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THE POLITICS AND PEDAGOGY OF ASIAN LITERATURES IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

The major role currently played by feminism in the field of Asian studies consists of work done on Asian women, dead and living, as cases of social historical study; investigations of feminine themes, tropes, and subjectivities in literature; and growing interest in Asian women writers. As in the case of fields traditionally dominated by scholarly criteria that are indifferent to the issues of gender, feminism is essential in Asian studies as a means of combat against entrenched habits of reading guarded by specialists. However, feminism's most significant contribution to the academic institution does not lie in an exclusive focus on women's problems. Rather, it lies in the way it alerts us, through women's experience of social subordination, to the barbarism and mutilation that go on in other spheres of knowledge production. As feminism consolidates its place in the reinterpretation of knowledge in all (especially Western) fields, there persist other types of problems which feminists need to recognize and confront—by forsaking the argument for the rights of women as their primary goal.

The following chapter, originally written for a panel of the same title at the 1989 MLA Annual Convention in Washington, D.C., deals with a specific problem in the institutional arrangement called "area studies"—the teaching of Asian literatures.

Even though feminism owes much of its current institutional power to the transdisciplinary character of gender, neither the emphasis on women nor transdisciplinarity itself is necessarily the most adequate means of intervening in the politics of institutional marginalization and exploitation. Many Asia specialists (male and female) would now accede to giving women their voices in scholarship while continuing to de-emphasize the crucial relation between language and knowledge by marginalizing the language-intensive work of literature teachers. Similarly, because the production of knowledge in "area studies" is stabilized—or pre-stabilized—by the notion of fixed geographical areas, the claims of "transdisciplinarity" and "multi-discursivity" often become simply another way of emboldening the tendency, adhered to among many social scientists, toward information retrieval based on unproblematized models of linguistic "communication."

The question I want to raise in regard to the topic "feminism and the institution"[1] is therefore not whether we can or cannot locate interest in women's issues in the Asian field. (The answer to that is, increasingly, yes.) Rather: What do the problems which obstruct the teaching of Asian literatures tell us about the seemingly wider and more ready acceptance of feminism in American universities? If this is a reflection of how feminism itself has become "normalized," then feminists need to ask what other kinds of institutional marginalization continue in the course of their own empowerment. Because such marginalization is systemic, we may not recognize it until it is too late.

Take for instance the policy, now implemented in some universities, of a mandatory second language requirement for undergraduates. Superficially, a policy like this is aimed against the monolingualism and parochialism typical of many American undergraduate curricula. And yet, precisely the emphasis on a second language can mean a death blow to the teaching of literature in a field such as Asian studies. In Asian departments where the duty of language

teaching often already falls upon the shoulders of literature teachers, increased second language requirements would simply sap literature teachers of whatever energy and time they would otherwise have to concentrate on literature. While the managers of Asian departments may congratulate themselves on increased enrollments, these departments are fast being transformed into mere language-training units. The teachers of "literature" would, of course, continue to be employed for the "transmission of knowledge about foreign cultures," but in effect they would be serving as the support staff for training business, military, and technical professionals even in a university setting, while the interventions they can offer in ideological struggles through the teaching of literature become nullified.

Against the politics of this kind of institutional exploitation, and hopefully addressing (albeit indirectly) similar concerns of "fellow travelers" in other fields, this essay is intended as an argument for the teaching of Asian literatures as a multiply critical event in the American university today.

Peter Wang's "A Great Wall" (1986) is a film about a Chinese-American family's visit to their "original" home, Beijing, and the contradictory emotions involved in this experience. The father, who spent his youth in China, is now a well-established computer expert in Silicon Valley, California. Although he enjoys his occasional bowl of Chinese-style noodles and dislikes the idea of his American-born son marrying anyone but a Chinese, he and his family are well acclimatized to the American way of life. The visit "home" is, in its small and subtle ways, traumatic, woven with memories of childhood in a China that is no longer there. While the son, Paul, finds everything in his "native" land exotic if somewhat boring, his Chinese counterpart, a local young man who is studying for his university entrance examination, is greatly fascinated with everything American: he drinks Coca-Cola, loves Pavarotti, and shows off his English to his girlfriend by reciting the Gettysburg Address. One of the highlights of the film shows the two young men competing at ping-pong. Despite his more powerful physique, Paul loses by

forgetting the rules several times. The film ends with the Chinese-American family returning to California, where the father now practices *qi gong* daily. In his new peace of mind, we are given a sense of Chinese cultural triumph.

The responses to this film among my friends are fascinatingly dissimilar. A Chinese person thought that this film pandered to the taste of *kweilo* (Cantonese for "foreign devils"). A European couple, who completely missed the fact that the Chinese youth won the ping-pong match, found the film aesthetically offensive because it polarizes America and China in terms of technological supremacy and backwardness. An American liked the film because it showed people living on the fault line between cultures and trying to hold them together—"Real people are hyphenated people," he said. What interests me about these responses is the strong if lopsided conviction with which each type of view is expressed. It soon became clear that this was one of those texts which are thought-provoking not so much because of intrinsic merit as because of the way they trigger divergent and even opposed views from their audiences. These views, heavy with historical resonances, turn a rather stereotypical story into the battleground for contending—perhaps mutually uncomprehending—claims as to how an Asian-American "homecoming" experience should be aesthetically produced.

Though casually expressed, my friends' critical views already contain what are in fact formulations of nativism, aesthetic formalism, and cultural pluralism, which epitomize problems that characterize the teaching of non-Western literatures and that are increasingly felt by the teachers of Asian literatures in American universities. Chief among these, felt by Asianists as a group, is the by and large ghettoized status of their existence. While some see the general lack of exchange between scholars of Asian and Western literatures in terms of a "mutual parochialism,"[2] many feel, with good reasons, that the greatest problem for students of Asian literatures is that of Western cultural hegemony. For, even when studies of a comparative nature are undertaken, the terms of reference are often provided by the West, "so that we have had considerations of symbolism in Chinese poetry, in which, for example, the Chinese phenomena were described in terms of their congruence, or divergence, from French and German ones."[3] In other words, vis-à-vis European literatures, Asian literatures share with other non-West-

ern literatures the task of a Gramscian "counter-hegemonic ideological production." The distinctive labeling of "Asian" is the sign of an allied insurgency among marginalized cultures within the establishment of the American university itself.

Marginalization within Asian Studies

Meanwhile, teachers of Asian literatures need to combat the politics which confines them to the simple "West" vs. "Asia" dichotomy. Like all classifications, "Asian literatures" is elusive, having more institutional usefulness for those who do not know what these literatures are and need to set them aside *en bloc* in a separate category than for those who are concerned with its specific problems. For those of us who have worked with Asian literatures, it is well known that in American universities, the standard representatives have for a long time been China and Japan in East Asia, India in South Asia, and Persia and Arabia in the Middle East. The categories provided by the *Journal of the Association for Asian Studies* usually list "Asia General," "China," "Japan," then "South Asia," and sometimes "Southeast Asia" and "Inner Asia." In recent years, interest in the Korean and Vietnamese languages and literatures has emerged in some institutions, but as in the case of fields in which the surfacing of minority issues serves to reveal all the more clearly the homogenizing tendencies of extant categories, China, Japan, and India remain the most heavily researched among Asian cultures in the West. In order to address the politics of teaching Asian literatures in American universities, therefore, it is necessary to insist on their non-monolithic nature, even when we must from time to time talk of "Asian literatures" as if they were one single entity.

The politics of teaching Asian literatures is by no means restricted to the struggle between Asia and the West, or between Asianists and scholars of Western topics. To see this, we need to clarify what we mean when we speak about "marginalization." How are Asian literatures marginalized? The answer to this question requires us to distinguish between different forms of marginalization within Asian literatures and Asian studies as they are currently institutionalized.

Among Asian classicists, culture is often still viewed as a kind of

general literacy which comes before such things as periodization and specialization. According to this view, if one has spent enough time with the classics spanning a few major dynasties, one would also be qualified to deal with anything that comes afterward. The reverse, however, is not true: if one has worked only with modern literature, one is a kind of illiterate who does not possess the depth of knowledge and breadth of experience which a classical education offers. This notion of a general literacy that one acquires not as a skill but as an *upbringing* in standard written texts and well-aged artistic practices (such as *qin qi shu hua*, or music, chess, calligraphy, and painting, for the Chinese) acts as a way to define the limits of centralized culture, even if the practitioners of that culture are dilettantes only. The farther one is removed from this *centralized literacy*, the more dubious is one's claim to the culture. When I told a senior Chinese classicist that I was going to a conference on contemporary Hong Kong literature, for instance, the response I got was: "Oh, is there such a thing?"

While this kind of elitism vis-à-vis modern and contemporary culture is a universal phenomenon, my point here is that in those areas which have only a marginal status within the American university to begin with, the elitism which stresses the importance of non-Western cultures by way of a hierarchical evaluation of their "excellence" or "superiority" actually collaborates with the minimalization of those non-Western cultures. Such "nativist" elitism is as frequently, if not more frequently, espoused by non-native area specialists as it is by the "natives" themselves. It leads to a situation in which the Asian classical literatures, precisely because of their arcaneness, are highly respected areas of scholarly cultivation. The general literacy that was a hallmark of culturedness in the past now becomes a "specialty" with a national designation in the contemporary West. Here, although one can speak of marginalization, since specialization in these areas requires not only the gift of mastering foreign languages and years of patient learning but also a commitment to spiritual ideals which may be at odds with the contemporary world, this is a marginalization fully in keeping with the notion of culture as high culture. It is also in keeping with the hierarchical class, ethnic, and gender distinctions that follow from such a notion. Since it puts Asian cultures on a par with all great civilizations of the world, this kind of specialization is often privileged over the

study of texts whose production is much more obviously inscribed in the politics of post-imperial (after-the-emperors) and post-imperialist ("Westernized" or "modernized") Asia.[4]

The *alliance* of nativist elitism and institutional Orientalism produces hegemonic paradigms of thinking and method that have as powerful an impact in determining the objects worthy of study as military, economic, and religious aggressivity did in producing accounts of "Asia" in the past. The tendency within Asian studies to belittle *modern* literature is often justified in terms of "quality," even though the criteria used are seldom scrutinized. It is interesting to see how the reasons for the marginalization of Asian literatures vis-à-vis European literatures, a fact about which Asian classicists feel indignant, are equally applicable to *the marginalization of modern Asian literatures within Asian studies*. Once we shift the comparison between "European" and "Asian" to a comparison between classical Asian and modern Asian texts, we realize that similar patterns of incomprehension, discrimination, or sheer indifference appear in relation to the latter group. As the terms of reference remain "classical," modern Asian literatures are often criticized for not being "literary," and when they are considered literary, they are often judged to be tainted by hybridization. This type of evaluation in which one sphere of specialization becomes the norm and criterion for all other spheres therefore does not only account for the marginalization of Asian literatures in general but also especially for *the doubly marginalized nature of modern Asian literatures*, since they are not merely unknown to nonspecialists but are dismissed by specialists of Asian cultures as well. That this takes place within the parameters of what I earlier refer to as an area of Gramscian counter-hegemonic ideological production is in part the result of a persistent Orientalist politics. While it permits the preservation of "culture" in classics, this politics discourages and disables the pursuit of literature as an ongoing historical discourse whose major concern may not be that of classical aesthetic excellence. In a discussion of East-West literary relations, Edward Said describes it this way:

> Sanskrit was a language that stood for a very high cultural value in Europe, but it was a dead language, far removed from the backwardness of modern Indians. The romantic imagination of European writers and scholars was saturated with Orientalism, but their Orientalism was gained at the expense of any sympathy they might have felt for the benighted natives they ruled. One of the faint lines of thought running through early nineteenth-century Orientalist scholarship . . . is that Orientalist enthusiasm is often fueled by apathetic ignorance not only of the ancient Orient but especially of the modern Oriental.[5]

Said's argument enables us to see the manner in which Orientalism continues to inform the institutionalization of *scholarship* on Asia in America. The conservation of the classics, the programmatic insistence on archival, archeological, and textual research, and the careful distinction made between scholarship and politics are all part of this ongoing Orientalism. In this light, the specialization of the indologist, the sinologist, or the japanologist does not necessarily help correct the marginalization of Asian literatures in the world context but in all likelihood serves to continue that marginalization by giving us an Asia which, apart from cheap laborers and multitudinous consumers, also continues to produce *ancient* culture.

The Culture of Illiteracy

Of course, modern Asia, too, is amply investigated. It simply does not produce "literature." Take the study of China, for example. While sinologists specializing in premodern texts feel disdain toward modern and contemporary Chinese literature, modern China as a text is heavily populated with the views of historians, anthropologists, political scientists, economists, and so on. Such a division is never simply the division between ancient and modern China, but a struggle for social control among the disciplines, each of which has a competing claim to discursive authority in the formation of the modern nation-state.

The issue of language is a critical one here. Everyone is familiar with the demands made by the teacher of literature on students' knowledge of the language they are using. But the insistence on linguistic aptitude means different things in different pedagogical situations. Whereas it is still typical of specialists in French and German literature to assume that knowledge of French and German

amounts to something of a global cultural imperative, it is not possible for the teacher of Asian literatures to insist on such knowledge of her languages even as she is teaching them. To secure enrollments for classes in an Asian literature, one needs to make sure that the students are, on the one hand, attracted to the culture and, on the other, not so daunted by the language that they would stop trying after a short period of time. The rare combination of interest and effort means that very few students venture beyond a superficial reading of the literatures, whether taught in translation or in the original, and those who do usually become intellectually so invested that their scholastic achievements blind them to the racist and sexist ideologies that are ingrained in the instruments of pedagogy themselves.

Unlike the teacher of French and German, the Asian literature teacher would almost guarantee her own inaudibility if she were to insist on using the original language in a public setting. The problem she faces can be stated this way: Does she sacrifice the specificities of the language in order to generalize, so that she can put Asian literatures in a "cross-cultural" framework, or does she continue to teach untranslated texts with expertise—and remain ghettoized?

One of the results of this dilemma, for instance, is that whenever Asianists publish in non-Asian journals, they have to provide long plot summaries and simplified accounts of their stories/histories at the expense of their arguments. Some publications never go beyond the plot summary stage, and often, simply because of the relatively unrepresented nature of their subject matter, they become acceptable to journals which are eager to beef up their "interdisciplinary" and "cross-cultural" profiles. The reduction to plot summary—that is, transparent communicability—and to sensational details—that is, fetishized exoticism—describes the space accorded to Asian literatures in the American university at large.

One might ask at this point: How indeed can we discuss literature beyond the plot summary? Hasn't *all* literature already been reduced to this status, a status which Asian literatures, by virtue of being multiply marginalized, urgently magnify? Ironically, one way in which literature's specificities can be dismissed is precisely that of "interdisciplinarity" itself. A student I know once applied to an excellent "interdisciplinary" program on the West Coast and was

rejected on the grounds that his project was "too literary." This student was proposing to work on a little-known Asian literature as part of a critique of cultural imperialism. An incident like this is worth bringing to the attention of all because it is an example of how, because theoretical development in North America has reached such an advanced stage that awareness of cultural diversity means it is no longer adequate for us simply to focus on "literature," someone from the "third world" with a project about a "third world" literature becomes old-fashioned and, from the "first world's" "critical" point of view, politically incorrect. This means that either such a literature remains unknown in its foreignness or, if it is known, it is known only in the universalist language of "interdisciplinarity," "cross-cultural plurality," etc., in which it becomes a localized embellishment of the general narrative.

What the foregoing argument shows is that, at the same time that an idealist appeal to ancient culture as a way to legitimize the understanding of modernity corroborates the marginalization of the Asian field, the current environment in which the non-West is "allowed to speak" by affirmative pedagogical attitudes/policies in support of "cultural pluralism" can be equally detrimental to the realization of a genuinely critical project. The current upsurge of interest in non-Western cultures owes its origins to the broader political context in which the American university is only a part. The widening of our curriculum to include such things as the "third world" and minorities, and the extension of job opportunities to African American, Hispanic, and Asian scholars are part of an ongoing program of instrumentalizing language and culture. Indeed, we can say that the current "cultural studies" programs in institutions of higher education are homological entities to the "literacy campaigns" that are aimed at the lower strata of American society. While the poor need to learn how to read and write, the educated need to read and write *other cultures*. The universalist ambitions by way of terms such as "culture" and "discourse" belong therefore to a market economy in which "culture remains a force but largely of social control, a gratuitous image drawn over the face of instrumentality."[6]

At this juncture, the relationship between the teaching of language and the teaching of literature becomes less a hierarchical than a parallel one. It is, of course, still true that teachers of lan-

guage usually occupy a lower status than teachers of literature. The fact that writing programs are usually staffed by graduate students in need of financial support attests to that—the logic has been that our subservients take care of the "dirty work" of training writing skills while we perform the more lofty task of thinking literarily. However, this situation is quickly changing precisely because of the widening of the curriculum to include such items as "third world studies." What face teachers of "third world" literatures are demands of instrumentality similar to those that are produced by the lucrative professional disciplines on the teachers of language. When students of economics, business administration, and computer science fill up Japanese language class-lists, the teacher of Japanese *literature* becomes equally useful as a transmitter of fragmented pieces of Japanese culture and history, enabling such students to have claims to knowledge about Japan while they carry on their high-tech and business vocations. Thus a paradoxical situation arises: as we broaden our curriculum and make it "easier" for Asian languages and literatures to be "represented" in teaching, a more restricted, much more superficial kind of knowledge about such cultures is produced which students now use to fulfill "requirements" of multiculturalism. The result of such restrictions and superficialities is what Wlad Godzich calls the "new culture of illiteracy, in which the student is trained to use language for the reception and conveyance of information in only one sphere of human activity: that of his or her future field of employment." Once we substitute the terms "literature" and "culture" for the term "language" in Godzich's statements, the dire circumstances under which teachers of literature, especially minority literatures, work are clearly evident:

> . . . whereas one would have expected that a crisis of literacy would have called for a greater appreciation of the multiplicity of functions that language performs, the foremost of which is the ability to code and to transcode experience and to provide cultural directions for its interpretation, handling, and elaboration, one finds instead a further instrumentalization of language, where the latter is shattered into a multiplicity of autonomous, unrelated languages, with the competence to be acquired restricted to just one of these.[7]

The Question of Literature in "Cultural Studies"

If the rationale for cultural studies programs across the U.S. begins with the apprehension of the insufficiencies of models of learning "culture" that are based on the nation-state (which appear in the form of departments of national languages and literatures in the humanities), the question remains as to what is to be done after the traditional boundaries of knowledge-production have been overthrown.

In a way, that question was answered much earlier in the non-Western fields, simply because "culture" in these fields, by virtue of being cut up historically through the imposition of Western languages and modes of living, had already been delivered into the hands of Western social scientists. The anthropologists, archeologists, sociologists, economists, and historians were dividing Asia and Africa among them long before the humanists realized that they, too, must join the "scramble for concessions"—to use a description of the West's invasion of China in the nineteenth century—and stake a claim for "culture." This, I think, is where the institutional mushrooming of "cultural studies" gets its momentum. What happens to literature in a field like Asian studies?

Because modern Asia is not "literary" any more, the close and patient attention that classicists devote to literary texts simply evaporates. Instead, works of modern literature become mere research documents for the historian or political scientist. While there is nothing wrong with the use of literature as social documentation, what is alarming is the way such uses redirect the focus of the field of Asian studies to one of information production, thus making "interpretation," the critical coding and transcoding of experience which Godzich mentions, a more or less "subjective" (privatized) and hence dispensable activity. It is in the light of this cognitive hegemony of information that Said writes:

> The one issue that urgently requires study is, for the humanist no less than for the social scientist, the status of *information* as a component of knowledge: its sociopolitical status, its contemporary fate, its economy. . . . What happens to information and knowledge,

> . . . when IBM and AT&T—two of the world's largest corporations—claim that what they do is put "knowledge" to work "for the people"? What is the role of humanistic knowledge and information if they are not to be unknowing (many ironies there) partners in commodity production and marketing, so much so that what humanists do may in the end turn out to be a quasi-religious concealment of this peculiarly unhumanistic process? A true secular politics of interpretation sidesteps this question at its peril.[8]

What Said's passage makes clear is the primary role played by information nowadays in the organization of knowledge both in the humanities and the social sciences. For those of us in literature, this passage serves to highlight one of the most devastating aspects of literature's marginalization within cultural studies. This is the methodological subordination of literature to other disciplinary controls in such a way that the instrumentalist, reflectionist assumptions about language and representation, which literature challenges as part of its critical project, remain entirely unexamined. Instead, such assumptions often accompany the use of literature—now for many simply one type of discourse among others—and become normative ways of reading. If information is, strictly speaking, "*a* component of knowledge" as Said puts it, the problem we face is that of information replacing knowledge altogether. Often, not only does literature's potential in subverting the increasing trend toward *informationalization* remain unrealized, but literature itself becomes an instrument in that process of informationalization and a subordinate part to the world historical record.

The informationalization of literature produces the illusion that there is no real need to pay attention to literature and to the work it performs upon its readers. Here, the marginalization of *modern* Asian literature is especially acute. What is marginalized as a result of the institutional desire for information is the experience of *cultural modernity* in modern Asian texts that is not immediately reducible to models of "communication." While the ancient texts still possess cultural capital and are allowed to retain their opacity (formal difficulty) as exotica, the modern texts are, in spite of their density, conceptually streamlined with writings in the other disciplines for the overall (i.e., not specialized) knowledge about Asia.

Caught between the past as culture and the present as realpolitik, and between classicists who view them as "not really Asian" and other Asianists who fail to see their formal specificities, modern Asian literatures are thus consigned to an impossible struggle for survival in American academic institutions where funding is predisposed toward the fact-and-profit-yielding disciplines.

While many universities still pursue the study of Asian literatures in specially designated language and literature departments, many others now adopt a different kind of organizational structure—what is called an "area studies program," in which scholars whose research bears upon, say, an Asian topic convene for the collaborative administration of Asian studies. What could be the logic justifying this kind of coercive coexistence apart from its convenience for administrators? The university here acts as an agent for disseminating a quickly changing view of culture as something to which students can have *access* regardless of the differences in their disciplinary backgrounds and the conflicts involved. Access is promised by the nominal designation of an area as an information target field. Traditionally marginalized areas such as East Asia, South Asia, or Eastern Europe are among the first to be identified in the form of such a target field.

The consequences of departmentalizing a group of literary critics, historians, sociologists, geographers, statisticians, and so forth can, of course, be positive at one level. Such a group may serve to bridge the gaps in our knowledge about one another.[9] Yet why must such bridging take place over one geographical area? The radical critical implications of each of the disciplines brought together in this way must always be subsumed, through a kind of pseudo-intellectual division of labor, under the notion of an "area" whose conceptual stability contributes toward the successful institutionalization of knowledge.

When scholars are departmentalized simply because they are all "doing" "China," "Japan," or "India," what actually happens is the predication of so-called "interdisciplinarity" on the model of the colonial territory and the nation-state. In the twentieth century, the colonized countries of the "third world," caught between the bankruptcy of traditional social organization and the need to assert self-determination in the throes of imperialism, are forced to adopt the model of the nation-state, complete with the ideological dead-ends

that that model entails. It is therefore not an accident that, in the massive trends of reconceptualizing the disciplines in the U.S., it is precisely the cultures of such countries that are among the first to be put into "area studies" programs, at the same time that the dominant literary culture, English, continues to hold its autonomy. To the extent that it would seem absurd to most to insert English into some such program as "Western European studies" or "North American studies," we understand the magnitude of discriminatory politics involved. (Let us not forget that "discrimination" here applies to *U.S. culture* as well. In the wake of anti-imperialism, whereupon former British colonies like India, Canada, and Australia rightly insist upon the uniqueness of their own cultural/literary productions, it is the national literature of the U.S.'s former colonizer that continues to be taught with dignity in most English departments in the American university, while the indigenous literature and culture remain, with little respectability until recent years, "ghettoized" in the field called "American studies"!)

In the case of Asian studies, the most immediate concern for the teacher of literature is the increasing risk posed to the teaching of modern literature under these circumstances. Such a risk cannot simply be measured by the number of courses one can or cannot put in the curriculum. It has much more to do with the reenactment of the discourse of imperialism in pedagogy itself. In my own experience, for instance, the language and literature teachers in one such area studies department are often accused by the social scientists of being "unproductive" and deserving of the low esteem they receive. This kind of rhetoric is institutionally effective because, by a show of objective rationality, it erases its own implication in the history of Western cultural hegemony in the name of quantifiable scholarship. As the teachers of language and literature are often native speakers while the teachers of the social sciences often are not, the tensions involved in the marginalizing of literature quickly take on a racial or ethnic coloration, and the charges of "unproductivity" precisely replicate, in an academic context, the implications of the classic claim of the "white man's burden."

The problem of "productivity" is in many ways faced by all teachers of literature. Literature teachers are, in the *thematics* of contemporary culture, "unproductive" since productivity is always assumed to be the productivity of the technological world. No matter how we argue for the relation between literature and society, literary people are, in the words of Gayatri Spivak, "still caught within a position where they must say: Life is brute fact and outside art; the aesthetic is free and transcends life."[10] Of course, within literature, people can spend time debating what the nature of art is, but the ideological division between art and life continues to determine how public policy is made. It follows that literature remains—in an institutional language transformed by technology—a "soft" and thus superfluous subject. Consequently:

> . . . if the study of literature is "only" about literary representation, then it must be the case that literary representations and literary activities (writing, reading, producing the "humanities," and arts and letters) are essentially ornamental, possessing at most secondary ideological characteristics. The consequence is that to deal with literature as well as the broadly defined "humanities" is to deal with the nonpolitical, although quite evidently the political realm is presumed to lie just beyond (and beyond the reach of) literary, and hence *literate*, concern.[11]

There is no better way of confirming this than by surrendering the politics of interpretation to the general discursive transparency in which the communicability and information status of knowledges become the primary goals of pedagogy. In the reverse extreme, literary people, especially those in the minor fields, can collaborate in the demise of their own practice by thinking of it as a purely formal matter. C. T. Hsia clarifies this point by criticizing those who reduce the study of Chinese fiction to fictional construct only:

> . . . students of Chinese fiction have apparently lagged behind the historians: in their objective examination of novels and stories in terms of style, point of view, and narrative method, or in their more ambitious interpretations of the same in terms of myth, archetype, and allegory, they study fiction as literature and nothing more. Apparently, they think that only Marxist critics are concerned with social reality. . . .[12]

Concern with social reality must be accompanied with a close attention to how language works—not so much in the creation of formal beauty as in the concealment of ideology. Such close atten-

tion to language is not that of appreciation but a form of vigilance. It is like constructing barricades against the enemies along small streets in a city, when large boulevards are constantly being built that will effectively wipe out the possibility of such political resistance. Spivak alludes to the urgency of our situation in these terms: "the Army, the Foreign Service, the multi-nationals themselves, and intelligence and counter-intelligence take the necessity of language-learning with the utmost seriousness. We have something to learn from our enemies."[13]

Preconditions of Reference and Criticism: Ruins and Reason

For the Asianist, the task of teaching literature is further complicated by the fact that she has to demonstrate not only the "literariness" but also the "Asian-ness" of her undertaking. Here, what is often taken for granted and pronounced as self-evident truth—"Chinese," "Japanese," "Indian," and so forth—runs up against the ruining of indigenous tradition in the aftermath of imperialism and colonialism. What is the nature of such ruining? The presence of the West does not simply put an end to native daily practices, most of which, in fact, are allowed to continue exactly as they were in the past. British policy in Hong Kong, for instance, benignly honors every major Chinese festival around the year and even abides by the rules of Chinese folklore and geomancy on significant celebratory occasions.

What are disrupted, eroded, and foreclosed are the very terms of legitimation *and* criticism—philosophical, philological, and aesthetic—on which traditional scholarship in these cultures depends. Using the example once again of Hong Kong, such demolitions of what are in fact the preconditions for cognition and the production of knowledge in a southern Chinese society take place most effectively through policies of colonial education, in which the discrimination against teachers with college degrees from China, the promotion of English as the primary medium of instruction from kindergarten or primary school on, and the reduction of Chinese literature to one subject among many that secondary school children can choose for their public examinations work smoothly in conjunction with an environment that is, like everywhere else in

the "developing" world, already predisposed toward vocational and technical training. Traditional culture, having lost its power to intervene politically since the preconditions for that power have disappeared, takes on an ornamental function in the form of museum masterpieces. The kind of "specialized" dedication it requires—once the sign of a general cultural literacy—preempts it from participation in realpolitik.

In the American university today, the establishment of cultural studies and, increasingly, comparative literature programs represents, to a certain degree, an attempt to address the global crisis that follows from the loss of the critical function that traditional literary culture used to possess. Cognizant of the extent to which national cultures have been dismantled—as is most pronounced in the case of "third world" countries—the notion of "cultural studies" increasingly attempts to supply the referential as well as critical ground for the understanding of humanistic culture. The development of cultural studies in this sense is comparable, perhaps even companionable, to the development of area studies. Instead of a geographical territory, "culture" itself becomes the point of institutional stabilization. It is, after all, entirely possible to view "culture" as an "area" in which an instrumentalized communicability among the disciplines comes as first priority in the progress of knowledge.

Because the nature of their tasks tends to be predefined in the foregoing terms, teachers of Asian literatures face the problem of how to sustain the critical import of their work. It is incumbent upon them not only to disseminate knowledge about Asia but, more importantly, to demonstrate how, precisely because of the precarious status of their operations, this dissemination of knowledge is inseparable from the political intervention without which knowledge itself easily becomes *either* ornamentation *or* the military weaponry of instrumental reason.

In the struggle for the articulation of critical intervention, a familiar path taken by Asianists has been that of scholarly nativism, which sees returning to the authority of tradition as a way to understand modernity. The return to traditional authority, or to tradition as authority, inevitably clings to a notion of past culture as a pure phenomenon. The consequent romanticizing of indigenous cultures as untainted origins fits the scholarly agenda of Orientalism

extremely well. But while Asia is served as a "specialty" in Western institutions, Asian peoples whose "cultures" are in the pages of research journals and archives in the West receive little representation in the form of an articulation of how they feel about being the silenced objects of Western study.

Since much of such scholarly nativism is currently espoused in the name of a respect for "cultural difference," teachers of Asian literatures must become extremely wary of how they teach cultural difference itself. Often, in an attempt to differentiate Asian from Western literatures, we belabor the former's differences in terms of elements such as—in the case of East Asia, for instance—spiritualism, resignation, worldviews that prefer peace and quiet to conflict and struggle, etc. Such standard descriptions of East Asian literatures are often made in neglect of the problems of ideology that accompany the production of literature and culture. But the portrayal of Asian literatures as apolitical is not so much an objective portrayal as it is a companion tactic to the economic and political coercion of the past and a superficial cross-cultural understanding by way of commodified (or standardized) notions of "cultural difference" in the present. Instead of political apathy, teachers of Asian literatures need to emphasize, with non-Asianists, the "dialectical and continuous crosshatching of ideology and literary language."[14] This is simply because "[n]ot just anthropologists, economists, and political scientists, but students of literature too, with their theories of discourse, rhetoric, and textual criticism, provide the necessary information and tools of analysis for the propagation of cultural and even military domination."[15] As long as students come to Asian literatures with the ideological notions of learning about the continuity of great traditions, the truth of humanity, the beauty of aesthetics, etc., we are continuing to perpetuate the general dismissal of literature's relevance as a mode of social inquiry whose methods are central to other modes of social inquiry.

Preconditions of Reference and Criticism: Interrogations of Identity

Much like the reactions to "A Great Wall," the politics regarding Asian literatures cannot be defined purely in terms of the intrinsic value of the "cultural object" at hand. As we constantly encounter

situations in which the teaching of Asia is divided among people with very different backgrounds and different claims to what having knowledge about Asia means, the problems faced by teachers of modern Asian literatures are not going to be resolved by our thinking that one day everyone will come around to appreciating how great literature is and how great Asian literatures are. Whether we like it or not, strong combative feelings that are rooted in the tensions between members of different groups with histories of ethnic, disciplinary, and institutional conflict will increasingly come into play in the daily routines of pedagogy, both in terms of decisions regarding the objects of study and in terms of the human relations governing collegiate collaboration in a university setting.

In the U.S., the kind of space which is now given to the study of minority cultures has been the result of a long struggle for civil rights. Unlike the view put across by Nathan Glazer, for whom ethnicity in America is "voluntary" in character,[16] the consciousness of ethnicity for Asian and other non-white groups is inevitable—a matter of history rather than of choice. Like Hispanics, African Americans, and Native Americans, Asians were for a long time categorized by way of the notion of "problem," which, as Vine Deloria, Jr. writes, "relegates minority existence to an adjectival status within the homogeneity of American life."[17] If this "problem" status has now acquired some visibility, since the dominant white culture itself has been undergoing fragmentation to the point at which, as Stuart Hall puts it, "the centering of marginality" has become "part of post-modern experience,"[18] it does not mean that the ideology which is inscribed in the previous acts of discrimination has disappeared once and for all. Because it is regarded as common sense, ideology always lags behind:

> Ideology in the critical sense does not signify an avowed doctrine. It is rather the loosely articulated sets of historically determined and determining notions, presuppositions, and practices, each implying the other by real (but where does one stop to get a grip on reality?) or forced logic, which goes by the name of common sense or self-evident truth or natural behavior in a certain situation.[19]

The multiple ideological stakes—cross-cultural, chronological, and disciplinary—involved in the teaching of modern Asian literatures find their expression in an issue that keeps recurring in mod-

ern Asian texts: *identity*. It is crucial for us to see that what looks like an ontological preoccupation that has exhausted its theoretical relevance in the West means something quite different here. Given the demolition of the traditional terms of reference and the de-legitimation of the grounds of criticism that such terms provide, and given the untenability of a return to traditional culture in any unadulterated form, the very instability of cultural identity itself becomes a combative critical base. This critical base engenders a new set of terms for the production of knowledge and for intervention that are no longer simply cognitive or ontological but are informed by subjectivity and experience.

In North America, where the study of Asian literatures cannot be divorced from the knowledge of the history of Asian immigrants, Asian "identities" are split between paradigms of distant grandeur and recent deprivation. Even if we were to continue to use, as is often the case in Asian studies, the language of tradition and heritage, we must ask ourselves: "which heritage and which tradition?" On the misty lands of dragons, gods, and goddesses are superimposed the more recent historical memories of racially discriminated railroad workers, laundry men and women, restaurateurs, gardeners, and prisoners in concentration camps. "Ancestry" is not continuous but fraught with displacements and destructions. *What does it mean to be "Asian"?*

The self-consciousness that surfaces in modern Asian texts, be they literary, historical, or critical, goes against the point, often made by traditionalists, that the personal self is insignificant among Asians. The concern with identity as such, of course, is not only about the personal self; however, problematizing the self does become a major theoretical development through which modern Asian texts depart from trajectories of the classics.[20] What makes the problematizing of the self interesting is perhaps not so much the "Westernization" of Asian literatures through a personal category; rather, it is the emergence of a critical means of gauging modern Asian experience in its essentially non-monolithic, often "self"-contradictory, multiplicity.

The articulation of the self in modern, especially contemporary, Asian writings suggests a new politics that is both *resistant* and *redemptive*.

The notion of "resistance literature" is the one Barbara Harlow uses to study contemporary "third world" liberation movements.[21]

Examining the writings produced for resistance struggles in Palestine, Nicaragua, and South Africa, Harlow powerfully criticizes the vast negligence, in our teaching of literature in the West, of the relationship between writing and political movements. What is remarkable about her study is that, while it gives an account of resistance writers in the "third world," it also questions our habitual—ideological—assumptions about literature. Her book asks: Do these "resistant" writings not require that we redefine our concepts of literature? Should "resistance" not be regarded simply as one kind of literature but as what constitutes the basis of literature itself?

While I do not think that modern Asian literatures would be adequately understood through the notion of resistance in the radical sense that Harlow gives it, what is extremely relevant is the other, implied, part of her argument without which resistance would not be recognized. This is the redemption of materials which are otherwise lost or unknown. For the teachers of literature, who work with texts and who discuss political movements from afar, redemption is *the* practice of resistance against the obliviating moves of any dominant politics. What need to be redeemed are not the classics—our museums and libraries do that for us—but the experiences of uneasy translations between cultures, translations that are mediated by the possession and lack of power.[22]

For instance, how do we read "America" in twentieth-century Asian literatures? How does the experience with "America" translate into literary production? On the leftist American front, we are accustomed to hearing condemnations of American involvement in the Second World War, the atrocities committed in Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and so on. In Asia, in many parts a world torn by warfare, poverty, and undemocratic politics, "America" still looms large with hope because of the sheer opportunity it represents—for Chinese democracy protesters as much as for tens of thousands of Vietnamese waiting for years in refugee camps for that magical "immigrant" status. In the Asian countries which are politically stable, the translation of "America" structures everyday realities. Rock and roll, hamburgers, shopping malls, television programs, computer games, and tourism constitute the materiality of "culture" which is not so much about past grandeur or political resistance as it is about accommodation, collaboration, and complicity.

Redemption-in-translation, translation-as-redemption: such lived

experiences are appropriately captured in Stuart Hall's notion of *migranthood.* In an account about identity called "Minimal Selves," Hall emphasizes his identity as a black Jamaican scholar living in England in terms of the migrant. He describes the two kinds of questions every migrant faces:

> The classic questions which every migrant faces are twofold: "Why are you here?" and "When are you going home?" No migrant ever knows the answer to the second question until asked. Only then does she or he know that, really, in the deep sense, she/he's never going back. Migration is a one way trip. There's no "home" to go back to. There never was.[23]

These statements, when *translated* into the field of Asian literatures in the American context, carry great historical import. Once the implications of migranthood are dislodged from their narrow "personal" frame and juxtaposed with the questions we have been discussing, they demand a reconceptualization of each of these terms—modern, Asian, literatures—in fundamental ways. The two questions facing Hall's migrant become: why is there the category of "Asian literatures" in American universities? When or how are these literatures "going home"?

In the realm of classical Asian literatures, as I have been trying to show, the question of origin has always been answered by going back to the ancient texts. There, at least for now, the standard practice is to give Asian literatures authority by letting them "go home" to the time and space of their ancestry. The question of origin is a much more difficult one in the modern context. Even though the classical method of tracing origins is still often used (typically, in studies of "influences"), the notion of migranthood is far more pressing and productive. The question "When are you going home?" can be responded to in the following manner: home is here, in my migranthood. This migranthood is not a negative or nostalgic way of gesturing toward the philological and philosophical density from which modern Asian literatures have been permanently dislocated. Rather, it is, precisely because of its deterritorialized mode, a form of *interference*—the "crossing of borders and obstacles," the "determined attempt to generalize exactly at those points whose generalizations seem impossible to make." Said goes on:

> One of the first interferences to be ventured, then, is a crossing from literature, which is supposed to be subjective and powerless, into those exactly parallel realms, now covered by journalism and the production of information, that employ representation but are supposed to be objective and powerful.[24]

To extend the metaphors used by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the boundary-crossing interrogations of identity in Asian literatures are the "minor" practice within the major language of instrumentalized culture.[25] This minor practice is the first step toward the formulation of a new type of cultural reference.

As part of this preconditioning for understanding Asian literatures, the conception of "identity" changes from nationalistic to ethnic terms. Ethnicity signifies the social experience which is not completed once and for all but which is constituted by a continual, often conflictual, working-out of its grounds. Instead of the instrumentalist production and retrieval of information characteristic of much of the work currently done under the rubrics of "area studies" and "cultural studies," it is ethnicity understood in this sense of an unfinished social field that should provide the new terms of criticism as well as reference. As Hall puts it, "The slow contradictory movement from 'nationalism' to 'ethnicity' as a source of identities is part of a new politics."[26] In this new politics, the question "why are there Asian literatures in American universities?" becomes an important event. The question cannot be answered simply by conscientious demonstrations of the intrinsic "value" of Asian literatures (beauty, depth, aesthetic quality, etc.), nor simply by resorting to the debatable objectives of "cultural pluralism." Rather, it is in terms of the cultural interventions which Asian literatures, in alliance with other minor literatures, bring to American society as a politically constituted community that answers should and will be sought in the decades to come.

between the "elite" and the "subaltern" in China needs to be formulated *primarily* in terms of the way education and gender work together.

25. The conference "Sexuality and Gender in Twentieth-Century Chinese Literature and Society" at the University of Iowa, March 1991, and the panel "Gender, Class, and Twentieth-Century Chinese Fiction" at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, New Orleans, April 1991.

26. *Hegel's* Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. A. V. Miller, with analysis of the text and foreword by J. N. Findlay (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 54–55; emphases in the original.

27. The extensiveness of the philosophical, political, and feminist arguments about "essentialism" is such that I can merely point to it here. Two recent publications readers can consult are Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 1989), and *differences* 1.2 (Summer 1989), a special issue on essentialism.

28. "In 'woman' I see something that cannot be represented, something that is not said, something above and beyond nomenclatures and ideologies." Kristeva, "Woman Can Never Be Defined," trans. Marilyn A. August, in Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds., *New French Feminisms* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), p. 137.

29. I want to acknowledge those who have contributed to the final version of this chapter. I have benefited from comments made by Wendy Larson and Lydia Liu at the conferences at Iowa and in New Orleans. Continual discussions with Kwai-cheung Lo, Tonglin Lu, and Ming-bao Yue about this chapter and other related issues give me the support of a strong critical community. Most of all, I am indebted to Yu-shih Chen for a forceful and enabling critique, which made me restate my concerns with a clarity that had been previously missing.

6. The Politics and Pedagogy of Asian Literatures in American Universities

1. This was the theme of *differences* 2.3 (Fall 1990), in which this chapter was first published.

2. Pauline Yu, "Alienation Effects: Comparative Literature and the Chinese Tradition," in *The Comparative Perspective on Literature: Approaches to Theory and Practice*, edited and with an introduction by Clayton Koelb and Susan Noakes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 162. Yu defines "mutual parochialism" in terms of the difficulties facing someone attempting to study Chinese literature from a comparative perspective. These include the impatience of scholars of Western literatures who often consider the linguistic and cultural differences too profound to make any serious comparative study meaningful, and the hostility of sinologists who distrust anyone who claims to "know about China *and* something else as well" (emphasis in the original).

3. Wlad Godzich, "Emergent Literature and the Field of Comparative Literature," in *The Comparative Perspective on Literature*, p. 22.

4. The dismissal of Edward Said's account of Orientalism by some sinologists is typical of the ideology of "nativist elitism" described here. See, for instance, Simon Leys, "Orientalism and Sinology," in *The Burning Forest: Essays on Chinese Culture and Politics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1986), pp. 95–99. Leys, a French sinologist, speaks as someone steeped in knowledge about the Chinese culture. While he shows some humility toward the "natives" (since he regards the Chinese as his teachers), Leys's attack on Said's work clearly indicates that he is not merely "protecting" the Chinese. What comes across strongly in his brief essay is an arrogant sense of disdain, often encountered in European intellectuals, toward the U.S. and the American university, of which Said, the critic of European Orientalism, is viewed as a representative.

5. Edward Said, "Raymond Schwab and the Romance of Ideas," in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 264.

6. Hal Foster, "Postmodernism: A Preface," *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, edited and with an introduction by Hal Foster (Port Townsend: Bay Press, 1983), p. xii.

7. Godzich, "The Culture of Illiteracy," *enclitic* 8.1-2 (Spring/Fall 1984): 29.

8. Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community," in Foster, p. 137; emphasis in the original.

9. This is the basic argument made by Benjamin I. Schwartz, "Presidential Address: Area Studies as a Critical Discipline," *Journal of Asian Studies* XL.1 (November 1980): 15–25. In what is a defense of area studies against Said's attack on area studies as a mode of intellectual imperialism, Schwartz cites the "desire to communicate" (p. 15) as the reason for the multidisciplinary makeup of area studies programs. Area specialists "do aspire to achieve a complex and deep understanding of other societies, cultures, and historic experiences" (p. 25). I have two major difficulties with Schwartz's argument. First, I cannot agree with his view that area specialists are, like historians, "humble gatherers of facts" (page 17 and *passim*). Second, given the fact that area specialists should be comparative and interdisciplinary by inclination, why would "theory" present such a problem for them? Though it is an issue specially raised by Schwartz, the conflict between theoreticians and "humble gatherers of facts" is not, to my mind, sufficiently politicized. As I indicate throughout this chapter, that conflict has much to do with what, in spite of claims of interdisciplinarity, remains the untheorized stable point of reference for area specialists—the notion of a fixed geographical "area" itself.

10. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Reading the World: Literary Studies in the Eighties," in *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 95.

11. Said, "Opponents," p. 153; emphasis in the original.

12. Hsia, "Chinese Novels and American Critics: Reflections on Structure, Tradition, and Satire," in Peter H. Lee, ed., *Critical Issues in East Asian Literature* (Seoul: International Cultural Society of Korea, 1983), p. 179.

13. Spivak, "The Political Economy of Women as Seen by a Literary

Critic," in Elizabeth Weed, ed., *Coming to Terms: Feminism, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 228.

14. Spivak, "Reading the World," p. 100.

15. Barbara Harlow, *Resistance Literature* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 14.

16. Nathan Glazer, "The Emergence of an American Ethnic Pattern," in Ronald Takaki, ed., *From Different Shores: Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 23.

17. Vine Deloria, Jr., "Identity and Culture," in Ronald Takaki, ed., *From Different Shores*, p. 101.

18. Stuart Hall, "Minimal Selves," in ICA Document 6: *Identity* (1987): 44.

19. Spivak, "Reading the World," p. 97.

20. See, for instance, Trinh T. Minh-ha, "Difference: 'A Special Third World Women Issue,' " *Discourse* 8 (Fall–Winter 1986–87): 11–37.

21. See Harlow, *Resistance Literature*.

22. I am indebted for an insightful discussion of "translation" to Kwai-cheung Lo, "Crossing Boundaries: A Study of Modern Hong Kong Fiction from the Fifties to the Eighties" (M. Phil. Dissertation, University of Hong Kong, 1990).

23. Hall, "Minimal Selves," p. 44.

24. Said, "Opponents," p. 157.

25. See Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan, foreword by Réda Bensmaïa (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

26. Hall, "Minimal Selves," p. 46.

7. Listening Otherwise, Music Miniaturized

1. "Comrade Lover" ("Airen tongzhi"), theme song of a film of the same name, music and lyrics by Luo Dayou, published by Praiseplan Ltd., Hong Kong, 1989. The translation is mine.

2. *Inscriptions* 5 (1989). "Traveling Theory" is the title of a chapter in Edward Said's *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 226–47. Said means by "traveling theory" the borrowing of ideas between persons, situations, and time periods.

3. Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973), p. 200.

4. Raymond Williams uses the term "practical consciousness" to refer to areas of experience which fall outside the attention and hence, by implication, the absolute control of the dominant culture. See *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 125.

5. Adorno's position on mass culture is one that requires a more lengthy discussion than I can provide here. A recent article on this topic I find very interesting is Thomas Y. Levin's "For the Record: Adorno on Music in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 23–47. (See also the articles by Adorno in the same issue.) Levin shows that

in his writings on the gramophone and the phonograph record, Adorno was formulating a position on mechanical reproduction that was much closer to Walter Benjamin's than most critics are hitherto led to believe. Levin argues that Adorno was advocating "gramophonic montage" and that his ideological critique of the culture industry and its commodification of popular culture is in fact inseparable from his fascination with and call for a dialectical interpretation of mechanical reproducibility (an interpretation Adorno first associated with the techniques of mass produced music but subsequently also with the techniques of film). However, the careful details of Levin's essay give us an Adorno who was, as always, cultured and refined in the highbrow sense: He was captivated by the new technological forms such as the phonograph record because they were, for him, a materialization of phenomenal events that amounted to a determined but encrypted *trace* or *writing*. Despite its reified and commodified aspects, in other words, the mass musical technology ironically presented Adorno with a supreme example of a *mediated* inscription/performance that he consistently privileged in his notion of progressive art. To this extent at least (i.e., that mass culture is interesting only because its mediatedness requires *contemplation* in such a way as to lead to a discerning and rigorous *cognition* on the part of the critic/consumer), I would contend that the popularized reading of Adorno as "elitist" remains—even if unwittingly—on the mark.

6. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism: Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review*, no. 146 (July/August 1984): 55.

7. Katrina Irving, "Rock Music and the State: Dissonance or Counterpoint?" *Cultural Critique*, no. 10 (Fall 1988): 158.

8. Roland Barthes, "Of What Use Is an Intellectual?" *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962–1980*, trans. Linda Coverdale (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), p. 268.

9. Mao Dun, "From Guling to Tokyo," trans. Yu-shih Chen, *Bulletin for Concerned Asian Scholars* (Jan.–Mar., 1976): 40.

10. Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 71.

11. Friedrich Kittler, "The Mechanized Philosopher," *Looking after Nietzsche*, ed. Laurence A. Rickels (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 201.

12. Stephen Schiff, "Havel's Choice," *Vanity Fair* (August 1991): 158.

13. Cui Jian did not make any public appearances during the period immediately after the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989. In January 1990, however, he gave a series of concerts in China to raise funds for the Asian Games. The concerts, during which he sang many of his controversial songs, drew extremely large crowds. On the eve of the second anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre in June 1991, the Chinese authorities again canceled a rock concert in Beijing where Cui Jian was planning to appear. Around the same period he appeared in Hong Kong as part of the concerted effort by musicians and performers to raise funds for China's flood relief.