

identitaire que constituait l'expérience coloniale » (p. 211). C'est probablement, d'ailleurs, pour une question d'authenticité culturelle que la question du métissage entre Amérindiens et colons a si longtemps été ignorée par les chercheurs. L'ouvrage de Dawson, en ce sens, constitue un apport original à l'historiographie québécoise et espérons qu'il inspire d'autres chercheurs. Néanmoins, les nombreuses faiblesses de l'analyse qu'il présente en font une contribution négligeable dans le cadre des études métisses.

Plusieurs anthropologues ont souligné la difficulté de définir culturellement les communautés métisses du Canada. Cette difficulté est une conséquence directe du fait que le terme « métis » est en lui-même porteur d'ambiguïté et qu'il ne peut difficilement échapper à sa signification originale et première de « mélange ». S'il ne semble pas y avoir de consensus au sein de la communauté scientifique sur la façon de définir les Métis au Canada, notons cependant que les critères de définition juridiques, dans la foulée du jugement Powley, semblent de plus en plus servir de repères aux chercheurs. C'est dans ce contexte de judiciarisation et de politisation de l'identité métisse qu'il faut lire le plus récent Dawson. Notons, finalement, que la popularisation soudaine des recherches sur les Métis dans laquelle il s'inscrit laisse déjà présager plusieurs difficultés épistémologiques. Ces études sur l'ethnogenèse, en plus de faire ombrage aux données ethnographiques, pourraient, à partir de critères réducteurs inspirés des décisions juridiques, conduire à nier une réalité historique fort complexe.

Notes

- 1 Cour suprême du Canada, Jugement rendu le 19 septembre 2003 dans la cause de Sa Majesté la Reine contre Steve Powley et Roddy Charles Powley, Ottawa, Cour Suprême du Canada, 2003, n° du greffe 28533.27, paragraphes 10 et 12.
- 2 La Communauté métisse de Domaine-du-Roy et de la Seigneurie de Mingan au Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean défend présentement un de ceux-ci devant la Cour supérieure du Québec dans une affaire d'occupation illégale du territoire (Procureur général du Québec 2008).
- 3 Jobbeur : du mot anglais *jobber* : sorte d'entrepreneur qui établissait des contrats avec des compagnies forestières pour fournir du bois de coupe.
- 4 Il est intéressant de noter, à cet égard, que le terme sang-mêlé, bien qu'il soit généralement invariable, est accordé au pluriel dans le titre de l'ouvrage.

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Anthropology's Orientalist Slot? Masculinity and Chinese Nationalism in the Ethnology of Taiwan

Michel-Rolph Trouillot argued that anthropology is the West's "Savage slot" (Trouillot 2003: 2). Part of a wider symbolic field, anthropology contributed to the West's self-congratulatory discourse. In this imagined geography, (1) sociology, history and so on focused on the West, (2) literature and philology constructed the "Orient" (Said 1979), and (3) anthropology studied the non-literate Rest. Since the Cold War emergence of area studies, some anthropologists have also filled an "Orientalist slot" by acquiring Asian literacy to combine textual knowledge with ethnographic detail. When they construct rigid boundaries around imagined versions of Chinese or Japanese "culture," as in Ruth Benedict's *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), they recreate what Eric Wolf called "a model of the world as a global pool hall in which the entities spin off each other like so many hard and round billiard balls" (Wolf 1983:6). After decades of self-reflection, some have apparently not moved far from Benedict's shadow, even as studies of cultural patterns and national personalities have been discredited elsewhere. This disorienting effect is most evident in studies of Taiwan, where boundaries around "China" and "Taiwan" are strongly contested.

Two new books, by Avron Boretz and Marc L. Moskowitz, may represent a new trend in Orientalist anthropology:

multi-sited research crossing political boundaries of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC, *aka* Taiwan). *Cries of Joy, Songs of Sorrow* is a fine example of field research and cultural analysis. The theoretically dense *Gods, Ghosts, and Gangsters* blends literary analysis with ethnography of Yunnan and Taiwan. Both works are erudite contributions to anthropology. This is precisely why they merit a critical reading, which should in no way deflect from their scholarly value.

Wenrou, Wu and Wen: Looking for Chinese Masculinities

Both books explore masculinity in innovative ways. Through analysis of lyrics, as well as interviews with mostly women, Moskowitz points out the irony that most Mandopop songs are written by men for women performers who complain about men. His approach is largely a psychological comparison of American and Chinese genders. Moskowitz demonstrates discomfort with uncritical use of the word "western," instead using "the United States as a comparative point with China and Taiwan" (p. ix). His focus on Mandarin helps him elucidate common gendered themes across the region, for example the Buddhist term *yuanfen* (karmic relations). Moskowitz finds Confucian themes of relegating women to the home, and Taoist conceptions of feminine *yin* balanced with masculine *yang* (p. 76). Lyrics have "conservative" conceptions of innate gender characteristics. Women are portrayed as dependent on men, stationary and waiting, whereas men are more likely to be independent, active wanderers (p. 71).

Moskowitz highlights the term *wenrou*, usually translated as "gentle, tender," and used positively for both genders. Describing *wenrou* as "effeminate masculinity" or "tender androgyny," he compares it to the American "rigid idea of male physiques and personas" (p. 89). Likewise, "unlike in the United States, where androgyny is often looked down on as lacking manliness, in Taiwan muscular bodies are often associated with stigmatized lower class occupations, gangsters, male gay culture, or barbaric Western physiques" (p. 89). At a symbolic level, Moskowitz shows that PRC music, like its politics, is masculine (even "macho"), in contrast to "southern feminized" Taiwan, Hong Kong and Shanghai (p. 27). Moskowitz uses gender to address regional politics: "Mandopop revolves on several axes—female/male, subject/ruler, Gang-Tai/PRC—and in each case *yin* seems to be victorious over *yang* as a way to humanize the masculinist rhetoric of state politics ... Taiwan's pop retaking of the mainland is therefore a gendered invasion" (p. 87). He thus imagines Hong Kong and Taiwan (Gang-Tai) as the feminine half of the traditional Chinese *tai-ji*, a discourse that binds the two halves essentially to one another. A separation is unthinkable.

The relevant psychological comparison is between American and Chinese cultures. Echoing modernization theory, Moskowitz argues: "whereas many in the West might look at the separation from friends and families as an unfortunate but inevitable event, in modern China and Taiwan, individualism has been ushered in by the modern capitalist infrastructure at

such a fast pace that it has not yet been naturalized ... when so much of their culture tells them that they are part of a greater whole" (p. 56-57).

Boretz's rich ethnography of temples and ruffians in Taiwan, with a brief detour to an ethnic minority village in Yunnan, provides a deeper sinological analysis of Chinese masculinity. Boretz examines *wen* (the civil and literary) and *wu* (the military or martial) masculinities. On the *wen* side are men who, like Moskowitz's *wenrou* males, have literary talent, refined tastes, and emotional sensitivity. In imperial China, such men pursuing careers as literati and government officials were models of masculinity. On the *wu* side are men of martial prowess exemplifying knight-errant virtues of loyalty, sincerity and righteousness. Overall, *wu* and *wen*, "encapsulate a historical contest between common and elite structures of values, respectively, within Chinese society" (Boretz 2011:41).

Boretz ventures into the unexplored (for anthropology) territory of *jianghu* (rivers and lakes), inhabited by vagabonds, outlaws and others alienated from mainstream society (p. 31). Boretz's research was based in Taidong on Taiwan's East Coast, which was declared to be part of the Chinese empire as late as 1875, but had little government authority beyond a handful of outposts in valleys and coastal enclaves. This harsh frontier, originally inhabited by feared aboriginal headhunters, attracted adventurers, sojourners and fugitives from western Taiwan (p. 72). Taidong's working-class people still maintain a "wild frontier spirit," a sense of "rootless, treacherous and peripheral existence" (p. 86).

Boretz analyzes masculine practices including tattooing, self-mutilation rituals, martial processions, and carousing with women in karaoke bars. Through anecdotes of gangster moralities and practices, he shows that men are motivated by martial ethics, courage and self-control, illustrating "the very object of *wu* masculinity: to embody (self-)productive, (self-)transformative, efficacious power" (p. 211). Boretz sees individuality as intrinsic to Chinese masculinity. In the patrilineal family, men are subordinated to their fathers for much of their lives, even as they desire personal autonomy (p. 11). Martial rituals participants are "in pursuit of individual affirmation as a particular kind of vigorous, aggressively masculine man" (p. 18); or "attempting to produce themselves as autonomous subjects in their own terms" (p. 127). Individuality is thus not an American particularity; but rather a way of asserting autonomy within social relations, an intrinsic part of the Chinese masculine psyche.

By combining fieldwork with literary analysis, for example of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) martial arts novel *Water Margin*, Boretz attempts to show that this way of being is essentially Chinese. Left unsaid is that his Bai and Taiwanese informants also have good reasons to claim that they are *not* heirs to China's 5000 year cultural history. If anything, both Yunnan and Taiwan were incorporated into an expanding Chinese empire at different historical periods without the consent of the original inhabitants. If we were talking about other parts of the world, we would call it "colonialism" (Vickers 2011).

The Power-ful Problem of "Chinese Culture"

Both books focus primarily on Taiwan, but claim to represent "Chinese culture." In both cases, the ethnography of Taiwan is full of thick description, whereas that in the PRC is thinner. Moskowitz based his book on 65 interviews in Taipei, but only 18 in Shanghai. Boretz has a chapter on Yunnan's Bai Fire Torch Festival which, ironically, is held by an ethnic minority to provide Chinese tourists with "ethnic colour" (Boretz 2011:113) rather than represented as "Chinese culture." PRC field conditions make it difficult to conduct long-term, detailed research without state interference. Boretz, after describing Taiwanese rituals, says that popular religion in the PRC is "stridently challenged" and "remains a touchy subject" (Boretz 2011:159). Boretz could participate in rituals in Taiwan and establish long-term rapport with gangsters, but this "did not and probably could not have happened in the mainland" (Boretz 2011:175).

Both authors claim current social practices have ancient roots. For Moskowitz, men writing lyrics for women is partially an "extension" of literary traditions from the Warring States period (480 BCE – 221 BCE) when male poets used female characters to symbolize their powerlessness vis-à-vis the state (p. 71). Boretz compares contemporary drinking and carousing practices to Zhou Dynasty (1050-771 BCE) customs. At least Boretz recognizes that he cannot know if modern practices are actually *derived* from earlier forms (p. 177); what seem more important for him are the *poetics* of the comparison. He treads on safer ground when he documents the history of Chinese migration to both Dali (Yunnan) and Taidong (Taiwan). Those chapters are useful because they demonstrate how China was constructed.

Moskowitz makes stronger political claims, for example "the northern sphere (Beijing) houses the PRC government whereas Hong Kong and Taiwan still retain political autonomy in the south" (p. 26, emphasis added). He thus denies the political sovereignty of the ROC on Taiwan, which not even "pro-unification" leaders in Taipei, from Chiang Kai-shek to current president Ma Ying-jeou, have ever done. Moskowitz sometimes occults facts to make his argument. He writes, "when Japan lost the Second World War in 1945 it was forced to cede Taiwan to China as part of the treaty" (p. 33), but fails to specify *which* treaty. Is this the 1952 *Treaty of San Francisco*, with 48 state signatories, in which Japan renounced "all right, title and claim to Formosa and the Pescadores" without specifying the recipient? Or the 1952 *Treaty of Taipei*, signed by Japan and the ROC, which defined ROC nationals as "all the inhabitants and former inhabitants of Taiwan (Formosa) and Penghu (the Pescadores)"? The latter document proves that the ROC was, three years after the founding of the PRC, a sovereign state able to sign important international treaties. It is counterfactual to imply that the ROC is not a sovereign state or that Taiwan, similar to Hong Kong, is an autonomous zone of China. Intentional or not, Moskowitz appears to support PRC claims over a territory they have never governed.

The arbitrary nature of cultural analysis is visible in both works. For Moskowitz, Chinese masculinity is androgynous

compared to American norms; whereas for Boretz there has always been a Chinese balance between literary and martial masculinities. For Moskowitz, individualism is a capitalist influence; whereas for Boretz, personal autonomy has long been the ultimate goal of Chinese men. Already in the 19th century, Marx made fun of philosophers who were looking for the fruitness of fruit (Trouillot 2003:5). By looking for the Chineseness of Taiwan, we return to Wolf's billiard table.

The goal is not to replace "Chinese culture" with "Taiwanese culture." The question is why it is considered legitimate to look for an essential culture or national personality at all. This is important, not because many people on Taiwan contest so-called Chinese identity (even though they do), but because anthropology has moved elsewhere. Wolf demonstrated that the culture concept originated in 19th German nationalism (Wolf 1999:29). Often employed for political control, it needs to be used prudently: "if culture was conceived originally as an entity with fixed boundaries making off insiders from outsiders, we need to ask who sets these borders and who now guards the ramparts" (Wolf 1999:67).

In all fairness, Boretz and Moskowitz both accomplished well the research tasks they defined for themselves. Boretz's book will become classic in the ethnography of "Chinese" folk religion; and Moskowitz adds new insights to the study of pop music. Yet cultural anthropology, to the extent that it still reifies certain place-based identities as "cultures," risks becoming the social poetics of nationalism. These otherwise excellent Taiwan-based ethnographies, although probably not consciously intended by the authors, refract Chinese nationalism. Perhaps this is because both anthropologists do fieldwork where nationalist ideologies are fiercely promoted and contested; or perhaps because they are surrounded by area studies specialists debating what the rise of China means for Taiwan. In the final analysis, anthropology's Orientalist slot, like its Savage slot, remains in use.

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