



Networking Asia Pacific: queer film festivals and the spatiotemporal politics of inter-referencing

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ABSTRACT

Expanding on the critique of Euro-America-centrism in knowledge production, this article examines three spatiotemporal hierarchies through the inter-referencing practices of Asia Pacific Queer Film Festival Alliance. First, through the analysis of the documentary short *Lady Eva* and its circulation, I look at how the network opens up the issue of Pacific indigeneity in the transpacific context, which has the potential to unsettle the existing epistemic structures that rest upon the binary of West/non-West or white/Indigenous. Second, I investigate how the queer film festival alliance serves as sites for the articulation of queer rights, which sometimes cast a progressivist temporal narrative based on a hierarchical arrangement of geographical places. Third, through the case of ShanghaiPRIDE Film Festival, I examine how anti-institutionalism in film festival organizing offers a critique of gay-male dominated queer film festivals and the capitalist developmental logic that emphasizes profit and financial viability. By doing so, I scrutinize how the spatiotemporal hierarchies embedded in the film festival network complicate the understanding of inter-referencing as citation, collaboration, and competition. At the same time, I use inter-referencing to further the discussion of spatial politics in film festival studies by highlighting the spatiotemporal hierarchies.

KEYWORDS

Film festival; queer; Asia; Pacific; inter-referencing; network; rights

The notion of inter-referencing has received considerable scholarly attention lately as a critique of Eurocentrism and America-centrism in knowledge production. As Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000, 28) sharply points out, the dominance of “Europe” in the production of historical knowledge results in “[t]hird-world historians feel[ing] a need to refer to works in European history; historians of Europe do not feel any need to reciprocate.” To counter such a tendency, in *Asia as Method*, Chen Kuan-Hsing (2010, xv) calls for “using Asia as an imaginary anchoring point” to allow societies in Asia to “become one another’s reference points, so that the understanding of the self can be transformed, and subjectivity rebuilt.”

The new millennium has seen a growth of scholarship on inter-Asian connections and comparisons. Aihwa Ong sees (2011, 17) “inter-referencing” Asia as a wide range of “practices of citation, allusion, aspiration, comparison and competition” among various Asian urban planning and political practices. Similarly, Chua Beng Huat (2015, 68) regards inter-Asian referencing as “actual practices in governance and enterprise in Asia.” He discusses how several Asian economies followed in the footsteps of Japan’s export-oriented industrialization; how Bangalore, Surabaya and Dalian