

## The Poetry Turn

### Writing Chinese Cultural Studies between Empires

**ABSTRACT** This article attempts to conceptualize and encourage an already extant conceptual turn right now taking place in China studies: a turn toward poetry composition, in which transcultural critical scholars also compose their own original poetry. The reason for the phenomenon, the article argues, is the interimperial position of China scholars in English, forced to study texts from one imperial culture in the contexts of another. The article reads poems by Ni Zhange, Wang Pu, and Yang Xiaobin, among others, by using Laura Doyle's theorization of interimperiality as an often-gendered form of labor through which subjects negotiate the "everyday ethical challenge" of survival under multiple imperial structures. The construction and positioning of transimperial subjects in the creative work of China scholars resists forms of imperial power that serve to marginalize, erase, and invalidate the cross-cultural, experiential knowledge at the heart of China studies. By making scholarly betweenness legible and visible, the work of scholar-poets takes steps toward an interimperial style in both poetry and criticism, a meeting place in language that can accept in migration from many directions and build solidarity among diverse thinkers united by the needs of survival under empire.

**KEYWORDS** interimperialism, poetry, poet-scholar, creole, Ni Zhange

The medial and intellectual turn toward poetry composition that has been taking place underneath and inside the transnational study of Chinese culture is not immediately visible to those who only read scholarship. In most cases, scholarly identity as poet is paratextual, haptic, a function of poetic texts passed hand to hand; the bottom of a CV, perhaps, that nobody finishes reading. The recent history of poetry writing in China studies is a history of *despites* and *surprisingly enough*s; in addition to their contributions as a scholar, the rumors go, that person is also quite a fine poet. And yet, the tools of contemporary poetry—its symmetries, its experiments, the way it shapes intersubjectivities by crafting lyric speakers—are everywhere in contemporary Chinese cultural studies. This article aims to make visible the ways in which poetry writing drives some contemporary scholarship, and in so doing to argue that this turn-in-progress has a future as a deep structure of insight in contemporary Chinese studies.

Here is a nonexhaustive list of transnational scholars of Chinese culture who have published poems or collections of poetry: Yang Xiaobin 楊小濱, Wang Pu

王璞, Wang Ao 王敖, Jonathan Stalling, Song Zijiang 宋子江 (sometimes credited as Chris Song), Carla Nappi, Ni Zhange 倪湛舸, Mi Jiayan 米佳燕 (writing as Mi Jialu 米家路), Andrea Lingenfelter, Huang Yunte 黃運特, Huang Yibing 黃亦兵 (writing as Mai Mang 麥芒), Tammy Lai-Ming Ho 何麗明, Eleanor Goodman, Julian Gewirtz, and myself.<sup>1</sup> That list contains three winners of the Anne Kao Poetry Prize 劉麗安詩歌獎: Wang Pu, Wang Ao, and Ni Zhange; a research fellow at the Academia Sinica, Yang Xiaobin; and a founding editor of *Chinese Literature Today*, Jonathan Stalling. The fields represented range from political culture (e.g., Gewirtz's work on the influence of transnational futurists in the early Deng period) to history to literature to religious studies (e.g., Ni Zhange, as discussed below).

But this article's argument is not primarily sociological or historical. The scholar-poets listed here are not the majority of contemporary scholars, and the union of poetry, erudition, education, and scholarship is nothing new in the history of Chinese letters. Instead, I see the simultaneous pursuit of scholarship and poetry as a conceptual reaction to present conflicts and lifeways inherent to the study of Chinese culture in English. In doing so, I echo both Huang Yunte's work on the transpacific and Trinh T. Minh-ha's work on writing postcoloniality.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, though, to reflect the particular prominence of state and national power in China studies, I choose the terminology of Laura Doyle's recent book *Inter-imperiality*. Doyle defines interimperiality as an elemental type of the "microphysics of contingent survival and positioning that we enact with and against others at both intimate and macropolitical levels."<sup>3</sup> Writing from an intersectional feminist perspective, she emphasizes negotiations with empires as labor that is often gendered, and as such she identifies the "everyday difficulty" and the "everyday ethical challenge" (14) of being subjected to multiple empires. I find poetry's construction of speaking subjects to be deeply influential in a basic, everyday struggle constituting transnational China studies, which is to build intellectual selves between empires, and in so doing to resist and transform interpellation or self-identification as imperial subjects. Understanding the value of poetry writing in China studies today, I believe, reveals the power and the promise of our daily negotiations with the style of scholarly writing. Poetry can draw shapes for the future bodies of our textual subjectivities.

### Not Interdisciplinary but Interimperial

I have a consistent emotional and intellectual need to read about climate change and climate futures, but I rarely encounter scholarship in my field of Chinese cultural studies that helps me discover whatever it is I am looking for. One exception is the following poem from Ni Zhange's book *Xue shi shei shuo de huang* 雪是誰說的謊 (Whose Lie Is the Snow):

### BEYOND CORRELATIONALISM

Nothing has ever happened, nothing will ever happen again, this is the difference between useless struggle and prayer; doesn't the blank have its rhythm, or flavor, its luster, perhaps the blank shouldn't be named at all, what we are struggling uselessly or praying for is just a word unrelated to an object, trapped inside it, also seeming to be in its place, the ocean is burnt salt, the people who have exhausted themselves befouling everything are backed up against the dike, using wine bottles to catch the rain, too much error, all we can do is to act more like giants, who hoist on their backs the continents they can't set foot in.

### BEYOND CORRELATIONALISM

甚麼都不曾發生，甚麼都不再發生，這就是妄想和祈願的分別，空白也有它的節奏嗎，或者氣味，或者光澤，也許空白本就不該有名字，我們所妄想或祈願的只是與事物並無關聯的詞語，被困在裡面，又像是在那裡，海是燃燒的鹽，耗盡力氣搞砸一切的人背靠防風堤用酒瓶裝雨，錯得太多，我們不得不承擔更多像巨人背負起自己不能涉足的大陸。<sup>4</sup>

I encounter the poem first through its mood, the vertiginous and enticing “flavor” of the rearranging of thinking that commits a projective “we” to our likely climate futures. Poetry’s power of fiat establishes the climate disaster not as a possible future but as the future itself, as the thing we walk toward with desire (who wants to be locked out of the future, however grim it might be?) and without any sense of ownership. Then I encounter the poem through its construction of subjectivity. This is a speaker who has imperiously cut their identity and their lineage from those who “have exhausted themselves befouling everything.” Fatigue is a substantial subtheme of *Whose Lie Is the Snow*, and it seems clear that the book as a whole struggles with its own participation in climate destruction; but the “we” of the book is female, queer, and transcultural—a position that allows this poem to imagine the befoulers as someone else, somewhere else, and the speaker therefore can become elsewhere, out of relation to the old order. This subject formation, this construction of a poetic speaker’s position, is an engine of the poem’s forward thinking, its gusto. What distinguishes the speaker most strongly from the befoulers is their philosophy, which is the third way I encounter the poem, through its citation. The term “correlationalism” (or “correlationism”) was coined by French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux as an identification of the endemic post-Kantian belief that humanity cannot think things-in-themselves that are separate from us, but can only think through the correlation between things and our perceptions of them.<sup>5</sup> To Meillassoux, this assertion of deep and unavoidable subjectivity is a trap, one that feels deeply imbricated in the humanist failure to address the realities of climate change.<sup>6</sup> This trap is the source, perhaps, of the

struggle or prayer “for . . . a word unrelated to an object” in Ni’s poem. Moving beyond the trap might be an occasion for speculative materialisms, new thinking, and all manner of experiments. Of course, I say to myself while sitting and reading the poem, we must have new epistemologies now that the heat won’t break, now that the seas are coming. And the poem’s light, final reference to mythic stories like that of Moses—who himself was operating out of a radical epistemology born of direct contact with the transcendent—reminds me that this has happened many times before and that one never builds a new philosophical foundation with full understanding or control of the shapes it will later take.

I insinuated above that I find this poem to be a useful piece of “scholarship” in the full understanding that generically, this prose poem would not be accredited as scholarship. For me, though, it does some of the things that scholarship—particularly theory—does. It makes an argument; it sends me to the library to check out Meillassoux; it alters how I want to write my own scholarship, giving language to my increasing desire—especially where climate change is involved—to stop endlessly shuttling between fluid cultural constructions and shifting social attitudes. The fact that my experience of the poem starts with a mood makes it no outlier in contemporary theory, which mixes the analytical and the affective. Derrida said the poem is a philosopheme; this feels like a little bit more, like theory in action, not the component parts of a philosophy yet unwritten but a philosophy transformed by, and presently facing, its world.<sup>7</sup> This expanded role makes a lot of sense considering that the poets and philosophers Derrida was writing about were eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germans who drew strong, bright lines between poet and scholar; but the poetry I am reading today is written by a twenty-first-century poet-scholar participating broadly in what Maghiel van Crevel calls the “Elevated,” intellectual tradition of contemporary Chinese poetry,<sup>8</sup> and making accredited, philosophically activated research at the same time.

Simultaneity is an important feature of the poetic turn, and it is one reason I reject a description of the poetic turn as an “interdisciplinary” moment. Just as one makes sociology or literary criticism in multiple genres and multiple media—from the blog to the book review to the peer-reviewed journal article—I believe that the discipline of Chinese cultural criticism is taking place both in Ni’s poetry and in her scholarship. In fact, this both-andness is epitomized by her monograph *The Pagan Writes Back*, where she introduces the concept of “pagan criticism, a reading strategy that pays due credit to the context-specific formations of *both* religion *and* literature, tracing their related transmigration and transmutation in various parts of the world.”<sup>9</sup> The pagan critic is a practitioner of magic and therefore feels whisper-close to the unmeasurability, untrustworthiness, and immanence of the poet. “The magician-critic plays a crucial role . . . because she is responsible for highlighting pagan understandings of creativity (and authorship), dissolving the rigid boundary between the text and the world,

and turning a ‘closed’ book into a polyphonic conversation.”<sup>10</sup> We are not, in this account, shuttling between, comparing, or attempting to fuse the fields of religion and literature; we are not at a juncture or communication point between scholarship and poetry; this is poetic scholarship, creatorly scholarship, a writing that has no definable boundary between itself and Ni’s scholarly poetry, between her philosophical and theoretical creativity. It is a single body of work produced by a person with two simultaneous identities.

It is the simultaneity of these specific identities, in our specific transnational academy, that makes the turn I am describing a unique one, irreducible to the long tradition of Chinese poet-scholars. Premodern and early modern poet-scholars like Wang Wei 王維, Zhu Xi 朱熹, and even Wen Yiduo 聞一多 were all educated in institutional and aesthetic cultures in which literary composition, scholarship, and political work were more or less routinely superimposed. They worked simultaneously in separate forms, and their verse influenced their political and scholarly prose, but this hybridity was a tradition of their natal empire, not a tool to simultaneously experience multiple systems of authority. Because of its affiliation with the imperial epistemological and political system, their engagement in poetry and scholarship could not map onto their mixed, transimperial identities, even in the case of Wen Yiduo, who traveled and published in the United States. They did, however, serve as models for important early interimperial poet-scholars, like Wang Jingxian 王靖獻 and Leung Ping-kwan 梁秉鈞 (pen names Yang Mu 楊牧 and Ye Si 也斯, respectively).<sup>11</sup> As residents of regions with conflicting and multiple imperial regimes, these writers simultaneously created scholarship and wrote poetry, serving as models whose influence continues today.<sup>12</sup> In examining their scholarly work, however, the fledgling nature of their interimperial performance seems clear: Early interimperial poet-scholars felt a stronger need to imitate extant scholarship and had much more neatly split identities.

For example, Wang Jingxian’s 1974 monograph *The Bell and the Drum*, published under the name “C. H. Wang,” states the goal of manifesting the “mode of imaginative creation in an age of oral composition” of the *Classic of Poetry*,<sup>13</sup> but it looks and feels much like the philological and anthropological research into the social context of poems that was common to scholarship at the time. It is also written in a kind of prose, and possesses a comparative imaginary, that seems to understand its single Anglophone audience quite clearly. About poem #252, for example, he writes: “This is one of a small number of the Shih Ching poems in which an ‘ending’ is designed with purposeful sophistication. For the poems of Shih Ching are by and large worked out in a composite convention, like that of the medieval European ballad, which requires the perfection of imagistic coherence rather than structural acme.”<sup>14</sup> There is a clear separation and hierarchy here between the scholar and the poet, the sophisticated sociological and anthropological critic and the unsophisticated arts worker, even though the goal is to discover

the “mode of imaginative creation in the book.” This separation between poet and scholar is enhanced by Wang’s practice of publishing under separate names for his poetry and his criticism, and it is further reinforced by his academic study of ancient poetry rather than modern or contemporary work.<sup>15</sup> As the turn has matured, these boundaries and categorical separations have begun to fall away.

The singularity of creative scholarship—the visibility and potential of the turn toward poetry—is much more clearly marked in the work of Brandeis professor and celebrated poet Wang Pu, whose monograph on Guo Moruo 郭沫若 focuses on the poet’s “translingual creativity” and through that lens identifies a “creative mode of translation as historical imagination at the core of the long Chinese Revolution.”<sup>16</sup> We can see in this figure of the translator-creator an echo of the pagan critic and the poet-scholar, but more deeply we can see a very particular understanding of how a poet, artist, or politician creates through their betweenness rather than through the synthesis or contestation of disparate categories. Underneath Guo’s diverse and evolving politics and stylistics, Wang finds a question that is both creative and revolutionary: *From what time do I write?* In that question of Guo’s “lyric position” in time and space,<sup>17</sup> Wang finds the engine of this self-creation and self-recreation, whether it is as a lyre of cosmic spirit, a gramophone of revolutionary consciousness, or a trumpet of the Party.<sup>18</sup> In Wang’s account, Guo’s place of creation is always between languages, and his time is largely a superimposition, a simultaneous experience, of the socialist present and the feudal past. This conceptual between-space is immensely generative, resulting in some of the first 今譯 *jinyi* translations of the *Classic of Poetry* into contemporary Chinese language, using the tools of translingual and transnational practice to address a temporal gap.<sup>19</sup> It is Wang’s insight, colored subtly by Wang’s own identity and ideology, to see this betweenness as a representative quality of intellectual and aesthetic history, rather than an outlier or a dissonant note.

Interdisciplinarity fails to describe how scholar-poets like Wang and Ni are independently successful in multiple fields simultaneously; worse, it flattens the daily politics of their deep structures of betweenness into a question of academic method. Many, perhaps most, of us in transnational China studies began to do it by traveling conceptually, linguistically, and physically between empires. Whether one is moving from Beijing to Boston or Boston to Beijing, this low-visibility labor is a core experience of the field. To put it more concretely, Wang Pu is a graduate of Beijing University and spent his undergraduate career a little over eight miles from the residences of the Chinese political elite at Zhongnanhai. His job at Brandeis, in Waltham, Massachusetts, outside Boston, is around four miles from the headquarters of the Raytheon Corporation, one of America’s largest arms producers. These distances are metonymic representations of economic and ideological realities; physicalizing them helps us understand the special situation of China scholars outside China. When Wang asks how writers and translators

make revolution happen, as he does in his monograph on Guo Moruo, it should be nearly impossible to visualize him as a nonparticipant, as a nonwriter, as distant from real contests over power.

The limits of contemporary scholarship allow Wang to discuss concepts he has discovered or considered through his own transculturation as long as they are concomitant with his academic subject. He simply rediscovers them in the texts of others. But his poetry foregrounds cultural work that is gendered, political, and daily, work that makes his access to the archive of Chinese literary texts possible in the first place. He dedicates dozens of poems to his wife, Li Jing 李婧, including the poem “Us” 我們, in which the “you” of the poem helps the speaker finish sentences, performs domestic chores like cleaning, exorcises demons, and annotates and criticizes his poetry.<sup>20</sup> That daily support, that daily linguistic and intellectual interaction, is precisely Doyle’s vision of gendered labor, the foundation of interimperial negotiation and resistance; the poem “Us” makes it crystal clear that all this work, from dusting to debate, is conceptual and affective at the same time.

“Us” was written in 2002, before Wang Pu moved permanently to the United States, but imagining Wang and Li negotiating interimperial betweenness together reminds me that my path to my own job in central New York (the “Empire State”) has involved years spent on the payroll of the Chinese government, as teacher and translator, and then years spent applying for jobs and grants funded by the United States government. In a single classroom I train students who will go on to work for both governments, or more accurately both empires, although a few will shuttle back and forth from one to another, as I have done. I was brought into my own betweenness through many forms of gendered and invisible labor, for example through the work of Judy Z. Mu, Wu Fengtao, and Liang Xia, my first language teachers at Washington University in St. Louis. Just as the addressee of “Us” helps the speaker build sentences, so did my language teachers build my social and intellectual interaction with Chinese culture. Cultural majority and cultural hegemony, the oppressions of empire, are daily practical problems, in this case the same practical problem: *Who do I speak Chinese to?* The answers to this problem are the force lines of our field of inquiry; among many other things, they web together families, partners, teachers, friends, and colleagues in the field. Scholarship does not always contain such a question or the pain and promise of its many possible answers; it does not always build the interimperial struggle as a meeting place for scholars from different places who are moving in different directions. But the work of scholar-poets can help us think through, articulate, and survive our interimperial betweenness.

### Seeing and Building Selves-in-Resistance

Betweenness is still not the dominant self-conception of the field of China studies, even though plenty of precise, usable language exists to describe it. In the

poet-scholar Huang Yunte's 2008 monograph *Transpacific Displacements*, he describes the notional Pacific as a "deadly space between"<sup>21</sup> and identifies literary practices that do not bridge, but rather inhabit, the gap the Pacific represents: "In contrast to the master narratives, these works of counterpoetics turn away from any meta-discourse on the transpacific; they move instead toward the enactment of poetic imagination as a means to alter memory and invoke minority survival in the deadly space between competing national, imperial interests and between authoritative regimes of epistemology serving those interests."<sup>22</sup> The struggle for epistemological survival that English-language China studies faces and has faced is quite clear. This is a field in which, a hundred years after its inception, Lee Haiyan writes that "China has not generated a wealth of abstract, logic-driven, and universalistic systems of thought,"<sup>23</sup> and Lucas Klein writes that "the hesitancy to assert any Chinese thought or discourse as 'theory' represents to me a delimiting and belittling of Chinese knowledge as knowledge, quarantining the Chinese from the possibility of the universal."<sup>24</sup> Our residence in the Euro-American academy incentivizes and valorizes the circulation of universals, while simultaneously providing no grounds or audience for establishing them on Chinese terms or among Chinese literary publics. We feel ready to abandon the benefits of Euro-American generalization and abstraction while knowing quite clearly that such a practice will decrease the perceived value of Chinese literature in the eyes of our larger academic community. Meanwhile, the invisibly interimperial position of the field makes it possible for its participants to be critiqued as tools of American epistemological empire and as ideologically inert language specialists ripe for capture by institutions of Chinese soft power, like Confucius Institutes. The power and the promise of the field's "minority survival" never appear to those who surround it.

Our interimperiality has low visibility for several reasons, some strong, some weak. First, accepting that one speaks from an interimperial position constrains the field's traditional claims of imperial authority and hampers the ability to establish universal theory, accepting, after Sakai, that this universality is in fact a particular set of needs and desires experienced by empowered Euro-American institutions.<sup>25</sup> Rather than being conceptualized as a privileged group able to see what holds true everywhere regardless of region or nation, China scholars are easier to visualize, and therefore erase, as instruments or servants of cultural institutions led from elsewhere. The spouse is relegated to the dedication of the scholarly manuscript; the language teacher disappears from the self-conception of the China scholar; the translator disappears from the front cover of a Chinese book; the China scholar disappears as an active agent of intercultural thought and is read monoculturally, as if already captured by one or another power. This calls to mind, in form if not always in intensity, Doyle's description of the interimperial woman: "Their struggles issue not merely from their positions 'between men' and not merely from their positions between colonizing and colonized men, but also from their status as pawns in a whole terrain of men jockeying in and among



empires, who tactically move, divide, and capture women.”<sup>26</sup> Interimperial thinking is an admission that we are pawns of imperial movements. It identifies the scholar not with the producers of truth but as survivors of imperial masculinity. When, for example, the university and publishing system in Hong Kong is slowly hollowed out after the Chinese Communist Party’s passage of the 2020 National Security Law, or when the granting of travel visas is disrupted by geopolitics, empire happens *to* us, capturing and shaping our work in intimate and precognitive ways. In the poem of a scholar, or in scholarship that is animated by poetry, that capture can appear; it can be disturbed through depiction.

China scholars are often unable to see or speak their own interimperiality because the intellectual scope and medial traditions of the field are constructed to efface its presence. While it is true that anything is possible in scholarship—the gatekeeping system around peer review is happily full of holes—Chinese literature scholarship that talks overmuch about American empire or Eurocentric structures of thought, and especially Chinese literature scholarship that identifies the demands American empire makes on China studies scholarship, is likely to be referred out of the field as somehow mixing categories. The exception is stories of influence and transit that reinforce the separateness of the two imperial institutions; we do not often claim, for example, that we are having American-style reactions to Chinese literature or point out that English-language research in our field is often shaped by the Chinese critical tradition.<sup>27</sup> China studies scholars are instead allowed and encouraged to point out that a concept or practice moved from one imperial pole to another. In analyzing a translated text or a transferred concept, the boundaries between empires are reified. Doyle points out that concrete and well-maintained divisions between nurturer and producer, taker and giver, woman and man are structures that benefit patriarchy; in this case, the divisions between form and content, apparatus and target, the West and China all reinforce the conceptual power of empire.

But these pressures are not fate. Inside the interimperial predicament, the poet-scholar creates subjectivities that exist across and in disrespect of category. The poet-scholar builds an agency “understood not as an aspect of autonomy, nor as primarily individual or unidirectional, but rather as dialectical: always already arising interdependently.”<sup>28</sup> Wang Pu dedicates his poem “Pagoda” 寶塔, the title poem of his award-winning book, to one of his classmates at Beijing University, and only through that lens does it address a generation:<sup>29</sup>

#### PAGODA

—for Li Chun and a generation

The pagoda is also a candle. The lake near the trees  
and the beer bottles by the lakeside, warming themselves.

Why isn't the pagoda a beer bottle?  
You raise it up, do you want another mouthful?  
Will you play it like a flute? Or throw it in the lake?  
The big *we*, the little *me*, moving fast as lightning. The pagoda  
suddenly stands up from the weekend shopping list, says: *love!*  
*Hate!* What your right hand gropes for doesn't seem like a  
mouse or a Western book, but a window frame: open it up,  
let in the thin mist of translation. Mountain shapes appear in many languages,  
just like dawn on frosted glass—cheap goods! In this context  
the pagoda is a dangerous peak. The darkness you turn to hold  
is always its inverse. So the pagoda, like a soldier, does a left face.  
It faces you. It might be shaggy, fruit-flavored, fluorescent.  
But first of all it is red.

### 寶塔

——給李春及一代人  
寶塔亦是蠟燭。樹邊的湖  
和湖畔的酒瓶，從中取暖。  
寶塔為甚麼不是酒瓶呢？  
你舉起來，是要再飲一口？  
是吹瓶哨？還是將它投入湖中，  
扯開嗓子向夜生活一唱？  
大我、小我風馳電掣。寶塔  
忽然從週末的購物清單上立起來，說：愛！  
仇恨！你的右手摸索的，不像是  
滑鼠或西文書，而是窗櫺；推開吧，  
讓翻譯的細霧進來。山形在多語中浮現，  
猶如磨砂面的曙光—太偽劣！如此背景下  
寶塔是險峰。你轉而握住的黑暗，  
總是它的倒影。寶塔於是向左看齊。  
向你看齊。它可以是毛茸茸的，果味兒的，螢光的。  
但首先是紅色的。<sup>30</sup>

Historically, scholarly writing has only a tiny affordance for subject construction. Even in cases where a scholar locates themselves before and while writing their analysis, even under systems of participant observation in anthropological research, there is a tension between the thing readers intend to learn and the lens or apparatus through which it is seen. If the participation was the point of a monograph, rather than the observation, then it wouldn't be a piece of scholarship; it would be a memoir, a missive, a sermon, or a poem. Poetry excels at

subject construction, so in “Pagoda” we can see roads toward interimperial intellectual subjectivities. The loss of authority that interimperial identity implies is no problem here. The “big *we*, little *me*” of life in collectives is an axiomatic quality of this poetic voice, which speaks to and for its generation in an interdependent way. The West is present somewhere on the table, but what the speaker is reaching for is actually the fogging effect of translation, an interimperial lack of crisp boundaries and certainties that feels, for a moment, like a breath of fresh air. But translation is insufficient, and the pagoda looms over the speaker, martial, red.

The great difference between the trans-European theorist of the twentieth century and the China theorist after the poetry turn is in the “little *me*”—the way in which the interimperial subject writes empire from the perspective of its target. European theory was written by interimperial subjects of varying experience: Derrida was Algerian, French, and Jewish, and Foucault taught through the pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Tunisia in 1967. They most often spoke, however, as experts and authorities, as analysts—activists, sometimes—but not as poets.<sup>31</sup> They provided information and truth rather than ways of being. One of Doyle’s core observations about interimperial life, taken from Chang Rae-Lee’s *Native Speaker*, is that “over the mountains there are mountains,”<sup>32</sup> that the in-between place where we reside is not escapable or transcendable and there will be no moment of final liberation. The struggle against one form of power is to be followed immediately by the struggle against another. No underlying freedom can be summoned that is not built, step by step, from the daily labor of resistance and solidarity. We transform our present not exclusively through the insight of the poem but from the way hands touch as they pass it from reader to reader. Shu-mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet advocate for a creolized theory as a step toward decolonization: “If minor formations become method and theory, then new analytics will be brought to the foreground to creolize the universalisms we live with today.”<sup>33</sup> But it seems clear that our empires are already creoles—witness the American melting pot—and that creoles can of course seize universal status in exactly the way that pan-European theory has done. To Doyle, and at the end of “Pagoda,” the pagoda remains. It has not been thought out of existence; were it to crumble, it would reveal behind it yet other edifices, yet other colonizations.

Lionnet and Shih quote Françoise Vergès pointing out that “there are strategies of resistance, of inventiveness, of creativity in the arts, music and even in the political discourse that would give, or rather allow comparisons, or transfers of tools . . . exchange rather than hegemonization,”<sup>34</sup> but then they immediately move to their own goal: “to develop a critical language that assumes creolization as the ground of theory.”<sup>35</sup> The critical apparatus, the generalizing tool, the structuring institution—theory—is not necessarily creolized or mixed: The creole is the *ground* of theory. The result is “open to vernacular grammars, methods and lexicons” (31), but the generalizing, analytical, critical, disembodied perspective

remains, adapting and resting upon the “minor” creole to produce improved theory. This is a strategy of competition and not of resistance; it aims to supplant current theory, not to survive the endless assault of its imperial certainty. Resistance would mean beginning in and with the creole *person* and accepting that we as transnational scholars of China studies are ourselves unavoidably creole people, negotiating between a string of shifting imperial powers. It would ask not how a creolized person can write theory, but what it is that creolized people write. Interimperial theory reminds us that what people trapped between empires write is what they *need* to write: texts that resist co-optation and digestion by hungry powers. When asked how their resistance happens, Vergès says it is in the exchange of art, music, and politics, not primarily or exclusively in theory.

It is in the art—in the politics and the music of the art—that Wang Pu creates a subject-in-resistance, a person at a desk, dwarfed by the edifice. The speaker of the poem reaches across boundaries looking for something; whether or not the speaker finds it, the poem seems to ache for escape, and in this way it seems to search for an alternative to what Chen Kuan-Hsing calls “our own imperial desire.”<sup>36</sup> The construction of new universals on creole grounds won’t lessen that desire; the opening of new subjectivities can. And these subjectivities can be borrowed across borders, as they have been since time immemorial. I have a different linguistic, racial, and national position from Wang Pu’s, with different privileges and a different level of privilege; but it is also true that I did not construct either American or Chinese hegemonies, and after reading the poem I too can visualize myself as being dwarfed by their edifices. From that subject position, I want space to breathe; I want the structures stretching over me to fail to reproduce themselves in my own room. Ni Zhang’s speaker also seems to want something other than domination, a speaker who lifts whole continents without possessing them, who is trying to learn to taste the blankness of the deep relativism that the empire uses to deny its near future. These figures are figures, not people, but they are powerful. They share tactics for being in between from which we can write our scholarship and experience the world around us.

### **Toward the Citation of Style**

The poetry turn is already happening, and although I will advocate for its continuation and intensification in the conclusion, I first want to describe how, and in my opinion why, it is already happening in scholarship even though poems themselves are rarely visible there. Subject construction exists prior to scholarly writing; we visualize ourselves as a particular kind of speaker, with a particular goal and a specific identity. But we rarely, if ever, are able to cite the origins of that subject. The identity of the scholar is a deep structure of scholarship, something we have trouble even admitting is present—and yet so much of the discipline of transnational China scholarship is about being the kind of person who moves,

the kind of person who resides in between. What *kind* of in-between persons can we be? How do we share and connect those identities? Here is a nearly untranslatable poem by the scholar Yang Xiaobin:

《後律詩：唯名主義者沙彌尼》  
 歡喜到冰點，如雪藏起一粒沙。  
 她的沙啞綻放出妖冶花。  
 喝沙漠影子會太苦，  
 沙發上纏綿，卻沾一身狐步舞。  
 聞到宇宙沙龍的酸味，  
 她嚼夢的沙沙聲裡新月如醉。  
 幸福沙拉在蝴蝶禪裡發狂，  
 她便是漂亮的女沙皇。<sup>37</sup>

To attract attention to the poem's real beauty and comedy—its shape in the Chinese language—I'll describe it without giving a complete translation. The title is "Post-regulated Verse: The Nominalist Novice," where "novice" is my simplified translation for *shami ni*, a young Buddhist nun. The poem describes a woman who believes in nominalism—namely that abstractions only exist in language and that all reality is ungeneralizably particular. This description is affectionate but mocking, as the piece is also a paean to the materiality of language. Each line contains, sometimes several times, the character 沙 *sha*; and where traditional regulated verse is structured by simple end rhyme, this poem has stuntlike double rhymes, like *fakuang* with *shahuang*, as well as the absurdly virtuoso pairing of *hui tai ku* and *hubuwu*. I labored over the translation of this poem at some length, but I am only really happy with the sonic intensity of my translation of the first couplet, which I provide for the purpose of flavor:

Joy to the freezing point like the bit of grit in snow.  
 The grit in her voice unfurls a flirty flower.

Grit, here, stands in for 沙, the poem's repeated character, and the alliteration and internal rhyme in English tries to get across the complexity of the patterning in Chinese, which in just one couplet has four different binomes that follow first tone with third tone: *huānxǐ*, *bīngdiǎn*, *shāyǎ*, and *yāoyě*. In this poem, where the object is identified as young, fetching, and icily literal, the poem's speaker is constituted by their linguistic experience, their perverse play and prowess. This poem, like many poems, shows a way to be a self in language.

I maintain that these selves—the ones we see most clearly in poems—are circulating through China studies and that they generate futures for China studies. I think about prowess, play, and the subject who knows language well while read-

ing Yang Xiaobin's critical work, such as this passage from his article "Whence and Whither the Postmodern/Post-Mao-Deng: Historical Subjectivity and Literary Subjectivity in Modern China":

Postmodernity in Chinese literature can be primarily detected as the implosive disruption of the transparent, absolute genre that constructs the master discourse. The unifying modernity is still lurking, while at the same time it is whirled into the involute labyrinth of multiplied signifiers, the signifiers that fail to capture the signifieds in a transparent way. Then, to deal literarily with reality becomes, in the first place, to deal with the signifiers that are already culturally and historically intertextualized, overdetermined, contaminated and, in particular, entangled with the master discourse as something etiologically modern but pathologically/symptomatically postmodern.<sup>38</sup>

The lurking, whirling, labyrinthine excess of the language here is in excess of the passage's authority, speaking otherwise than from its value as accredited scholarship. As a translingual document, created by a person born in Shanghai and educated at Yale, it eschews the vision of theoretical language as something for foreign thinkers to aspire to, and establishes it as a place for play. Its Chinese qualities are subtle; its use of the definite article for "modernity," for example, is an insightful insinuation that there are many modernities, but only one is in charge at any given time (and therefore needs to be identified specifically as the modernity that is presently unifying). This is something that a monolingual English speaker, habituated to modernity as an uncountable noun, might miss. Past that, we can see the situation of the interimperial maker, the poet, even in this small passage. Regardless of what postmodernity wants to say, it is *etiologically* modern, caused by modernism, by an absolute that lurks inside profusions of difference. This feels like the observation of the scholar in an institution created and strengthened by empire, but who has little interest in serving the empire, a scholar who asks: What better thing can one make out of one's unfortunate and nonconsensual entanglement with the absolute? It is also the posture of the speaker of the "Post-regulated Verse": You claim you are a nominalist, a relativist, but I see your doctrinaire believer's heart.

Thinking through poetry, and writing poetry, thinks through style. Style thinks through context: symmetries and structures that are judged and animated not by their relationship to prediction or other measures of truth but that live and die according to their relationships to other people. China studies—and I do not simply mean literary criticism—needs style because it needs to be seen in its interimperial place, rather than being subjected to the evaluations of one or another empire. Writing cannot build a community or a movement without attention to the intersubjective, affective labor of style. And yet style in China

studies has been standardized and nationalized. A good article for a major journal of Chinese literature in English all too often looks and feels like good articles in major journals in English literature. Yang Xiaobin's translingual inventiveness, his verve and excess, dresses up like other English-language theory, and it is judged, one fears, in terms of that costume, rather than as an interimperial invention of costume. The performance and the gender work that takes place in the "Post-regulated Verse" turns into "solid" theoretical prose, and the work of its origins is effaced.

Poet-scholar Jenn Nunes has taken a rare set of steps toward stylistic dynamism and transgeneric simultaneity in her article on Yu Xiuhua 余秀華, titled "Sitting with Discomfort: A Queer-Feminist Approach to Translating Yu Xiuhua." In it, she produces three translations of Yu's poem "My Little Dog, Xiao Wu" (我養的狗·叫小巫) that are annotated in increasingly personal and subjective ways and that increasingly refuse to render certain parts of the poem (like the name of the dog, which might be "Little Shaman") in English. The between space of the scholar/analyst/translator, usually seen as an instrument through which the commensurability or incommensurability of imperial languages becomes visible, is for once *not* suppressed, and it becomes impossible to decide what the poem means, is, or does without reference to how Nunes encounters it. The discomfort of not having a "clean" and authoritative translation, as well as the uncomfortable and intimate power play between the scholar and her subject, are in this article not solved or suppressed but courted as experience: They are "sat with." The style and form of the article are experimental and personal, with the prose story-vignettes of Nunes's original poetry entering her Yu translation, and with the queered translations taking up the first part of the article without the field's often-compulsory introduction for uninitiated readers.

Nunes conceptualizes the style and structure of her article partially on the model of what Shih and Lionnet would call "ethnic studies," taking up "a queer theory of radical failure and disruption, in conjunction with a 'politics of relationality' and women of color feminism, to suggest an approach that refuses to produce the singular, fluent translation that is the English norm, in order to contribute to a feminist translation theory of accountability, relationality, and play."<sup>39</sup> This brand of relationality is also meaningfully interimperial. As her own text proliferates between lines of Yu's translated poem, troubling the lines between Yu's text and the language of the translator, the China studies reader cannot but see a classic 注解 *zhujie* annotation. *Zhujie* often claim to explain, define, or translate ancient language into modern language, but as we know they have also always been a place where scholarly transformation, deformation, subversion, and play have become visible. Regardless of the scholar's place in the empire, their desire to make their mark visible—to justify it to other scholars like themselves, to appear—has goals that are not reducible to the empire's preferences. In them, a

subject can address an interlocutor without reference to their place in the hierarchy: a teacher to a mistrustful student, a marginal thinker to an imagined future in which they are relevant, sometimes simply a book lover mourning the destruction or inscrutability of an interesting text, accepting that they cannot read or understand something they'd like to. So too, in Nunes's work, there is a woman speaking to a woman, a "yearning toward intimacy"<sup>40</sup> that is prone to failure and partiality and is destructive of imperial certainty.

It feels important that Nunes's interimperial experiment is justified almost exclusively in terms of Western theory. She writes the following disclaimer:

While Lawrence Venuti and other scholars on whose work I draw focus on a transnational Anglosphere and my argument gestures toward translation and literature in general, my intervention is best situated in a US context, because of my familiarity with the state of translation and contemporary poetry in the US. At the same time that I attend to the visibility of the translator, I make room for varied and nuanced consideration of ethical reading practices by those positioned in relative positions of privilege (me) who translate work by those more easily exploited within transnational power structures, where issues of gender, class, ability, and so on are further inscribed with the "otherness" of the foreign.<sup>41</sup>

Nunes registers the primacy of the Euro-American tradition in determining who gets to speak in China studies. The poet in her as well as the scholar can both see her interimperial position quite clearly. She has unjust and deforming access to mediation and discourse power as a result of her heritage and training, preconceptual qualities of imperial context that aren't strictly possible to ignore or repudiate. Her citations of American and European feminist scholarship and translation theory are her "home language" and give her words weight that might not be granted to the poets she studies in the contexts in which she studies them. As interimperial writers do, and poets as well, she negotiates, arranging her subject position in order to "make room" for more varied interactions with structures of power.

From this perspective, the comparative subtlety of other scholar-poets' interventions into the style and shape of scholarship is a missed opportunity. More visible stylistic differences make more space. I think of the low visibility of my own work—and it was hard work—to encapsulate and emblemize moments in genre history through the careful selection and translation of poems, in one case even summarizing a twenty-page discussion in a single sentence.<sup>42</sup> This practice arose not only from long hours spent memorizing epigrammatic passages from Confucius and Su Shi's "*Fu* on Red Cliff" for Joanne Chiang 楊玖 in graduate school, but also from the way the Chinese critics I was reading at the time took responsibility to provide takeaway summaries for large and complex traditions.



Because Chinese critics like Huang Yongjian 黃永建 foregrounded their authority in a way that made it testable—claiming a quality for a genre or tradition that one could agree or disagree with, rather than qualifying their generalizations until they were unassailable—I came to see a poem translation and its associated close reading not as ends in themselves but as stand-ins for the much larger, more authoritative amount of reading and examination I had done. But this interimperial negotiation ended in a product that looked familiar as Western scholarship: a piece with some close reading in it, a strong thesis statement. And the politics of the style, the space opened by the style, was easily disappeared.

I don't regret making my own stylistic interventions subtle. As an interimperial person, I make these negotiations for my own academic survival, and I felt I needed my work to pass smoothly through the assessment of non-Chinese-speaking editors. I knew that my peer reviewers would be able to flexibly handle both normative English style and more Chinese-inflected scholarly structures but that other elements of the Anglophone editorial apparatus could easily serve as a limiting factor, so I did what I could. But I do register it as a missed opportunity, one that is no longer necessary in my career individually, nor hopefully in the field at large, now that China scholars and Chinese-literate editors have increasing control over university press selection. There are now enough China scholars to allow for style and to allow us to make our styles visible, citable, and sharable, an instance of the “transfers of tools” that Vergès holds out as one hope against empire.

### The Future of the Turn

The future of the turn toward poetry composition is not limited to those who write or read poetry; the space it can open is for everybody in China studies. “Improvisational and highly contingent, turns turn at the site of a theoretical ‘what if?’ They open up the possibility of a new map or orientation for thinking and organizing reality not by fixing thought on an object but by opening a new route for thinking to traverse and christening it with a name.”<sup>43</sup> What if we turned like this?

[B]etween cause and effect, woodcutter pulling at a cross-cut saw,  
before he succeeds fresh snow shakes loose  
a goalie in a flying dive, but his body turns in midair like a swallow's,  
melting into the arbitrary world

因果之間，拉扯線鋸的伐木工，在決勝前搖落一場新雪  
飛身撲救的守門員，卻如雨燕返身，融進隨機的世界。<sup>44</sup>

What if Su Xian 蘇弦, the pen name of the University of Alberta MA graduate and current Cornell PhD candidate Lin Chengxiang 林誠翔—winner of the 2018 Enclave Young Poets Prize, the 2017 *Stars Magazine* College Poetry Prize,

and the 2016 Hu Shi Young Poets' Prize, writer of the above poem—could design his own style in English-language criticism? What if he could use syntactic parallelism in his academic prose in a way that helped him elucidate ideas and the field would accept and valorize those structures as useful and necessary for China studies? What if everybody was able to use those forms? How would our scholarship change? What if we inhabited the static between traditions not as error but as a space for emergence?

A spot of static

where the girl shell buckles.

I scrape the eyes off and gaze is what's left. Released it shimmers the epic length of the hallway. Released I make the alien body. Their new girl shape in the hallway. The terrifying geometry.<sup>45</sup>

What if we theorized or even just discussed the subjective and affective histories of identity that underpin China studies—the economic and spiritual refugees from Americanness who have encountered China as a liberating space, the sojourners infatuated with one or another language, the economic migrants, the queer people who appear most solidly at a distance from their natal homes—what if we were less terrified by the partiality and the personality of these drives? What if we accepted them as something other than a necessary evil or a secret horror? What if we were released to make the alien body? What if we started seriously thinking about this Yang Xiaobin poem, written as an email from an American student to his Chinese teacher:

您好楊老師：我是劉學生。  
我貴姓劉，您送給了我的名子。

您活在中國的十間太九，我們  
都很失去您。放家，沒有學校了

我的中文不但快快地壞了，  
我的體重而且慢慢地大了。您的身體

什麼了？天氣在北京  
怎麼辦？今天是星期末，

您必須在用朋友玩兒？我猜？

What if this poem could be a joke and absolutely true at the same time, could be a ludic space in which language falls apart and a delimited space where language didn't have to commit such rigorous crimes of exclusion? What if this interlan-

guage, this pidgin, wasn't marked as inferior? What if we wrote in it? Improved it past this elementary level? Exploited it as balance against the situation in which students with superior access to capital get superior access to linguistic education, transculture more easily, and are vastly more likely to have their ideas sanctioned by academic institutions? What if we married Englese to Chinglish? What if I told you that I structure this paragraph in this way because contemporary Chinese poets love anaphora? That I have in the back of my mind the poem "Symbol" by Ya Shi 哑石?<sup>46</sup> What if the poet-scholar Canaan Morse translated Yang Xiaobin's poem not because it is in fact translatable, but because it is fun?<sup>47</sup> And what if he emailed me that translation not just "for fun" but because it ended up a bit stylish? And what if this particular instance of recursively created style, an English poet scrutinizing the language of a Chinese poet scrutinizing the language of an English student scrutinizing the Chinese language, became a gathering place?

Hello dear Teacher Yang: this is Student Liu.  
 My family name is Liu; you delivered me this name.  
 You're alive in Beijing for too long, we all  
 really misplace you. It's vacated, so school is gone  
 My Chinese is not just going bad fast,  
 my weight is also getting big slow. What is up  
 with your body? What to do about  
 Beijing weather? Today is the end of days  
 of the week, you must be using friends for fun? I guessed?

What if this gathering place, a space of interimperial style, was space in which the binaries of Western and Chinese, Asian and white, rich and poor, man and woman stopped making sense? What if we accepted that some version of Chinglish is the lingua franca of most graduate schools in Chinese studies? What if we attended to that generative mess between languages and saw it as the power and contribution of the field? As an unsecured space between contexts? As a subject position, a place to speak and live from? As the only real way for our community of migrants and creoles and translators to answer the question "What is up / with your body?" What if we began to accredit interimperial language, empower it? What if experiments like Jonathan Stalling's *Yingelishi* were so common as to no longer seem like experiments? What if a scholar could appear bodily in that space with imperfect authority, a partial understanding of universals, and a decided lack of "imperial desire"? What if that scholar was provided with a language built and refined by a collective of interimperial,

translingual creole people, a beautifully mixed, usable language, broken, reassembled? What if this language was only partially influenced by the language of Euro-American theory, but we did theory in it anyway? What if we built that assemblage and then gave it to the future scholar as a gift? What if we gave it to them as a means for survival?

#### TWO-BODIED KING

Ni Zhange

I woke up waterproof  
the city was losing its silhouette  
the hem of the skirt of fog stroked the sod, we called it frost  
after the sun came up the thrown stones disappeared under sailcloth  
what I woke up for was to terminate the oppositions  
to get a hold of the swiftly slanting light  
to say goodbye to what I won't get dragged into again  
to bury the fine-veined, the delicate  
the whole city's gunpowder isn't enough to warm the cannon's throat  
on the firing range, algae is freezing in its puddles

國王雙身

倪湛舸

我隔水醒來  
城邑正喪失輪廓  
霧的裙襖摩挲草地叫做霜  
太陽升起後帆布遮沒了投石器  
我醒來是為了終結對峙  
為了抓緊急速傾斜的光  
送別不再受累的  
埋葬紋理纖妍的  
全城的火藥都不足以溫暖炮膛  
炮彈落地處水潭凍結著水藻<sup>48</sup>

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### Notes

- 1 This list is offered in reverse alphabetical order to emphasize the primacy of Chinese-language poetry and poets of Chinese extraction in the turn. It excludes two important types of poets: first, graduate students, who are much more difficult to identify but whose numbers certainly include Su Xian 蘇弦, Jenn-Marie Nunes, Canaan Morse, and many others. Second, though, the list excludes poets who do not publish or who have not yet published their work. This is a crucial, low-visibility element of the turn: scholars who think poems and think in poems but do not share them widely.
- 2 Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other*, 42: “instances where the borderline between theoretical and non-theoretical writings is blurred and questioned, so that theory and poetry necessarily mesh, both determined by an awareness of the sign and the destabilization of the meaning and writing subject.”
- 3 Doyle, *Inter-imperiality*, 1.
- 4 Ni, *Xue shi shei shuo de huang*, 109. This is my translation; the title of the original is given in English.
- 5 Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, chap. 1.
- 6 See, for example, Bryant, “Correlationism,” 47: “For the correlationist there is no answer to the question of whether carbon atoms exist apart from us and whether they decay at such and such a rate because we only ever know appearances. This is Meillassoux’s support for scientific realism.”
- 7 Derrida, *Eyes of the University*, 68.
- 8 van Crevel, *Chinese Poetry*, chapters 1, 4, and 12.
- 9 Ni, *Pagan Writes Back*, 3.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 11 Leung, for example, wrote a 2004 article on reading Wen Yiduo in Hong Kong; Leung, “Reading Wen Yiduo.”
- 12 Yang Mu was director of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy (文哲所) at the Academia Sinica in 2006, the same year Yang Xiaobin was hired there. Yang is additionally credited with shaping the *xueyuan pai* 學院派 in Taiwan, a loosely affiliated group of intellectual and scholarly poets. PK Leung was a mentor to the contemporary Hong Kong poet and scholar Chris Song. These kinds of affective, structural, and personal influences are more numerous than can be registered here.
- 13 Wang, *Bell and the Drum*, ix.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 86.
- 15 He discusses this decision, based on his feeling of dissatisfaction with modern poetry, in Yang and Zhai, “Language Is Our Religion,” 67.
- 16 Wang, *Translatability of Revolution*, 5 and 3, respectively.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 48.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 28–29. Note here the organization by metaphor; Wang’s monograph is full of symmetrical structures and periodizations like this, often using them to arrange representative or iconic vignettes and stories.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 233.

- 20 Wang, *Baoji*, 164–65.
- 21 Huang, *Transpacific Imaginations*, 2.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 4–5.
- 23 Lee, “Latour, Tiananmen, and Glass Slippers,” 466.
- 24 Klein, “*Alors, la Chinoiserie*,” 420.
- 25 Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, 157.
- 26 Doyle, *Inter-imperiality*, 18.
- 27 As an example, when I reviewed David Der-Wei Wang’s book *The Lyrical in Epic Time*, I praised how the book’s “breadth of occasion also extends to its archive,” including more private works by canonical authors and artists. I was thinking, but did not write, that this is a real and continuously exciting strength of literary study in the People’s Republic of China, where the canonization process and the profusion of scholarship allows for deeply three-dimensional pictures of certain authors, ranging from their holograph manuscripts to the floor plans of their homes to their daily correspondence. See Admussen, “*The Lyrical in Epic Time*.” In retrospect, I left out the fuller analysis because describing Wang’s archival research in Anglophone terms sounded “better” to me; I had internalized a demand of the Euro-American academy, which sees itself as methodologically advanced.
- 28 Doyle, *Inter-imperiality*, 3.
- 29 In an interview, Wang says he originally wrote the poem playfully for Li, then later realized it might become “an intergenerational experience that connected the flesh to the times. . . . Li Chun and I are only small elements of the generation. Perhaps this poem is just about us, but perhaps it is about this generation.” Wang, *Wo dui wo de tongdairan*.
- 30 Wang, *Baoji*, 5.
- 31 Hélène Cixous’s many collections of poetry, as well as her plays and novels, are an intriguing counterexample.
- 32 Doyle, *Inter-imperiality*, 19.
- 33 Lionnet and Shih, *The Creolization of Theory*, 21.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 31.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 Chen, *Asia as Method*, 198.
- 37 Yang, *Shi x 3*, 15.
- 38 Yang, “Whence and Whither,” 393–94.
- 39 Nunes, “Sitting with Discomfort,” 29.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 40.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 28–29.
- 42 Admussen, *Recite and Refuse*, 134.
- 43 Tavlin, “Turns and Revolutions,” 21.
- 44 Su, *Ru xi*, 49.
- 45 Nunes, “WORD GIRLFRIEND.”
- 46 Ya Shi, *Floral Mutter*, 30–31.
- 47 He did; a segment of his as-yet unpublished translation follows, reproduced with his permission.
- 48 Ni, *Bairen de hai*, 235.

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