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Source: *Verge: Studies in Global Asias*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 2019), pp. 153-181

Published by: University of Minnesota Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/vergstudglobasia.5.1.0153>

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Beyond Minor Subjects toward the Minor as Method: Anti-Oedipus, Affect, and Becoming in Yan Xing's *Kill (the) TV-Set*

IN CONTEMPORARY Chinese artist Yan Xing's *Kill (the) TV-Set* (2012) (referred to hereinafter as *Kill*), a two-channel black-and-white video plays for about three minutes. One video is a reperformance of *Charlotte Moorman with Human Cello* (1965), where Moorman simulated playing John Cage's *26' 1.1499* (1955) across Nam June Paik's back. Paik and Moorman are semi-naked and face each other, while Paik holds a string along his spine. His head rests above Moorman's left breast. Through film, Yan reenacts Paik and Moorman's interpretation of Cage's sound project. In other words, Yan reperforms (a photographed) reperformance of a (sound) performance. Yan, dressed in a freshly starched and cuff-linked white button-down that is tucked into his black trousers, stages himself in a similar position as Moorman. Nigerian actor Agu Anumudu performs Paik's role and stands facing Yan in the same semiformal attire. Yan and Anumudu's conservative clothing is striking in comparison to Paik and Moorman's exposed flesh. Yan's face peers into the space directly below him, while he lightly caresses a bow across the string held by the actor. The other video is a shot of a bonsai tree that Yan groomed. In the foreground, the screen repeatedly flashes, in bold white letters, the sequence "Kill," "(the)," and "TV-Set." Distinct from Cage's *26' 1.1499*, Yan's films run in silence.

Kill is a difficult piece to analyze. It riffs on reperformance, art icons, and intermedial art while simultaneously located within and beyond contemporary China. *Kill* is both formally innovative and situated within a particular context, requiring us to grapple with experimentation

alongside geographic specificity. Rather than simply mediating these two notions, this essay reads Yan's purposeful play on form, representation, and referentiality as offering methodological approaches for transnational analysis. I examine Yan's production as a minor artist—a minorness in terms of his identities as non-Western and queer as well as with his less-established status in comparison to major figures—to trace the ways in which Yan directs us to how representation and referentiality condition and predetermine the very terms of his (minoritized) existence. By methodologically using reperformance to parody and make known the dominance of representation and referentiality that flatten more complex understandings of his work, Yan deploys the minor beyond a notion of subjecthood toward methodology. This minor as method highlights the limits of deploying the minor primarily in terms of subjectivity and contextualization. I argue that a minor method examines the assumptions of how dominant frames often render a difficult work like *Kill* in predictable ways that do not necessarily contend with details that might be presumed to be unimportant like form and feeling. As method, the minor functions by directing us to the major logics and foundations that construct how minor subjects are understood. Rather than providing answers that clarify the status of queerness in China, Yan creates modes of illegibility that do not reproduce representative, truthful, or fully contextualized accounts of minor experiences in the peripheries known as the non-West.

The predominant use of the minor, according to Mimi Nguyen (2015, 12), concerns “those marginal forms, persons, and worlds that are mobilized in narrative (including archival) constructions to designate moments of crisis.” The minor has primarily been articulated through recognizable and stabilized understandings of subjects such as the body, identity, and geography. Since these subjects exist on the peripheries of or as excluded from the dominant, they are presumed knowable in order to be recuperated for theoretical and political purchase. As a queer¹ non-Western artist from the peripheries of the Western art world, Yan embodies the dominant ways subjects and their artistic productions are often curated in this way via the minor: as a minor queer subject from the minor geographic peripheries. Yan's embrace of another man and his allusions to past art figures could render *Kill* to be primarily about queer subjects in China. In this vein, two convenient queer readings shape the reception of *Kill*. First, the work could be seen as a homoerotic connection between Yan and another man. In addition, since Paik is considered the founder of media and video art because he was the first to use televisions within a fine arts context, another convenient queer reading could be that of a filial, genealogical, or daddy connection between Yan and his Asian



Figure 1. Yan Xing, *Kill (the) TV-Set*, 2012. 2-channel video installation, 1st channel, single HD digital video (b/w, silent, loop), 2'30". Dimensions variable. Copyright Yan Xing. Courtesy of the artist.

predecessor Paik. Within both frames, queerness emerges from Yan's minoritized positionality as gay-identified (minor subject) and Asian (minor geographic space).

The condition of being a minor subject confines artists like Yan within limited discourses surrounding representation and referentiality. Although his works have circulated throughout China, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and the United States, and he has exhibited alongside established artists like Vito Acconci and Ai Weiwei, Yan is nonetheless taken not only to represent geopolitical context or antagonistic relations to the state but also to reference Western "masters," other Asian artists, or Chinese tradition. Since he was born in 1986 in Chongqing and graduated from the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, his success and acknowledgment through awards are often attributed to the ways he is framed in relation to being "queer" (representative identity) or born after the Cultural Revolution (referential context). Yan is emblematic of the oedipal and genealogical conditions that render non-Western and minoritized artists as derivative of Western masters and primarily considered in relation to their country of origin. In fact, such a condition has plagued non-Western art, particularly contemporary Chinese art, since its development. During the 1990s, noted curator Hou Hanru (1994, 88) criticized Western commentators for limiting the art as "only imitat[ing] Western art" and for legitimizing the art "through the[] use of 'ink wash' or 'calligraphy.'" Hou emphasizes how a reliance on Chinese references and the genealogical fear of Western influences produce limited oedipal possibilities for non-Western art.

Yan's subject status as queer further perpetuates these dominant narratives surrounding oedipalization. As one of the few Chinese artists identified as queer² within the global art market, his work gains currency through narratives of resistance against state and social discrimination. Furthermore, Yan has become known for his use of nudity in his art and for his blog focusing on his family, sex, and Chinese politics. The blog inspired his performance *Daddy Project* (2011), which involved a video recording of him reading a letter to his father and addressing his childhood being raised by a single mother. Although media and academic coverage on Yan Xing has been increasing (Lu 2011; Jeppesen 2011; Cotter 2011), the framings of Yan have predominantly rendered him emblematic of a globally queer aesthetic as some critics problematically situate him "as openly gay [who] lives in a country (if not a world) that tends to frown upon (if not actively suppress) displays of sexuality that are deemed outside of the norm" (Sanderson 2011). Such analyses emphasize the oedipal by foregrounding his queer background, past traumas, and Chinese

context to theorize his work. I, however, expand understandings of Yan beyond personal identity and subject position into the realm of his minor methodological renderings of China and queerness. In particular, his transnational existence that arises from leaving Sichuan to working out of both Beijing and Los Angeles informs a more complex negotiation of minority politics and sexuality as he questions constructions surrounding queer personhood and Chineseness. Yan's reworking of genealogical or daddy relations allows us to move beyond the frames of minor subject and geographic location that predetermine the way he is situated.

I follow Nguyen's and Yan's reworking of the minor to focus on the disciplinary divides that limit the possibilities of the minor beyond the subject. This article expands the minor from the categorical (who is included as legible subjects) to the methodological and physiological (the study of function) to produce more open narratives for minoritized subjects. Specifically, I explore the minor as method through Yan's production of three modes—the anti-oedipal, affect, and becoming—which utilize theoretical insights from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to amplify and critique the disciplinary tendencies of area, ethnic, and queer studies. Yan's shift from the minor as subject to the minor as method assists in deploying China and area to rethink what we presume subjects to be (ontology) and how we know them (epistemology). Yan's aesthetics formulate a minor methodology that humorously deploys sensation and other deceptively simple means to grapple with how we navigate transnational analysis. For example, his subtle allusions to many canonical artworks mock popular discourses around reperformance. *Kill* makes repeated references to the past referential figures that contextualize his work to goad the dominant frames of cross-medial art practice and referentiality. Yan finds new relational modes that work outside of the previously established economies of oedipal triangulation: the Western modern, the Chinese premodern, and the political dissident; the transnational West, the particularity of the rest, and the avant-garde artist; and daddy, mommy, and self. He highlights the limited discursive options that are embedded within such triangulations. In other words, he hails the work of Deleuze and Guattari (2009) by producing an *anti-oedipal* relation to such configurations, which I discuss in the next section. Yan's aesthetic amplifies the absurdity of this condition. He makes reference upon reference in order for a viewer to take note of such conditioning.

In addition, Yan emphasizes the differential relations to representation and referentiality across disciplines. *Kill's* minor method attends to the fractures amid fields: area (Asian), ethnic (Asian American), queer, and transnational studies. Transnational artists' aesthetics are deeply

saturated by and demand an attention to such fields and the minor. Akin to Chen Kuan-Hsing's (2010, 223) call to "multiply [our] frames of reference," I argue that we have yet to develop sufficient methods that respond to the complex provocations demanded by global cultural production. Culture offers an aperture into the limits of disciplines, particularly as artists do not necessarily operate within academic boundaries. I place pressure on how the minor has functioned across fields by tracking divergent disciplinary references. In an era of presumed interdisciplinarity, we often privilege field *connections* to identify insights of pressing concern. However, the tensions between fields offer equally important possibilities. The minor indexes such field limits. Ethnic and area studies have often relied on the minor as subject position. However, recent calls to rethink subjects, from bodies to nations, at the level of ontology have arisen within American studies,³ China studies,⁴ and queer of color critique.⁵ Consonant appeals to renegotiate the subject have emerged in queer and feminist studies through discourses on feelings, affects, and new materialisms. Gestures, sensations, and objects engage questions surrounding how we define materialism, relations, the political, and the limits of the human and being. I track this expanding sense of the minor as method.⁶ Many have been grappling with the perceived lack of material concerns, or "classical ideas of normativity and political critique," within these fields (Appadurai 2015, 222). As such, this essay follows theorists like Mel Chen and Dana Luciano (2015) and Jordy Rosenberg (2014) by amplifying and rethinking the minor's operations. By situating field discourses surrounding the minor, I track the minor's functions to offer a more expansive articulation for this key term.

I examine *Kill* to track how Yan extends an understanding of the minor through three modes. Each mode locates and destabilizes three related yet distinct ways of knowing subjects: disciplinarity, queerness, and nation-states. I first work through the anti-oedipal as it examines the limits of representation and referentiality for minor subjects. By theorizing together how Yan's *Kill* and Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* offer a rethinking of daddies and the oedipal, I direct the minor method toward highlighting disciplinary tendencies. Afterward, I renegotiate the minor queer subject as discourses around non-Western sexuality rely on a stable sense of identity and the body to articulate queerness. I examine how affect offers a methodological avenue for reworking the minor as queer subject. Lastly, I situate the minor to engage the transnational by offering the notion *becoming China* to query the Wallersteinian center-periphery model that is oft assumed in humanistic discourse.

To move beyond the minor as subject does not discount the need to

focus on identity or representation; rather, an expansion of the minor amplifies its possibilities for minoritarian discourses. I broaden the minor from the categorical to the methodological because the dominant reliance on the minor as subject maintains such a subject as a fully knowable, absolute entity. Maintaining subjects as static often obscures the fact that they are malleable to power and control; these subjects are deployed in service of rendering the minoritized as less than human in relation to the figure of the Western liberal Man. This essay thus follows critics, such as Sylvia Wynter (2003), Alexander Weheliye (2014), Hortense Spillers (1987), and Denise Ferreira da Silva (2007), who have centralized the import of how black bodies have been subjugated and rendered inhuman to produce the universalized categories of Man and human. Their collective project asserts that one cannot theorize the human without contending with race, not as a form of subject exclusion but rather as a malleable object for the production of universal frameworks. I focus on the minor as method to assist in such a project. However, I examine the ways the Asiatic form enhances a minor method to not only centralize racialized difference for theorizations of the human but also mark the need to attend to the differences surrounding Asian racialization for this discourse.⁷

■ **DELEUZE YOUR DADDY? THE ANTI-OEDIPAL BEYOND MINOR SUBJECTS**

Oedipal discourses require that an artist like Yan Xing represent and reference legible modes of Chineseness and identity. Yan mocks the dominance of this oedipal demand by making multiple references to forefathers and other symbolic objects, ranging from a television (Paik) to a bonsai tree (artificial constructions of pan-Asianness) and artistic genealogies (from Cage to Moorman and Paik). Yan parodies these demands by juxtaposing his call to “Kill” such symbols on one screen against his performed boredom on the other. This affective disconnect directs us to the limits surrounding the oedipal symbols that predetermine how his work is understood. Rather than asserting a passionate rejection of or an angry plea to end such symbols, Yan’s performance of boredom brings to light the dominant and artificial narratives that construct the reception of *Kill*.

Through the invocation of oedipal figures, Yan’s aesthetics do not merely demand that one replace or forget such symbols. The juxtaposition of passion (Kill!) against boredom humorously reveals the limits and problems with the medial, Asian, and art historical frameworks for his work. In a more subtle fashion than rejection, he demands an anti-oedipal relation that makes transparent the dominance of the oedipal; he engages the work of Deleuze and Guattari. These theorists assist in

developing the minor as a method by examining the field tensions that Yan cites. Through the invocation of such famous art historical figures and objects, it might be tempting to narrate *Kill* as embodying a progression of media (from sound to performance) or representing a genealogy of avant-garde (both Eastern and Western) fathers. In addition, Paik holds a similar subject position to Yan, as the former comes from Asia (South Korea) and circulates widely in Western fine arts circles. However, Yan complicates these linear models of historical development and artistic referentiality through his use of parody and formalism. He reveals the problems surrounding teleological understandings of time and filiation. Rather than replace or assert his Chinese presence into this genealogy of art historical and medium-specific practices, Yan makes this linear (filial) logic transparent. There is no original referential father in Yan's reperformance of a reperformance. Yan offers too many daddies of which to keep track to make visible the model that conditions and creates predetermined narratives for non-Western artists via the figure of the metaphoric daddy.

Yan brings to the fore his relationship to his pasts, attempting to find configurations that are not solely filial, linear, or oedipal. When one considers his move away from Sichuan, one discovers more complex relations to not only geography but also aesthetic genealogies. Yan exemplifies the limits placed on Asian and Asian/American artists, whereby critics often rely on ties to genealogies of other Asians or Asian/Americans, although these artists often circulate in much broader and complex ways.⁸ Through the use of exposure, absurdity, and the "killing" of the many hailed fathers, along with a demand not to replicate presumed relationships between the artist and his past, Yan's work foregrounds the subtle and minor function of the anti-oedipal. Deleuze and Guattari wrote their key text during a moment when Freud's oedipal complex became a dominant framework for scholarship. Their critique of the oedipal extends to their oft-cited work on minor literature, as it relates to Franz Kafka. By moving away from "unfortunate psychoanalytic [oedipal] interpretations" of Kafka's "Letter to the Father," Deleuze and Guattari emphasize how Kafka's minor literature's "goal is to obtain a blowup of the 'photo,' an exaggeration of it to the point of absurdity." In other words, Yan's hailing of forefathers similarly operationalizes the minor as a method by critiquing the dominance of the oedipal through an anti-oedipal stance that "enlarge[s] to the point of absurdity, comedy," the complex (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 10).

Deleuze and Guattari's (2009) *Anti-Oedipus* revamps the psychoanalytic narratives that privilege a child's normative development. Rather than relying on this rejection, the authors emphasize the need to find



Figure 2. Yan Xing, *Kill (the) TV-Set*, 2012. 2-channel video installation. 2nd channel, single channel digital video (b/w, silent, loop), 3'06". Dimensions variable. Copyright Yan Xing. Courtesy of the artist.

new pathways: “The question of the father isn’t how to become free in relation to him (an Oedipal question) but how to find a path there where he didn’t find any” (10). This minor approach does not replace older models but takes note of the limits surrounding dominant frames. In this vein, I situate Yan’s multiple reperformances as offering different pathways that do not perpetuate the oedipal model of filiation, representation, and referentiality. He does not merely replace or refute the existence of his father figures. Rather, Yan amplifies the absurdity of this problematic condition through his reperformance of a reperformance of a performance. Yan shifts the emphasis from “*Who’s your daddy?*” to “*Who is your daddy?*” The shift from asserting a daddy role (*Who’s your daddy?*) to the search for identifying the daddy figure (*Who is your daddy?*) directs us to a predicament—one that changes from asserting clear roles to lacking clarity. Rather than claiming his sociohistorical context, Yan invites the audience to identify the limits surrounding representation and referentiality.

To obtain a less abstract sense of the minor's function, let us focus on the corporeal and sonic. Minor muscles and sounds do not simply replace their respective major counterparts. On the physiological level, minor muscle groups are generally unnoticed; it is not until the minor fails that one realizes how the major is upheld. For music, the minor for a major's key signature enables one to register an affective, melancholic tone. It is through the function of these minor forms that one can track the assumptions of how the major operates. The minor, as such, is a method that arises not as replacement but rather as observation and remark. In citing Deleuze and Guattari, I do not simply assert that we discard previous frames for Deleuzian⁹ approaches to Chinese art; rather, I work through Yan's invocation of these authors to more forcefully examine disciplinary divides. I turn to these theoretical references to ask not only what their theories offer but also why they are privileged in some disciplines but not others.

Deleuze and Guattari's relation to the minor additionally indexes the disciplinary divides that Yan brings to the fore. They have played a critical role in "minor" discourses on affect, queerness, and new materialisms. However, they have often been easily dismissed for "classical" political questions that are more closely associated with fields like ethnic and area studies. I centrally locate Deleuzian frames for engaging not only Asian American but also Asian cultural production. Deleuze and Guattari bring to light the differences between minor subjects and methods, a differentiation that enables us to examine the applicability of the minor to questions surrounding materiality and power. In particular, their critique of the oedipal complex emerges out of a denunciation of French colonization, which highlights their applicability for "classical" political questions. The oedipal becomes a universalizing discourse that perpetuates predetermined understandings about a space and people. These authors develop their approach of the anti-oedipal from colonialism to reveal how the oedipal complex has become an overdetermined framework even for sites outside of Europe. As such, I delve into Yan's reliance on Deleuze and Guattari, since these authors are generally not central for accounts of Asian art. By situating their critique of the oedipal complex within anthropological accounts of Nairobi, India, and other spaces, Deleuze and Guattari (2009, 169) develop the anti-oedipal by revealing how the oedipal is a colonizing model:

an Oedipal framework is outlined for the dispossessed primitives: a shantytown Oedipus . . . the colonized remained a typical example of resistance to Oedipus. . . . The colonized resists oedipalization, and oedipalization tends

to close around him again. To the degree that there is oedipalization, it is due to colonization.

I cite *Anti-Oedipus* and center Deleuze and Guattari's relation to the transnational to emphasize the admittedly limited yet overlooked concern over colonization that informs their insights. As noted earlier, they have greatly inflected the affective turn, yet some have questioned their applicability for major concerns surrounding the political. However, based on the preceding passage and my explanations to come, I direct us to how their minor and affective theorizations have critical insight for "classical" or "urgent" political questions. Although some might consider their ideas imperfect, their concerns with colonialism and the oedipal offer decolonial or, in the words of Chen Kuan-Hsing, "de-coldwar" possibilities. Rather than dismissing Deleuze and Guattari as ahistorical, universalist, or lacking material engagement, I highlight their concern with the social to offer a model by which to expand the minor and theorize *Kill*.

Before delving deeper into my analysis of *Kill*, I would like to take a moment to further contextualize Deleuze and Guattari. Their deployment across fields reveals disciplinary tendencies surrounding the minor and global cultural production. In a schematic sense, they are more central for queer studies than area¹⁰ and ethnic studies.¹¹ Yan directs us to these various fields; yet, they differently approach not only the concept of the minor but also these theorists. These authors have a relatively stable position in relation to certain branches of queer theory. However, they are almost nonexistent in some of our "classical" political discourses. When compared to Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, or Jacques Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari possess less of a citational pull for area and ethnic studies.¹² What does it mean that these authors play a central role for minor theories, while they less frequently arise in the other fields that are implicated by global art? From this broad overview, I offer a sense of how Deleuze and Guattari as references mimic disconnects between intellectual projects, particularly following the legacy of area studies' formation following the Cold War. As such, I further develop Deleuzian concepts to contend with these figures and shift toward the minor as method.

■ FORMING QUEER AFFECT: ENACTING THE FUZZY AND VIBRATIONAL

In addition to the anti-oedipal, Yan develops the minor as method through an exploration of queerness as an affect rather than a subject identity. As mentioned earlier, throughout the performance, he exudes disengagement. The juxtaposition between his distant look and the flashing of

“Kill” on the opposite screen creates a rhythmic disjuncture, as he does not perform at the same intensity of the repeated words. Although his detachment could be attributed to reperforming Moorman’s look, the formal construction of and rhythmic disconnects between the two screens offer a different, queer relation. *Charlotte Moorman with Human Cello* is the structural basis for Yan’s piece. Paik and Moorman’s collaboration was a reinterpretation of Cage’s 26’1.1499 sound work, which involved a structured solo for either a single player or an ensemble. Cage’s composition lasts 26 minutes and 1.1499 seconds and deploys chance operations. The soundscape consists primarily of the player’s fortissimo stringing, which is punctuated by momentary ruptures of breath, short statements (“Hey”), and staccato taps on the instrument. Moorman and Paik’s goal in deploying fine arts and performance is to sexualize classical music, which at that point had not been done. Their exposed flesh comes into contact, as Moorman sits in between Paik’s straddling knees. Their use of nudity, corporeal position, and media interrupts music’s puritanism, as Paik (1967) asserts that “music history needs its D. H. Lawrence, its Sigmund Freud.”

Similar to Deleuze and Guattari’s explicit critique of Lacan and Freud in *Anti-Oedipus*, Yan’s shift from these psychoanalytic figures help us reconsider Paik’s commitment to them. The lack of sex in *Kill* amplifies this pivot. Yan notably desexualizes his reperformance by dressing formally. In comparison to past works, *Kill* is much less sexually explicit. Many of his earlier pieces deploy nudity. For example, in *The History of Fugue* (2012) and *Sexy* (2011), bare buttocks and penises are displayed on large-scale videos and framed photos. Even after *Kill*, other works, such as *The Sweet Movie* (2013) and *The Sex Comedy* (2013), furthered his exploration of explicit sex by respectively documenting pornographic film and archiving sex toys. As such, this notable desexualized shift in *Kill* complicates how we define queerness: through the representation of sex or other less explicit possibilities. Through this change in tone, Yan pushes the goals of Paik and Moorman’s project to new territory: rather than representing queerness via a subject’s body or sexual identity, Yan delves into queerness’s instability. As a reperformance of Paik and Moorman’s performance of Cage’s sound work, *Kill* produces multiple citations through divergent medial practices. Yan focuses away from Paik and Moorman’s sexualizing of the nude body to another queer possibility: the daddy relation. Yan highlights the many referential figures that structure his reception and aesthetics: Paik, Cage, Moorman, the Chinese state, Western avant-gardism, and other Asian artists. However, rather than simply representing these daddies through their attendant media (sound, video, etc.), he deploys medial forms to develop queerness through

affect. His reperformance of two canonical works produces a double layer of referentiality that forces one to consider what the function is of being twice removed from a sourced material. Form, media, and reperformance enable an affective understanding of queerness.

Yan deploys the minor as an affective mechanism, which refrains from reading how symbols in a work represent an outsider queer subject status. For example, instead of discussing Yan's embrace of a male body as a stable representation or commentary on queer life, I privilege an affective engagement that approaches the subject's body as concrete and real yet simultaneously open to other understandings. Yan methodologically attends to form with openness. His embrace of the Nigerian actor Anumudu might symbolize not only bodies but also nation-states and relations across minor geographies, since there are geopolitical shifts with Chinese migration and capital into countries in Africa.

However, queer affect, tracked within Yan's formal aesthetics, produces another dimension for the minor that destabilizes understandings of subjects, bodies, and nation-states. Although there is an embrace between men, it appears disconnected. There is no sense of shared passion. Anumudu is not closely embraced as a fake cello, since even an instrument requires involved handling. Unlike the way cellists passionately press their fingers into a string, Yan's entire palm flatly rests against the string and Anumudu's shirt. Yan hovers his arms across Anumudu, as if half-heartedly following stage directions. The work's queer dimensions arise from indeterminate, formal relations, or what might be called its affective qualities. Affect produced between objects, forms, and bodies enables the viewer to ask questions and imagine multiple relations between Yan and the other. A focus on form is not meant to imply that Yan teleologically queers the past media of sound and video through performance; rather, affect through form emerges in a less linear engagement with media. For example, Yan's reperformance runs in silence. Rather than retracing or reproducing the sonic landscape created by Cage, Yan deploys silence and a slow aesthetic to allow space for other narratives to arise.

As a reperformance, Yan builds off of the photo documentation of Paik and Moorman's collaboration. How does Yan deploy live performance to work through the photographed memory of this piece? Rebecca Schneider's (2011, 148) work offers guidance; she reveals the oversimplification that delegates "live performance as vanishing in time and photography as capturing time" that has distinguished the two media. Yan uses a slow and silent performance to produce an instability between these two media—an affective and medial rupture that cannot be captured by a representational analysis of Yan's queer identity or the use of male bodies. At first, the video appears to be a still photograph of Yan's reperformance

of Paik and Moorman's piece. However, as the film develops, the subtle use of breath and slow gestures from the moving bow indicate a shift in the medium. This intermixing of performance and photography caught through film fractures the distinctions that separate performance "as vanishing in time" and photography "as capturing time." The movement of bodies through breath and gesture enables a perpetually ruptured sense of stillness that confuses the line between photography and performance. Furthermore, the high level of pixelated definition directs a viewer to the fuzzy details of breath and movement, which might be overlooked by a viewer observing the work as a *tableau vivant*. One witnesses Yan's chest and Anumudu's back slowly rise; twitches in Yan's face sporadically appear.

These moments of affective fuzziness and indeterminacy resonate with Deleuze and Guattari's (2009) approach to bodies. Rather than presuming the social to be static or rendering bodies and nations as fully knowable, their method attends to the minute vibrations that are often overlooked to discover connections that span time and space:

What defines a minority, then, is not the number but the *relations* internal to the number . . . the minority is defined as a non-denumerable set. . . . What characterizes a non-denumerable set is neither the set nor its elements; rather, it is the *connection*, the "and" produced between elements, between sets, and which belongs to neither, which eludes them and constitutes a line of flight. . . . The minorities constitute "fuzzy," nondenumerable, non-axiomizable sets, in short, "masses," multiplicities of escape and flux. . . . The role of the minority is to bring out the power of the nondenumerable even when it consists in only one member. (469–70)

Deleuze and Guattari situate the minor in relation to the nondenumerable. This concept connotes numbers that cannot be associated with integers or be positivistically represented by known numbers. In other words, the nondenumerable does not correlate meaning with representability. The minor cannot fully correspond to numerical representation, directing us to rely on an indeterminate fuzziness to track subjects and objects.

Anti-Oedipus offers theoretical insights for the minor as method within *Kill*. Affect approaches subjects, ranging from the body to "area," as representations *with* nuance and difference. By focusing on "units" and other affectively fuzzy means, Yan develops the minor for its function, working with the Deleuzian goal of moving away from "the dreary games of what is representative and represented in representation" (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 54). The fuzzy implicates two meanings: a tactile sensation and a cognitive state of vagueness. These definitions together highlight that an affective approach entails engaging a subject as a solid form while

simultaneously sensing its vibrations that are not predetermined by what one assumes it to be. Similar to the subjectless stance that has been articulated in Asian American and queer studies (Chuh 2003; Lye 2004; Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz 2005), the fuzzy that arises from affect situates subjects in both material and open means. China is not only a knowable form but also an indeterminate construction, akin to Allen Chun's (1996) early reconstruction of China's "boundedness." This approach privileges the affective and fuzzy contours of an object, without solely relying on its dominant form and attendant narratives, to understand it as both real and constructed. A queer, fuzzy affect emerges through the medial relations noted earlier, along with the complex web of reperformances that Yan weaves. By relocating queerness within aesthetic formalism and the affective foundations of the work, Yan allows "the minor, forgotten, overlooked, disavowed, unsung, second, double, and 'lesser' [to] gain a kind of agency in the re-do" (Schneider 2011, 180).

Yan invigorates a minor and limited agency within his reperformance; he provides a political edge to the affective and fuzzy. By dislocating queerness away from subjects and bodies toward affect, Yan engages Deleuze and Guattari's attention to a work's surface and affective fuzziness rather than unconscious and representative meanings. Yan enables a minor agency that does not manifest through overt resistance; rather, this agency brings about space to ask questions and destabilize assumptions around identities, subjects, and objects. The minor as method involves a weaker mode of agency that produces questions rather than meaning or critique. Queerness becomes less about Yan's identity and more about his creation of a disconnected affect that emerges when juxtaposing multiple media. Queerness can certainly arise from the representation of bodies; however, it also exists through illegibility. I bring to the fore the affective contours in *Kill* to flesh out the minoriness of affect that is often occluded by the dominant frames of the oedipal, representation, and referentiality. An affective approach reworks what some presume queerness is in China and as represented by two men.

Yan fractures and presents subjects ranging from individual to national bodies as vibrating entities—they have solid form yet shift in meaning. Through Yan's fuzzy renegotiation of dominant representational accounts, one can structure different relations within the social. These relations do not presume a grand narrative or way of being. Minor methods do not replace the dominant; they operate in less impactful ways and privilege fractures over completion. The political operation of affect is thus to produce alternative "codes" that may not be subsumed by dominant, major structures.¹³ However, such codes require a deep attention to contours

and details. One focuses on the affective to notice the minute details (codes) that allow us to imagine a subject differently. As such, this minor method also contends with detailed insights from a field like area studies to amplify the possibilities of the relational, which I discuss shortly. Area studies offers such an attention to code.

The politics of minor affects operates beyond the register of direct critique. However, this does not eradicate the import of subjects. Affect and contingencies within the minor open up relations with others. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari (2009, 352), these relations are discovered through connections that span time and space: “vibrations . . . express connections, disjunctions, and conjunctions of flows that cross through a society, entering and leaving it, linking it up with other societies, ancient or contemporary, remote or vanished, dead or yet to be born.” Furthermore, such relations are not universalized to flatten racialized difference:

We have seen several times that minorities are not necessarily defined by the smallness of their numbers but rather by becoming or a line of fluctuation. . . . A minority can be small in number; but it can also be the largest in number. . . . That is the situation when authors, even those supposedly on the Left, repeat the great capitalist warning cry: in twenty years, “whites” will form only 12 percent of the world population. . . . Thus they are not content to say that the majority will change. . . . And the very curious concept of nonwhite does not in fact constitute a denumberable set. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 469)

Deleuze and Guattari centralize not only relations to other dispossessed populations but also whiteness to complicate their affective method. The minor as method is not devoid of subject position. Yan develops this critical aspect of the minor by focusing on racialized and sexualized bodies, while simultaneously emphasizing fuzzy and minor moments that offer different understandings for such subjects.

Yan aestheticizes a Deleuzian shift away from a subject-based analysis, whereby the minor does not solely involve numerical representation. One might worry that this fuzzy stance, particularly when considering geopolitics, ignores materiality and questions of race. However, as noted, Deleuze and Guattari’s work grapples with whiteness and difference. Such a minor method develops from the relationality enabled by collective dispossession. In moving away from static modes of representation based on a subject or position, I do not argue per se for a universal stance through affect. Rather, this method moves beyond an identification with “proper” objects of study and representational, preestablished, and overdetermined understandings of what one might assume the state, difference,

and history to be in relation to minoritized experience. Although this method is less about subject position, it certainly finds roots from close attention to experience.

In sum, the minor as method that privileges the affective and fuzzy enables one to hold on to a dominant form—to outline its contours—while also sensing its internal structures. Such variations provide avenues to imagine other political dispositions and relations. This multifaceted method approaches *Kill* without a predetermined reading, allowing the object to breathe beyond oedipalization, representation, or referentiality. The tension from maintaining an attention to the major form, alongside an examination of new avenues provided by affect, produces the minor as method. Affective fuzziness is not simply about openness and indeterminacy. Contextual details afforded by a field like area studies are what enable the fuzzy and affective to transpire. An attention to form brings to the fore the minor details embedded within an object, ultimately allowing us to read the dominant form in less congealed ways. Both postcolonial and China studies offer such an understanding. These fields consider how Eurocentric concepts cannot simply be discarded; they can only be revised in relation to affect, the fuzzy, and the minor. As Dipesh Chakrabarty (2007, 5) astutely observes in relation to Frantz Fanon's simultaneous critique of and belief in the Enlightenment notion of the human, "there is no easy way of dispensing with these universals in the condition of political modernity." Similarly, as Wang Hui (2011, 57–58) argues, "as we correct the errors in the idea of Asia, we must also reexamine the idea of Europe." These scholars emphasize the need to critique work within the limits of dominant forms. The minor can never replace or be as important as the major. The minor functions as a method that renegotiates what we consider to be a major and legible form.

■ BECOMING CHINA, FRACTURING MINOR GEOGRAPHIES

The anti-oedipal and affect are minor methods that question the stability of the body and queerness. However, what are the ramifications of this minor approach for the transnational? What arises by extending this affective method toward not only the contours of the individual subject but also other aggregate bodies, such as the nation (Berlant 2011)? Minor methods attend to minor geographies by affectively engaging nation-states beyond stabilized spatial positions. In a similar vein to affect, minor contours provide avenues to take note of the dominant theorizations surrounding the nation and globality. After interviews with Yan during research trips to China, I struggled with situating the artist's work within a context of localized queer politics in China, other peripheral sites, or a

transnational network of diasporic (queer) Asian artists. These models, informed by my training in area and ethnic studies, presumed established modes of theorizing China: the particularity of context, the relationality produced across sites, and a relational queer diaspora. These approaches could not grapple with the complexities of *Kill* and could not fully contend with how China is neither unique nor universal. I struggled with these available models as they relied on either (1) particularity, *the* Chinese context, or (2) relationality, a generalizability that connected Yan to others based on subject status or geographic position. However, when I shifted from trying to find an alternative model to culling minor details within *Kill*, I began to obtain a sense of the instability and becoming of China. Rather than produce a new model, I relied on minoriness to gauge the disciplinary and methodological assumptions surrounding transnational analysis.

Two models predominate for theorizing the transnational. Particularity involves a focus on and stabilization of a specific geographic space. Relationality emerges by tracking commonalities across space and time. The relational undergirds both queer diaspora (Eng 2010b; Gopinath 2005) and minor transnationalism, which searches for connections across peripheral sites (Shih and Lionnet 2005). The particular and relational, at times, appear contradictory to one another, as theorists often deploy one to replace the other.¹⁴ However, following in the vein of a minor method, is there a way to hold both together and situate their productive limits? I trace here a minor method from the sense of *becoming China* within Yan's piece.¹⁵ Rather than presuming what we may understand to be the culture and history of China or the racialization of Chinese populations globally, thinking of China as becoming approaches the nation affectively. Becoming emphasizes the limits of the particular and relational. This approach offers a different sense of the minor from minor spatial position to question the disciplinary fractures that fix the particular and relational within a binary.

China is not different but has differently become. Becoming balances an acknowledgment of difference without ossifying such difference onto particular spaces and people. For example, Yan fractures a stable sense of Asia. The bonsai tree that serves as the background for the flashing of the phrase "Kill (the) TV-Set" along with his racialized body are presumed to be stable representations of Asianness. Yan performs slowness through his reperformance of the photograph of Paik and Moorman's original work; the breath and the lingering gesture of the cello bow produce an aesthetic that some may identify as Chinese or Asian.¹⁶ However, Yan repeatedly punctures the stability of Asia and this slow aesthetic with the

constant flashing of words, specifically violent ones like “Kill.” Yan’s use of English, rather than Chinese, not only indicates how his work circulates in international art circles but also disrupts the wholeness of what may be presumed to be a racialized aesthetics of slowness. Yan refuses a clear legibility around his reperformance. It is neither a cohesive Chinese reappropriation nor a Westernized, assimilationist piece.

Yan produces an ambiguous sense of Chineseness to situate the nation-state affectively. China becomes affectively fuzzy through Yan’s multiple narratives about the site. Yan does not rely on linear modes of engagement that behold the nation as stable. Rather, his aesthetics offer space to work through dominant form alongside vibrations; objects teeter between stability and fuzziness. Yan enables the viewer to peer into the fuzzy and to grasp the dominant modes of imagining China. *Becoming* tracks how different forms and understandings of China have shifted throughout time. *Becoming* is the transitory space where one particular thing merges into another related space. Within this conceptual frame, China is not only understood as a concrete social body but also seen for its affective contours. By attending to the minor of affect, we discover singular differences within the nation. This act of tracing what arises within the in-between provides an account of what it means to become China: through the contextualized and textured form of the nation and its transitional states. It is only through a deep engagement with context and a full sense of an area’s becoming that one can begin to see a national body beyond its static form. Yan enables this sense of becoming China to grapple with both particularist and relational approaches to minor geographies.

The minor method of becoming nuances the particular. Although area and ethnic studies have historically been separated, they often rely on similar modes of stabilizing the notion of “area.” *Becoming* tracks the specter of essentialism that distances fields from one another. *Kill* is dually legible as Asian and Asian American. The appearance of the bonsai tree exemplifies this ambiguous status, bringing to the fore the differences and similarities in how area and ethnic studies engage representation. The tree, as an object, enables fuzzy understandings of Asianness. Yan deploys bonsai to harken multiple genealogies and uses; Chinese, Japanese, and other cultures throughout Asia have furthered the art form. Yan groomed for about one year the tree that he filmed, highlighting the practice of bonsai as a living art. However, the cultivation of these trees on a plate has become a global phenomenon. As such, the tree inspires a generic sense of Asianness and globality, as bonsai becomes a stable object signifier with unclear signifieds. The tree is simultaneously real and an

artificial construction that becomes legible as a construct of Orientalism. These teetering meanings are further amplified aesthetically; the tree as object remains still while the flashing words interrupt its stable appearance. The use of changing words negates the possibility of a singular meaning for the tree.

Similar dynamics arise within the fields of Asian and Asian American studies, as the ways nations, “tradition,” and areas are presumed to be differently (yet in application are similarly) beheld.¹⁷ Area and ethnic studies have generally relied on stable forms of representation to situate works by queer and feminist artists. China has been presumed to be a stable nation-state requiring contextualization, a demand that emerges from disciplinary histories. On one hand, area studies has translated China primarily for U.S. intervention. The rise of area studies holds a strong relation to Cold War politics. From this period, the field emerged in response to the imperialist desire of knowing more about regions “pivotal” to U.S. expansionism. As such, the particular was prioritized through a focus on linguistics, history, and politics, especially when placed in the context of the lack of access during the Cultural Revolution. On the other hand, Asian American studies was inspired by activist movements from the 1960s. Mobilization eventually led to the field’s institutionalization. With such an orientation, China, or more broadly Asia, was imagined as a stable geographic locale. China and Asia became the diasporic centers with which immigrants, and those whose families had been in the United States for decades, could identify to create a place from which to form solidarity that challenged the racialized aggression from within the United States. Asian American studies has relied on the particular to stabilize a specific geographic space. Although Asian American studies emerged out of different circumstances, the region of Asia was understood in similarly particularized ways.¹⁸ The notions of racialization, essentialism, and Orientalism maintained the stabilization of Asia to challenge white supremacy within the United States. Asian American studies rejects essentialized understandings of Asia yet imagines a centralized locale of Asia for its racialized migrants on U.S. soil. With more attention generally directed to “classical” political questions, both fields have historically understood China within stable, particular forms of representation surrounding geography/history (area studies) and race (ethnic studies).

This overview emphasizes disciplinary divisions *and* similarities. Area and ethnic studies have presumed the nation-state as stable for different reasons. However, amid their admittedly varied uses of representation, critiques of essentialism have conditioned ethnic studies to have a

generally phobic relation to area studies. Although scholars like David Eng (2010b), Anjali Arondekar and Geeta Patel (2016), Lisa Rofel (2007), and Petrus Liu have complicated some of these delineations between fields, the dynamic of “an intellectual division of labor between the gathering of raw materials in area studies and the production of universal or no-mothetic paradigms in (queer) theory” nonetheless continues (Liu 2010, 297). This problematic division privileges “theory” to develop universal modes of relationality amid sites, ignoring the way in which Asia has been recentered within ethnic studies as a knowable site for Asian Americans to create a sense of difference vis-à-vis white supremacy. This dynamic of minimizing insights from area studies limits the fuzzy details necessary to track affect and the codes of becoming. However, these details afforded by area studies allow us to engage “area” in affective ways. Area studies does not merely provide contextual background; the field helps shift how we understand the transnational—both ontologically (what it is) and epistemologically (how we come to know it). I provide this schematized account of disciplinary divisions to locate our intellectual moment that has divergent calls around the destabilization and reconsolidation of the nation. The sense of becoming China within *Kill* brings to light these disciplinary fractures, as Yan’s aesthetics complicate the cohesiveness of Asia. The object of the bonsai highlights how Asia is often beheld as a representative form within area and ethnic studies. However, Yan’s aesthetics make transparent how these fields have differently engaged this presumably stable object of/from Asia. Similar to the tree, Asia not only is a physical entity but also embodies fractured narratives that offer a sense of its becoming. Becoming acknowledges these disciplinary histories and attends to an object’s form to more productively analyze global cultural production like Yan’s.

The second model that informs transnational analysis is the relational. This frame privileges connections across minor sites (avoiding a reliance on the center) or through a diasporic network. Rather than replace relational models, becoming nuances diasporic and center–periphery frameworks through more indirect and incomplete understandings of China and its subjects. For both diaspora and minor transnationalism, the metaphor of flows and directionality across sites maintains these relational models. However, Yan’s aesthetics of fractures challenges this metaphor of directionality. Fractures arise through the indeterminate narratives on both screens. On one, the phrases “Kill,” “the,” and “TV-Set” circulate every one and a half seconds, generating a rapid rhythm that does not cohere or culminate in meaning. There is no payoff for a viewer. On the other screen, Yan holds Anumudu’s body in a disconnected fashion. Anumudu

is neither a cello nor a lover; the embrace is cold and does not offer a legible narrative. In both screens, Yan rejects a sense of narrative flow. The artist highlights the predominance of fluidity, directionality, and narrative meaning or closure that undergird the relational. The metaphors of flow and directionality track connections and relations across sites and bodies. However, Yan's affective and fractured aesthetic makes this dominant metaphor transparent to privilege less complete modes of relationality for both aesthetics and the transnational.

Discourses like diaspora and a focus on peripheries have yet to fully contend with how the minor and subject are defined. Alexander Weheliye (2014, 31) highlights some of these limits through critiques of diaspora: "national boundaries, or linguistic differences . . . become the ultimate indicators of differentiation. In this process, national borders and/or linguistic differences are in danger of entering the discursive record as *ontological absolutes*, rather than as structures and institutions that have served again and again to relegate black subjects to the status of western modernity's nonhuman other" (emphasis added). Within this articulation, the minor as a subject leads to overdetermined, absolutized forms. This skews how the minor subject or geographic position has been deployed in the production of dehumanizing populations. As such, "diasporic populations appear as real objects instead of objects of knowledge," whereby such subjects remain stable (31). By not fully grappling with how we define queerness and subjects, we obscure how global difference is central to the formation of a universalized sense of human and Man.

Yan's fuzzy and indeterminate methods shed light on disciplinary presumptions and renegotiate the dominance of fluid directionality implicit within some of our theoretical models for globality. In addition, the framework of flow that creates relations across space or throughout other minor sites nonetheless relies on a presumed center. Immanuel Wallerstein's (2011) world-systems theory is the explicit and implicit model that undergirds the logics of minor transnationalism and diaspora. The center-periphery is the main framework within which these relational models operate. Even when one focuses on the peripheral or across diasporic sites, the center is the implicit place that both models seek to work against, reaffirming its dominance. The metaphor of flows and directions upholds the center-periphery framework, as clear tracings across minor spaces or minoritized subjects are privileged over fractures, fuzziness, and affects. Although Wallerstein's work has undergone critique, the center remains a dominant assumption for transnational work. The reliance on the minor subject reaffirms the minor spatial position as always framed within directionality: diaspora is articulated through a center-periphery

or periphery–periphery, “South–South” relation (Eng 2010b, 18). Regardless of the directionality that queer diasporic and other models provide, they continue to operate within the conditioned framework of directionality that enables the center to remain intact.¹⁹ Arif Dirlik (2001) emphasizes the problem of such conceptual reversals and inversions. He critiques the move of multiplying the notion of modernity because it “legitimizes the most fundamental assumptions of modernization by rendering them globally valid, forecloses serious consideration of alternatives to modernization, and reintroduces Eurocentrism by the back door” (14). Analytics that multiply or reverse dominant concepts reaffirm the existence of the center. Flows and directionality reassert the center because they do not fundamentally restructure or privilege more fragmented possibilities for understanding globality. Dirlik emphasizes the need not simply to ignore the existence of the center or Eurocentrism; instead, only by revealing the dominance of such concepts can one begin to provincialize them, in the words of Chakrabarty (2007).

Yan provincializes the center by puncturing the model of directed flows, producing leaky understandings of how the transnational and aesthetics articulate themselves. Yan does not simply reverse this flow; rather, through the tree, rhythmic punctures, and the cold embrace of Anumudu, he refuses to generate a clear direction or meaning to make such a presumed flow more transparent. His work is antinarrative in form, refusing to fulfill an expectation of transparent realism and meaning that is often demanded of minoritized subjects. Even the cyclical nature of the work enacts this antinarrative form, as Yan structures *Kill* to repeat and loop without a sense of finitude. Yan’s production of becoming China privileges incomplete analyses, directing relationality beyond not only a sense of “proper” and “common” subject position but also a clear understanding of China. This fragmented approach places China not as an after-effect of globalization (from the center to the periphery) but as a complex force within it. Yan complicates our understanding of the transnational to emphasize how China functions within global discourses. Eng, Teemu Ruskola, and Shuang Shen (2012, 5) underscore how China is considered “universally particular” while Europe becomes “particularly universal.” In such a dynamic, China is seen as the exception, which situates the transnational to flow from the West to the rest. The center becomes the universal and the source for the transnational. Yan’s anti-oedipal ethics and affective aesthetics disrupt this presumed flow by generating questions rather than answers.

■ CONCLUSION

Through his use of multiple media, stylistic choices of a performed boredom, excessive references to past works, and refusal to fulfill an audience's expectations around narrative closure, Yan Xing methodically reveals how our disciplinary tendencies have become absurd limitations placed on minor subjects. By shifting away from a model of critique that privileges a resistance to improper representation or a problematic state context, Yan limits agency through a minor mode of engagement. He highlights presumptions rather than operating through a logic of replacement. This minor method may be less forceful yet has critical import for how we engage minoritarian discourse, politics, and theory.

As a term, the minor has been central for ethnic, transnational, area, and queer studies. However, the different ways of engaging the minor, as subject, position, or method, have lacked clarity in terms of the stakes involved for each. As a method, the minor functions to question disciplinary limits that work outside of the previously established economies surrounding oedipalization. As such, my stakes in privileging the minor as method are to negotiate interdisciplinarity. Rather than producing new models and enacting a logic of replacement, one might deploy minor methods to deflate our critical impulses and to imagine otherwise, anew, and askew.

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■ NOTES

The author would like to thank the editor and staff at *Verge*, the anonymous reviewers, the "Migratory Aesthetics" Summer Institute at Penn State's Asian Studies, Iván Ramos, Evren Savci, Andrew Jones, Shannon Jackson, Mel Chen, and SanSan Kwan for their helpful feedback.

1. I deploy the term *queer* as it frames Yan Xing on the global art market. I am not focused on the vibrant "queer" cultures that have been emerging throughout the Sinophone world. I use *queer* for its performative capacities (how and what one does with queer) rather than producing its proper definition depending on history and space.

2. Within the art market, the most discussed Chinese artists have been heterosexual cisgender men.

3. Amy Kaplan (2004, 11) has emphasized how the transnational turn "has been crucial in decentering the tenacious model of the nation as the

basic unit of knowledge production” to contend with American exceptionalism and empire.

4. Allen Chun (1996, 119) calls for destabilizing theorizations of China as knowable by moving beyond the nation’s “boundedness” to see how “discourses of culture are really attempts by the state to grasp . . . the nature of its own modernity.”

5. Within queer studies and queer of color critique, the “subjectless” frame has been privileged to “identify and trace the shifting positionalities and complicated terrains of U.S. American culture and politics articulated to a globalized frame” (Chuh 2003, 11).

6. In declaring this, I do not mean to ignore the critical work within the field of queer China studies, along with the turn within Asian American studies toward the transnational. Although I acknowledge the intersections of these fields, I make such divisions to assist in understanding the differences that continue to separate them. Furthermore, I parse them in order to better understand the citational practices and theoretical bases that contribute to disciplinary fractures. The critical projects of Petrus Liu, Lisa Rofel, Howard Chiang, Fran Martin, Eng-Beng Lim, Sean Metzger, and Tze-lan Sang, among others, have assisted in thinking about queer and area studies together.

7. I follow Lisa Lowe’s (2015) work in *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, as she contends with the disciplinary limits that preclude a full account of distinct yet related modes of racialization across colonial sites.

8. Directors like Tsai Ming-Liang, Ang Lee, and Wong Kar Wai work beyond the limits of Asia and circulate within an art house economy. Similarly, visual and performance artists like Ming Wong and Cao Fei operate in more complex ways that exist in not only Asian but also European and American contexts. This essay as such attempts to work through the difficulties of balancing context with the need to formulate new ways of engaging these complex modes of existence.

9. I will reference both authors in this essay; I use *Deleuzian* as a shorthand rather than an exclusion of Guattari.

10. In relation to area studies, Deleuze and Guattari have less of a presence. In my book project from which this article draws, I trace a Deleuzian intellectual genealogy among Chinese artists and theorists by examining the influence of Henri Bergson, a strong basis for Deleuze and Guattari’s works. In addition, Weihong Bao (2015) traces Bergson’s influence on philosophical and art discourses. Some work around Deleuze and Guattari and affect has developed in China studies (Lundy and Patton 2013; Dean and Lamarre 2007; Eng 2010a; Schroeder 2012).

11. Within ethnic studies, Deleuzian thought has appeared in works

by Jasbir Puar (2007), Arun Saldanha (2007), and Amber Musser (2012). Within Asian American studies, Metzger (2011) and Khoo (2005) offer Deleuze as a theoretical resource.

12. Shaobo Xie (2014) offers an overview of the emergence of European postmodern theory in China. Xie notes the popularity of Foucault, Barthes, Derrida, Lacan, Schopenhauer, and Bakhtin in China.

13. Deleuze and Guattari (2009, 286–87) “brin[g] into play processes of temporalization, fragmented formations, and detached parts, with a surplus of value code, and where the whole is itself produced alongside the parts, as a part apart or, as Butler would say, ‘in another department’ that fits the whole over the other parts.”

14. Shih and Lionnet (2005) use minor transnationalism to replace particularist tendencies: “The postnational assumes that nations have discreet [*sic*] boundaries in order to go beyond them, but our conception of minor transnationalism takes as its point of departure Edouard Glissant’s theories of relation” (8).

15. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) situate the notion of becoming to becoming animal. Although the links between animalization and racialization, particularly in relation to the Chinese imagined as barbaric dogeaters, exist, becoming China does not occlude such an exploration but understands how China becomes in relation to such racist images.

16. Asian aesthetics are often connected to slowness. For example, Butoh and Noh are Japanese performance practices that have come to represent a pan-Asian aesthetics of duration (Lim 2014).

17. The following overview of field formations is influenced by Sino-phone studies (Liu 2010; Shih and Lionnet 2011).

18. Internal debates within Asian/American studies illustrate the problems of such stable understandings of Asia. Many question how a focus on China often glosses over countries like Tibet, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. “Asia” has primarily been oriented toward East Asia at the expense of Southeast Asian and, to some extent, South Asian studies.

19. Black studies’s reliance on diaspora has its own unique history, which I do not fully account for in this essay. However, such cross-racial accounts will emerge in forthcoming work.

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