

## **Book Review: Marc Andre Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World: Hegemony and Space in Modern China*\***

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Marc Andre Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World: Hegemony and Space in Modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 2016). xii, 362 pp., 162 USD, ISBN13: 9789004327146.

*Imagining a Postnational World: Hegemony and Space in Modern China* (2016) by Marc Andre Matten is an incredibly comprehensive study of geopolitical ideas in East Asia from the 19th century to the end of the Second World War. The book's wider discussions stretch all the way from the Zhou Dynasty to the present. While the focus is on China, especially in the parts on the time before the 19th century and after the Second World War, Matten discusses China and Japan in comparison for the core time period. This book can be used as a very well-sourced reference work on the topic, but it is also a new narrative about the transformation from conceptualizations of the world as *tianxia* 天下 to thinking in terms of nation states and international organizations. The most intriguing effect of this new narrative

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is, to me, that Matten takes *tianxia* seriously as a theoretical model to frame international relations, but then proceeds to critique it on the basis of a thorough theoretical discussion. This is a very welcome contribution to current debates about *tianxia* and the tributary system, and discussions about their suitability for framing present and future international relations.

Breaking down such a rich book into a few themes for a review is by force a selective endeavor. I discuss here three strands of the monograph that seem especially important to me: the development and fading of “territorial” thinking; “postnationalism” in the modern era; and the changing concept of the “enemy.”

## “Territorial” and “Spatial” Thinking

Matten’s discussion of the transformation from *tianxia* to the nation state proceeds from a definition of the “nation” that focuses on “space” and “territory”: “Any nationalism that intends to function properly as a means to create and maintain a certain political order ... cannot simply limit itself to the question, ‘Who is Chinese?’ but also has to answer the question, ‘Where is China?’ (i.e., its territorial extension).”<sup>1</sup> This point of departure does not lead to a discussion about geography, in the sense of where China’s boundaries are or should be drawn. Instead, Matten “[t]ak[es] space [and territory] ... as an epistemological category,”<sup>2</sup> rather than conceiving of them “ontologically, for they are concepts that are constructed and function as ideological markers.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, he discusses how notions of “space” and “territory” figure into “geopolitical thinking”<sup>4</sup> and how

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Andre Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World: Hegemony and Space in Modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 22.

these notions change.

His analysis then hinges upon the conceptual distinction between “territory” and “space.” By “territory” Matten means “bounded space that is under control of a group of people that ideally form a nation-state.”<sup>5</sup> “Space,” on the other hand, is any area that a state has control over, even when it is not as such part of that state. The examples Matten gives are what he calls the “traditional imperial empires,” which were “territorial,” and “modern empires,” such as those of France and Britain, which were “spatial”: “The former ones have a clear conception of the area under their rule, but their territory - as opposed to that of the nation-state - is not exclusive. Boundaries are subject to the actual political or military power of the ruler. Modern empires are obsessed with the acquisition and/ or control of territory that is beyond their limited territory. They have an idealized notion of being able to conquer, control, and form space ... It commands space, not simply a limited territory.”<sup>6</sup> Having established this distinction, Matten then traces the development of the concepts in China and Japan from the Zhou Dynasty to the present, with a focus on the 19th century to the end of the Second World War.

The *tianxia* model, Matten writes, was established in the Confucian Classics, such as the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 and the *Lunyu* 論語. He characterizes *tianxia* as a “spatial” concept and not as a “territorial” one, the reason being the well-known idea that *tianxia* did not emphasize boundaries. As such, *tianxia* was of course no “bounded space.”<sup>7</sup> This had the advantage, according to Matten, that when the Jin Dynasty of the Jurchens invaded Kaifeng, the capital of the Northern Song Dynasty, this “did not question the ecumenical order [of the *tianxia* model].”<sup>8</sup> Similarly, when the Song had to conclude a treaty with the Western Xia (*Xixia* 西夏), according to which the Song had to pay tribute to the Western Xia, this order

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<sup>5</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 76.

<sup>7</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 72.

<sup>8</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 37.

was not challenged because “the Song emperor adopted the ruler of the rivalling country as his son.”<sup>9</sup> As is familiar to students of Chinese history and as Matten outlines, *tianxia* also made it possible to view the Manchus as a Chinese dynasty, since “Confucian values are not tied to ethnic or territorial boundaries.”<sup>10</sup> The same was the case for the 17th- and 18th-century treaties between the Qing and Russia. In the Treaty of Kiakhta (1727), the Qing “integrated the Russian Empire into their tribute system by establishing a peace zone (and not a border) for more than a century.”<sup>11</sup>

This changed when China faced Western imperialism in the 19th century and when an influx of Western ideas ensued, Matten continues. The fact that *tianxia* lacked a notion of boundaries, he writes, caused feelings of inferiority because “Sun Yat-sen [for example] noticed that ... the Chinese were a people without a nation.”<sup>12</sup> What had happened is the famous story of how, in the wake of Western imperialism, the *tianxia* model encountered Western-originated concepts of the nation state. This was a moment when, in Matten’s interpretation, “territorial,” rather than “spatial,” thinking entered China: While in the Qing Dynasty, space had been conceptualized as *jiangyu* 疆域, it now began to be understood as *lingtu* 領土.<sup>13</sup>

However, by the 1910s, the country showed itself to again be hesitant to adopt “territorial” (rather than “spatial”) thinking. School textbooks after 1915 (when Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 [1859-1916] signed the Twenty-One Demands), for example, contained “maps of national shame” (*guochi ditu* 國恥地圖),<sup>14</sup> which depicted the Chinese area both as it should be, in that view, and as it was de facto

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<sup>9</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 64.

<sup>12</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 128.

<sup>14</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 142.

under the impact of imperialism. China as it should be was conceived of as the area of the Qing Dynasty. Since these maps showed an area that was not actually part of the Chinese state, Matten interprets them as non-territorial: “[T]he map [a “national humiliation” map of 1929] is a normative one. It is not a factual but an emotionalized geographical representation of the nation that functions by explicitly appealing to morality. The boundaries used are boundaries defined by the categories of barbarism and civilization, or national shame and national pride.”<sup>15</sup>

These non-territorial maps of the Republican period, moreover, draw upon older strategies in creating maps that go back to the Qing Dynasty, and in this Matten echoes William Callahan.<sup>16</sup> The Qing, Matten argues, used maps for a variety of ideological purposes. One was to show that the Qing territory was larger than the Ming territory had been.<sup>17</sup> Another one was to depict the Qing Dynasty as a multiethnic entity, and to make clear that Manchus were different from Han. The maps achieved this by, for example, drawing a “borderline between Manchuria and China”<sup>18</sup> or by writing “place names north of the Great Wall ... in Manchu and those south of the Great Wall, in Chinese.”<sup>19</sup>

Spatiality, in contrast to territoriality, was even further emphasized in China in the 1940s, when new *tianxia* models entered the country’s geopolitical thought. In 1943, for example, Luo Mengce 羅夢冊 (1906-1991) created the idea of a “*tianxia*-state (*tianxia guo* 天下國),” which he set apart from the “nation-state” and the “empire.” This “*tianxia*-state” differed from the other two, because “China had experienced a different political evolution, one characterized by the notion of continuity and the kingly way (*wangdao* 王道) that preferred integration and

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<sup>15</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 149.

<sup>16</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 150; W. A. Callahan, “The Cartography of National Humiliation and the Emergence of China’s Geobody,” *Public Culture*, 21:1 (January 2009), pp. 141-173.

<sup>17</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 122.

<sup>18</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 123.

<sup>19</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 125.

harmony over rivalry and bloody competition.”<sup>20</sup> Matten interprets this as a “truly alternative model of world order that combined morality with spatiality differently, and more convincingly.”<sup>21</sup> Finally, Matten outlines, *tianxia* is still a powerful model for contemporary thinkers in the present, and in order to show this, he analyzes, among others, Zhao Tingyang 趙汀陽 (b. 1961) and his book *The Tianxia System* (*Tianxia tixi* 天下體系).<sup>22</sup> Even though Matten concludes that “the *tianxia* proposal is nothing more than a wishful imaginary” because “the Western order of nation-states is still considered to be the norm in international relations” and because “the developments in the recent decades have shown that the belief in national strength has also not weakened in China,”<sup>23</sup> he still argues that such ideas are “profoundly transforming the different schools of IR theory.”<sup>24</sup>

The story of the transformation from *tianxia* to the nation state is, of course, not new. But Matten tells it from a new angle through his theoretical framework of “space” versus “territory.” This new angle is important, since it enables Matten to tap into the debate about whether *tianxia* and the tributary system can be a theoretical model for present and future international relations. In the Anglophone part of academia, this idea is not only propagated by Zhao Tingyang, but also especially made known by David Kang and his book *China Rising* (2007), to whom Matten refers too.<sup>25</sup> While well received in some quarters,<sup>26</sup> the idea to use *tianxia*/

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<sup>20</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 252.

<sup>21</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 223.

<sup>22</sup> On Zhao Tingyang in Matten, see for example *Imagining a Postnational World*, pp. 258-276. See also Zhao Tingyang 趙汀陽, *Tianxia tixi: shijie zhidu zhexue daolun* 天下體系：世界制度哲學導論 (The Tianxia System: An Introduction to the Philosophy of the World Institution) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 305.

<sup>24</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 277.

<sup>25</sup> For Matten on David Kang, see *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 293. David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> Robert Hellyer, “Review of *China Rising* by David Kang,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 55:1 (January 2012), pp. 197-199; Mohammed Bedrul Alam, “Review of *China Rising* by David Kang,” *Journal of Third World Studies*, 26:2 (Fall 2009), pp. 275-277.

the tributary system as an alternative theoretical framework to the balance-of-power idea of the Westphalian system has met with some heavy criticism from other quarters. Such critics point out that theorizations of *tianxia* ignore the historical context, that the model is overly selective and “replaces Eurocentrism with Sinocentrism”;<sup>27</sup> that the tributary system never existed,<sup>28</sup> but was essentially a conceptualization of John K. Fairbank’s edited volume *The Chinese World Order* (1968);<sup>29</sup> that Asian states in China’s imperial times accepted China’s hegemony because they had no choice and manipulated and circumvented the system to the best of their abilities;<sup>30</sup> that, in this case David Kang, “makes truly ludicrous claims about warfare in Asia”;<sup>31</sup> that ruminations about *tianxia* are suspiciously vague;<sup>32</sup> and that they are nothing more than “apologetics for the PRC.”<sup>33</sup> While Matten, too, rejects the *tianxia* idea, he approaches it in a manner that takes it much more seriously as a theoretical model and critiques it on the basis of that. Such a theoretical discussion - and, in this case, critique - of present *tianxia* ideas is an important addition to the debate.

Beyond the controversy about *tianxia*, *Imagining a Postnational World* is part of a wider trend in Western scholarship, which seeks to take Chinese thought seriously from a theoretical perspective, rather than deploying Western theory to explain China-related empirical findings. This trend has, for example, been

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<sup>27</sup> William A. Callahan, “Sino-Speak: Chinese Exceptionalism and the Politics of History,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 71:1 (February 2012), p. 42.

<sup>28</sup> Peter C. Perdue, “The Tenacious Tributary System,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 24:96 (November 2015), pp. 1003-1004.

<sup>29</sup> Perdue, “The Tenacious Tributary System,” p. 1005; John K. Fairbank and Ta-tuan Chen, eds., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968).

<sup>30</sup> Anthony Reid and Yangwen Zheng, eds., *Negotiating Asymmetry: China’s Place in Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Perdue, “The Tenacious Tributary System,” p. 1004.

<sup>32</sup> June Teufel Dreyer, “The ‘Tianxia Trope’: Will China Change the International System?,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 24:96 (November 2015), p. 1023.

<sup>33</sup> Perdue, “The Tenacious Tributary System,” p. 1004.

pioneered by Leigh Jenco in her recent edited volume *Chinese Thought as Global Theory* (2016).<sup>34</sup> The jury is still out on the long-standing discussion if there is such a thing as “Western theory,” or whether theory is just theory that can be applied to all parts of the world independently of where it was created; or on the question of whether talking about “Chinese theory” essentializes “China” and “the West.” And while not solving these (presumably unsolvable) issues, Matten’s *Imagining a Postnational World* shows a way of bringing theoretical thought produced in China and in the West together. As such, it is part of an important development, and it will be exciting to watch the results of this kind of approach over the next few years and decades.

## Postnationalism

A second theme in the book is Matten’s argument that the “modern age”<sup>35</sup> has not just brought forth nationalism, but also transnational or, as he calls it in his book’s title, “postnational” thinking. Among the ideas that were absorbed in Asia in the 19th and early 20th centuries were Western concepts of geopolitics, Matten writes. But these concepts were negotiated differently in China and in Japan, with Japan adopting them more actively. Among these geopolitical ideas was the Monroe Doctrine, which, Matten outlines, started as an expression of the United States to be “unwilling to accept further efforts by European governments to obtain colonies in the New World” in 1823.<sup>36</sup> In 1905, it turned “into a principle that should serve as an ideological justification for US hegemony and function as a right of unilateral intervention without being bound by international law.”<sup>37</sup> Among

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<sup>34</sup> Leigh Jenco, ed., *Chinese Thought as Global Theory: Diversifying Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Albany, N.Y.: Suny Press, 2016).

<sup>35</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 126.

<sup>36</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 97.



the ideas was also the German jurist Carl Schmitt's (1888-1985) conceptualizations of "*Großräume*" (in Matten's translation, "larger spaces").<sup>38</sup>

While China, as outlined above, reinvented *tianxia* thinking, Japan adopted these ideas, Matten writes. It also reinvented the Monroe Doctrine as an Asian Monroe Doctrine in the late 19th century, whose tenet was "East Asia is the East Asia of East Asia,"<sup>39</sup> and which revolved around concepts of Pan-Asianism. The point of origin for this was, according to Matten, a racial "white peril" discourse in the 19th century, which led Japanese thinkers to conclude that Japan needed to save the "yellow race" from the West. This soon resulted in a further reformulation of the Asian Monroe Doctrine into "Asia is a matter of the Japanese,"<sup>40</sup> with the well-known consequences for Japanese imperialism in the first half of the 20th century.

Through the notions of "space" and "territory," Matten analyzes a number of "postnational" developments in the 20th century. First of all, there were Carl Schmitt's "*Großraum*" theory and the Monroe Doctrine, which were used to justify, in Matten's interpretation, "spatial" expansion. Secondly, there was the more "spatial" *tianxia* model, which was recycled at various points in China in the 20th century. Thirdly, this "modern age"<sup>41</sup> saw the emergence of international organizations like the League of Nations. One of the most intriguing insights of the book is when Matten shows how the League was actually understood through the conceptual framework of Kang Youwei's 康有為 (1858- 1927) *Datong shu* 大同書. "The parallels [to Kang Youwei's *datong*] were so obvious for Kang and his contemporaries that they widely used the term *datong* for rendering League of Nations into Chinese, for example, as *wanguo datongmeng* 萬國大同盟 or *guoji datongmeng* 國際大同盟. In their pamphlet *China and the League of Nations*, the diplomats Wellington Koo 顧維鈞 (1888-1985) and Chengting Thomas Wang 王

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<sup>38</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 101.

<sup>39</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 184.

<sup>40</sup> Citing Tokutomi Iichirō, Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 194.

<sup>41</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 126.

正廷 (1882-1961) echoed Kang's vision of the league as the culmination of the classical ideal *datong*.”<sup>42</sup>

Matten's exploration of this theme of “postnationalism” is one of the most comprehensive and systematic discussions of the important thinkers of the time. It is also rare and insightful to have a threefold comparative perspective, spanning Europe, China as well as Japan. Theorization, of course, requires abstraction, and this demands detachment from the historical context to some extent. However, I cannot avoid feeling somewhat uncomfortable that a discussion of Carl Schmitt's involvement in the Nazi state, as well as the connection between his ideas about *Großräume* and the expansionist ideology of Nazi Germany are missing from the discussion.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, a work as comprehensive as *Imagining Postnationalism* unavoidably needs to be limited to certain thinkers, otherwise it becomes unmanageable. Matten has chosen to focus on the truly famous ones, such as Kang Youwei, Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 (1866-1925) or Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887-1975), to name just a few. But here again the abstraction required for theorization results in a thinning-out of historical richness: What, for example, were the views of less famous thinkers? How were these famous ideas received at the time?

This observation does not so much point to a problem with *Imagining Postnationalism*, rather than to a more general challenge faced by those who attempt to theorize Chinese thought (or, in fact, thought originating from any part of the world). How should this emerging field deal with questions, not just of the often-debated danger of essentializing, but also of historical context and historical focus? These are issues that will have to be discussed. Matten's book provides one way of navigating these questions, upon which others in the future will be able to build.

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<sup>42</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 244.

<sup>43</sup> On Carl Schmitt's connection to the Nazi party and state, see Jens Meierhenrich and Oliver Simons, “‘A Fanatic of Order in an Epoch of Confusing Turmoil’: The Political, Legal, and Cultural Thought of Carl Schmitt,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt*, ed. Jens Meierhenrich and Oliver Simons (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 4-10.

## The Concept of the “Enemy”

One of the most insightful themes is Matten’s discussion of how the development from *tianxia* to the nation state changed the notion of the “enemy” in China. In this, he draws upon a distinction between a “personal enemy” (in Latin, *inimicus*) and a “political enemy” (*hostis*),<sup>44</sup> who is a much more “absolute enemy.”<sup>45</sup> In the imperial days of *tianxia*, differences between friend and foe were seen in terms of the dichotomy of “civilization and barbarism,” Matten explains.<sup>46</sup> “Confucian political thinking,” he argues further, did not know the idea of the *hostis*, since “the notion of evil (*e* 惡) did not have a theological foundation in traditional China” (in contrast to the “Christian” West, in Matten’s view).<sup>47</sup> Any enemy could therefore “be taught the benefits of Confucianism and thus be transformed (*hua* 化) accordingly.”<sup>48</sup> For this reason, people considered “barbarians” might have been slaughtered, for example during the Qing Dynasty’s conquests, but “the role of Confucian orthopraxy in Qing’s efforts to define China as a multi-ethnic empire did not translate into a radical notion of enmity: the high Qing considered in fact differences in culture, ethnicity, and religion only of little significance.”<sup>49</sup>

Notions of absolute enmity (designated by the Latin “*hostis*”) only emerged with the Taiping in the 19th century, Matten writes. The Taiping subscribed to a notion of “enmity [that] was so radical and irreconcilable that there emerged suddenly non-Chinese communities with whom it was not only improper to have contact with [sic] or who were to be held at bay at any price, but who were so

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<sup>44</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 230.

<sup>45</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 227.

<sup>46</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 42.

<sup>47</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 227.

<sup>48</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 227.

<sup>49</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 231.

ontologically different that any acceptance was considered impossible. In other words, the Manchu were not relative enemies anymore but absolute ones.”<sup>50</sup> This trend towards absolute enmity was exacerbated by the influx of racial thinking in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, both in Japan and in China. Enmity was then also coupled with territory: Thinkers like Liu Shipei 劉師培 (1884-1919) and Zou Rong 鄒容 (1885-1905) conceived of the Manchus as absolute enemies, who should be expelled to territories conceived of as being theirs (contrary to the ones that belonged to the Han): “Zou [Rong] develops a highly radical notion of the enemy that is distinctly political. It holds that there are different territories, and each territory should form an ethnic homogeneous nation-state. His call for a revenge for the occupation of China turns the Manchus into a political enemy (*hostis*) where enmity is no longer a relative one but a more radical, ontological one (and, in contrast to the Taiping, no longer religiously founded).”<sup>51</sup>

In my view, this is the most intriguing theme of the book, as it adds a truly new layer to the familiar story about the influx of racial thinking into China in the 19th century. It also reframes the debate about whether China is pacifist or not. This is a debate in which both scholars of International Relations and historians of China participate, with both fields having produced proponents of the idea that China is pacifist, either thanks to current political slogans (such as the “peaceful rise”) or to its Confucian past, or that it is not.<sup>52</sup> Tracing changing notions of

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<sup>50</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 233.

<sup>51</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, p. 240.

<sup>52</sup> An example for a historian who considers China peaceful thanks to its Confucian culture: John King Fairbank, “Introduction: Varieties of the Chinese Military Experience,” in *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, ed. Frank Algerton Kierman and John King Fairbank (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 7. Among those who see Confucianism more as a source of pacifist rhetoric than reality: Morton H. Fried, “Military Status in Chinese Society,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 57:4 (January 1952), pp. 347-357; Hans J. van de Ven, “War in the Making of Modern China,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 30:4 (October 1996), p. 737; Nicola Di Cosmo, “Introduction,” in *Military Culture in Imperial China*, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 2. Scholars of contemporary China who regard the slogan of “peaceful rise” as a reliable indicator that China will not engage in war:

“enmity” is a very nuanced way to participate in this debate, because it shows that less radical ideas about friend and foe can still translate into massacres - and vice versa. Like the discussion of *tianxia*, this theme places *Imagining Postnationalism* at a very productive interface between the fields of History and International Relations, and shows what explorations of the *longue durée* of history can add to our understanding of contemporary China.

*Imagining a Postnational World* is a very ambitious work, with rich descriptions of geopolitical conceptualizations in the highly dynamic time period from the 19th century to the end of the Second World War; among the themes not discussed in the review are the role of international law in the 19th century<sup>53</sup> and thinking about “national sovereignty” vis-à-vis the dichotomy of territoriality versus spatiality.<sup>54</sup> Even where these ideas are well-known, they are rarely assembled in such a systematic analysis and comprehensive description. Matten also narrates the story of this transformation from a new theoretical perspective. This is more than a simple retelling of the narrative, but a contribution to the larger project of taking thought produced in China seriously from a theoretical point of view. In this sense, the book is a worthwhile read for those trying to get their bearings in geopolitical thinking from the 19th century to the end of the Second

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Chen Yue 陳岳, “‘Zhongguo weixielun’ yu Zhongguo heping jueqi: yi zhong ‘cengci fenxi’ fa de jiedu” 「中國威脅論」與中國和平崛起：一種「層次分析」法的解讀 (The “China Threat Discourse” and China’s Peaceful Rise: An Interpretation Based on the Method of “Level of Analysis”), *Waijiao pinglun* 外交評論 (Foreign Affairs Review), no. 82 (March 2005), pp. 93-99; Biwu Zhang, “Chinese Perceptions of US Return to Southeast Asia and the Prospect of China’s Peaceful Rise,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 24:91 (January 2015), pp. 176-195; Honghua Men, “China’s Position in the World and the Orientation of Its Grand Strategy,” *Modern China Studies*, 24:1 (2017), p. 42. Examples for scholars who are more sceptical about this Ralph D. Sawyer, “Chinese Strategic Power: Myths, Intent, and Projections,” *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 9:2 (2006-2007), pp. 57-62; June Teufel Dreyer, “US-China Relations: Engagement or Talking Past Each Other,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 17:57 (October 2008), pp. 591-609.

<sup>53</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, pp. 79-88.

<sup>54</sup> Matten, *Imagining a Postnational World*, pp. 88-96.

World War, for those who want to refresh their memories with regards to the details of this thinking; and for those who want to rethink the time period from a theoretical point of view.

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