A Glitch in Translation: (Self-)Orientalism and Post-Orientalism in Platform Governance

Fan Yang

introduction

Are "content moderation" and "censorship" synonymous? To what extent are the two terminologies intertwined in its practice? Who marks the boundary between the two? Content moderation has been criticized as being a practical mechanism for censorship as both of which indicate content removal—one of the most visible effects that defy platforms' libertarian promises[1]. Distinctions of the two terms are normatively made based on which geopolitical context enacts control over the platform[2] or the extent to which a political hegemonic power intervenes in online discussions.[3] Scholarships on the governance of Chinese internet normatively adopt the terminology "censorship", versus "moderation", to stress political and ideological intervention in the daily operation of platforms that silences antagonistic voices in the authoritarian nation to defend the CPC-led hegemonic power. The term "moderation", however, is mobilized to suggestively describe regulatory implementations against unacceptable content or behaviors that sabotage democratic societies across social platforms developed in the US[4].

---

[1] *See* Jonathan Walter, *Content Moderation Is Not Synonymous with Censorship*, Pub. Knowledge (Nov. 16, 2020), https://publicknowledge.org/content-moderation-is-not-synonymous-with-censorship.

[2] *See* C Gopinath, *Your Censorship Is My Content Moderation*, Hindu Bus. Line (Mar. 10, 2021), https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/columns/your-censorship-is-my-content-moderation/article34037536.ece.

[3] *See* Scott Wright, *Government-Run Online Discussion Fora: Moderation, Censorship and the Shadow of Control*, 8 British J. Pol. & Int'l Rels. 550 (2006).

[4] *See* Sarah T. Roberts, Behind the Screen: Content Moderation in the Shadows of Social Media (2019); Tarleton Gillespie, Patricia Aufderheide, Elinor Carmi, Ysabel

Seemingly, "content moderation" and "censorship" are respectively associated with two sets of internet culture working in parallel—"cyberlibertarianism" and "cyberpaternalism". Tensions and ideological connotations are attached to the terminological choice which demarcates what a platform should (not) be and who obtains the discursive power to define it. Through a dialogical and intercultural approach, this essay critiques the unquestioned binary understanding of "content moderation" and "censorship" that reinforce techno-Orientalism in studying platform governance and reveals its inadequacies when technological ideas are mobilized across cultural contexts. In so doing, the essay is premised on the need for bridging the scholarly conversations between platform governance in China and the US. This attempt is both innovative and experimental.

The essay firstly identifies the translation glitch of "content moderation" and "censorship"—the two activities exist historically and interculturally in both China and the West but are now endowed with ideological references in their conceptualizations of internet governance. The essay then recognizes that "content moderation" and "censorship" can describe the same phenomenon—the automated or manual elimination of unacceptable content or activities on the platform[5] while unacceptability confined by governance stakeholders[6]. However, (self-)Orientalism sees platforms in China and the US as two fundamentally different categories. That is, geopolitical divide between China and the US guides platform studies which shields the postcolonial entanglements between science and technologies in China and the West. China's modern practices in advancing the country's science and technology have been characterized by learning from the UK and the US [7]. Noticeable, such advancement is a relative concept that measures China's development of techno-science against the West-set standard of modernity in order for

Gerrard, Robert Gorwa, Ariadna Matamoros-Fernández, Sarah T. Roberts, Aram Sinnreich, & Sarah Myers West, *Expanding the Debates about Content Moderation: Scholarly Research Agendas for the Coming Policy Debates*, 9 INTERNET POL'Y REV. (2020), https://policyreview.info/articles/analysis/expanding-debate-about-content-moderation-scholarly-research-agendas-coming-policy.

[5] *See* Jennifer Cobbe, *Algorithmic Censorship by Social Platforms: Power and Resistance*, 34 PHIL. & TECH. 739 (2021).

[6] See Robert Gorwa, *Stakeholders*, YALE-WIKIMEDIA INITIATIVE ON INTERMEDIARIES & INFORMATION (Aug. 2, 2022), https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/area/center/isp/documents/stakeholders_ispessayseries_aug2022.pdf.

[7] *See* Fan Yang, *The Postcolonial Route of WeChat: Technological Mimicry, Excess, and Orientalism*. Asian Journal of Communication, 32 ASIAN JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION. 5 (2022).

China to be part of global capitalist system. In light of postcolonial science studies, the essay is concluded by proposing a post-Orientalist approach to analyze platform governance in China and beyond. This post-Orientalism is instigated by Mark Zuckerberg's emulation of Tencent's business model[8] and Elon Musk's envision of Twitter into a super app, like WeChat[9], suggesting the transferability of platform governance between China and the US while de-emphasizing its (self-)Orientalist boundaries.

I.   The Glitch: Intercultural Translation of Platform Governance

Quite often, researchers are siloed in one form of platform ecology or techno-sphere dominated by China or the US with rare intercultural engagement of platforms on both sides. Despite postcolonialism that deeply entangles technological ideas between China and the US, the artificially drawn differentiation depends on whether a platform is seen to sit on one side of the margins of Orientalism or the other (which will be entailed in the following section). Both sides of works contain epistemological and narrative modes that simultaneously support and unsettle the myth of hegemony in platform studies. They also reveal several dilemmas. Firstly, there is a lack of intercultural language to conceptualize the historical and geographical transcendence of platform cultures. The hegemonic nature of English academic writing is that it is often regarded as the only proper mediation for knowledges in the world while curtailing the circulation of alternative forms of knowledges[10]. Secondly, biases are imbued in the terminologies which we choose for granted and the taken-for-grantedness constrains us from exploring the activities and rationales in common that constitute "censorship" and "content moderation" while focusing on the disparities embedded within the two terms. Thirdly, without questioning the limitations of the two terms "content moderation" and "censorship", researchers can participate in reinforcing techno-Orientalism that is built by one to marginalize or

---

[8] *See* Li Yuan, *Mark Zuckerberg Wants Facebook to Emulate WeChat. Can It?* THE NEW YORK TIMES (March. 7, 2019), https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/07/technology/facebook-zuckerberg-wechat.html.

[9] *See* Beatrice Nolan and Grace Kay, *Elon Musk's Plan to Turn Twitter into a Super App is a Step Closer Now that He Owns the Platform*. INSIDER (Oct. 29, 2022), https://www.businessinsider.com/elon-musk-twitter-super-app-x-2022-10.

[10] *See* Banafsheh Ranji, Traces of Orientalism in Media Studies, 43 MEDIA CULTURE & SOCIETY 6(2021).

de-legitimize another while neglecting East-West contacts in platform cultures and beyond.

1.1 Content Moderation versus "Zhongyong"

Existing research on the governance of American platforms, represented by Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Reddit, and Tumblr, identifies that content moderation is a set of organized activities geared towards preventing unacceptable content or behaviors; it is driven by a platform's commercial imperative to protect the majority of platform users that generate volumes of traffic,[11] its ethical obligation confined by America's long history of speech regulation,[12] and its dynamic engagement with internal and external stakeholders.[13] Surveillance and deletion are the bulk of content moderation.[14] Content moderators or platform's self-developed algorithms monitor users' activities and their generated content to remove any information containing obscenity, hate speech, violence, racism, child pornography, fake news and disinformation, and spam before or after publication, along with the possibility of suspending the accounts that frequently engage in such unacceptable activities.[15] Content moderation is generally conceived as significant, moral, and positive in shaping the quality, useful, and safe online discussions while aligning itself to "public interest."[16] The conception of public interest is not without constraints as Instagram's "nipple ban" on Instagram[17] and Twitter's resurge in far-right accounts[18] already raised concerns of content moderation being engineered favoring sexism and racism. The two examples show that the idea of public interest in the operation of content moderation is confined within the so-called "mainstream" Western democracy and is typically characterized by

---

[11] Roberts, *supra* note 4.

[12] TARLETON GILLESPIE, CUSTODIANS OF THE INTERNET: PLATFORMS, CONTENT MODERATION, AND THE HIDDEN DECISIONS THAT SHAPE SOCIAL MEDIA (2018).

[13] Chinmayi Arun, *Facebook's Faces*, 135 HARV. L. REV. F. 236 (2022).

[14] Cobbe, *supra* note 5.

[15] Gillespie, *supra* note 12; Roberts, *supra* note 4.

[16] *See* Wright, *supra* note 3; James Grimmelmann, *The Virtues of Moderation*, 17 YALE J.L. & TECH. 42 (2015); Ysabel Gerrard, *Beyond the Hashtag, Circumventing Content Moderation on Social Media*, 20 NEW MEDIA & SOC'Y 4492 (2018).

[17] *See* Julia Jacobs, Will Instagram Ever 'Free the Nipple'?, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Nov. 22, 2019), https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/22/arts/design/instagram-free-the-nipple.html.

[18] *See* Sheera Frenkel and Stuart A. Thompson, *Some Far-Right Accounts on Twitter Saw Surge in New Followers, Researchers Say*. THE NEW YORK TIMES (Oct. 28, 2022), https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/28/technology/twitter-far-right-followers.html.

whiteness, masculinity, middle-classness, and heterosexuality—by boundary and exclusivity, rather than inclusivity[19]. Under the guise of America's cyberlibertarianism, racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, and classism have long been coded in platforms' architecture and their technological language.[20]

Does "content moderation" exist in China? There is a lack of Chinese translation for the phrase "content moderation" in the context of platform governance but it exists on its own terms. Moderation suggests the process of negotiation among divergent opinions to achieve a common place.[21] In Chinese language, one of the earliest documented records of "moderation" should be traced back to "*zhongyong*,"—a term drawn from Confucius's *The Doctrine of the Mean*[22]. *Zhongyong* means something in the middle, without excess or extremity, sometimes after adjustment. It is a concept focusing on equilibrium and harmony when addressing the relationship between humans and nature, or the relationship between the governor and the governed.[23] Despite being articulated in different eras and cultural contexts, the concept of *zhongyong* and Habermasian public sphere are surprisingly similar. In expressing public opinions, moderation can be a rather idealistic approach in public sphere.[24] The action of moderation hints at negotiating multiple articulated ideas that are oriented in different directions; via negotiation, different parties achieve an agreed-upon balance point.[25] During negotiation, different ideas dilute each other to achieve harmony. No one wins or loses but each party compromises. The disconnection between moderation in theory and in practice is evident. "Content moderation" in theory can barely capture American social platforms' practice on unacceptable content—content removal in the moderation practice conducted by individual moderators supersedes the negotiation process among content publishers, platforms, content moderators, and relevant stakeholders who might obtain different

---

[19] *See* Fan Yang & Yun Jiang, Multicultural Australia? How the Mainstream Media Segregates Us, PEARLS AND IRRITATIONS (Jan. 31, 2022) https://johnmenadue.com/multicultural-australia-how-the-mainstream-media-segregates-us/.

[20] Dan M. Kotliar, *Data Orientalism: On the Algorithmic Construction of the Non-Western Other*, 49 THEORY & SOC'Y 919 (2020); Safiya Noble & Sarah T. Roberts, *Technological Elites, the Meritocracy, and Postracial Myths in Silicon Valley* (UCLA, Racism Postrace Report No. 6), https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7z3629nh.

[21] Wright, *supra* note 3.

[22] *See* JAMES LEGGE, THE CHINESE CLASSICS (1960).

[23] Chun Shan, *Natural Justice and its Political Implications: Legal Philosophy Revealed in the Doctrine of the Mean*, 7 FRONTIERS L. CHINA 425 (2012).

[24] Jürgen Habermas, Sara Lennox & Frank Lennox, *The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)*, NEW GERMAN CRITIQUE, Autumn 1974, at 49 (1974).

[25] Wright, *supra* note 3.

perspectives. Large-scale negotiation practices in moderation are almost unachievable or kept in secrecy with cost and efficiency prioritized, leaving users uncertain about how rules and policies are applied.[26]

Although the Chinese translation of "content moderation" remains lacking, relevant practices exists on WeChat particularly in response to user-generated reports of content plagiarism and fake news, which can easily slip from algorithmic detection. 100 influential Official Accounts. i.e., a publishing function on WeChat, are formed as part of the temporary evaluation panel to judge whether and to what extent the reported piece involves plagiarism and the degrees of penalties to be implemented.[27] This collective evaluation is also revealed to be applied across WeChat's governance over fake news, which is de facto conducted by groups of voluntary fact-checkers verified by the platform.[28] Compared to American platforms where content moderation is conducted in the form of individual tasks, WeChat's assessment of plagiarism and fake news presents an instance of a relatively transparent, public interest-oriented dispute resolution mechanism. This practice might be capable of providing more legitimacy in the future rectification of platform governance implementation in general. Nonetheless, the lack of transparency in the formulation of the evaluation panel can still make collective assessments rather unfair on WeChat.

1.2 "Censorship" versus "Shencha"

Like "moderation", "censorship" exists across cultural contexts and temporalities. However, compared to content moderation, the narrative of censorship describes the critical involvement of hegemonic power—normally associated with political authorities—to suppress any content that displeases the dominance. The history of censorship indicates the long power struggle between religious and/or imperial governance via moral and political codes and liberty in speech in China and West[29]. The

---

[26] *See* MacKenzie F. Common, Fear the Reaper: How Content Moderation Rules are Enforced on Social Media, 34 INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF LAW, COMPUTER & TECHNOLOGY, 2(2020).

[27] See FAN YANG, News Manufactories on WeChat: The Word Business, Censorship, and Pseudo-Journalism, Doctoral thesis, Deakin University.

[28] *See* Daniel Funke, *On WeChat, Rogue Fact-Checkers are Tackling the App's Fake News Problem* (2018), POYNTER, https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2018/on-wechat-rogue-fact-checkers-are-tackling-the-apps-fake-news-problem/.

[29] *See* Mette Newth, *The Long History of Censorship* (2010), BEACON FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, http://www.beaconforfreedom.org/liste.html?tid=415&art_id=475

extensive presence of censorship can be traced back to the Burning Books and Burying of Confucian Scholars in 213 BCE and the punishment of Socrates for acknowledging unorthodox divinities in 399 BC. The negative connotation of censorship links to the misalignment between the public interest and the state interest, especially when the state interest is more narrowly confined than public interest and can thus jeopardize the latter.

Chinese platform governance initiated the long tradition of censorship to fend off any (un)intended threats to authorities in the form of speech or publication. "*Shencha*", the equivalent to the "censorship", indicate more complicated processes of Chinese platform governance than content removal. In Chinese, the two Han characters "*shen*" and "*cha*" indicate joint actions taking place in sequence—elaborate investigation (*shen*) followed by identification and capture (*cha*). To some extent, Cobbe's contention that censorship/content moderation proceeds on widespread automatic surveillance over users' content and activities[30] coincides with what "*shencha*" indicates. Censorial mechanism is extended beyond content deletion whose operation tends to be the focus of research. In Chinese platform governance, it involves a series of sequential actions including platform surveillance and monitoring, algorithmic examination in conjunction with manual assessment, and a final decision-making process. The final decisions can be extended from online to offline to include deleting content, shutting down publishers or websites, jailing dissident journalists, bloggers, and activists, and perhaps intimidating their family affiliations.[31] During the process, a range of stakeholders are involved, including law enforcement bodies, platforms, internet service providers, and content producers.

Content moderation and censorship exist across temporalities and cultural contexts. While the two sets of activities are not identical, the idea(l) of content moderation is normatively manifested into censorship as a time-and-cost-effective approach in platform governance. The boundary between the two is artificially drawn by the powerful and dominant West to define what a platform is (not) discursively in order to maintain their privileged position or homogenizing logic of institutions while marginalizing those deemed different or otherwise inferior; and it is also self-drawn by China to distinguish itself from the West. Our terminological choice is not necessarily ideologically motivated consciously or unconsciously; however, it matters as it reflects the aspect of social knowledge, the mode of knowledge production, and norms that

---

[30] Cobbe, *supra* note 5.
[31] *See* YANG, *supra* note 27.

we take for granted in our everyday practices. In studying platforms in the intercultural context, we all undertake the role of translators, weaving together notions of ideology, hegemony, axiology, and common sense while engaging in the process of differentiation which construct differences.

2.   (Self-)Orientalization

Benjamin Bratton conceptualizes the relationship between Chinese and American technologies by referring to the everyday lived geopolitics of Beszél and Ul Qoma, the two fictional cities that seemingly separate, depicted in China Mieville's novel *The City and the City*:

> "The two cities only partially visible to one another
> even as they occupy the same location, each dependent
> on enforcing a willed ignorance of the other's presence,
> constantly policing one another's breaching".[32]

This relationship contains entanglement, mutual gazing, and discursive boundary-marking between platforms in China and the US. Universality of distribution and appropriation, individuality in self-expression, and connectivity in social networking characterize platforms developed in the US; noticeably these categorical distinctions demonstrate both rhetorical and structural connection to neoliberalism, bourgeois subjection of democratic rhetoric, and global capitalism's projection of equality.[33] Silicon Valley defines what platforms and other forms of technologies are legitimate through their global expansion, discursive branding, and neoliberal legal orders in a way to maintain their own existence and reproduce new notions of recognition as structured through colonial pasts.[34]

---

[32] *See* BENJAMIN H. BRATTON, THE STACK: ON SOFTWARE AND SOVEREIGNTY (2015).

[33] Rosemary Jolly, *Desiring Good(s) in the Face of Marginalized Subjects: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in a Global Contex*t, 100 S. ATL. Q. 693 (2001).

[34] *See* Warick Anderson, *Postcolonial Technoscience*, 32 SOC. STUDS. SCI. 643 (2002); Beth Preston,

Ethnotechnology: A Manifesto, *in* ARTEFACT KINDS: ONTOLOGY AND THE HUMAN-MADE WORLD 145 (Maarten Franssen, Peter Kroes, Thomas A.C. Reydon & Pieter E. Vermaas eds. 2014); Matteo Pasquinelli, *What an Apparatus is Not: On the Archeology of the Norm in Foucault, Canguilhem, and Goldstein*, PARRHESIA, No. 22, at 79 (May 29, 2015), http://www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia22/parrhesia22_pasquinelli.pdf. Yang, *supra* note 7.

Compared to the Western discursive framings, platforms in China are Otherized through the lens of techno-Orientalism.[35] Techno-Orientalism is an extended concept from Edward Said's Orientalism.[36] While Orientalism speaks to a filter grid through which the Far East is viewed and stigmatized by the Western consciousness, techno-Orientalism initially envisions a dystopian imaginary of technologies developed in Japan in the 1990s and now in China. This Orientalist view in non-Western technologies is manifested in the form of Otherization, patriotism, pain, moral concern, and anxiety that non-Western technologies are *more West than the West* in a way that challenges the Western dominance. What differentiates in this contemporary discourse of Othering is that the tech "Otherness" of Chinese technologies, from its so-called backwardness from 1861 to the "world factory" attached to the capitalist production, is now refashioned as a space of digital dystopia.

A significant implication of techno-Orientalism is that "non-West" is confined in its own special domain from the West. The dominant West perceives platforms in China as something inferior, different, or even morally depraved. For example, WeChat, Weibo, Baidu, and Alibaba have been colloquially made sense of within and outside China as resemblances or counterfeits of Facebook, Twitter, Google, and eBay/Amazon respectively.[37] This Western gaze is only more intensified given the geopolitical tension between China and the West. In August 2020, the Trump administration proposed to sanction WeChat and TikTok in the US because of purported cybersecurity concerns raised ahead of the 2020 U.S. presidential election that, in fact, served Trump's political interest.[38] As America's ally, Australia subsequently initiated further investigation of the two apps.[39] By problematizing Chinese platforms to prioritize the narrative of "China as a threat"[40], the problems of surveillance, cybersecurity, data ethics, state-business affiliations, and even disinformation instilled in the business backbone of Anglo

---

[35] ROH ET AL., to examine how Japanese technologies were portrayed as a threat to the United States during the 1990s across mass media and how such anxiety was co-opted in American patriotic propaganda.

[36] *See* EDWARD SAID, ORIENTALISM (1977).

[37] Yang, *supra* note 7.

[38] *See* Fan Yang, Is Concern about China's Digital Footprint Warranted? ASIA & THE PACIFIC POLICY SOCIETY, https://www.policyforum.net/is-concern-about-chinas-digital-footprint-warranted/.

[39] *See* Yang, *supra* note 27.

[40] *See* Yang, *supra* note 7.

platforms—platform capitalism[41] and surveillance capitalism[42]—are considered less severe.

Chinese platforms engage in the practice of self-Orientalization that, on the one hand, distinguishes themselves from American platforms as part of nation-building and on the other, legitimizes control and governmental intervention over the internet. In 2011, after Facebook and Google were banned from China, Fang Bingxing, known as the leading developer of China's Great Fire Wall program, drew the line between the internet in China and the US with a metaphor (translated below):

> Water has no nationality, but riverbeds are sovereign territories. We cannot allow polluted water from other nation-states to enter our countries.[43]

In the quote, "riverbeds" signify the Chinese sovereignty and the country's political ideology; "water" hints at the internet that carries Western libertarianism to China; "other nation-states" specifically implies the United States. Fang suggested that America's liberal ideological, counter-CPC forces can be bundled with the internet and thus "pollute" the Chinese nation-state and further destabilize the country's integrity. The nation-state, with the capacity to govern the "riverbed," should function as a gatekeeper to oversee the domestic internet and decide what is acceptable to the country. The internet was introduced to China. However, "Chinese characteristics" is embedded in the governance of internet technologies to legitimize any future politically driven intervention of technologies. Self-Orientalization distinguishes Chinese platforms to their American counterparts where openness and inclusivity are upheld and control or any forms of governmental elimination is supposed to be condemned.

Governmental control over Chinese internet is well-pronounced. Multiple political bureaucracies directly involved in constructing and continually shaping Chinese internet governance. Near the top of the

---

[41] NICK SRNICEK, PLATFORM CAPITALISM (2017). Platform capitalism captures the business model of platform technologies that is established upon monetizing user-generated digital footprints.

[42] SHOSHANA ZUBOFF, THE AGE OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM: THE FIGHT FOR A HUMAN FUTURE AT THE NEW FRONTIER OF POWER (2019). Surveillance capitalism goes beyond platform capitalism by identifying historicity of manifesting surveillance as a form of behavioral intervention to serve political and/or business interests.

[43] Fang Binxing, 方滨兴：未来网络的安全问题 [The Cybersecurity Concerns of the Future], SINA (Nov. 15, 2011), http://tech.sina.com.cn/t/2011-11-15/11396321935.shtml. The English translation was provided by the author.

bureaucracy is the Cyberspace Administration of China (hereafter CAC), the state institution directed by Zhuang Rongwen which is responsible for devising China's internet governance framework and the specific regulations with which tech companies, platforms and users should comply. Zhuang also undertakes a deputy role in the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC which oversee China's media systems. CAC directly reports to the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission (CCAC), headed by the Chinese president Xi Jinping and formerly directed by Li Keqiang, China's then Premier, and now sharing the responsibility with Wang Huning, allegedly China's ideology tsar, after a five-yearly leadership reshuffle in October 2022. CAC and CCAC are closely connected through Zhuang Rongwen via his Chief of General Office role at CCAC. The constitution of political bureaucracies—CAC, CCAC, and the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC in building China's architecture of platform governance suggests the embodiment of the CPC's interest that holds onto censorship as its primary task.[44]

Perceiving Chinese platforms through techno-Orientalism overlooks platforms' mediation of power and history and the postcolonial legacy of China's technological development characterized by learning from the West. Platforms, regardless of their origins, mediate power and history; platform governance is shielded behind the neoliberal, user-empowerment discourse which in fact shape users' behaviors while reinforcing existing social structures.[45] Each platform is not monolithic; it responds to internal and external actors dynamically and such responses shape algorithmic, functional, and policy changes, either announced or unannounced by the platform.[46] Furthermore, since the late Qing dynasty, modern technologies in China have been developed under the influence of postcolonial technoscience dominated by the West and have been undergoing a complex process of imitation, adaptation, rejection, transformation, and Otherization from the West.[47] Technological ideas

---

[44] Aofei Lv & Ting Luo, *Asymmetrical Power between Internet Giants and Users in China*, 12 INT'L J. COMMC'N 3877 (2018); Yun Tai & King-wa Fu, *Specificity, Conflict, and Focal Point: A Systematic Investigation into Social Media Censorship in China*, 70 J. COMMC'N 842 (2020).

[45] *See* WENDY HUI KYONG CHUN and THOMAS KEENAN, NEW MEDIA, OLD MEDIA: A HISTORY AND THEORY READER (2006); Yang, *supra* note 7.

[46] *See* Robert Gorwa, *What is Platform* Governance, 22 INFO., COMMC'N & SOC'Y 854 (2019); Arun, *supra* note 13.

[47] *See* YUK HUI, THE QUESTION CONCERNING TECHNOLOGY IN CHINA: AN ESSAY IN COSMOTECHNICS (2015).

filter between the West and the East, rather than unilaterally from the dominant to the periphery.[48]

Conclusion

The paper reflected on the taken-for-granted convention in studying platform governance in China and the US by critiquing the differentiated terminological deployments of "censorship" and "content moderation". At the end of the paper, I proposed "post-Orientalism" in studying platform governance in intercultural contexts as a way to move forward. Post-Orientalism does not suggest the end of Orientalist thinking; it is the proposition of challenging the techno-Orientalist dogma that generalizes and simplifies the Other, in this case platforms developed in China. One significant step in dealing with the techno-Orientalist dogma is seeing it and acknowledging that it exists in our everyday academic practices of researching, teaching, performing peer-reviews, and communication. This reflexive effort to challenge academic "norms" should be conducted collectively.

---

[48] *See* Anderson, *supra* note 34.