



Mixed blessings: globalization and culture as hybrid discourses

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Tyler Cowen

Creative Destruction: How Globalization Is Changing the World's Cultures

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002 (hbk); 2004 (pbk). 179 pp. ISBN 0-691-11783-7 (pbk)

Koichi Iwabuchi

Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism

Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002. 275 pp. ISBN 0-8223-2891-7 (pbk)

Liu Kang

Globalization and Cultural Trends in China

Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004. 208 pp. ISBN 0-8248-2759-7 (pbk)

Jan Nederveen Pieterse

Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange

Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004. 149 pp. ISBN 0-7425-2802-2 (pbk)

George Yúdice

The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era

Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003. 466 pp. ISBN 0-8223-3168-3 (pbk)

Back in the 1990s, much of the globalization literature in media and cultural studies spoke in portentous and universal terms, with gravitas but little sense of *gravity*. Globalization seemed weightless, giving Marx and Engels' famous diagnosis that 'all that is solid melts into air' a new prophetic spin as capitalism and (Western) modernity re-ordered a globe now variously conceived as an array of flows, enhanced mobilities and reconstituted spaces. Many of the academic and popular keynotes seemed to ignore inertia and the adhesive qualities of structures and forms. They forgot the brakes on processes involved in economic, political and

cultural change. That rhetoric's dizzy hyperbole now looks like a kind of heritage literature of globalization. Today globalization seems far from the 'frictionless capitalism' predicted by Bill Gates. For example, the books described in this review essay (presumably manufactured and distributed under the conditions of post-Fordism) took several weeks, and in some cases months, to reach the reviewer. Culture travels, but at unpredictable velocities to locations where it meets with some resistance, even when incorporated into the everyday practices of different subjects in particular places.

Thankfully many of the totalizing narratives of a decade ago have been replaced by more situated ways of understanding globalization. 'Grounded' is a word we encounter more often in the recent literature. On the one hand, the empirical realities of globalization force us to question the national(ist) and territorial paradigms that continue to dominate the humanities and social sciences. In hoping to 'de-Westernize' media and cultural studies, we cannot simply line up various states alongside each other for comparison within an internationalist framework that does not adequately theorize the translocal relationships that occur across national borders. On the other hand, nation-states still exert a great deal of power at many levels, and they continue to elicit identification and mobilize affect in all kinds of ways. Transnational (not postnational) epistemologies must not lose sight of the uneven sedimentations and movements of 'the cultural' in specific locations.

Writing soon after the death of Jacques Derrida, one is also reminded that the discourse on globalization (particularly in relation to culture) has produced a cluster of binaries agonizingly twisted around each other: homogenization versus heterogenization, global versus local, nations versus diasporas, settlement versus migration, hybridities and cosmopolitanisms versus fundamentalisms and absolutisms. These antagonisms continue to frame and animate globalization debates.

Where social scientists and humanities scholars seem to agree is that globalization is being shaped by technological change, though they may disagree as to the extent that these technologies themselves determine the formation and development of the current stage of capitalism and its international division of labour. The neoliberal policies of governments, with a nudge from international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization and the World Bank, have deregulated the movement of capital, increasingly accumulated and mobilized as finance capital. The institutions and power of labour movements have been weakened. The nation-state has not disappeared into a postnational plethora of political formations. Instead sovereignty

is networked across different types of governance with their respective institutions interacting at local, national, regional and supranational levels. Nation-states are spending relatively less on public services including cultural activities, either abandoning them to the private sector or increasingly working alongside these market interests to modify cultural production and consumption. In this sense, globalization involves what Jan Nederveen Pieterse terms 'structural hybridisation'. This *mélange* of organizations (as well as interstitial groups and actors) points to the mix of processes and structures involved in globalization, whether we choose to consider it primarily an empirical phenomenon or set of discourses.

Like globalization, culture is a hybridized discourse. It remains civilizing for the humanities, but also a code word for civilizations as apparently immutable ethnic and religious particularities. Culture is invoked as the causal fault-line of conflict as if cultural difference is in itself the root of tension and violence. Reified and static notions of culture that would embarrass the colonial anthropologist are still alive and well. In another sense, culture is used to rationalize economic development and tourism, revitalize cities and make political claims. Cultural citizenship has emerged as a framework, if unevenly accepted, for the consolidation of individual and collective cultural rights. More grandly, culture is seen as the underlying logic of the present stage of capitalism, providing the images and sounds, bits and bytes that fuel economies. As George Yúdice points out, culture is an *expedient* concept, invoked strategically by different agents. Just these few resonances of 'culture' suggest that even Raymond Williams's concepts of the residual and emergent have an evolutionary faith that does not begin to capture the multiple temporalities and spaces of culture under the sign of the global.

Of the five books reviewed here, Jan Nederveen Pieterse most directly and explicitly addresses the issue of globalization and culture, without any one context the location for his argument. He approaches the problem with polemical economy. *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange* takes hybridity as its leitmotiv, not merely to celebrate the H-word as a post-colonial panacea, but to argue for theories and methodologies that at least assume hybridization as unremarkable and ordinary, yet crucial to our understandings of the world. As a Professor of Sociology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, he aims for 'a critical, multidimensional, and long-term approach to globalization that is closer to historical sociology, anthropology, history, and global political economy than to mainstream sociology or other disciplines'

(p. 21). So globalization is inevitably a hybridized discourse constituted by these disciplines as well as actors in political, economic and cultural institutions. This hybridity marks transdisciplinary and globalized academic formations like cultural studies.

However, Nederveen Pieterse argues that most globalization studies take a narrow time frame, whatever their disciplinary orientation. Media and cultural studies respond to the corporate expansion of media industries and technologies in the 20th century. Research is primarily concerned with the production, distribution and consumption of cultural commodities and organized around the theme of cultural homogenization. Political science and journalism are preoccupied by ethnic politics, nationalism, religious fundamentalisms and identity politics, particularly after the break up of the Soviet Union, the 'defeat' of communism in the Eastern Bloc countries and the growth of Islamist movements around the world. Sociology frames debates about globalization within modernity, risking a Eurocentrism that relegates other societies to satellites of a Western developmental narrative into which these nations will eventually be integrated. This approach belies the hybridization and melding of subjects, practices and forms in a deep history of human interaction. It fails to see that the world is not 'the West and the rest', but a globe constituted by many relationships, including those between non-Western cultures. Globalization therefore needs to be seen against the *longue durée*, not the short term, defined neither by modernity nor by capitalism nor, for that matter, that variation of capitalism we call neo-liberalism. To argue for comparative or alternative modernities in capitalist, colonial and post-colonial temporalities is insufficient, unless these versions are not merely additive, but complicate the dominant territorial models hegemonic in the study of society and culture.

Nederveen Pieterse argues that hybridity is quotidian but needs to be foregrounded and theorized due to the resilience of boundary fetishism. Many attempts to theorize hybridity through affiliated and overlapping terms such as syncretism, mimicry, creolization, mestizaje, the rhizome and the post-human illustrate a continuum of differentiated hybridities. These theorizations take root from a genealogy that includes grafting in agriculture and horticulture, genetics, hybrid animals such as centaurs and cyborgs, work on creole languages, polyphony and heteroglossia, organizational hybridity in management, interdisciplinarity in academic fields, and the everyday vernacular hybridities in identities, consumer practices and lifestyles.

Globalization and Culture launches a succinct attack on 'the anti-

hybridity backlash' with a withering critique of its paradigmatic exemplar, anthropologist Jonathan Freedman, who has ingloriously stated that the triumph of the hybrid is essentially the triumph of neo-liberal multiculturalism and global capitalism. Such 'Redneck Marxism', according to Nederveen Pieterse, reads hybridity as the normative discourse of cosmopolitan intellectuals. This claim by the anti-hybridity brigade submits that the varied theoretical and conceptual interventions of scholars such as Paul Gilroy, Edward Said, Stuart Hall, Arjun Appadurai, Ella Shohat, Hamid Naficy and Homi Bhabha are largely self-serving. In this respect, the anti-hybridity backlash does appear to resort to bourgeois baiting. According to Nederveen Pieterse, such criticisms are akin to racist invocations of 'the wandering Jew'. The work of exilic and diasporic intellectuals also responds to the vernacular cosmopolitanisms of ethnic communities, and indeed the (hybridized) culture of the working class so reified by a certain type of leftwing critic.

Hybridity and hybridization remain worthwhile concepts only insofar as we continue to be tied epistemologically to borders and boundaries. The meaning of hybridity, like culture, is unstable and open-ended. Mixing, integration and cross-border encounters of various kinds are historically specific and may thus have their own particular patterns. Neither inherently progressive nor regressive, hybridity can be mobilized for a broad range of political, economic and cultural agendas. Like culture, it is an expedient concept but has conceptual value.

From an economist's perspective, Tyler Cowen's *Creative Destruction* maps the hybrid cultural output of cross-cultural exchange generated by market capitalism's ability to foster a diversity of cultural products. Cowen presents his brief argument as a response to critics (including in his roll call Pierre Bourdieu, Antonio Gramsci, Jürgen Habermas and Néstor García Canclini) that deride market culture for 'promoting hegemony, alienation and dumbing down of taste'. Cowen is Professor of Economics at George Mason University where he is General Director of the Mercatus Center and the James M. Buchanan Center for Political Economy. He adopts Joseph Schumpeter's developmental and evolutionary model of production under capitalism as 'creative destruction'. Cowen's questions centre on the ability of trade in cultural products to support or destroy cultural creativity and artistic diversity in the world. He advocates a 'gains-from-trade' argument with some reservations. 'A wide menu of choice' is an oft-repeated phrase in this book. Cowen states that the core of his knowledge comes from his own diverse experience as a cultural consumer rather than specialized academic knowledge.

Cowen extends to the cultural domain the economist Ludwig

Lachmann's notion of 'capital complementarity', which refers to capital goods that increase each other's value. In a society's creative epoch, its particular ethos, technologies and marketplace conditions align to create a network of productive artists and cultural practitioners. Among the brief case studies outlined by Cowen as the products of beneficial cross-border trade are French food, reggae and Persian carpets. For example, the popular music of Zaire – arguably the most influential popular music in Africa during the last half-century – was generated by migrant workers from other parts of Africa moving to mining camps in the 1920s. Technologies like records, radio and cruise ships brought music from the Caribbean and USA, and led to the flowering of local music in the work of musicians like Wendo, Bosco, Franco and OK Jazz, and many others. These influences were consolidated in the growing cosmopolitanism of cities like Leopoldville (later Kinshasa) and Brazzaville. While Cowen acknowledges that culture is produced through translocal connections or articulations, the negotiations and power relations involved in these transactions and encounters are largely obscured in *Creative Destruction*. Cultural creativity is generated primarily from the combination of (Western) technologies and poor creators in the developing world. Cowen deems the relatively wealthy Western consumer as the crucial factor in the continuing fruition of creativity.

Cowen concedes that diversity of cultural products may increase within particular local and national cultures at the cost of difference between national cultures. Cross-cultural contact can destroy a certain *ethos*. Ethos refers quite broadly to that special feel or flavour of a culture, a worldview, shared ideas, tradition, a cultural matrix of network of relations. Ethos can describe anything from the broad ethos of liberal democracy and its individualism to the narrow ethos of science-fiction fans, taste cultures, subcultures and the virtual communities of the internet. Globalization encourages the proliferation of new diversity but also the destruction of some ethoses. Cowen suggests that cultural decline is possible, and that in order for some cultural forms and practices to survive they may need to develop in relative isolation if they are not to be degraded and/or disappear. However, for the most part, Cowen's extended essay supports the exchange of cultural goods facilitated by a globalizing free-market ethos.

Creative Destruction defends Hollywood's domination of the global film market, characterizing anxieties about Hollywood hegemony as primarily a European neurosis. Cowen frames this as essentially a US–French argument about film industries. European cinema's influence has waned since its high point between 1950 and 1970. Cowen contends

that state subsidies support politically or ideologically motivated nation-building culture rather than popular stories and forms. Europe also has smaller markets and an aging elite of *auteurs* whose filmed stories fail to connect with mostly youthful filmgoers who prefer the universal themes of US films. European filmmakers, according to Cowen, might consider their marginalization a boon. Instead of depending on government subsidy, they should adopt the strategy of micro-budget filmmakers in the US whose work is distributed by the major film companies of the Hollywood system.

The crux of Cowen's argument is that 'We should consider the cautious embrace of a cosmopolitan multiculturalism as a guiding aesthetic principle and as a practical guide to policy' (p. 144). A left-leaning critic could well have penned these words. *Creative Destruction* clearly indicates the breadth of Cowen's cultural literacy, but elides *culture as labour* in its devotion to culture as the sensory experience of the Western consumer. Cultural traffic in Cowen's account appears to consist of products as floating phenomena in a deep ocean. The frictions involved in the processes in some of the important and influential cultural productions described by Cowen are missing here. Cowen gives us little insight into the contradictory field of forces in this hybridization, or that the heterogeneity of global culture may be orchestrated by institutions and actors through unequal power relations. The operations of power underlying hybridization must be highlighted, rather than ditching the hybridity concept for the familiar but inadequate verities of territorial thinking.

In *Recentering Globalization*, Koichi Iwabuchi examines a politically questionable form of hybridity – the hegemonic *hybridism* that defines common-sense thinking about Japanese cultural identity. According to this intellectual and popular discourse, Japan is unique in Asia in its incorporation of Western influences without the transformation of national identity. This apparently unique Japanese ability to mediate between East and West has been mobilized alongside the rise of Japanese cultural power in an intra-Asian market during the 1990s. *Recentering Globalization* examines the asymmetrical cultural flows that constitute recent Japanese transnationalism in East and South-East Asia. Iwabuchi is currently Assistant Professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the International Christian University in Tokyo. He was a reporter and producer for Nippon Television Network Corporation (NTV). This book is based on a PhD dissertation completed at the University of Western Sydney under the supervision of Ien Ang. The research on the transnational strategies of the Japanese television and popular music

industries and the reception/consumption of their products was conducted in Tokyo, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei and Hong Kong from 1994 to 1997.

This book refutes the globalization-as-Americanization thesis, regionally examining what Iwabuchi terms the 'Japanization' of Asia. Since he is concerned with the recent past and one permutation of globalization discourse offers a critique of the modernization thesis, Iwabuchi temporally maps the globe as one of 'multiple modernities'. Japan's modernity is constructed in part through complex, intertwined and contradictory relations with the 'polymorphic indigenized modernities' of other Asian locations.

Iwabuchi hyphenates 'trans/nationalism' to draw attention to the fact that the national is reconfigured rather than repudiated by global flows. The cross-cultural traffic of commodified images, sounds and practices and the resultant translocal cultures can function in alliance with nationalisms. In the case of Japan, its own hybridism is a kind of 'fluid essentialism' that domesticates anxieties about foreign influence. In the history of Japan, this capacity to assimilate elements from the outside (*doka*) rationalized imperial enterprises; Japan's racially mixed origins provided one justification for colonial rule in Korea and Taiwan. After the post-war occupation by US forces, nationalist cultural studies have refashioned this historical discourse, reorienting Japanese culture primarily as a function of its relationship with the West, rather than through an examination of the nation's internal politics of difference or its relations with other parts of Asia.

The preoccupation with the homogeneity and racial purity of a Japanese culture that could absorb Western elements successfully, despite being the victims of US power, went alongside an active forgetting of Japan's imperial past. In the 1950s this was forged into a discourse of Japanese civilization – not just culture – suggesting that Japan had reached a higher stage of historical evolution and could provide a template for development for a wider Asia. This civilizational rhetoric is articulated alongside Neoconfucianism and the 'Asian values' thesis in alliance with neoliberal economic theories. In effect, just as Japan could look to America for modernization, so other Asian nations could look to Japan as a model for the modern way in a chain of transnationalization.

Iwabuchi argues that Japanese civilization theorists in the 1990s have inherited this perspective, but that it also seduces and taints Western examinations of the Japanese model of globalization in the work of Jean Baudrillard, Roland Robertson and David Morley. These critics have focused on the Japanese concept of glocalism (derived from

the adaptive agricultural techniques of *dochaku* – ‘living in one’s own land’), modified in that awkward abbreviation ‘glocalization’, which became a crucial strategy for transnational corporations seeking wider markets in the 1990s. But Iwabuchi argues that exclusively aligning this concept to ‘Japanization’ risks essentializing it as a strategy and eliding the specificities and difficulties faced in the transnational export of Japanese culture across Asia.

One of the problems facing Japanese media industries has been their desire to sell their cultural goods in Asian countries that have longstanding resentments toward Japan. One debate in Japan has centred on the status of *mukoseki* (‘something or someone lacking any nationality’), the culturally neutral or what Iwabuchi terms ‘culturally odorless’ commodities. That fetish object of cultural studies’ desire – the Sony Walkman – and the characters of Japanese animation do not have ostensibly recognizable Japanese features. In this regard, Japanization, in comparison to Americanization, is less obviously visible. Iwabuchi contends that this suppression of Japanese visibility is a result of the colonial legacy and has worked quite successfully for Japanese media industries in Asian media markets; it is marked by the success of the films *Akira* (1988) and *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), and the expansion of Japanese cable and satellite television channels across Asia in the 1990s.

The localization strategies of the Japanese music industry in Asian markets also bear that legacy of *mukoseki*. Record companies have tried to find local pop stars modeled on the Japanese idol system (*aidoru*) in which young male and female vocalists, often with questionable singing ability, are transformed into pop idols through televised contests that feature considerable interaction between potential stars and the audience in the studio and at home. For example, in 1992 Fuji TV launched one such talent quest *Asia Bagus! (Asia is Terrific!)* hosted by three presenters – a Japanese woman and two Singaporean men, who speak English and Japanese, Malay and Mandarin Chinese on the show. This and other Japanese-sponsored star search programs have proliferated on prime time in Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan and South Korea. In fact, the pop-idol phenomenon has since been more widely disseminated as another global television format. Japanese companies such as Honda, Suzuki, Toyota, Toshiba, Panasonic and Hitachi use local pop idols to sell their products through television and print advertising.

But Iwabuchi points to the limits of this glocalization and its attendant problems when faced with sticky local differences on the ground. Executives and workers with Japanese media operations in Asia are often at odds with their Tokyo head offices over the best way to

promote products to local audiences. Songs in television commercials do not produce hits in China as they do in Japan. Japanese manufactured idols have to increasingly compete for markets with singers from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Like Singapore, these locations produce their own indigenized versions of 'modernity' and associated consumption practices, threatening the idea that Japanese modernity is the one to follow.

This does not, however, mean that Japanese cultural influence is waning. In fact, Japanese media goods more consistently flow to Asian markets. A perception of temporal lag behind the fashions, trends and happenings of Japanese culture has been replaced by an increasing sense of *coevalness* – of being more contemporaneous and proximate to Japanese culture in temporal and spatial terms – generated by the synchronized scheduling of television programs, music and film releases, the availability of print media, as well as the proliferation of pirated media copies available soon after or even before the original is officially released.

Iwabuchi uses this notion of coevalness to expand on the notion of 'cultural proximity' developed by media analysts such as Joseph Straubhaar, Stuart Cunningham, Elizabeth Jacka and John Sinclair. Their basic argument is that media and cultural globalization occur unevenly through geo-linguistic communities, regional and diasporic networks that share similar cultural features. Iwabuchi suggests that such a model might dangerously replicate the ahistorical, civilizational model propagated by Huntington and others. He uses a case study of Taiwanese responses to *Tokyo Love Story*, a television drama serial about young people first broadcast outside Japan in 1992, to show the dynamic negotiation of cultural proximity. The program occupied viewers mainly for the way it mediated different modes of femininity in an urban context. Young viewers in Taiwan identified the program as more familiar and connected to their lives in an Asian city than both the family-oriented local dramas and US shows such as *Beverly Hills 90210* which dramatize the similar terrain of young adult life and relationships. But differences as well as similarities in Tokyo and Taipei formed part of the pleasure of the viewing experience. Iwabuchi's respondents commented on the greater subtlety of romantic expression as visualized in Japanese dramas in comparison to Taiwanese serials.

Iwabuchi also examines the 'counter-flows' of culture and reveals how the experience of Japanese media in Asia is not replicated in the presence of Asian media commodities in Japan. A kind of Japanese orientalism articulates a nostalgic fantasy of 'Asia'. For Japanese consumers, this

projection is underpinned by a narcissistic belief that other Asian nations are modernizing in the wake of Japan. In fact, some of the fascination with Asian pop stars such as Singapore's Dick Lee and Hong Kong's Andy Lau relies on the idea that these countries and their cultures manifest the modernizing energy Japan once had, but has now lost. Female fans of some of these music stars speak in magazine letters and articles about the emasculation of Japanese men in comparison with the sexy vigour of Hong Kong and Taiwanese singers. Another feature of this youthful Japanese Asianism is a reaction against the perceived regimentation of Japanese society. Iwabuchi's grounded study of globalization in the East and South-East Asian region concludes that these alternative hybridities and modernities prove attractive due to a nostalgia for the recent past in Japan and a crisis in Japanese national identity – a crisis, however, that still has not resulted in reflection and serious meditation on the unequal power relations between Japan and its Asian neighbours in the imperial past and global present.

Like Iwabuchi's project of an alternative modernity, Liu Kang's *Globalization and Cultural Trends in China* examines China's modernity in the recent globalizing past, but with the ghost of Mao Zedong's revolutionary culturalism rather than imperialism still haunting the present. For Liu the main question is: What happens when revolutionary hegemony is replaced by capitalist hegemony? Liu is Professor of Comparative Literature, Cultural Studies and Chinese at Duke University. This book focuses on the period of Deng Xiaoping's *gaige kaifang* (reform and opening up) since 1979. Liu explores the tension between Deng Theory's economic determinism as China integrates into the global capitalist economy and its polar opposite, the cultural-ideological legacy of revolutionary Maoism. This is a paradox of China's hybrid culture that cannot be sustained and, according to Liu, has led to a crisis in the state's political legitimacy.

Liu examines official state theory and 'propaganda' (a significant rarity these days as an analytical object in Western cultural studies), the writings of intellectuals, most of whom are embedded in financially and politically vulnerable humanities departments in academic institutions, and the texts of an increasingly commercial and mediated popular culture that has come to contest and undermine the traditional influence of state ideologies and intellectuals alike. Liu argues that China's modernity and globalization are fractured due to the nation's full-blown absorption into the global world-system and at the same time, the centrality of revolution to China's history in the last half century. Though it may appear residual, revolution is still multifarious –

present in the field of cultural production, in everyday life, and also invoked as a way of maintaining the one-party system.

A large part of the book is taken up with a discussion of various intellectual discourses and academic institutions as they have disengaged with Mao's revolutionary culturalism and retreated into the ivory tower or reactionary conservatisms. These shifts in Chinese cultural studies include the emergence of New Confucianism (once described by Mao as 'feudalist junk') as an 'ethical' bulwark for global capitalism. This rapprochement with traditional pre-revolutionary culture was part of the reinvention of Chinese cultural history as new 'guidelines for implementing patriotic education' were introduced in the 1990s. Chinese Marxism and Confucianism were no longer considered antithetical by the ISAs (ideological state apparatuses). After the heated democratizing debate of the Culture Fever in the late 1980s and the Tiananmen events of 1989, many Beijing intellectuals retreated within the formation known as 'National Learning'. This movement drew on pre-Communist literary and philosophical forebears in order to consecrate pure autonomous scholarship and learning, abandoning cultural politics. Chinese post-modernism, once fired up by Fredric Jameson's lectures at Peking University in 1987, became depoliticized and developed as a kind of obscure lingua franca for intellectuals keen to integrate into the global academic economy, yet detached from the enormous cultural changes in Chinese culture and society. Though critiques of China's globalization and its resulting social injustices have emerged from some academic perspectives, they have tended to offer conservative solutions like the positing of new elites or the knee-jerk reactions of the old guard left. Liu finds some hope in the work of avant-garde writers (exemplified by Yu Hua), who have abandoned hermetic language games to write through a plain and accessible realism in order to articulate the lived experience of ordinary Chinese people.

A deracinated academic culture has had to contend with Deng Theory and the heteroglossia of popular discourses in proliferating 'public' though commercialized spaces. Liu suggests that Deng's policies of economic development constitute a theory that is 'a hybrid and intermediary discourse'. The language of Deng Theory incorporates the stylistic elements of Mao's syntax in speeches and writings. The Principle of Cat ('As long as a cat can catch a mouse, it is a good cat whether it is black or white') and the Principle of Fumble ('[In launching the reform and opening up] we've fumbled our way to cross the water') suggest to Liu the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) combination of pragmatism and ideological passivity in the face of economic reform.

Much of Deng Theory is satirized or ignored by the Chinese public and has little power in the popular culture. It stands in striking contrast to the 'culture of the masses' (*qunzhong wenyi*) established by Mao which included singing contests, rallies, festivals, folk songs and dances, puppet theatre, operas and the iconography of posters and banners. Though this national-popular revolutionary culture with its internationalist socialist outlook replaced a desire for urban and rural unanimity with a pastoral romanticism further deformed in the repressive extremes of the Cultural Revolution, its traces and echoes are still a vibrant presence in Chinese popular culture. Ballroom dancing in parks testifies to that tradition of collectivism. According to Liu, much of the culture of the masses is now commodified, forming a kind of heritage communism, but the term 'nostalgia' is inadequate to grasp its attractions. For many, these forms and rituals point to the gap between contemporary realities and a communist discourse devalued by Deng, Jiang Zheming and the CCP leadership. In fact, this gap serves to delegitimize the Party rather than the historical discourse it repeats without conviction. In any case, the revolutionary legacy is not only the preserve of the CCP and the ISAs. It surfaces in television soap operas that deal with the period of 1949–80, such as the epic family drama *Jiqing Ranshao De Suiyue* (The Years of Burning Passion), which attracted huge viewing figures in September 2001 and has been rerun many times. Liu contends that such a phenomenon cannot be understood through the evolutionary prism of postmodernism or a misreading of Gramsci's notion of 'civil society' that separates culture and the state when they are 'interpenetrating and interdependent'.

As a New Left critic, Liu looks to everyday culture as a possible site of critique and reconstruction of the revolutionary legacy. The Chinese internet provides many incipient voices and conversations on emerging literary websites. New forms of literature produced by young women and men, including frank sexual e-novels written in a hybridized global Chinese that incorporates English words, reveal subjectivities that are engaged in articulating the desires generated by consumer capitalism and what Liu calls its 'pleasure oriented, egotistical values and beliefs'. Unlike Iwabuchi's more sympathetic engagement with the pleasures of Japanese pop culture in Asia, Liu feels more comfortable with the musical play *Che Guevara*, a popular hit in 2000. Even though the play's success led to merchandising of t-shirts and a local version of the cult of masculinity around the revolutionary hero, for Liu this rock-and-roll performance revitalized the revolutionary legacy, rather than dismissing that past as irrelevant to China's present and future.

Liu's chapters on elements of popular culture return us to the question of 'civil society' in relation to globalization and culture. The re-tooled humanities and social sciences taking 'the cultural turn' over the last quarter century have looked to civil society as a site of political struggle. This is partly motivated by scepticism about the wholesale political and cultural takeover of the state that informed the ideologies of Marxist movements. Liu notes pessimistically that in much of the cultural studies bibliography Gramsci's emphasis on civil society has been divorced from his advocacy of the political party's role in political and social change, and the state's imbrication in that civil society. George Yúdice points out that neoliberal policies have resulted in the institutions and practices of civil society becoming increasingly defined by market interests. The ideologues of neoliberalism emphasize the importance of reorganizing civil society in the image of the market. However, Yúdice argues that:

Though most leftist views of globalization are pessimistic, the turn to civil society in the context of neoliberal policies and the uses of the new technologies on which globalization relies have opened up new forms of progressive struggle in which the cultural is a crucial arena. (p. 88)

In an essay entitled 'The Globalization of Culture and the New Civil Society' in *The Expediency of Culture*, Yúdice extends the conceptualization of hybridity in Latin American media and cultural studies, in particular the work of Jesús Martín-Barbero and Néstor García Canclini. These and other scholars produced a multi-accented critique of corporate globalization, the cultural imperialism thesis, and the nationalist orientation of states and cultural studies. Local and regional cultural studies reoriented the role of intellectuals and policy institutions in relation to popular (including mass mediated) culture.

On the ground, transnational and grassroots agents such as foreign NGOs and local actors have worked together to address particular issues in contradictory conditions. The state does manage and control third-sector organizations, but many, despite government support and managerial interference, function to undermine the state's terms for their operation. On the battleground of 'culture', states such as Mexico have constructed notions of cultural identity, including indigenous identity, that have legitimized state power rather than opening up democratic participation for subaltern national subjects. In contrast, the Zapatista movement in and beyond Chiapas has used transnational media such as the internet and video to formulate a program for the remaking of national and international civil society that bypasses

invocations to cultural 'identity'. The Zapatistas, black Brazilian *funkeiros* (funk fans) in Rio de Janeiro, and the black activists Grupo Cultural AfroReggae discussed in various chapters of *The Expediency of Culture* suggest the translocal ways that grassroots movements mobilize elements of popular culture on broader social and economic fronts to 'take back their neighbourhoods and cities' without necessary recourse to the notions of difference and diversity accommodated and supported by the state.

However, these case studies in Mexico and Brazil, in Latin and Latino America are not unremittingly optimistic. Yúdice reveals the complicated negotiations that take place between individuals, various cultural intermediaries and institutions. He is also cognizant of how free trade agreements NAFTA and MERCOSUR contribute to the international division of labour that results in the exploitative *maquiladora* (border assembly plants) model of production extended to cultural sectors. This book finds artists and indigenous workers on the Mexico-US borderlands negotiating with municipal councils, art institutions and museums. The channels for Latino and Latin American cultural production may ostensibly seem enhanced. But the globalization of Latin American media space through transnational media organizations in, for example, Miami and the city's projected economic development on the basis of its culture of fusion and hybridization perpetuate the exploitation of black migrants and residents. Yúdice's work here is significant for its critique of abstract hybridity-talk, celebratory border theory and multicultural performance art that fails to interrogate its own operations of power.

US cultural institutions and cultural studies tend to narcissistically construct culture anywhere on their own terms – a 'we are the world' mentality that, in the case studies discussed in *The Expediency of Culture*, domesticates Latin American cultural politics, blind to the specificities of peoples and places beyond the US border. Yúdice suggests that the hegemonic textual determinism of American cultural studies sees politics as something intrinsic to and circumscribed by particular creative enunciations in cultural texts without thoroughly embedding that textual practice in the field of forces active in any historical conjuncture.

But culture is ultimately a widely dispersed resource. Yúdice argues that this is part of a paradigmatic shift in which culture as resource cancels out distinctions between high and low culture, anthropological and communication models of culture, and so on. The fact that debates about intellectual property regimes increasingly dominate the circulation

of more and more forms of culture signals this transformation of the notion of 'culture' itself. In effect, culture as resource is a hybridized discourse that subsumes other notions of culture which may be 'performed' when expedient. These permutations of that thing we call 'culture' may remain incommensurable. Fields of force involve sets of 'performative injunctions' for subjects and institutions. Building on Judith Butler's notion of performativity, Michel Foucault's work on the care of the self, and Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, Yúdice argues that the practice of ethics and politics 'entails a reflexive practice of self-management'. *The Expediency of Culture* is nuanced in its examination of the power brokers, those enabled but also broken or damaged at the intersections and interstices of empire and transnational capitalism.

The hybrid and hybridization appear in various forms through the geographically dispersed and varied flows and sites in the books reviewed here. These works point to both the politically reactionary and emancipatory uses of hybridity under the signs of culture and globalization. The activation of this concept by scholars with differently located concerns and disciplinary histories is enough of a reason to continue to use and interrogate hybridity more rigorously to analyse what Michael Burawoy terms the 'forces, connections and imaginations' that constitute globalization. This is not to claim hybridity as a meta-concept and underlying logic of globalization. For hybridity, as for one of its sibling terms, Yúdice reminds us that 'politics trumps the content of culture' (p. 23).

Biographical note

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