but a picture of how the Jacquinot Safe Zone fit into this larger refugee relief context is missing here.

The result is that the Chinese population is depicted passively in *The Jacquinot Safe Zone* as victims. Agency seems to lie with the foreign community in the person of Jacquinot. Perhaps that was true for Shanghai during the Japanese occupation. The war lasted eight long years and touched most of China proper. By 1939, the central government was making a sincere effort at organizing refugee relief in central and southwestern China. As with Jacquinot’s safe zone, relief aid was inadequate to the needs of refugees as a whole. The numbers were too overwhelming and the condition of the refugees too desperate. Including those fleeing into and out of Shanghai, total estimates of the size of the refugee population at the national level run to 100 million for the entire war period. Still, what was achieved in the way of refugee relief by a number of bodies, public and private, with the largest number being served by the central government organizations, was impressive and important historically because it laid a foundation for the organization of social services in the People’s Republic of China and Republic of China on Taiwan. More attention to agency on the Chinese side, even in Shanghai, is needed.

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**Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific.** By SHU-MEI SHIH. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007. xiii, 243 pp. $60.00 (cloth); $22.95 (paper).

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Shu-mei Shih’s *Visuality and Identity* has much to recommend it. First, it is one of the most ambitious recent projects to reconfigure the parameters of Chinese studies. Second, it champions visuality as the most stimulating means of articulating issues of identity across the Pacific. Third, it offers a provocative reading of visual artists and products of assorted ideological persuasions and representational media. The introduction defines key concepts of visuality, identity, and the Sinophone. The first chapter addresses issues of flexibility, translatability, and minoritization, and focuses on Ang Lee. The second explores a feminist transnationality and analyzes cases of identity fragmentation and antagonism. Chapter 3 maps the geopolitics of desire by tracking images of “mainland sister” and “mainland cousin” in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The fourth chapter provides a short history of the “mainland” and traces the Taiwan media’s production of “eternal China.” Chapter 5 interrogates the allegorical mode by elaborating Fruit Chan’s tactics of the “mundane,” while the final chapter engages questions of empires, cosmopolitanism, and ethics. As Shih concerns herself mainly with the Sinophone concept, this review concentrates on her theoretical elaboration.

Shih defines the Sinophone as “a network of places of cultural production outside China and on the margins of China and Chineseness, where a historical
process of heterogenizing and localizing of continental Chinese culture has been taking place for several centuries” (p. 4). In addition to being territorial, Shih’s definition is binary, if not oppositional: center versus “margins,” “continental” versus overseas, “Zhongwen (Chinese)” versus “Huawen (Sinophone)” or “Sinitic” (p. 33), “Chinese culture” (Zhongguo wenhua) versus “Sino-culture” (zhonghua wenhua) or “Sinophone culture” (huayu wenhua) (p. 122). Shih is aware of multivalence: “The Sinophone is many things, and . . . cannot be contained by uniform definitions” (p. 35). Nonetheless, she dismisses the homeland myth in diaspora studies and endorses the notion of a counterhegemonic Sinophone, arguing, “in the unlikely event that the dominant Chinese relinquish the notion of cultural and linguistic authenticity, to accept that the Han is nothing but the name of a river, that the concept of ‘China’ itself is but a series of constructions over a long historical trajectory, the Chinese as such may then be replaced by the Sinophone as heterogeneous practices of language and culture” (p. 33). This concept, however, has problems: (1) Han designates the majority of people in China rather than merely a river name; (2) like “China,” “Sinophone” also is a controversial construction; and (3) mounting evidence proves that “Chinese” has rarely ceased to refer to “heterogeneous practices,” even during Mao’s totalitarian rule.

Definitional problems aside, Shih’s stated purposes are worth quoting. First, the Sinophone debunks the “Chinese diaspora,” which she conceives as “a universalizing category founded on a unified ethnicity, culture, language, as well as place of origin or homeland” and thus traceable to a “Han-centrism” (p. 23). Second, the Sinophone works “to delink language and nation” (p. 187) and to critique “Greater China” and “Cultural China,” which posit a homogenizing order. Third, Sinophone bridges existing academic fields, and Sinophone studies bring together Asian studies and Asian American studies (p. 46). As Ang Lee’s case of minoritization illustrates, the Sinophone promises “multidirectional critiques,” no longer bound by an either/or choice derived from a fixed identity (p. 190).

One of Shih’s insights is that “Sinophone visual practice [should] be situated both locally and globally” (p. 6). Considering her emphasis on “transitional” (p. 186), I suggest that “translocal” may be a better term than “local” to capture the value of heterogeneity and border-crossing in the Sinophone. Nonetheless, Shih has yet to solve the problem of how to conceptualize differences between spoken and written languages. Her privileging of the spoken over the written complicates her differentiation of Taiwan and Hong Kong: If “Taiwan is not non-China,” “not non-Japan,” “not non-West,” but simply “is Taiwan” (p. 138), then why is she confident that “Sinophone” is appropriate for Taiwan, while post-1997 Hong Kong “may inevitably cease to be a Sinophone community on the margins of China and Chineseness”? (p. 164). What makes Cantonese less counterhegemonic than “Taiwanese” (or Minnan dialect) in the Sinophone articulation? The imperative of the translocal reveals Shih’s exclusion of China and Chineseness from the Sinophone as a major weakness. Many cultural productions in Chinese inside China (e.g., dissident writing, underground film) are not only more counterhegemonic than Shih’s examples but also are more effective in exposing the “amnesia, violence, and imperial intention” (p. 183)
behind the construction of China and Chineseness. Excluding these productions from Sinophone studies on territorial terms is unconvincing. Despite her as yet unsettled conceptualization of the Sinophone, Shu-mei Shih is commended for challenging us to rethink geocultural politics in interdisciplinary studies. For its provocative arguments and readings, Visuality and Identity will remain a key reference in the ongoing debate in identity, ethnicity, and transnationality for years to come.

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Changing Lanes in China: Foreign Direct Investment, Local Governments, and Auto Sector Development. By ERIC THUN. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xiii, 326 pp. $78.00 (cloth); $29.99 (paper). doi:10.1017/S0021911809000321

In the aftermath of the East Asian financial crisis of 1997–98, it would have been easy to join the new orthodoxy proclaiming that “the state” in the Asian region had played a negative role in guiding industrial modernization, leading to “crony capitalism” in state–business relations. Criticism of the Asian developmental state became the new conventional wisdom, as the state was no longer seen as the source of Asian dynamism but rather the main cause of the meltdown. Eric Thun’s well-researched and strongly argued study of China’s automotive development, focusing on the time span of the early 1980s until the late 1990s, addresses this issue at several levels. First, it challenges the postcrisis orthodoxy, focusing on the constructive role of the local developmental state and local networks of firms in driving China’s automotive modernization from the mid-1980s onward. Second, it examines how two decades of reform, development, and foreign investment have prepared state-owned Chinese auto firms for the challenge of global integration. Third, it sheds light on future challenges for China’s auto industry, examining how deepening integration and recent shifts in the global automotive industry have exposed inherent weaknesses in even the most advanced Chinese automotive corporations.

Clearly written and well organized, Thun’s study is indispensable reading for those interested in the keys to the success of industrial development inside China and in China’s future development prospects in the automotive sector, and it stands to be one of the most important books on the political economy of China’s industrial development in recent years. Its findings are mainly drawn from an impressive data set that Thun accumulated through 187 structured but open-ended interviews with a broad range of key participant-observers over an eight-year period across five municipalities and at the central level. The primary sources were then supplemented with information from statistical yearbooks, planning documents, newspaper reports, academic journals, and commercial sources.