

Encounters between East and West

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Transcultural Encounters in Knowledge Production and Consumption

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*In memory of our colleague Regis Machart
(1968–2016)*

Foreword

What is the antidote to a world where increasingly it is professed as acceptable to deal with difference by building walls, making simplistic vulgar threats, and shouting without discrimination in 140 characters? A book about the challenges of understanding and comprehension explored through the lens of dialogue, indeed *transcultural* dialogue, between people who are passionate to understand and willing to admit their inherent structural biases. *East Meets West: Transcultural Encounters in Knowledge Production and Consumption* is unapologetically challenging. It needs to be read carefully and often the reader has to go back and reread a paragraph, page, and chapter. This is because deep understanding is not simple. Reductions to base dichotomies—east versus west, us versus them, red versus blue, good versus evil—fail our lived experience when we try to expand beyond the 140 characters and when we try to explain our situation to others.

What the book does contribute is to a process through which greater insight and subtlety is exposed. The process is the dialog of sustained transcultural engagement; that is, seeking out the superficially different and exploring its meaning, and thereby our own meaning, through a Socratic-like conversation. Through that *process* the falsity of simple antagonistic dichotomies is exposed and the more nuanced interconnectedness, interdependence, and simply incomparable are appreciated. This is transcultural knowledge.

In this book, the contributors are dealing with a specific kind of transcultural knowledge: how China is understood by the Anglosphere. It is not, however, a book about China for the English-speaking world. Rather, it is a book about what edification happens when the sparks of conversation are fired by thinkers observing, reflecting, and interpreting dynamically, and to hold it together the subject of China provides the primary focal point.

The book is organised into three themes: media, the creative arts, foreign relations. These are quintessential fields to test the process of transcultural view and indeed they produce exceptionally interesting individual insights (for example, Ma Huijuan's fascinating history of the reception of Peking Opera to England in the 1930s). The themes are less important for me, however, than the complex—even messy—picture that is painted by the whole. It is the insight that emerges slowly as

one works through the chapters and adds more points to the comprehensive landscape. As such, this is a book that can be read in linear fashion through the three sections, but it is equally satisfying to jump in and out randomly.

Each of the contributors interprets the remit of transcultural method subtly in one's own way, but I am particularly attracted to Wittington's approach that interacts with music composition, Chinese poetry, and diasporic furniture design. I appreciate that he rejects hybridisation, which suggests some Frankensteinian bolting together of different bodies, for a more reflective and organic creation of a new transcultural knowledge. One wishes one's own endeavours can be as fruitfully creative, honest and unique. In the increasingly globalised world brought about by hyper mobility and convenient access to non-mainstream knowledges we should expect more of this form of transculturalism and creativity in the future.

In reflecting on the book, I cannot resist a comment about language and how that impacts the transcultural approach and conclusions. Unfortunately given the dominance of monolingualism or asymmetric linguistic ability worldwide, choices have to be made about the language in which to have a transcultural dialogue and in what language the resulting knowledge is recorded. In this case, the language is English which probably remains the global lingua franca at the moment. The insurmountable problem with limiting to one language, however, is that language becomes a framework that influences the ideas. It begins with the language of publication assuming something about what background references the reader will bring, but it goes beyond this to restrict contribution to those who have fluency, familiarity or translation access with the medium. Jose's chapter touches on this when he explores translation and the untranslatability. My own hope is not for a future where we each wear a Babel fish homogenising the aural diversity into a unified language or we allow an English, Mandarin or Spanish to become a dominate language. Rather, my own hope is that we continue to promote second language acquisition so that more individuals are forced to go through their own transcultural experience and our future books reflect that by allowing for a plethora of published vocabularies understood by readers widely. That sounds complex and messy but sometimes truth is.

In a world where people are craving simplistic insight given the overload of social interaction from the ubiquity of knowledge available through the internet, this book resists. And, I celebrate that. The world is complex, messy, dynamic, and constantly evolving. It is okay for our interpretations to reflect that, yet the device of the transcultural lens presents a delightful frame to not abandon the exercise of trying to seek insight from order but to embrace an approach that etches clarity among the blurred nuance. I leave the book with a better understanding of China as well as my own lookout from the Anglosphere.

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Introduction

East Meets West: Transcultural Knowledge in Production

This book has grown out of a sustained transcultural engagement between scholars from Australia and China. The intellectual exchange has brought into focus the need to go beyond the imaginary construction of East versus West that had its origins in what Edward Said (1992) refers to as the façade of Orientalism, a façade under which people from the East were routinely positioned as inferior to the West in their attainment of the levels of civilisation of the white race (p. 184). At one level, it is a historic puzzle as to how European intellectuals could perceive of the West on a developmentalist continuum in which the East was but the West's past. Moreover, what seems amazing is that even now such a teleology dominates knowledge production, and is by no means erased from East–West discourse (Chakrabarty 2000; Bhabha 1994). Even after 20 years, Huntington's thesis on the clash of civilisations between East and West, which has been discredited in academic circles as a metaphysical myth (Said 2001), continues to capture the imagination of Western media and exist in Western political postulations. In its totalising tendencies, the clash of civilisations seems impervious to both empirical and theoretical criticisms. Nevertheless, the false logic of superior versus inferior must be continuously challenged by new dialogues and new concepts that transcend the *Us* and *Them* trope. The East–West dichotomy, as Rizvi (2011) argues, still needs to be contested by conceiving cultural formations “as neither absolute nor necessarily antagonistic, but deeply interconnected and interdependent, so much so that they reveal how the tensions between cultures indeed can be comprehended and transcended” (p. 234).

This book brings together scholars, who problematised thinking which seeks to reaffirm “the West's” view of itself as the philosophical apex of knowledge, and the arbiter of what counts as “civilised” epistemology (Dutton 2002; Connell 2007; de Sousa Santos 2007; and Smith 2012). Collectively, the chapters challenge such a hierarchy of knowledge production and demonstrate that the pursuit of knowledge, whether it be in the West or in the East, has been at the centre of human pursuits for

thousands of years. Globalisation, especially the time–space compression (Harvey 2014), has accelerated cultural interactions and heightened the necessity to acknowledge the plurality of epistemologies developed by humankind. Influenced by recent theoretical advancement in knowledge domains led by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Raewyn Connell, and Wang Hui, more research has focused on contesting the “global pattern of centrality” of knowledge which has so far been dominated by a single version of history (Chakrabarty 2000). This book follows that lead by presenting a distinctive collection of chapters on transcultural encounters in knowledge production and consumption, which are situated within cognitive justice framework. The book uniquely represents transcultural dialogues between academics located on the borders of different knowledge systems, seeking to advance scholarship for universal benefit. The rigorous research evidenced in this volume collectively challenges the developmentalist paradigm, which homogenises Asian Studies research in Western universities and interprets divergent knowledge using the Western style of reason which has “lost its balance” (Toulmin 2007). Through explorations of cross-cultural encounters, the chapters engage with “Chinese” and “Western” thought on transcultural subjects that are based on self-reflection and genuine open respect for alternative ideas. Together, they articulate a new politics of difference which aims to decentre the dominant epistemologies and research paradigms in global academia. Refracted through transcultural theories and practices, adapted to diverse traditions, histories, and regional affiliations, and directed towards an international transcultural audience, the collection demonstrates expansive possibilities in knowledge production.

The coherence of this volume lies in the convergence of transcultural perspectives which bring together diverse disciplines including cultural studies, education, media, translation theory and practice, musicology, political science, and literature. Each chapter embraces a global perspective, which goes beyond the “Northern Epistemologies” (de Sousa Santos 2007), and explores the possibility of decolonising the knowledge production space, as well as research methodologies, from a consciously dialogical angle. Scholars of this collection all work within the transcultural frontiers in global higher education. Transcultural adaptations happen in multiple forms, whether it is musical transpositions, literary transplantations, educational transformations, multimedia transmissions and place making, or cultural, political, and social representations.

The book’s structure divides the exploration of what Nick Jose terms transcultural into three thematic sections. Section one deals with the papers of Mary Griffith, Zhang Weimin and Peter Pugsley, and Wu Minghua in exploring physical, virtual, and social media spaces of knowledge production and contestation. Section two takes the transcultural in a cultural direction with Nick Jose’s transcultural appraisal of literature, followed by Ma Huijuan’s reading of Hsiung’s cultural translation of the Peking Opera, *Wang Baochuan*. Zhang Jian’s paper then provides a transcultural analysis of William Empson’s Chinese writings, followed by Stephen Whittington’s reflections on his transcultural composing practice. The final section turns to a transcultural appraisal of educational knowledge production and foreign policy ontology, with Regis Marchant exploring East and West

adaptation theory, and Greg McCarthy and Xianlin Song analysing the ontological construction of West versus East in foreign policy, using Australia as a case study. The three sections are integrated through their dialogue with transcultural knowledge in production. What follows here is an explanation of each chapter's part in addressing the book's theme.

In her chapter, Mary Griffith commences with the social justice question of how minorities and majorities can equally experience cityscapes. She analyses the potential of the "Internet of Everything" to create the possibility for "smart cities", whereby technology allows for interdisciplinary knowledge and hands-on democracy to become user-friendly. Griffiths argues that "mobile locative" technologies can open new knowledge to millions of people, creating a democratic knowledge space to challenge the commercial and conservative media's capture of knowledge in the public sphere. Using examples from Berlin and Australian cities, Griffiths shows how technology now offers interactive ways in which information can be produced and disseminated to enrich people's understanding of the past, present, and future. She argues that, as mobile media is personalised, it can enhance one's experience of a city, in which an individual is as much a producer as a receiver of knowledge of their lived spaces. Such an interactive experience is built on an interdisciplinary knowledge exchange and transcultural sensitivity in which urban planners, historians, and media experts can work together to develop rich intercultural heritages, to allow for multiple entries to city space, enriching the user's experience. The use of such mobile information democratises knowledge through its accessibility and adaptability for the end user.

In their chapter, Zhang and Pugsley use a discursive historic approach to analysing the changing parameters of disaster reporting in China. By analysing how media discourse on natural disasters in China is constructed in differing conjunctures, Zhang and Pugsley relate the shifting subject form but also the shift in knowledge production from dynastic to Maoist to contemporary truth discourses. Beginning with Foucault's notion of discourse, Zhang and Pugsley draw on Chinese reporting of natural disasters, which initially saw them as moral omens sent from heaven. During the conjuncture 1949–1978, natural disasters were represented in the media as evidence of the heroic soldier and peasant worker, rescuing nameless victims. The heroic alliance was given sustenance by the imagery of Mao as leading the people against nature. However, the post-Mao conjuncture saw a fundamental discursive shift to social realism, in which disasters were reported more factually than ideologically. The discursive concentration was less on the rescuers and more on the resilient victims of floods, earthquakes, and the like. Zhang and Pugsley argue that the shift in discourse was needed to legitimise the media as reporting realities rather than engaged in obfuscation. Again, in an era where "fake news" in the West is a legitimization strategy used by distrusted leaders, contemporary Chinese media must, in contrast, construct national disasters accurately to legitimise the media itself. Such a change in media discourse means that the victims of natural disaster are portrayed sympathetically, evoking public empathy, rather than seen as mere objects of heroic comrades. Chinese reports of natural disaster recovery operations need to show both sympathy and leadership.

Following on from the issue of legitimacy, Wu Minghua explores how netizens use a variety of techniques to destabilise mainstream media, leadership, and social norms. Again, there are echoes here of how social media in both West and East voices civic participation. Wu, drawing on Bakhtin's (1984) notion of the Carnavalesque as a participatory discourse, contextualises how Chinese netizens mask up to protect their identities and seek to humiliate those in authority, who are designated as abusing their power. Wu argues that the micro-blogging sphere in China has enabled ordinary Internet users to produce alternative perspectives and increasingly drive the authorities to respond to them. Linking the theory of the Carnavalesque with Foucault's idea of multiple sites of power and Habermas's idea of the lifeworld of civil society, Wu contends that these Western theories are a necessary but insufficient base from which to explain the netizen masking strategy as a way to demean public figures. Her call for a more Chinese theoretical approach echoes that of Dutton's (2016) notion of China as theory, where authority seeks to contain flows of affect, including on the Internet. For Wu, within this flow of affect, online citizens are noted for how, Carnival-like, they pock fun at officialdom. In Wu's account, what is notable about citizen dialogue is its wittiness, with Chinese characteristics, that employs "gags" to challenge the authoritarian "gag" on information.

In section two on the arts, Nicholas Jose begins the analysis by exploring the etymology of the word transcultural. Starting from Song and Cadman's use of the term to postulate a new way of advancing educational justice, Jose traces its origins to the Caribbean in the creole character of language. According to Jose, transculturation is fundamental and indispensable for an understanding of the history of Cuba and, for analogous reasons, of that of America. Jose takes us on a literary journey of discovery of how transcultural language, and with it literature, flows from Cuba to America, from indigenous languages to Mandarin, from East to West. As literature becomes transcultural, so does literary understanding, and appreciation of and respect for difference. The transcultural now seems to take us beyond cross-cultural, multicultural, and intercultural to a new level of merging of knowledge of ourselves and others: a knowledge shared in writing and reading literature. Having taken the reader on the journey of the term transcultural, we arrive at the point where the most acclaimed literature is now transcultural, including that of the Nobel Laureate J.M. Coetzee. According to Jose, Coetzee's transculturalism is expressed to the reader in his use of "perplexing, provoking, and teasing" language, while simultaneously expressing a global social justice philosophy. Likewise, Alexis Wright's indigenous literature brings us multiple voices of the First Peoples and injustices acted upon them. As Jose notes in the indigenous context, "the transculturation, as in the early Cuban usages, includes the transformative interchange between cultures and communities within a society. The term 'intercommunal' has a specific application here. Even within a community there will be communities". Jose leaves us with a transcultural puzzle as there are certain words that seem untranslatable and yet have transcultural meaning across cultures. Such a word is "bamboozle" which has a long distant etymology and in contemporary Chinese is akin to the cultural phenomenon of *huyou*. In short, Jose notes,

“the transcultural move here is to leave the untranslatable as if untranslated, a hole in the text”. In summing up, Jose views the transcultural as a practice that conforms to a globalised era of cultural understanding and inquiry for writers, readers, and teachers.

In her contribution, Ma Huijuan tells the instructive story of how the first English version of the Peking Opera *Wang Baochuan* was translated by Chinese playwright S.I. Hsiung in 1934. The opera was then translated into an English version called *Lady Precious Stream* to worldwide appreciation, being performed in 40 countries. For such a success to have occurred in the high art form of Chinese Opera is remarkable and raises a question as to how the translation led to this transcultural adaptation and appreciation. Ma provides a biographical note on S.I. Hsiung noting his prominence as a diasporic writer in the 1930s. She notes that Hsiung’s translation of *Lady Precious Stream* was performed at the Little Theatre in London by the People’s National Theatre and ran for about 1000 nights between 1934 and 1936. This success was notable not just for the skill of the translator but also as it was in an era when China was little known in the West and its sophisticated operatic form and content was little appreciated outside the country. Having been the first translator and playwright in the West End of London, Hsiung took the *Lady Precious Stream* to New York to great success and it was adapted for television in 1950.

Given the success of the translation and its adaption, the question that puzzles Ma is what translation strategies account for the play’s triumph. To answer this question, Ma uses both textual and extra-textual analysis to uncover the secrets of its transcultural adaptation, performance, and global reception. She argues that the success of the translation of the play was firstly in the skill of the translator. Secondly, the opera was shown at the contextual conjuncture in which China was emerging from dynastic rule and embracing a different modernity. The ability of the translator to contextualise the play as a cultural whole was not merely a reflection of his artistry but of what Said calls “wordliness” (1992): his ability to grasp the dialectic of a world in turmoil. In addition, the success of the play was linked to its marketing and the financial support of patrons. Overall, in this chapter, Ma gives an important case study of how, to be globally effective, translation needs to be transcultural.

Zhang Jian’s analysis of the cultural encounters of the renowned poet William Empson with Chinese culture, also mentioned in Nick Jose’s chapter, captures the 1930s conjuncture in China. Jiang weaves a transcultural story of a unique Westerner living in the East, in fact living in China during the horrors of the Japanese invasion. Empson’s Chinese experience is captured in his poetry and gives shape to his unique form of critical theory. Zhang captures how Empson’s poems are multilayered, semantically playful, and inspired by his new cultural environment. According to Zhang, the poem “Autumn on Nan-Yeuh” can be read as

expressing a sense of personal and cultural ambiguity in suggesting flight from UK culture and flight from the invaders, flying to a safer haven outside Peking, as well as personal flight; poetry as an escape from war and the vicissitudes of one's life. By providing a glimpse of Empson's life in Hunan, Empson revealed great resilience and a remarkable power of recollection. With his trusty typewriter, Empson typed out English poetry and Shakespeare sonnets and plays from memory for his students' appreciation. His renown for critical reading was evident in his transcultural interpretation of Othello, and his dialogue with students dealing with differing cultural appraisals of Desdemona. Zhang sees Empson's critical theory approach, as developing from this very cross-cultural contextualisation of race and gender he experienced teaching in China. Zhang notes that Empson's teaching in China played a significant part in his conceptualisation of personal and cultural alterity. Likewise, having taught in Japan and China, Epsom was able to reflect on cultural specificities and he dutifully respected the cultural differences that shaped student's views. This is not to say that Epsom was fully aware of his own cultural prejudices, but he was able to appreciate the different intellectual traditions he encountered in Japan and China, as compared to UK. Zhang places this understanding on the notion of imagined community, where Epsom as an outsider could see the particle Han national imagination in his students as compared to the ethnic minorities they somewhat disdainfully encountered. In reflecting on the East versus the West, Epsom developed what can be called a Said-like orientalist perspective that the West misconstrued the Other as inferior and irrational. Zhang concludes that reading Epsom's collective works was a seminal experience, in his appreciation and acceptance of the equality of West and East cultures.

In a unique chapter, Stephen Whittington explains how his musical compositions may be considered transcultural rather than hybridisation. Whittington notes that his musical craft began with his own Western training as a pianist and composer. His developing interest in Eastern music took him to a consideration of how to blend Chinese poetry and sensibilities into his composition. Whittington noted that the art of music is deeply hybrid but that transcultural music is something different: not merely a grafting of Eastern musical art forms onto Western ones. Rather, it requires a deep immersion in techniques, musical sounds, and compositions to move from exotic influences to a transformation of art in composing, performance, and reception. It is only then that the music goes beyond exoticism to reach transculturalism. Whittington notes that the history of Western and Eastern music is one of asymmetry; for example, Western music has had a far greater influence on Chinese music than is true of the reverse. Moreover, instances of Chinese representation in Western opera tend towards Orientalism, where the exotic East is a fairyland of naïve people, basking in the infancy of civilisation. Nevertheless, despite the overall neglect of Chinese music in the West, Whittington comments that Gustav Mahler's 1909 symphonic song cycle *Das Lied von der Erde* (*The Song of the Earth*) does show conscious Chinese musical influence.

Having provided a comprehensive overview of Eastern and Western musical influences, Whittington turns towards his own appreciation and adaptation of Chinese culture in his own compositions. He notes that his interests developed due

to an early appreciation of Chinese opera, his marriage, and then association with the Chinese composer and long-time director of the Shanghai Conservatory, He Luting. This led Whittington to appreciate the breadth of Chinese musical styles and to seek to incorporate his appreciation of Chinese poetry in his compositions. This direction soon became one of to the composition, as illustrated in the composition ... *from a thatched roof*. This composition also reflects his association with the diasporic Chinese furniture designer Khai Liew, whose philosophy is that the natural and human nature should be bridged by art, but it should be an art that conceals art. Whittington then explains how he blended these views on art and nature, along with classical Chinese poetry and Chinese philosophy, into this Western seven movement quartet, which also embraces Whittington's interest in the musical style of French composer Erik Satie (1866–1925), as well as minimalist Western musical tropes. The composition ... *from a thatched roof* can be now appreciated as a truly transcultural art work from East to West as the two are inseparable in its composition and performance. Whittington hopes that by explaining his hidden art of composition, this may assist in challenging the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between Western and Chinese music.

Opening the third section on East and West sensitivities in education and foreign policy, Regis Marchart returns the reader to the trope of *Us* and *Them* as a dividing line in educational differentiation. Even through the binary has been severely critiqued in academic circles, its persistence in educational discourse is, he argues, driven firstly by the global commodification of Asian international students and secondly by the continuation of solid stereotypes of cultural difference, which seem impervious to criticism. Marchart explores these two phenomena by firstly analysing Western university Websites, showing how they advertise essentialised differences, to market an alleged superior educational and cultural experience for international students to partake in. His demonstration shows how even seemingly progressive universities do not escape from the orientalist call for the *Them* to adapt to *Us* and our superior educational and cultural environment. Marchart relates this marketing to a more pernicious discourse than that of the international student confronting an inevitable “cultural clash”, coming from a less culturally developed culture to a higher-level culture. These perceptions, he argues, are devoid of critical discursive analysis, which assumes a clash and then sets out to find evidence, thereby ignoring evidence to the contrary. The result is to assume the clash is due to deficiencies of the students in not having the necessary adaptation skills to adjust to their host countries' culture. Marchart's evidence shows how this cultural clash syndrome is based on solid stereotypes and demonstrates little appreciation of the liquid character of international student identity or of the heterogeneity of the educational institution or its social setting. What Marchart's research exposes is how the commodification of education exacerbates the essentialising cultural tendencies, and in doing so aggravates the failings of the cultural clash discourse.

The second aspect of Marchart's analysis is to open our eyes to the substantial movement of students from East to East or South to South, which presents a corrective to the assumption that student mobility is but a one-way flow from the East to the alleged superior Western education system. Building on his critique of

essentialism, he notes that the idea of a unified Asian Confucius educational model is itself a vulgarisation of multiple Asian country models and teaching practices, where the pursuit of truth takes many forms. He debunks this notion of student uniformity in extensive surveys showing that international students come with many differing educational models and appreciations, which shape their respective adaptation to different teaching and research models in the East and the West. Despite the evidence of adaptation and the success of international students, the dominant discourse remains fixed, even ignorant of the heterogeneous nature of countries such as France, Australia, USA, or Malaysia. To drive home his point, Marchart conducts research on Chinese students studying in Malaysia to show how they have a fluid identity and reflect on their host country's culture, seeking to respond to that culture and adapt to it, therein having the potential to enhance their own sense of global identity. However, there is no single experience of a Chinese student studying in Malaysia; they come with differing backgrounds, skills, knowledge, and expectations. This should be the starting point for exploring international student adaptation rather than fixed categorisation.

As the above analysis gives testimony, Regis Marchart was a leading global educational researcher. Trained in Paris and writing from his academic base in Kuala Lumpur, he was in a unique position to critique the orientalisation of educational discourse from both an Eastern and a Western critical perspective. For this reason alone, his sudden death was a great blow to global educational theory. Nevertheless, Regis leaves us with a transcultural appreciation of how one must challenge educational essentialisation in the name of social justice.

In their chapter on East–West foreign policy ontology, McCarthy and Song develop the theme of West versus East to examine Australian foreign policy via three Australian governments, those of John Howard (1996–2007), Kevin Rudd (2007–2010), and Tony Abbott (2013–2015). The analysis explores how the three administrations fundamentally misunderstood China, because of an ontological assumption of Westerns superiority and a (neo)orientalist framing of China. The authors explore the paradox that China became Australia's major trading partner in 2007 and yet Australian knowledge of and understanding of China never matched their deeper economic ties. McCarthy and Song argue that this is due to a developmentalist logic, with Australian political leaders regarding Australia as the philosophical and social yardstick against which to measure China. Moreover, the misunderstanding of China is in no small part due to relegating China's revolutionary past to “dead” history. The chapter probes into the transcultural dimensions of this misunderstood relationship from a conscious position that reflects on the West as well as the East. Through an analysis of Howard's human rights dialogue, Rudd's misreading of China–Australia via the trope of friendship, and Abbott's insensitivity towards Chinese history in relation to Japan, this chapter offers a transcultural reading of Australia–China relations over the past two decades. McCarthy and Song argue that such relations are underpinned by what Pan has identified as an unreflective form of social knowledge (Pan 2012).

McCarthy and Song use as evidence to support this East versus West (un)reflectiveness by examining human rights dialogues between Australia and

China commencing with the Howard government. The chapter shows that Australia developed a Western conception of human rights as legal and political but was ready to sublimate this to expanding trade relations. Nevertheless, Australia did not accept the Chinese version of human rights as prioritising economic rights. Further, Australia was unable to appreciate the complex and variegated debates in China on human rights and how they emerged from the 1949 revolution and were amended after the death of Mao. Notwithstanding the differing conjunctures, there has been a certain continuity in the understanding of rights in China that is little appreciated in the West. Moreover, Dutton (2016) has argued that the notion of rights in China is tied to the politics of affect, where its acceptance is related to the flows of power and political legitimacy, across conjunctures.

The chapter then explores how despite Prime Minister Rudd speaking Mandarin and having a diplomatic knowledge of China, he ardently espoused the Western values system of his predecessor. This is evident in Rudd's "*zhengyou*" speech at Peking University where he chastised China over human rights violations in Tibet. Rudd's speech was well received in the West but officially in China, it was read as a Western attack on China's sovereignty. As Wang Hui (2011) explains, in China the Tibetan question must be traced back to 1949 and the vicissitudes in policies that have dealt with the region now made more complex by the overlaying of a market economy in Tibet. It is not just a sovereignty question but also one of a separation of religion and state and one of marketisation. Rudd's lack of reflection built up a greater distrust in China as the expectation was that his language skills were going to be matched by his level of cultural awareness.

Rudd's successor Julia Gillard followed the Howard formulae in prioritising the US alliance and espousing the view that the USA was the inspirational model of Western values. In contrast to Rudd, her attitude to China was diplomacy over Australia's values agenda. In contrast, the next conservative Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, was an avowed Anglophile, arguing Australia had to always choose the West over the East. Abbott saw Japan as a democratic non-Eastern country and consequently as the "best friend" and "ally" of Australia. Abbott's predilection for values diplomacy was seen in his siding with Japan in the South China Seas dispute between China and Japan, symbolised by contestation over Senkaku-Diaoyu islands. Going beyond Australia's neutral stance in the dispute, Abbott emphasised that China was at fault. He stressed that in terms of understanding Australia's position, it was important to note that for Australia, China was but a trading partner, whereas Japan was a democracy.

Abbott articulates the most extreme version of a developmentalism in which democracy is the end of history to which China must aspire. In this teleology, Japan is accepted as being both anti-communist and part of the Western development agenda due to its democracy. Concomitantly, there is the assumption that China's economic rise will follow a Eurocentric path and lead to pluralist democracy. In this ontology of West versus East, there is an overt Eurocentric postulation that China is reliving the Western path from feudalism to capitalism. However, China's economic liberalisation is better understood in terms of uneven and combined development between first tier cities, other cities, and the countryside.

Rather than understanding China in this uneven complexity, Australian governments appear to accept a clash of cultures and espouse a certain Western triumphalism. However, as Derrida (1994) argues, the spectre of Marxism is always with us, even if it is declared dead and the differing paths to capitalism are well illustrated by China. The point at issue here is that the irrevocable obligation of the West is to rethink China not in terms of its own sense of ontology but in terms of a different ontology, therein furthering the nation's sense of being. Australia looks at China without self-reflection so it imposes an idealised ontology onto the other and finds it wanting, whereas with the rise of China, it is Australia's own identity that requires reflection. It is, as Hamlet proclaims, the West that is "out of joint" with the East.

In short, the book's chapters respectively address a transcultural reflection on the East versus West paradigm. They adopt a mode of thinking that interconnects critical theory with case studies on media spaces, transcultural literature, cultural translation, poetic and musical inspirations and transplantations, East and West student identity, and West versus East foreign policy ontologies. The chapters have framed knowledge in a manner that destabilises the developmentalist logic so prevalent in the teleology of the East comes West discourse and contests the hierarchy of knowledge production. Moreover, the collection demonstrates that globalisation has heightened awareness of the multiple forms of knowledge productions in the current conjuncture of high academic, cultural, people, and knowledge mobility. Collectively, the volume contributes to critical dialogues between culturally divergent researchers questioning existing cultural frameworks and enhances our understanding of and between research scholarship which deals with collective societal and cultural challenges in the globalised world in which we live.

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