The making of China: The construction of Chineseness during the Beijing Olympics
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Communicating Chineseness in a De-imperialized World?

At 9:00 pm, 27 July 2012, twelve days to four years after the opening of the Beijing Olympics, the Opening Ceremony of the London Olympics was on the show. Director Danny Boyle presented a truly different opening ceremony from that of the Beijing Olympics. It was a mixture of self-reflections on industrialization, world wars, and women’s rights movements; symbolic British pop culture (such as James Bond, Mr. Bean, rock and roll music, Harry Potter); the British celebrities (e.g., Kenneth Branagh, David Beckham, Paul McCartney, and Queen Elizabeth II); and the national “pride” — the public health care. Compared to the “pressuring” majestic spectacle of the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics, the presentation style of this Opening Ceremony was regarded to be more individualistic and joyous, equipped with deliberately embedded humanism and liberalist values. The London Opening Ceremony also did not include the ancient British history (before industrialization) but focused on the modernization and the contemporary pop culture, which formed a sharp difference to the heavy reliance on traditional culture and ancient history in the Beijing Opening Ceremony. Beijing highlighted the grand technology, such as space exploration and the largest LED screen, while London paid homage to Tim Berners-Lee, who invented the Internet.

The differences between the opening ceremonies of the Beijing and the London Olympics reflect the different situations that Beijing and London are in. The United Kingdom, as a long-existing power that had hosted three Olympics, was one of the major propellants of industrialization and modernization, and is still an important power in the world: although its political, economic, and military power declined in the twentieth century, its cultural industry (one of the main resources of soft power) has remained prominent in the past several decades. Meanwhile, China is still a rising

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power trying hard to “catch up” with the world (which is still largely dominated by the Western countries): the Beijing Olympics was widely believed to be China’s “coming out” party.

Therefore, in the two Opening Ceremonies, London indulged itself in presenting the British leading role in the world industrialization and in the contemporary global cultural industry, while Beijing cautiously presented China as an “amicable” global power. The idealized “China” constructed in the Ceremony was a normal, orderly, prosperous, modernized, and peace-loving country, which partly was to demarcate the contemporary China from the “revolutionary” China. London straightforwardly highlighted the “humanistic values” (e.g., performances around the women’s rights movements, the homage paid to the unattended and to the construction workers, and so on). On the contrary, Beijing very cautiously presented its performances, eager to show China’s friendliness to the world. To minimize the association with “China threat,” Beijing deliberately coated its articulation with “determined romanticism” and “world universalism” (humanistic values and the western aesthetics) and avoided any direct “political” representations (e.g., the socialist ideology).

Similar to the highlights of the British strengths in the modern and contemporary history in the Opening Ceremony of the London Olympics, the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics relied on Chinese grandiose ancient history and traditional culture to articulate a “new” set of Chineseness. With the discourses of history and culture, harmony, Chinese modernity, and “determine romanticism,” the idealized “China” was constructed as a normal, orderly, prosperous, and modernized country, as well as an amicable global power. Within this construction, the history and culture discourse was the main thread of the idealistic representations of China, showing China as a continual and glorious civilization that had greatly contributed to world and had always had a harmonious relationship with the world. The culture was also integrated into the construction of the Chinese idealistic and modernistic future: a harmony between human and nature, which is a cultural interpretation of the political rhetoric of “scientific development values.” These similarities and differences between Beijing and London open up possibilities for further discussions about the construction and mediation (and the accompanying contestations) of the new Chineseness and the new image(s) of China during the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics.
New Chineseness and Its Contestations

This dissertation examines how a “new” set of Chineseness was constructed in the Opening Ceremony — as an initiative to improve the image(s) of China in the world and to foster national identity inside China; and how this new Chineseness was mediated and responded to in the media in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and the English world. In chapter two, I have analyzed the systematic construction of this “new” set of Chineseness as the thematic core of the Opening Ceremony. With the interwoven discourses of history and culture, harmony, and Chinese modernity, this new Chineseness emphasized the Chinese particularity to distinguish China from the rest of world, mobilized dual universalisms to guarantee its acceptance, and meanwhile hinted at the potential of this set of Chineseness (at least some aspects of it) as an alternative to the Western modernity. This new set of Chineseness articulated an ideal China: China is a “superpower” with a long continuous history and grand culture, a harmonious society that has long been advocating and contributing to the harmonious world, and a modern and prosperous society with harmonious and scientific development values emphasizing green development and the harmony between human and nature. In addition to these essentialist narrations of the “tangible” Chineseness, the Opening Ceremony further constructed the temperament of the “new” Chinese: self-confident, friendly, romantic, and determined (with perseverance) to build an even better China. I argue that this “new” Chineseness was a twofold construction: On the one hand, it was arguably a “strategic essentialism” that aimed to internally foster national identity and externally improve China’s national image to facilitate its “rise” and “rejuvenation,” to strengthen its acceptance in the world (or at least the interactions with other countries), and to promote its soft power. On the other hand, in order for it to be accepted (especially in Western societies), it was constructed with a sense of “to-be-looked-at-ness,” a state-prescribed non-Western cultures’ self-representation, constructed or produced with dominant Western perspectives, aesthetics, and production methods.

Through the examination of the “thickening” and “centering” (Hepp and Couldry 2010) of the Opening Ceremony, the following chapters have analyzed the responses and contestations from media in different media cultures. Chapter three
examines how the binary images of China as “cuteley panda” and “evil dragon” were mobilized, and how the particular interests in (criticizing) the “evil dragon” image were embedded in the live/rebroadcasts of the Opening Ceremony on the television channels of the English world. BBC, as a public television channel, appropriated the live broadcast of the Opening Ceremony (by criticizing the new Chineseness) to reaffirm the “public value” it upheld, echoing the criticisms that proliferated in the Western media before the opening of the Beijing Olympics. NBC as a commercial television channel, trying to gain maximum commercial interests out of its rebroadcast, intentionally spectacularized the Opening Ceremony and presented relatively “friendly” commentary on the “new” Chineseness and the Opening Ceremony. Nonetheless, NBC still had to negotiate a space between the commercial interests and the overall media atmosphere that tended to criticize China. However, despite the ostensible differences, both television channels articulated China as an “other”: for NBC, China was an exotic and Orientalistic “other”; while for BBC, China was an evil and authoritarian one. Therefore, although the “new” Chineseness and the Opening Ceremony were constructed with “to-be-looked-at-ness,” this new Chineseness was rather contested on BBC and NBC, which for some observers means “a weak soft power” of the Opening Ceremony and the Beijing Olympics in the Western societies (Manzenreiter 2010; see also Luo and Richeri 2012; Bonde 2009; Naka and Kobayashi 2010; Tarantino and Carini 2010; Papa 2010; Hong 2010; Mangan and Ok 2010). Meanwhile, these centerings have provided another case revealing the obstinacy of (cultural) imperialism and cold-war mentality in the English media.

In chapter four I analyze the reception and contestations of the new Chineseness and the Opening Ceremony on Hong Kong’s and Taiwan’s televisions. I argue that the new Chineseness was itself rather monolithic and sino-centric (containing few representations of the ethnic cultures and local cultures from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Chinese diaspora communities), thus it was not so effective in “uniting” Hong Kong and Taiwan as the organizers had wished. In the live broadcasts of the Opening Ceremony, Hong Kong and Taiwan presented a pendulum of Chinese identity: TVB (Hong Kong) tried to evade the local-identity issue in the broadcast, which exactly reaffirmed the existence of it; CTV (Taiwan) attempted to estrange Taiwan from mainland China, but it finally acknowledged the cultural connection and a shared identity of “we Chinese.” Although Chinese traditional culture had, to some
extent, served as a cultural bond to unite mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, the culture alone was not sufficient to obliterate the geopolitical concerns among these regions, as we can see in the pendulum of Chinese identity in the live broadcasts of Hong Kong and Taiwan media. Thus, a set of more updated and inclusive “new” Chineseness (or other forms of articulations), which can better match the pervasive hybridity in the Chinese communities across mainland China and the world, is called for to serve as a better identity basis for (at least) those who are willing to engage or reengage in some sort of Chinese identity.

Chapter five examines the responses and contestations on the Chinese Internet. I argue that, in 2008 when patriotism was highly mobilized, the six critical discourses to the new Chineseness and the Opening Ceremony had more or less reinforced the new Chineseness, instead of undermining it. The critical discourses related to the new Chineseness were not necessarily objecting the concept and contents of the new Chineseness; instead, these critical discourses (and the antagonisms among themselves) worked like different descriptions given by different groups to depict the ideal representation of China, which unexpectedly unified these groups under the name of new Chineseness. Thus, the critical discourses and their internal antagonisms had turned the new Chineseness into a zero institution (a slippery signifier with various versions of signified meaning), and worked (more or less) to enhance the new Chineseness and the legitimacy of the Chinese government. This chapter also provides a case demonstrating that although there are still quite pervasive viewpoints regarding the Internet as just a supplement to the traditional media, the Internet as a “new” media covers no fewer audiences, and sometimes involves deeper with the social, political, and cultural issues than traditional media like television. The new media is independent (and not supplementary) and no less “powerful,” if not more powerful, than the traditional media.

The examination of the different “thickenings” and “centerings” of the new Chineseness and the Opening Ceremony resonates with what Hepp and Couldry (2010) argue that in the contemporary world, the global media event is highly localized: the local broadcasting is not necessarily “loyal” to the script of the organizer; the “integrative” moment of media events is not something, as Dayan and Katz assume, “that may be assumed in advance as characteristic,” but “something uncertain that must be investigated from one case to another” (Hepp and Couldry
This approach reintroduces the power relations into the study of media events in the global age.

Despite the different centerings and the contestations, we can see from the various chapters in this dissertation that some kinds of “we/s,” though not a shared global “we,” might persist in the mediation and contestation of the new Chineseness and the Opening Ceremony. Chapter three reveals a common preference of and particular interests in “negative” reports of China in the English media (and arguably in most Western media), a cold-war mentality, and an everlasting perspective seeing China as an “other.” Chapter four demonstrates that a certain kind of “common cultural identity” is observable in the Hong Kong’s, Taiwan’s, and mainland China’s live broadcasts of the Opening Ceremony. Chapter five demonstrates that the criticisms to the Chineseness on the Chinese Internet have more or less reaffirmed the new Chineseness.

However, despite these persisting “we/s” in the global mediation of the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics, the contestations revealed in the chapters are reflections of cultural and political differences that might lead to further communication crashes between China and the Western countries (and other countries like those in Southeast Asia), and between mainland China, and Hong Kong and Taiwan. These crashes, at worst, may deepen the already existing tensions among these countries, regions, and beyond. In the following, I will try to scratch the surface of developing more constructive communication strategies and tactics, with Kuan-Hsing Chen’s idea of “de-imperialism” (K-H. Chen 2010).

**Communicating Chineseness in a De-imperialized World?**

1. **Should the Western Media Be De-imperialized?**

As I have discussed in chapter three, the Anglo-American televisions’ centering of the Opening Ceremony reflects the overall Janus-faced image of China in the Western society and the particular interest in an “evil” China in the Western media. This particular interest in negatively reporting China is not a single case in the English television, but a common practice in the Western society. In comparison with the
Opening Ceremony of the London Olympics, this interest is even more evident. One of the typical examples is the different performativity in reporting and commentating on the “omission” of the historical periods in the London and Beijing Opening Ceremonies. During the broadcast of the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics, BBC specifically criticized the “omissions” of the Chinese history from the Opium War to the Maoist China. As I have discussed in chapter one and chapter two, the omission of these periods was a gesture of friendliness (to articulate a discourse of a “harmonious world”) and a reflection of the Chinese government’s political disjuncture with radical Maoism. However, for BBC, this “omission” was a deliberate cover-up. Similar criticisms were pervasive in Anglo-American newspapers, as well as on television channels in other major Western societies. On the contrary, BBC, not being “impartial” as it claimed to be, totally “neglected” the missing of the history of British colonialism, imperialism, or slavery in the Opening Ceremony of the London Olympics. Hardly any major English newspaper even mentioned this “omission.”

These different thickenings reveal the obstinacy of the (cultural) imperialism and cold-war mentality in the Anglo-American media (and arguably the general Western media). This obstinacy is a reflection of the ongoing Western neo-imperialism in the form of globalization. The Taiwanese cultural studies scholar Kuan-Hsing Chen sees globalization rather as a process in which “capital-driven forces which seek to penetrate and colonize all spaces on the earth with unchecked freedom, and that in so doing have eroded national frontiers and integrated previously unconnected zones” (2004: 4). This neo-imperialism is an inheritance and development of the imperialist world order built after World War II, when the United States and other major Western countries established a West-dominated world order through the mixture of Cold War and imperialism. With this mixture of neo-imperialism and cold-war mentality, the Anglo-American televisions and press media

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146 See Papa 2010: 1976; Tarantino and Carini 2010: 1275. Shiozawa Eiichi [鹽澤英一], Kyodo News Agency’s China correspondent, commented on this “omission” in a similar way (in a softer tone, though) in an interview in 2010: “it was quite out of my expectation that there was no performance about [the history after] establishment of PRC in the Opening Ceremony of the [Beijing] Olympics.”

147 I have briefly scanned through more than six major newspapers in Anglo-America (including Washington Post, New York Times, and Wall Street Journal in the United States, and Guardian, The Times, Daily Telegraph in the United Kingdom), but there was not a single article reporting or criticizing this “neglect.”
(and arguably general Western media) are more likely to view China as more or less an enemy or dangerous challenger of the established West-dominated world order, and are more interested in the negative reports of China (discussed in chapter one and chapter three; see also Brownell 2008; deLisle 2008). At best, China is viewed as an exotic or Orientalistic “other,” as we can see in the case of NBC.

As I have mentioned in previous chapters, these “negative” representations of China in the Western media have been fueling the already strong nationalism in China. Similarly, this way of reporting China is also likely to fuel the skepticism about China’s rise in Western societies (as well as in Taiwan and Hong Kong, which will be discussed later). This situation thus calls for interventions, like Kuan-Hsing Chen’s idea of “de-imperialism.” Chen proposes that if we wish to establish “a peaceful new world” in the globalized times (but not meaning to build a “new” world that is dominated by new forms of imperialism or colonialism), then the world must perform a process of de-imperialism, a triadic process of de-imperialization, de-colonization, and de-Cold War, which should be undertaken simultaneously (2010: Introduction). Firstly, for the colonizers and imperialists, de-imperialization means that they must “examine the conduct, motives, desires, and the consequences of the imperialist history that has formed its own subjectivity”, and then reflect on the relationship with their former (and current) colonies (ibid.: 4). De-colonization means, for the colonized, to “reflectively work out a historical relation with the former colonizer, culturally, politically, and economically” (ibid.: 3). Meanwhile, de-imperialization must go with de-Cold War, a process “to confront and explore the legacies and ongoing tensions of the cold war” (ibid.:4). Chen argues that these three processes “have to proceed in concert, precisely because colonization, imperialization, and the cold war have become one and the same historical process” after World War II (ibid.). Here, if we follow Kuan-Hsing Chen’s argument (2010) and Edward Said’s *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), then should the Anglo-American televisions and press media (and arguably the general Western media) actively involve in a process of “self-negation, self-critique, and self-rediscovery” to reflect on the cultural influence of imperialism and cold-war mentation, and to facilitate change? If even imperialism and cold-war mentality in media representations are not totally reflected upon and removed, a peaceful world is hardly imaginable, indeed.
2. Should Chineseness Be De-colonized and De-imperialized?

Although it has never been totally colonized, China had been a “semi-colony” of various Western countries and Japan from the first Opium War (1839–1942) to 1949, with Hong Kong and Macao remaining as colonies of the United Kingdom and Portugal until 1997 and 1999 respectively. Meanwhile, it is a pervasive viewpoint in mainland China that China, as many other non-Western societies, has always been an object of Western cultural (for some critics political and economic as well) imperialism. The feeling of being humiliated by Western (and Japanese) colonialism and imperialism is fueling strong antagonistic or revengeful nationalism in China (discussed in chapter five; see also Callahan 2010; Shen and Breslin 2010).

In contemporary China, the patriotic emotions against Japan and Western countries (especially from the neo-patriots and neo-Leftists, as I have discussed in chapter five), and an aspiration to be a superpower equivalent, or even superior, to the Western countries is ubiquitous in China. Although the new Chineseness constructed an “always peace-loving China” and aspired to a “harmonious world” (which resonated with China’s constant claim and promise of a “peaceful rise”), the proposition of the Chinese modernity as an alternative to the Western modernity was more or less a reflection of a strong nationalistic aspiration, though in a softer tune. This nationalistic sentiment also infiltrated the idea of improving China’s “soft power” through the construction of new Chineseness, the Opening Ceremony, and the overall Beijing Olympics (and many other similar campaigns like the Shanghai Expo in 2010, the national image branding in 2011), as I have discussed in chapter one and chapter two.

However, this setting of the construction of the new Chineseness and the Opening Ceremony may give rise to questions. The soft power is, after all, an instrumental power. As Joseph Nye himself admits: “No country likes to feel manipulated, even by soft power” (2004: 25). The discussion on the relationship between “American soft power” and “American cultural imperialism” emerges as soft power theory proliferates (M. Fraser 2003; Fan 2008; Schiller 1991). For example, soon after Joseph Nye published his first paper on soft power in 1990, Herbert

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148 In chapter five I have mentioned some discourses related to this viewpoint. Generally, the neo-Leftists and neo-patriots are more likely to share this viewpoint.
Schiller proposes a strong argument against soft power: “Soft power, as Nye defines it, is essentially the control of communications and definitional power. This is cultural imperialism with a semantic twist” (1991: 18). Some arguments are less acute, for example, Matthew Fraser cautiously dissociates his research on soft power from the study of cultural imperialism, but he still claims that in the post-cold-war world, the United States has become “an undisputed imperial power whose soft-power umbrella overreaches the entire world” (2003: 32). These critiques beg reflections on China’s soft power campaigns, such as the new Chineseness and the Opening Ceremony. For example, if the Chineseness is an alternative to the Western modernity, how and why will the Western societies not resist this construction? How and why will they abandon the imagination of China as an “evil dragon” (which will discussed later)? If the new Chineseness does uphold an idealism of “peaceful coexistence” or “harmonious world,” then is it also necessary for China to simultaneously reflect on its own potential “neo-imperialism” within the idea of “Chineseness as an alternative modernity”?

Drawing on Edward Said’s *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Kuan-Hsing Chen argues that:

> Said’s analysis convincingly demonstrates that — consciously or not — cultural discourses [of colonialism and imperialism], together with cultural practices and politics, produces a system of domination that extends throughout the space of the cultural imaginary, shaping the parameters of thought and defining the categories of the dominant and the dominated. It justifies and affirms the imperialist right to expand, and it closes off possibilities for alternative modes of imagination. (2010: 25)

This dominant cultural system of colonialism and imperialism has practical restriction on the formerly “colonized.” In a similar vein, Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968) analyzes the colonial and imperial impulses in the former colonies. Kuan-Hsing Chen summarizes that Fanon’s analysis predicts a “structural experience common throughout the third world: colonization is followed by decolonization, which is then followed by a stage of internal colonization and eventually incorporation into the system of neocolonial capitalism” (K-H. Chen 2010: 23). For example, Chen regards Taiwan’s “Southward Advance” campaign in the 1990s
(which aimed to expand Taiwan’s political, economic, and cultural influence in Southeast Asia) as a typical case, he argues:

The ubiquity of the postcolonial trajectory, in which decolonization is followed by recolonization or neocolonization, shows that the ideological condition that permits the subimperial desire to take shape exists precisely because there has been no critical reflection on decolonization. (ibid.: 63)

As mentioned above and in chapter five, China has never been totally colonized, but it was a subject of capitalist imperialism from the 1840s to 1949, and has been a target of “new” cultural and economic imperialism since World War II. According to Kuan-Hsing Chen, it is also possible for China to be trapped in this neo-imperialism. For example, although the Beijing Olympics upheld a typical cosmopolitanism, China’s eagerness to strengthen its soft power and the suggestion of the Chineseness as an alternative to the Western modernity might open up the possibility of China moving toward neo-imperialism. Considering that China had long maintained a large empire in history that had several neighboring vassal states, this may not be a groundless concern. For example, the iconic Singaporean historian, Wang Gungwu, calls the rise of China in recent decades as the “fourth rise” of China, a successor of the previous three rises: Qin-Han unification of the first bureaucratic empire (roughly from third century BC to AD third century), Sui-Tang reunification (581 AD–907 AD), and the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368 AD–1912 AD) (G. Wang 2004: 312). During these rises, China had deepened its cultural impacts to its neighboring regions and countries (with its peak in the second rise). He proposes that the rise of China “needs to be seen in a longer perspective”: if we take the culture of modernity that originated from and is dominated by the Western culture, the fourth rise allows for “the possibility that China would so transform that culture of modernity in its own way that a new manifestation might emerge,” since China had a record during the past three rises that “Chinese culture had made universalist claims as a civilization” (ibid.). Similar to the previous three rises, the “new manifestation” might have significant influence on China’s neighboring countries and regions. Here the “new manifestation” of the culture of modernity is probably not identical to the new Chineseness constructed in the Opening Ceremony, but more like a more “sophisticated” and “developed” version that would emerge along with the development of this “fourth rise” in future.
However, no matter what it exactly is, this “new manifestation” more or less hints a “new” Chinese empire comparable to the previous three.

The strong and pervasive neo-patriotism and neo-Leftism (and traditionalism, to some extent) equipped with strong nationalism, may even push China further ahead in this direction, as we can observe in recent years. For example, China’s active role in solving the financial crisis and the succeeding fiscal cliff in the United States and the Euro Zone since 2009, and its military developments (e.g., the launch of the first aircraft carrier in 2012) have ignited stronger nationalistic sentiments that expect “stronger” communication with the West (and Japan). Under such circumstances, when China criticizes the West for “demonizing China,” should China also reflect on its possible involvement with “neo-imperialism” and, at least, develop more peacefully constructive communication strategies and tactics?

3. Should More Inclusive Chineseness Be Built Up through De-imperialized and De-Cold War Communication?

If the two issues discussed above are largely involved in the broad discussion on the “clash between China and the West,” the communication between mainland China, and Hong Kong and Taiwan is more complicated. In the following I will scratch the surface of this issue to imagine a more constructive communication among these regions.

The new Chineseness, as I have discussed in chapter two, did not contain any cultural representative of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Chinese diaspora communities (only the “Gaoshan Ethnicity [高山族],” referring to the indigenous Taiwan ethnic groups, was symbolically included in the rituals and ethnic performances), but focused on the Han culture in the central China. This monolithic or one-dimensional representation reflects the sino-centrism long held in mainland China, and a de facto negation of “local” cultures beyond the central China. Here the representational routine is a manifesting case of the official attitude that, by default, takes Hong Kong and Taiwan as a part of China, and Hong Kong and Taiwanese cultures as a marginal part of the central-Chinese culture.

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149 For more details, see Nye (2010) and Ross (2011).
However, the pendulum of identity in Hong Kong and Taiwan indicates the existence of localism in both places. In chapter three I have analyzed how the evasion of local identity on TVB implies the existence of the local identity resulting from the British colonialism for more than 150 years, and how the estrangement from mainland China on CTV indicates the *de facto* gulf between mainland China and Taiwan resulting from fifty-nine years of separation. One dimension I wish to add here is the legacy of Cold War. After World War II, it was the Cold War that redefined the territorial relationship in northeast Asia: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (and Philippines and Singapore in the southeast Asia) were united in the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) by the United States; while mainland China and North Korea were “demonized” as evil countries, enemy of the liberal world.\(^{150}\) The Cold War arguably ended in 1991 (the collapse of the Soviet Union); however, as Kuan-Hsing Chen argues, “[t]he effects of the cold war have become embedded in local history, and simply pronouncing the war to be over will not cause them to dissolve” (2010: 118). For example, in Tu Weiming’s idea of cultural China, the sentiment of anti-communism is manifest.\(^{151}\) In the commentary of the Opening Ceremony on CTV, the military tension, as part of the legacy and consequences of the Cold War, was still a key issue for the imagination of the relationship between mainland China and Taiwan. Research studies also show that the independence movement in Taiwan since the 1990s and the recent anti-mainland China protests in Hong Kong are also related to the legacy of the Cold War (Cummings 1999; Vukovich 2012).

Thus, it should not be surprising that in the commentary of the Opening Ceremony, CTV specifically alienated Taiwan from mainland China, and paid particular attention to the military connotations of the artistic performances, while contesting many aspects of the new Chineseness. Similarly, TVB’s deliberate alignment with mainland China was also a result of an uneasy relationship with mainland China. Also, the commentator’s focus on the interpretation of the Chinese culture implied their “indifference” or “resistance” to other aspects of the new

\(^{150}\) For more details please see Cummings (1999), K-H. Chen (2010: Introduction and chapter three).

\(^{151}\) A similar but more recent academic campaign is the articulation of the “Sinophone world.” The concept of “Sinophone,” literally Chinese-speaking people, refers to Chinese-speaking people across the world, including mainland China in the twentieth century. In the last decades, the concept was specifically rearticulated to exclude mainland China and to feature a separate “Sinophone world” (Shih 2004, 2007).
Chineseness. The relationship between mainland China, and Hong Kong and Taiwan is far more complicated than what I have discussed above and in chapter four. However, we can still see how the sino-centrism and the cold-war mentality have a strong impact on the communication among these regions. A de-imperialized and de-Cold War communication should be carried out simultaneously in these three regions in order to imagine a more constructive communication in these regions, and to negotiate a set of more updated and inclusive “new” Chineseness (or other forms of articulations) to serve as a better identity basis for at least those diaspora Chinese who are willing to engage or reengage in some of Chinese identity.

**Coda**

As Hepp and Couldry (2010) argue, in the globalized age, it is unlikely to expect “loyal” broadcasting and mediation of global media events. The global mediation of the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics and new Chineseness were thickened, centered, and contested very differently on various television channels and on the Chinese Internet. However, despite the differences, some common “we/s” are still observable in these centerings. More importantly, we can observe certain clues of neo-imperialism and cold-war mentality in the “we/s,” which may probably lead to more misunderstanding and conflicts. Thus, although I do not expect an identical, “loyal” mediation of global media events, I propose that mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and Western societies should imagine a less contentious relationship and more constructive mediascape through the processes of de-imperialization, de-colonialization, and de-Cold War in the meantime. It is vital for China to reflect upon the “humiliations” from the West (and Japan) and to resist the imperative of imagining a “new empire.” It is equally important for the Western media to reflect upon the imagination of China based on cold-war mentality, the particular interests in an “evil” China, and the neo-imperialist imagination of the world in which China should remain a “subordinated” partner. Also, in order to imagine a more peaceful relationship between mainland China, and Hong Kong and Taiwan (as well as the diaspora Chinese), de-imperialized and de-Cold War communication should be carried out simultaneously in these three regions.
It is true that the imagination and construction of a more peaceful world is far more complicated; and communication and mediation (especially that of global media events) are subject to complicated power relations. However, building more de-colonized, de-imperialized, and de-Cold War communication is a vital step, given the mighty power of media in constructing the reality.