

Keane's three final chapters discuss the contribution of art, design and media to the creative industries. Here the treatment of "art" is broad, including not only the contemporary Chinese art market but also the revival of *Kunqu* classical theatre, for example, and Zhang Yimou's ongoing series of Olympic spin-off "tourist spectacles". For Keane, designers have a greater potential to constitute a "creative class", which typically contributes to progressive types of urbanism, or the integration of industries such as fashion or animation into the urban matrix—and Keane lists a number of Chinese cities experimenting with such creative hubs. Keane concludes with his observations on Chinese media who, like *shanzhai* producers, can afford to be more experimental the greater their distance from central authority. In other words, as Keane reminds us, "politics is never far away" and, while governments can nurture soft power, "it is not done by decreeing cultural superiority . . . [nor] by pouring money into lavish reenactments of history. This ultimately has an adverse effect on target audiences" (p. 201). The freedom of expression that underwrites real innovation remains a challenge for the Chinese authorities, who continue to "harmonize" it.

As China becomes more affluent, and its contemporary culture more influential, those looking to find out what makes it tick are becoming more diverse, both in the facets of Chinese society that they research and the kinds of researchers involved. *Creative Industries in China* responds to this demand to position China in a global context, often opting to raise more questions than it has room to answer. In the complicated areas of history and politics, for instance, one wonders about China's experience at the World's Fairs since the 1850s, including its first international "expo", held in Nanjing in 1910. What might the long-term effect of the Chinese government as a cultural producer be, when, as a "patron", it now outsources "publicity" (as propaganda work is now known) to sectors of the creative industries? Such tangents highlight the untapped potential in a burgeoning field, to which this book offers a ready entry.

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*Signifying the Local: Media Productions Rendered in Local Languages in Mainland China in the New Millennium*, by Jin Liu. Leiden: Brill, 2013.  
x + 315 pp. €126.00/US\$163.00 (hardcover).

This wide-ranging exploration of the linguistic value found in localized Chinese media texts (including literary fiction) offers rich insights into the broader contexts of Chinese cultures. By carefully situating the production of film, television, music and literature, Liu is able to contrast the state-encouraged development

of Standard *Putonghua* ("common speech") Mandarin texts with those produced or re-produced in various forms of *fangyan* ("regional speech"). As Liu writes in reference to the use of *fangyan* in contemporary fictional literature, these regional forms are used to "repudiate the central, rational, modern discourse signified by the use of Standard Mandarin" (p. 251). The sense of loyalty or authenticity to a particular linguistic, ethnic or minority group, however, often comes at the cost of commercial success on a national scale.

Liu makes extensive use of footnotes, presenting a wealth of supplementary information. Her discussions of the Sichuan Mandarin-dubbed versions of American *Tom and Jerry* cartoons, and the Japanese *Crayon Shin Chan*, clearly show how local languages are culturally marked to indicate status. Even more specifically within these versions of foreign cartoons, Tom (the not-too-bright cat) speaks Chengdu Mandarin, while Jerry (the cunning mouse) uses Zhongjiang Mandarin; thus audiences will note subtleties (and blatant stereotypes) that align certain characters with particular behaviors or attitudes.

The use of three separate chapters to investigate film allows Liu considerable space in which to explore the valuable and often necessary process of dubbing films into local languages, and the substantial differences between the use of local languages in films of the marginal (as exemplified by Jia Zhangke's *Xiao Wu*, *Platform* and *Unknown Pleasures*), and mainstream studio films. It is this latter theme that could be developed further, although the discussion of the films of Feng Xiaogang and Ning Hao's *Crazy Stone* as a case study, serve to illustrate how popular film (and comedies in particular) can draw on marginalized languages without damaging the popularity of their films. Similar depth of understanding is encountered in the three chapters on television—beginning with serialized sitcoms and dramas, before moving to TV news talk shows, and finishing with a brief chapter on the (comic) necessity for linguistic differences in the comedy sketches found in CCTV's most popular program, the *Spring Festival Eve Gala*.

One further important and timely sector that Liu examines is that of new media technologies and their role in perpetuating youth cultures through the use of local languages in popular music. The circulation of regional songs often occurs in genre-based styles such as the popular urban-centered rap and hip-hop that emerged in the late 1990s and became a highly successful niche-market in the recording industry during the 2000s. Local languages and dialects punctuate Mandarin-heavy web broadcasts and YouTube clips, giving the songs a gritty authenticity. This street-level poetry boosts the credibility of the songs for audiences keen to move beyond the radio-friendly sounds of mainstream recordings and the prosaic, formal tones of Standard Mandarin.

By exploring the ways that collective identities become possible at a national (and diasporic) level, Liu taps into the significant exchange of texts and influences between young people across provincial, national and international borders. The use of non-traditional media also allows artists (especially hip-hop and

rap performers) to ply their trade in expletive-ridden and highly political songs of the style expected in their chosen genre. Liu also tracks back over the Chinese rock music of the 1990s, perhaps best exemplified by the music of Cui Jian, that set the precedent for their rap counterparts.

Liu's extensively detailed book provides insights into the various modes of communication in China that challenge notions of Han-dominant, Putonghua-Mandarin-based entertainment. Through a variety of well-chosen examples across a range of mediums, Liu successfully informs us of a China far from the monoculture sold to us by Western media and (some) academics. Language in its multitude of linguistic and dialect forms is able to represent the cultural specificities of a range of vastly different regional, social, cultural and economic groups within, and beyond, China's borders.

A mammoth undertaking, *Signifying the Local* is not a theory-heavy treatise on linguistic differences in China but a book that cleverly incorporates theory with real, visible examples from everyday media. It will undoubtedly serve as a base text for many further studies into the ways in which media can be employed to communicate across a linguistically diverse China.

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*Multinational Retailers and Consumers in China: Transferring Organizational Practices from the United Kingdom and Japan*, by Jos Gamble. Hounds mills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. xii + 257 pp. £55.00/US\$85.00 (hardcover).

China is currently reinventing its growth model and places an increasing emphasis on consumption. As part of this macro process, we not only observe a growth in household consumption expenditure but also witness a change in consumption patterns. The long shift from wet markets to hypermarkets has been accelerated by the presence of foreign retailers. They transferred organizational practices from their home markets to China. These principles were quickly adopted by Chinese managers and helped to transform management practices, employees' self-image and consumers' service expectations.

Jos Gamble's meticulous field research sheds light on these conversions. He includes case studies of a UK DIY retailer and three Japanese department stores, as well as some Chinese retailers for reference. The research is primarily qualitative, and is built on several hundred interviews as well as participant observation. Some of the data were also collected by a large employee survey.

After a short general introduction including research design and an identification of the broader research gaps, Gamble sets the scene for the study in

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