

“storytelling” to bring out the different voices of the “coming out” stories of her interviewees, underlining how these stories are closely tied with the national and global imagining of China’s opening up. In chapter 3, she discusses quite lengthily her fieldwork, paying special attention to the problem of representation and legitimization. She is particularly sensitive to her own role as “a semi-outsider, a non-gay female, a researcher from Australia, a citizen of Hong Kong, a visiting scholar of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, and a non-Beijing resident in the field” (60) who has done research on gays and lesbians in urban China. Chapter 4 is a rather short chapter on the politics of same-sex articulations through the divergent meanings of “homosexual,” “gay” and “lesbian” in the Chinese context, using a linguistic analysis. In chapter 5, she turns into the increasingly commercialized and state-controlled Chinese gay cyberworld.

Building from the previous chapters, chapter 6 is the most important and interesting chapter, as Ho puts forward her main argument that the emergence of modern Chinese same-sex identities cannot merely be treated as “modern” (read Western) or “authentic” (read indigenous), but are constituted by a complicated interplay between local coming-to-terms gay and lesbian generations, China’s project of modernity, and global queering.

This is a rather short book, seemingly converted from Ho’s PhD thesis. As noted by the author, there are plenty of areas for further investigation. I enjoyed reading it very much but would like to read more. For example, I would like to read how the author might take queer theory on board to enrich her theoretical understanding of (de)centering identity. Her present theoretical model is mainly based on Stuart Hall’s notion of cultural identity and Ken Plummer/Richard Troiden’s notion of sexual identity formation. Secondly, I would like to hear more the different voices among the gay and lesbian communities, as the dominant voice presented here was that of highly educated, city-based, male professionals (mainly due to the sample of interviewees). Still, this does not distract from the book’s being a valuable empirical study of sexual minorities in China.

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CHINA FOREVER: The Shaw Brothers and Diasporic Cinema. *Edited by Poshek Fu.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008. vii, 270 pp. (Tables, figures, maps, B&W photos.) US\$25.00, paper. ISBN 978-0-252-07500-1.

Whether it is walking into a DVD store in US Chinatowns, or turning on cable television in Taipei, the Shaw Brothers’ logo is still hard to miss even decades after the studio’s last film production. Starting in Shanghai in the 1920s, the later Hong Kong and Singapore-based Shaw Brothers Studio created an extensive business network, transforming itself from a local film industry to

a transnational cinema once second in production only to Hollywood. Yet, unlike Hollywood, not much has been written on this cinematic empire. Poshek Fu's edited *China Forever: the Shaw Brothers and Diasporic Cinema* comes to the shelves to fill in this long-standing gap.

As the first book-length critical study of the Shaw empire in English, *China Forever* brings together 11 critics, actresses and scholars from film to history, area studies to cultural studies, cultural geography to theatre. With their joint effort, the volume touches on a wide range of issues such as cultural, media, and even personal histories the studio engaged with, its formation of diasporic networks, global businesses it propelled, its role in the invention of pan-Chinese imaginations, and its modernizing, globalizing as well as localizing endeavours.

Mirroring the diversity of the Shaw Brothers' productions, the volume looks at a number of genres. Wong Ain-ling focuses on black-and-white *wenyi* films made in the 1950s and 1960s, tracing a genealogy from Shanghai melodramas in the 1930s to the cross-pollinating of various later-rising genres (such as the *wu xia* film), a genealogy which Wong argues helps mold the contours of Hong Kong cinema until this day. Sui Leung Li discusses the musical in conjuncture with the historical epic. In so doing, he highlights a complex interplay between imaginations of the cosmopolitan, the local and the national which the studio, like Hong Kong itself, negotiated with as it ventured to find a place on a global stage.

Tracking the Shaw Brothers' transnational endeavours, *China Forever* also touches on a range of locales. Law Kar looks at the studio's Cantonese films in the 1950s, discussing how it produced a local image of Hong Kong for a rising lower middle class. Sai-shing Yung delineates a history of the Shaw Brothers' involvement in the Malayan-Singaporean entertainment industry, looking specifically at a network of amusement parks and movie houses through which the studio made its mark on the Southeast Asian market.

A good number of chapters are also devoted to comparative work on the Shaw Brothers' cross-regional, cross-genre, cross-language and multi-ethnic reach. Ramona Curry discusses the studio's arduous attempt to push its pan-Chinese blockbuster *Love Eterne* onto a mainstream US stage. On the other hand, Sundiata Keita Cha-jua looks at the genre of kung-fu films, which has had the most success in crossing the Pacific. Pairing the genre with discussions of US blaxploitation films in the 1970s, Cha-jua shows how they provide an alternative imagination of masculinity that diverges from, and even combats, white supremacy at a militant time in US history. Fanon Che Wilkins further traces this cross-fertilization between Shaw Brothers' kung fu fantasies and US blaxploitation films in the construction of African-American hip-hop imaginations.

Actress Cheng Pei-pei endearingly closes the volume with a personal testament of the Shaw studio's influence over the lives of a whole generation. The Shaw studio, she reminisces, "was the paradise of each and every

young person who found themselves there ... it was at that studio that each of us lived out our dreams” (246). As a dream factory of its time, the now dreamlike past of the Shaw studios has been beckoned back into being by *China Forever*. The volume serves as itself a “glocalizing” debut for Shaw Brothers studies in the English-speaking world, demonstrating the richness of the underrepresented subject matter, and showcasing many promising venues for further exploration.

Emphasizing the studio’s ventures and reception in diasporic communities, and even the mainstream US market, its relationship with Mainland China remains under-investigated in the volume. How might have the studio’s “Chinese Dream” formed a dialogue with the social-historical “realities” of Mainland China of the time, or even caused ripples in cultural imaginations in a Post-Mao era, especially after Celestial Pictures’ recent re-releases in DVD form? The fascinating evolution of the Shaw legacy in new forms of media such as transnational DVD sales, cable television, cult film festivals and YouTube, in an age inundated with streaming and online downloading sites, seems to be also worthy of investigation. Nevertheless, *China Forever* reopens the gates to the Shaw Brothers’ legend, evoking critical attention to this under-recognized milestone in sinophone cinema, beckoning us to venture further for more.

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