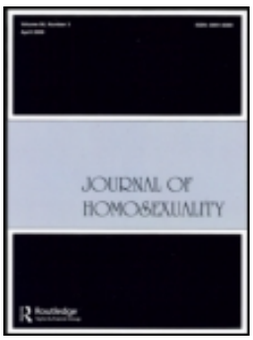

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Kuaering Queer Theory: My Autocritography and a Race-Conscious, Womanist, Transnational Turn

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SUMMARY. Critiquing queer theory's omissions in race and class, E. Patrick Johnson (2001) suggests "quare" studies, a turn similar to that being made from feminism to womanism. I fully embrace Johnson's theorizing. But to make relevant the worlds lying beyond the pale of North America, Europe, and the English language to the study of sexualities and other dimensions of systematic discrimination, I use *kuaer* theory to make another turn. One that is *at once* race-conscious, womanist and transnational. I travel through three awakenings, and look into *nu nu* (female-female) words in Taiwanese and Chinese lesbian existence in different historical periods. I also offer a rhetorical analysis of the title of *Ai Bao*, the first officially registered Taiwanese lesbian magazine, exploring its persuasiveness via wordplay and multiple entendre. In addition, from *jin lan hui* to *nu tongzhi*, from *T*/*puo* and *lazi* to *kuer*, I provide sketches of heterogeneous and complex Taiwanese and Chinese *nu nu* worlds. As I get deeper

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into my autocritography, these women become my women and I learn to utter my own words in a language that is little pre-packaged. My crossing marks a daring but humble beginning. If nothing else, there is at least more space for bringing up race and transnational complicity queerly.

KEYWORDS. Autocritography, lesbianism, quare studies, queer theory, rhetorical invention, Taiwanese/Chinese, transnationalism, womanism

. . . MY NAMELESS EVERYWHERE . . .

I am a bridge connecting two shores across the Pacific Ocean: Taipei, Taiwan and San Jose, California, United States. Transnational itinerary, quite obviously, is my autobiography, and writing myself, I have come to terms with an elision, a void that has been a nameless everywhere*–in my youth, in my work, in my daily encounters and, most importantly, in my dreams. How was I awakened to this name and the histories of this namelessness? How did I manage to erase the memories of romance among my classmates in* Bei Yi Nu *(see Figure 1 for a Chinese-English word list compiled for this essay), the best girls' high school in Taipei in the 1970s? How did I bury the overtly friendly yet timid interest in me during my graduate school days in Los Angeles in the 1980s? What persona did I assume in my scholarly writings on Chinese and Taiwanese women in the U.S. academy in the 1990s? I have portrayed myself as a liberal straight woman from Taiwan writing in the United States. I have never been "homophobic" yet I am always "straight," so I thought.*

What has become obvious is that the chi[1] *running through me is deeply heteropatriarchal. Do I have a heteropatriarchal mirror which I constantly have to dust off? But, if there is no mirror, whence comes the dust? For me, these are big questions, and I am going after them.*[2]

This "going after" is tearing me apart, tearing me into pieces. Trying not to feel like a thief, a language stealer, yet exploring words that reach into the different sides of me, unseen, unspoken, and untouched, I welcome you into my bilingual and mutli-styled journal–public, private, main text, endnotes, Mandarin Chinese, United Statesian English, italicized me and nonitalicized scholar[3]*–a written world where there is no common word, no common sentence ready for me to use.*[4]

My formative years offer a glimpse of the national-historical memories in Taiwanese society in the second half of the twentieth century. Quietly embedded in these memories are horrendous acts of discursive amnesia,[5] *which I have learned to "see" and "hear" and, ultimately, to "unlearn" its incompre-*

FIGURE 1. Mandarin Chinese to North American English Word List

Ai Bao	Love Paper (abbreviated from *Ai Fu Hao Zi Zai Bao*)
Ai Fu Hao Zi Zai Bao	Love, Luck, Good, Self-at-Ease Newspaper/Magazine (abbreviated as *Ai Bao*)
bai xiang zhi	avowed [sisters due to] mutual appreciation; women who lived like husband and wife in Canton
Bao Juan	Precious Volume
Bei Yi Nu	The First Girls' High School in Taipei, Taiwan
bu fen	not differentiating [between *T* and *puo*] (see *T* and *puo* below for their respective definition)
bu-fen-pien-puo	not differentiating [between *T* and *puo*] but leaning toward *puo*
bu-fen-pien-T	not differentiating [between *T* and *puo*] but leaning toward *T*
bu luo jia	[married but] not settling down in the [husband's] family
chi	energy running through the human body
chuan ku zi de	pants wearer [women who love women; a pre-*tongzhi* era term]
gui ning	returning home to wish parents peace and good health
jie mei hua	older sister and younger sister flower/sisterhood
jin lan hui	golden orchid association (see footnote 11)
kuaer	children who cross worlds; children who are proud; children who are transnational womanist quares
kuer	children who are queer/cool
lazi	women who love women/lez
lian li zhi	connected branches; husband and wife/marriage
nan	male
nan tong xing lian	male same-sex love/male homosexual or male homosexuality
nan tongzhi	male comrade/gay man
nu	female/s
nu nu	female-female
nu nu guan xi	female-female connections/relationships [see footnote 8; Adrienne Rich's "lesbian existence" relocated in Chinese/Taiwanese contexts]
Nu Shu Dien	the Femme Bookstore
nu tong xing lian	female same-sex love /female homosexual or female homosexuality
nu tongzhi	female comrade/lesbian
puo	grandmother or wife [feminine women who love women; femme; wife of *T*; more or less equivalent to "lipstick lesbian" in the United States]
shang shen ti	damaging body; "body" in this phrase is used holistically to mean physical health
shao	filial piety to the parents
shuang guan yu	double entendre
T	adopted from the English expression tomboy [masculine women who love women; equivalent to "butch" in the United States]
Tai Da	an abbreviated term for National Taiwan University
tan bao	juicy dumpling; a transliteration from "tomboy" and equivalent to *T* explained above]
tong xing lian	same-sex love/homosexual or homosexuality
tongzhi	comrade/lesbians and gays
Xien Tien Da Dao	The Great Way of Former Heaven
yang pai	"ocean/foreign style"; this expression means "Westernized."
yo yi ci	a triple entendre: (1) bearing meanings, (2) interesting/fun, and (3) showing romantic interest
zhong	loyalty to the emperor
zi shu nu	self hairdressing female; spinster

hension. Discursive amnesty,[6] *theoretically and in praxis, is the backdrop of my transformed way of seeing. It involves a reorientation of my being. Inwardly, flashbacks and traces of past* nu nu guan xi *(female-female connections; this expression sometimes will be abbreviated as* nu nu *in my journal)*[7] *dance at the edges of my consciousness. Socially, a cacophony of signs which lay dormant in my nameless everywhere come to speak to me:* jin lan hui *(golden orchid association),* bu luo jia *(unsettled into her family/home) and* zi shu nu *(self-brushing female) in the 19th century (Chen, 1928/1994; Topley, 1975); school girls' romance in Ling Shuhua's short story, "Once Upon a Time" (1928/1998) in the 1920s;* T *or* tan bao *(tomboy, butch),* puo *(femme),* lazi *(women who love women),* kuer *(queer) and* nu tongzhi *(female comrade or lesbian) in the 1990s in Taiwan (Hong et al., 1997).*

Do you find any of the above Chinese expressions yo yi ci*?* Yo yi ci*, a Mandarin Chinese phrase, carries three possible interpretations. It is a triple entendre.*[8] *Translated,* yo yi ci *means: "Do you find any of the above Chinese expressions* ***meaningful****?" or "Do you find any of the above Chinese expressions* ***interesting/fun****?" or "Do you find yourself* ***romantically interested*** *in any of the above Chinese expressions?" You have just learned* yo yi ci *as a triple entendre. But for me, I am experimenting with myself in two forms of creativity: (a) to feel free to play with words and (b) to learn to understand/interest/love simultaneously. It was through a journey, long but full of surprises and serendipity, that I found the above words from Taiwanese and Chinese* nu nu *worlds* yo yi ci*.*

NU NU *CONNECTIONS AND* NU NU *WORDS*

In the early 1990s, reading Adrienne Rich's "lesbian existence" and "lesbian continuum" pushed me to pay attention to different forms of woman-woman relationships.[9] *Just looking at the list of friends who were invited for dinner at my house on a regular basis, I was dismayed by a horrendous consistency: middle-class professional white males, both gay and straight. No matter how hard I tried to overcome the separation caused by different axes of oppression in theory and in my writing, I could not escape a self-indictment–my life was an affluent, male-centered whiteness. Cherré Moraga's words drive to the heart of my painful realization: "I felt this [separation] most acutely with Black women–Black dykes–who I felt ignored me, wrote me off because I look white. And yet, the truth was that I didn't know Black women intimately (Barbara says, 'it's about who you can sit down to a meal with, who you can cry with, whose face you can touch'). I had such strong 'colored hunches' about our potential connection, but was basically removed from the lives of most Black women. The ignorance. The painful, painful ignorance" (1981, p. xvii).*

When did I or do I know nu nu *intimately? Whom can I sit down to have a meal with? Now, I am more conscious of my* nu nu guan xi*, and these "friends" from different centuries and different races, genders, nationalities, class and*

*educational backgrounds have gradually assumed different forms of "primary intensity" in my life. Their biographies accompany me, especially in waves of vocabulary that have awakened my consciousness, a special kind of consciousness, which I call "*kuaer."[10]

FIRST AWAKENING: JIN LAN HUI *AND MARRIAGE RESISTANCE*

I came across the expression *jin lan hui* when I was doing research on Chinese feminisms and anti-footbinding discourse at the turn of the 20th century. This broke the massive silence on Chinese lesbianism for me, a silence that is loudly naturalized by the Chinese heteropatriarchal normativity (Ng, 1997). Reading Chen Dongyuan's book on Chinese women's history (1928/1994), I came to appreciate his progressive criticism of Chinese patriarchy. Rendering Chinese "female homosexuals" visible, Chen nonetheless advanced a troubling view, treating female homosexuality as an endemic disease: "Endemic" because it was unnaturalized and peculiar to an area, and "disease" because it infected women and damaged their health. Let me explain.

In a 426-page book, Chen spent only two-thirds of a page on "Cantonese *Nu Tong Xing Lian* (female same-sex love)" (p. 300), a scant treatment. I was not surprised by his use of *tong xing lian*,[11] a general concept to refer to homosexuality and homosexuals. This term is old-fashioned and mainly used by people who accept the framing of homosexuality as unorthodox and deviant, not seeing alternative reading and naming in their horizons. But the section where Chen placed his discussion struck me: Chapter Eight and Section Eleven, entitled "Peculiar Customs in Sundry Places."

Among the other nine customs lumped together with *nu tong xing lian* or "female homosexuality," the only "peculiar" custom that Chen praised overtly was the Miao ethnic people's "Dancing to the Moon." The custom, though "barbaric," was endorsed by Chen because Miao people based the marriage on free love (vs. arranged marriage) and monogamy (vs. polygamy). This custom, Chen argued further, emulates the West and is important for the *Han* Chinese to model themselves after.

Chen condemned *nu tong xing lian.* He quoted extensively from Zhang Xingtai's *Yue Yo Xiao Zhi* (*Travel Journal in Canton*, undated):

> In Canton, women vow to become sisters under the name of golden orchid association [*jin lan hui*].[12] Three days after the wedding ceremony, a woman returns to her natal family for a ritual visit. [Often without prior consummation], she does not go back to the husband's house until her association sister gets married. Pressed to the extreme, association sisters would commit suicide together. . . . In the recent decade, custom has changed again from sisterhood [*jie mei hua*] to marriage [*lian li zhi*].

> When two women live together, one often resembles the husband. This custom was initiated in *Shun De*; it then infected the *Fan Yu* and *Sha Jiao* areas, in which people practiced this custom more severely. It was unavoidable even in the county capital. It's also named *bai xiang zhi* [avowed mutual appreciation]. Engaged as "sisters," women's love for each other is as dense and interwoven as silk, exceeding that between husband and wife, so that they choose to remain unmarried for the life time [translation mine]. (p. 300)

Bolstered by Zhang's travel writing, Chen further asserted that remaining unmarried because of same-sex love violates nature's rule and damages women's health. He remarked that this practice became even more pervasive due to changing economic conditions. It deterred women from marrying and made them *sink* into same-sex love, causing a big problem [for the society] (p. 300).

Chen's judgment of "problem" is couched in terms of his heteropatriarchal value system, treating heterosexuality, monogamy, free love, spouses of small age difference, and getting married when one matures as "natural." Its normative power is made visible when "peculiar" is chosen to mark its undesired other; that is, "peculiar" takes on meaning against the backdrop of Chen's normativity: class-based, *Han*-centric and Western-emulating compulsory heterosexuality. Ethnic minorities (the Manchus, Tibetans, Yaos, Miaos, and Lis) and lower class *Han* people (peasants) were also "peculiar" (read "unnatural"). Finally, not only were Cantonese *nu nu* connections "peculiar/unnatural," but worse yet, they also *shang* (damaged) *shen ti* (body; it is used holistically to mean physical health). Like a disease, *nu nu* connections might deter women from the fulfillment of nature's callings to get married and bear children. They might also cause solitude, isolation, infirmity or suicide. After all, an unmarried and childless life was no life at all.

In Marjorie Topley's historical essay on marriage resistance in Canton,[13] I found two more terms for marriage resisters: *zi shu nu* (self-brushing [the hair] women) and *bu luo jia* (not settling down in the [husband's] family)[14] (1975, p. 67). There was a hairdressing ritual for a bride before marriage. If a single woman chose to take the vow of spinsterhood, she would go through the same hairdressing ritual. But she would be assisted by "an elderly celibate female" rather than "an elderly woman with many sons" (p. 83). Going through the hairdressing ritual by herself, she entered a new stage of life alone, henceforth the term *zi* (self) *shu* (brushing) *nu* (female).

In contrast, some women went through their wedding ceremony but did not consummate their relationship with their husbands. Recall Zhang's travel writing quoted by Chen in my earlier discussion. Three days after the wedding, the bride would be accompanied by the groom to pay a ritual visit to her natal family, called *gui ning*. *Gui* means returning and *ning* means safe/peaceful. Together, it means the bride returns home to wish her parents a safe and healthy life. The unwilling bride during the resistance era would take advantage of this

ritual, refusing to return to the husband's family, henceforth acquiring the name *bu* (not) *luo* (settle down) *jia* (family/home).

In sum, golden orchid association, *jin lan hui*, is a 19th century Chinese vocabulary for *nu nu* connections in Canton. Specificities in *jin lan hui* are further mapped based on (a) whether a woman resisted marriage by not marrying (*zi shu nu*) or by marrying but not returning to the husband's house (*bu luo jia*), and (b) whether their relationship was a celibate sisterhood (*jie mei hua*) or female-female marriage/cohabitation (*bai xiang zhi*).

Economic activities made it possible for unattached women, *zi shu nu* and *bu luo jia*, to be gainfully employed. They became even more economically viable in the mid-nineteenth century when steam-driven machinery (i.e., industrialization) was introduced into the silk factories (p. 72). In addition to financial factors, religion also contributed to the prevalence of marriage resistance. *Bao Juan*, the Precious Volume, printed by a religious sect, *Xien Tien Da Dao*[15] (p. 74), especially influenced many of these unattached women. It preached to women that marriage resistance is not morally wrong; men cannot be trusted; childbirth is a sin; celibacy is the only way to the Happy Land (paradise); and suicide is a virtue if it is committed to preserve purity and chastity.

As the silk industry hit bottom in the great depression of the 1930s, marriage resistance declined. Older unattached women retired early, and younger ones sought employment as domestic servants in Canton as well as Malaya and Singapore. The custom of golden orchid association, which had lasted for one hundred years or so, declined. Established society resumed its silence on this matter in no time.

I found myself drawn to these unattached women. What did they look like? What were their dreams, torments and obsessions? Employment and religion, especially the advocacy of celibacy and suicide, were two foundations on which jin lan hui's unorthodox practice stood. These women would have been my great grandmothers' peers. Had I been born into their generation, would or could I have done the same thing?

I am an agnostic and a college professor. I am gainfully employed. I have my "modern" beliefs–women should receive education, learn to drive, have the right to divorce, and so on and so forth. The golden orchid sisters seem ghostly. Yet, their existence, in mysterious ways, is beyond me, neither an option nor a challenge, especially for my younger self.

I feel thousands of years behind these women. They were never my women, yet I become, little by little, part of these women, leaving my ghostly self behind.

SECOND AWAKENING: AI BAO *AND 1990s* NU NU *WORDS*

In 1993 and 1994, I went back to Taiwan to visit my mother, other family members, and friends. I met three female professor friends at Nu Shu Dien*, the*

Femme Bookstore, across the street from Tai Da *(National Taiwan University), where vibrant and often dissenting intellectual movements originated. They talked about the influence of postmodern, poststructuralist and postcolonial theories in the Taiwanese academy. They also mentioned that there's a fierce schism between [heterosexually unconscious] feminists and lesbian feminists. A breakthrough on the front of Taiwanese lesbian organizing/theorizing, according to them, was the first officially registered lesbian publication in Taiwan,* Ai Fu Hao Zi Zai Bao*, abbreviated as* Ai Bao*–the Love Newspaper/Magazine.*[16]

I thoroughly enjoyed our conversations on that hot summer afternoon. Before returning to my mom's house, I picked up all available issues of Ai Bao *at the Femme Bookstore. Reading through them, I was struck by many new terms I had never heard of in Chinese. Moreover, what stood out beyond the literal content of their words were* Ai Bao*'s discursive strategies, a marvelous and sophisticated demonstration of the rhetorical art.*

Ai Bao *and Rhetorical Invention*

Rhetoric is a "Greek" term for the study of persuasion in general and the practice of argument in particular. I found this focus useful in appreciating/understanding the title of the first Taiwanese lesbian magazine, *Ai Bao*, a remarkably complicated text. Here, I would like to focus on rhetoric as the art of invention in words, and on style as an ultimate component of rhetorical invention. Walter Watson (2001) touches on style's oxymoronic essence:

> The style of the speech is thus in its components both familiar and strange, in relation to the case at hand both common and unique, in its forms both recurrent and novel, and in its functioning both known and unknown. This joining of tradition and innovation corresponds to the nature of invention itself. (p. 398)

Relevant to my analysis here are three ways to materialize style: determining word choice, ensuring suitability to the situation, and using vivid/esteemed sayings.

Ai Bao offers an exemplary case study of rhetorical style, specifically in terms of the use of wordplay in the contemporary Taiwanese world. Many different kinds of wordplay exist. Relevant to my rhetorical analyses here are two types of wordplay: homophonic and homonymic. According to Plett (2001), homophonic wordplay (e.g., soul and sole) is one where two words have different spellings and different meanings but identical pronunciation. Homonymic wordplay (e.g. to lie–to prostrate; to lie–to tell an untruth) offers words that have the same phonetic components and the same spelling but different meanings. I will now explicate multiple ways in which *Ai Bao* artfully achieves its rhetorical invention.

First Take. Translated literally, the title of the first Taiwanese lesbian magazine reads "Love, Luck, Good, Self at Ease Newspaper" (see Figure 2). *Ai* means love, affection and, discursively, it draws people away from hatred. *Fu* means fortune or luck, and it marks the difference from bad luck. *Hao* means good and positive, and it moves people discursively away from things that are bad and disagreeable. "Love," "luck," and "good" are feminine virtues authorized by the traditional Chinese patrilineal-heterosexual hegemony. A good woman is said to bring love, luck, and especially male offspring to the family.

After this parade of feminine virtues, we encounter *Zi (*self) and *Zai* (present). Together, these two characters refer to "self-at-ease, self-content." This contemporary term is derived from the teaching of Confucius, asserting that a man of virtue finds himself at ease (content) wherever he goes. So, "self-at-ease" marks the difference between a man who feels calm and content and desires nothing and a man who feels inadequate and tormented by unfulfilled desires. It is important to note that Confucius, a misogynous philosopher, grouped women and ignoble men into the same category. So self-at-ease is traditionally a gendered elitist virtue. It belongs to the masculine sphere. But unlike the two selfless virtues in traditional worlds–*zhong* (loyalty to the emperor) and *shao*[17] (filial piety to the parents), *zi zai* focuses more on the delight and joy of the male self.

Even though *Zi Zai* (self-at-ease) and *Ai Fu Hao* (love, luck and good) are both authorized imperial/feudal values, a discursive tension is built into the title because *Zi Zai* is masculine and self-oriented, while *Ai Fu Hao* is feminine and selfless. Together they create a perfectly traditional, innocent and positive

FIGURE 2. Five Takes of *Ai Fu Hao Zi Zai Bao* Via Wordplay

The First Take on the Title:

Ai Fu Hao • Zi Zai • Bao

(Love Luck Good • Self-At-Ease • Newspaper/Magazine)

The Second Take on the Title:

Ai Fu • Hao Zi Zai • Bao

(Caress/Foreplay • So Very Great/Free • Newspaper/Magazine)

***The Third Take on the Title*:**

Ai Fu Hao • Hao Zi Zai • Bao

(Chinese Herbal Potency Drinks • U.S. Sanitary Napkins • Newspaper/Magazine)

The Fourth Take on the Title:

Ai Fu • Hao Zi Zai • Bao

(Caress/Foreplay • U.S. Sanitary Napkins/So Very Great/Free • Newspaper/Magazine)

***The Fifth Take on the Title*:**

Ai Fu Hao • Hao Zi Zai • Bao

(Chinese Herbal Potency Drinks • So Very Great/Free • Newspaper/Magazine)

title for the new magazine; that is, the title is not only familiar but also good. It is, therefore, persuasive: "Anything that is thought to be good can serve as a basis for a deliberative argument, and so the rhetor needs to know all the kinds of things that are thought to be good" (Watson, 2001, p. 392). Traditional good values are mobilized to break open new rhetorical spaces via subversive turns in meaning; that is, its title allows different readings through wordplay.

Second Take. *Ai Fu* (love luck) is a homophonic wordplay for caress and foreplay. *Hao*, in addition to having the meaning of "good," is a homonymic wordplay for "so, very." *Hao Zi Zai* can be read as "so very great/free!" (See Figure 2 again.) The title turns "risqué" when we read it as "Caress/foreplay so very great/free!" It liberates a woman from the cage of selfless feminine virtues espoused by the patrilineal and heterosexual status quo. The Confucian "self-at-ease" at first assumes a straight face, only to find itself coupled with "sexual pleasure" replacing a scholarly, canonical image. The title takes hostage two discursive taboos that regulate female identities: (a) a woman is not supposed to mention sexual matters (e.g., caress, foreplay) in public, and (b) a woman is not encouraged to enjoy sexual pleasure in the private and public spheres, let alone in print. In Taiwanese society, this challenges the core of sexualized and gendered oppression, in Spivak's words, the "effacement of the clitoris" in subordination to a uterine social organization (1988, p.151).

Third Take. Another combination of homonymic wordplays makes possible a third take on the title. *Ai Fu Hao* is a commercial herbal drink manufactured to enhance male energy and, especially, to facilitate heterosexual male potency. *Hao Zi Zai* is the Chinese translation of *Care Free*, a brand name of sanitary napkins imported from the U.S.A. The title turns "indelicate" when it reads, "Chinese traditional potency drinks for men and female sanitary napkins from the U.S."

Chinese patrilineal-heterosexual tradition valorizes male potency. Precious animal parts, for example, deer antlers and penises, have been avidly pursued to aid masculine potency for centuries. One of the imperial herbal doctors' duties was to seek out exotic medicine to aid the Emperor's potency. Taoist treatises were written to help older Chinese men practice sex without losing their "precious fluid," which they believed would help them prolong life.

Women's menstruation, not surprisingly, receives a polar opposite treatment. Menstruation was long held to be "unfortunate." Seeing bloodstains from menstruation brings a man bad luck. Young women, to this day, usually euphemize their monthly flow as "good friend." In a traditional sense, the herbal drink "*Ai Fu Hao*" is discursively acceptable, while sanitary napkins "*Hao Zi Zai*" are hushed into silence. Neither will openly make it into the title of a magazine. A third turn in meanings via wordplay has produced subversive and satirical effects. Male potency and female monthly flow are clandestinely juxtaposed and turned into printable topics.

Fourth and Fifth Take. To make the meanings even more daring, let us consider a fourth and fifth reading of the title: "Caress/foreplay and United Statesian sanitary napkins/feel great/make people self-at-ease" and "Traditional Chinese potency drinks for men feel great/make people self-at-ease." The multiple discursive and bodily possibilities offered by such wordplay maximize a tension between traditional values and an insurgent female sexual agency. By "agency," I mean discursive subjectivity or subject positioning (Spivak, 1988, p. 216). A set of discursive rules allows a specific "I" to speak, and a group of people to grant this "I" a hearing. In the title of this new magazine, I hear a Taiwanese woman marching away from a submissive, silenced non-entity (a role that is always talked to, ordered around, and made ashamed of and invisible) into a speaking, emerging identity (a role that says "I" loud and visible, makes assertions, enjoys sexual pleasure and feels unashamed of menstruation).

"I" have a traditional, good feminine identity coupled with "my" traditional male self-content. But "I" also love caress/foreplay. "I" am no longer the erotic object of male gaze and male fondling. What's more, "I" enjoy potency drinks and menstruation. "I" speak in such a witty yet sophisticated way, attracting a group of people to listen to this irreverent female sexual "I."

When *Ai Fu Hao Zi Zai Bao* is abbreviated for the ease of writing, it is called *Ai Bao*, which means "Love Paper." It is a non-threatening title for those who endorse heteropatriarchy. But subversive readings, as I have shown above, make this title oxymoronically daring for gendered and sexual outcasts in Taiwan: All forms of love between women are possible!

Wordplay as Vision, Morality as Cliché

Different forms of wordplay, in my view, share two discursive acts: creativity and defiance. Wordplay is sign making, a creative association between meanings or between sounds unthought of by unimaginative people. In other words, wordplay breathes the spirit of originality, freshness and spontaneity into the quotidian. In respelling the mundane anew, wordplay also subversively enacts a defiant disassociation from the existing ideologies and moralities that have turned cliché. Going beyond the trite, the banal, and the stale, wordplay invokes experiences unconfined by the present: dream, trance, reverie, vision, the unconscious and the games of the underground (Kenard, 1997).

Performing an aura of creativity, wordplay's simmering defiance renames the Chinese heteropatriarchal morality not so much as a system of negative confinement but as cliché and, by implication, passé–it becomes the overused, excessively applied code that terminates thoughts and should be vanished! Put differently, to urge a different course in *Ai Bao* is less about defying morality/tradition than refusing to be trite, to be banal, and to be stale, a marvelous shift from right/wrong to cliché/creativity. Rhetorically speaking, wordplay,

as a creative and defiant move, opens up thinking and offers visions–making the persuasive case that the love between women psychologically and/or sexually is good and, more importantly, original and creative.

Nu Nu *Words in the 1990s in Taiwan*

Between 1949 and 1987, the Nationalist party ruled Taiwan through Martial Law. Many criminal offenses were tried in military rather than civil courts. Homosexual behavior was regarded as deviant, and, according to Y. Antonia Chao, a professor at Tunghai University in Taiwan,

> . . . any offenders of the given social order would be demonized in political terms (usually by being labeled as *fei die* [the Communist spy]), tomboys were frequently charged by the police on the count of treason. (2001, p. 188)

A new rhetorical world emerged in the *nu nu* sphere in Taiwan after July 15, 1987, when the Martial Law of Taiwan was formally ended (Cogswell, 2000). With the loosening of political restraints,[18] especially since the early 1990s, not only did insurgent publications like *Ai Bao* surface, but also new terms from the homosexual underground began to circulate in public.

Tongzhi is an obvious example. Chou Wah-Shan, a Chinese scholar in Hong Kong and one of the pioneers in the gay rights movement and *tongzhi* discourse, explains,

> *Tongzhi* is the most popular contemporary Chinese word for lesbians, bisexuals, and gay people. The word is a Chinese translation from a Soviet communist term "comrade," which refers to the revolutionaries that shared a comradeship. The term was first adopted by Chinese in Republican China, and then taken both by the Communist and Nationalist Party to refer to comrades struggling for the communist/nationalist revolution. *Tong* literally means "same/homo," the same Chinese word for "homo (sexual)," and the word *zhi* means "goal," "spirit," or "orientation." (2001, p. 27)

In other words, *tongzhi* is a homonymic wordplay. It offers three meanings: (a) "revolutionaries" who overthrew the Qing dynasty at the turn of the 20th century, (b) "comrades," a gender-neutral title which functions like "Mr." and "Ms." for men and women in Communist China, and (c) gays, lesbians and bisexuals of Chinese descent in the end of the 20th century and onward.

Tongzhi is the name adopted by gay and lesbian activists/organizers in Taiwan, China and Hong Kong.[19] *Kuer*, a Chinese transliteration of the English word "queer,"[20] a lesser-known term than *tongzhi* in the 1990s, circulates more exclusively in metropolitan areas in Taiwan. Like "queer" in the United

States, *kuer* is sensitive to the heterogeneities among sexual minorities. Yet differently nuanced, *kuer* carries another sense in Taiwan. It has an additional meaning of "being cool," a partially transliterated exclamation borrowed from youth cultures in the United States. So being *kuer* is to be playful, fresh, and original in sexuality. It is freer and more porous than *tongzhi*. Discursively, *kuer*, a gender neutral term, is more into pleasure, defiance, heterogeneity, theory and critical discourse; *tongzhi* is also gender neutral, but it is equivalent to lesbians/gays, and more associated with social change projects and activist praxis.[21] Given that the sexual insurgent movement is about one decade young in Taiwan, *tongzhi* and *kuer* have less deep-rooted and politically unresolved issues than those between gay/lesbian activists and queer theorists in the United States. Despite their relatively different sensibilities, *tongzhi* and *kuer* tend to work cooperatively rather than in opposition in Taiwan (Chi, 1997, pp. 15-16).

In addition to gender-neutral terms, there are new expressions in the *nu tongzhi* (female comrades) world and female *kuer* (children who are cool and queer) world. Before *tongzhi* consciousness was named, women who love women romantically were called "*chuan ku zi de*," meaning pants wearer. When the *tongzhi* movement picked up momentum in the 1990s, *nu tongzhi* words like "*T* or *tan bao,*" and *"puo*" became more widely known.

Tomboy, abbreviated as "*T*" or transliterated as "*tan bao*," which homophonically also means "juicy dumpling," means a masculine woman who loves other women. Having an English concept as its origin, "*T* or *tan bao*" is roughly equivalent to "butch." "*Puo*" has two meanings in a conventional sense: grandmother or wife. It means feminine women who love other women. It also means "the wife" of *T* (Hong et al., 1997, p. 52; Zhang, 2000, pp. 2-26), a role similar to femme in the United States.[22]

Like *T* and *puo*, "lazi" is another woman-centered *nu nu* word. However, *lazi* is more fluid and porous, not subscribing to *T* and *puo's* relatively rigid role-differentiation. According to Wong (1999, p. 256), college educated *lazi* in Taiwan tend to call themselves "*bu fen*" (not differentiating), *bu fen pien T* (not differentiating but leaning toward *T*) and *bu fen pien puo* (not differentiating but leaning toward *puo*).[23]

In addition to its role fluidity, *lazi* is also less *yang pai* or "Westernized" than *kuer*. Even though *lazi* can be easily translated into American English as "lez" (an abbreviation of "lesbian"), *lazi* is more indigenous because it is originated from the main character's name in Qiu Miaojing's novel, *Journal of a Crocodile* (1994). In 1995, Qiu committed suicide in the Montmarte quarter of Paris, France, where she studied as a foreign student from Taiwan. Since then, many *nu tongzhi* and female *kuer* worship her like a cult figure. As indigenous as *nu tongzhi*, *lazi* is more playful and irreverent. Ultimately, *lazi*/lez becomes a popular term in Taiwan, especially on Websites and in chatroom conversations.

From nu tongzhi to lazi, from kuer to T/puo, I feel directly and indirectly the pulse of the United States–lesbian, queer, butch and femme. Yet, Taiwanese nu nu *connections emerge with different contours and vibes, vibrating inside me, opening up channels for a new kind of* chi[24] *running through me. But the voices of womanists–radical women of color–and queers who are not white are yet to reach the shores of Taiwan, its academy and public/private discourse, and vice versa.*

I have a deep sense of unease, longing for a different kind of connection. Perhaps, by crossing the ocean and the Internet between Taiwan and the United States, transcending nations and states, more words and spirits will come to speak to me.

THIRD AWAKENING: KUAER, A NEW NAME FOR "TRANSNATIONAL WOMANIST QUARE"

Queer theory[25] and the gay liberation movement have increased the visibility of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders in the United States. However, black womanists and radical women of color have articulated and challenged a fundamental elision–sexual minorities who are not white, male, and affluent remain relatively invisible in their different localities. Barbara Smith, a long time organizer and cofounder of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, confronts this elision and the practical impact it has on grassroots political activity:

> In most cases countercampaigns against the right are led by white gays and lesbians who have little idea how to communicate with and work effectively with members of the Black community. The racism, white solipsism, and elitism that traditionally dominate the mainstream white gay male political agenda spell absolute disaster when what is at stake is changing our own communities' attitudes about issues of sexual orientation and civil rights. (1995/2000, p. 173)

This is not merely a local/national problem. It is inscribed in and produced through "theory":

> I am particularly struck by the fact that for the most part queer theory and queer politics, which are currently so popular, offer neither substantial antiracist analysis nor practice.[26] (1999, p. 18)

Forging coalition politics and building communities among people who exist "as women, as people of color, and as queer," Vera Miao remarks:

> Narratives of rejection and disillusionment by many Asian American lesbians and bisexual women, whose exclusion is caused by the homophobia of racial and ethnic communities and the racism of predominantly white queer populations, are only a few painful interventions in prevailing definitions of "home" and "community." (1998, p. 70)

Addressing the same problem in *Text & Performance Quarterly*, one of the leading journals in Communication Studies, E. Patrick Johnson (2001) recently offered "quare studies," an invention that dreams of the forgotten localities inhabited by shadowy figures–black, poor, male and female–multiply erased in the incubating but hegemonic queer hierarchies. Quare studies, according to Johnson, addresses what is left out[27] in queer theory:

> While queer theory has opened up new possibilities for theorizing gender and sexuality, like a pot of gumbo cooked too quickly, it has failed to live up to its full critical potential by refusing to accommodate *all* the queer ingredients contained inside its theoretical pot. (2001, p. 18)

Johnson, in other words, offers quare theory to redress the omissions of queer theory, featuring the specificities of gays and lesbians of color. His invention emphasizes race and class as interrelated dimensions of sexuality. It pays attention to communities, embodied performativity, and theory in the flesh, taking an interventionist stance in performing critical praxis.

I fully embrace Johnson's move from *queer* to *quare.* Here is a theory that is not merely brilliant but timely and useful. Yet to understand the discursive amnesia in *nu nu* connections in Taiwan and to push theorizing's critical potential, I cannot but move further into *transnational womanist quare studies*. My rearticulation is "womanist" because I insist on noting gendered and racialized experiences in specific localities, honoring the black women and radical women of color who have taught me many important lessons.[28] My rearticulation is "quare" because, like Johnson, I can no longer stomach the naturalized presence of homophobia in heteronormative communities or whiteness in queer communities. Finally, my rearticulation is also "transnational" because I live in an increasingly globalized world that is desperately in need of critical praxis (Hegde, 1998; Shome, 1996, 1999) beyond the reach of International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization; and I resist the technologies of global domination on the Third World, wittingly or unwittingly exercised by progressive First World *identity academicians*, be they feminists, anti-racists, poststructuralists, Marxists, or queer theorists (Kaplan & Grewal, 1994). In sum, my critical rearticulation[29] speaks to the importance of quare theory and quare coalition politics, making a transnational link between and beyond Taiwanese quare wo/men and radical quare wo/men in the United States.

Resonating with the sensibility of quare theory without fulminating against queer studies, I extend *tongzhi* and *kuer* further into *kuaer, transnational*

womanist quare/s, a starting point for subversive strategy as wordplay. *Kuaer* is a transliteration of two Chinese characters *kua* and *er*. *Er* literally means child/children. Elsewhere I defined it: ". . . the function of *Er* is like the y added to a person's name in English, for example, Jimmy, Jenny, Tommy. It makes one sound childlike" (Lee, 1999, p. 297). Rather than being childish, *er* connotes vibrant energy, the ability to grow and to learn new things, and is consistent with the move to originality and away from the banal. *Kua* lends itself to multiple meanings. Depending on its tonal differentiations, *Kua* may mean crossing, praised or proud/boastful. Together, *Kuaer* has many shades and colors: *Children who cross horizons. Children who are praised. Children who are proud/boastful. Children who cross worlds and understand quare and womanist politics. Transnational womanist quare children who are proud and praised and whose critical consciousness is multi-racial, multi-sexual, multi-gendered, and multi-class-based. Kuaering* queer theory, my move to a transnational womanist quare theory and politics affords me a more critical assessment of the Chinese *nu nu* world, from *zi shu nu* and *bu luo jia* to *kuer*, *nu tong zhi*, and *lazi*. One of the main differences between the 19th century and the 1990s *nu nu* worlds lies in whether reform is explicit or not. Topley comments on marriage resistance practice as "nonorthodox but nonreformist" (1975, 68). The *nu tongzhi* movement, on the other hand, is consciously reformist, asking for equal rights in marriage, family, employment and personal relationships. The former embraced an ambiguous "celibacy," while the latter champions unambiguous "sexual pleasure."

Both marriage resistance and *nu tongzhi* movement are made possible by women's increased level of education/literacy and the ability to be economically independent. The former phenomenon originated among working classes aided by the silk industry in areas where international trades were prevalent and Western imperialism was dominant; and the latter movement originated with metropolitan elite classes assisted by Western human rights discourse and critical academic discourse, including feminism, postmodern and post-structuralism, lesbian/gay and queer theory (Ho, 2000). What is important to ponder are the opportunities given to the unattached women in the midst of domestic industrialization and foreign imperialism at the turn of the 20th century. What is also important to mark is that, in contemporary Taiwan, the discursive existence and histories of subaltern *nu tongzhi*–those who are from the non-elite classes,[30] factory workers, the modern equivalent of *zi shu nu* and *bu luo jia*, those who are non-Han people, and those who live in rural areas and do not go to college–remain in the shadows.

Kuaering queer theory, our struggles will remain multifaceted and both within and from outside. Standing where we are, we need to organize against what Patricia Hill Collins calls the "matrix of domination" (1990) in our local communities transnationally, heeding how multiple systems of hierarchy in race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality and education work *together* (not in isolation) to create domination, inequality, and opportunities. This call speaks

to the bind articulated by Audre Lorde: "Within the lesbian community I am black, and within the black community I am a lesbian" (1999, p. 307). It resonates with Shane Phelan's urging of critical practices:

> We have to stand where we are, acknowledging the links and contradictions between ourselves and other citizens of the world, resisting the temptations to cloak crucial differences with the cloak of universality and to deny generalities for fear of essentialism. Only in this way will we be able to be free from the domination that lives both within and around us. (1993, p. 786)

Search your hearts and thoughts and let me ask you, "Does the name kuaer make you nervous? Does it stretch your horizons and help you see erasures that once elided you? Does it point to new directions of 'primary intensity' for you? Do you find kuaer yo yi ci *(meaningful; interesting/intriguing; romantically engaging)?"*

POSTSCRIPT

I have labored in two fields of human communication–critical intercultural communication and postcolonial womanist rhetoric. I believe that my research and theorizing is inherently *political* and I work to dismantle hierarchical injustice created by *intersectionality* (i.e., disfavored combinations of race, class, gender, nationality, etc.). I have been voicing the importance of gender, race and transnational/postcolonial power differences in the understanding of human communication. Yet, the lack of dialogue between radical women of color and women who do "high theorizing" in poststructuralism and postcolonialism profoundly disturbs me. I am further troubled by my own deferral in addressing an aspect of intersectionality–sexuality.

A few years ago, in an essay on antifootbinding rhetoric in China, I had to admit, "My femaleness does not address the voices of lesbians living during the footbinding eras" (1998, p. 29). Recently, in a co-authored piece on critical intercultural communication, I asked a question: "We talk about intersectionality and multiple dimensions of oppression. What will a concrete intercultural communication project look like if intersectionality is deeply integrated rather than given lip service? What are the dimensions usually left out? I personally do not see a lot of issues regarding 'sexuality' raised" (Collier et al., 2001, p. 273). Awakened by Audre Lorde's remark, "I simply do not believe that one aspect of myself can possibly profit from the oppression of any other part of my identity" (1999, p. 306), I vow to work in areas that do stretch beyond my earlier consciousness. To go beyond my frequent use of "etc." or the apologia of "future research should," this essay is an "otherwise" project.

*Kuaer*ing queer theory, I have made a race-conscious, womanist, and transnational turn at the metatheoretical level. Linking the genealogy from queer to quare and from *kuer* to *kuaer*, I have also made an honest effort to understand and theorize the *nu nu* world in Taiwan at the dawn of a new millennium. But this is not so abstract as it may sound to both those who relish and those who scoff at the merely academic. Beyond "project" and "work," it carries with it a sensual, personal dimension or, better, commitment. I refuse to abandon the poetic in this personal/political struggle. I also strive to perform what Michael Awkward (1999), an African American literary scholar, calls "autocritography"–a self-reflexive academic act that strategically foregrounds multiple genres and provides critical accounts, both institutional and personal, for the production of a scholar and his/her professional concerns (p. 7). Stated differently, my project is a layered reflection on my own marginalities and privileges and how I negotiate them and turn them into scholarly inquiries (Yep, 1998).

Ultimately, I wonder who would invite me and whom I would invite to have dinner? A peacock feather note to these kuaers: Ziao Yi and Ziao Wei (my lazi *friends), Audre Lorde, S. and M. (two Mormon feminist friends), Y. S. (my* kuaer *friend from Europe), Moraga and Anzaldúa, Shu Yuon (my* kuaer *friend crossing three continents), Barbara Smith, E. Patrick Johnson, Mab Segrest, and more. I see their voices and they hear my dreams. Awakened to each other's dreams and dreaming each other's awakening, our crossing is, through and through, kuaer.*

NOTES

1. It means energy running through the human body.

2. My quest here echoes the journey outlined in Buddy Goodall Jr.'s new ethnography (2000): "I couldn't answer a lot of these questions. But raising them, and finding narrative methods of inquiry to explore them, opened my ethnographic self to a new *rhetorical* frontier of inquiry. I found a way to write about how experiences of the ineffable shape the everyday. I learned what it means to 'read' between the lines of lived experience a variety of alternative interpretive possibilities. I became narratively involved in how individual life quests and communal participation figure into a larger puzzle about human purpose and agency" (p. 188). What concerns me here in this "going after" project lies less in finding answers than experiencing an embodied and evocative process of co-creation with you, my readers and myself. Pursuing shared subjectivities, I experiment with a cacophony of voices as well as genre multiplicity in this essay. See also Kenneth Gergen's works (1999, 2000) for similar advocacy of multiple writing styles and a fundamental rethinking of intellectual/research purposes.

3. The inspiration for my use of personal and scholarly voices in italicized and non-italicized print comes from Michael Awkward's book, *Scenes of Instruction* (1999). As defined and explained in the postscript of this essay, I also perform his genre/method of "autocritography" throughout my writing here.

4. My inspiration comes from Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989, pp. 15-20).

5. Discursive amnesia is defined as "much deeper levels of forgetting, levels far beyond the need of a censor, and levels created both positively through accretions and endorsed recollection (official histories) and negatively through lack of reward (under-funded histories)" (Lee & Wander, 1998, p. 154).

6. I want to make it clear that discursive amnesty is not a wholesale, one-size-fits-all deal. It has to come with a specific ideological shift upheld by a critical community, a community that learns and interrogates forms of "discursive amnesia" and is persuaded by alternative, genealogical histories. The shift such a community urges is not to turn to *dualistic reversal* (e.g., from "whites as superior" to "whites as racists" or "queers as deviant" to "queers as oppressed") but to an anti-unearned-entitlement based program for social change and social justice.

7. I use this term to denote the relationships sensitized by Adrienne Rich's "lesbian existence" in Chinese/Taiwanese contexts. *Nu* means "female/s" and *guan xi* means relationship/s or connections. Together, *nu nu* means female-female and *nu nu guan xi* means the relationships/connections between/among women.

8. One phrase that carries two meanings is called *shuang guan yu* in Mandarin Chinese. Its equivalent in English is double entendre, defined as "a word or expression used in a given context so that it can be understood in two ways, esp. when one meaning is indelicate or risqué" (*The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, 1971, p. 428). "*Yo yi ci*," here, is an example of triple entendre, which means (1) possessing meaning, (2) interesting/intriguing, and (3) romantically interested.

9. See Rich's essay, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (1980/1993). I was particularly affected by her appeal:

> To take the step of questioning heterosexuality as a "preference" or "choice" for women–and to do the intellectual and emotional work that follows–will call for a special quality of courage in heterosexually identified feminists, but I think the rewards will be great: a freeing-up of thinking, the exploring of new paths, the shattering of another great silence, new clarity in personal relationships. (p. 239)

Nevertheless, I am aware of objections to her view. For example, Esther Newton (1993) suggests those who work on lesbian cultures and identities not "be gobbled up" by detouring into "generic women's networks or groupings" (p. 538). Personally, I endorse Rich's view. For me, *nu nu guan xi* echoes Rich's definition of lesbian existence, which means "woman-identified experience" and "forms of primary intensity between and among women" (p. 239). But I prefer *nu nu guan xi* or *nu nu* in abbreviation rather than a transliteration of Rich's concept in order to emphasize women-women connections in Taiwanese/Chinese contexts.

10. *Kuaer* is a transliteration, using the pinyin system, of two Mandarin Chinese characters *kua* and *er*. *Kuaer* has the same pronunciation as "quare" coined by E. Patrick Johnson in his ground breaking essay, " 'Quare' Studies or (Almost) Everything I Know about Queer Studies I Learned from My Grandmother" (2001). As will be explained later in this essay, I appropriate existing words, both Mandarin Chinese and African American, to coin a richly layered term, *kuaer*, to name a coalitional-based positionality–"transnational womanist quare." I urge a transnational study of sexuality with related dimensions of inequality (race, gender, class, and educational background) firmly in mind.

11. *Tong* means the same, *xing* denotes gender/sex/sexuality, and *lian* refers to romantic love.

12. Topley (1975) provides two possible explanations for the meanings of *jin lan hui*:

> James Liu of Stanford University has suggested to me that it may be derived from the following passage in the *I-Ching*: "When two persons have the same heart its sharpness can cut gold; words from the same heart have a fragrance like the orchid." Winston Hsieh has suggested that the term may be a metaphor referring to structure–i.e., that such associations may "bud" or divide into subgroups as they enlarge, just as orchids bud into several flowers on one stem. (p. 76)

13. Topley did her research in the early 1950s and in 1973 in Hong Kong (p. 69). She attempted to offer historical insights into "marriage resistance" among Cantonese women living in a small area for roughly one hundred years, from the early 19th to the early 20th century.

14. I use the Pinyin phonetic system to translate Chinese in this essay. It differs from Topley's translation.

15. This sect was said to derive from the White Lotus Sect. The Qing government in the North suppressed it. This religion entered the marriage resistance areas in the mid-nineteenth century.

16. Translated literally, *Bao* means "newspaper." It is important to note that *Ai Bao* is a quarterly newsletter/magazine not a daily newspaper. For this reason, I use "magazine" rather than "newspaper" throughout the essay.

17. There are three offenses against *xiao* (filial piety). The worst offense is not having male offspring.

18. After 1987, together with the sexual minorities' movement, Taiwan also witnessed unprecedented energy in women's movement, environmental movement and labor movement, challenging "ruling class Confucianism" and opening up political spaces for dissenting viewpoints (Lee et al., 1995, p. 280), marking a transition into a more "democratic" state (Chiang, 1998, p. 380).

19. I do not mean to imply that the use of the term *tongzhi* is uncontested. For an example of such a controversy, see e-mail exchanges triggered by a polemic individual, LuvBangor, after the 1998 *tongzhi* conference in Hong Kong (Lu, 1999, pp. 335-343). LuvBangor indicted that the 1998 conference was part of an "'anti-American style' gay movement" and objected to the use of *tongzhi* in the conference title: "Finally, stop using that fucking word 'Tongzhi,' no one want[s] to be a god damn communist" (LuvBangor, 1999, pp. 336-37).

20. In 1994, Ta-wei Chi, Ling Hong, and Tan-mou Dan coined this term, *kuer*, which is a transliteration of "queer" (Chi, 1997, p. 9 & p. 17). A revised entry on *kuer* in *Little Kuer Encyclopedia* is reprinted in Chi's book (Hong et al., 1997, pp. 55-57).

21. While I agree with Tan's interpretation, "It [*Kuer*] tends generally to denote resistance to mainstream culture and a deliberately pariah stance that aims for subversion. In contrast, *tongzhi* tends to denote more reformist tendency" (2001, p. 134, footnote 13), I disagree with Tan's view that *tongzhi* and *kuer* are both translations of "queer" (see Tan's footnotes 7 and 13). Considering historically different political and social constraints in the United States and Taiwan, I argue in this essay that *tong xing lian* is analogous to "homosexuality," *tongzhi* analogous to "lesbian/gay/bisexual," and *kuer* analogous to "queer."

22. For an excellent essay on lesbian tomboys in Taiwan, see Chao (2001).

23. For a nuanced analysis of *lazi* sensibilities and their heterogeneities, challenging the simple and uncritical dichotomy of *T* and *puo*, see Zhang Juenfeng's field research, *Love's Free Style* (2001).

24. A reader of my earlier draft asked, "You might want to explain what you mean here, Wenshu. What can you imagine? What does it feel like? What kinds of transformations are possible? Tell us! It is so wonderful. You must not tease us. . . ." I drew a

blank facing this new but ineffable energy (*chi*). Each time I tried to articulate it in a question-and-answer way, I failed. Then it suddenly dawned on me, recalling a passage in a powerful novel written by Alice Walker, ". . . our affair wasn't like any affair you're likely to read about in *Playboy*. It had this incredible nurturing quality; it was the kind of affectionate sex that seemed designed to reconnect me to myself, to keep me alive" (1998, p. 132). This new *chi* has helped to "reconnect me to myself, to keep me alive," and an incredibly nurturing relationship, in my view, knows no boundaries marked by homosexuality, bisexuality or heterosexuality.

25. Given the limited space in this essay, I do not provide a systematic treatment of queer theory. For a good starting point to grasp the slippery semantics of queer theory and its genealogy, see William B. Turner (2000).

26. It's hard to find articles challenging racism in the gay and lesbian movement. An example is in Brandt (1999): "One of the biggest frustrations in compiling this book was trying to find a contributor willing to discuss the phenomenon of gay racism . . . on the topic of racism in the history of the gay liberation movement, I was faced with a great deal of discomfort and silence" (p. 9).

27. My thinking benefits from the critical scholarship of Philip Wander, a rhetorical critic, who advanced the theoretical terms "third persona" (1984) and "rhetorical contextualization" (1996) to address systematically what's left out and degraded in the discourse authorized by hegemonic ideologies. What Wander argues for is collective struggle critical of its own omissions: "Political struggle too often overlooks the claims of the poor, the immigrants, the minorities, the wives and daughters of the elites, the uneducated, the foreign, the others we are led to ignore, objectify, ridicule, or eliminate" (2001, p. 287).

28. For a systematic introduction of womanism into the communication discipline, see my earlier writing on whiteness and "gendered colorism" (Lee, 1999).

29. For a similar move to connect postcolonial women and minority women of color in literary criticism see Fawzia Afzal-Khan (1996). This coalition refuses to let globalized demagogues profit from socially constructed fissures via the logic of divide and rule.

30. Y. Antonia Chao's work is an exception. Her research focused on "bar-oriented, working-class individuals" and her informants "were working class or had limited access to cultural capital, in contrast with lesbians who have participated in Taiwan's gay rights movement since the early 1990s. These women are exclusively students or graduates of prestigious colleges and universities, and are familiar with North American notions of gay rights and queer theory" (p. 208).

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