

In This Issue

CHARLES ARMSTRONG'S article looks at the cultural cold war in Korea in the period from 1945 to 1950. He examines educational enterprises and cultural activities by Americans and Russians in their respective zones of occupation, using films, magazines, and other kinds of propaganda documents generated by both sides, suggesting ways in which Russians were more skilled propagandists in the cultural arena. He concludes with some observations about how the role of American culture in Korea has changed in the fifty years since the period he writes about in his article.

LISA TRIVEDI looks at the ways in which the *swadeshi* (native products) movement helped constitute national identity in India in the early twentieth century. The production and wearing of homespun cloth (*khadi*) was a clear way of rejecting colonial domination. Furthermore, the swadeshi movement sent teams out with lantern shows and other visual aids, connecting distant parts of India with one another and thus creating a sense of Indian nationhood. Trivedi argues that khadi itself and the visual media that were used to promote it were fundamental in constituting the imagined community, which was essential to the creation of Indian nationalism.

FRANK PIEKE examines the genealogical mentality in China—by which he means not only the recently revived practices of keeping genealogy but also of a means of thinking that connects people together by filiation and blood, rather than, say, locality. He allows us a close look at the discussions surrounding the plans to produce several new genealogies, including one of the Kong clan, putative descendants of Confucius. Never far from the forefront of his article is the issue of state power, as well as the complex ramifications of state power with lineage interests.

DEBORAH WINSLOW looks at a village of potters in Sri Lanka and the ways how they have experienced and reacted to various development schemes in the past twenty years. She begins her article by suggesting that critics of the development model have failed to imagine adequately paradigms that lie outside the development model. Her close-grained study of the potters suggests alternative ways to look at development.

KIDDER SMITH is interested in Sima Tan (d. 110 B.C.E.) and the whole question of how he constituted intellectual groupings in the *Shiji* (Records of the grand historian). Smith stresses the novelty of Tan's categorization on the basis of ideas, not of men or of texts. He characterizes the particular ways in which Tan's intellectual project is part of a political project, and he concludes with some observations on the nature of history in Sima Tan's time and our own day.

It is a diverse group of articles.

One of the pleasures of editing a journal—of becoming seriously involved with other people's work and placing it in a context (by which here I mean something very literal and material, next to other articles, between the bright red covers of this journal)—is the serendipity of it. For about two years now, I have been asking authors to respond to one another's work and have taken their responses and have cut and

pasted them to craft this section of the journal in order to form a kind of introduction to the issue and to suggest ways in which articles might be read productively across geographic and disciplinary lines. As I read through manuscripts and proofs, I see resonances and imagine what authors will say about one another's work. When I read Armstrong's description of film projectionists going into the Korean countryside to show propaganda films, I was reminded of Trivedi's descriptions of lantern shows which "visually mapped the nation." Winslow and Trivedi both concentrate on material objects—pottery and cloth—to look at broader questions such as development and nationalism. Both Kidder Smith and Frank Pieke are interested in questions of genealogy—how ideas and identities are filiated in China—although the cases they are interested in are more than two thousand years apart. I was interested in how they would speak to these commonalities.

Even more so than usual, however, the four authors who responded to my request for comments on the articles in this issue found common metaquestions (or, in Winslow's phrase, similar things-to-be-explained) in the articles, although they express this discovery in distinctive ways. Both Winslow and Smith explicitly address the practice of reading in their discussion of these articles. I have deviated from my usual practice and have resisted the impulse to cut and paste. The four responses are reproduced below as wholes, with only normal editorial interventions, introductions, and transitions.

Both Armstrong and Trivedi note that these articles all ask questions about the relationship between power and culture. Armstrong writes:

These articles, despite their vastly diverging geographical areas, time periods, and approaches, ask a number of intriguing and mutually complementary questions about the relationship between power and culture. Each article caused me to think in new ways about the subject in question. For example, Smith's piece inspired me to reexamine what I thought I knew about the origins of Taoism and the very idea of "isms" in Chinese thought, as well as the practice of history both in East Asia and the West. His discussion of schools as lineages linked nicely across time to Pieke's discussion of genealogy in contemporary China. Pieke describes genealogy as "a discursive node where power produces truth and truth produces power." The relationship between the local production of genealogies and the state's attempts to exploit them as supporters of "Chinese" identity creates an unstable (and from the viewpoint of the state, potentially dangerous) situation, one currently in considerable flux as the PRC rediscovers the usefulness of genealogy. This state-supported genealogical work seems indeed as if it is a form of "governmentality," in Foucault's useful phrase, through which the PRC state appears to be moving toward a "hegemony beyond domination." As Pieke points out, however, this linkage of local genealogy to central state power and national identity may not always work. In addition to the problem of minorities and the potential strengthening of local power at the expense of the central state, the extension of national (also meaning ethnic) identity beyond the boundaries of the PRC can be quite problematic: I thought, for example, of the many "Kongs" in Korea who trace their lineage to Confucius but on the whole do not think of themselves as "Chinese."

Winslow maps out a complex and fascinating relationship between the state's assertions of authority and local production by pottery makers in rural Sri Lanka, which combine to create a "hybrid" form of "development." Trivedi also talks about the links between local and national, the creation of communities of belonging, in this case the spread of khadi in India, which created a new visual language of the nation. Going beyond the elite, written discourses analyzed by Benedict Anderson and others, Trivedi convincingly argues for khadi's role in creating a popular nationalism for a diverse, widely dispersed, and largely illiterate society. Although I

did not explore the actual cultural products as deeply as I would have liked, in a way my own article investigates the local/central production of cultural products but at an international or global level. I tried to capture a certain period in which the United States, as part of a conscious policy in the early cold war, attempted to “naturalize” its own state discourse abroad in order to win over the “hearts and minds” of Koreans (among others). As I point out, this was not very successful at the time, but arguably the discursive community of the “Free World”—and perhaps even more importantly, American-style consumer culture—did sink roots in South Korea and, for better or worse, has been highly effective around the world.

(Armstrong, e-mail, 15 November 2002)

Trivedi states the initial premise somewhat more strongly than Armstrong—while he notes that the five articles are connected by complementary questions, she goes so far as to assert that they are bound by a common approach to the understanding of power through culture. She writes that in these articles

[p]ower is not assumed to reside simply in the realm of high politics but can also be explored through other venues and perhaps in more nuanced ways. Here we read about non-elite and individual strategies, rather than focusing upon high politics of select leaders and states. Even when high politics is considered, the account shifts our attention to the cultural realm to suggest that states or states-in-the-making recognize that it is the cultural realm that they must influence or through which they can influence.

This focus on culture also brings different subjects forward in each article than might otherwise be privileged in each field of scholarship. The authors draw attention to how the power of ordinary people and the power of the formal political world relate to one another. In these articles, all of the authors focus upon the ways in which people make use of power (ideas of history, ideas of progress, ideas of the nation, ideas of genealogy) as strategies. This is not to suggest that the articles hold a romanticized view of non-elites but, rather, that they pay specific attention to how people employ the power that they have. Their power (albeit limited) cannot be completely recuperated within the dominant narratives of power and often exists beyond them in competing discourses which, despite their limited efficacy, nonetheless shape the narratives that come to dominate.

I was particularly struck by the Winslow piece, which seems to be addressing many questions about development analogous to those that I address about nationalism. By taking a sort of “*longue durée*” approach, Winslow successfully argues that potters change and adapt for their own benefit when faced with both pro- and antidevelopment programs. Winslow shows us that, regardless of what the colonial or national states intend, ordinary people have their own sensibility around progress and that they both live through and beyond the power of states and agencies which seek to change them. [*Winslow response: I really like this way of putting it, especially if we keep in mind that their sensibility shifts over time, only partly because of external interventions (e-mail, 9 January 2003).*] In a parallel fashion, I emphasize that a national community cannot be taken for granted but, rather, is something whose on-going making must be charted in order to challenge the nation’s claim for its timelessness and naturalness—its right to exist. There are a variety of strategies that nationalists effectively used to weave a very disparate population together, and the targets of these strategies themselves made use of these strategies for purposes other than that for which they were intended. Both Winslow and I effectively resist the framing of our subjects simply within dominant narratives, be they developmental or national. Both articles caution scholars from assuming that non-elite adoption of high political ideas, beliefs, and/or strategies necessarily means the unqualified acceptance of dominant narratives of power. Potters, in other words, may express their goals through a

language of progress which does not mean that they have accepted (and, as we learn from Winslow, they have often actively resisted) the colonial or national program for development. Ordinary people in India may have adopted the cloth of the swadeshi movement, employing it in protest against a colonial regime without completely accepting either the Gandhian or nationalist ideal of India. Potters and khadi wearers may have adopted these strategies for other purposes, transforming the dominant narrative even as they themselves are transformed by the strategies that they employ. In either case, by focusing upon the ways in which these strategies are adopted and adapted, both essays call into question the dominant narrative of the colonial and national states by exposing their frailties. [*Winslow response: I fully agree with Trivedi's parallel here, although I do think that simply by participating in or using the adopted strategies, people can be affected by them, whether they intend to be or not. Even resistance is not total [e-mail 9 January 2003].*]

(Trivedi, e-mail, 5 November 2002)

Winslow begins her discussion with some observation on scholarly reading practices and moves on to show the dividends of reading across boundaries.

This group of articles took me into territories where I rarely spend much time. Perhaps in that I am not unusual; it has seemed to me for a while now that one of the more insidious effects of area studies may be scholarly provincialism. Anthropologists, historians, political scientists, and others who specialize in research on one geographic area seem not to read widely outside that area. Of course, we all recognize that just keeping up with the literature in one's own area is a challenge. . . .

From this perspective, the articles for this issue were salutary. Although only the two articles on China list specific reading in common, the articles themselves make it clear that bibliography is not everything. Just as Trivedi shows us how a national community can be created without print capitalism, these articles reveal a number of common modes of conceptualizing problems and concerns despite the lack of common citations, leaving me to wonder what it is that operates as the scholarly equivalent of the Indian nationalists' posters, magic lantern shows, and exhibitions. Despite the variety of fields (two anthropologists and three historians) and field sites (third-century B.C.E. China, contemporary China, post-World War II Korea, India from 1920 to 1930, and twentieth-century Sri Lanka), I think that these five articles share a common problematic, a common sense of what it is that needs to be held up to the light and accounted for.

At the most general level, this thing-that-needs-to-be-explained appears to turn around the hegemonic processes entailed in the construction of "state," or would-be state, power. How did the Indian nationalists try to convince the residents of the subcontinent to see themselves as comprising a common nation without having recourse to either colonial or precolonial government structures? How does the contemporary Chinese state draw back from direct control (presumably to foster economic entrepreneurship) while simultaneously maintaining its authority and expanding its purview? How could the United States military command in Korea build a cultural basis for a unified, noncommunist society? How did the work of Sima Tan, Lord Grand Astrologer to the Han court in second-century China and a key figure in early Daoism, support unified state power at the time, yet lay the groundwork for political division a century later—and do it through a rather abstract religious philosophy? Finally, how did development projects in Sri Lanka connect state and village, regime after regime, for over a century?

Yet, there are major differences among the articles. Not surprisingly, the two by anthropologists, Pieke and me, take a more bottom-up approach, describing how local people are affected by state power; the three by historians, Armstrong, Smith, and Trivedi, focus on how those in power or seeking power try to control local people.

Our shared message is that successful elites and states cannot simply exert dominance; they have to work at it and subtly convince people to conform to their goals. For their part, the people do not just conform; they find openings to do what they want, although the outcomes, which are never final, may not be what anyone intended.

Pieke's article describes the contemporary use of genealogies in northeastern Yunnan province. Among anthropologists trained in peasant studies in the 1970s, China is famous for its genealogies; when trying to get my Sri Lanka informants to remember back even past their parents, I admit that I have thought with absolute *longing* of those generations and generations of Chinese patrilineal descendants reputed to have been lovingly, clearly, and accurately recorded for posterity (and a few lucky anthropologists).

Although genealogical record keeping is a centuries-old Chinese practice, Pieke does not argue that there is an "unchanging cultural form" underlying present day activity in the villages, nor an "unchanging . . . national essence" at the center. Both shift over time, in response to each other and other factors, building always, as well, on what came before. This part of his argument is, I think, very much like the argument I make about the changing government and village practices in Sri Lanka.

Pieke distinguishes between the more modest genealogies of local descent groups and the new, great genealogies that bring the different local groups together by referring back to an ancient apical ancestor to whom all these different lineages can trace descent. He suggests that the former do, in fact, *continue* pre-1949 genealogical practices in order to serve the interests and purposes of a relatively small and localized group of agnates who want to exclude competitors from access to land and other resources. In contrast, the larger, great genealogies, although they may build on the old, great Qing genealogies of inclusion, are also "firmly rooted in contemporary historical research, writing, and publishing." Thus, he concludes that "the new genealogies constitute a new hybrid tradition," and similarities with the older great genealogies "have to be explained functionally or culturally, not historically."

If I understand this correctly, Pieke is saying that sometimes local *genealogists* perpetuate older traditions unchanged (for the local genealogies) and sometimes hybridize old and new (for the great genealogies). The difference seems to lie in the state's interests; representatives of the state ignore the first and sometimes seem to encourage the second because they think it might serve their purpose of nation building. Contemporary genealogies and genealogical practices become part of a modern discourse in which one can both belong to an exclusive clan and at the same time claim (or be claimed by others, including the state) to be part of a unified China—including all those Chinese rather inconveniently located in such places as Taiwan and Hong Kong. It is, he suggests, in line with the way that the Chinese state has shifted its focus from direct control to more "differentiated and negotiated processes of . . . state building."

This suggests to me that I should further examine what programs the Sri Lankan villagers adopt more or less unchanged—which may mean, when does the state allow (or when is it unable to prevent) modification and when does it not allow it, and why. At the same time, I wonder if Pieke might not want to reexamine the apparent perpetuation of older traditions; if the local genealogies really are unchanged by "historical research, writing, and publishing," would we not want to know why?

Both Pieke and I end by noting that things may not work out as intended. Pieke suggests that once having let the genealogical genie out of the bottle, the state cannot necessarily control its divisive tendencies, which eventually may work against its interests of unification. That is, local genealogical discourse may win out. My worry is the opposite. Walangaman freedom for economic maneuver is constrained by what is available, and much of that is encumbered with cultural baggage that promotes their ethnic group over others in Sri Lanka, indirectly contributing to the bloody tragedy of ethnic conflict. I worry that the ideology of the state may win.

In our considerations of local/state articulations, neither Pieke nor I make an argument that what we found could simply be called resistance. Pieke puts it beautifully when he writes that “[a]t different points in time, this unfolding [local] discourse [of genealogies] has met (confirmed, refuted, or merged with) efforts from the empire, the Republic, or the People’s Republic at state formation and later nation building.” My point is similar. I have argued that the people in Walangama have met the discourse and projects of development in different ways over time and have used them variously to confirm, refute, or simply become one with the emerging nation-state.

It is in that vein that I also see a connection with Trivedi’s article. She opens by explaining that leaders of the nationalist movement for home rule in India might not even have conceived of the nation as they did if they had not been themselves influenced by British colonial cartographic representations. They then turned around and employed a visual discourse to pass their new hybrid consciousness onto the masses and create a sense of a common nation where none had existed. She shows us how Indian-ness was woven whole cloth, so to speak, and communicated to a population that not only was spread out over a territory two-thirds the size of western Europe but also comprised practitioners of several different religions and speakers of some two dozen different languages. Trivedi makes it clear that the promotion of khadi was not simply a snub of British imports, as it often is portrayed, but part of a larger project of re-representing India to Indians, of creating Anderson’s “imagined community” in a novel fashion in a very challenging space.

I read Trivedi’s article first, and my immediate thought was that it paralleled Peter van der Veer’s description of contemporary Indian politicians who journey around India in quasi-pilgrimage style in order to evoke the national geography of sacred spaces to stake a political claim. Trivedi described how the nationalist leaders used visual imagery (the magic lantern pictures of different parts of India, the exhibitions that both represented a national space through displays from different parts of India while also walling off the exhibition as a nationalist space apart) to achieve a similar sort of geographic inscription. The nationalists, however, were trying to promulgate subcontinent inclusiveness by using symbols that crosscut ethnic and religious groups, while contemporary politicians seem to be putting similar methods to work in the name of exclusiveness, an India only for Hindus. *[Trivedi response: I certainly do not want to advance the idea that Gandhi’s swadeshi movement was entirely free from the communalist politics of nationalism. I would point out that the vast majority of my sources are from a period in which swadeshi proponents were allied with the Khilafat Movement and from a period before Gandhi defined “khadi” in such a way that the swadeshi movement effectively undermined (inadvertently) Muslim weavers who relied heavily upon cheaper mill-spun thread to make their cloth. I suspect that the early 1930s mark a significant shift in Gandhian politics of communal inclusion vis-à-vis swadeshi and that this shift coincides with the end of a “high point” for swadeshi politics within the Congress-led nationalist movement. Still, it is extremely significant that the kinds of communalist imagery that Christopher Pinney has explored in Camera Indica (1997) do not seem present in the propaganda of the swadeshi movement {e-mail, 18 January 2003}.]*

After I had read Pieke’s article, of course, this made even more sense. I was first struck by how impossible it would be to conceive of “great genealogies” in the Indian context; caste and its rooting in essential difference seem to make that impossible. Like the Chinese state using the double-edged sword of genealogies to help build a nation, the Indian nationalists, too, were taking risks when they employed what were often Hindu values—such as the purity and simplicity of unadorned dress—to forge a new country. At independence the Muslims did break away. I believe, however, that many of them were clothed in khadi when they did so! The “visual vocabulary of nationhood” was very potent against the British, but it did not operate in a vacuum and may have been heard by different constituencies in different ways.

Finally, like Pieke and me, Trivedi notes that using tradition is not the same as replicating it. The visual representations went against some aspects of Hindu culture: the stress on the need for women's active participation and the fact that spinning and weaving were caste-based activities, while National Spinners and Weavers wanted everyone to participate. Magic lantern shows, exhibitions, and mass-produced oleographs, however, conveyed these messages indirectly through visual images rather than direct confrontation.

This reminded me of the way the government of Sri Lanka uses images in their development propaganda: like the women lurking at the edge of the oleographs, perhaps representing India or perhaps women as such, the rural rice farmer seems always to be posed near a Buddhist temple, an equation of religion, farming, and nation, that leaves out not only Hindus and Muslims but also potters and others who do not farm. It is in that context that the potters have had to plan for their futures: stuck with pottery making as their best financial bet in the short run, they then invested some of their proceeds in building a Buddhist temple.

I was charmed by the article on Korea for a rather personal reason. Some time ago, as I prepared to show a 16-millimeter film to adult students in a summer Elderhostel course, a gentleman came forward to help me with the projector. Afterwards he explained that after World War II, he had been part of a group that created the prototype of that projector—portable and reliable—to show films in Korea. Because of Armstrong's article, I finally understand why. Armstrong's article describes a failure of nation building, a history of neglect followed by clumsy missteps. The projectors may have worked perfectly, but the films they were showing were apparently pretty awful.

In that sense, as Armstrong has described it, what happened in Korea seems the countercase to the other articles. The Americans held the country by force of arms, by direct dominance, not by the more subtle modes of hegemony. They appreciated the need for the latter if they were ever to be able to leave and not have Korea "fall" to the communists, but they clearly did not have a clue. On pretty much every cultural front, they bungled their attempts to enlist the support of the intelligentsia and other elites, and apparently they made almost no attempt to draw in the masses. The result was that many aspects of public life "soon split into left and right." It seems to me just that sort of holding together of parts in tension that the other articles are describing as the goal of nation building. The only discourse that the Americans succeeded in establishing was one in which communism and Americanism were totally split, driving those who might have occupied the middle zone onto one side or another. No wonder war broke out in Korea in 1950 and the country was divided.

Smith's article, too, seems to speak to the issue of governance, as he terms it. If I understand him, he is saying that the significance of Sima Tan was that he shifted the terms of political discourse. It had been associated with a chaos of competing philosophies, but he pulled together their philosophies—or his rendering of their philosophies, since Smith is saying he distorted them—as a "unified field" of knowledge that could be evaluated not so much in terms of truthfulness but in terms of its "usefulness in ruling the empire." A century later, however, other political philosophers looked back at what Sima Tan had done and took it apart, ignoring his unified field of knowledge and reasserting the presence of six different and competing modes of political thought. My sense is that Sima Tan might very well appreciate the use of great genealogies in China today, development programs in Sri Lanka, and magic lantern shows in India—and that he would find the bungling of the U.S. Army in Korea laughable.

I think the articles in this issue come together well around the issues of governance and its fragility. We may not read the same literature, but we all seem to have imbued a Gramscian sense that the dominance of an elite and the unity of the nation can never be taken for granted.

(Winslow, e-mail, 6 November 2002)

Kidder Smith begins his comment by suggesting that he had not expected to find the articles to be of “one stripe” but that he did. Although the first three commentators expressed the commonalities they saw in terms of connections between power and culture, Smith sees the articles as exploring and constituting mythologies, which he connects to other expressions of mythologizing. He uses the words of Winslow as a gloss on Roland Barthes.

Like Sima Tan, my subject/object of study, I think in wholes. In this instance, though, it has become downright embarrassing: I had *not* planned on seeing our five articles as of one stripe, yet I do. (Where is it, for example, that Jorge Luis Borges condemns us to imagining a singular author for the *Lao Tzu* and the *Thousand and One Nights*?)

My way in is through Armstrong’s characterization of the film *Nae Kobyang*, released during 1949 in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. He calls it “a remarkable encapsulation of the fundamental myths that would shape the DPRK’s image of itself for decades to come.” For more than anything I could now name, our five articles appear as the nature of myth—vast, momentary webbing of knowledge that catch and hold our social, political, and artistic life.

“Myth in life” goes off in rife dimensions. I would like to restrain it here to two, and then one (falling into the whole again). During the mid-1950s, Barthes wrote some two dozen glistening essays on toys, cars, wine, and soap powder, the most famous of which discerns a classical theatrical mode in professional wrestling. In 1957 these were published as *Mythologies*, his sharp denunciation of the mystifications perpetrated as bourgeois existence and a call to reverse their invisibility to themselves.

At that same time, Gary Snyder was writing a sequence of poems on logging, hunting, and shamanism, published in 1960 as *Myths and Texts*. His book begins:

The morning star is not a star
Two seedling fir, one died

Io, Io,

(p. 3)

And concludes, in excerpt,

The text

Sourdough Mountain called a fire in:
Up Thunder Creek, high on a ridge. . . .
Toward morning it rained.
We slept in mud and ashes,
Woke at dawn, the fire was out,
The sky was clear, we saw
The last glimmer of the morning star.

The myth

Fire up Thunder Creek and the mountain—troy’s burning!
The cloud mutters
The mountains are your mind . . .
Rain falls for centuries . . .
& the last wisp of smoke floats up . . .
“Buddha incense in an empty world” . . .
Licks the sun
The sun is but a morning star

(pp. 53–54)

These two mythologies, now half a century old, each speaking its own visionary politics, have possessed my reading of our five articles. I figure that as scholars we have pretty well come to terms with Barthes, that is, we are committed to make visible, in Winslow's words, "the inherent instability and persistent historicity of all societies, social forms, and identities." Snyder urges us farther, however, passing through historicity and identity to the morning star that is not a star. How might we approach that realm?

Well, myths are not only immense, but they are also local. Indeed, it is their particular function to be immediately both. [*Winslow response: I like this. Although I would have to insist that the myths change meaning in different context, I appreciate Smith's insistence on the power of the stories themselves to limit the meanings that are given to them (e-mail, 9 January 2003).*] Thus, writes Trivedi, Gandhian politics transformed khadi—rough, homespun cloth—"from an object of everyday life into a central symbol of nationalist ideas and political community." Similarly, Pieke shows how "[a] genealogy is both a statement of the unique position and achievements of a particular group of people and the unbreakable bond that this group has with that largest of agnatic groups: the entire Chinese race." I think we can also find both these aspects in the American cold war film propaganda that sought to show "'in each picture, in miniature, 140,000,000 people who *live* democracy in their daily action'" (Armstrong, quoting the vice president of the Motion Picture Association of America, 1948).

The word "immense" is larger even than the nation. It means that something cannot be measured. In my article, this is represented by Sima Tan's insistence on *xu*, "vacuity," as a core value of his Daojia, an empty core that is unerringly localized by its companion *yin*, "responsivity." For Snyder, one marker of immensity is the sun but another local deity is the earth smoke that licks it. More and bigger still: the sun is but a morning star, and the smoke only one Buddha manifestation.

Imaginary? Yes, and so, of course, is "the nation" or "the race," so, of course, is "democracy" and even "community," where we all live. As Trivedi states, "the key to this vision of the nation was a willingness to *imagine* [my emphasis] a larger community beyond the traditional local communities of one's personal experience." Both locality and immensity must be reimagined in their every invocation. In Winslow's words, "they are everyday and, most important, *ongoing* refashionings," by which she means that "the story I tell here has no end, but is, inevitably, a work in progress." It cannot be seen without a "longer view."

How long do we need? The whole universe is already right here, in our imagining, just as Pieke's genealogies connect "a local history of proliferation and spread to a claim of ultimate origins" and in the process "affirm the fact that they [all Chinese] are indeed ultimately from somewhere else." Thus, writing genealogies reverses "the path traveled by migrating ancestors" and "leads to locations . . . of hidden genealogical knowledge."

This is always political. As Winslow reminds us, "the fit was never smooth but always full of contradictions." Snyder again:

San Francisco 2x4s
were the woods around Seattle;
Someone killed and someone built, a house,
a forest, wrecked or raised. . . .

"Pines grasp the clouds with iron claws
like dragons rising from sleep"
250,000 board-feet a day
If both Cats keep working
& nobody gets hurt

(p. 4)

My vision, then, is to hear Barthes speaking from within Snyder's mythology. Perhaps Barthes already dreamed this himself—although, as a true myth, it may have remained invisible in him. In the concluding, metalinguistic essay of *Mythologies*, he wrote:

If I am a woodcutter and I am led to name the tree that I am felling, whatever the form of my sentence, I 'speak the tree,' I do not speak about it. . . . [B]etween the tree and myself, there is nothing but my labour, that is to say, an action. This is a political language. . . .

(p. 145)

I will leave the last word to the Chinese Zen tradition and their politics of experience:

What a miracle—
 {or, we might say, what a myth}
 —I cut wood, I draw water.

Local, immense, within, and without history and identity, that we might tread the path of restless ancestors to locations of hidden knowledge.

(Smith, e-mail, 31 October 2002)

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