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Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority

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**Abstract:**

Addressing the problem of the 'Han' ethnos from a variety of relevant perspectives—historical, geographical, racial, political, literary, anthropological, and linguistic—*Critical Han Studies* offers a responsible, informative deconstruction of this monumental yet murky category. It is certain to have an enormous impact on the entire field of China studies." Victor H. Mair, University of Pennsylvania

"This deeply historical, multidisciplinary volume consistently and fruitfully employs insights from critical race and whiteness studies in a new arena. In doing so it illuminates brightly how and when ideas about race and ethnicity change in the service of shifting configurations of power." David Roediger, author of *How Race Survived U.S. History*

"A great book. By examining the social construction of hierarchy in China, *Critical Han Studies* sheds light on broad issues of cultural dominance and in-group favoritism." Richard Delgado, author of *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*

"A powerful, probing account of the idea of the 'Han Chinese'—that deceptive category which, like 'American,' is so often presented as a natural default, even though it really is of recent vintage. . . . A feast for both Sinologists and comparativists everywhere." Magnus Fiskesjö, Cornell University



"This collection of trenchant, penetrating essays interrogates what it means to be 'Han' in China, both historically and today. It will make a valuable and enduring contribution to our understanding of the uniqueness and complexity of Chinese history and culture. Dru Gladney, Pomona College

Constituting over ninety percent of China's population, Han is not only the largest ethnonational group in that country but also one of the largest categories of human identity in world history. In this pathbreaking volume, a multidisciplinary group of scholars examine this ambiguous identity, one that shares features with, but cannot be subsumed under, existing notions of ethnicity, culture, race, nationality, and civilization.

Thomas S. Mullaney is a professor of history at Stanford University. James Leibold is senior lecturer and Asian studies program convenor at La Trobe University. Stéphane Gros is a research fellow at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. Eric Vanden Bussche is a Ph.D. candidate at Stanford University.

Contributors: Uradyn E. Bulag, Kevin Carrico, Zhihong Chen, Tamara Chin, Mark Elliott, C. Patterson Giersch, James Leibold, Thomas S. Mullaney, Nicholas Tapp, Emma J. Teng, Chris Vasantkumar, and Xu Jieshun

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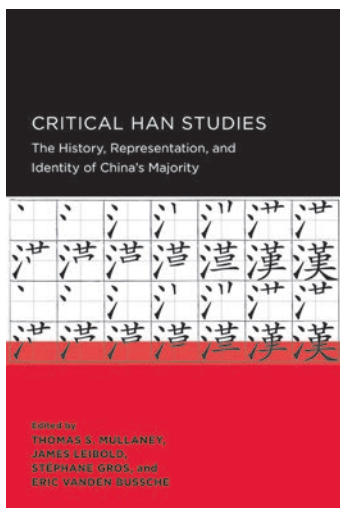


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Edited by Thomas S. Mullaney, James Leibold, Stéphane Gros, and Eric Vanden Bussche

*Published in association with the University of California Press*

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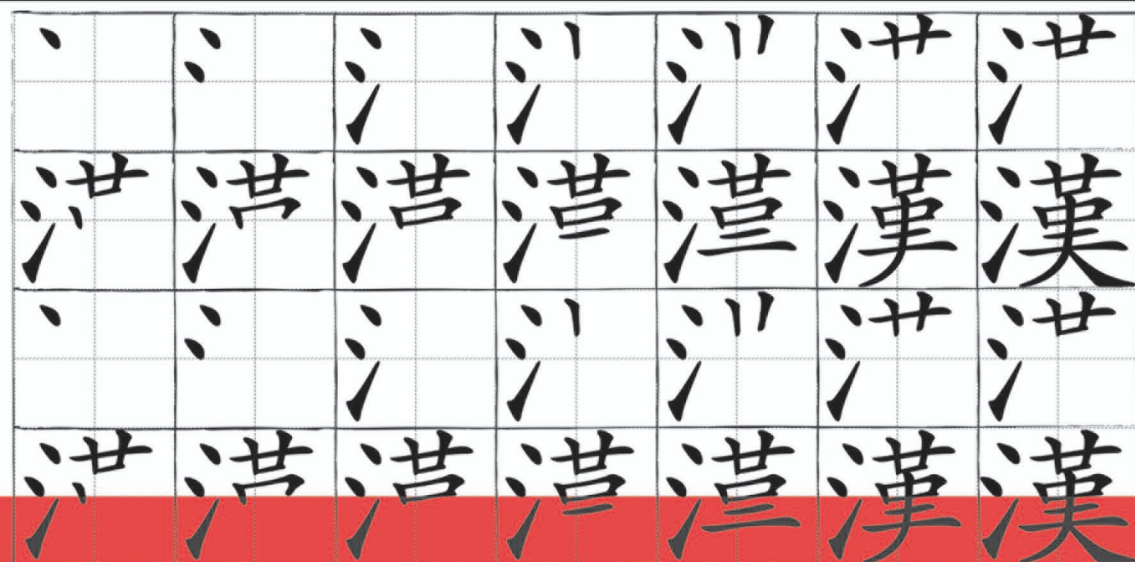
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# CRITICAL HAN STUDIES

The History, Representation, and  
Identity of China's Majority



Edited by

THOMAS S. MULLANEY,  
JAMES LEIBOLD,  
STÉPHANE GROS, and  
ERIC VANDEN BUSSCHE

## *Critical Han Studies*

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON CHINESE CULTURE AND SOCIETY

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# Critical Han Studies

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and Identity of China's Majority*

*Edited by*

THOMAS S. MULLANEY

JAMES LEIBOLD

STÉPHANE GROS

ERIC VANDEN BUSSCHE



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# Critical Han Studies

## *Introduction and Prolegomenon*

Thomas S. Mullaney

Encompassing more than 90 percent of the populations of the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, "Han" is one of the largest categories of collective identity in the world. On the mainland, Han is understood to be a type of *minzu*, or ethnonational group, a categorical designation that places it alongside the country's fifty-five other officially recognized *minzu*: the Zhuang, Yi, Uyghur, Bai, Tibetan, Miao, Lisu, and so forth. The category of Han, however, is of a size and constitution that sets it apart quite starkly from its "sibling nationalities." First of all, it claims among its members some 1.2 billion people, making it roughly seventy-six times larger than mainland China's next largest *minzu*, the Zhuang, and over *four hundred thousand* times larger than its smallest, the Lhoba. Whereas ethnic groups no doubt vary greatly in size, the incomparable immensity of Han—a category whose subethnic and geographic "branches" dwarf in size the population of some European countries—prompts us to reconsider the appropriateness of treating Han as the same type of collective identity as those with which it is normally compared. To compare Han to any given Non-Han *minzu* is in certain respects akin to comparing a phylum with a class, a class with an order, or an order with a family—that is, across entirely different taxonomic registers. Within China, Han is on a scale all its own, on par with such global categories as race, religion, and even continents.

The internal composition of the Han also raises questions as to its coherence as a single, unified category. Han encompasses eight immense speech communities—Guan (Mandarin), Wu, Yue, Xiang, Hakka, Gan, Southern Min, and Northern Min<sup>1</sup>—which, although referred to as "dialects" (*fangyan*) in Chinese parlance, exhibit levels of mutual unintelligibility that would likely be treated as differences of language were they observed in the European context. As John DeFrancis has argued, the con-

cept of a singular Chinese language is an “abstraction” that contains a host of “mutually unintelligible forms of speech.”<sup>2</sup> And as Jerry Norman has argued, “There is probably as much difference between the dialects of Peking [Beijing] and Chaozhou as there is between Italian and French; the Hainan Min dialects are as different from the Xi’an dialect as Spanish is from Rumanian.”<sup>3</sup>

When we take these issues of scale and composition into account, the group now referred to in the singular as “Han” appears less like a coherent category of identity and more like an umbrella term encompassing a plurality of diverse cultures, languages, and ethnicities. Confronted with this tension between its putative unity and empirical diversity, then, one might expect Han to have long been the object of critical and deconstructive analysis, akin to that which scholars have brought to bear on national, racial, ethnic, and even continental categories.<sup>4</sup> If categories of race constitute inventions; national categories, imaginations; and continents, myths, then surely we can expect the same of Han. However, with the exception of a very limited number of studies, which will be addressed forthwith, our expectation would not be met. The category of Han has in large part managed to pass through the epoch of deconstruction largely unscathed if not fortified. On the whole, the traditional understanding of Han continues to echo the highly questionable idea that, as Eric Hobsbawm has phrased it, China is “composed of a population that is ethnically almost or entirely homogenous.”<sup>5</sup>

In an effort to conceptualize new approaches to the question of Han, some scholars have suggested looking outside of China for methodological inspiration and theoretical guidance. In particular, Critical Race Theory and Whiteness Studies have been invoked as potentially profitable sites of exploration, with scholars such as Dru Gladney, Stevan Harrell, and Susan Blum bringing into play an analogy of sorts between Han and White.<sup>6</sup> While each of these scholars readily acknowledges the vast differences that separate these two categories of identity, and cautions us against facile or distorting comparisons,<sup>7</sup> nevertheless there are certain concepts and methodological approaches that have been developed as part of the study of whiteness that encourage scholars of China to view the Han category in radically new ways. One family of concepts pertains, for example, to forms and phenomena of transparency, nonreflexivity, and dys-consciousness, central features of white self-conceptualization by which, as Barbara Flagg has argued, “whiteness attains opacity, becomes apparent to the white mind, only in relation to, and contrast with, the ‘color’ of non-whites.”<sup>8</sup> Such concepts resonate powerfully with the practice of Han identity, one

that enjoys a powerful and hegemonic neutrality all its own. In many ways, the category of Han is, like that of white, “not only an identity, but the power to name and shape identities.”<sup>9</sup> As Blum has shown, mainstream (Han) ethnic discourse has the power to designate certain Non-Han groups as more and less civilized, more and less dangerous, more and less exotic, and so forth, establishing a hierarchy in which each group is defined relationally to the Han apex. Whereas the Zhuang are often considered innocuous and more or less “just like Han,” for example, Islamic groups such as the Uyghurs are described and governed in far more aggressive and anxiety-ridden terms and methods. Moreover, these stereotypes have come to shape, not only Han perceptions and expectations of different Non-Han groups, but also the perceptions and expectations that different Non-Han groups maintain with regard to each other.<sup>10</sup>

In an effort to initiate a conversation about this category of identity, the Critical Han Studies Conference and Workshop was organized by Thomas S. Mullaney, James Leibold, Stéphane Gros, and Eric Vanden Bussche. Hosted at Stanford University in April 2008, the conference brought together more than fifty scholars from eight countries. This gathering was simultaneously a venue for the presentation of new scholarship and a workshop for conceptualizing a new interdisciplinary field of study. It was out of this academic collaboration that the present volume emerges, not so much as a microcosm of the conference, but rather as an initial wave of new scholarship on the Han category designed to define certain key issues and to help inspire further research.<sup>11</sup> The eleven chapters featured in this volume represent the first step toward the creation of a new area of analysis, one provisionally titled “Critical Han Studies.”

To frame the overall volume, the balance of this introduction examines three thematic issues that factor heavily in the chapters herein: the relationship between the category of Han and those of China and Chinese, the origins of the Han category, and the historic formation of the Han category. While these three issues by no means exhaust the Han problematic, nevertheless they constitute foundational questions with which any investigation of Han will have to grapple.

#### HAN AND CHINA: THREE AMBIGUOUS RELATIONSHIPS

“Is it possible to be Chinese without being Han?” This question, posed by Joel Thoraval in his 1980 article, “Is the Chinese Concept of Nation ‘Obscure’?” encapsulates the first issue we will engage with here: the relationship of the category *Han* to those of *China* and *Chinese*.<sup>12</sup> There are at

least three ways in which Han and China are entangled: the long-standing commensuration between Han and “Chinese culture”; a similarly long-standing equivalence between Han and “the Chinese people”; and the intimate relationship between Han and the political-geographic concept of China. Each of these threads tugs at our analysis of Han, pulling us in directions that, if we are not chary, would make our examination of Han merely an examination of China by other means.

*Han as Chinese Civilization.* In 1952 Herold Wiens published his influential study *China's March into the Tropics*, charting the history of the southward expansion of Chinese culture and civilization into the Jiangnan region and the present-day territories of southwest China. For Wiens, the “China” in his title is contrasted against a second category appearing in the subtitle of the book: *Non-Han-Chinese*.<sup>13</sup> In 1967 Wiens republished his study under a slightly different title, one that made this connection between the categories of Han and Chinese more direct. Renamed *Han Chinese Expansion in South China*, Wiens’s inclusion of this new qualifier “Han” made explicit the first of the three conceptual pairings with which we are concerned here: namely, Han as “Chinese civilization,” “Chinese culture,” and the like.<sup>14</sup> As Wiens explains, the term *Han-Chinese* in his study is “used to mean what Li Chi [Li Ji] has called ‘sons of the Yellow Emperor’; that is, descendants of the earliest Wei and Yellow River Chinese, and, more loosely, Chinese and people of China long assimilated to and identified with the Yellow River civilization.”<sup>15</sup> Well aware that *Han* was not the relevant ethnonym for many of the groups encompassed by this definition, he goes on to explain:

It is noteworthy that the people who call themselves “Han-jen” [Hanren], or “Han people” are those living in North and Central China to whom the Han Dynasty appeared to have contributed most in the way of a glorious heritage. The Chinese of Ling-nan (Kuang-tung [Guangdong] and Kuang-hsi [Guangxi]) call themselves “T’ang-jen” or “T’ang people”, because it was during the T’ang Dynasty that orthodox Chinese culture most deeply transformed the people of this region. Our term Han-Chinese, in its specialized use here, will be applied to orthodox Chinese from the time of the Yellow Emperor down, and therefore, includes the pre-Han orthodox Chinese as well as the orthodox culture adherents in Ling-nan.<sup>16</sup>

For Wiens, “Hanren” is a proxy, not only for all “orthodox Chinese” at a given moment in history, but all orthodox Chinese at all stages of history—even before the origination of the moniker “Hanren” itself. It is



at once a historically specific term (connected to the Han dynasty) and a transhistorical term that can be applied across the entire span of history from the second millennium B.C.E. to the present. The “Han” in “Han Chinese,” one might say, is redundant.

Since the publication of Wiens’s study, the use of the ethnonym *Han* has made deeper inroads into global discourse, both academic and popular. If travelogues at the turn of the twentieth century made only infrequent references to “Han” and absolutely none to “Non-Han”—preferring instead terms such as *Chinese*, *Chinamen*, and *Celestials*, on the one hand, and simply *Non-Chinese* on the other—those from recent years use the terms extensively.<sup>17</sup> Far from detaching the category *Han* from that of Chinese, however, the overall effect has been to repackage “Chinese history” as “Han history.” In the reference work *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of China*, for example, the entry for “Han” contains all the historical periods and personages traditionally associated with “Chinese history” more broadly. These include not only the Shang and Zhou dynasties but also twentieth-century periods and political formations such as the May Fourth Movement, the United Front, the Chinese Communist Party, and even post-Mao reforms.<sup>18</sup> Suddenly, it would seem that everything from the Four Modernizations to the Tiananmen Square massacre has been ethnicized as Han. This commensuration of Han and Chinese has led to a virtual silence over the formation of Han identity as something apart from the overall discussion of “Chinese nationalism” more generally. As Dru Gladney has argued, “Few have questioned how the Han became the 91 percent majority in China,” with most “merely accepting the Han as representative of the Chinese in general.”<sup>19</sup> One of the most vivid symbols we have of this commensuration is the linguistic term *Hanyu*. Although translated into English as “Chinese,” *Hanyu* translates more literally as “Han language,” precisely in the way that *Baiyu* translates as “Bai language,” *Miaoyu* as “Miao language,” and so forth. The fact that we so readily pair it not with a Han ethnocultural group but with China itself indicates the degree to which the connection between Han culture and Chinese culture has been naturalized.

The pervasiveness of the Han-Chinese identification obscures a host of issues, one of which is whether Han itself constitutes anything like a coherent category of identity in the first place. In the opening chapter of this volume, “Recentring China: The Cantonese in and beyond the Han,” Kevin Carrico questions this coherence through the example of regional identities below the surface of the Han, calling attention to an issue that few if any scholars have seriously addressed before: the simultaneously commonsense yet problematic location of the Cantonese within the Han.

Despite the fact that the Cantonese exhibit a host of cultural features that distinguish them from other subsets of the Han category, possess qualities that would seem to qualify them as a full-fledged *minzu* in their own right (shared territory, language, culture, and so forth), and have historically referred to themselves, as Carrico notes, as “Tang people” (Tangren/Tongyahn) rather than “Han people” (Hanren/Hohnyahn), their status as Han has been so thoroughly naturalized that it has failed to register as a problem in need of consideration. In the case of the Cantonese, then, the types of questions that Noel Ignatiev and Karen Brodtkin ask of Irish American and Jewish American communities—namely, how each came to be considered part of the category *White* from which they were originally excluded—have simply gone unasked.<sup>20</sup> No one has truly pursued the question of how the Cantonese became Han.<sup>21</sup>

Despite their categorization as part of China’s majority, are the Cantonese fully Han? Posing this question, Carrico’s chapter furthermore considers the underexamined yet easily perceptible products of this uncertain or anomalous integration—the persistent tensions between unity and differentiation that characterize Chinese national, ethnic, and regional imaginaries, represented in his chapter by Northern imaginings of a “wild” South, Southern marginalization of a “backwards” North, and an emerging material enactment of Han homogeneity in Han clothing. By analyzing these centrifugal and centripetal tensions dwelling below the surface of a seemingly homogeneous Han, Carrico’s study resonates with the work of Emily Honig on the Subei people, a group that, although officially recognized as Han, remains subject to a host of prejudices that, under any other circumstance, we would expect to be called “ethnic discrimination.”<sup>22</sup> However, by virtue of the shared *minzu* status of those discriminating and those being discriminated against, at best we are permitted to use altogether confusing terms like “intraethnic discrimination.” Like Honig’s work, Carrico’s chapter alerts us to the complex internal structure of the Han category, one in which certain subsets of the Han occupy the peripheries of the category—liminal positions that call into question our oversimplified Han/Non-Han dichotomy.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Carrico’s chapter lends support to ongoing interventions made by Fred Blake, Dru Gladney, Jonathan Lipman, and Emily Honig, among others: namely, that it might be more accurate to think of “intra-Han” divisions and Han “subsets” in terms of ethnic difference and ethnic groups.<sup>24</sup>

*Han as the Bioracial Category of Chinese.* To compound the complexity of its relationship with “China,” the category of Han is also frequently

commensurated with the bioracial concept of the Chinese people or the Chinese race. In her chapter, "On Not Looking Chinese: Does 'Mixed Race' Decenter the Han from Chineseness?" Emma J. Teng explores the powerful yet largely unexplored bioracial dimensions of the putatively ethnic Han category, weighing it against the category's more frequently discussed cultural aspects. Teng focuses on the experiences of Eurasian individuals, so-called biracial figures, to ask the question: "Does the Eurasian disrupt conventional notions of Chinese identity, decentering the Han, or does this marginal figure simply help to define the center, establishing the 'pure' Han Chinese subject as the embodiment of quintessential Chineseness?"<sup>25</sup>

As Teng demonstrates through her treatment of two prominent Eurasian women, Irene Cheng and Han Suyin, cultural factors such as proficiency in the Chinese language and the ability to navigate the complex and rule-governed playing field of Chinese familial relations weighed heavily in the experience of both women in their attempts to identify with their Chinese heritage. Both Cheng and Han made concerted efforts to perform Chineseness, a complex process that involved speaking Chinese, using Chinese names, attending Chinese schools, eating Chinese food, demonstrating loyalty to China, and other activities geared toward the acquisition of what Teng calls "Chinese cultural capital."<sup>26</sup> Assessing the powerfully cultural focus of such activities, Teng explains that we might conclude that "it is not necessary to 'look Chinese' to be Chinese." Phenotype, it would seem, is trumped by "claims of cultural affiliation (demonstrated through practices such as clothing, ancestor worship, or even drinking green tea), language, hometown, and political allegiance." All of this would lead us to conclude that Han, as well as the category *Chinese* with which it is so intimately connected, is fundamentally different from American conceptions of whiteness, insofar as "'impurity' does not automatically exclude one from we-group membership."<sup>27</sup>

As Teng proceeds to explain, however, the cultural dimensions of Han Chinese take us only so far, as evidenced by the experience of both Irene Cheng and Han Suyin. For both women, biological concepts of pure and impure blood factored heavily. Among the most important factors determining whether others accepted them as Chinese was that of paternal inheritance, that is, the central importance of whether one's father was or was not Chinese. Despite her complete fluency in all things Chinese, for example, Han Suyin nevertheless encountered those who used her "foreign blood" as a means of excluding her (either wholly or partially) from the category with which she identified. She was, at the end of the day, a *hunxue'er*—a person of "mixed blood."

The experience of the Eurasian, Teng concludes, demonstrates that the categories of Han and Chinese are not simply cultural and that the biology/culture dichotomy is a false one. For Teng, the “mixedness” of the Chinese Eurasian “only serves to underscore the importance of ‘blood’ and descent in defining group membership.” “Moreover,” Teng continues, “Chinese concepts of identity often implicitly link cultural inheritance to genetic inheritance.”<sup>28</sup> Han is a fugitive concept, one that can retreat into biology when pursued from the side of culture, and can retreat into culture when pursued from the side of biology. It straddles the ethnoracial divide, and from this ambivalence derives an elusive resilience.

*Han as the Political-Geographic Category of China.* If the putatively ethnic category of Han has long been infused with a distinctly bioracial discourse, so too has it been intimately connected to the political-geographic concept “China.” Unlike the two relationships outlined above, however, this particular Han–China connection is not one of interchangeability or transference. On the contrary, the relationship between Han and the Chinese polity is one in which Han derives immense support from its association with Chinese state power, and at the same time finds itself closely monitored and even bound by this very same state power.

To understand the first half of this ambivalent relationship, one in which the category of Han derives resilience through its deep connections with the political-geographic concept of China, we are guided in this volume by Zhihong Chen and her chapter, “‘Climate’s Moral Economy’: Geography, Race, and the Han in Early Republican China.” Chen investigates the role that the discourse of environmental determinism played in the ethnoracial ideology of early twentieth-century Chinese social scientists and nationalists. Drawing on the work of two influential early geographers—Zhu Kezhen (1890–1974) and Zhang Qiyun (1900–1985)—Chen traces the links these and other thinkers drew between bioracial concepts of a Han Chinese people and the territory of China itself, through the bridging concepts of climate and topography. As Chen demonstrates, the discourse of environmental determinism was central to the racial discourse of Han. Chinese geographers drew upon notions of environmental “endowment” popularized by such figures as Robert DeCourcy Ward (1867–1931), with some portraying the “Yellow” Han Chinese race as superior to that of the “white” Euro-Americans in its natural capacity to settle in a wide variety of climates. Unlike the white race, some argued, the Han was endowed with the capacity to weather starkly different environments, ranging from the brutal cold of the northern steppe to the tropical zones of Southeast

Asia. Some nationalists took this idea as an omen of an Asian future, dominated by Han.

To the extent that Han derives political and symbolic power from its deep connection to the Chinese “geo-body,”<sup>29</sup> so too is it bound and confined by this geo-body in ways that require our attention. The clearest way to witness such confinement is by considering what happens to the Han category when we try to take it beyond the political boundaries of either the People’s Republic of China or the Republic of China, or to recently reacquired territories such as Hong Kong and Macau. In a word, it disappears. For example, were one forced to assign an ethnonymic term to American Chinatowns, urban enclaves with deep historical connections to traditionally “Han” areas of southeast China, the operative term would not be Han but Tang or Hua (we see this, for example, in the Chinese term for “Chinatown,” *Tangren jie*, or Tang People Street). In Vietnam, ethnically Chinese citizens are categorized, not as “Han” or as its Vietnamese analog, but rather under the rubric “Hoa” or “Hoa Kieu” (derived from the Chinese terms *Hua* and *Huaqiao*). In fact, nowhere besides mainland China and Taiwan does the term “Han” function as an ethnonymic designation. There exists no such thing as “overseas Han.” By contrast, the other categories with which “Han” is so often commensurated—such as “ethnic Chinese”—travels widely and freely across the globe. The same is true of related terms, such as “overseas Chinese” and the “Chinese diaspora.”

The strict political-geographic parameters of “Han” are further illustrated when we consider its counterpart, “Non-Han.” Whereas one might expect “Non-Han” to apply to any and all groups that are not Han—a category that would include not only Chinese minorities but also, let us say, Irish communities in New York—we find that it too is confined to the political territories of mainland China and Taiwan. As a person of mixed western European heritage, for example, I the author am *not Han*, but I am most certainly *not Non-Han*. Were I to identify with the identity of Non-Han, I would at the same time be identifying myself implicitly as a citizen of China or Taiwan, insofar as the political and ethnonational concepts are inseparable. By contrast, the category *Non-Chinese*—which, based on the simple principle of transitivity, theoretically should behave along the same lines as “Non-Han”—is not confined in the same manner. “Non-Chinese” can refer both to Non-Han Chinese minorities and to communities without any political or cultural connections to China.

To understand this second half of the ambivalent relationship between the category of Han and the political-geographic entity of China, we are

guided in this volume by Uradyn E. Bulag and his chapter, “Good Han, Bad Han: The Moral Parameters of Ethnopolitics in China.” As he argues, turn-of-the-century revolutionaries and post-imperial state builders had a troubled and tenuous relationship with the very idea of Han. Initially, revolutionaries fostered and employed it as a radical discourse by which to marshal support against the Manchu Qing. After the revolution, however, the imperatives of consolidation called for the attenuation if not neutralization of Han chauvinism and jingoistic fervor lest these alienate the many other groups in China who were both Non-Han and Non-Manchu (such as the Tibetans and Mongols).<sup>30</sup>

Following the revolution of 1949, which ushered in Communist rule on the mainland, CCP leaders maintained this vigilant concern over the threat of what they termed “Great Han Chauvinism” (modeled after the Russian-Soviet concept “Great Russian Chauvinism”). Indeed, it is fair to say that “Han Chauvinism” was considered equally if not more threatening to political stability than “Local Nationalism” (i.e., minority nationalism or separatism). As Mao articulated the problem in 1956: “We say China is a country vast in territory, rich in resources and large in population; as a matter of fact, it is the Han nationality whose population is large and the minority nationalities whose territory is vast and whose resources are rich.”<sup>31</sup> Confronted with this inescapable political reality—that wherever went China’s Non-Han peoples, so too went vast expanses of territory—the Chinese Communists adopted a posture that, at first glance, seems like an oxymoron: a vociferous opposition to Han hegemony, mounted and policed by a single-Party hegemonic political regime that, by any demographic measure one could imagine, was itself a Han regime. Not only were Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, and Deng Xiaoping all members of the Han nationality (as are Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao), but so too has the overwhelming majority of members of the National People’s Congress hailed from the country’s majority nationality.<sup>32</sup> Was this not a contradiction in terms?

The Party’s answer to this, as Bulag explains, is in the negative, a stance that they are able to make by way of their invention of a novel ethnopolitical subject position: the “Good Han.” “Good Han” (*hao Hanren*) was part of what Bulag describes as the Party’s attempt to practice “good ethnicity”: a progressive, cosmopolitan, even transcendent type of Han ethnonational identity that stood apart from its perceived opposite, that of the “Bad Han” (*huai Hanren*). If “Bad Han” was the Han of assimilationism, bigotry, and chauvinism, “Good Han” was the Han of multinational camaraderie and multiculturalism, of mutual respect and collaborative development, and one that made possible a new form of political alliance: an alliance between

Good Han and Good Non-Han against a common set of politically refracted ethnic enemies, namely, the “Bad Han” or “Great Han Chauvinists” that would seek to make China a country of Han and the “Bad Non-Han” or “Local Nationalists” that would follow the path of “separatism” and “split-tism.” Despite the clear and long-standing complicity between “Han” and the political-geographic entity that is “China,” we can never lose sight of the ways in which the concept of Han has threatened (and continues to threaten) Chinese state stability. It is not a purely symbiotic relationship, insofar as the host is often at risk of being overtaken.

#### ANCIENT HERITAGE VERSUS INVENTED TRADITION: THE ORIGINS OF THE HAN CATEGORY

Having analyzed the ties that bind the category of Han to those of Chinese ethnicity, race, and polity, we turn now to consider Han as a category unto itself—one that, although intimately connected to China, cannot be understood simply as a proxy for China. In doing so, one of the central questions is that of Han origins. Did the category of Han as we understand it today originate in distant antiquity or in the recent past? Does it enjoy an ancient heritage, or is it an invented tradition?<sup>33</sup> This pair of questions can be parsed further to ask: to what extent should we limit our investigation of the “Han minzu” to the specific components that form the compound: Han and *minzu*. Is it justifiable to seek Han origins *avant la lettre*, before “Han” was used to refer to, as Elliott phrases it in this volume, “a label for people who, by descent, language, and cultural practice, were recognized as Central Plains dwellers (or their descendants),” and before the rather recent neologism *minzu*?<sup>34</sup> Is it fair to search through the annals of history in search of categories that “behave” in ways comparable to the modern-day Han, even if they are called Hua, Min, Neidiren, or otherwise? Or, on the other hand, must we place a certain emphasis on discourse, and set our threshold of similarity such that it disallows all but the precise terminological compound “Han minzu”?

In China, the most long-standing and dominant paradigm regarding Han origins is represented in this volume in the chapter by Xu Jieshun, “Understanding the Snowball Theory of the Han Nationality.” Xu, who is the founding director of the Han Nationality Research Center in Guangxi, has long argued on behalf of the antiquity of Han, tracing its origins to the distant recesses of the Chinese past—well before the terms *minzu* and *Han* existed or were used in the manner one sees in the contemporary period.<sup>35</sup> In his chapter in this volume, which for many readers will likely



be the most conservative and perhaps controversial piece in the collection, Xu traces what he regards as the origins of Han over three periods. The first encompasses the Xia dynasty (21st c.–18th c. B.C.E.), the Shang dynasty (17th c.–1027 B.C.E.), and the Western Zhou (1122–771 B.C.E.). The second stretches from the Spring and Autumn period (772–476 B.C.E.) to the Qin (221–206 B.C.E.). The third is roughly coterminous with the Western Han (206 B.C.E.–9 C.E.). Dividing his narrative into this tripartite chronology, Xu describes the origins of Han as a process of accretion in which increasing numbers of groups undergo a process of sinicization and amalgamation. Xu Jieshun is not alone in advocating this theory. To the contrary, he has been careful to present himself, not as the originator of this idea, but merely as a vehicle for its elaboration. In particular, Xu cites the eminent sociologist and ethnologist Fei Xiaotong as his intellectual forebear, attributing the name of his theory—the “snowball theory of Han”—to an analogy first made by Fei Xiaotong.<sup>36</sup>

One of the key dimensions of Xu’s approach to Han is his highly permissive treatment of the term *Han* itself. Xu does not limit his examination of the “Han minzu” to either of the component terms *minzu* or *Han* (the first of which did not appear in Chinese until around the turn of the twentieth century, and the latter of which did not stabilize until the late imperial period). In the Xia, Shang, and Zhou, for example, Xu focuses primarily on the “Huaxia,” a category of identity he regards as the original nucleus of the later Han category. Xu assigns precise populations to the group at different phases of China’s imperial history: 80 million to 90 million in the early Tang; exactly 104,410,000 in the year 1109; 150 million in 1601; and 400 million in 1851.<sup>37</sup>

Whereas the snowball theory of Han has long enjoyed dominance in mainland Chinese scholarship, serious challenges have been raised. Kai-wing Chow has argued that the Han category of today is just over one century old, having originated in the discourse of antidynastic revolutionaries in the late Qing (1644–1911). Thoroughly disillusioned with the ailing Qing state—headed by Manchu rulers who had conquered the territories of China in the first half of the seventeenth century—radicals such as Zhang Binglin and Zou Rong openly proclaimed their goal of expelling the “barbarians” and restoring China to its rightful owners: the ethnic Chinese, newly conceptualized under the moniker “Hanzu.”<sup>38</sup>

Unlike Xu and Fei, then, Chow places particular emphasis on what Pierre Bourdieu has called the “symbolic power” of naming.<sup>39</sup> For Chow, the neologism “Han minzu” is not a neutral or passive descriptor by which an already existing community was finally referenced but rather an active



ingredient in the formation of this community. For all their resemblance, "Hanmin" and other earlier categories were quite unlike that of "Han minzu," Chow argues, with the former categories being understood as highly malleable and which permitted the inclusion of members based on their ability to master certain cultural practices. By contrast, the new concept of Han minzu, or "Hanzu," exhibited the sort of biological essentialism and exclusionism characteristic of racial categories. Frank Dikötter has argued along similar lines, portraying late imperial revolutionaries as Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei as having "reconfigured folk notions of patrilineal descent into a racial discourse which represented all inhabitants of China as the descendants of the Yellow Emperor."<sup>40</sup> Dru Gladney has also made such claims, arguing that, while the "notion of Han ren (Han person) has clearly existed for many centuries . . . the notion of Han minzu (Han nationality) is an entirely modern phenomenon, which arose with the shift from Chinese empire to modern nation-state."<sup>41</sup>

Chow ties this conceptual invention to the political exigencies of the late imperial period, and most directly, to the activities of anti-Manchu/anti-Qing revolutionaries. The concept of Hanzu enabled anti-Manchu radicals to articulate a form of essentialized, unbridgeable difference between the Manchu ruling elite and the non-Manchu imperial subjects that was impossible to argue using the logic and terminology of either traditional, cultural notions of identity or recently imported Social Darwinist conceptualizations in which the world's population was understood as a hierarchy of white, yellow, black, brown, and red races. The Manchus, as many scholars have observed, had in large part mastered the forms and vocabulary of traditional Chinese regimes, securing their legitimacy through an active patronage of, for example, Confucian ethics and the civil service exam.<sup>42</sup> As such, their rule was difficult if not impossible to delegitimize using culture-based arguments. At the same time, other available avenues of revolutionary discourse—in particular the increasingly global concept of race war articulated in the Social Darwinism of Huxley and others—were similarly insufficient, due to the Manchu's and Han's common designation as members of the same "Yellow Race."<sup>43</sup> To articulate their anti-Manchu stance, Chow argues, the revolutionaries imagined into existence the novel, culturalist-cum-racial concept of Hanzu, a form of "Han racism," designed to "undermine the reformists' ground for continual support for the Manchu regime."<sup>44</sup> Outfitted with this amalgamated idea of culture-race, Liang Qichao and others were able to articulate their opposition to Manchu rule as the cultural equivalent of racial struggle.<sup>45</sup>

Here we arrive at an impasse, with one group of scholars arguing for

the ancient origins of Han and the other for quite modern ones—arguments articulated, as we have seen, via the former camp’s highly flexible treatment of discourse and the latter camp’s emphasis on the symbolic and causal power of language. In our attempt to navigate this highly polarized historiography, we are helped by two of the authors in this volume. First, in her chapter, “Antiquarian as Ethnographer: Han Ethnicity in Early China Studies,” Tamara Chin draws upon the insights of both sides of this debate to offer a bifocal analysis of Han origins. Through one lens, Chin focuses on the *longue durée* of Chinese history, employing the same ancient Chinese sources that one finds in the work of Xu Jieshun and his cohort. Through her second lens, however, Chin also investigates the history of discursive and epistemological paradigms through which, at different points in history, such questions of origin and ancient identity have been posed and answered. In particular, she examines classical studies, archaeology, and ethnology. Drawing insight and inspiration from Jean Comaroff, Chin argues on behalf of “a dialogic ethnographic relation between the observer and the observed” in which we focus, not exclusively on either discourse or practice, but on the relationship between “the antiquarian and the archive.”<sup>46</sup> Scholars within the tradition of classical studies developed theories based on their own assumptions about cultural transformability, as well as on their own assumptions about what dimensions of experience did and did not constitute evidence worthy of analysis. In later periods, archaeologists and ethnologists developed still different theories of origin and ancient identity, ones grounded in their own particular sets of assumptions. As this bifocal analysis reveals, the question of Han origins can never be separated from its historical context and should always be considered as a function of a relationship between presents and pasts. In this respect, Chin does not refute so much as reconcile the observations of Fei Xiaotong and Xu Jieshun, on the one hand, and those of Kai-wing Chow and Dru Gladney, on the other.

A similarly bifocal approach is advocated by Nicholas Tapp in his chapter, “The Han Joker in the Pack: Some Issues of Culture and Identity from the Minzu Literature.” Like Kai-wing Chow, Dru Gladney, and others, Tapp emphasizes the significance of the modern provenance of the term *minzu*, proposing that this new concept “changes the nature of the playing field entirely”—a claim that is well supported when one considers the history of the term and its East Asian analogs (*minzoku* in Japan, *minjok* in Korea). In Japan, as Kevin Doak explains, the term *minzoku* underwent important and sometimes thorough transmutations, at one point used to legitimate the Japanese colonial empire and then, after 1945, repurposed by

scholars in an effort to distance the discipline of ethnology (*minzokugaku*) from the legacy of Japanese militarism. For turn-of-the-century Korean nationalists such as Sin Ch'aeho, the articulation and narrative elaboration of *minjok* represented what Andre Schmid has described as "the rediscovery of an objective unit that centuries of historians before him had failed to recognize," and an entity without which history itself did not exist.<sup>47</sup> In China, the term "*minzu*" was at the center of a fierce ethnopolitical struggle between Chinese Nationalists and Chinese Communists over the essential nature of the Chinese nation.<sup>48</sup> For all of these reasons, the history of the discourse of *minzu*, *minzoku*, and *minjok* constitutes a vibrant and highly contested conceptual terrain in its own right. These terms are not simply neutral nomenclature through which "real" histories were articulated. Rather, discourses of race and ethnicity, and in particular the historical vicissitudes of load-bearing concepts such as *minzu*, have to be considered in our analysis of the people and communities whose lives are being described and prescribed by such discourses.<sup>49</sup>

While recognizing the significance of the neologism *minzu*, however, Tapp ultimately stands at a critical distance with respect to both Chow and Gladney. Rather than portray the emergence of *minzu* as a break with the past—as a discursive formation that completely displaced earlier modes of collective identity—Tapp argues that the fuller significance of *minzu* is the way in which it has formed the governing logic of a new ethnopolitical environment in which "prior forms of social difference rearrange themselves in relation to the new terms."<sup>50</sup> This new discourse of *minzu* permeates, fuses with, and in some cases entirely refashions on-the-ground cultural relations to the point where, as Tapp contends, "a new configuration of cultural identity and social difference is brought about, in which ethnic and *minzu* identity is almost inextricably intertwined."<sup>51</sup>

With such considerations in mind, then, the present volume represents an attempt to move beyond the binary "new Han" and "ancient Han." For those who emphasize the centrality of discourse, this volume challenges us to engage seriously with the idea of Han *avant la lettre*. At the same time, it cautions us to avoid simplistic commensurations between "Han" and premodern categories of identity that bear some relation with it (e.g., Hua, Huaxia, Min). The same holds true for the category of *minzu*, a modern neologism whose historical significance is occluded when we commensurate it with earlier notions of collectivity (*zhong*, *lei*, etc.). Incorporating both approaches, then, the goal of a Critical Han Studies subfield is to take these premodern categories seriously while critically investigating their historical relationship to the contemporary category of Han.

CONVERGENCE VERSUS DIFFERENTIATION:  
THE PROBLEM OF HAN FORMATION

Closely connected to the problem of Han origins is the problem of Han formations. To understand the dominant paradigm of Han ethnogenesis, we must return once again to the chapter in this volume by Xu Jieshun. As noted above, Xu is among the most recent and prolific members of a long scholarly lineage, one that traces the origins of Han to the most distant recesses of the ancient past. Within this paradigm, Han ethnogenesis is understood as a multi-millennium process of aggregation (hence the image of an ever-rolling, ever-expanding snowball that is formed through its encounter with, and interiorization of, once exterior entities). Among Xu's intellectual forebears, this same theory has been framed in slightly different terms, sometimes as "plurality and unity" (*duoyuan yiti*),<sup>52</sup> other times as "integrated ethnic heterogeneity" (*heji cuoza zhi zu*), and elsewhere simply as "sinicization." Specific terminology notwithstanding, such descriptions of Han ethnogenesis are based on the idea that Han possesses what Xu describes as the "rare ability to absorb"<sup>53</sup>—a unique magnetism whereby, to borrow the language of one of Xu's intellectual predecessors, increasing numbers of "you-groups" are gradually enveloped and made part of the ever-expanding Han "we-group" category.<sup>54</sup>

Among those who argue on behalf of a more recent provenance of the Han category, we encounter a remarkably different set of paradigms, orientations, and commitments. One of the most important is the idea that, when examining the emergence, formation, and stabilization of a given identity, it is necessary to, as Fredrik Barth has framed it most succinctly, "shift the focus of investigation from internal constitution and history of separate groups to ethnic boundaries and boundary maintenance."<sup>55</sup> As another scholar has framed it, identity is "essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group."<sup>56</sup> A set of people who, to an outsider, might appear to share a great deal in common linguistically, culturally, or otherwise can through acts of "ascription and identification"<sup>57</sup> just as readily organize themselves into a multiplicity of communities. And for those who, from an exogenous perspective, might seem to differ markedly from one another, can just as readily converge upon a common identity. From this perspective, identity formation is a process that takes place "between and not inside"<sup>58</sup> communities of people, with stable categories of identity being the products of interaction wherein selves and others form through simultaneous processes of identification and differentiation.

For scholars who regard ethnicity from this vantage point, the question

of Han ethnogenesis takes shape very differently than in the “magnetic Han” paradigm. Rather than ask, Who has been absorbed to create Han? the question becomes, In response or contradistinction to whom was Han first articulated as a relevant category? While scholars have proposed different answers to this question, nevertheless there exists a certain basic consensus: namely, that the category of Han has taken shape by means of a “default contrast with all other ethnic groups,”<sup>59</sup> is a by-product of “internal orientalism,”<sup>60</sup> and is a “residual category comprised of all those who were not barbarians.”<sup>61</sup> In this way, Han representation of non-Han groups “reflects the objectivizing of a ‘majority’ nationality discourse that parallels the valorization of gender and political hierarchies.”<sup>62</sup> Phrased differently, this approach views Han, one might say, as “Non-Non-Han”: a formation of selfhood achieved by means of the representation of one’s Other.<sup>63</sup>

As the reader no doubt gleans from these passages, this approach to Han draws heavily upon Edward Said’s seminal text *Orientalism*, applying Said’s analysis of the West/East binary to that of Han/Non-Han. In much the same way that Said’s Orientalists were, through their representations of the “Orient,” engaging in the formation of “a collective notion identifying ‘us’ Europeans as against all ‘those’ non-Europeans,”<sup>64</sup> members of the Han majority are understood here as constituting their own identity by means of representing their imagined alter ego, the Non-Han. Whereas Han stereotypes may differ depending on the particular Non-Han group in question—with some groups being considered “colorful” and “harmless” (the Yi and Naxi) and others troublesome and “resistant” (Wa, Hui, and Tibetan)—nevertheless, all of these representations of minorities are, for scholars who advance this theory of Han, ultimately Han imaginings projected upon minority communities for the purpose of an inverted self-representation.<sup>65</sup>

In our attempt to navigate these competing views of Han ethnogenesis—one that portrays it as a *long durée* process of coagulation extending back many millennia, and the other locating it in a much more contemporary process of differentiation—we are guided by four of the contributing authors. Taken together, these chapters trace a long historical arc that in many ways reconciles, not only the opposing sides of the convergence-differentiation binary, but also the ancient-modern binary around which it is centered. In the first of these chapters, “*Hushuo*: The Northern Other and the Naming of the Han Chinese,” Mark Elliott places the Barthian problematic familiar to the “new Han” or “Han as Non-Non-Han” school within a historical period more typically associated with the “ancient” or “magnetic Han” approach of Fei Xiaotong, Xu Jieshun, and others. Adopting Barth’s approach to boundary formation, Elliott poses the ques-

tion: “who is (or was) the Other to the Han Self?”<sup>66</sup> The Other he has in mind is not a generic or transtemporal “Non-Han” identity, however, but rather the foundational Other, the first Other in contradistinction to which the category of Han began to take shape along the lines we now recognize as ethnic.

In his search for the original distinction, Elliott identifies as the most likely candidate the “Northern Other” around the time of the Wei dynasty (386–534), the “nomadic pastoralists living north of the central plains, in early times known in the Chinese language most familiarly as *Hu*, and by other names as well, such as *Fan*, *Yi*, and *Lu*.”<sup>67</sup> He proposes that the use of “Han” in an ethnonymic rather than political sense—that is, as a community sharing certain perceived connections of language, culture, and so forth, rather than simply political subjects of a particular dynastic regime—was not an invention of those who would come to be designated as Han. Instead, Elliott argues that “*Han* was a *Hu* proposition” and that “the ethnic unity of the Chinese as seen in the adoption of *Han* to describe themselves is really more the *product* of repeated efforts to create and foster political unity than it is the *source* of that unity.”<sup>68</sup> Elliott does not permit his concern with origins to become a preoccupation, however, and is quick to point out that Han-as-ethnonym, while first proposed by the *Hu*, fell out of use in the centuries following. Displacing “Han” was the category “*Hua*,” which, like Han, was also not restricted to political subjects but designated a community of people conceptualized along linguistic, cultural, and genealogical lines.

In his chapter, “From Subjects to Han: The Rise of Han as Identity in Nineteenth-Century Southwest China,” C. Patterson Giersch picks up on the story of Han where Elliott leaves off, albeit in a different part of the empire and many centuries later. Building on his pathbreaking work on the southwestern-most corner of the empire in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Giersch shows how the category of Han came to be used by immigrant groups during the course of their competition with indigenous communities for economic resources.<sup>69</sup> Originally, these communities had identified not as Han but as people of particular native places back in the Chinese interior. It was only when these native-place communities saw the strategic value of a pan-regional alliance that they began to employ “Han” in a broader, ethnonymic manner similar to that of the contemporary period, and the period outlined by Elliott. Taking account of both Elliott’s and Giersch’s insights, then, we begin to appreciate how the formation of a Han category at a given point in history did not ensure its even persistence through time. In Elliott’s historical period, we witness a time

before the inception of Han-as-ethnonym, its early formulation, and then its subsequent disappearance. In the later period examined by Giersch, we also witness a time when Han-as-ethnonym was not a salient category of collective identity, followed by its emergence under a very particular set of political and economic circumstances.

In his chapter, "Searching for Han: Early Twentieth-Century Narratives of Chinese Origins and Development," James Leibold offers an analysis that in many ways connects the imperial periods addressed by Elliott, Giersch, and Xu and the post-imperial period examined by Gladney, Chow, and others. In the work of the early twentieth-century theorists addressed by Leibold, we begin to see the bridge between the inchoate collectivities that were invoked and abandoned situationally by the actors in Elliott's and Giersch's chapters and the more vociferously articulated, elaborated, and defended concept examined by those who emphasize the modern provenance of the Han category. The category that Leibold's theorists were engaged in building was no longer a matter of temporary, political expediency—a way of marshaling greater forces for the purposes of expropriation. While no doubt still grounded in this network of political and economic relationships, in the early twentieth century the categories of Han, Hua, and others begin to take on much deeper symbolic meanings. In fleshing out what they saw as the essence of this category, the theorists in Leibold's study were engaged in what might be termed the "ideological work" of fortifying the Han category.

At the same time, this emerging family of categories was by no means standardized, even at this late date. Leibold traces three forks in the road where theorists of this massive collectivity debated its attributes and arrived at different conclusions. Was it of foreign origin, or was it indigenous to the soil of modern-day China? Was it monogenic or polygenic? Was it singular or plural? In each case, the diversity of responses outlined by Leibold prompts us to view the early twentieth-century concept of Han as unstable, one that had yet to acquire a definite shape. At the same time, this diversity of conceptualizations of Han was undergirded by a shared and expanding consensus about the existence of some sort of massive category of collective identity, the contours of which coincided to a significant extent with the boundaries of the Han category as it is understood today. There was by this time, it seems, an imagined community in search of a name.

Finally, Christopher Vasantkumar encourages us to reconsider long-held assumptions regarding the unidirectionality and inevitability of Hanization, training his focus on subsets of the Chinese majority he describes



as culturally, linguistically, and regionally “out-of-place.” Centered in northwest China, Vasantkumar’s chapter, “Han at *Minzu*’s Edges: What Critical Han Studies Can Learn from China’s ‘Little Tibet,’” concentrates on those members of the Han who operate in social and cultural contexts where they constitute the minority, and where divisions between Han and Non-Han are far more ambiguous than in “China proper.” Inspired by the work of Robert Ekvall, Vasantkumar emphasizes the importance of examining cultural relationships “not just between people who would now be classed as members of separate *minzu*, but, compellingly, between peoples who would now be classed as members of the same ethnic grouping.” By doing so, the author argues, one finds “complex ways in which inter- and intra-*minzu* relations and distinctions result in the emergence of unstable blocs of sentiment, belonging and exclusion.” One such complex bloc is the important common ground Vasantkumar discovers between local Han and Tibetans, one founded positively via each community’s reliance on the local lingua franca of the Amdo Tibetan dialect, as well as negatively by means of their shared distrust and prejudice toward the local Hui community. As Vasantkumar argues, such common grounds would likely escape our analysis should we adhere to the strict, *minzu*-based model that prompts us to assume that “ethnic relations” always entails those relationships that obtain between the different, recognized *minzu* of the PRC. Vasantkumar’s fieldwork also highlights what he terms the “differences between local Han and their more urban(e) coethnics,”<sup>70</sup> differences that derive from matters of economic class and region. As the author argues, there are strong cultural, even ethnic, differences between urban and rural Han, with the latter often being “lumped in with minorities in contradistinction to developed urbanites.”<sup>71</sup> The study of Han therefore depends upon examining this category in situ rather than in abstraction.

The three issues examined here are central to the analysis of Han, but by no means do they exhaust the problematic in its entirety. There remain vitally important problems that will require our attention, not the least of which center on questions of gender, language, diaspora, and comparative studies of Han alongside other global majority and/or hegemonic categories of identity. The scope of any one volume is necessarily limited, however, and thus we leave this essential work to others. With these issues and caveats in mind, then, we now turn to the eleven studies that together comprise our exploration of this new domain of critical inquiry.



PART I

Han and China



# 1. Recentering China

## *The Cantonese in and beyond the Han*

Kevin Carrico

Why have the Cantonese people been labeled Han? When you fill out an official form, don't you hesitate to check the "Han" box? Actually, the Han nationality doesn't even exist! . . . Any and all of our concerns are justified, for there have been cases throughout history of great races such as our own [the Cantonese] disappearing from the face of this earth. If Guangdong continues to be held under Northern rule, it will become just another place where everyone speaks their Northern hick dialect!

"Independence for the Outstanding Cantonese Nationality!"<sup>1</sup>

Who are the people of Guangdong Province? Despite differences according to the Stalinist standards of nationality applied in the People's Republic of China, why are the Cantonese considered Han citizens of Guangdong Province and not members of a Cantonese minority nationality? Although labels of nationality, identity, and majority or minority status are imagined as expressing some sort of essential or primordial character, nothing in these domains should be taken for granted as natural. This chapter aims to reassess the idea of a singular Han nationality by considering the underexamined factor of regional identities, with a focus upon the status of the Cantonese people within China. A review of Guangdong's shifting relations with the historical centers of the Chinese polity provides a framework for considering three distinct manifestations of Cantoneseness in the present (external marginalization, self-differentiation, and willed assimilation). These examples, ranging from the past to the present, serve to provide a new perspective on identity and majority-minority relations by demonstrating (1) how national macro-narratives, such as those associated with "the Han" (Hanren or Hanzu) or indeed "the Chinese" (Zhongguoren or Zhonghua minzu), overlook the multidimensional nature of identity, as well as (2) how the contested and power-laden nature of identity drives the perpetual reproduction of this form of recognizing the self and the other.

## REASSESSING IDENTITY

According to official characterizations, the Han is China's majority nationality, comprising roughly 94 percent of the total populace.<sup>2</sup> Guangdong Province, located in the south of China, is described as a 99 percent Han province, not unlike many of the country's other coastal provinces.<sup>3</sup> Each of these claims appears to present an authoritative picture of reality; however, upon closer examination, such one-dimensional, statistical, and thus static portrayals conceal more than they reveal. Historically, the notion of Hanren, or Han people, has existed for centuries as a culturalist label differentiating the descendants of the "great" and "benevolent" Han dynasty (ca. 206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) from the purported barbarians on the peripheries of the empire.<sup>4</sup> However, as Mark Elliott shows in his chapter in this volume, our present conceptualization of the Han cannot simply be projected backward throughout history. The Han as we perceive it today (Han minzu) is in fact a recent development, first promoted by nationalists in the waning years of the Qing dynasty (late 19th–early 20th century) as a means of articulating and differentiating a seemingly singular Chinese majority from its Manchurian rulers. This Han, while purportedly homogeneous, was in reality a massive melting pot, attempting to join peoples with vastly different local identities, customs, and dialects under a singular and one-dimensional label. The current Han nationality, in fact, does not even correspond to the four Stalinist standards of nationality employed by the Chinese state, namely, a common territory, language, economy, and psychological nature.<sup>5</sup> Rather, the Han's sole uniformly distinguishing feature seems to have been its labeling as "Han."

It is thus time to reconsider the category of the Han and the homogenizing discourses of identity that accompany this label, which have been almost unanimously accepted as a given fact over the past century not only in China but also abroad in the field of Chinese studies. Considering the broad and indistinct nature of Hanness, it is necessary to look beyond reified ethnic markers to understand the construction of this group: this chapter first proposes that Hanness is not a primordial or intrinsic essence within those labeled Han but rather the historical product of power relations between a self and an other. The concept of a Han race was, for its nationalist proponents in the late Qing, a means of imagining a seemingly unified Chinese interest group, in contrast to their "barbarian" or Manchurian rulers, as a vanguard for realizing a new, more powerful, and unified nation under their leadership.

The Han was thus from its very inception intertwined with issues of

hierarchy and power: yet besides uniting, power can also divide. Once the Qing dynasty fell and those who were called the Han assumed the role of national vanguard, similar concerns of hierarchy and power drew various internal interest groups to clash with one another across numerous lines of division, as can be seen in competition between warlords in the Republican era, the Nationalist-Communist rivalry of the Civil War, factional struggles under Mao, and regional competition during reforms. These tensions within a purported Han unity raise a second point: although relations within a nation-state are generally perceived in terms of the single dimension of race or nationality (e.g., the Han and the minorities), identities are in real life constructed and enacted across a much more intricate variety of multiple axes of identification. Despite the assumed primacy of Hanness, equally prominent forms of identification are in fact apparent in China along divisions of urban and rural, rich and poor, male and female, as well as between regions, provinces, languages and dialects, cultural backgrounds, political viewpoints, and countless other perceived and imagined lines of differentiation, thus infinitely problematizing the common vision of a single and unitary Hanness. This chapter, for example, is the product of extended stays in coastal regions of both northern and southern China, all populated by a purportedly singular Han majority, during which time I noted that from the North the South was imagined as a chaotic and lawless cultural desert, while in the South the North was similarly imagined as a violent land populated by oversized hoodlums: a unifying Hanness was not a salient form of commonality in these imaginings. Examining the realities and contestations of various forms of identity in practice, it quickly becomes evident that, beyond the idealized fantasies through which its labels are produced, identity in practice is always much more complex than any single label can communicate.

Although labels of identity do not contain any mystical primordial essences to describe those whom they mark, the general structure of their creation and deployment is nevertheless far more telling. In light of Stevan Harrell's analysis of the center's civilizing mission toward the periphery,<sup>6</sup> it becomes apparent that both a center and a periphery are present in each of the layers of identity cited above: the Han is the center to the archaic "little brothers" of the minority periphery; the North is the cultural and political center to the purportedly uncultured southern periphery, yet from another perspective the South is the economic center to the underdeveloped and rough northern and western peripheries; and developed urban China is the center to the rural peripheries. These same features can also be inverted to represent a romanticized rural China as a center of more

authentic Chineseness, free from the stresses of modern life. A third point thus asserts that amid the multiple and ever-shifting layers of identification available, relations of centeredness and marginality, perceived in terms of space (center and periphery) as well as time (present and past), constitute a universal structural trait.

Based upon identity's intertwining with power, its multidimensional character, and the ubiquity of a center-periphery binary, this chapter calls for a new conceptualization of identity beyond a one-dimensional vision of seemingly primordial races and totalizing majorities: identity is defined herein as a process of constructing and appropriating multiple layers of labels or imagined boundaries through which people come to express their desires for centeredness and thus imagined power. This is achieved either by appropriating particular fetishized group features that portray an in-group as a glorified center in an act of positive self-identification (as in the construction of "national characters" in both majority and minority nationalisms) or by attributing negative features to a peripheralized other in order to create a particular image of the self through differentiation. Although the state often takes the lead in constructing the dominant forms of ethnicity and identity, people on the ground also engage in similar state-like constructions of the identities of multiple selves and others for their own fantasies of power. Identification is thus a multilayered act of distinction across multiple axes, either through positive self-identification or negative othering, in a process that is neither solely top-down nor bottom-up but always relational, dynamic, and laden with the shifting imagining and exercise of power. While this definition accounts for the creation of idealized dominant centers across numerous sites of identity (the modern Han center, the spiritual Tibetan center, the business-savvy Cantonese center), it also takes into account the formation of counterexamples in corresponding peripheries (the underdeveloped wild lands of the minorities, the imperialist central government, or the backward and impoverished Northerners). Beyond China, similar power-based binary structures of center and periphery can be seen in the "Wild West" of the American imagination, the highlands of the Thai imagination, or the northern and southern peripheries of Hokkaido and Okinawa in the Japanese imagination: this reassessment thus provides a broad framework for examining the creation of labels and perceptions of identity.

Upon these theoretical foundations, Hanness can be seen as one layer of identification historically constructed as a central vanguard to the barbarians of the past; yet beneath the meta-narrative of Hanness, there has existed a continual subtext of tensions in other layers of identity, perhaps

the most prominent being North-South differentiation, which has similarly been manifested in complex power relations and shifting visions of centrality throughout history.

#### GUANGDONG: HISTORY OF AN INTEGRAL PERIPHERY

Reconceptualizing identity as more than a one-dimensional, static, primordial essence can bring us beyond the official vision of Guangdong as just another Chinese province with a 99 percent Han population. By right of its distance from the traditional centers of Chinese political power and its proximity to the ocean, where civilization meets the barbarians, present-day Guangdong has historically had a complicated and perpetually shifting relationship with China proper. Although subjugated in periods of heightened central power, Guangdong has repeatedly reemerged throughout history as an alternative center, providing a home to outcast pioneers and revolutionaries, as well as their ideas, at times when the imperial center has been largely stagnant, producing a cycle of incorporation, marginalization, and recentering that has continued into the present era.

The area known as Guangdong is geographically separated from the Central Plains of China by the Nanling Mountains, which served as a natural boundary until the area's tenuous military conquest under the Qin dynasty.<sup>7</sup> Nominally incorporated into the empire, Guangdong nevertheless remained marginalized on the edge of civilization, viewed largely as a terra incognita from the center.<sup>8</sup> Reifying and exaggerating difference perceived in cross-cultural interactions on the borders of "civilization," the people of this liminal realm were viewed throughout the centuries from the center as "exotic, strange, fearful, and disease ridden";<sup>9</sup> were believed to live in "rugged mountains and unhealthy swamps";<sup>10</sup> spoke a reportedly birdlike language, excelled at the impure practice of trade (in contrast to the idealized image of the agrarian imperial subject), and gave off a sense of general uncleanness. The *Classic of the Mountains and Seas* (Shanhaijing) famously described the people of the South as at once human and inhuman, possessing "a human face, wings, and a bird beak."<sup>11</sup> Hence, despite their tenuous territorial incorporation into Chinese civilization, the Cantonese have long remained anomalies within this civilization, similar yet different, and thus impure and dangerous.<sup>12</sup> This perception of anomaly, once created in the reified differences of many centuries ago, has reproduced itself in popular lore to the present day: tellingly, the character *Guang* in the modern name Guangdong Province itself means broad, expansive, or vast, conjuring images of an expansive and uncertain frontier on the

periphery of the empire or nation. A comprehensive study of Chinese regional stereotypes conducted with emigrants in Taiwan in 1965 found that the Cantonese were among the most frequently stereotyped provincial groups, consistently described as small, sly, and fond of strange foods.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the centuries, such stigmatizing imaginings gave present-day Guangdong a unique place in imperial history, first making it the ideal location for a penal colony for centuries of exiles,<sup>14</sup> creating “a kind of tropical ‘Siberia’,”<sup>15</sup> and later for contaminating trading outposts housing “red-haired barbarians”<sup>16</sup> during the Ming and Qing dynasties. At the same time, however, its marginalization also made Guangdong the ideal location for revolutionaries and other outcasts, living on the peripheries of central control, to challenge the prevailing order. If Guangdong was a place of disease and decay, it was also a place of iconoclasm and resurgence.

In accordance with this ambivalent position, local politics from a Cantonese perspective have leaned at times toward integration in a recognized Chinese center while at other times reestablishing the region itself as a new center. Guangdong’s initial incorporation into the Qin dynasty was followed by a century of autonomy under the Nanyue kingdom, only to be replaced by central control in the latter part of the Han dynasty.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, as the old Cantonese adage says, “the mountains are high and the emperor is far away”:<sup>18</sup> central control collapsed again with the fall of the Han dynasty,<sup>19</sup> and remained sporadic amid the massive shifts of power throughout history,<sup>20</sup> allowing for the appearance over the centuries of at least fifteen kingdoms or regimes in present-day Guangdong that exercised *de facto* independence from weak central authorities. Although the majority of these Southern regimes are, like other non-mainstream powers, unsurprisingly excluded from contemporary official outlines of Chinese history, most in fact remained dedicated to the imperial ideal, imagining their regimes as new centers of civilization that could eventually revitalize the empire.<sup>21</sup> Such recentering continued into the modern era, when Guangdong became the point through which new ideas were introduced to challenge a crumbling imperial tradition in the late Qing: the province was in fact the birthplace of modern Chinese nationalism, as the home of such prominent reformers and nationalists as Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Sun Yat-sen.<sup>22</sup> Thus despite, or perhaps in response to, Guangdong’s often marginalized status within the Chinese polity, many of its residents have strived to relate themselves to a transcendent center, either through loyalty to a recognized imperial center or through the recreation of this center in Guangdong, thereby creating a frequently shifting vision of North-South power relations throughout history.



Following the transition to the modern nation-state with clearly delineated borders and a single sovereign government, however, such fluidity and ambiguity became problematic. The end of the most recent era of Cantonese detachment from the center, in which the warlord Chen Jitang ruled Guangdong essentially independent of the faltering Republican government, heralded the arrival of the aggressively integrationist Maoist regime. As had been the case throughout the imperial era, the people of Guangdong were incorporated into the vision of the state, yet not fully: although the Maoist ideology of a unified “people” drew the primary axis of identification and distinction across lines of class in so-called Han-majority regions, local identity remained a primary concern in the central government’s Guangdong policy due to suspicion of the province’s “unique sub-culture, customs, and dialects, its history as a commercial center and treaty port, its distance from the national capital, and its closeness to Hong Kong and Macao.”<sup>23</sup> The establishment of Communist power in Guangdong Province thus consisted of parallel processes of homogenizing incorporation and marginalization, seeking an all-encompassing unity through a Beijing-centered national discipline.

From our present location, much as Han often appears to be a natural identity marker, or as Beijing seems to be the natural capital of China, so Mandarin is naturally perceived to be China’s national language.<sup>24</sup> Yet these are in fact quite recent developments following centuries of multiple dialects, shifting capitals, and repeatedly disintegrating central control. As the most totalizing central power in Chinese history, the Maoist regime was not particularly enamored of leaving anything beyond its control, and a campaign for the enhanced study of the national language of Mandarin (as opposed to Cantonese and other “dialects”) was initiated just months after the “liberation” of Guangdong,<sup>25</sup> ensuring Mandarin’s standing as the “language of status, power, and career prosperity” in Maoist China.<sup>26</sup> In the present, the often-cited nonstandard pronunciation of Mandarin by Cantonese speakers and the popular Chinese saying, “I fear not the heavens, nor the earth; I only fear Cantonese speaking Mandarin” (*tian bu pa, di bu pa; zhi pa Guangdongren shuo Putonghua*), signal a return of the repressed artificiality of the purportedly naturally unifying “mother tongue” of Mandarin, known in Chinese as Hanyu, the language of the Han.

Beyond language, a similarly unificationist ideology was apparent with regard to policy, as shown in the land reform process of the early 1950s. Although the Guangdong provincial government was initially composed of local cadres in the aftermath of “liberation,” the seemingly slow pace

of land reform in the province<sup>27</sup> soon heightened the increasingly fundamentalist central government's suspicions of the same-but-different Cantonese, bringing North-South tensions to a new height. Mirroring the discourses encouraging purportedly backward minorities on the peripheries to look up to their "big brothers" in the Han, a May 1951 editorial in Guangzhou's *Southern Daily* suddenly urged local cadres to rely on the guidance of their "big brothers" from the North in implementing policies.<sup>28</sup> Beijing soon sent a Southbound Work Team to remove the majority of locals from prominent government positions, replacing them instead with politically reliable administrators from the North<sup>29</sup> who could ensure that no mercy would be shown to the supposed enemies of the people. The northern shift resonated throughout Guangdong's Party hierarchy: local Party leader Fang Fang was replaced by an outsider, Tao Zhu, who remained a central player in Guangdong politics for decades; throughout the state hierarchy "80 percent of the local cadres of the rank of county-level leaders or above" lost their positions to Northerners in the first few years of the People's Republic.<sup>30</sup> Much as in Manchuria, Tibet, Xinjiang, and other peripheral and formerly independent regions, loyalty was clearly not assumed. Yet somewhat ironically for a nominally Han-majority province, Guangdong was largely denied even the illusion of self-rule offered to Tibetans and Uyghurs through the practice of showcasing local cadres in symbolic positions.

This tradition of incorporation combined with ostracism continued throughout the "Northern invasion" of the Maoist era, with the issue of Cantonese localism joining the ever-expanding plethora of imaginary enemies of this period. The Anti-Rightist Campaign in Guangdong, unlike in other Han-majority provinces, included the condemnation of localism and the forced reassertion of support for central control following an armed uprising in Hainan by a so-called anti-party localist group<sup>31</sup> of Cantonese guerrilla veterans ousted in the Northern takeover.<sup>32</sup> The determinedly homogenizing Cultural Revolution a decade later brought youths from the ideologically pure center to "exchange revolutionary experience" throughout Guangdong, inevitably decrying any seemingly heterodox local elements as either bourgeois or feudal. Under the salvationist "great unity" and radiant red sun imagined to be emanating from Beijing in the Maoist era, Cantonese difference was both naturally assumed and rigorously suppressed, as the people of this province were simultaneously incorporated into the People's Republic and marginalized from its supposedly revolutionary mainstream.

Such a situation, however, could not be maintained indefinitely; and as

the tides shifted in national politics in the late 1970s, Guangdong reemerged to remake the mainstream in response to a center weakened and demoralized from decades of fundamentalist policies: once severely disadvantaged in terms of government assistance under Maoism,<sup>33</sup> Guangdong Province was re-created as a center of economic dynamism, transforming itself into the locus of a new and admittedly more colorful vision of Chineseness. The historical trends described above, namely, incorporation, marginalization, and recentering, have come to manifest themselves in unique ways and in multiple directions in this new era of reform, in which regionalist ambitions have reached new heights, matched only by ever-growing nationalist aspirations and the simmering social tensions produced by the transition to a market economy.

#### PERCEPTIONS FROM THE REFORM ERA (I): CAPITALIST PERIPHERY, CULTURAL DESERT

With the shift from ascetic-revolutionary fundamentalism to economic-nationalist ideology in the late 1970s to early 1980s, Guangdong's status as a polluted periphery suddenly had its advantages: three of the initial four experimental Special Economic Zones were located in Guangdong Province (i.e., Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shantou).<sup>34</sup> Its distance from the center and its status as the already tainted former home of imperial exiles, traders and sailors, and other unseemly types earned the province a leading role as an economic laboratory in the reform process, turning the Pearl River Delta of the 1980s into a primary symbol of the new national narrative of strength through economic development.<sup>35</sup> However, as suggested above, marginalization tends to cyclically reproduce itself, and thus, while re-creating and even recentering Guangdong, the province's central role in the untidy process of reform and opening may have also accelerated and enhanced its marginalization within the national imagination, creating a popular vision of a wild and even foreign capitalist frontier on the southern edge of the nation.

Behind reliably laudatory official proclamations, one can easily sense a marked ambivalence within contemporary Chinese society toward the post-Mao market transition and its effects. Much as there is no singular and homogeneous Han, so there is no singular and homogeneous reform: and although the reforms of the past thirty years have brought economic dynamism and the expansion of some social freedoms, they have also vastly altered the social landscape, as a number of previously absent (or more likely previously unacknowledged) phenomena, such as materialism,

deception, adultery and divorce, corruption, and crime, have reappeared within the public eye. The resulting ambivalence of this reemergence splits the reforms within the popular imagination into a good reform, a source of positive changes and economic development, and a bad reform, a source of negative changes and general social chaos.

Within this split, Guangdong as a center of economic development represents, on the one hand, the beneficial effects of the policies of reform and opening, as its people are attributed a number of economically positive traits, such as “a good competitive consciousness, creativity, and [openness to] a free exchange of information.”<sup>36</sup> Yet, on the other hand, the well-established collection of stereotypes about the similar-yet-different Cantonese has combined with ambivalence about the social effects of the good-yet-bad reforms, producing a compounded marginality by which Guangdong becomes an expansive projecting screen for anxieties about the course of contemporary society. Such anxiety is writ large in a vast collection of literature and folklore in recent decades, seemingly descended from the *Classic of the Mountains and Seas* noted above, which objectifies and sensationalizes regional and provincial traits, with a particular focus upon the purportedly unique characters of such central players in the reforms as the Cantonese, Shanghainese, and Wenzhouese.<sup>37</sup> Within these portrayals, the Cantonese are still, as in the past, described as speaking a funny-sounding (“birdlike”) language and are widely regarded as short, dark, and ugly; yet in the reform era the residents of this distant and different “cultural desert” (*wenhua shamo*) are also perceived as particularly sly and unwholesomely business savvy, uncultured and uneducated,<sup>38</sup> obsessed with money, superstitious, and arrogant,<sup>39</sup> as well as hedonistic: they are known for a fondness for contaminating animals<sup>40</sup> on their kitchen tables and second wives in their bedrooms. Most important, however, they are everything that their detractors (supposedly) are not. At once Han yet different, many have in fact noted a foreign nature about the Cantonese:<sup>41</sup> mixing Han Central Plains civilization, local Cantonese impurities, and foreign pollution, the amalgam of Cantonese society is imagined as an alloy or even alien culture<sup>42</sup> that comes to affect (or threatens to infect) the rest of “pure” Han China.

As anomalous mixtures of sameness and foreignness,<sup>43</sup> the imagined traits of the Cantonese (slyness, hedonism, obsession with money, and a general corrupting aura) are eerily reminiscent of anti-Semitic discourses. Analyzing such pejorative constructions of “the Jew,” Slavoj Žižek has employed the apt metaphor of body snatchers, creatures from outer space that assume human shape and are thus undetectable at first sight: the

imagined combination of both uncanny similarity and essential difference makes the potential misrecognition of these contaminating and foreign bodies all the more dangerous.<sup>44</sup> This mixture of sameness (Hanness) and difference (Cantonese-ness) is also reminiscent of Mary Douglas's reinterpretation of the abominations of Leviticus. In Douglas's analysis, the animals biblically proscribed from consumption were deemed abominations by right of their anomalous transgressions of the schematic boundaries of earth, water, and firmament: the anomalous animals that Douglas deals with include "four-footed creatures that fly" or animals that "creep, crawl, or swarm upon the earth,"<sup>45</sup> not unlike the Southerners of the *Classic of the Mountains and Seas* with their "human face, wings, and a bird beak."<sup>46</sup> Yet Douglas emphasizes that such creatures, because of their anomalous nature, not only present an uncontrollable danger or pollution but also a potent form of power.<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, many of the traits that supposedly negatively distinguish the Cantonese from Northerners, such as slyness, calculation in human relations, or a fascination with money, can nevertheless be manifested as twisted forms of power in contemporary Chinese society, and might thus be viewed as at once corrupting and empowering by their critics. The peripheries occupied by these anomalous beings are then at once lands of a redeeming freedom and a potentially destructive chaos: Guangdong thus becomes the ultimate Han periphery in the popular imagination in the contemporary era, a land of hyper-reform and openness at once similar but also different, at once Chinese but also foreign-influenced, at once alluring with its economic success but also revolting and potentially contaminating.

This splitting is most apparent in popular imaginings of the powerhouses of China's economic development, the ultimate terra incognita of the four Cantonese Special Economic Zones: Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Hainan Island.<sup>48</sup> These borderlands are on the one hand envisioned as sources of economic prosperity and on the other imagined as chaotic capitalist frontiers devoid of morals or security. Horror stories of charming con men, conniving pickpockets, brazenly aggressive prostitutes, motorcycle-driving purse-snatchers, gang rapes in the middle of busy streets, and even the boiling and consumption of human babies characterize some of the claims about Guangdong that I have heard from "compatriots" farther north. And while Guangdong remains a terra incognita within the modern imagination, the Nanling Mountains no longer serve as a barrier as they did in the imperial era: as a result, concerns about the potentially contagious power of Guangdong's anomalous alloy culture are widespread. Such concerns can be seen in national policy, with the prov-

ince's four main economic powerhouses having been appropriately cordoned off from the rest of the nation until recently by the *hukou* system as powerful yet contaminated centers of economic activity; the possibility of overflows of social chaos following the downfall of this cordoning system of control is now a frequent point of concern in the public imagination.<sup>49</sup> Yet, as with many aspects of China's transition, ambivalence reigns, and Guangdong's mix of danger and glamour, or death and rebirth, continues to attract countless non-Cantonese hoping to make their fortunes in the "wild South": China's rapidly expanding Internet is home to countless question-and-answer groups in which newcomers planning to move to Shenzhen or Guangzhou seek information about the extent of chaos in these cities and advice on safety precautions for their new frontier homes.<sup>50</sup> There is also an extensive collection of sites bemoaning Guangdong's social disorder and the character of its residents. Prominent among the complaints of the frequently male and Northern writers are the debauchery of Cantonese society and the promiscuity of the contemporary urban female: in characterizing these women, the term *open* is frequently used, yet clearly without the positive connotations of the official discourse of reform and opening.

The stigmatization of Guangdong and concerns about its ability to literally infect the national body reached a peak during the SARS epidemic. Fueled by the speed of modern tools of communication, as well as the political convenience of scapegoating Cantonese hedonism rather than reflecting upon the central government's ruinous cover-up of the epidemic, the province's traditional image as a place of disease and death<sup>51</sup> reemerged prominently within the popular imagination. While residing in Nanjing during what I call the "SARS spring" of 2003, I noted widespread discussion of the supposedly dirty and diseased nature of the Cantonese, as well as frequent jokes to steer clear of anyone speaking with an easily recognizable Cantonese accent. Some saw a link between the contamination of the market economy and the contamination of SARS: one Internet commentator brazenly claimed that SARS was "the revenge of the heavens" for the Cantonese people's decadent lifestyles.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, some Northerners jokingly advocated Cantonese independence on-line, suggesting that a China without the frightening Cantonese would naturally be healthier and thus stronger.<sup>53</sup> Again demonstrating the cyclical nature of marginalization, especially since the outbreak of SARS, the people of Guangdong have come to be remembered more for their unique culinary habits than for their role in leading the national economic transition: no matter how the residents of Guangdong may contribute to the "glory" of

the Chinese nation in strict accordance with the official economic ideology, and, in the end, no matter how similar the admittedly untidy social situation in Guangdong may actually be to that of the rest of the nation, this province and its people remain stigmatized and excluded from the imagined vision of a unified vanguard Han, mainly for the purpose of differentiating and reaffirming those imagining them. In the words of a Shanghai taxi driver who brought me to the airport for a flight to Guangzhou, "Here in Shanghai we are developing even faster than Guangzhou, but we don't have all of their crime and problems."

#### PERCEPTIONS FROM THE REFORM ERA (II): MIRRORING MARGINALIZATION

Despite such marginalization, however, identity is always a relational and dynamic phenomenon: once the frameworks for imagining identities are created, these conceptualizations circulate throughout the social world and take on a life of their own, being appropriated by different parties for vastly different goals. Thus, when considering the place of the Cantonese within the Han and the Chinese nation, it is also crucial to consider what the Cantonese have to say about themselves and their others, revealing a process of recentering and countermarginalization in the self-construction of Cantonese identity in the reform era.

A recent article in Hong Kong's *Open Magazine* told the story of a confrontation between a Cantonese man and a surly Northern bully on a Guangzhou bus.<sup>54</sup> The Northerner was purportedly unhappy with the quality of the air conditioning on the bus and began to arrogantly berate the lowly bus driver. As the author watched this confrontation unfold, he reflected upon the humiliations inflicted upon the Cantonese people by the "Northern colonists" sent to oversee government functions during the Maoist era. These functions, as mentioned above, frequently included such admittedly contentious duties as pushing for a harder line on land reform or the outing of the ever-expanding ranks of imagined counter-revolutionaries. Yet, the author reflected, the dynamics of the contemporary reform era favored the "smarter" locals who led the transition to a market economy and thus the revitalization of China, inverting power relations and depriving these officials of their former supremacy and the privileges of colonial grandeur. Northern officials, once the masters of Guangdong Province, were now left with no choice but to briefly recapture their power through such petty means as picking on local bus drivers.<sup>55</sup> Much as Guangdong has emerged from its Mao-era passivity, the author



emerges from his seat to stand up to the Northern bully as a crowd of local passengers gather to support him; his concluding words are, "Do you think this is still the Maoist era?"

Indeed, it is no longer the Maoist era, and some in Guangdong have a few words to say about their place within the Chinese nation. One mode of response to Guangdong's marginalization is a mirrored marginalization of the North, rebutting and even inverting denigrating stereotypes as a means of reaffirming a leading Cantonese identity within the Chinese polity. In contrast to the allegations of dangerous "openness" in Guangdong, the people of the North are characterized as "indigent, insular, and ignorant,"<sup>56</sup> indolently relying upon the forward-thinking nature of the South to realize national development. And just as non-Cantonese frequently imagine Guangdong as a land of urban chaos in contrast to a superior North, Southern mirroring displaces local chaos onto an out-group of workers from other provinces,<sup>57</sup> who purportedly spread a less sophisticated and even criminal Northern culture as they steal jobs and get rich in Guangdong. Such assertions achieve a sense of self-reaffirmation and even create a victim narrative;<sup>58</sup> victimization, however, is combined with victory by emphasizing the economic success of the Pearl River Delta and the supposedly outstanding character of its people. The breakdown of the *hukou* system can thus be invoked as a traumatic moment by both non-Cantonese and Cantonese, as both sides perceive themselves as potentially being contaminated by the other. Marginalization breeds countermarginalization, as self-aggrandizing centering is met with recentering: a recent publication titled "You Don't Really Understand the Cantonese" follows precisely such a formula by rebutting, point by point, the many stereotypes directed toward the Cantonese before concluding with a haughty declaration that some people will just "never be able to understand" the Cantonese people's talented and pioneering ways.<sup>59</sup>

These pioneering ways, believed by their proponents to be based in both distinct primordial characters and unique modern experiences, reveal a second response to marginalization, namely, separation or differentiation. Just as the modern nation-state creates primordial visions to concretize ethnic categories, counternarratives use the past to create a primordially distinct and proud self in the present. One example of such differentiation is the recent fascination with the tomb of the King of Nanyue in Guangzhou,<sup>60</sup> a veritable case study in how seemingly bland disciplines like archaeology can garner widespread attention through romantic imaginings of a glorious and unique past. Discovered in 1983, the tomb of the Nanyue king displayed a marked level of cultural sophistication in its



artifacts while also quite conveniently placing the center of this ancient kingdom directly in downtown Guangzhou.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the kingdom existed during the Han period from which the Han nationality supposedly takes its name: this distant past thus raises a central issue in the present. Although the Cantonese are now classified as Han, this is not a locally derived appellation: geographically and socially distanced from the Han mainstream throughout the centuries, most Cantonese have long referred to themselves as either Yue people or Tang people, seeing themselves respectively as descendants of either the Nanyue or the Tang dynasty, thereby tracing their roots to a different “great” and “benevolent” past. While interestingly explaining the often-cited tendency for Tang dynasty poetry to rhyme in Cantonese, unlike in Mandarin, as well as the use of the term *Tangren jie* (Tang People Street) rather than, for example, *Hanren jie* in the largely majority-Cantonese Chinatowns across the world,<sup>62</sup> this trend even more importantly points to the eternally shifting, contested, and inherently man-made nature of labels of identity: whether historically considered a descendant of the Tang or not, 99 percent of Guangdong residents are now classified on their official identity cards as simply “Han.” It is thus not surprising that traces of the past, such as the tomb of the King of Nanyue, the symbol of an independent local society that had “a free and expressive culture quite distinct from the Han culture,”<sup>63</sup> have been employed as a popular means of recapturing the proud distinction of a previous era.

In the present, another relatively free and expressive culture in the South serves as a similar source of differentiation for the Cantonese people: the metropolis of Hong Kong. Undoubtedly, Guangdong’s intimate relationship with Hong Kong helped to bring the province to the forefront of economic reforms in the 1980s. However, this broader Cantonese region is differentiated not only by economic dynamism but also by an innovative cultural power, which is fueled by the speed and reach of modern technologies and media to create an alternative pan-Cantonese center within the Chinese nation. In contrast to the unyielding conservatism of the Northern political center, Guangdong’s proximity to Hong Kong and its vibrant civil society often make the emperor again seem quite far away, placing the region on the cutting edge of the nation: one need only consider the associations that arise around the respective terms Chinese Central Television (CCTV) (*Zhongguo Zhongyang Dianshitai*) versus *Southern Metropolis Daily* (*Nanfang Dushi Bao*). A recent Internet posting, “Why Cantonese Don’t Watch Chinese Central Television,” generated controversy by asserting to the utter surprise of many that “the majority of Cantonese haven’t

even watched the last decade or two of the annual Spring Festival Special on CCTV.”<sup>64</sup> Although this is likely a case of hyperbolic differentiation, the author’s far more grounded assertion that “Hong Kong cable television is both more entertaining and more truthful than CCTV”<sup>65</sup> clearly challenges the once-unquestionable centrality of central television. Similar differentiating trends, whether conscious or unconscious, can also be detected in the proliferation of Cantonese writing in recent decades: in addition to a Cantonese spoken language that is distinct from official Mandarin, a written language based upon colloquial Cantonese has been developing in popular Hong Kong newspapers, as well as on the broader Cantonese-language Internet.

However, beyond providing a platform for the further development of a unique written language, the Internet, known around the world as a safe haven for extremist viewpoints, has provided space for far more consciously confrontational efforts at Cantonese differentiation. One example is the website of the group Hong Konger Front, which advocates Hong Kong independence as well as a broader Cantonese independence from the PRC.<sup>66</sup> As suggested in the above analysis of power and centeredness in the construction of identity, the commentaries on this site re-create the relationship between the Chinese political center and the Cantonese center by separating the Cantonese people not only from the Han but also from the entire entity of China historically, linguistically, culturally, and ethnically. Stereotypes are inverted to re-create the marginalized Cantonese as vastly superior to the “dead weights” of the North, who are unfairly occupying their land and hindering their potential. One article reads:

It would not be an exaggeration to say that modern China has been built by our Cantonese people. The Cantonese brought China from an imperial system to a modern republican system. No other province or region has contributed anywhere near as much to China. However, not only have the Northerners failed to recognize the Cantonese people’s contributions to the Chinese nation, they have even engaged in the systematic exclusion of our people from the political system and turned us into second-class citizens in our own homes. The Northern cadres sent down to Guangdong enthrone themselves proudly upon the heads of our people, bringing all of their trashy friends along with them to Guangdong. All of the senior positions in government and state enterprises were handed over to these Northern pigs, who have a love-hate relationship with Guangdong: they love the money that they can find here, but they hate the fact that we are always more successful than them. . . . [T]he people of Beijing are good for nothing but serving as eunuchs and imperial concubines.<sup>67</sup>

Taking Guangdong's power within the Chinese polity and channeling it through his own rage at Cantonese marginalization, the author asserts that the nation of China would remain trapped in the imperial age were it not for the diligence and daring of the Cantonese people. While the Cantonese have been imagined as diseased and birdlike, this article transforms Northerners into pigs; and while the Northern capital of Beijing is portrayed in official discourses as the center and even the savior of the nation, this commentary reinvents Guangdong as the region that has made the greatest contribution to the development of the Chinese nation, so as to separate it from this nation.

Another article, "Independence for the Outstanding Cantonese Nationality!" similarly imagines a pan-Cantonese identity distinct from the Han through the assumption of an authoritative state-scientific discourse:

Many assume that Cantonese is a dialect of Chinese just because it is not the official language! This is a serious error! . . . The Cantonese people's physiques are in fact vastly different from those of the Northerners. Also, psychologists have provided us with a thorough comparison of the behaviors of Cantonese and Northerners. While they are still in the process of conducting their research, their preliminary conclusions show that the Cantonese people are an independent race.<sup>68</sup>

The author of this passage appropriates the sort of scientific and primordialist viewpoints presented in state definitions of race (such as the common references to "the blood running through the veins of our compatriots") in order to challenge precisely such a taken-for-granted state definition, naturalizing difference in order to denaturalize the common assumptions of Chinese identity. Such reappropriations at once undermine and re-create the sort of labels that established Cantonese marginalization in the first place, thereby demonstrating how the concept of identity and its attendant labels are reproduced so tenaciously.

Although Cantonese independence is admittedly a nonmainstream viewpoint, pride in Guangdong's accomplishments in the reform era and the differentiating embrace of a glorious past and unique cultural heritage are popular trends giving voice to the tensions that have dwelled beneath the imagining of a unitary Hanness while also demonstrating again the inherently power-laden nature of all labels and identifications. Giving voice to these trends as this chapter is being completed in summer 2010, thousands of young Guangzhou residents are gathering in rare protests to protect Cantonese-language programming from a state-proposed transition to Mandarin during the city's 2010 Asian Games: as is so often the case, the government has unfortunately responded with a media lockdown, surveil-

lance and detention of participants, and dismissal of the movement as having been organized by “people with ulterior motives.”<sup>69</sup> By incorporating the Cantonese into the Han and its nation-state while at the same time subjecting them to repeated marginalization, a flattering self-image of the North as the political and cultural center of the nation is created; yet in these recent Cantonese social trends, one witnesses attempts to recapture Cantonese difference and to build upon Guangdong’s growing economic and cultural power to create a new value system that would enable distinction from the dominant visions of Hanness and a Beijing-oriented polity. Some even re-create the Cantonese as a nationality (*minzu*) but never, of course, as a minority nationality (*shaoshu minzu*) within the PRC, imagining instead the attainment of the ultimate power as a majority nationality independent from the angrily objectified “Northern country bumpkins,” who then come to embody a newly inverted periphery.

### PERCEPTIONS FROM THE REFORM ERA (III): EMBRACING THE CENTER

Countermarginalization and differentiation are not, however, the sole Cantonese responses to marginalization. In fact, despite all the polarization discussed above, Guangdong’s place within the Chinese nation and the Cantonese people’s place within the category of Han are largely taken for granted in everyday life in China. Helen Siu has noted that from the Song dynasty onward, aspiring centralists in the Guangdong region have fashioned myths and genealogies to demonstrate a common ancestry with the North.<sup>70</sup> Today, some go to similar lengths to mask tensions between Southern and Northern identities, embracing the broader prevailing center of pure Hanness, the official vanguard of a rising China nominally backed by millennia of history and tradition. Yet, as mentioned above, the Han is a massive melting pot of an ethnic label ambiguously joining individuals with massive linguistic differences, local identities, and life experiences. While its apparent lack of distinct ethnic markers makes it the majority “default ethnicity,”<sup>71</sup> in contrast to the marked minorities of contemporary China, it also poses a problem for those interested in better articulating their membership: how can one make one’s Han identity known? In recent years, some have resolved this dilemma of Hanness with the standard and markedly unsubtle Chinese way of representing an ethnic group: clothing.

The recent Han clothing movement did not emerge from the Central Plains, which produced the ethnonym *Han* itself, but rather in the quite unexpected location of the Cantonese capitalist frontier. In 2003 the Han

Network (Han Wang), a website dedicated to the revitalization of "traditional" Han clothing, was registered at the fitting address [www.han-minzu.com](http://www.han-minzu.com). One of the founding members of the Han Network, a forty-something male in Shenzhen who goes by the not so subtle pseudonym Dahan (translated, in a telling case of polysemy, as either "Great Han" or "big dude"), had purportedly long bemoaned the fact that "among the 56 ethnic groups in China, the Han is the only one that doesn't have its costume."<sup>72</sup> Resolving this conundrum, the Han Network website and others like it promote the purportedly ancient ethnic dress of the Han. Characterized by broad sleeves and flowing robes decorated with brilliant colors, Han clothing was purportedly worn for millennia, from the time of the Yellow Emperor through the many great dynasties of Chinese history, until its suppression under the Manchu Qing dynasty. Reproducing the trend of objectifying external representations of ethnicity first developed for "colorful" minorities in official settings, and seemingly taking a cue from prime-time costume dramas' equally colorful portrayals of a glorious and exciting past, while at the same time declaring an essential superiority over these forms, the Han Network website has become a driving force in resolving this dilemma of ambiguous Hanness by providing a singular and seemingly eternal manifestation of one's purported Han essence.

There are hundreds of people who regularly wear these supposedly traditional Han outfits in Guangzhou,<sup>73</sup> and even more throughout the Pearl River Delta cities of Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Dongguan. According to Guangzhou's *Yangcheng Evening News*, Han clothing has already spread and developed into a rising subculture throughout the Southern metropolitan regions of the province, as a means of "learning from and re-creating the outstanding rites and culture of the *Huaxia* [Chinese] nationality, and making these part of our life again by wearing traditional Han clothing."<sup>74</sup> While those wearing their purportedly ancient national outfits continue to receive stares on the streets of metropolitan areas,<sup>75</sup> a group of young Guangzhou residents recently traveled around Guangdong Province in hopes of demonstrating and revitalizing Han clothing,<sup>76</sup> as ever more citizens throughout the province show an interest in this performative reconnection with tradition.

Although the Han clothing movement is not based solely in Guangdong, its prominence in this region merits attention. It is not by coincidence that the dilemmas faced by the contemporary Cantonese in asserting their Hanness, namely, a perceived difference and a stigmatizing pollution, are precisely the dilemmas resolved by the purportedly uniform and eternal nature of Han clothing. First, Han clothing provides a singular and

instantly recognizable manifestation of “being Han” to performatively realize the elusive myth of ethnic homogeneity. As the Beijing government appropriates the symbolic capital of economic development driven by the Pearl River Delta, there is pride to be found not only in the countermarginalization discussed above but also in unambiguously embracing the broader Han vanguard of a rising China and its accompanying emotive nationalism: an equal degree of self-flattery is apparent in each. As such, the appropriation of this purportedly traditional clothing in Guangdong seems to be an attempt to cover over the imagined differences and tensions between the Northerners and the Cantonese so as to create an instantly recognizable, aesthetically pleasing, and even enjoyable image of a truly unified Han, of which the Cantonese become an inalienable part.

Second, considering the Han clothing trend’s rise in the hectic metropolises of the Pearl River Delta, the appropriation of such supposedly ancient clothing can also serve as a means of imagining oneself and one’s nationality outside of the alienation and contamination associated with this hyper-modern capitalist periphery, through the embrace of an alternative center descended directly from an idealized primordial “Great Han” tradition of innocence and purity. One proponent of Han clothing commented, “We wear T-shirts and jeans, eat McDonald’s and drink Coca-Cola, watch American films, listen to jazz and rock, speak all types of foreign languages, and study Western etiquette. . . . In the midst of all of this globalization, some of us have begun to wonder, why is it that Indians can ever so naturally wear their saris, Scottish people can wear their kilts, and the Japanese are on the cutting edge of Oriental style with their kimonos, yet we don’t have a single form of clothing that can represent our uniqueness?”<sup>77</sup> Han clothing embodies this sought-after uniqueness, and the entire movement is laden with symbols of not only distinctiveness but also purification within a globalizing world: the Han Network’s calendar renders the year 2008 C.E. as “the 4705th year of the Yellow Emperor,” while essays on the site call on members to take pride in the beauty of the unique Han tradition and to wear traditional Han dress to revitalize a past unity, glory, majesty, and, thus, power. The Han clothing movement and the desires underlying its rise thus alert us to the fact that although states often impose visions of unitary, homogeneous identities in a top-down process, responses to and deployments of these visions on the ground show these labels to also have a bottom-up component, appealing to individuals by providing a sense of comfort and even reassurance through personal ties to an imagined glorious past and the promise of an even grander future. As suggested by the sight of groups of young people parading down the

hectic streets of Guangzhou in imaginarily ancient national clothing, the attribution of identity to others as well as oneself is always a case of the desire to see and to be seen, as well as to know and to be known.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking aspect of the Han clothing movement is the selection of this particular form of representing a unitary and primordial Hanness, seemingly modeled upon the minority clothing so fetishized within the Chinese imagination. Although clothing is exterior to the self, it is obviously meant, in the case of national clothing, to present the "illusion of an interior and organizing core,"<sup>78</sup> seemingly expressing an essence at once intrinsic and eternal, detached from the fluctuations of social and historical experience. It is essentially the denial of the fluctuating power relations and tensions analyzed above that extend throughout the multiple layers of identity, instead embodying an integrated Han identity in a single, simple, and seemingly eternal marker. The gaze directed at the minority other is redirected to the self, borrowing the practice of external objectifications of identity so as to take the lead in a pure Chineseness before the nation and the world, as members of a unified Han embodying the power of an untainted past and the promise of a majestic future, thereby simultaneously masking the complexities and tensions within the multiple layers of identity while also reproducing, much like the many other forms of identity described above, the practice of identification through empowering differentiation.

Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter, "who are the people of Guangdong Province," any answer will inevitably depend upon whom one asks: are they members of the Han or of their own Yue or Baiyue nationality?<sup>79</sup> Are they leaders and pioneers or cunning and dangerous hedonists? Or are they all and none of the above? This chapter has aimed to question the supposed unity of the Han, as well as all identifications of the self and others, proposing instead a multilayered and power-based definition of identity as shown in the case of the Cantonese within and beyond the Han. Either as a distant and impure hinterland or an at once praised and stigmatized capitalist frontier, in all cases and from all directions, Guangdong and its people have been imagined as similar to yet different from their Northern compatriots, playing a crucial role in the construction of Chineseness while also complicating the vision of primordial or homogeneous Han identity.

Yet beyond simply questioning the notion of the Han, this chapter has attempted to question the very notion of identity itself by showing how actors on the ground experience as well as deploy multiple and often

conflicting manifestations of identity as nexuses for fantasizing, exercising, and resisting power while complicating its categories. States often construct and impose visions of unitary ethnicities in a top-down process (such as “the Han”), but the deployment of labels on the ground show how the imagining of identity also has a prominent bottom-up component: through multiple layers of identity, individuals and groups attempt to either relate themselves to an imagined powerful center or re-create themselves as a new center, investing emotions in and seeking reassurance through personal ties to an imagined glorious past, a promising present, and the image of an even grander future. Such a desire to attain centeredness and imagined power through the construction of the self and the other then accounts for the persistent reproduction of the idea of identity itself: in the nationalist exaltation of a unitary majority identity, majority nationalisms produce minority nationalisms, which then dream of becoming majority nationalisms in their own right. Groups oppose others’ marginalizing labels through a self-imposed relabeling of their own group as a superior alternative center rather than by questioning the act of labeling itself. Judging from the historical cycle of power relations in China and the examples of perceptions from the reform era cited above, the multiple imaginings of identities across countless axes, such as “Chinese,” “great Han,” “Northerner,” “Southerner,” “Cantonese,” “Chaozhouese,” “urban resident,” “proletariat,” or even “citizen of the Republic of Guangdong,” among many others, will continue to be reproduced and through their perpetuation provide a space for people to envision themselves as centered and thus superior to others, as this is ironically always easier for one to imagine than a world without such essentially artificial labels.



# Notes

## INTRODUCTION

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1. Dru C. Gladney, *Dislocating China: Reflections on Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects* (London: Hurst and Company, 2004), 7.

2. John DeFrancis, *The Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1984), 39.

3. Jerry Norman, *Chinese* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 187. For a discussion of the intersections between abstracted, singularized concepts of the “Chinese language” and questions of “Chineseness,” see Rey Chow, “Introduction: On Chineseness as a Theoretical Problem,” in

Rey Chow, ed., *Modern Chinese Literary and Cultural Studies in the Age of Theory: Reimagining a Field* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 1–25.

4. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991); Martin W. Lewis and Kären Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

5. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 66.

6. Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 63; Susan Blum, *Portraits of "Primitive": Ordering Human Kinds in the Chinese Nation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001) 57–59; Stevan Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic in South China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 295.

7. Blum, *Portraits of "Primitives,"* 57–59.

8. Barbara J. Flagg, "The Transparency Phenomenon, Race-Neutral Decisionmaking and Discriminatory Intent," in Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, eds., *Critical White Studies: Looking behind the Mirror*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 221. See also Barbara J. Flagg, "Foreword: Whiteness as Metaprivilege," *Washington University Journal of Law and Policy* 18 (2005): 1–11.

9. Flagg, "Foreword: Whiteness as Metaprivilege," 1–11.

10. Still other comparisons can be profitably made employing Mia Tuan's conceptualization of white "cosmopolitanism" and the concept "white ethnics" or "not-yet-whites," as examined by Michael Novak, John Bukowczyk, and Stefano Luconi. See Mia Tuan, *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites? The Asian Ethnic Experience Today* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999); Stefano Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001). For an overview of the concept of white ethnics, see Joseph Ryan, ed., *White Ethnics: Their Life in Working-Class America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

11. The authors, it should be noted at the outset, were not required to make explicit connections between Han and white in their work, although a number did. Rather, each author draws upon his or her own disciplinary perspective, including history, anthropology, comparative literature, and cultural studies.

12. Joël Thoraval, "Le concept Chinois de nation est-il 'Obscur'? À propos du débat sur la notion de minzu dans les années 1980," *Bulletin de Sinologie* 65 (1990): 26.

13. Herold J. Wiens, *China's March into the Tropics: A Discussion of the Southward Penetration of China's Culture, Peoples, and Political Control in Relation to the Non-Han-Chinese Peoples of South China and in the Perspective of Historical and Cultural Geography* (prepared under the auspices of the Office of Naval Research, U.S. Navy, Washington, DC, 1952).

14. Herold J. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion in South China* (Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1967).

15. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion*, xiv.
16. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion*, xiv.
17. See, e.g., Samuel R. Clarke, *Among the Tribes in South-west China* (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Co., 1970); Archibald R. Colquhoun, *The "Overland" to China* (London: Harper, 1900); Henry Rodolph Davies, *Yün-nan, the Link between India and the Yangtze* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909).
18. James T. Olson, *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of China* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 100–132.
19. Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 13.
20. Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999). See also Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno, *Are Italians White? How Race Is Made in America* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
21. The closest we have to an attempt to pose and answer this question is an argument made by Dru Gladney. Gladney suggests, but does not pursue in any thorough way, the idea that the novel concept of the Han Nationality was a "brilliant attempt" by figures such as Sun Yat-sen "to mobilize other non-Cantonese, especially northern Mandarin speakers, and the powerful Zhejiang and Shanghaiese merchants, into one overarching national group pitted against the Manchu and other foreigners threatening China during the unstable period following the Unequal Treaties." See Dru C. Gladney, "Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (1994): 99.
22. Emily Honig, "The Politics of Prejudice: Subei People in Republican-Era Shanghai," *Modern China* 15, no. 3 (July 1989): 243–74; Emily Honig, "Invisible Inequalities: The Status of Subei People in Contemporary China," *China Quarterly* 122 (June 1990): 273–92; Emily Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei People in Shanghai, 1850–1980* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
23. See Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics*; and Ryan, *White Ethnics*.
24. Fred C. Blake, *Ethnic Groups and Social Change in a Chinese Market Town* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawai'i, 1981); Emily Honig, "Native Place and the Making of Chinese Ethnicity," in *Remapping China: Fissures in Historical Terrain*, ed. Gail Hershatter, Emily Honig, Jonathan N. Lipman, and Randall Stross (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 143–55; Jonathan N. Lipman, "Hyphenated Chinese: Sino-Muslim Identity in Modern China," in Hershatter et al., *Remapping China*, 97–112; Dru C. Gladney, *Ethnic Identity in China: The Making of a Muslim Minority Nationality* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998).
25. See Teng, this volume. Analogous questions have been posed in other East Asian contexts, as in Robert Fish's study of "mixed-blood" Japanese. Focusing on the phenomenon of biracial identity in Japan, Fish investigates the ways in which it subverts Japan's discourse of homogeneity. See Robert A. Fish,

“‘Mixed-Blood’ Japanese: A Reconsideration of Race and Purity in Japan,” in *Japan’s Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, ed. Michael Weiner (New York: Routledge, 1997), 40–58.

26. See Teng, this volume.

27. See Teng, this volume.

28. See Teng, this volume. Teng’s observations connect, moreover, with those of Barry Sautman on the PRC. Despite official claims to the contrary, PRC discourse on *minzu* is still characterized by a powerfully racial discourse centered on blood, consanguinity, and descent. See Barry Sautman, “Myths of Descent, Racial Nationalism, and Ethnic Minorities in the People’s Republic of China,” in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Frank Dikötter (London: Hurst and Company, 1997), 75–95.

29. Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994).

30. Uradyn Bulag’s analysis of the 1911 revolution and the post-imperial transition draw support, and in large part recapitulates, those made by other scholars of the period. See Joseph W. Esherick, “How the Qing Became China,” in *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*, ed. Joseph W. Esherick, Hasan Kayali, and Eric Van Young (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 229–59. For more on this troubled transition from empire to nation-state, see Pamela Crossley, “Nationality and Difference: The Post-Imperial Dilemma,” in *The Teleology of the Modern Nation-State: Japan and China*, ed. Joshua Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 138–58. With regard to the Nationalist regime’s postrevolutionary retreat from pre-1911 forms of Han racism—a retreat undertaken reluctantly by some—see James Leibold, “Positioning ‘minzu’ within Sun Yat-sen’s Discourse of ‘Minzuzhuyi,’” *Journal of Asian History* 38, no. 1–2 (2004): 163–213. In some respects, the transition from empire to nation-state brought with it similar challenges in the case of Japan as well. Having inherited the territories of the Tokugawa, territories managed according to a very different frontier logic, the Meiji Japanese state opted to extend undifferentiated sovereignty over a historically other and excluded part of the Japanese imperial domain. See David L. Howell, “Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State,” *Past and Present* 142 (February 1994): 69–93.

31. Mao Zedong, “On the Ten Major Relationships,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 5 (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1977), 295.

32. Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011). See chapters 1 and 5.

33. Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1–14.

34. See Elliott, this volume.

35. Xu Jieshun, *Xueqiu: Han minzu de renleixue fenxi* (Snowball: An

Anthropological Analysis of the Han Nationality) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999).

36. Fei Xiaotong, *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju* (The Pattern of Plurality and Unity in the Chinese Nation) (Beijing: Zhongyang renmin xueyuan chubanshe, 1989).

37. See Xu, this volume.

38. Kai-wing Chow, "Narrating Nation, Race, and National Culture: Imagining the Hanzu Identity in Modern China," in *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, ed. Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak, and Poshek Fu (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 47–83. Tsou Jung [Zou Rong], *The Revolutionary Army: A Chinese Nationalist Tract of 1903*, trans. John Lust (The Hague: Mouton, 1968).

39. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

40. Frank Dikötter, "Racial Discourses in China: Continuities and Permutations," in Dikötter, *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, 15.

41. Gladney, "Representing Nationality in China," 98. This view of Han, it bears pointing out, has since been picked up by other scholars. In his examination of Chinese nationalism, for example, Suisheng Zhao echoes this argument that "the creation of an ethnic Han identity goes back only to the late nineteenth century." See Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 21–2.

42. Beyond Confucian and Chinese practice, the Manchus had positioned themselves as patrons of their other imperial subjects as well, including the Mongolians and Tibetans. See Harold L. Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-lung Reign* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); David M. Farquhar, "Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch'ing Empire," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38, no. 1 (1978): 5–34.

43. Chow, "Narrating Nation, Race, and National Culture," 54–56.

44. Kai-wing Chow, "Imagining Boundaries of Blood: Zhang Binglin and the Invention of the Han 'Race' in Modern China," in Dikötter, *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, 39.

45. Edward Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861–1928* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 291. This subversive discourse of *minzu* found its way into late Qing native-place textbooks as well. For a fascinating recent study, see May-bo Ching, "Classifying Peoples: Ethnic Politics in Late Qing Native-Place Textbooks and Gazetteers," in *The Politics of Historical Production in Late Qing and Republican China*, ed. Tze-ki Hon and Robert Culp (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 55–77.

46. See Chin, this volume.

47. Andre Schmid, *Korea between Empires, 1895–1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 182.

48. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation*.

49. Kevin M. Doak, "Building National Identity through Ethnicity: Ethnology in Wartime Japan and After," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 1–39; Henry H. Em, "Minjok as a Modern and Democratic Construct: Sin Ch'aeho's Historiography," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, ed. Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 336–61; Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

50. See Tapp, this volume.

51. See Tapp, this volume.

52. Fei Xiaotong, "Plurality and Unity in the Configuration of the Chinese People," Tanner Lecture, Chinese University of Hong Kong, November 15 and 17, 1988; Xu Jieshun, *Xueqiu*.

53. See Xu, this volume.

54. Li Chi [Li Ji], *The Formation of the Chinese People: An Anthropological Inquiry* (New York: Russell and Russell, [1928] 1967).

55. Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, [1969] 1998), 10.

56. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 12. Whereas Eriksen is referring specifically to ethnicity in this passage, I consider the observation relevant to all nonethnic forms of identity as well, which also depend upon such relationships for their emergence, constitution, and stabilization.

57. Barth, "Introduction," 10.

58. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 12 n. 2.

59. Melissa J. Brown, "Local Government Agency: Manipulating Tujia Identity," *Modern China* 28, no. 3 (July 2002): 363.

60. Louisa Schein, "Gender and Internal Orientalism in China," *Modern China* 23, no. 1 (January 1997): 69–98. Dru Gladney has described a similar process in terms of an "oriental orientalism." See Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 53.

61. Patricia Ebrey, "Surnames and Han Chinese Identity," in *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, ed. Melissa Brown (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1996), 26.

62. Gladney, "Representing Nationality in China," 93.

63. Techniques of indirect or differential self-identification are by no means limited to Han, it is important to note. Manchu Qing representations of "barbarian" regions of the empire could also serve as a means of reasserting and reinscribing the civilizational superiority of the center or ruling regime. See Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel*

*Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004).

64. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, [1978] 1979), 7.
65. Blum, *Portraits of "Primitives,"* chaps. 1, 5, and 6.
66. See Elliott, this volume.
67. See Elliott, this volume.
68. See Elliott, this volume.
69. C. Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).
70. See Vasantkumar, this volume.
71. See Vasantkumar, this volume.

## CHAPTER 1

1. Anonymous, "Youxiu de Baiyue minzu- Guangdong dili!" (Independence for the outstanding Cantonese nationality!), February 2006, [www.hkfront.org/intcanton20060229.htm](http://www.hkfront.org/intcanton20060229.htm) (accessed between November 2007 and May 2009). Although the term *Baiyue* can refer to the Hundred Yue tribes, whose presence extended beyond present-day Guangdong, the author of the article cited above asserts that it refers to "the people of present-day Guangdong and Hong Kong." Accordingly, I have translated *Baiyue* as "Cantonese." For a detailed discussion of the relationship between the Baiyue, the Nanyue, and the present-day Cantonese, see Diana Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue—The Contemporary Agenda of History: Scholarship and Identity," *Modern China* 22, no. 1 (January 1996): 11–13.

2. The essay "Han Nationality," featured on the PRC Ministry of Culture website [ChinaCulture.org](http://ChinaCulture.org) ([www.chinaculture.org/gb/en\\_aboutchina/2003-09/24/content\\_23849.htm](http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/2003-09/24/content_23849.htm)), provides a concise and telling synopsis of official portrayals of the Han.

3. David Goodman and Chongyi Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," in *China Deconstructs: Politics, Trade, and Regionalism*, ed. David Goodman and Gerald Segal (New York: Routledge, 1994), 178.

4. Dru C. Gladney, *Dislocating China: Reflections on Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 14.

5. Stevan Harrell, "Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 23.

6. Harrell, "Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them," 7.

7. Goodman and Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," 179. Herold J. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion in South China* (Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1967), 130.

8. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 7.

9. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 13.



10. Helen Siu, "Cultural Identity and the Politics of Difference in South China," *Daedalus* 122 (Spring 1993): 19. For an informative examination of the history of environmentally determinist thought in China and its relationship with racial ideologies, please see Zhihong Chen's chapter in this volume.

11. Hsiao-Chieh Cheng, Hui-Chen Pai Cheng, and Kenneth Lawrence Thern, *Shan Hai Ching: Legendary Geography and Wonders of Ancient China* (Taipei: National Institute for Compilation and Translation, 1985), 148.

12. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966), 49.

13. Wolfram Eberhard, "Chinese Regional Stereotypes," *Asian Survey* 5, no. 12 (December 1965): 600.

14. Siu, "Cultural Identity and the Politics of Difference," 19; Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 8.

15. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion*, 132.

16. Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 36.

17. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion*, 138–41; Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 9.

18. Siu, "Cultural Identity and the Politics of Difference," 32.

19. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 12.

20. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion*, 130.

21. Goodman and Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," 179.

22. Ni Jianzhong, ed., *Renwen zhongguo: zhongguo de nanbei qingmao yu renwen jingshen* (Humanist China: Humanism and the Character of South and North China) (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Publishing, 1996), 511.

23. Peter Tsan-yin Cheung, "The Case of Guangdong in Central-Provincial Relations," in *Changing Central-Local Relations in China: Reform and State Capacity*, ed. Jia Hao and Lin Zhimin (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1994), 211.

24. See John de Francis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950).

25. Ezra Vogel, *Canton under Communism: Programs and Politics in a Provincial Capital, 1949–1968* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 54.

26. Edward Friedman, "Reconstructing China's National Identity: A Southern Alternative to Mao-Era Anti-Imperialist Nationalism," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (February 1994): 78.

27. Vogel, *Canton under Communism*, 98.

28. Vogel, *Canton under Communism*, 113.

29. Goodman and Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," 180.

30. Vogel, *Canton under Communism*, 121.

31. Vogel, *Canton under Communism*, 214, 212.



32. Goodman and Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," 180.

33. David Goodman, "The Politics of Regionalism: Economic Development, Conflict, and Negotiation," in Goodman and Segal, *China Deconstructs*, 29.

34. The observations in the following three sections are based upon five years of residence (2002–7) in Han-majority regions of both northern and southern China (Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Guangzhou). Internet posts, popular books, magazine articles, and other commentaries are cited in these sections as concise and telling expressions of opinions and trends noted during this period.

35. Goodman and Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," 188.

36. Lynn White and Cheng Li, "China Coast Identities," in *China's Quest for National Identity*, ed. Dittmer Lowell and Samuel S. Kim (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 164.

37. A useful example is Jin Hui and Yang Li, *Ke pa de Wenzhou ren* (The Frightening Wenzhouese) (Beijing: Author's Publishing House, 2002); and the notably awkward labeling of the people of Wenzhou as the "Jews of China."

38. One commentator, in a widely distributed Internet post, attributed the perceived unpleasant and uncultured characteristics of the Cantonese people to their relatively short history (only two millennia compared to the purported five millennia of the Central Plains) as well as to their leading role in opening to the world (which he claimed has resulted in the entry of "foreign sediment"). See Piaoling Gongzi, "Choulou de Guangdongren" (The ugly Cantonese), 2005, <http://tieba.baidu.com/f?kz=132862453> (accessed April 2009).

39. Ni Jianzhong, *Renwen zhongguo*, 490, 534, 546.

40. A popular saying claims that the Cantonese eat "anything that flies except airplanes and everything with four legs except tables."

41. Daniel Ferguson, "The Shandong Highwayman: Mechanisms of Inclusion and Resistance and the Predication of Cantonese Identity through Cantonese Opera," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 25 (1993): 69.

42. White and Li, "China Coast Identities," 173.

43. For more insight into conceptualization of "mixed blood" and the Han, please see Emma Teng's chapter in this volume.

44. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 49, 89.

45. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 69–70.

46. Cheng et al., *Shan Hai Ching*, 148.

47. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 201–202.

48. Hainan Island was designated as a province independent from Guangdong in 1988, yet remains associated in popular imaginings with the Cantonese cultural milieu.

49. James Cheung, "Guangdong under Reform: Social and Political Trends and Challenges," in *Rethinking China's Provinces*, ed. John Fitzgerald (New York: Routledge, 2002), 137.

50. Duanxiaduanxia, "Shenzhen luan ma?" (Is Shenzhen chaotic?), February 2006, <http://zhidao.baidu.com/question/3485489.html?fr=qrl3> (accessed between December 2007 and April 2009); Aeraneal\_hsu, "Guangzhou zhende luan me?" (Is Guangzhou really chaotic?), January 2006, <http://iask.sina.com.cn/b/3511282.html> (accessed between December 2007 and April 2009).

51. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 13.

52. This comment was posted in response to a purported exposé of a Cantonese meal of human fetuses, which turned out to be a piece of performance art. For more details, see Anonymous, "Zhenjing a! Sang jin tianliang! Tamen zai chiren!" (Shocking! They have completely lost their conscience! They're eating people!), March 2007, <http://post.baidu.com/f?kz=183175763> (accessed between November 2007 and April 2009).

53. Zhu Xueyuan, "Gancui rang Guangdong duli suan le" (Just let Guangdong be independent), April 2003, [www.boxun.com/hero/zhuxueyuan/9\\_1.shtml](http://www.boxun.com/hero/zhuxueyuan/9_1.shtml) (accessed between December 2007 and April 2009).

54. Li Dali, "Shanghai guangzhou jianwenlu" (Records from a journey through Shanghai and Guangzhou), *Kaifang zazhi* (Open Magazine) (August 2007), 64.

55. Li, "Shanghai guangzhou jianwenlu," 65.

56. Friedman, "Reconstructing China's National Identity," 86.

57. Such attributions of difference to workers from outside of Guangdong are not solely based in class but also in regional identity. Much like Shanghai and other rapidly developing coastal cities, the urban areas of the Pearl River Delta are populated not only by lower-class migrant workers engaged in physical labor but also by professionals and office workers from other provinces. Yet even among professionals in an upper-class office, perceptions of difference remain between "locals" (*bendiren*) and "outsiders" (*waidiren*); e.g., Ni Jianzhong, *Renwen zhongguo*, 495.

58. This is a phenomenon that I first noticed in Shanghai, where anything unsavory was inevitably deemed to be the workings of *waidiren*.

59. Ye Shuming, "Xiang yaomohua shuo bu: qishi ni bu dong Guangdongren" (Say "no" to demonization: You don't really understand the Cantonese), [http://book.sina.com.cn/nzt/soc/1110948111\\_guangdongren/](http://book.sina.com.cn/nzt/soc/1110948111_guangdongren/) (accessed November 2008 and May 2009).

60. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 4.

61. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 6.

62. Ferguson, "The Shandong Highwayman," 69–70; Allen Chun, "Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity," *boundary 2* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 112.

63. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 6.

64. William Long, "Weishenme Guangdongren bu kan Yangshi" (Why Cantonese don't watch CCTV), December 2005, [www.williamlong.info/archives/346.html](http://www.williamlong.info/archives/346.html) (accessed November 2008 and May 2009).

65. Long, "Weishenme Guangdongren bu kan Yangshi."

66. Vagueness about the borders of their Republic, as to whether it would

include only Hong Kong or also Guangdong, is another interesting example of differentiation, this time within the pan-Cantonese community.

67. Anonymous, "Wo yao zai Guangdong qian qi yi chang shao feichai de yundong" (I want to burn away the waste in Guangdong), January 2006, [www.hkfront.org/intcanton20060102.htm](http://www.hkfront.org/intcanton20060102.htm) (accessed between November 2007 and May 2009).

68. Anonymous, "Youxiu de Baiyue minzu- Guangdong duli!" (Independence for the outstanding Cantonese nationality!).

69. Ivan Zhai, "Guangzhou Blames People with Ulterior Motives for Pro-Cantonese Campaign," *South China Morning Post*, July 29, 2010.

70. Siu, "Cultural Identity and the Politics of Difference," 23.

71. A term borrowed from Stevan Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic in South China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press), 2001.

72. Josie Liu, "In a Search for Cultural Identity, Clothes Definitely Maketh the Han," *South China Morning Post*, September 10, 2005.

73. Betty Lin, "Han Clothing May Be Revived," August 2007, [www.phstory.com/print.php?id=518](http://www.phstory.com/print.php?id=518) (accessed between November 2008 and May 2009).

74. Jin Ling, "Hanzu zhao bu dao ziji de minzu fuzhuang le?" (Will the Han find their own national clothing?), December 2005, [www.ycwb.com/gb/content/2005-12/01/content\\_1030067.htm](http://www.ycwb.com/gb/content/2005-12/01/content_1030067.htm) (accessed between November 2008 and May 2009).

75. Liu, "In a Search For Cultural Identity"; and personal correspondence, 2010.

76. Betty Lin, "Han Clothing May Be Revived."

77. Zhu Yueyi, "Guangzhou hanfu buluo meinv wangyou chuan kuan-pao daxiu guangjie" (A beauty from Guangzhou's Han clothing tribe hits the streets with her broad skirt and big sleeves), August 2006, <http://culture.people.com.cn/GB/22219/4697452.html> (accessed May 2009).

78. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 186.

79. See note 1 in this chapter for a discussion of the Baiyue, the Yue, and the Cantonese.

## CHAPTER 2

An earlier version of this chapter was presented as a conference paper at the Critical Han Studies Symposium, held at the Humanities Center, Stanford University, in April 2008. I would like to thank the conference organizers and participants for their feedback. In particular, I thank Thomas Mullaney, James Leibold, Stephane Gros, Eric Vanden Bussche, Stevan Harrell, Frank Dikötter, Jonathan Lippman, Nicholas Tapp, Pat Giersch, Mark Elliott, Dru Gladney, Melissa Brown, Leo Shin, Donald Sutton, Eva Chou, David Schaberg, and Erica Brindley. My research assistants, Sarah Sheppard, Em Ho, Betty Zhang, Joa Alexander, and Katherine Tan, worked with dedication on this project. Elizabeth Sinn and Andrew Tse provided invaluable help locating

# Character List

Baiyue	百粤
Baihua zhongguo lishi	白话中国历史
Baixing	百姓
Ban ge Zhongguoren	半个中国人
Beijingren	北京人
Beiren	北人
Beiyu	北语
Bendiren	本地人
Bentuhua	本土化
Bijiao Hanhua	比较汉化
Bijiao xianshi	比较现时
Bianjiang kaogu	边疆考古
Bu yu Hua tong	不与华同
Bunmeishugi	文明主義
Chen Boda	陈伯达
Chen Jianshan	陈兼善
Chen Liankai	陈连开
Chengshi	诚实
Chiang Kai-shek	蒋介石
Chide tai luan le	吃得太乱了
Chiyong	蚩尤
Chuzhong benguoshi	初中本国史
Chunjie	春节
Da Han	大汉
Da Hanzu minzu zhuyi	大汉族民族主义

Da Hanzu zhuyi	大汉族主义
Da minzuzhuyi	大民族主义
Datongshu	大同书
Dayitong	大一统
Dao bianjiang qu	到边疆去
Dimai	地脉
Diyun	地运
Dinglun	定论
Dongfang nüzi	东方女子
Dongfang zazhi	东方杂志
Duo minzu de guojia	多民族的国家
Duoyuanshuo	多元说
Duoyuan yiti	多元一体
Duoyuan yiti geju	多元一体格局
Fada	发达
Fan	蕃
Fan	番
Fanxiang	返乡
Fanyi	番夷
Fanzu	蕃族
Fan Hua	反华
Fangmu	放牧
Fangyan	方言
Fei wo zulei, qi xin bi yi	非我族类,其心必异
Fei Xiaotong	费孝通
Fengsu	风俗
Fengyan	风偃
Fu Sinian	傅斯年
Ganzhi	干支
Gongxiang	共相
Gudai minzu	古代民族
Gu Jiegang	顾颉刚
Gugan	骨干
Guxiang	故乡
Guang	广
Guangdong sheng	广东省
Guigen	归根
Guizheng ren	归正人
Guizu	贵族

Guocui	国粹
Guojia	国家
Guomin	国民
Guoren	国人
Guoshi dagang	国史大纲
Guozu	国族
Gushibian	古史辨
Han'er	汉儿
Han Fan bu qi	汉番步骖
Hanfu yundong	汉服运动
Hanhua	汉化
Hanjian	汉奸
Hanjun	汉军
Hanmin	汉民
Han minzu	汉民族
Hanren	汉人
Hanren jie	汉人街
Hanren pengyou	汉人朋友
Han renzhong	汉人种
Hanshui	汉水
Hansu	汉俗
Han Suyin	韩素音
Han tu guanbing	汉土官兵
Han wang	汉网
Hanwen	汉文
Hanxue	汉学
Hanyu	汉语
Hanzhong	汉种
Hanzu	汉族
Hao Hanren	好汉人
He Ailing	和艾龄
He Bingsong	何炳松
He Dong/Ho Tung	和东
He er butong	和而不同
Heji cuoza zhi zu	合极错杂之族
Hemu	合墓
Hexie Shehui	和谐社会
Hen nanting	很难听
Ho-si-man/Heshiwen	何仕文
Hu	胡

Hufu	胡服
Hua	华
Huaqiao	华侨
Huaren	华人
Huaxia	华夏
Hua-Yi yi jia	华夷一家
Hua-Yi zhi bian	华夷之辨
Huayi	华裔
Huayi Yingguoren	华裔英国人
Huayi Yingji	华裔英籍
Huazu	华族
Huai Hanren	坏汉人
Huangbai hezhong	黄白合种
Huangdi zisun	黄帝子孙
Huang Zunxian	黄遵宪
Huiguan	会馆
Huiguo	回国
Huijia	回家
Hunxue'er	混血儿
Jimi	羁縻
Jiazu	家族
Jian Bozan	翦伯赞
Jiandan	简单
Jiang Zhiyou	将智由
Jiefang ribao	解放日报
Jiemeng	结盟
Jin	金
Jinbu	进步
Jindai minzu	近代民族
Jingxue	经学
Jiuguo	救国
Juhe	聚合
Junzi	君子
Kang Youwei	康有为
Kaoguxue	考古学
Kejiaren	客家人
Kemin	客民
Keren	客人
Kezhang	客长

Kezhong	客众
Lai Xiru	赖希如
Laoban	老板
Laojia	老家
Li Dongfang	黎东方
Lihai	厉害
Li Ji	李济
Lishi renwu	历史人物
Liyi lianjie	礼仪廉洁
Liangmin	良民
Liang Qichao	梁启超
Liang Siyong	梁思永
Liao	辽
Lin Huixiang	林惠祥
Liuguan	流官
Liumin	流民
Liu Shiwei	刘师培
Liu Yizheng	刘诒征
Long de chuanren	龙的传人
Longshan	龙山
Lu	虏
Lu Maode	陆懋德
Lü Simian	吕思勉
Lü Zhenyu	吕振羽
Luohou	落后
Manyi	蛮夷
Mei shenme teshu de	没什么特殊的
Menggu gongzuo	蒙古工作
Mengjian	蒙奸
Miao Fenglin	缪凤林
Miaojiang	苗疆
Miaoman	苗蛮
Min	民
Minjia	民家
Minren	民人
Minsu	民俗
Minzu	民族
Minzu qingxu	民族情绪
Minzu shibie	民族识别



Minzu tuanjie	民族团结
Minzuxue	民族学
Minzu yishi	民族意识
Minzu zhengce	民族政策
Minzu zhuyi	民族主义
Muti	母体
Nanfang dushi Bao	南方都市报
Nanren	南人
Nanyue	南粤
Nanzu	南族
Naozi hen jiandan	脑子很简单
Neidi	内地
Ningju hexin	凝聚核心
Ouya	欧亚
Ouya hunxue	欧亚混血
Ouya hunxue de Zhongguo nüzi	欧亚混血的中国女子
Putonghua	普通话
Qi	气
Qimeng	启蒙
Qipianle ni	欺骗了你
Qian Mu	钱穆
Qianshen	前身
Qian shi tamen de pengyou	钱是他们的朋友
Qianshi Hanren	前世汉人
Qingming Jie	清明节
Qingqing baibai huangdi zhi zisun	清清白白黄帝之子孙
Qingzhen	清真
Qun	群
Qun zhuyi	群主义
Ran'gan (Sārbi term)	染干
Renleixue	人类学
Renmin	人民
Renzhong	人种
Renzhongxue	人种学
Rong Di zhitai	戎狄志态
Ronghe	融合

Ru zhongguo bantu	入中国版图
Rui Yifu	芮逸夫
San duo	三多
Semu	色目
Shaguotun	沙锅屯
Shan hai jing	山海经
Shaoshu minzu	少数民族
Shaoshu minzuhua	少数民族化
Shiji	史记
Shijie Huaren wenxue	世界华人文学
Shitou buneng dang zhentou,	石头不能当枕头, 汉人不能做朋友
Hanren buneng zuo pengyou	
Shizu	氏族
Sichuanren	四川人
Sifa xingzheng bu	司法行政部
Sima Qian	司马迁
Sixiang	思想
Siyiguan	四夷馆
Sobokushugi	素朴主義
Songzu	宋族
Suzhi	素质
Suibian bu ting hua	随便不听话
Sun Yat-sen	孙中山
Tamen naozi hao	他们脑子好
Tangren	唐人
Tangren jie	唐人街
Tianxia	天下
Tiaodunren	条顿人
Ting women de anduo Zangyu	听我们的安多藏语觉得很舒服
juede hen shufu	
Torii Ryûzô	鸟居龙藏
Tongyi duominzu guojia	统一多民族国家
Tubing	土兵
Tulian	土练
Turen	土人
Tusi	土司
Tuoba (Tabgach)	拓拔
Wai	外

Waidiren	外地人
Waiguoren	外国人
Wailai	外来
Wailaishuo	外来说
Waizu	外族
Wangben	忘本
Wang Chuanxie	王传燮
Wei	魏
Weishenme suoyoude Zhongguoren buxing?	为什么所有的中国人不行?
Wenhua	文化
Wenhua shamo	文化沙漠
Wenyanwen	文言文
Weng Wenhao	翁文灏
Women da Hanzu	我们大汉族
Women meiyou wenhua, meiyou jianshi	我们没有文化, 没有见识
Women Zangzu zui bu xihuan de shi Huizu	我们藏族最不喜欢的是回族
Wuhu luanhua	五胡乱华
Wuji	无稽
Wuzu gonghe	五族共和
Xiguan	习惯
Xilaishuo	西来说
Xinan shaoshu minzu	西南少数民族
Xia	夏
Xiahe	夏河
Xia Zengyou	夏曾佑
Xianbei (Sārbi)	鲜卑
Xiansheng	先生
Xiangtu	乡土
Xiao buluo	小部落
Xiaoren	小人
Xin dalu	新大陆
Xinxian xueye	新鲜血液
Xin xuetong de hunru	新血统的混入
Xing	性
Xing ji xionghan	性极凶悍
Xiong Shili	熊十力
Xu Bingchang	徐炳昶

Xugouxing puxi	虚构性谱系
Xu Jieshun	徐杰舜
Xueheng	学衡
Xueqiu	雪球
Yan	燕
Yandi	炎帝
Yan Fu	严复
Yange dili	严格地力
Yanhuang	炎黄
Yanren	燕人
Yang Du	扬度
Yangshao	仰韶
Yi	夷
Yidi	夷地
Yifang	夷方
Yifang shuitu yang yifang ren	一方水土养一方人
Yifen wei'er	一分为二
Yimin	夷民
Yiren	夷人
Yishi tongren	一视同仁
Yisilan minzu	伊斯兰民族
Yixia dongxi shuo	夷夏东西说
Yiyuanlun	一元论
Yiyuanshuo	一元说
Yu Jianhua	俞剑华
Yuan	元
Yuanren	猿人
Yuan Shikai	袁世凯
Yuanshi Ouzhou renzhong	原始欧洲人种
Yue	粤
Zhanzai Hanren de fangmian	站在汉人的方面
Zhang	瘴
Zhang Binglin	章炳麟
Zhang Qiyun	张其昀
Zhang Xuguang	张旭光
Zhendan	震旦
Zhina	支那
Zhizu	支族
Zhong	中

Zhong	种
Zhongguo	中国
Zhongguo benbu	中国本部
Zhongguo de Youtairen	中国的犹太人
Zhongguo minzu shi	中国民族史
Zhongguo minzu	中国民族
Zhongguo mingyun	中国命运
Zhongguoren	中国人
Zhongguoren de xue	中国人的血
Zhongguoren de xuetong	中国人的血统
Zhongguo renmin	中国人民
Zhongguo renzhong kao	中国人种考
Zhongguo renzhong xitong	中国人种系统
Zhongguo xin	中国心
Zhonghua	中华
Zhonghua da di	中华大地
Zhonghua guozu	中华国族
Zhonghua minzu	中华民族
Zhonglei	种类
Zhongtu	中土
Zhongyang dianshitai	中央电视台
Zhongyuan	中原
Zhongzu	中族
Zhongzu de oushiang	种族的偶像
Zhou Guanghu	周光湖
Zhou Yutong	周予同
Zhuti	主体
Zhuxia	诸夏
Zixiang	自相
Zizhi bang	自治邦
Zongjiao butong	宗教不同
Zongzu	宗族
Zou Rong	邹容
Zu	族
Zuguo	祖国
Zulei	族类
Zuqun	族群
Zuqun lilun	族群理论
Zuxian	祖先
Zui gulao de minzu	最古老的民族
Zuozhuan	左传

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