Postprint, 7 Feb 2023
In: Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Media in the 21st Century (forthcoming)

Chinese (Pseudo)Archaeology on Television: A *Daomu Biji* Case Study

E. Charlotte Stevens
Birmingham City University

The *Daomu Biji* (≪盗墓笔记≫) franchise – novels, television dramas, and spin-offs – offers a view on China's past that foregrounds a deep history with discoveries in hidden ruins. It stands in contrast to Western tomb-raiding literature, film and game franchises in which exotic 'oriental' spaces are a stage for white Western exploration (Pyburn, 2008; Weaver-Hightower, 2014). Unlike the familiar colonial-imperialist tropes, on the surface *Daomu Biji* (DMBJ) offers Chinese characters exploring sites of Chinese tangible cultural heritage and resisting the sale of antiquities to foreign buyers. The protagonist Wu Xie (吳邪) follows his grandfather's tomb raiding notes, though with a filial rather than material interest. Indeed, rival groups who are motivated by profiting from the sale of artefacts are punished in the narrative. The adaptations are also careful to reframe the tomb raiding activity as archaeological interest, likely to ensure they do not run afoul of ever-changing morality standards in Chinese media (Bai, 2014; Ng & Li, 2020). That said, despite narrative disavowals seemingly designed to satisfy state censors' shifting requirements, DMBJ's characters are very much in the 'adventurer-archaeologist' mould, being 'rough-types who spend their lives sniffing out lost cities and ancient treasures with little (or no) regard for proper archaeological procedure' (Rassalle, 2021, p. 7) as they move within and beyond China's borders.

This chapter argues for the relevance of DMBJ as a representation of archaeology that engages a broad audience, with a focus on its Mandarin-language television adaptations. Titled *Grave Robbers' Chronicles* for the official English translation, the novels were written by Xu Lei (徐磊, also Kennedy Xu), under the name Nanpai Sanshu (南派三叔), whose works and popularity have invited comparisons to Stephen King (Curtin & Li, 2018). The first novel was serialised online from 2006 before being issued in print as a nine-book publication between 2007 and 2011 (Inwood, 2016, p. 438). Sales have been significant: in mid-2018 *China Daily* reported 12 million copies sold (Xu, 2018), and six months later *South China Morning Post* put that figure at 20 million (Yau, 2018). As noted in *The Economist*, this fantasy-adventure series has been credited with 'strengthening [Chinese] public interest in archaeology' despite showing minimal archaeological practice ('China's Tomb Raiders Are Growing More Professional', 2021). As Christina Maags notes, in recent years China has been 'revitalizing' its heritage offer to tourists, which is 'supporting Chinese nation-building and soft power' as well as being 'a tool to foster economic development' (2021, p. 179). It is easy to see where a franchise about exploring – and *not* plundering, though often destroying – tangible cultural heritage would be attractive in this policy context. Through its protagonists' adventures and diegetic reflections on their practice, DMBJ models tensions around tangible heritage in a contemporary Chinese context.

Beginning with *The Lost Tomb* (Lau, 2015), to date there have been nine live-action dramas[1] based on the core novel's books, plus prequel/sequel novels; Table X.1 has a full list. Other *Daomu Biji* adaptations include comics and graphic novels, an animated series, and a 2016 feature film; Xu Lei has also scripted spin-off dramas and specials, and continues to finish short stories featuring his protagonists. I rely on English-language scholarship and journalism to understand the franchise in context. The affordances of streaming television platforms make it possible for programmes to have a global reach without the mediation of a national broadcaster. Audiences (and scholars) have rapid access to media that travels beyond national and/or linguistic borders; in this current example, a contemporary Chinese iteration of a well-established genre. I screened the dramas with English subtitles primarily through Chinese streaming platforms (iQIYI, Tencent's WeTV) and Rakuten Viki, a fan-subtitling site which licenses Asian television for international distribution (Dwyer, 2012). References to dialogue are drawn from these translations. This chapter approaches the franchise from television studies, and will address current Chinese television production as context for what is at stake in this staging of fantasy/sci-fi archaeology for domestic and international audiences. This chapter discusses the DMBJ television adaptations, moving on to frame how the dramas present arguments about archaeology and work to iterate the famously imperialist tomb-raiding genre, and how it models tensions around the contemporary antiquities trade. I end with some thoughts about the immense success of the franchise, its presence in Chinese popular culture, and how it is approached and reworked by fans.

Table X.1, the core live-action television adaptations of the Daomu Biji novels, given in production order. Compiled through scrutiny of the credits, with reference to DramaWiki, MyDramaList, Daomu Biji Wikia, and Grave Robbers Chronicles Wiki.

English Title	**Original Title**	**Platform(s)**	**No. of episodes**	**Premiere date**
The Lost Tomb	≪盗墓笔记≫	iQIYI	10	12/06/2015
The Mystic Nine	≪老九门≫	iQIYI and Dragon TV	48	04/07/2016
Sand Sea; alt. *Tomb of the Sea*	≪沙海≫	Tencent Video	52	20/07/2018
The Lost Tomb 2; episode title cards and poster include the phrase *Explore with the Note*	≪盗墓笔记 2≫ also ≪怒海潜沙&秦岭神树≫	Tencent Video	40	06/06/2019
Reunion: Sound of the Providence; alt. *The Lost Tomb: Reboot*	≪重启之极海听雷≫	iQIYI and Youku	32	15/07/2020

[1] I use 'drama' rather than 'television series' to follow Asian media fan usage, and to acknowledge differences to Western television in form, production, and distribution.

Reunion: Sound of the Providence Season 2	≪重启之极海听雷第二季≫	iQIYI	30	13/09/2020
Ultimate Note	≪终极笔记≫	iQIYI	36	10/12/2020
Explore with the Note; alt. *The Lost Tomb 2: Heavenly Palace on the Clouds*	≪盗墓笔记 2 之云顶天宫≫	Tencent Video	24	11/07/2021
Tibetan Sea Flower	≪藏海花≫	Tencent Video	36	TBC 2023

Daomu Biji **and its Television Adaptations**

The *Daomu Biji* adaptations are long-form serialised adventure dramas, with a considerable proportion of each series spent exploring, or searching for, ancient ruins. The narrative structure is reminiscent of archaeology-adventure games like *Tomb Raider*, which Meghan Dennis has described as 'heavy on puzzles and navigating environmental challenges' (Dennis, 2019, p. 194), containing plots oriented towards exploration to solve mysteries left by previous generations. Fittingly, recent scholarship on representations of archaeology in the media looks to video games (Copplestone, 2017; Rassalle, 2021; Reinhard, 2018); it is notable that Tencent, one of the DMBJ producers, is also a significant investor in *Assassin's Creed* producer Ubisoft. The protagonist Wu Xie is a descendant of an old tomb raiding family, and claims authority when in the field by recalling his study of architecture (not archaeology, or history) at university. Wu Xie and his companions Wang Yueban (王月半), known as Pangzi (胖子), and Zhang Qiling (張起靈), call themselves the 'Iron Triangle'; they are joined in their quests by a range of supporting characters. These protagonists are as likely to face a range of computer-generated monsters and complicated ancient traps as they are to confront villainous mercenaries out for personal gain.

I will return to the Iron Triangle's positioning in opposition to more criminal tomb raiding activity in due course. First, it is useful to make some observations about Chinese television dramas in general – which are indebted to both South Korean television drama formats and Latin American telenovelas (Zhu, 2008) – in order to convey how the DMBJ adaptations present their arguments about archaeology and function as television. European and North American fiction television is typically produced for weekly release, and narrative seriality is either the province of so-called 'quality' programmes or long-running soap operas. In contrast, Chinese television dramas tend to be aired over a concentrated period: up to 14 episodes per week, broadcast in pairs on consecutive days, with longer series aired over a month (Bai, 2014, p. 10). Streaming platforms follow a similar release pattern. In borrowing 'the story format and conventions of dramatic shows from Asia and Latin America' (Y. Zhao & Guo, 2020, p. 465), the extended seriality of Chinese dramas prompts intense and concentrated engagement from the audience (Bai, 2014; Zhu, 2008). This format allows for protracted exploration of tombs, meaning the novels' alignment with masculine young adult adventure tropes resembles a dungeon-crawling video game. DMBJ adaptations average

between 30 and 50 episodes per series and are not focused around 'monster of the week'-style adventures. Instead, their serial narrative unfolds at a more leisurely pace, allowing for an ensemble cast, multiple interwoven plotlines, and lengthy flashback sequences to the life of a tomb's occupants or a previous archaeological work. In this way, multiple volumes of a serialised novel can be adapted as a single drama as an extended story without many interruptions or omissions.

In contrast to the measured pace of the dramas' narratives, dramas themselves have a complicated production history, with adaptation duties shared between competitors. The first drama, *The Lost Tomb*, adapted the first volume of *Daomu Biji*, but after that point iQIYI and Tencent Video have shared the adaptions. As iQIYI is 'the closest comparator to Netflix' in China (Cunningham & Craig, 2021, p. 154), sharing *Daomu Biji*'s production with Tencent, an internet video and games giant (Brannon Donoghue, Havens, & McDonald, 2021), is akin to Netflix and Amazon Prime each adapting individual novels of, say, Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* or George RR Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, regardless of where each sits in the overall narrative order. Table X.2 lays out the live action television adaptations of the DMBJ novels, presented in plot order. Additionally, there is a new cast for each instalment, though some actors repeat roles across series, and others appear as multiple characters; the exception is *Reunion: Sound of the Providence* (Pan, 2020), which appears to have been filmed as a single serial narrative but was released as two distinct dramas, likely following state-mandaded limitations on the number of episodes in a drama (Curtin & Li, 2018). Wu Xie appears in every series except for *The Mystic Nine* (Leung, Wong, He & Zou, 2016), which centres on his grandfather's contemporaries during the Japanese occupation. In addition to the core adaptations, since 2016 there have also been nine 'specials' (75-minute films) featuring supporting characters, two full spin-off dramas featuring a side character, and an animated series. The eighth and final volume of *Daomu Biji* is yet to be adapted.

Table X.2, the core live-action television adaptations of the Daomu Biji novels, arranged in series chronology.

Titles	**Source and setting/plot**
The Mystic Nine (2016)	Based on prequel novel, set in 1930s Changsha, in which a mountain hides a meteorite with mysterious properties.
The Lost Tomb (2015)	*Daomu Biji* book 1. Wu Xie (Li Yifeng, 李易峰) follows his grandfather's notebook to explore a Warring States tomb.
The Lost Tomb 2 (2019)	*Daomu Biji* books 2, 3 and part of 4. Three snake eyebrow copper fish figurines lead Wu Xie (Hou Minghao, 侯明昊) from Myanmar to an ancient bronze tree, and then to the snowy northern Changbai region.
Explore with the Note (2021)	All of *Daomu Biji* book 4. The first episodes repeat events shown at the end of *The Lost Tomb 2*, and largely takes place inside Changbai mountain tombs. Stars Bai Shu (白澍).
Ultimate Note (2020)	*Daomu Biji* books 5-7. Follows on from Tencent's *Explore with the Note*, but is set in the early 2000s to function as a prequel to iQIYI's *Reunion*, released earlier that year. Stars Zeng Shu Xi (曾舜晞).

Tibetan Sea Flower (TBC 2023)	Sequel novel set 5 years after *Daomu Biji*; Zhang Luyi (张鲁一) is Wu Xie, after playing Wu Xie's grandfather in *The Mystic Nine*.
Sand Sea (2018)	Spin-off novel; teenager Li Cu (Wu Lei, 吴磊) is brought into tomb raiding by Wu Xie (Qin Hao, 秦昊).
Reunion: Sound of the Providence (2020)	Sequel novel set 10 years after *Daomu Biji*. The 'Iron Triangle' of Wu Xie (Zhu Yilong, 朱一龙), Pangzi (Chen Minghao, 陈明昊), and Zhang Qiling (Huang Junjie, 黄俊捷) reunite to look for Thunder City.
Reunion: Sound of the Providence Season 2 (2020)	Direct continuation of the above, with the same cast.

The scope and scale of this production – all released since 2015 – is remarkable and is entirely an artefact of the developing OTT (over-the-top) streaming television landscape. *Lost Tomb* was a breakout success in Chinese television producers' efforts to create web content, functioning as proof-of-concept in the industry's efforts to find a home-grown answer to Netflix's move into production after 2013. Indeed, *Lost Tomb* was regularly cited in iQIYI's press notices and in academic discussions of China's shift from ad-supported video-on-demand to subscription models where early episodes are provided for free and the remainder are locked to subscribers (Curtin & Li, 2018; Keane, 2016; Sethi, 2019; X. Yan, 2021). iQIYI released episodes of *Lost Tomb* in weekly instalments for free, with the full series made available in full to subscribers partway through its run – a move that 'attracted over 160 million clicks in the first five minutes' after the remaining episodes were posted (C. Feng, 2015), reportedly earning a record-setting 3 billion hits (He, 2016).[2]

That level of attention made *Lost Tomb* a proof-of-concept for the viability of DMBJ as exploitable intellectual property (IP). Xu Lei has been placed as a Chinese answer to George RR Martin (Yau, 2018), who has benefitted from the 'adaptation fever' of web content to television and film (Inwood, 2017, p. 195; L. Wang & Yang, 2020). However, *Lost Tomb* itself was (at best) a qualified success: 'its poor quality and lame storyline' meant it failed to live up to the high expectations set by fans of the novels (Xiao, 2015). The drive to exploit popular web IP can yield subpar results, meaning *Lost Tomb* – whose youthful stars were referred to as 'little fresh meat' (小鲜肉) in the media (Mok, 2017) – has been condemned by scholars for using celebrities 'without acting skills to shoot TV dramas without content, resulting in the phenomenon of consuming audiences and wasting resources' (L. Wang & Yang, 2020, p. 237). This is perhaps why producers looked elsewhere within DMBJ canon for the next adaptations, rather than continuing with the main novels: *The Mystic Nine* takes place during the Republican era (1912-1949), which is a safe and bankable Chinese television setting (see: C. Y. Wang & Hu, 2021); *Sand Sea* (Li, Mao & Zou, 2018) stars

[2] This was quickly surpassed by the '5.8 billion hits over two months on video-streaming sites' (He, 2016) gained by *Nirvana in Fire* (≪琅琊榜≫; Kong & Li, 2015), a historical drama also adapted from a popular web novel, which was additionally broadcast on satellite and terrestrial channels. This model is proving successful: *The Untamed* (≪陈情令≫; Cheng & Chan, 2019), a steaming-first web novel adaptation reportedly had 9.5 billion views following its release (Wen, 2021).

established actors, and positions Wu Xie as mentor to a new generation (Xu, 2018). Once these proved successful, more of the DMBJ novel was adapted, sometimes outstripping the pace of Xu Lei's own writing.

Therefore, the television adaptations of DMBJ present a sprawling, and at times chaotic, narrative across a franchise that encompasses many adaptations, spin-offs, and feature-length productions. Even before considering its representation of archaeology and tomb raiding, it is a fascinating case study for the rapid changes – not to mention the pace, practices, and volume of production – in the last decade of Chinese television production as streaming becomes established in the domestic market. The affordance of telenovela-style extended seriality offers the space to tell a complete narrative over the course of a single drama, and the hunger for exploitable IP means DMBJ's many books, the prequel, and growing number of sequels have been well-placed for adaptation. When turning to DMBJ's representation of archaeology, as I will do now, the franchise offers compelling compromises and disavowals as it seeks to satisfy an audience looking for action-adventure stories in the context of state censorship concerned with appropriate representations of nation and heritage.

Pseudoarchaeology, Tomb Raiding, and Imperialism

In this section, I move from looking at *Daomu Biji* as television to considering the dramas as a familiarly pulpy representation of archaeology in media, though adapted to suit the Chinese context by way of regulatory constraints, reflexivity about treatment of tangible heritage, and the genre's imperialist tendencies. One key element is the National Radio and Television Administration, formerly the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT), a media regulator whose brief covers streaming series as well as traditional media (Gorfinkel, 2017; Keane, 2016; W. Y. Wang & Lobato, 2019). Chinese screen industries have faced a general prohibition on 'superstitious' content since the 1920s (Grealy, Driscoll, Wang, & Fu, 2019), and contemporary dramas which present an 'unscientific and superstitious worldview' will face censorship (C. Y. Wang & Hu, 2021, p. 110).[3] However, tomb-raiding fiction often contains supernatural elements, such as zombies, monsters, or magical artefacts (Hiscock, 2012; Malley, 2018), meaning the genre as a whole has 'quasi-supernatural underpinnings' (Dennis, 2019, p. 222). Peter Hiscock argues that these examples of tomb-raiding fiction are not representations of archaeology as much as they are *pseudoarchaeology* by offering views of the human past which are 'mystical and unscientific in nature' (Hiscock, 2012, p. 174; see also: Schiele & Schiele, 2022). This raises an interesting tension in a Chinese market, for 'while supernatural elements such as ghosts and zombies are allowed in books, these elements must have a reasonable scientific explanation in films' as well as dramas (Wei, 2016; see also: Lugg, 2011). The explanations

[3] This longstanding fear of China's perception as backward has manifested across many policy areas. Indeed, it was only following the PRC's ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), that 'traditional cultural practices formerly deemed as "superstitious"' and that were supressed throughout much of the twentieth century were rehabilitated into 'intangible cultural heritage' (Maags, 2021, p. 178).

for odd phenomena in DMBJ dramas are explicitly scientific: for example, meteorite fragments in *Mystic Nine* and *Ultimate Note* (Zou & Wei, 2020) cause hallucinations and other biological effects, but this is due to special properties of the minerals rather than to anything mystical.

It is generally held that Xu Lei's DMBJ began as a derivation of the novel *Ghost Blows Out the Light* (≪鬼吹燈 ≫*Gui Chui Deng*), by Zhang Muye (張牧野, writing as Tianxia Bachang 天下霸唱), but swapped the gender of one of *Ghost*'s protagonists to make an all-male trio. Posted online from 2004 (Lugg, 2011), *Ghost* 'initiated the wave of similar writings through its vivid representation of the most complicated rituals that the robbers are supposed to observe in carrying out their job' (Duan, 2019, p. 674) including the title's explicitly supernatural reference to lighting a candle in a tomb to communicate with the dead.[4] The DMBJ novels follow a similar pattern of explicitly supernatural activity, which are transmuted to scientific or technological sources in the adaptations. For example, in *Reunion*, the Iron Triangle fight papier-mâché soldiers that move as a lurching horde, and are *not* zombies, but are technological marvels of an ancient dynasty. In this way, DMBJ dramas are careful to present a range of genre-typical pleasures while not overstepping regulatory guidelines about appropriate on-screen content. Later, in *Reunion 2*, they see shadowy figures which are *not* ghosts, but are moving images generated by the magnets and mineral content of an ancient structure, essentially a cave-based version of videocassette recording. Therefore, the franchise twists established tomb-raiding tropes, presenting sites of tangible cultural heritage where apparent 'mysteries' are revealed to have grounded (if ridiculous) scientific explanations, and the pleasures of pseudoarchaeological fiction persist without suggesting mystical causes. The balancing act reveals a complicated rhetorical position about tombs and ruins, and therefore about how archaeological work is represented: that there's nothing supernatural to be found and what is there will likely be weird, probably mutated, and likely deadly.

While tomb raiding genres may increase a public interest in archaeology, as cited at the start of this chapter, archaeologists complain that the popularity of DMBJ 'has led to misunderstandings about the nature of field archaeology' (Lu, Ma, Li, Mi, & Xu, 2019, p. 45). In one notable misunderstanding, DMBJ was reported to be the source for 'basic knowledge about antiquities and tomb-looting techniques' by the leader of novice mausoleum raiders after the group was arrested (Ge, 2015). However, when *Lost Tomb* was temporarily removed from iQIYI by order of Chinese state censors in 2016 this was reportedly to make edits to curb 'vulgar, violent or superstitious' content (Liu, 2016), not because the novel had been used as an (ill-advised) instruction manual. The market for Chinese antiquities has expanded since the 1990s and supports a sizeable workforce 'in a bid to satisfy the ever-growing demand for such artefacts among collectors' (Friedrich, 2020, p. 309). One recent estimate put the possible number of 'full-time tomb raiders' in China at 100,000 (Ge, 2015),

[4] If the ghost does blow out the light, it is a signal for the raiders to leave immediately. Following the success of *Lost Tomb*, *Ghost Blows Out the Light* was adapted as *Candle in the Tomb* (≪鬼吹灯之精绝古城≫ Kong, Sun & Zhou, 2016). At the time of writing, there are four sequel dramas.

despite looting and the sale of artefacts attracting severe sentences including life in prison and the death penalty (Shan, 2016). Mass arrests of criminal tomb raiders are publicised as a deterrent, with press reports noting multiple instances where over a hundred perpetrators are detained at a time (Chen, 2018; Friedrich, 2020; Ge, 2015; Qin, 2017). This real-world context for tomb-raiding fiction is the background against which the DMBJ dramas model their characters' interactions with tangible cultural heritage.

Narratively, tomb raiding in DMBJ is shown to be not profitable: minor characters are given jail terms for the illegal sale of antiquities, loot recovered is either appraised as worthless or dutifully handed over to the government for a small reward, and events (or, sometimes, snakes) prevent characters from plundering rooms full of gold and gems. When one of the nine old tomb-raiding families – a consortium who in recent generations had shifted from extraction to preservation – is revealed to be selling crates of finds overseas in *Explore with the Note* (Lau, 2021), this is framed as a betrayal of the alliance and of an unspoken aim to keep tangible heritage within Chinese control. Throughout the franchise, Wu Xie is motivated by filial concerns: while he relies on his grandfather's notebook that details past tomb raiding adventures, the titular 'graverobber's chronicle', he uses it for clues in pursuit of his missing uncle (Wu Sanxing 吳三省) rather than for treasure-hunting. Throughout the adaptations there is a conscious ambivalence in the way the characters discuss their activities and explain their interest in antiquities. At the start of *Reunion*, Wu Xie (Zhu Yilong 朱一龙) is 'retired' from adventuring, and instead runs an antiques shop and works as an 'antiquities consultant' in partnership with his other uncle, Wu Erbai (Hu Jun 胡军), who is introduced as a 'cultural relics protection consultant'.

The dramas pointedly perform disavowals, toeing a line that models sanctioned (and ethical) approaches to tangible heritage, while winking at these obfuscations. For example, a gathering of the nine families in *Sand Sea* is framed as a meeting of an 'Antique Authentication Exchange Association', and elsewhere characters explicitly discuss the distinctions between looting and scholarly interest. *The Lost Tomb 2* (Lau, 2019) contains a sequence in an underground tomb complex where Pangzi (Zhang Boyu 张博宇) is teased by Wu Xie (Hou Minghao 侯明昊) about being a tomb robber and not an archaeologist with university training or hereditary interest, but Pangzi counters with a claim to be '*wild* archaeologist'. The performance feels like a reflexive nod to the line the franchise treads, especially as this is intercut with flashbacks to a previous scholarly/sanctioned expedition to the same location. Interestingly, when trying to locate a remote village later in their series, the pair's cover story is that they are experts in 'ethnic minority studies', taking a conceptual place one step further from an interest in looting. This deniability offers all the pleasures of illicit and dangerous adventure, tempered by filial excuses and the pretence of cataloguing cultural heritage.

Another characteristic of (pseudo)archaeological tomb-raiding media is their overt imperialism, with a white 'raider-archaeologist' crashing through the global south to collect treasure and destroy local settlements (Weaver-Hightower, 2014). On the surface, DMBJ

subverts this: Chinese characters broadly working within Chinese borders to encounter and uncover Chinese tombs, showing off the advanced engineering (read: traps) made by Chinese craftspeople of the past, neatly swapping out an Abrahamic mythos of Indiana Jones (Hiscock, 2012, pp. 163–164) for stories delving thousands of years into Chinese history. While the excavations and ruins in DMBJ are ancient, they are part of a living context that shapes how archaeology sits in society. In a Chinese context, 'more than 400,000' sites of tangible cultural heritage remain despite the 'desecration' of the Cultural Revolution (Shepherd & Yu, 2013, p. 17); this is the basis for the promotion of domestic heritage tourism to enable a 'personal experiencing of this shared tangible storehouse of knowledge' (Shepherd & Yu, 2013, p. 1). DMBJ also shows off the ecological diversity within PRC borders – jungles, deserts, mountains – resulting in an increase in tourism to locations like Changbai Mountain after its appearance in the franchise (L. Zhao, Liu, & Zhao, 2018). Indeed, the adventure/exploration elements in DMBJ arguably advance an agenda about the PRC's size and might: this is a strategy taken by Chinese broadcasters when localising wilderness survival reality TV formats, which replace interpersonal competition with showing comradeship and determination in remote locations across the country (Fung, 2009; Keane, 2004).

This is complicated by the position the dramas take towards non-Han Chinese, and close neighbours to the PRC. Of concern here is the representation of landscape, of people, and questions of respect for the past including whose past is being represented. The nod to ethnic minority studies mentioned above exists in a 'Han-dominated nation-state' in which representation of the 55 official non-Han ethnicities 'contribute to both the construction and the rhetoric of national unity in the PRC' (Z. Yan, 2020, p. 2). Deeper discussion of Han supremacy is beyond this chapter's scope, but is context for unpicking DMBJ's imperialist undertones, which regularly locate set-piece tombs in regions that subsequently came under central control – the titular *Lost Tomb* dates from the Warring States period, approximately 2500 years ago and before the Qin dynasty established a unified empire – or place characters just outside of PRC borders. The recourse in *Lost Tomb 2* to 'ethnic minority studies' serves to remind the audience that the characters are pursuing a regional non-Han site, which is now part of modern China: it arguably locates these exotic others within a colonised space. Similarly, *Sand Sea* filmed desert scenes in Xinjiang, and takes place partly in the Inner Mongolian autonomous area (Xu, 2018), but also in what characters call 'no-man's land' across the Mongolian border. Rhetorically, this is presented as a natural move beyond a border that is flexible, and a reminder of the land-based imperial expansion of Asian states in contrast to Western naval colonisation.

Western imperialist tomb-raiding narratives are a 'fantasy... where the archaeology disrupts an economic system by plundering and destroying a sacred or historical place' (Weaver-Hightower, 2014, p. 122); in DMBJ the historical places are often, but not always, 'lost' sites with only academic interest. However, *Reunion* includes the violent destruction of a rural village that appears to be in Laos, one whose residents practiced shamanistic rites in local ruins. As Kathleen Davis states, 'terms such as *irrational*, *superstitious*, *traditional*…have

long been applied both to Europe's past and to contemporary peoples who serve to constitute modernity's outside—whether the colonised, rural outliers, or the urban poor' (2015, p. 69). In light of PRC assertions of regional power, and the general prohibition against supernatural elements on screen, there is another complicated disavowal at play in this instance that represents and then effectively punishes a rural community for being irrational, superstitious, and traditional. By implication, and in a classic imperialist trope, the villagers fall outside of modernity and end up sacrificed in the conflict between our heroes and mercenary forces who are both after the same lost city. This highlights one of the compelling tensions in DMBJ: its careful discouragement of looting portable antiquities sits against the destruction of heritage sites (indeed, not many tombs survive our heroes), and it replicates many of the same imperialist tendencies of Western tomb raiding narratives.

Contexts for popularity: audiences and fandom

I finish up this discussion of *Daomu Biji* with some notes and reflections on its popularity and reception. Much can be said about soft power and the availability of Chinese television on platforms outside of the PRC, but in the interest of space I will limit myself to a few comments about reception. Beyond sales figures, streaming stats, and evidence of an active fanbase, the range of offhand references to DMBJ in scholarship beyond literature or archaeology speak to its presence in Chinese popular culture. It is sufficiently popular to use in a corpus for linguistic analysis of code-switching in online novels (Su, 2018), the dramas have been favourably cited for bringing aspects of intangible cultural heritage into popular culture (Fu & Huang, 2018), and a volume about pangolins mentions DMBJ, noting an increase in pangolin-claw necklaces for sale in markets is potentially attributable to Pangzi also wearing one (Xing et al., 2020, p. 236). In none of these cases is DMBJ the subject of the discussion, nor indeed is archaeology, but the regularity with which it crops up is indicative of its cultural presence and potential visibility of discourses around heritage.

The book series appeals mainly to younger male readers (L. Wang & Yang, 2020), which one expects given its descent from boys' adventure novels (Phillips, 1997). The novels have impressive sales figures, at one point being amongst the top online novels in the Chinese market (Lugg, 2011, p. 126), and seeing heavy library circulation (Sun & Xie, 2016). In 2015, anticipation over a new chapter's publication caused the series and related keywords to become 'both a trending topic and top search term on Weibo' (a microblogging social media platform) with one topic being read '400 million times' (Y. Feng & Literat, 2017, p. 2593). Xu Lei has been 'among the top ten highest-grossing Chinese authors of recent years' (Inwood, 2016, p. 437), having 'several million fans following on WeChat' (Liang & Shen, 2016, p. 337). He also has a direct stake in the success of the adaptations as co-producer through his production company NP Entertainment, named for the pinyin 'nan pai' in his penname (Xu, 2018). It is a truism that the younger male demographic is the most lucrative and therefore desirable market segment, and it appears that DMBJ has successfully found its market.

However, the series also has a 'massive fanbase' amongst readers in female-oriented danmei (耽美) contexts who view the relationship between the characters Wu Xie and

Zhang Qiling as a romantic one (A. Wang, 2021, p. 120; see also: Inwood, 2017). Danmei, the Chinese iteration of BL (Boys' Love), is a literary genre 'that portrays idealized homoerotic relationships between physically attractive male figures' (J. Feng, 2009, p. 2) based on 1970s Japanese comics for girls and is 'created by and for women and sexual minorities' (Yang & Xu, 2017, p. 3). Xu Lei has acknowledged the significance of so-called 'rotten girl' fans[5] in making the novels a success 'even if the genre [of DMBJ] is not danmei' (A. Wang, 2021, p. 120). Danmei fandom is broadly equivalent to Western slash fandom through its focus on fanworks which create or emphasise male/male romance (Jenkins, 1992; Penley, 1991), but a key difference is that slash typically refers to riffing on homoerotic subtext in a media text, whereas danmei is a male/male romance genre from the outset (J. Feng, 2009; Ng & Li, 2020; Yang & Xu, 2017). There is DMBJ fan fiction in English and Chinese posted on *Archive of Our Own*, a significant (Western) website for fanworks; based on an informal sampling, many focus on Wu Xie and Zhang Qiling, others look at supporting characters or the Iron Triangle as a triad, and still others do not feature romance and focus on canon-typical pseudoarchaeology. The interactions and overlaps between Chinese, Chinese-speaking, and other fans is a site for further study, particularly in light of recent theorisation about online fandoms and postcolonial cyberculture (Pande, 2018).

However, in a context of danmei novel adaptations, it is interesting that the marketing for *Ultimate Note* emphasised the homosociality of the all-male adventure series: one notable photo shoot of two leads mimics those of successful danmei adaptations *Guardian* (Zhou, Gao, & Xie, 2018) and *The Untamed* (Cheng & Chan, 2019).[6] In this, the way the franchise models the deep bonds of committed friendship between men across many years of exploits can be seen as another disavowal: not committing the characters to a romantic relationship, but offering a familiar semiotic space that invites an alternate reading. It is important not to conflate danmei with any (Asian) source that can be read homoerotically: a homosocial Chinese drama can be read queerly without being based on danmei, as is the case with spy drama *The Disguiser* (Li, 2015) which has a substantial Chinese slash fandom (C. Y. Wang & Hu, 2021). Skirting a homosocial/homoerotic line to appeal to slash fans and 'rotten girls' while serving up masculine adventure narratives is perhaps subtler than offering genre pleasures of pseudoarchaeology with a veneer of scientific plausibility, and more careful than positioning the protagonists as consultants and not looters. Nevertheless, and taken all together, it is revealing in how the difference audiences for DMBJ – younger men, fans online, state censors, archaeological enthusiasts – are appealed to, and appeased.

Conclusion

The sitcom *Detectorists* (Crook, 2014-2017) shares DMBJ's homosociality and its sense that a shared national past is available for discovery (Schwanebeck, 2019). Diane Rodgers (2021) has argued that *Detectorists* can be understood as folk horror – DMBJ's relationship to the landscapes it inhabits is also fraught, though without the pervasive melancholy of

[5] The Chinese term funü (腐女, lit. rotten girls) is derived from the Japanese fujoshi, and is adopted by danmei fans as a self-description (A. Wang, 2021).

[6] The similarity is noted across social media posts; Fancy.Sun (2021) provides a good example.

Detectorists. There are connections here regarding the suppression and emergency of trauma, manifested as monsters in DMBJ, and the idea of landscapes hiding both the potential for wealth and the threat of a quick and violent death, wrapped up in discourses of shared national pasts articulated through movement across (and dominance over) landscapes. Given the fraught status of Chinese tangible heritage following the Cultural Revolution (Andrews, 2018; Shepherd & Yu, 2013), a franchise which negotiates these themes is compelling.

To conclude, *Daomu Biji* is a compelling franchise, not in the least because of the intensity of its pace of adaptation, and its place within a global streaming television context which is similarly undergoing rapid change. At the same time, it is a localisation of what is ultimately Victorian imperialist pulp literature that has been iterated through Hollywood blockbusters and videogames, and which presents an uneasy subversion of imperialist tropes. The political constraints of contemporary Chinese media production result in winking claims to scientifically-plausible pseudoarchaeology, but also in presenting tomb raiders who carefully explain that their interest is in the preservation of antiquities, even as they dynamite a tomb to escape the aforementioned plausible tomb-dwelling creatures. Tomb traps show off the ingenuity of ancient people whose descendants exist within PRC borders, or just beyond them, in an affirmation of ethnic diversity within a Han-dominant sense of nation. Overall, this representation of sanctioned and experienced defenders of Chinese tangible cultural heritage paints a heroic – if inaccurate – picture of contemporary archaeological practice. It is too soon to tell, but with the franchise increasing the visibility of archaeology and heritage, it may yet succeed in attracting a new generation to the sector.

Acknowledgements
This chapter is indebted to the translation work and commentary of English-language DMBJ fandom. My thanks to students at Birmingham City University and University of Strathclyde and to the anonymous peer reviewer for feedback on this work in progress.

References
Andrews, M. (2018, April 12). Why a former book-burning Red Guard now saves Chinese antiques. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/article/2141217/why-former-red-guard-now-saves-chinese-antiques-and-uses-his-collection

Bai, R. (2014). *Staging Corruption: Chinese Television and Politics*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Brannon Donoghue, C., Havens, T., & McDonald, P. (2021). Introduction: Media Distribution Today. In P. McDonald, C. Brannon Donoghue, & T. Havens (Eds.), *Digital Media Distribution: Portals, Platforms, Pipelines* (pp. 1–24). New York: New York University Press.

Chen, L. (2018, September 19). Chinese tomb raiders dug tunnels to steal 3,000-year-old artefacts. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2164859/chinese-tomb-raiders-dug-underground-tunnels-steal-priceless

China's tomb raiders are growing more professional. (2021, April 17). *The Economist*. Retrieved from https://www.economist.com/china/2021/04/17/chinas-tomb-raiders-are-growing-more-professional

Copplestone, T. J. (2017). But that's not accurate: The differing perceptions of accuracy in cultural-heritage videogames between creators, consumers and critics. *Rethinking History*, *21*(3), 415–438. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642529.2017.1256615

Cunningham, S., & Craig, D. (2021). 'Tech-Tonic' Shifts: The U.S. and China Models of Online Screen Distribution. In P. McDonald, C. B. Donoghue, & T. Havens (Eds.), *Digital Media Distribution: Portals, Platforms, Pipelines,* (pp. 145–163). New York: New York University Press.

Curtin, M., & Li, Y. (2018). IQIYI: China's Internet Tigers Take Television. In D. Johnson (Ed.), *From networks to Netflix: A guide to changing channels* (pp. 343–353). New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Davis, K. (2015). Timelines: Feudalism, Secularity and Early Modernity. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, *38*(1), 69–83. https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2014.989651

Dennis, L. M. (2019). *Archaeological Ethics, Video-Games, and Digital Archaeology: A Qualitative Study on Impacts and Intersections* (PhD thesis, University of York). University of York, York, UK. Retrieved from https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/24400/

Duan, G. (2019). Chinese internet literature: Digital literary genres and new writing subjects. In M. D. Gu (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Modern Chinese Literature* (pp. 669–681). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Dwyer, T. (2012). Fansub Dreaming on ViKi: "Don't Just Watch But Help When You Are Free". *The Translator*, *18*(2), 217–243. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2012.10799509

Fancy.Sun. (2021, March 2). Harper's Bazaar x bl ships is really a thing now! Retrieved 31 August 2021, from ~BL•Drama~ | aminoapps.com website: http://aminoapps.com/p/5j5j6c

Feng, C. (2015, July 7). iQiyi TV: Chinese video streaming site expands into self-produced content. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from https://www.scmp.com/tech/apps-gaming/article/1834096/chinas-online-video-providers-see-self-produced-content-next-cash

Feng, J. (2009). 'Addicted to Beauty': Consuming and Producing Web-based Chinese 'Danmei' Fiction at Jinjiang. *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, *21*(2), 1–41.

Feng, Y., & Literat, I. (2017). Redefining Relations Between Creators and Audiences in the Digital Age: The Social Production and Consumption of Chinese Internet Literature. *International Journal of Communication*, *11*, 2584–2604.

Friedrich, M. (2020). Producing and Identifying Forgeries of Chinese Manuscripts. In C. Michel (Ed.), *Fakes and Forgeries of Written Artefacts from Ancient Mesopotamia to*

Modern China (pp. 291–336). De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110714333-014

Fu, M., & Huang, Z. (2018). Transformation and Inheritance of Suzhou Pingtan in the Context of Intangible Cultural Heritage. *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Arts, Design and Contemporary Education (ICADCE 2018)*. Presented at the 4th International Conference on Arts, Design and Contemporary Education (ICADCE 2018), Zhengzhou, China. Zhengzhou, China: Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/icadce-18.2018.50

Fung, A. Y. (2009). Globalizing televised culture: The case of China. In G. Turner & J. Tay (Eds.), *Television studies after TV* (pp. 178–188). London and New York: Routledge.

Ge, C. (2015, December 4). China's ancient treasures under siege from army of tomb raiders. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/article/1885832/chinas-ancient-treasures-under-siege-army-tomb-raiders

Gorfinkel, L. (2017). *Chinese Television and National Identity Construction: The Cultural Politics of Music-Entertainment Programmes*. London and New York: Routledge. Retrieved from https://www.routledge.com/Chinese-Television-and-National-Identity-Construction-The-Cultural-Politics/Gorfinkel/p/book/9780367869892

Grealy, L., Driscoll, C., Wang, B., & Fu, Y. (2019). Resisting age-ratings in China: The ongoing prehistory of film classification. *Asian Cinema*, *30*, 53–71. https://doi.org/10.1386/ac.30.1.53_1

He, H. (2016, May 15). Global content providers eye China's online drama boom. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from

https://www.scmp.com/business/article/1945174/global-content-providers-eye-chinas-online-drama-boom

Hiscock, P. (2012). Cinema, Supernatural Archaeology, and the Hidden Human Past. *Numen*, *59*(2–3), 156–177. https://doi.org/10.1163/156852712X630761

Inwood, H. (2016). Internet Literature: From YY to MOOC. In K. A. Denton (Ed.), *The Columbia Companion to Modern Chinese Literature* (pp. 436–440). New York: Columbia University Press.

Inwood, H. (2017). Screening the in-between: Intermediality and digital dystopianism in contemporary Chinese film and fiction. *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies*, *43*(2), 193–219. https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.39825

Jenkins, H. (1992). *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Keane, M. (2004). It's All in a Game: Television Formats in the People's Republic of China. In K. Iwabuchi, S. Muecke, & M. Thomas (Eds.), *Rogue Flows* (pp. 53–71). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Keane, M. (2016). Disconnecting, Connecting, and Reconnecting: How Chinese Television Found Its Way Out of the Box. *International Journal of Communication*, *10*, 5426–5443.

Kim, Y.-H., & Jung, H.-K. (2019). Expansion of K-Content by Global Fandom: Focusing on 'Fansub' Community of Viki. *Journal of Digital Convergence*, *17*(11), 523–530. https://doi.org/10.14400/JDC.2019.17.11.523

Liang, Y., & Shen, W. (2016). Fan economy in the Chinese media and entertainment industry: How feedback from super fans can propel creative industries' revenue. *Global Media and China*, *1*(4), 331–349. https://doi.org/10.1177/2059436417695279

Liu, J. (2016, May 2). Online data storage providers shut down in China as digital content crackdown continues. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from https://www.scmp.com/business/article/1940477/online-data-storage-providers-shut-down-china-digital-content-crackdown

Locher, M. A. (2020). Moments of relational work in English fan translations of Korean TV drama. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *170*, 139–155. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2020.08.002

Lu, Q., Ma, S., Li, J., Mi, H., & Xu, Y. (2019). IRelics: Designing a Tangible Interaction Platform for the Popularization of Field Archaeology. *Proceedings of the Thirteenth International Conference on Tangible, Embedded, and Embodied Interaction*, 45–54. Tempe Arizona USA: ACM. https://doi.org/10.1145/3294109.3295647

Lugg, A. (2011). Chinese online fiction: Taste publics, entertainment, and *Candle in the Tomb*. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, *4*(2), 121–136. https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2011.565673

Maags, C. (2021). Cultural heritage politics in China. In C. Shei & W. Wei (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Chinese Studies* (pp. 177–190). Routledge.

Malley, S. (2018). *Excavating the future: Archaeology and geopolitics in contemporary North American science fiction film and television*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Mok, L. (2017, September 22). 10 'little fresh meat' actors making waves in China's film scene. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from https://www.scmp.com/magazines/style/people-events/article/2112413/have-chinas-little-fresh-meat-male-actors-lu-han-li

Ng, E., & Li, X. (2020). A queer “socialist brotherhood”: The Guardian web series, boys’ love fandom, and the Chinese state. *Feminist Media Studies*, *20*(4), 479–495. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2020.1754627

Pande, R. (2018). *Squee from the Margins: Fandom and Race*. University of Iowa Press. JSTOR. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv7r43q4

Penley, C. (1991). Brownian Motion: Women, Tactics, and Technology. In C. Penley & A. Ross (Eds.), *Technoculture* (pp. 35–161). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Phillips, R. (1997). *Mapping men and empire: A geography of adventure*. London ; New York: Routledge.

Pyburn, K. A. (2008). Public Archaeology, Indiana Jones, and Honesty. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress*, *4*(2), 201–204. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11759-008-9071-y

Qin, A. (2017, July 16). Tomb Robbing Makes Comeback in China. *The New York Times*, p. A6(L).

Rassalle, T. (2021). Archaeogaming: When Archaeology and Video Games Come Together. *Near Eastern Archaeology*, *84*(1), 4–11. https://doi.org/10.1086/712387

Reinhard, A. (2018). *Archaeogaming: An introduction to archaeology in and of video games*. New York: Berghahn.

Rodgers, D. A. (2021). Et in Arcadia Ego: British Folk Horror Film and Television. In M. Cheesman & C. Hart (Eds.), *Folklore and Nation in Britain and Ireland* (pp. 203–216). New York: Routledge.

Schiele, A., & Schiele, B. (2022). Archaeological representations in the media: The dominance of pseudo-Archeology. *Review of Science, Mathematics and ICT Education*, *16*(1), 19–48. https://doi.org/10.26220/rev.3873

Schwanebeck, W. (2019). A Field That Is Forever England: Nostalgic Revisionism in *Detectorists* (2014-2017). In C. Lusin & R. Haekel (Eds.), *Community, Seriality, and the State of the Nation: British and Irish Television Series in the 21st Century* (pp. 99–118). Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag GmbH.

Sethi, A. (2019). *Chinese Consumers: Exploring the World's Largest Demographic*. Singapore: Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8992-3

Shan, J. (2016, April 15). Tomb raiding ringleader gets death penalty. *Global Times*. Retrieved from https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/978630.shtml

Shepherd, R. J., & Yu, L. (2013). *Heritage Management, Tourism, and Governance in China: Managing the Past to Serve the Present*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Su, Q. (2018). A Study of Code-Switching in Chinese Web Novels. *2018 International Conference on Asian Language Processing (IALP)*, 123–128. Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia. https://doi.org/10.1109/IALP.2018.8629220

Sun, L., & Xie, J. (2016). An Exploration of Reading Promotion and Readers' Advisory at Chinese Public Libraries. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, *56*(2), 96–107.

Wang, A. (2021). Male Writers of Dānměi Literature: An Analysis of Fēitiānyèxiáng. *Heritage of Nusantara: International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage*, *10*(1), 101–140.

Wang, C. Y., & Hu, T. (2021). Transmedia Storytelling in Mainland China: Interaction Between TV Drama and Fan Narratives in *The Disguiser*. In F. Gilardi & C. Lam (Eds.), *Transmedia in Asia and the Pacific* (pp. 107–126). Singapore: Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7857-1_6

Wang, L., & Yang, S. (2020). Analysis on the Dissemination of Internet Novel IP (Intelligent Property) Dramas in the New Media Era. *Advances in Social Science, Education, and*

Humanities Research, *507*. Moscow, Russia: Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201215.335

Wang, W. Y., & Lobato, R. (2019). Chinese video streaming services in the context of global platform studies. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, *12*(3), 356–371. https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2019.1584119

Weaver-Hightower, R. (2014). Tomb Raider Archeologists and the Exhumation of the US Neoimperial Cinematic Fantasy. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, *47*(1), 109–128. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2012.00936.x

Wei, X. (2016, August 9). Censorship a hurdle for tomb raiding book adaptations. *The Global Times*. Retrieved from https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/999172.shtml

Wen, W. B. (2021, June 24). 时隔两年,《陈情令》播放量破 95 亿_手机网易网 (After a lapse of two years, the broadcast volume of 'Chen Qing Ling' exceeded 9.5 billion). Retrieved 20 August 2021, from https://3g.163.com/dy/article/GD9FRQ5805506BEH.html

Xiao, L. (2015, October 22). 'Chinese wave' needs quality productions to swell | Op-Ed. *China Daily (USA)*. Retrieved from http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2015-10/22/content_22255175.htm

Xing, S., Bonebrake, T. C., Cheng, W., Zhang, M., Ades, G., Shaw, D., & Zhou, Y. (2020). Meat and medicine: Historic and contemporary use in Asia. In D. W. S. Challender, H. C. Nash, & C. Waterman (Eds.), *Pangolins: Science, Society and Conservation* (pp. 227–239). London: Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-815507-3.00014-9

Xu, F. (2018, July 26). Grave Robbers 'Chronicles' sequel released to fanfare. *China Daily (Global Edition)*. Retrieved from https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201807/26/WS5b59129da31031a351e90324.html

Yan, X. (2021). The operational model of cinematic adaptation from Internet content in China. In Q. Li, Y. Guan, & H. Lu (Eds.), *Development of the Global Film Industry: Industrial Competition and Cooperation in the Context of Globalization* (pp. 149–156). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003051503

Yan, Z. (2020). *Ethnic Minority Children in Post-Socialist Chinese Cinema: Allegory, Identity, and Geography*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. Retrieved from https://www.routledge.com/Ethnic-Minority-Children-in-Post-Socialist-Chinese-Cinema-Allegory-Identity/Yan/p/book/9781032084718

Yang, L., & Xu, Y. (2017). Chinese *Danmei* Fandom and Cultural Globalization from Below. In M. K. Lavin, L. Yang, & J. J. Zhao (Eds.), *Boys' love, cosplay, and androgynous idols: Queer fan cultures in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan* (pp. 3–19). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Yau, E. (2018, December 13). China seeks its own Harry Potter or Game of Thrones. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from https://www.scmp.com/culture/film-tv/article/2177562/chinas-quest-its-own-harry-potter-or-game-thrones-profitable-global

Zhao, L., Liu, M., & Zhao, X. (2018). Research on Strategies for Tourism Development of Changbai Mountain North Scenic Spot. *Advances in Social Science, Education, and Humanities Research*, *233*, 1232–1236. Moscow, Russia: Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/iccessh-18.2018.273

Zhao, Y., & Guo, Z. (2020). Sixty Years of Chinese Television: History, Political Economy, and Ideology in a Conflicted Global Order. In J. Wasko & E. R. Meehan (Eds.), *A Companion to Television* (2nd ed., pp. 459–476). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9781119269465

Zhu, Y. (2008). *Television in Post-Reform China: Serial Dramas, Confucian Leadership and the Global Television Market*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203930663

Audio-visual works cited

Cheng, S., & Chan, K. L. (Director). (2019). ≪陈情令≫ [Chen Qing Ling; *The Untamed*] [TV series]. Tencent.

Crook, M. (Creator). (2014-2017). *Detectorists*. [TV series]. BBC.

Kong, S., & Li, X. (Directors). (2015). ≪琅琊榜 ≫ [Lang Ya Bang; *Nirvana in Fire*] [TV series]. Dragon TV; Beijing TV.

Kong, S., Sun, M. L., & Zhou, Y. (Directors). (2016). ≪鬼吹灯之精绝古城≫ [Gui Chui Deng Zhi Jing Jue Gu Cheng; *Candle in the Tomb*] [TV series]. QQ.

Lau, R. (Director). (2015). ≪盗墓笔记≫ [Daomu Biji; *The Lost Tomb*] [TV series]. iQIYI.

Lau, R. (Director). (2019). ≪盗墓笔记 2≫ [Daomu Biji 2; *The Lost Tomb 2*, alt.≪怒海潜沙& 秦岭神树≫ Nu Hai Ti Sha & Qinling Shen Shu; Wrath of the Sea & Qinling's Sacred Tree] [TV series]. Tencent Penguin.

Lau, R. (Director). (2021). ≪盗墓笔记 2 之云顶天宫≫ [Yunding Tiangong; *Explore with the Note*, alt. *The Lost Tomb 2: Heavenly Palace on the Clouds*] [TV series]. Tencent.

Leung, S., Wong, C., He, S., & Zou, X. (Directors). (2016). ≪老九门≫ [Lao Jiumen; *The Mystic Nine*] [TV series]. iQIYI.

Li, X. (Director). (2015). ≪伪装者≫ [Wei Zhuang Zhe; *The Disguiser*] [TV series]. Hunan TV.

Li, Z., Mao, K., & Zou, X. (Directors). (2018). ≪沙海≫ [Sha Hai; *Sand Sea*] [TV series]. Tencent Penguin.

Pan, A. (Director). (2020). ≪重启之极海听雷≫ [Chongqi Zhi Ji Hai Ting Lei; *Reunion: Sound of the Providence*] [TV series]. Tencent Penguin.

Qing, H. (Director). (2022). ≪藏海花≫ [Zang Hai Hua; *Tibetan Sea Flower*] [TV series]. TBC.

Zhou, Y. Z., Gao, H., & Xie, Y. H. (Directors). (2018). ≪镇魂≫ [Zhen Hun; *Guardian*] [TV series]. Youku.

Zou, X. & Wei, L. (Directors). (2020). ≪终极笔记≫ [Zhong Ji Biji; *Ultimate Note*] [TV series]. iQIYI.