"A cool kid": Queer theory travels to China

Hongwei Bao, University of Nottingham, UK

Published in *Translation and Interpreting Studies* issn 1932-2798 | e-issn 1876-2700,

https://doi.org/10.1075/tis.19069.bao

Abstract:

This article traces the historical moment when queer theory first arrived in mainland China in the early 2000s by comparing and contrasting two translated texts in Chinese: Wang Fengzhen's book *Guaiyi Lilun* [Peculiar Theory] and Li Yinhe's book *Ku'er Lilun* [A Cool Kid Theory]. Juxtaposing the two translators' positioning and marketing strategies, along with their use of paratexts such as book cover design and translator's prefaces, this article aims to explain why *Ku'er Lilun* ended up being a more popular and widely circulated text than *Guaiyi Lilun*. It also pinpoints the cultural specificities of queer theory's reception in the postsocialist Chinese context at the beginning of the new millennium. This article hopes to provide critical insights into the politics of translating academic theories transnationally, with a focus on paratextual, extratextual, and contextual factors which work in tandem to shape the reception of these theories in a non-Western context.

Keywords: queer theory; queer; China; paratexts; Li Yinhe; Wang Fengzhen

Introduction

Queer theory first entered the People's Republic of China (PRC) at the beginning of the new millennium as a translated intellectual discourse and academic theory, represented by Wang Fengzhen's edited collection *Guaiyi Lilun* 怪异理论 (literally "peculiar theory") and Li Yinhe's edited collection *Ku'er Lilun* 酷儿理论 (literally "a cool kid theory"), both published in 2000.[1] Two decades have passed, and *ku'er* [queer] has now become a buzzword in China's LGBTQ communities and academic discourses, celebrated by some and criticized by others (Bao 2018; Yi 2018; Tang, Wang and Bao 2020). Terms such as *ku'er dianying* [queer film], *ku'er yishu* [queer art], *ku'er wenhua* [queer culture], and *ku'er shenfen* [queer identity] have become widely circulated terms in China's urban LGBTQ communities. Queer writer and filmmaker Cui Zi'en even claims that "compared to the American 'ghetto' of academic subspecialization, queer theory in China enjoys a much broader media presence" (Cui, quoted in Liu 2015: 35). By contrast, *Guaiyi Lilun* is only known to a small academic readership. On Douban (2020a), a Chinese-language book and film website popular among urban youths, at least six books use *ku'er* to translate "queer" in their titles, and only one book uses *guaiyi* in its book title and that is Wang Fengzhen's book. On the same website, 739 people have reviewed *Ku'er Lilun*, in contrast to only 29 reviews for *Guaiyi Lilun* (Douban 2020b). The two books on the same topic could not have been treated more differently. Their differing fates lead me to ask: How did queer theory travel to mainland China? What historical, social, and cultural contexts have shaped the Chinese understandings of queer theory? Between Wang's "peculiar theory" and Li's "a cool kid theory", why did Li's translation end up being

[1] In this article, I primarily use the *hanyu pinyin* romanization and follow the Chinese order in presenting Chinese-language names; that is, surname first, followed by given names (e.g., Li Yinhe), unless a preferred way of spelling and presenting names exists. I use the Western name order when a Chinese scholar is known in English in that order. All the translations are mine unless otherwise specified. Both *guaiyi* and *ku'er* translate the English term queer. I opt to translate *guaiyi* literally as "peculiar" and *ku'er* literally as "a cool kid" to make distinctions between the two terms and to draw readers' attention to their cultural specificities in the Chinese context.

more popular whereas Wang's translation is almost forgotten? What does this tell us about the process and politics of translating academic theories?

This article contributes to the scholarly discussion about the translation of critical and cultural theories in a transnational context, often known as the "traveling theories" debate. In his classic essay "Traveling Theory", Edward Said (1984) argues that theories are always on the move; when they travel from the West to non-Western contexts, they may lose some of their critical edge, entailing different processes of representation and institutionalization. James Clifford (1989) challenges the Eurocentrism in Said's use of the "travel" metaphor (which often suggests that a traveler has a fixed origin and destination); he points to the multiple, hybrid, and creole spaces of theoretical production. Feminist scholar Caren Kaplan (1996) draws attention to the transnational material context of traveling theories, often shaped by legacies and processes of colonialism and cultural imperialism. Chinese feminist scholar Min Dongchao proposes an "alternative traveling theory", which pays meticulous attention to "the complexities of the relationship between power and influence that underpins what does and what does *not* travel" (Min 2017: 7, original emphasis). In Min's account of how feminism has traveled to China in the post-Mao era, liberal feminism has travelled faster and more easily than socialist feminism, largely due to the historical context of global neoliberalism in which feminist theories travel. "Traveling theory" therefore points to invisible ideological positions inhabited by translators and complex power relations embedded in the processes of translation.

The notion of "traveling theory" is a useful tool for us to think about how queer theory travels transnationally. If we acknowledge that queer theory was first produced in a Western context, and that it has now become accepted or even institutionalized in many parts of the world, it is necessary to ask what this process looks like in each social and cultural context and what factors may have shaped the process. Following Min's critical question

about what travels and what does not, we may further interrogate the power relations that shape how theories travel. Recognizing the importance of translation, we can also query the role of translators: what role translators play in the processes of traveling theories, and whether different translators engender distinct sets of enabling or disabling effects. This article aims to address the question of how theories travel by analyzing individual translators situated in specific social and cultural contexts, using how queer theory traveled to the PRC in the early 2000s as a case study. Although there has been abundant scholarship addressing the translation of queer theory in the Taiwanese and other Sinophone contexts (e.g. Damm 2003; Martin 2003; Lim 2008, 2009; Chen 2011; Guo 2020) and the translation of knowledge about homosexuality in China's Republican era (e.g. Sang 2003; Kang 2009; Chiang 2010; Rocha 2010; Guo 2016), there is little research on how queer theory has been translated into the contemporary post-Mao and postsocialist PRC context. This article fills this gap in academic literature.

In this article, I trace the historical moment when queer theory first emerged in the PRC by comparing Li's translation with Wang's translation. My focus is not simply on how the two translators translate the concepts of "queer" and "queer theory" for a Chinese-language readership; I am also interested in the "paratexts" (Batchelor 2018) surrounding translated texts--including book cover design, promotional blurbs, translators' prefaces and introductions--together with other extratextual and contextual factors, including the translators' profiles and the academic disciplines in which they are situated. By situating the two translated texts in the context of postsocialist Chinese society, I interrogate how queer theory, as well as the academic disciplines with which these translations engage--cultural studies and sociology--participate in China's social change in the post-Mao and postsocialist era (1978 to present). I contend that queer theory's relatively smooth entry into mainland China owes as much to sociology as Li's social status of being a public intellectual and media

celebrity. Moreover, queer theory's reception in China is also politically and ideologically complex, as it coincides with the ascendance of liberal and neoliberal ideologies in a postsocialist Chinese society that gradually departed from socialism and embraced differences in gender, sexuality, and desire. Overall, this article highlights the assemblage of a multiplicity of political, commercial, and human factors in shaping the reception of translated texts and traveling theories.

A "cool kid theory": Queer theory travels to the Sinophone world

By 2000, when the two Chinese-language books were published, queer theory was only a decade old in Western academia. Its signature birth is often attributed to a special issue of *Difference: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, guest edited by Teresa de Lauretis (1991) and titled *Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities*. In her introduction to this special issue, de Lauretis juxtaposes "queer" with "lesbian and gay" and intends "queer" to function as a critically disruptive term to challenge "the discourse of white gay historiography and sociology" (1991: iv). Since then, queer theory has gained increasing popularity in Western academia. Within a mere few years, several anthologies (e.g., Abelove et al. 1993; Warner 1993; Escoffier et al. 1995; Morton 1996) and even a textbook-type introductory guide (Jagose 1996) had been published. Annamarie Jagose starts her book *Queer Theory: An Introduction* with a quote from Michael Warner: "The appeal of "queer theory" has outstripped anyone's sense of what exactly it means" (quoted in Jagose 1996: n.p.), gesturing toward the open and uncertain nature of queer theory in its origin and development.

On the other side of the Pacific, "queer" was transliterated into *ku'er* in the January 1994 issue of the literary and cultural journal *Island Margin* in Taiwan, in a special issue titled "*Ku'er*/ Queer" guest edited by Hung Ling (aka Lucifer Hung), Chi Ta-wei, and Tan

T'ang-mo (Lim 2008: 238). Besides two translated short stories, this special issue also included an article titled "Little *Ku'er* Encyclopedia", with forty-nine entries of queer-related terms and images "seemingly culled from Western pornographic sources" (ibid). Song Hwee Lim reads the emergence of "queer" in Taiwan as "a struggle for cultural capital in the literary and intellectual fields, with the young upstarts attempting to stamp their mark on the map of discourses on same-sex sexuality" (2008: 241). Examining Taiwan's queer movement in the 1990s, Li-fen Chen observes that the term queer often valorizes a "cultural politics of resistance" and has become "a meaning-loaded keyword in this strain of counter-nationalist dissident culture" (2011: 387). Examining an online queer community in Taiwan, Terri He (2007) observes that community members negotiate with terms such as *tongxinglian* [homosexuals], *tongzhi* [literally comrades, meaning gay or queer] and *ku'er* [queer] along the nexuses of East and West, China and Taiwan, and such a negotiation is often highly political.

Ku'er is not the only way to translate the English term "queer" in Taiwan. Feminist scholar Chang Hsiao-hung (2000) prefers using *guaitai* [weirdo or freak] to translate queer. As Fran Martin suggests, *guaitai* is "one of several terms which attempt more precisely to translate the meaning of queer, in this instance, as a literal translation of 'queer' as a refunctioned term of homophobic abuse" (2003: 4). However, *guaitai* is not as popular and long-lived as *ku'er* largely because the stigmatized term *guaitai* runs against LGBTQ communities' collective will to detach themselves from a stigmatized past. In contemporary Sinophone academia and queer communities, *ku'er* has ended up being the default translation of "queer" (Lim 2008, 2009; Chen 2011; Guo 2020). *Ku'er*--as its literal translation "a cool kid" suggests--often conjures up an association of youthfulness, playfulness, joy, and rebelliousness, thus devoid of its stigmatized history and association in the Anglophone context. This is complicated by the term's close association with popular and consumer

culture: *ku'er* is a homophone of the English word "cool" and the name of a Coca Cola branded drink called Qoo (pronounced *ku'er*) popular in Taiwan at the time (He 2007: 205).

It is worthwhile noting that terms such as *ku'er*, *tongzhi* and *tongxinglian* coexist in the Sinophone sphere and are used--and sometimes conflated --by various groups for specific reasons and purposes. Overall, *ku'er* is predominantly used in the intellectual, art, and activist communities in Taiwan, denoting youthful rebelliousness, creativity, and social distinction (Lim 2008). This association has not been completely lost when *ku'er* travels to other parts of the Sinophone world. In the PRC context, *ku'er* also carries its own cultural baggage because of the distinct historical and social contexts upon its entry at the beginning of the new millennium.

A "peculiar theory": An estranged encounter between cultural studies and queer theory

Following the dissemination of queer theory and the rise of queer studies in Taiwan and other Sinophone contexts in the 1990s, *Guaiyi Lilun*, the first academic book on queer theory in simplified Chinese, was published in mainland China in January 2000. The book was an effort made by a group of cultural studies scholars in China to engage with the issue of non-normative sexuality, and such an engagement did not generate the social impact it would have anticipated.

Guaiyi Lilun is a collection of translated essays, edited by cultural studies scholar Wang Fengzhen and translated by several other cultural studies scholars. An esteemed translator of Fredric Jameson's theoretical works on postmodernism and cultural politics, Wang had long dedicated himself to editing and translating works in critical theory and cultural studies from English to Chinese since the 1990s. This collection is part of the Avant-Garde Translation Series published by the Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences Press. The

book series includes a book on rock music and another on the 1960s counterculture in the West. It is worth mentioning here that many Chinese cultural studies scholars, Wang included, come from a literary studies background, and cultural studies is often seen in China as a subfield associated with Western literary theory and comparative literature. Queer theory, therefore, first arrived in the PRC as part of the scholarly effort to introduce cultural studies to the Chinese academia as a new approach to study Western literature and culture.

Guaiyi Lilun is dedicated to the study of "peculiar phenomena in human relations, including homosexuality, bisexuality, transvestism, and third sex" (Wang 2000: 3).[2] The 127,000-word book contains the Chinese translation of six full-length English articles by Lisa Duggan, Nancy Fraser, Judith (Jack) Halberstam, Phillip Brian Harper, Rosalind C. Morris, and Priscilla Wald. Despite the eclectic variety here, these texts are rather difficult to read and often require a familiarity with both poststructuralist theories and American culture in order to understand them. In the book, the editor did very little to explain his selection criteria or the contexts of these texts. This negligence can lead to readers' difficulty in understanding texts, or even misreading them. The first article in this collection--which was also among the first English-language queer scholarship translated for a mainland Chinese readership--is titled "Cultures and Carriers: 'Typhoid Mary' and the Science of Social Control" (Wald 1997). It analyses the racial and gender "othering" of the epidemic narrative in American history at the beginning of the twentieth century and attributes this narrative to the US government's social control of its population. This article may seem largely irrelevant to the lives of sexual minorities, but the context of its publication is worth noting: this article was written in the late 1990s as a response to the "othering" of gay communities in the AIDS

[2] Wang's discussion of "peculiar theory" will be discussed later in this section. Based on his preface for the book, Wang equates "peculiar" with non-normative sexualities such as homosexuality, bisexuality, transvestism, and third sex, all found in the decadent, capitalist West and presumably non-existent in China. This also reflects the general public perception in the Sinophone world toward these phenomena at the time.

pandemic. The historical analysis of the "Typhoid Mary" story in the 1900s thus serves as a critique to the Reagan government's deliberate negligence and even demonization of LGBTQ communities during the 1980s and 90s AIDS pandemic. Unfortunately, this important contextual information was lost in translation due to the editor's negligence. Most Chinese readers were not familiar with the AIDS history and gay history in the USA; and the Chinese government had yet to openly acknowledge the existence of AIDS in China, let alone the existence of China's gay communities. Without necessary contextualization, the article may even have helped to establish a link between non-normative sexualities, viral contagion, and Western decadence, thus further stigmatizing and othering sexual minorities in China--a possible negative consequence which the translator might not have anticipated.

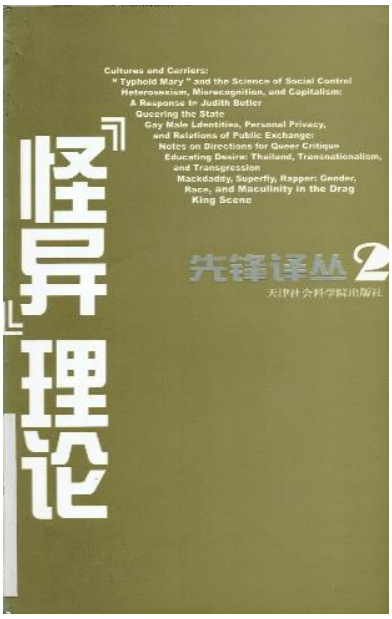

Figure 1. *Guaiyi Lilun* book cover

From a design and marketing perspective, *Guaiyi Lilun* is oriented toward a niche academic readership. The seaweed green book cover is characterized by a minimalist design,

which conveys a sense of solemnity and even alienation (Figure 1). All the English titles of the articles collected in the book are clearly listed on the front cover of the book, appearing oblivious to its Chinese context. The message that the front cover sends to the readers seems to be: one needs to possess a considerable degree of cultural capital--including a good command of English and some familiarity with academic literature and Western popular culture--in order to feel comfortable enough to pick up the book from a shelf, and this target readership would have been a privileged minority in the early 2000s China. The Chinese translation of these article titles listed on the back cover of the book equally appear strange and even alienating to a general readership. Terms including *daijunzhe* [virus carrier], *shanghan* [typhoid], *lapitiao zhe* [pimp], and *fandu zhe* [drug trafficker] seem hardly inviting to LGBTQ readers, either. *Tongxinglian* [homosexual] is listed alongside all these terms--all carrying negative connotations--and this has the effect of further stigmatizing sexual minorities.

Simple cover design and lack of consideration of its queer readership aside, perhaps the biggest weakness of the book is that it fails to give a clear explanation to the readers what queer theory is. Filled with abstract English and academic jargon, the book cover does not seem to make any effort to communicate with its readers about the topic and subject matter. The editor's preface does not help readers understand what queer theory is, either. Written by Wang himself, *Guaiyi Lilun*'s preface is a generic text introducing the whole book series (Avant-Garde Translation Series) instead of the book alone. Wang starts the preface by explaining what *xianfeng* [avant-garde] means, relating the term to contemporary American culture and the field of cultural studies. He then proceeds to a one-paragraph summary of each book in the series. Wang describes *guaiyi lilun* [queer theory] in the following one-paragraph summary:

> *Guaiyi Lilun* focuses on hot cultural topics in contemporary USA; that is, the meanings and significances of some "peculiar" cultures. *Guaiyi* denotes some "odd" phenomena in human relations, including homosexuality, bisexuality, transvestism, and the third sex. These phenomena are usually seen as "peculiar" or "odd", and these people are often discriminated against and treated badly in society. However, these people do not consider themselves odd. Instead, they seize every opportunity to fight for equality. (Wang 2000: 3, my translation)

Wang's definition of queer theory at the same time broadens and narrows down the meaning of queer: not as an umbrella term for gender and sexual minorities, nor as a post-identitarian gender and sexual politics, but as encompassing all "peculiar" and "odd" phenomena in human relations, and especially in the USA. These phenomena seem to exist exclusively in contemporary American society and are presumably irrelevant to China. As such, reading about and studying these "hot cultural topics in contemporary USA" effectively conveys a sense of occidentalism (Chen 1995); that is, a partial, stereotypical, and often biased imagination of the West as liberal and desirable but at the same time sexually promiscuous, decadent, and even dangerous. Such an imagination was shared by Chinese intellectuals and the general public in the early 2000s as China was ready to enter the World Trade Organisation. This occidentalist discourse often functioned along the binary opposition of a good, moral socialist state versus a corrupt, amoral capitalist West. The West, represented by the USA, was imagined as a place full of "odd" and "peculiar" things such as "homosexuality, bisexuality, transvestism, and the third sex". It was a place filled with hopes and dangers, fascination and fear, at the same time.

Such an occidentalist understanding of the American society underpins Wang's book. The book therefore deals with all the "odd" things in American society including virus carriers, typhoid, pimps, drug traffickers, and homosexuals, as the article titles listed on the

book cover suggest. Devoid of sexual politics and detached from its local context, *guaiyi lilun* becomes the fetishized object and privileged knowledge of a small minority of heterosexual-identified, cosmopolitan Chinese male intellectuals, well informed but at the same time critical of the West. Their knowledge of queer theory has little to do with the lives or interests of LGBTQ people in China. This type of knowledge risks further marginalizing and stigmatizing gender and sexual minorities. Such knowledge effectively becomes a marker of some academics' social distinction and cultural capital in an increasingly competitive intellectual field. This manifests some interesting parallels with as well as differences from other Sinophone contexts: literary and cultural studies scholars in Taiwan also translated queer theory to showcase their distinction in the academia but the impact of these scholars in the 1990s Taiwan was far greater than that of their mainland Chinese counterparts in the 2000s mainland China (Lim 2008, 2009; Chen 2011; Liu 2015). As the first book on queer theory published in the PRC, *Guaiyi Lilun* failed in its mission both in terms of attracting a readership and promoting queer theory.

Unsurprisingly, *Guaiyi Lilun* did not enjoy a long shelf life or have a large readership. The publication of *Guaiyi Lilun* in January 2000 attracted limited attention in the field of literary and cultural studies and soon became a forgotten event. After the first print run, the book did not reprint. The obscurity of Wang's book thus forms a sharp contrast with the fame Li has garnered for her translation of queer theory. I suggest that, on top of some weaknesses in Wang's translation, book packaging, and promotion, this lack of interest and impact can be partly attributed to the status of cultural studies in general as an unrecognized field of study in China (which only started in the late 1990s), in comparison to the more institutionalized and established discipline of sociology (which started in the 1920s and was re-established in 1979 after being banned as a "bourgeois pseudoscience" in the Mao era) in China at the time (Dai 2012; Zhou and Pei 1997). More importantly, Li's "celebrity effect"--that is, her symbolic,

social, and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984)--has shaped the destiny of her book in a significant way, a topic I will discuss in the next section.

"A cool kid theory": An intimate encounter between sociology and queer theory

A month after the publication of *Guaiyi Lilun*, a book titled *Ku'er Lilun* (*Queer Theory*) appeared on the book market, edited by Li Yinhe and published by Current Affairs Press, a commercial publisher which targets a general reading public. An academic book such as *Ku'er Lilun* could hardly expect to become a bestseller. And yet this book ended up becoming one of the most popular Chinese-language books on queer theory and even marked the official entry of queer theory into the PRC (Yi 2018; Tang, Wang, and Bao 2020). The following two sections aim to offer an explanation for the book's popularity and impact.

Before 2000, there were only a limited number of academic essays and scattered online articles about queer theory in mainland China, amongst which was an appended section at the end of the second edition of Li Yinhe's (1998a) seminal *Tongxinglian ya wenhua* [*The Subculture of Homosexuality*], a piece of sociological research introducing the "homosexual subculture" in the 1990s Beijing. In the appended section of the book, Li introduced a "trending Western theory on human sexuality", but the introduction was brief. Also there, Li translated "queer theory" into *ku'er lilun*. In the 2000 book *Ku'er Lilun* Li elaborated in lengths on her understandings of queer theory.

Li's book *Ku'er Lilun* was a collection of translated essays on sex and sexuality. The book, totaling 300,000 words, contains the Chinese translation of seventeen texts from English, written by authors such as Judith Butler, Stephen Epstein, David Goldman, David Halperin, Gayle Rubin, Steven Seidman, Cherry Smith, Michael Warner, and Monique Wittig. The collection includes Judith Butler's (1991) classic text "Imitation and Gender

Insubordination", Gayle Rubin's (1984) "Thinking Sex: Note for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality", as well as Monique Wittig's "The Straight Mind" (1980a) and "One is Not Born a Woman" (1980b). Judging from the sources of these articles, they were not from the same English anthology. Li must have put together the articles she could find at the time from various sources to compile such a book. While some are independent essays and articles originally published in academic journals and edited collections, others are prefaces to books such as Steve Seidman's (1996) introduction to his edited book *Queer Theory Sociology* and Michael Warner's (1993) introduction to the edited collection *Fear of a Queer Planet*.

Overall, these articles and book prefaces have several features in common. Firstly, all these theoretical texts are selected from Anglophone queer theory. Even when non-Anglophone authors are chosen, they are often heavily mediated by English language scholarship. For example, French queer feminist Monique Wittig's texts "The Straight Mind" (1980a) and "One is Not Born a Woman" (1980b) are known in the Anglophone world largely because Wittig wrote them in English after she had moved from France to the United States in the late 1970s. The Anglophone bias of the selection can be attributed to the origin of queer theory in the United States in the 1990s, the hegemony of the English-language scholarship in queer knowledge production worldwide, as well as Li's own linguistic competence and her scope of knowledge and experience.[3]

Secondly, most of these articles are introductory texts; or at least, they were written in a reader-friendly manner. This is demonstrated by their short and often self-explanatory titles, including "Ku'er jiujing shi shenme?" [What is that thing called queer?] and "Nage guaiyi de ku'er shi shui"? [Who is that queer queer?]. Most of these texts do not require readers to have

[3] Li gained a PhD in sociology from the University of Pittsburgh in 1988 and her PhD dissertation is on marriage and family in urban China (Cochrane and Wang 2020).

a deep understanding of relevant theories and contexts. Li has therefore made particular efforts in selecting introductory texts suitable for a general readership.

Thirdly, there is a strong emphasis on sociological texts over texts from other disciplines such as literary and cultural studies. This is showcased by the inclusion of sociological texts such as Steve Epstein's (1994) "A Queer Encounter: Sociology and the Study of Sexuality", Arlene Stein and Ken Plummer's (1994) "I Cannot Even Think Straight: Queer Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology", Steven Seidman's (1996) introduction to *Queer Theory Sociology*, as well as Michael Warner's (1993) introduction to *Fear of a Queer Planet*. As if to make a statement about the usefulness of queer theory in real life, there is also an article titled "Shijian zhong de ku'er lilun" [Queer Theory in Practice]. In a post-Mao and postsocialist society where "practice" was given prime importance and even seen as the "sole criterion for truth", such an emphasis on practice, utility, and pragmatism would no doubt have been welcomed by Chinese readers at the turn of the twentieth century.

A professor from China's lyceum research institute and government think-tank, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Li had already established herself as one of China's leading sociologists and sexologists before the book was published. She was often referred to as "China's first sexologist" (Kehoe 2017) and had published about a dozen books on gender, sexuality and family, including her pioneering research on the subcultures of homosexuality and sadomasochism (Li and Wang 1992; Li 1998a, 1998b).[4] Li was also known as the partner of China's leading novelist and essayist Wang Xiaobo, who passed away in 1997. At the time of *Ku'er Lilun*'s publication, Li was yet to publicly engage in China's burgeoning LGBTQ activism and rights advocacy.[5] She was also yet to propose the legalization of same-sex

[4] Li's books published at the time can be roughly divided into two categories: books based on empirical research (e.g., Li and Wang 1992; Li 1998a, 1998c) and books introducing Western theories to China (e.g., Li 1998b, 2000).
[5] In December 2001, Li attended a talk show hosted by the Hunan Satellite Television with queer writer Cui Zi'en and artist Shi Tou, a public event that marked the media "coming out" of China's LGBTQ community.

marriage to China's legislative body, which made her a controversial public figure in 2001. But even in early 2000, she was already a well-known public intellectual and media celebrity, and her lectures and books had a large following in China and internationally. Li was frequently interviewed by the media and later kept an active profile on social media, making social commentaries and critiques. Li knew how to capitalize on her celebrity status in the "attention economy" (Bueno 2016) and she used her influence strategically to advocate for gender and sexual equality in China, supporting issues such as legalization of same-sex marriage and decriminalization of polygamy, prostitution, and orgies. In a largely sexually and morally conservative Chinese society, Li is frequently controversial and even provocative, but she is well respected in China's queer communities because of her sexuality research and LGBTQ rights advocacy.

Li's systematic exposure to queer theory can be traced to a residential seminar series which she attended at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) in 1998. At the research seminars, she met Western queer theorists such as Judith Butler and Gayle Rubin and also collected English-language articles for inclusion in her *Ku'er Lilun* book project.[6] From 14 January to 20 February 1998, Li, together with three other Chinese gender studies scholars, visited UCSC for a six-week residential seminar series. The seminars were funded by the Henry Luce Foundation and organized by three UCSC-based gender studies scholars--Gail Hershatter, Emily Honig and Lisa Rofel--to review and develop gender studies scholarship in China and the USA. During the six weeks, Chinese and American gender studies scholars met regularly to present their own research; they also had intensive discussions about gender theories and feminist research methodologies. It is important to note

[6] Li Yinhe recounts her UCSC experiences in her preface to the 2003 edition of *Kuer Lilun* (an updated version of the 2000 book on queer theory) (Li 2003: 1-2). Another participant in the seminar series, Cai Yiping (2019), also recalls learning about queer theory at the UCSC seminars. I thank Gail Hershatter and Lisa Rofel for verifying facts and supplying information about the UCSC seminars.

here that the UCSC residential seminar series were organized by feminist scholars working on Chinese history and these seminars focused primarily on feminist issues. One can even argue that personal connections and academic exchanges in transnational feminism shaped the transnational travel of queer theory from the USA to China. From the outset, queer theory in the PRC had more connections with feminism than with the LGBTQ movement and lesbian and gay studies scholarship.

The book *Ku'er Lilun* is a part of "Li Yinhe's Book Series on the Sociology of Sex", a collection of five books (Li 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 1999, 2000) on sex and sexuality, jointly published by three commercial publishers (China Youth Press, Today's China Press, and Current Affairs Press). It may seem odd that commercial publishers would be interested in publishing books related to sociology, but the principle of "sex sells" applied in the early 2000s China as much as in many other places in the world (Farrer 2002).

Figure 2. *Ku'er Lilun* book cover

Both the book packaging of *Ku'er Lilun* and Li's writing style have contributed to the relative popularity of the book. *Ku'er Lilun* has a simple but memorable book cover (Figure 2). Two golden-colored and full-blooming sunflowers occupy half of the front cover, giving a sense of vitality but also suggesting sexual innuendo. The book's Chinese and English titles are conspicuously printed on the cover. Although *ku'er lilun* was a new term in the Chinese language at the time, the book's subtitle "Western sexual thought in [the] 1990s" gives readers a clear sense of what the book is about. On the front cover, Gayle Rubin et al. are acknowledged to be co-authors and Li Yinhe is listed as translator of the book. On the top left, the title of the book series, *xing shehuixue xilie* [sociology of sexuality], is unambiguously listed, indicating the academic nature of the book; this also functions as an advertisement for the entire book series. Contrary to the vague nature of Wang's book toward its subject matter, *Ku'er Lilun* makes a deliberate effort to tell the readers about the content of the book. While the book uses Li's "brand name" and the book series as a selling point, it also conveys a sense of positivity (embodied in the image of sunflowers) and cosmopolitanism (signified by the simultaneous use of the English and Chinese languages).

As if the book's front cover is not clear enough, the book blurb printed on the back cover also helps to clarify the subject matter:

> From the 1990s, some sexual dissidents in the West--including homosexuals, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals, and sadomasochists--have started to call themselves "queer". They have also invented "queer theory", a theory about themselves and their sexual dissidence. In my view, although there are various ways of being queer, and different interpretations of queer theory, queer theory can be summed up in one phrase--to live a free life. I hope that this book can function like a gust of wind, blowing open Chinese people's conservative and repressed mind, and making us live and breathe freely from now on. (my translation)

Compared to Wang's generic explanation of *guaiyi lilun* as "hot cultural topics in contemporary USA", Li's description of *ku'er lilun* seems clearer and more reader-friendly. As the summary specifies the core issues of gender and sexuality, it also makes strategic use of the discourse of universalism to appeal to a wider readership. Here queer is not seen as a minority issue, but an issue of great importance to everyone in society; China is not seen as an exception to a 'universal' experience, but an integral part of a global humanity. This forms a sharp contrast with Wang's minoritarian, subcultural, occidentalist, and even Chinese exceptionalist framing of queer theory. It may seem odd that Li would turn to the discourse of universalism to establish the legitimacy of queer theory--a theory often associated with poststructuralism and postmodernism--but such a modernist rhetoric aptly chimes with the collective reimagination of China's new place in a global capitalist modernity in the post-Mao and postsocialist era (Rofel 2007). The analogy of queer theory to "a gust of wind" being able to "blow open Chinese people's conservative and repressed mind, and make us live and breathe freely from now on" may sound like an idiosyncratic rhetoric; it however taps into the popular, utopian, universalist, and cosmopolitan discourses in Chinese society at the turn of the century. Indeed, Li Yinhe's understanding and framing of queer theory is full of such utopianism, reflecting a widespread sense of optimism in Chinese society at the beginning of the millennium.

A utopian theory in postsocialist times

In her introduction to *Ku'er Lilun*, Li explains her rationale of using the term *ku'er* to translate queer:

> *Ku'er* is a transliteration of the English term "queer". […] I have thought about using other words such as "strange" [*qiyi*] and "alternative" [*yuzhong butong*] to translate the

> term, but such translations often seem too plain; they tend to lose the subversive nature of the term. I cannot find a Chinese equivalent to translate the subversion either. I eventually decided to use the transliterated term *ku'er* from Hong Kong and Taiwan. (Li 2003: 1)

In this account, Li confesses that she has considered several options including *qiyi* and *yuzhong butong* before deciding to adopt *ku'er*; she also acknowledges the Sinophone origin of the term *ku'er*. The major difficulty for her is the subversive nature of the English term "queer", which can be easily lost in translation. After all, the Sinophone originated *ku'er* is not satisfactory in getting the subversive meaning across. As mentioned earlier, although "a cool kid" conveys a sense of youthful coolness and rebelliousness, it loses the stigmatized history embedded in the English term "queer". This is complicated by the fact that *ku'er* often conjures up a sense of fashion, style, and consumption usually associated with urban youth in the Chinese language, thus strongly compromising queer theory's initial aim to be radical, political, and resistant to social norms. *Ku'er* is chosen, in this context, not because of its subversiveness but because of consistency in using language for academic communication and exchange in the Sinophone sphere.

In contrast to the lack of clarification and often misrepresentation in Wang's introduction, Li offers a brief history of the origin of queer and queer theory in the North American context in her introductory text. Moreover, she summarizes the key arguments of queer theory in five points, in her own words: first, queer theory challenges gender and sexual norms by disrupting the heterosexual/homosexual binary; second, it challenges gender dimorphism characterized by the male/female binary; third, it challenges the identity politics privileging the gay male experience; fourth, it brings together all gender and sexual minorities, and thus embodies the potential for building a coalition politics; fifth, it is informed by poststructuralism and postmodern theories which aim to challenge "grand narratives" (Li 2003: 4-14). In ten pages, Li explicates these five points with a combination

of theoretical discussions and examples from Western popular culture, including Madonna, Oscar Wilde, Tom of Finland (11). She also introduces Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender performativity (5-7), Eve Sedgwick's (1991) and Michael Warner's (1993) critiques of gay identity politics, complete with British writer and satirist Mark Simpson's (1999) discussion of queer popular culture (Li 2003: 8-9, 11). Examples from China and discussions of Chinese society are missing from Li's introduction. Despite this, the key points of queer theory are clearly laid out in Li's own words and in a lucid language. Her five-point summary of queer theory has since become a standard reference for numerous scholarly discussions of queer theory in the PRC context (e.g., Gao 2006; Yang 2011; Tang, Wang, and Bao 2020).

In the introductory text, Li expresses a firm belief and strong confidence in queer theory. She concludes her introduction with the following words:

> Queer theory is a highly subversive theory. It drastically changes how people think about things. It makes all the exclusionary minority groups look narrow-minded. It arms people with the weapons and power required to throw away all the old-fashioned ideas. Queer theory embodies great strength and vitality. It directs us to the twilight of the twenty-first century. (Li 2003: 14-15, my translation)

These words, full of passion and optimism, almost sound hyperbolic to today's readers, but the roots of such a writing style can be found in the tradition of revolutionary romanticism, a literary genre often used in leftist literature from China's socialist era (Wang 2011). Growing up under socialism, Li would no doubt be familiar with such a writing style. This style of language was powerful and affective in socialist and revolutionary contexts because it conjured up a feeling of revolutionary optimism and socialist utopia. In the post-Mao and postsocialist context, such a style is still powerful and speaks to the collective memories of a generation. Packaged in an affective language and a leftist writing style, queer

theory has ceased to be a Western theory, a theory about "hot topics" and "peculiar cultural phenomena" in the contemporary USA, or a theory only relevant to gender and sexual minorities. It has been imagined as a theory for all humanity, with its utopian imperatives and emancipatory potentials. Queer Theory therefore spoke to the "structures of feeling" (Williams 1961) of a postsocialist Chinese society at the time. At the beginning of a new millennium and with China's entry into the World Trade Organization and the world of global neoliberal capitalism, people might not have known where China--and the world--would be heading, but this did not stop them from imagining a utopian future, and queer theory seemed a perfect fit in this picture. Fully endorsed by a renowned and respected sociologist, public intellectual, and media celebrity, queer theory gained indisputable legitimacy in the PRC. Thanks to Li Yinhe and other Chinese translators' efforts, queer theory was able to land safely in mainland China in those years.

Conclusion

Li's and Wang's translations of queer theory highlight the assemblage of a contingent number of factors--political, commercial, and human--in shaping how theories travel and how translated texts are received in a specific social and cultural context. Among these, linguistic and translation skills--often valorized in translation and interpreting studies--do not seem the only factors that matter. Surrounding the figure of the translator, a multiplicity of paratextual, extratextual, and contextual factors are at play.

Firstly, this article has highlighted the importance of paratextual and extratextual factors. Li's and Wang's books differ significantly in their choices of book title, book cover design, selection of articles, and the framing statements they make to introduce queer theory in the books' prefaces and introductions. For potential readers, all these paratexts are as

important as the translated texts themselves. The contexts of the publishing industry--including the selection of publishers, book series, and marketing strategies--also have an impact on a book's shelf life and social impact.

Secondly, this article has demonstrated the crucial role that translators play in the process of traveling theories. The social status--i.e., the "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1984)--of translators plays a crucial role in the promotion of books. Wang is an excellent scholar in his own right, but his influence outside the field of literary and cultural studies is limited. By contrast, as a public intellectual and media celebrity with a long-term investment in sexuality studies, Li's name has become a unique selling point for her books. Her empathetic attitude toward and close relationship with China's LGBTQ communities has also won her strong community support and a loyal following. In other words, a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship between Li and the LGBTQ communities has contributed to the popularity of the book.

Thirdly, this article has emphasized the academic fields and disciplines where discourses about sex and sexualities are legitimized. In China at the beginning of the millennium, both cultural studies and sociology engaged with queer theory in distinct ways. Cultural studies, with its obsession with "high theory" and a sense of elitism at the time, failed to connect with LGBTQ communities and the general reading public. Sociology, on the other hand, with its emphasis on empiricism, socially relevant research, and humanitarian concerns for marginalized groups, tapped into the "structures of feelings" at the beginning of the new millennium. Li's research demonstrated the relevance of sociology to the lives of marginalized social groups and to the entire Chinese society. This comparison does not suggest an epistemological superiority of any academic discipline. It does, however, remind us of the role of academic and scientific knowledge in creating and legitimizing discourses about marginalized people and communities (Foucault 1990), together with the necessity for

a more collaborative relationship between the researcher and those being researched (Lahman 2017).

Queer theory should therefore be seen as a transnational body of knowledge that does not have a fixed trajectory. Although originated in the West, queer theory has traveled to different parts of the world with varied and unpredictable impacts in the past three decades. The translation of queer theory should not be seen merely as a linear process of 'import, export and transport' (Mesquita, Katharina and Lasthofer 2012), with its "gives" and "takes", as well as origins and derivatives. Instead, it entails a constant process of transformation and creation, engaging with specific historical and social contexts and forming unexpected assemblages. Attractively packaged by academic and commercial publishing industries and mediated by celebrity translators, queer theory as "a cool kid" appears commercially attractive, politically pertinent, and ideologically complex in a postsocialist and neoliberal world.

References:

Abelove, Henry et al. (eds). 1993. *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Bachelor, Katherine. 2018. *Translation and Paratexts*. London: Routledge.

Bao, Hongwei. 2018. *Queer Comrades: Gay Identity and Tongzhi Activism in Postsocialist China*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge.

Bueno, Claudio Celis. 2016. *The Attention Economy: Labor, Time and Power in Cognitive Capitalism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.

Butler, Judith. 1991. "Imitation and Gender Insubordination." In *Inside/ Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. by Diana Fuss, 13-31. New York: Routledge.

Cai, Yiping. 2019. "Tansuo disan shijie nüquan yundong." [Exploring Women's Movements in the Third World] *Tongyu*. Last accessed 15 August 2020. http://www.tongyulala.org/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=25&id=136.

Chang, Hsiao-hung. 2000. *Guaitai jiating luoman shi* [*Queer Family Romance*]. Taipei: Shibao.

Chen, Li-fen. 2011. "Queering Taiwan: In Search of Nationalism's Other." *Modern China* 37(4): 384-421. www.jstor.org/stable/23053329

Chen, Xiaomei. 1995. *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chiang, Howard. 2010. "Epistemic Modernity and the Emergence of Homosexuality in China." *Gender & History* 22(3): 629-657. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0424.2010.01612.x

Cochrane, Donald, and Jinjie Wang. 2020. "Vision Without Action is Merely A Dream": A Conversation with Li Yinhe." *Critical Asian Studies* 52(3): 446-463. DOI: 10.1080/14672715.2020.1768132

Clifford, James. 1989. "Notes on Theory and Travel." *Inscriptions* 5: 177-188.

Dai, Jinhua. 2012. “Coordinates, Confusions, and Cultural Studies.” In *Creativity and Academic Activism: Instituting Cultural Studies*, ed. by Meaghan Morris and Mette Hjort, 125-138. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Damm, Jens. 2003. “*Xing/Bie, Kuer, Guaitai*—Postmodernist and ‘Queer’ Approaches in Taiwanese ‘Lifestyle’ Publications of the 1990s.” In *Transformation! Innovation? Perspectives on Taiwan Culture*, ed. by Christina Neder and Ines Susana Schilling, 203-213. Wiesbaden: Harrassoswitz Verlag.

de Lauretis, Teresa. 1991. “Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities.” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 3(2): iii-xviii.

Douban. 2020a. “Ku’er lilun” [Queer Theory]. *Duban*. Last accessed 15 August 2020. https://www.douban.com/search?source=suggest&q=%E9%85%B7%E5%84%BF%E7%90%86%E8%AE%BA

Douban. 2020b. “Guaiyi lilun” [Queer Theory]. *Duban*. Last accessed 15 August 2020. https://book.douban.com/subject/1050580/

Epstein, Steve. 1994. “A Queer Encounter: Sociology and the Study of Sexuality.” *Sociological Theory* 12 (2):188-202. DOI: 10.2307/201864

Escoffier, Jeffrey et al. (eds). 1995. Special Issue on “Queer.” *Radical History Review* 62(Spring).

Farrer, James. 2002. *Openning Up: Youth, Sex Culture and Market Reform in Shanghai*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality*. Vol. 1. London: Penguin.

Gao, Yanning. 2006. *Tongxinglian jiankang ganyu* [*Homosexual Health Intervention*]. Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe.

Guo, Ting. 2016. “Translating Homosexuality into Chinese: A Case Study of Pan Guangdan’s Translation of Havelock Ellis’ *Psychology of Sex: A Manual for Students* (1933).” *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies* 3(1): 47-61. DOI: 10.1080/23306343.2015.1129782

Guo, Wangtaolue. 2020. “Sinicizing Non-Normative Sexualities: Through Translation’s Looking Glass.” In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation, Feminism, and Gender*, ed. by Luise von Flotow and Hala Kamal, 345-360. London: Routledge.

He, Terri. 2007. “Why (Not) Queer?: Ambivalence About “Politics” and Queer Identification in an Online Queer Community in Taiwan.” In *Queer Popular Culture: Literature, Media, Film, and Television*, ed. by Thomas Peele, 197-214. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jagose, Annamarie. 1996. *Queer Theory: An Introduction*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Kang, Wenqing. 2009. *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Kaplan, Caren. 1996. *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Kehoe, Séagh. 2017. “In Profile: Li Yinhe.” *Women and Gender in China*. Last accessed 15 August 2020. https://www.wagic.org/blank-2/2017/10/11/In-Profile-Li-Yinhe

Lahman, Maria K. E. 2017**.** *Ethics in Social Science Research: Becoming Culturally Responsive*. London: Sage.

Li, Yinhe. 1998a. *Tongxinglian yawenhua* [*The Subculture of Homosexuality*]. Beijing: Jinri zhongguo chubanshe.

Li Yinhe. 1998b. *Nuelian yawenhua* [*The Subculture of Sadomasochism*]. Beijing: Jinri zhongguo chubanshe.

Li, Linhe. 1998c. *Zhongguo nüxing de ganqing yu xing* [*The Emotions and Sexualities of Chinese Women*]. Beijing: Jinri zhongguo chubanshe.

Li Yinhe. 1999. *Xing de wenti* [*The Issue of Sex*]. Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe.

Li, Yinhe (trans. and ed.). 2000. *Ku'er lilun* [*Queer Theory*]. Beijing: Shishi chubanshe.

Li, Yinhe (trans. and ed.). 2003. *Ku'er lilun* [*Queer Theory*]. Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe.

Li, Yinhe and Wang Xiaobo. 1992. *Tamen de shijie: Zhongguo nan tongxinglian qunluo toushi* [*Their World: A Perspective into China's Male Homosexual Community*]. Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe.

Lim, Song Hwee. 2008. "How to be Queer in Taiwan: Translation, Appropriation and the Construction of a Queer Identity in Taiwan." In *AsiapacifiQueer: Rethinking Genders and Sexualities*, ed. by Fran Martin et al., 237-250. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Lim, Song Hwee. 2009. "*Queer Theory Goes to Taiwan."* In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Queer Theory*, ed. by Noreen Giffney and Michael O'Rourke, 257–275. London: Routledge.

Liu, Petrus. 2015. *Queer Marxism in Two Chinas*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Martin, Fran. 2003. *Situating Sexualities: Queer Representation in Taiwanese Fiction, Film and Public Culture.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Mesquita, Sushila, Maria Katharina Wiedlack, and Katrin Lasthofer (eds). 2012 *Import – Export –Transport: Queer Theory, Queer Critique and Activism in Motion*. Vienna: Zaglossus.

Min, Dongchao. 2017. *Translation and Traveling Theory: Feminist Theory and Praxis in China*. London: Routledge.

Morton, Donald (eds). 1996. *The Material Queer*. Boulder, CL: Westview Press.

Rocha, Leon Antonio. 2010. "Xing: The Discourse of Sex and Human Nature in Modern China." *Gender & History* 22(3): 603-628. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0424.2010.01609.x

Rofel, Lisa. 2007. *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Rubin, Gayle. 1984. "Thinking Sex: Note for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" In *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, ed. by Carole S. Vance, 267–319. New York: Routledge.

Said, Edward. 1984. "Traveling Theory." In *The World, The Text, The Critic*, 226-247. London: Faber and Faber.

Sang, Tze-Lan Deborah. 2003. *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 1991. "How to Bring Your Kid Up Gay." *Social Text* 29: 18-27. DOI: 10.2307/466296

Seidman, Steven. 1996. *Queer Theory Sociology*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Simpson, Mark. 1999. *It's A Queer World: Deviant Adventures in Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Stein, Arlene and Ken Plummer. 1994. “I Can't Even Think Straight: Queer Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology.” *Sociological Theory* 12(2): 178-187. DOI: 10.2307/201863

Tang, Ling, Veronica Wang and Hongwei Bao. “Ku’er lilun zai Zhongguo de xingqi he fazhan xianzhuang.” [The Emergence and Development of Queer Theory in China] *Ms Muses*. Last accessed 5 October 2020. https://wemp.app/posts/18f66561-54c5-499e-b591-02b7bf51b307

Wald, Priscilla, 1997. “Cultures and Carriers: ‘Typhoid Mary’ and the Science of Social Control.” *Social Text* 52/53: 181-214. DOI: 10.2307/466739

Wang, Ban (eds). 2011. *Words and Their Stories: Essays on the Language of the Chinese Revolution*. Leiden: Brill.

Wang, Fengzhen. 2000. *“Guaiyi” Lilun* [*“Peculiar” Theory*]. Tianjin: Tianjin shehui kexueyuan chubanshe.

Warner, Michael. 1993. *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Williams, Raymond. 1961. *The Long Revolution*. London: Chatto and Windus.

Wittig, Monique.1980a. “The Straight Mind.” *Feminist Issues* 1(1): 103–111. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02685561

Wittig, Monique.1980b. “On ne naît pas femme.” [One is Not Born a Woman] *Questions Féministes* 8(8): 75–84. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40619199

Yang, Jie. 2011. *Kuer lilun yu piping shijian* [*Queer Theory and Critical Practice*]. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe.

Yi. 2018. “Tantao ku’er zai Zhongguo de xianzhuang yu fazhan.” [Exploring the Status Quo and the Development of Queer in China] *Zhihu*. Last accessed 15 August 2020. https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/46376501

Zhou, Xueguang and Xiaomei Pei. 1997. “Chinese Sociology in a Transitional Society.” *Contemporary Sociology* 26(5): 569–572. DOI: 10.2307/2655620

Address for correspondence

School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies

The University of Nottingham, University Park Campus

Nottingham, NG7 2RD, United Kingdom

hongwei.bao@nottingham.ac.uk

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1905-7926

Bionote

Dr Hongwei Bao is an Associate Professor in Media Studies at the University of Nottingham, UK, where he also directs the Centre for Contemporary East Asian Cultural Studies. His research primarily focuses on queer cultures in contemporary China. He is the author of *Queer Comrades: Gay Identity and Tongzhi Activism in Postsocialist China* (2018) and *Queer China: Lesbian and Gay Literature and Visual Culture under Postsocialism* (2020).