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“Are you still Chinese?”

NEGOTIATIONS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN
THE YANG LIJUAN AFFAIR

JOSH STENBERG

In the spring of 2007, the Sinophone media world was captivated by the saga of Yang Lijuan, a twenty-eight-year-old Mainland Chinese woman whose adulation of Hong Kong superstar Andy Lau had reached extremes.¹ Extensively covered in print and on television, the story attained its greatest pitch and notoriety on the Sinophone Internet, featuring prominently in the news sections of Baidu, QQ, Sina, and all other major Internet portals.² Although Yang was not the first Chinese “star-chaser,” the affair is widely remembered because its tale ended, unthinkable, with the suicide of her father. The episode has become a touchstone for discussion of the moral responsibilities of media in the Chinese context, as well as the possible dangers of obsessive fan culture. When *China Daily*, a state publication introduced the case to its English-language readership, it summarized it as follows: “The most famous star-chaser, no doubt, was Yang Lijuan, whose desire to meet Lau in private led to one of the biggest—and saddest—melodramas in star-fan relationships, complete with her father’s suicide and her story becoming a cautionary tale about everything that’s wrong with relentless ‘star-chasing.’”³

The affair was characterized by the contrast between the two main actors. In mainstream Chinese media, a sentimental narrative was initially constructed around

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this unemployed, uneducated woman from a remote and underdeveloped region of the People's Republic of China (PRC).⁴ Neither young nor beautiful by media standards, she had developed an obsessive devotion for one of the Sinophone world's wealthiest, most iconic music and film stars. There was also a wild disproportion between the desired end—personal contact with Lau—and the means undertaken to achieve it, which included incurring debts, the sale of the family house, and finally her father's suicide. The death of Yang's father turned the affair from a human-interest item about an improbable dream into a sensationalist media free-for-all, feeding on a misfortune that was itself media generated. The case provoked finger pointing and soul searching about the relationship between media and celebrity in China. It also provoked extensive commentary in academic publications, as well as in the blogs of public intellectuals and pop-culture figures.

Although domestically the debate considered questions of China's moral fiber and media responsibilities, this essay is concerned with how definitions of "Chineseness" operated as a crucial point of contention for the Yangs, Lau, and the media. Yang Lijuan's pleas and demands for a one-on-one meeting with Lau, and those made by her parents on her behalf, were voiced in cultural and politically nationalistic terms. They were also decried, described, and responded to on the same grounds. Since the major actors in this affair shared vocabulary as well as presumptions of Chineseness, the texts of the Yang Lijuan affair show how the construction of fandom and celebrity in the Sinophone world involves negotiating a definition of Chineseness along political and cultural lines.

The Media Creation of Yang Lijuan

Yang Lijuan first came into the public eye in the pages of the *Lanzhou Morning Post* in March and April of 2006, a year before the affair's grim conclusion. With titles such as "I Will Marry No One If I Cannot Meet Andy Lau" and "A Loving Father Tearfully Petitions Andy Lau," a series of articles described how Yang's parents had sold their house and contracted debts in order to allow their daughter to chase this star.⁵

To see Lau in concert or attend fan events, Yang Lijuan had traveled six times to Beijing and three to Hong Kong. Her father, the retired schoolteacher Yang Qinji, had even attempted to sell one of his kidneys to raise money. Though this circumstance provided many of the early headlines, he was prevented from carrying out his plan, the procedure being illegal. The *Lanzhou Morning Post*, which openly espoused the daughter's efforts to "make her dream come true," continued coverage of the affair, trumpeting its success in engaging the nation's interest in the Yangs' story while highlighting "our paper's longstanding compassion and assistance of the underprivileged." Soon, superficially

sympathetic but often voyeuristic interest spread to outlets as major as *Dragon TV* and the *Southern Metropolis Daily*.⁶ Eventually, Beijing TV interviewed Yang and offered its support in arranging for a meeting with Lau (which never occurred).

Speaking to Chinese Central Television, Yang Lijuan identified herself as “different from ordinary star-chasers”; “besides being passionately in love and unwavering,” she said, “I have also sacrificed my own youth [for Lau].” Her father’s remarks on the same occasion were “If we can’t find the money for it, then my daughter won’t be able to go to Hong Kong. What if something were to happen to her for that reason? How could my wife and I live with that?”⁷ By that time, however, certain voices in the media were warning that the story was not newsworthy. They expressed concern that a mawkish narrative was being constructed that would only encourage or aggravate unreasonable star-chasers’ hopes, while setting an unhealthy example to other fans.

After a year, the media-enabled “story” came to a bad end. On March 25, 2007, Yang (whose trip had been sponsored by media) finally met Lau at a Hong Kong fan club event, but was unable to secure the one-on-one meeting she desired. The following day, her sixty-eight-year-old father drowned himself in Victoria Harbour, leaving a twelve-page suicide note addressed to Lau in which he angrily denounced the star for failing Lijuan. In this note, he demanded: “Are you still Chinese?”⁸

The immediate result of this conclusion was an intensification of the media frenzy, including items (not least in the central state media organs) such as “Is Andy Lau to be Blamed for the Decline and Demise of a Female Fan’s Family?” and “Yang Lijuan vs. Andy Lau: a Bloody Case Provoked by a ‘Pipe Dream.’” Media scholars Chen Lidan and Liu Ningjie record over thirty stories about the case that ran in Beijing and Guangzhou media alone between March 29 and April 6. When Yang Lijuan and her mother returned to Lanzhou, reports were that journalists from over fifty media outlets accompanied her, from “both shores” (Taiwan and Mainland China) and the “three territories” (Hong Kong, Macau, and Mainland China).

In the wake of Yang Qinji’s death, an investigative article appeared in the controversial Guangzhou-based *Southern Weekend*. This report focused on the Yangs’ native place of Agan, a severely depressed coal-mining village in Gansu, the population of which had decreased from 100,000 in the early 1990s to 20,000 in 2007.⁹ A police officer and documentary filmmaker remarked in an interview that it was “not at all strange” for Agan to “produce weirdos,” the town being in his opinion “fragile, sensitive, hopeless.” The article also described a complicated family situation, including implications of mental illness, to suggest what should have been obvious: there were graver underlying causes for Yang’s failure to go to school than single-minded devotion to Lau. This report in a relatively liberal forum drew explicit attention to the contrast between the industrial poverty of this area of rural northwestern China and the glamour

of the Hong Kong entertainment world that had produced constant tension in narratives regarding the Yang Lijuan affair. However, this sort of attention was not what Yang desired: in 2008, she sought damages against the newspaper. In September 2009, the Guangzhou Intermediate People's Court dismissed her appeal, ruling that because she and her parents had become "voluntary public figures," they were ineligible to claim damages.¹⁰

Early academic comment about the Yang Lijuan affair focused on the media's role in exacerbating, participating in, inflating, inventing, and enabling her behavior. One media studies article calls it "a classic example of 'a fake media event' designed for financial profit," heedless of moral concerns; while another decries the "one-sided" and "vicious attacks" perpetrated via the Internet on Yang Lijuan and her family, and cites the attacks as evidence of the "irrationality of internet discourse." Commenting even more darkly, media studies professor Chen Weixing writes that the case shows how information now constitutes only "an index of hype," meaning that "information itself is unimportant, what is important is for information as a kind of loan, which is no longer subjected to a salutary exchange with people's common sense." His article ended sourly: "Entertainment is dead. What we face now is entertainment terrorism." Sinophone sociologists used the case to illustrate the "results of the rupture of social bonds" in China but also to indict the media for its role as "participants" and "planners" of the event. More lurid verbiage in the media blogosphere included accusations that the media had "murdered" Yang Qinji (e.g., Zhang J.), as well as several self-accusing articles that—though deploring the role of the media—hardly deflected attention from this cause célèbre.¹¹

In commentary on the case, two categories were often invoked, both mainstays of Chinese entertainment news: the "star-chaser" and the "Internet celebrity." Both operated in this discourse as symptoms of declining moral standards.

"Star-chasing" stories are a staple of Sinophone news, up to and including reports of suicide attempts. It is worth noting that the most common pattern is of Mainland fan and *Gangtai* (Hong Kong or Taiwan) superstar, so that the "star-chasing" phenomenon frequently has undertones of socioeconomic envy, admiration, or emulation.¹² Yang Lijuan thus did not come to such wide attention because she represented a departure from the rule, but because she instantiated the transgression committed by star-chasers. Her failure to finish school, obtain gainful employment, marry, or produce an heir were all blamed on her star-chasing, and were interpreted as an offense against the perceived dictates of filial piety as a traditional Chinese social norm. As an extreme example, she embodied what was troubling about the phenomenon in general.

On the face of it, Yang Lijuan would not seem to qualify as an Internet celebrity, since her initial rise to prominence showed little trace of the self-promotion that had caused the notoriety of such Internet celebrities as Furong Jiejie, a Shanghai

woman who became famous through her blog, which was devoted to her outrageous narcissism. However, the identity of an “Internet celebrity” is bound up not only in the actions of the person but also in what I. D. Roberts identifies (writing about Furong Jiejie) as the “feelings of amusement and derision generated by [their] postings among the growing ranks of China’s internet-literate,” despite being “widely considered by [their] readers to lack both beauty and talent.” For this reason, as a plain unmarried girl without obvious prospects, yet holding high romantic ambitions, Yang Lijuan coded for many participants in Sinophone media as an exemplar of a transgressive, marginal figure, whose distorted self-image could be enjoyed as online entertainment, dissociated from any human reality or consequences. Indeed, Zhu Dake identifies Furong Jiejie and Yang Lijuan as “mirror images,” with, in his view, the reflection consisting in Yang Lijuan’s adoration of Lau as the transposition of narcissism onto an external object.¹³

Articles that placed Yang Lijuan in both categories, “star-chaser” and “Internet celebrity,” were thus investing her with transgressive, unfilial characteristics—she was newsworthy because of her deviance. She was depicted as an example of a child whose selfishness was destroying a family, while she failed to fulfill the family obligations of study, work, marriage, and parenthood. Especially in initial reports, there was certainly an admixture of concern and pity, as well as admiration, for the senior Yangs’ parental sacrifice, but the reception of reports on Yang Lijuan in the public at large was on balance increasingly and finally overwhelmingly hostile toward her. She was portrayed as a person who rose to prominence through abnormal behavior, social outrageousness, and egregious transgression of the cultural value of filial piety. Hers is a case of fandom brought to prominence as deviant, exacerbated by the media spotlight, and then condemned for its deviance.

Andy Lau: Emblem of Chineseness

In order to understand the nature of Yang Lijuan’s expectations and of her father’s accusations against Andy Lau, as well as the way in which Mainland media reported the affair, it is necessary to briefly discuss Lau’s image, particularly its nationalist aspect. Since the mid-1990s, Lau has been presented as an “icon of Chineseness” whose celebrity symbolizes Hong Kong’s political loyalty to the PRC. The evolution of his image “illustrates how the entertainment industry in Hong Kong has managed to accommodate the politically-oriented popular culture in China.”¹⁴ What became evident during the Yang Lijuan affair was that Lau’s “Chineseness” encoded for audiences not only the political loyalty of Hong Kong, but also a variety of values perceived to be associated with traditional Chinese culture.

Lau is one of the Sinophone world's major pop and movie stars, having risen to prominence in the late 1980s in Hong Kong, first as a television idol and then as a star of cinema and popular music. During the 1990s, his fame spread well beyond Hong Kong. In 1995, a Mainland newspaper found that although only 30 percent in a class of fourth-graders could identify Mao Zedong, and only one could sing the national anthem, all recognized Lau.¹⁵ Classed in the public mind as one of the "Four Heavenly Kings of Cantopop," Lau has enjoyed an extremely successful career that has flourished in all Sinophone territories, including overseas, as well as to a lesser extent in other Asian markets.

One thing setting Lau's image apart is that he developed a specific political dimension in Sinophone popular culture at the time when the Hong Kong entertainment world was negotiating its new relationship to Mainland China after the Hong Kong handover. Although positive engagement with Chinese authority was and is commonly practiced by Hong Kong entertainment figures, perhaps no other celebrity has been more iconic of Hong Kong's return to China, and representative of the special administrative region's loyalty to "Chineseness," than Lau.¹⁶ A key appearance in this capacity was Lau's performance of a song called "Chinese People" during the 1997 handover ceremonies. The performance featured "a dragon dance and a battery of drummers from rural China" as the backdrop for lyrics that drew attention to phenotypical characteristics ("[our] yellow skin and black eyes") supposed to nurture unity: "We'll let the world know that we're all Chinese." Equally significant, Lau appeared in the 1998 CCTV Chinese New Year's Gala, the first postreunification installment of a program that then, as now, is one of the world's most viewed; it is also an annual show constructed by the PRC government as a "national reunion" to "induce an instant sense of national belonging." On that occasion, Lau performed a song, "Da Zhongguo," which can be translated into English as "Great" or "Greater China," alongside stars from the Mainland and Taiwan, thereby symbolically representing the unity of all territories claimed by the PRC. They sang together in Mandarin, "We all have a home / Its name is China."¹⁷ Lau's patriotic image has been maintained in recent years. For instance, a year after the Yang Lijuan affair, he sang at the Closing Ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, having already released a Chinese New Year's song that included more phenotyping, with Lau's wish for the New Year being China's success at the Games: "On the stage of the world / [may Chinese athletes] run faster than those blacks."¹⁸

This nationalism operates even as Lau's attraction for the Mainland audience is bound up inextricably with Hong Kong's "foreign" or "Western" mystique, and while the systems of musical production and revenue—Lau's albums have come out on EMI and BMG—are fully integrated into the global entertainment system. Particularly in parts of China as impoverished as Yang Lijuan's hometown, where the glamour of Hong Kong's entertainment world contrasts absolutely with daily

reality, Mainland viewers have been attracted by the performance of a wealthy, handsome, unmarried (until 2008), foreign-language-speaking star who so often and so overtly pledges loyalty to their ethnos and state. Cultural anthropologist Vanessa Fong found in 2004 that the song “Chinese People” figured prominently for certain Mainland teenagers in “the idiom of filial devotion, which they found more convincing than state-sponsored discourses that emphasised China’s admirability” and which they also saw as “analogous to their unconditional loyalty to their parents.” The perception of Lau as devoted to Confucian ideals resulted in his being awarded a special prize in 2007 for “great filial piety” by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Chinese Filial Committee, and the Chinese Filial Network. Two years later, *China Daily* reported that he had “performed funeral rites, as befits a son-in-law,” for his girlfriend’s father, and on his blog, Lau respectfully called the man an “ancestor.”¹⁹ This report shows not only how Lau publicly conforms to expectations of filial piety, but also the official media’s approval thereof. Clearly, for the Mainland consumer, Lau’s image holds in place these distinct “Chinese” qualities—on the one hand, an affirmation of Hong Kong’s (and its entertainment industry’s) commitment and belonging to China—and on the other hand, an appropriation of cultural Chineseness as exemplified by statements and performances of filial piety. Thus, in Lau’s public persona, Chineseness as expressed in political, racial, and allegedly traditional moral terms is deployed to underpin a political message of unity.

All of this helps explain why, when Yang Lijuan’s obsession was first reported, Lau (or his team) replied in the terms of “Confucian” morality. Lau stated through his manager that he considered Yang’s behavior “wrong, abnormal, unhealthy, and unfilial.” As reporting on Yang Lijuan continued, Lau made repeated statements to the effect that he “hated . . . unfilial people who are selfish and show little respect and concern for their parents,” adding “I will not care [about] the fans who hope to see me through unhealthy means.”²⁰ Indictments of Yang’s “unfiliality”—which overlap significantly with the impieties Lau charged her with—came to represent in the media and blogosphere the authoritative description of her supposed faults. Criticisms included the ways in which her actions had caused her parents to sell their house and go into debt, and the fact that she was not earning money to support her parents.

The Suicide Note

Just as Lau framed his refusal to meet Yang Lijuan by invoking the concept of filial piety, so too did her father’s demands on Lau reflect concepts that appealed to constructions of traditional Chinese morality. Both parties, then, as mediated by news reports and commentaries, recognized concepts of traditional virtue as

a relevant terminology in the construction of interaction between fans and stars. Filiality, a key contested term in this affair, constituted the central element of Lau's refusal to meet Yang Lijuan. Her father ultimately responded to the refusal with his suicide, what he called an act of "resistance," in a letter to Lau detailing ways in which the Hong Kong star offended against "Chineseness." Although it is uncomfortable to approach a suicide note academically, in this case it is defensible not least because Yang Qinji clearly intended his letter for publication. Further, his family members immediately provided the letter to the media. Finally, it would be skewed to discuss the terms of discourse that framed the Yang Lijuan affair without taking into consideration a document that sets forth the self-justification of one of its main actors. The letter remains easily available throughout the Internet, including on Yahoo, NetEase (163.com), and other sites.²¹

Yang Qinji's letter is a lucid firsthand account of what motivated his actions, up to and including his suicide. It details the expectations and responsibilities he placed on Lau as an object of adulation, and expresses no regrets or doubts about his own behavior. The text gives the impression of being carefully considered. Subsequent reports indicated it had been written in anticipation, before it was clear that Lau would not grant Yang Lijuan a meeting. Apparently, too, Lijuan's mother had known of his plan to commit suicide, but had not believed he would carry it out.²² The evidence supports a conclusion that Yang Qinji's suicide was premeditated and (at the very least) consistent with his desire to capture media attention. The letter itself states that Yang intended it as a public explanation of his act. It explicitly demands, too, that his death motivate Lau to meet Yang Lijuan on her terms.

Articulate and forceful, Yang tried to shame Lau from related nationalist perspectives: political and cultural patriotism, Buddhism, social responsibility, Confucian values. His letter explains that he "dies as a form of resistance," and avows, "You, Andy Lau, have driven me to my death." Particularly virulent are his attacks on Lau as a patriotic singer, asking him how he can still perform in the Mainland, or sing "Da Zhongguo." The letter links Lau's attitude to a perceived Hong Kong arrogance that, in the context of Sinophone cultural politics, codes as a remnant from colonial days. In this rendering, Yang Lijuan has been ignored not only as an insignificant fan, but specifically as a Mainland fan—beneath Lau's attention. Her father's letter includes an appeal to the government to redress the wrong Lau has done him and his daughter. In his view, the matter constituted grounds for official intervention. The implication is that the Hong Kong government should ensure fair treatment of Mainlanders by Hong Kong celebrities such as Andy Lau.

The letter adduces these reasons why Lau should meet Yang Lijuan:

1. Because he presents himself as a patriot, he owes it to (Mainland) Chinese fans and media;
2. Yang Lijuan has offered him her youth;

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3. he has created pressure on Yang Lijuan by criticizing her in the media for filial impiety;
4. he should do so to avoid the opprobrium of posterity;
5. he should do so to conform to Lau's claims of Buddhist compassion;²³
6. he should do so to avoid karmic retribution;
7. he should do so because Yang Qinji is paying for this meeting with his life;
8. he should do so because Lau is only an actor.

Of these elements of reproach, the first can be identified as having an overtly geopolitical element, and is clearly connected to Lau's image as an emblem of the handover. The remaining seven appropriate a variety of supposedly traditional terms or concepts.²⁴ For instance, the second and third are functions of female honor and chastity, while the fourth is concerned with male honor and family name, concepts that resonate with popular understandings of Confucianism. This element of reproach explains Yang's reference to government intervention, since in traditional Confucian thought, correct government is the agent of a moral universe, beholden to a standard of morality and justice that ultimately derives from a correct and unchanging natural order. The fifth and sixth deploy Buddhism as another aspect of traditional Chinese morality embraced by Lau. The seventh element of Yang's reproach fits a pattern of committing suicide to express resistance, confer shame, or obtain redress that can be found throughout Chinese history and literature. The last reflects contempt for actors. By using the antiquated term *xizi* to make this point, Yang reminds (largely online) readers of his letter that the acting profession traditionally has been among society's lowest ranks in China.²⁵

Behind these assumptions lies Yang Qinji's conception, rooted in a version of traditional Chinese philosophy, of a moral universe. In Chinese history, suicide has been used as "a moral protest, and as a strategy for dealing with exploitative and oppressive social relations."²⁶ Yang writes as if righteous behavior, including performing the ultimate sacrifice for one's child, is defensible and noble. He writes, too, as if his behavior should produce the contrite acquiescence of the offending figure. The idea that Yang Lijuan had kept herself chaste for Lau is similarly grounded in a conception that sacrifices can be made unilaterally and then ought to be redeemable from their (unknowing) object. Since, willing or no, Lau in some way possesses Yang Lijuan's chastity (i.e., exerts power over her body), the least he could do is offer his physical presence in a one-on-one meeting.

The letter thus constantly reminds the reader of the demands of traditional moral teachings. A typical sentence reads: "You are the criminal, unfilial one, your parents didn't bring you up properly, you neither respect the old nor cherish the young, otherwise you wouldn't say such things, [so you tell me] who is the slanderer, who is the one who has taken leave of his senses?" The case is represented as a matter for official intervention, with reference to officials

who either “didn’t care” about the Yang Lijuan affair or who, on the other hand, “consoled” or “supported” the Yang family. Yang Lijuan’s desire to meet Lau is framed as a righteous cause and the meeting a privilege she has earned by her self-sacrifice. The letter concludes:

I entreat the Hong Kong government to speak on our behalf, to intervene for us, and make Andy Lau respond to us. I profoundly salute those in Hong Kong who showed us sympathy, understanding, help and support, [and] my spirit in heaven will thank them.

I haven’t lived for nothing. I have been frank and forthright in my actions. I am bold enough to do what I say, farewell forever!”

Yang Qinji
March 23, 2007

The full text of the letter on QQ elicited over 8,000 comments. In the wake of Yang Qinji’s suicide, contrary to both previous and later general online sentiment, most postings on the letter itself accepted Yang’s logic and expressed anger at Lau’s behavior, usually with reference to Chinese identity and using the state rhetoric of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). One posting reads: “Would it have been so hard to meet her before all this happened? Now let’s hear you call for a humane society! Or a harmonious society? Isn’t it the responsibility of every Chinese person? And will you, Andy Lau, still lip-sync to ‘Chinese People?’” Another posting reads: “Andy Lau: besides singing some songs and abiding by the laws, you ought also to understand the traditional morality, customs and habits, etc., of our nation [*minzu*], or else you’re not good enough to call yourself a Chinese man. . . . [T]he heavens have eyes, and all deeds will be duly repaid, the whole world is watching you.” However, even in response to the text of the suicide letter, a smaller number of posts—perhaps one-third—continued to reflect anger at or derision of the Yangs for causing China to lose face, or by repeating Lau’s accusation of Yang Lijuan’s unfiliality. These discourses did not disappear after Yang Qinji’s suicide. Even afterward, Yang Lijuan phrased her continuing demand-cum-self-defense in these terms: “[I wanted] to meet Andy Lau and tell him I am not an unfilial daughter.”²⁷

Reactions and Critiques: Zhu Dake, Song Zude, and Ma Busheng

A few weeks after Yang Qinji’s death, academic cultural critic Zhu Dake—known for his pithy commentary on film and literature as well as social affairs—devoted

an article to the affair entitled, “Thoughts on Yang Lijuan: Report on the Pathology of the Idol Industry.” His critique concerns what he calls “a classic case of idol worship. This is an era,” he writes,

in which capital is manipulated by entertainment, [as] idols and fans thirst for, necessitate, gush about and caress one another, to a point of intense mutual love. This idolized entertainment system is the ideology which governs youth sub-culture. Its enormous power is expressed not only in the deafening noise of a live performance, but has infiltrated ordinary families, and altered people’s basic way of life.²⁸

For Zhu, the Yang Lijuan affair illuminates the “harsh laws of idol economics,” which presume that consumption on the part of fans must be repaid in the idol’s love for his fans. In his view, Yang and her family have simply carried this principle to extremes, having “paid for” the private interview with Lau by sacrificing Yang Lijuan’s youth. According to Zhu, Lau was not willing to make the commensurate payment for her sacrifice, with the result that he would instead “pay for it” in the moral aspersions cast on him. Zhu, also investing the discourse with vocabulary borrowed from classical China’s moral concepts, suggests with dark humor that given Yang’s “chastity,” a chastity arch (*paifang*) should be erected to her. The use of this image of the *paifang*, a structure erected in late Imperial China to honor chaste widows—often suicides—ironically and incongruously inserts Yang’s behavior in the Confucian tradition of valorizing chastity as the defining female virtue. This connection may help explain the Yang family’s expectations in the case, bearing in mind that some of the first articles on Yang included her vow never to marry anyone without first having met Lau.

If Zhu’s comments illustrate the way in which the events were invested with the discourse of traditional morality, two other figures—Ma Busheng and Song Zude—highlight in different ways the geopolitical expectations at work in the relationship between a poor Mainland fan and a Hong Kong superstar.

After the death of Yang Lijuan’s father, reports about her continued to focus on her morality, with particular reference to two points. One was her failure (or financial inability) to bring her father’s body back to their hometown, another perceived offense against filiality. The other was her reported demand for compensation from Lau. This latter point was taken up by Ma Busheng, a Lanzhou writer known for fiction and essays. Soon after Yang Qinqi’s death, Ma wrote two Chinese-language blog essays about the affair in which he invoked his status as a fellow Lanzhou resident in to

interrogate Yang Lijuan. In the second, “Yang Lijuan, Don’t Make Any More Trouble,” he queries the report that she had demanded compensation from Lau. “Yang Lijuan,” he writes,

as your fellow townsman, I want to ask you: What gives you the right? The water of the Yellow River at Lanzhou may be turbid for most of the year, but the faces and clothing of Lanzhou people are clean; the hills to the north and south of Lanzhou may be covered in soil, and when it is windy, the dust may fly, but Lanzhou’s people’s hearts are clean; Lanzhou people may not be affluent, but it isn’t as though they’ve never seen the people’s currency [the RMB]. Now, I really think that I’ve lost face, I really think that her behavior is connected to Lanzhou people, to Gansu people, to Mainland people. What kind of system it is that produces people like Yang Lijuan is something I really couldn’t explain just now. But I am sure that Yang Lijuan is not the last of this lot, she is only the vanguard, the scout.

Ma’s comments sum up the frustration and embarrassment many Mainland netizens and bloggers felt during the Yang Lijuan affair. To an important degree, the Yang family’s actions “read” to young Mainlanders as something which, as Ma writes, demonstrated a problem in the Mainland fan system and was a harbinger of things to come. Ma, then, was surely trying to protect Lanzhou in particular, and China in general, from ridicule in the rest of the Sinophone world. Joining him were people who made harassing phone calls to Yang and her mother as well as to Lau; vicious comments about all the principal actors in the affair were also common.²⁹ If Lau had become Hong Kong entertainment’s ambassador to the Mainland market, Mainland netizens were concerned that the Yangs had become the representative image of the Mainland market for Hong Kong.

Typical of an aggressive vein of criticism online were the remarks of Song Zude, one of China’s most prominent entertainment bloggers, as well as remarks posted in response to Yang Lijuan’s (unsuccessful) attempt to sue Song for defamation. Online discourse being much more freewheeling than the commentaries of the official media, Internet criticism of Yang Lijuan was often merciless. Song pilloried her as “crazy,” “garbage,” and “shit,” and wished her a place in front of a “firing squad.” More tellingly, he referred to her as a “sinner of Mainland China.” A Mainlander himself, Song objected to her behavior on the grounds that it embarrassed Mainlanders in front of other members of the

“Sinosphere.” In another online posting, written by Song in response to Yang’s defamation suit against him, this claim is underwritten by both political and cultural nationalism: China’s most famous star-chaser is represented as a person who “chose to subvert the morals and values of socialism and put entertainment above all else.” “This is against the ‘Eight Glories, Eight Shames,’” he writes. “This is disloyal to the nation. For the sake of her own star-chasing dream, she drove her father to death. This shows a lack of filial piety.”³⁰

These criticisms cover a great deal of ground. The interaction of political nationalism with the perception of a shared inherited moral system (“Chineseness”) features throughout the texts of the affair, from Zhu’s caustic assessment of the entertainment industry, to Ma’s defense of Lanzhou and Song’s conflation of official socialism, filial piety, and patriotism.

Conclusions

The Yang Lijuan affair remains notorious; while writing this paper in Nanjing in 2012, I found its basic facts remembered by everyone I encountered, across class and age. Five years after events, the affair remains a touchstone for discussions of the morbid aspects of “star-chasing” in China.³¹ In response to the affair, the media produced numerous stories encouraging “healthy star-chasing,” though given that the media simultaneously creates, defines and condemns star-chasing, it is permissible to doubt the sincerity of some of these calls. In fact, the whole dynamic is essentially media driven, as shown by the way in which media reports successively produced, discovered, abetted, aggravated, decried, ridiculed, and mourned the behavior of the Yang family—and then sold advice on how not to be a “bad” star-chaser.

In the Sinophone world, the entertainment industry employs discourses of morality in order to define Chineseness. Social psychologists at Singaporean and American universities have demonstrated that a cultural representative’s levels of approval are linked to whether s/he behaves in a manner consistent with the culture’s core values. A team of social psychologists from twenty-one Sinophone universities have showed that “people dislike a scandalous figure less when he or she remains committed to the culture’s moral values, despite his or her scandalous behaviours.”³² Public subscription to a value such as filial piety, therefore, has provided Lau with greater leeway from his fan base. His criticism of Yang Lijuan in the same terms of morality deflected the damage to his brand he might have incurred if he were perceived as unfilial, disloyal, or contemptuous of Mainland fans and consequently un-Chinese. Criticism of Lijuan’s parents, muted by their sacrifice, dwindled to almost nothing once her father had committed suicide.

Situating the Yang Lijuan affair in the broader context of fandom in the Sinophone world demonstrates how the entertainment world (including fans) engages in negotiations of what defines Chineseness. That negotiation has an inherently geopolitical dimension, as Yang Qinji's letter shows. At times, singers from the Mainland, Taiwan, and Hong Kong have encountered criticism, suppression, or banning by the PRC government. If in the 1980s the state exercised "dictatorial authority, which chose to control popular music by means of direct bans and censorship," it has evolved into "an active agent, through various strategies, managing and producing a kind of popular music that can be conducive to, and be resonant with, the national ideologies." At the same time, liberalization of the media, with its attendant wide celebrity reporting, has made the personal lives of celebrities more subject to U.S.-style sensationalist attention.³³ There is thus wider exposure of celebrities to fandom, as well as more media attention directed at (and creating) relations between fans and stars.

The nationalistic element of Sinophone stardom, particularly pronounced in the case of Andy Lau, produces constant negotiation about how national identity should be defined and enacted. Chineseness, like any ethnic and national identity, is an evolving concept that negotiates its definition through many forms of expression, including pop culture, Internet culture, and news media. Hong Kong, as a postcolonial city with a distinctive history and linguistic environment, is famously ambivalent about its Chineseness. Discussing Hong Kong music videos, including one by Lau, media scholars Chow Yiu Fai and Jeroen de Kloet conclude that "China imaginable is never *fait accompli*; rather, it is a dynamic, power-ridden and therefore unstable project." The Hong Kong entertainment world is constantly "demonstrat[ing] a paradoxical act of evoking and undermining Chineseness,"³⁴ since to attract Mainland audiences it must both integrate itself into a narrative of Chinese patriotism and capitalize on its own lingering exotic attraction.

In the first English-language volume devoted to China's celebrity culture, Sinologists Louise Edwards and Elaine Jeffreys note that because "China's celebrity culture is marked by the influence of the Party-state and a fusion of culturally embedded and socialist values," its expression is "embedded within a CCP-led nationalist project that encourages public pronouncements of unabashed patriotism, irrespective of whether such statements are made genuinely, ironically or with a pragmatic eye on sales."³⁵ It is thus natural that Lau's performance of Chineseness is liable to be interpreted by Mainland fans as containing qualities and responsibilities of both modern patriotic and Confucian morality. Lau, with his overt performance of loyalty, allows fans—some of whom live in extreme poverty and have not benefited from China's economic rise—to appropriate the glamorous aspects of attachment to place, identifying with what Cornel Sandvoss calls *Heimat*: an idea redolent of the

“comfort and sense of belonging it offers while still positioning the self in its collective context.” Part of the “Chinese” Heimat as defined by celebrity culture is a “moral economy of virtue” emphasizing “attributes such as public propriety, group orientation, academic achievement, resilience and thrift.”³⁶

In this case, the assumptions inscribed in this Heimat include a moral “payment” (to use Zhu Dake’s terminology) to be made in return for the sacrifice of “chastity” of an extreme fan. Another assumption, however, is that a Hong Kong singer owes extended personal interaction to his Mainland fans by dint of his avowed patriotism. In this affair, the Yangs and Lau could not successfully negotiate interaction that was both “moral” and “Chinese,” which led to Yang Qinji’s attempt to instrumentalize use his suicide in order to compel acquiescence to his wishes, if necessary through government channels.

In the long-term, Lau’s career has not been severely affected by the affair. However, the sequence of events demonstrates considerable discrepancy in pop culture negotiations of what constitutes Chineseness, even when the terms of the discourse are to a large extent shared. Chinese media figures who do not conform to fan expectations risk being suspected of the grave offenses of unpatriotic behavior, immorality, or unfiliality. In short, they might be confronted with the question Yang Qinji asked Lau in his letter, “Are you still Chinese?”

NOTES

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1. The term *Sinophone*, built on the analogy to Anglophone or Francophone, has in its brief history been used to perform a variety of different functions. I use it here to group Chinese-language media, since the term *Chinese* has national, political, and ethnic implications. The Sinophone media world thus includes Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau, where the Chinese language is the dominant expression, as well as a diaspora in which various media serve Chinese linguistic communities, even in places where Chinese is not the principal language.
2. All three of these are Chinese Internet giants, and—like Yahoo or Google—none are primarily news providers. However, as the portals for most Mainland Internet users—and through their searching, archiving, blogging, question-answering or encyclopedic features—these are the main proximal sources of news for Mainlanders on the Chinese Internet. In addition, with the increasing domination of the Internet as a source of news, they are more and more the main proximal sources of news in the Sinophone world in general (they rate first, second, and fourth respectively at the time of writing, according to Alexa’s ranking of Chinese sites that use simplified characters; only the shopping site Taobao sits in between); worldwide, they rate fifth, ninth, and sixteenth (<http://www.alexa.com>, accessed February 1, 2013).

3. Zhou, Raymond, "Shadow Play in Stardom," *China Daily*, August 28, 2009, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2009-08/28/content_9066271.html. "Star-chasing" is a twenty-year-old Sinophone phrase coined to describe the activities of the celebrity obsessed. The English rendering is a calque (a loan translation) of the two elements *zhui* "to chase" and *xing* "star" that has been adopted by English-language Chinese media publications such as *Xinhua's English News* and *China Daily*. This term seems to bridge a conceptual space between what is thought of as "normal" fandom and outright celebrity stalking, for which there is no obvious Chinese equivalent.
4. Gansu, located in the Northwest, is one of China's poorest and least-populated provinces; its capital, Lanzhou, is located over 1,800 kilometers from Hong Kong, and 1,100 kilometers from Beijing. The Yangs were from an especially depressed region of Lanzhou.
5. Chen Lidan and Liu Ningjie, "Yi zhuang dianxing de 'chuanmei' jia shijian"—lun 'Yang Lijuan zhuixing shijian' baodao zhong meiti de daode zeren" [A classic example of a fake "media" event—on the moral responsibility of the media in the "Yang Lijuan star-chasing affair"], *Xinwen jie* 2 (2007): 3–6. Except where otherwise indicated, all translations in this article are my own. The articles cited in the summary of the development of the case are the work of Mainland media studies scholars and journalists. My understanding of the affair is also informed by extant media reports on the Yang Lijuan affair as well as conversations with friends and scholars, mostly in Nanjing, during and after the events.
6. Chen and Liu, "Yi zhuang dianxing de 'chuanmei' jia shijian," 4–5; Zhang Jian, "Meiti shi xiongshou ma? Xinwen xuezhe dianping Yang Lijuan shijian zhong meiti de zuowei" [Is media the murderer? Media researchers comment on the actions of the media in the Yang Lijuan affair], *Nanfang zhoumo* (*Southern Weekly*), May 9, 2007, <http://www.infzm.com/content/9439>.
7. "Fu mai shen chouqian yuan nüer meng—Liu Dehua huyu gemi wu fangxiao" [Father [attempts to] sell kidney to raise money to make his daughter's dream come true—Andy Lau urges fans not to follow his example], orig. in *Jinyang wang* [Golden sheep web], *Yangcheng Wanbao* [Guangzhou evening News], now available at *Renmin wang*, April 27, 2007, <http://ent.people.com.cn/GB/4238566.html>.
8. The *NetEase* page cited at the conclusion of this essay includes pictures of all twelve pages of the original letter. Yang Qinji, "Yang Lijuan fuqin yishu quanwen" [The complete text of Yang Lijuan's Father's suicide letter], *NetEase*, April 26, 2007, <http://ent.163.com/07/0328/20/3AMUF7VQ00031H2L.html>.
9. Roland Soong's website EastSouthWestNorth (www.zonaeuropa.com), which translates articles from the Chinese media and is widely used by foreign correspondents, renders the name of the town as Egan, rather than Agan, in its translation of the *Southern Weekend* article mentioned here. Both are possible transliterations of the characters, but "a" is the more usual expression of this character. In other English sources which mention the town, largely in relation to the coal industry, "Agan" is usual. Yuan Lei, "Ni bu hui dongde wo de shangbei—Yang Lijuan shijian guancha" [You could never grasp my sorrow—Observations on the Yang Lijuan affair], *Nanfang zhoumo*, April 11, 2007, <http://www.infzm.com/content/1602>.

10. Xue, Hong, "Privacy and Personal Data Protection in China: An Update for the Year End 2009," *Computer Law and Security Review* 26, no. 3 (2010): 285–86.
11. Chen and Liu, Yi zhuang dianxing de 'chuanmei' jia shijian'," 3–5; Fan Yaping, "Yang Lijuan shijian yu wangluo yulun de fei lixing" [The Yang Lijuan affair and the irrationality of Internet], *Dangdai chuanbo* 5 (2007): 32; Chen Weixing, "Yang Lijuan shijian, xinwen cehua zouhuo-rumo" [In the Yang Lijuan affair, news planning was demon-possessed], *Xinkuai bao*, April 11, 2007, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/pl/2007-04-11/094412751858.shtml>; Huang Zan and Xu Chunxia, "Cong 'Yang Lijuan shijian' kan yuegui xingwei de shehui kongzhi" [Examining the social control of deviant behavior in the 'Yang Lijuan affair'"], *Zhongguo qingnian yanjiu* 10 (2007): 65, 67; Zhang J., "Meiti shi xiongshou ma?"
12. Gangtai, a contraction of the Mandarin word for Hong Kong (Xianggang) and for Taiwan (Taiwan), has for over thirty years been a category in the Sinophone world. As Thomas B. Gold notes, popular music and film in the Sinophone world was once centered around Gangtai ("Go with Your Feelings: Hong Kong and Taiwan Popular Culture in Greater China," *China Quarterly* 136 [1993]: 907), though this is increasingly less true.
13. I. D. Roberts, "China's Internet Celebrity: Furong Jiejie," *Celebrity in China*, ed. Louise Edwards and Elaine Jeffreys (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 217–36; Zhu Dake, "Fansi Yang Lijuan shijian: ouxiang gongye de bingli baogao" [Thoughts on Yang Lijuan: report on the pathology of the idol industry], *Zhu Dake Caixin Blog*, April 16, 2007, <http://zhudake.blog.caixin.com/archives/28714>.
14. Anthony Y. H. Fung, "Marketing Popular Culture in China: Andy Lau as a Pan-Chinese Icon," *Chinese Media, Global Contexts*, ed. Chin-Chuan Lee (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 252.
15. Survey cited in Arthur Waldron, "China's New Remembering of World War II: The Case of Zhang Zizhong," *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 4 (1996): 976; Fung, "Marketing Popular Culture in China," 256–63.
16. The Chinese term, *huigui*, having different connotations from "handover," could be most closely translated as the "return" or "repatriation" of Hong Kong (official English-language PRC media use these two terms); Fung "Marketing Popular Culture in China," 252. Fung also points out that Lau's Chinese name (Mandarin, Dehua; Cantonese, Tak-wah) could be translated as "moral Chinese [person]."
17. J. Lawrence Witzleben, "Music in the Hong Kong Handover Ceremonies: A Community Re-Imagines Itself," *Ethnomusicology* 46, no. 1 (2002): 124; Zhao Bin, "Popular Family Television and Party Ideology: the Spring Festival Eve Happy Gathering," *Media, Culture & Society* 20, no. 1 (1998): 43; Zhao's article focuses on the 1997 edition of the New Year's Gala (which he calls "Spring Festival Eve Happy Gathering"), where Hong Kong's upcoming handover was also patriotically highlighted.
18. Andy Lau's music video *Gongxi ni facai* (the title is the traditional New Year's greeting) can be found at "Liu Dehua—'Gongxi ni facai'" [Andy Lau—"(I) wish you prosperity"], October 23, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4SRZurGg1c>, and footage from the 1998 CCTV New Year's Gala performance of "Great China" at "Mao Ning, Zhang Xinzhe, Liu Dehua 'Da Zhongguo' (1998 nian CCTV chunjie lianhuan wanhui gaohuazhi)" [Mao Ning, Jeff Chang, and Andy Lau 'Great China'

- (1998 CCTV New Year's Gala, high-resolution)], December 29, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPdCkw2AoTs>). A discussion of the staging of "Great China" can be found in Cui Yawei, *Chinese Television as a Medium of National Interpellation: Diasporic Responses to the CCTV Production of the Spring Festival Gala* (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2009), 137–40. Cui, who uses "Spring Festival Gala" to render the same program name for which I use "CCTV New Year's Gala," points out that this matching of Mainland and Gangtai stars is a common pattern in this annual program.
19. Fung, "Marketing Popular Culture in China," 255, 259; Vanessa Fong, "Filial Nationalism among Chinese Teenagers with Global Identities," *American Ethnologist* 31, no. 4 (2004): 632; R. Zhou, "Shadow Play in Stardom."
 20. Zhang Xiaojing, ed., "'Bu zhengque, bu zhengchang, bu jiankang, bu xiao'" [Wrong, abnormal, unhealthy, unfilial], *Yunnan Xinwen wang*, 23 December 2007, <http://www.yn.chinanews.com/html/xinwenyulu/20071223/26006.html>; Jessie Tao, "Girl Wants More than a Meet with Icon Andy Lau," *China Daily*, March 29, 2007, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-03/29/content_839741.htm.
 21. For an extensive discussion of the concept of suicide as resistance in Chinese history and literature, as well as its relevance in modern China, see Sing Lee and Arthur Kleinman, "Suicide as Resistance in Chinese Society," *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, ed. Elizabeth Perry and Mark Selden (London: Routledge, 2000), 221–40; Yang, "Yang Lijuan fuqin yishu quanwen."
 22. One of the family circumstances detailed in the *Southern Weekend* article was that the couple had been divorced for a long time and lived apart. This circumstance was largely ignored by media reports, perhaps because it worked against the pathos implicit in this tale of long-suffering parents.
 23. Buddhism also is part of Lau's public image, including donations, performances at Buddhist events, and recordings of Lau singing prayers ("China—Recognized Tibetan monk to visit Hong Kong," *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific—Political Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, April 20, 2012. Natalie Soh, "Sick but No One to Turn To? There's Ren Ci; In the Second of Our Series on Charities at Home, We Profile Ren Ci Hospital and Medicare Centre. Natalie Soh reports," *Straits Times* [Singapore], August 6, 2005). Chow Yiu Fai and Jeroen de Kloet include a brief discussion of the Buddhist-themed music video for Goddess of Mercy ("Blowing in the China Wind: Engagements with Chineseness in Hong Kong's Zhongguofeng Music Videos," *Visual Anthropology* 24, nos. 1–2 [2010]: 64).
 24. The elements of reproach from Yang Qinji's letter invoke a variety of traditions. However, the manner in which the names of complex traditions are deployed by an individual such as Yang Qinji does not necessarily reflect an easily identifiable specific practice or belief. Besides practices and systems of private belief, moral traditions can also serve as a shorthand for creating approval or disapproval. For that reason, it is best to be cautious about how traditional these appeals to morality are.
 25. Dictionaries usually indicate that *xizi* is pejorative, and in some texts it is translated as "lowly entertainer." It is clear from Yang's usage that he means the term to convey disrespect.

26. Lee and Kleinman, "Suicide as Resistance in Chinese Society," 296.
27. Elmer Cagape, "The Cost of Loving Andy Lau," *Asian Correspondent*, April 6, 2007, <http://asiancorrespondent.com/17349/the-cost-of-loving-andy-lau/>.
28. The article was printed in *Zhongguo xinwen zhoubao* [ChinaNewsweek] and included in Huacheng Press's 2007 *nian Zhongguo zawen nianxuan* [A collection of Chinese essays from 2007]. The easiest access to it however is likely at Zhu's blog—<http://zhudake.blog.caixin.com/>—where it was posted on April 16, 2007, and will remain archived for the foreseeable future.
29. The Yangs reportedly demanded that Andy Lau pay the burial costs, a view that received mixed responses among commentators (*Xiandai kuaibao*, "Yang Lijuan qi fushi li gang—Yang Mu da ma Liu Dehua biantai" [Yang Lijuan abandons her father's body and leaves Hong Kong—Yang's mother severely denounces Andy Lau as perverse], March 30, 2007, <http://ent.sina.com.cn/s/h/p/2007-03-30/12501499325.html>). Elsewhere, Wang reported that Yang Lijuan had not wanted to bury her father until Lau had paid his respects to the body (Wang Jing, "Andy Lau Fan Leaves Father Behind—Who's to Blame," *CRI [China Radio International]*, April 2, 2007, <http://english.cri.cn/4406/2007/04/02/1181@211742.htm>; Ma Busheng, "Yang Lijuan, bie zai nao le" [Yang Lijuan, don't make any more trouble], *Ma Busheng: yi dian jianghu*, VOC Blog, http://blog.voc.com.cn/blog_showone_type_blog_id_119059_p_1.html; Yahoo Yule, "Yang Lijuan qi wangfu shiti bugu hui neidi bei paohong renzha" [Yang Lijuan abandons her father's corpse and returns to the Mainland; is viciously criticized], March 29, 2007; Zhishang GQ, translated in *AndyLauSounds*, "Andy's Interview with GQ Mainland China First Issue," October 20, 2009).
30. Song Zude cited in Yan Xiaoguang, "Yang Lijuan zhuanggao Song Zude qinfan mingyu Song Dazui boke beihei" [Yang Lijuan sues Song Zude for defamation of character—Bigmouth Song's Blog is Blanked], *Eastday* (from Dayang), August 30, 2008, <http://news.eastday.com/s/20080830/u1a3839546.html>. The "Eight Honors, Eight Shames" are a series of moral guidelines promulgated by Hu Jintao and the CCP in 2006.
31. As this article was being prepared, the Sinophone media saw a flurry of articles about a Xiangyang woman—Yin Yanhong—whose profile was startlingly similar to Yang Lijuan's: unemployed, without friends or education, a "full-time" star-chaser of Andy Lau. Perhaps the most bizarre follow-up stories in the wake of the Yang Lijuan melodrama concerned a billionaire Shanghai property developer who supposedly was inspired by Yang's devotion to consider undergoing cosmetic surgery to look like Lau before proposing to a woman ("Billionaire Seeks Surgery for Andy Lau Looks," *China Daily*, April 13, 2007, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2007-04/13/content_849521.htm). Yet, even if credence can be given to the reports, I have seen no evidence that the man went through with the operation. These provisos noted, *China Daily* and many Internet sites reported as a fact this man's plan to have surgery so that he would look like Lau.
32. Wan Ching, et al., "Intersubjective Consensus and the Maintenance of Normative Shared Reality," *Social Cognition* 28 (2010): 439–41; Jiang Jiang et al., "Emotional Responses to Scandals," *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 14 (2011): 215.

33. Gold, "Go with Your Feelings," 917, and 913–14; J. Lawrence Witzleben, "Cantopop and Mandapop in Pre-Postcolonial Hong Kong: Identity Negotiation in the Performances of Anita Mui Yim-Fong," *Popular Music* 18, no. 2 (1999): 247; Wai-Chung Ho, "Social Change and Nationalism in China's Popular Songs," *Social History* 31, no. 4 (2006): 444–48; Anthony Y. H. Fung, "The Emerging (National) Popular Music Culture in China," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8, no. 3 (2007): 425; Louise Edwards and Elaine Jeffreys, "Introduction," *Celebrity in China*, ed. Louise Edwards and Elaine Jeffreys (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 2–4.
34. Chow and Kloet, "Blowing in the China Wind," 64.
35. Edwards and Jeffreys, "Introduction," *Celebrity in China*, 16.
36. *Ibid.*, 15, 16; Cornel Sandvoss, "On the Couch with Europe: the Eurovision Song Contest, the European Broadcast Union and Belonging on the Old Continent," *Popular Communication* 6, no. 3 (2008): 199; Edwards and Jeffreys, *Celebrity in China*, 17.