Broadcast live at 9 P.M., 9.1.1 in Hong Kong was a prime-time television event. Indeed, my (Peter) first source of information was from watching live CNN footage of the WTC with occasional bursts of confused Cantonese commentary, and although my television experience of the event that night was to be complemented with a plethora of other telecommunications channels, television remained my primary source of information. After the initial live broadcasts, and notwithstanding a few mildly critical comments from several celebrities and scholars, Hong Kong television (and print media) remained respectably neutral (which in Hong Kong means pro-economy), mainly concentrating on the effect of the bombing on the Hong Kong stock market and economic outlook, which I imagined would have appeared shockingly cold blooded to an American.

My media experience that night was complemented by telephone conversations. In particular, I was surprised to find that one of my friends, not normally concerned with matters political, expressed his satisfaction with the terrorist act. (My friend was equally surprised that as a nationalistic and politically active Chinese intellectual, I was not rejoicing with him.) Surprised at such a polarized reaction from the ranks of the politically agnostic, I investigated whether the Internet reflected local television's conservative voice. In contrast to the carefully polished mass media, my interface to the Chinese virtual sphere through ICQ, e-mail, and various commercial and government online bulletin boards suggested that the internet was the site for a strong subcurrent of anti-U.S. sentiment that felt that the United States "had it coming."
Many saw it as payback for the recent spy plane incident, which in the opinion of the Chinese, and even in more traditionally pro-U.S. Hong Kong, was a clear-cut incidence of U.S. hegemony.

This brief biographical clip tells something about the interesting discursive contour of Hong Kong’s mediascape on 9.1.1 and its aftermath. Mainstream media has been primary television-led. The television screen has been filled mainly by images from international sources, except for the brief pre-air strike period immediately after 9.1.1, when local reporters were sent to Pakistan for firsthand coverage. Hong Kong reporters reported live to local television viewers in Pakistan and the nearby region. However, when the air strike started, international agencies again became the predominant new sources. Throughout, television coverage of the incident has been framed mostly in the perspective of anti-terrorism. The editorial tone has been kept in line with the mainland Chinese official stand of being cautiously neutral to U.S. military action. Mainstream populist newspapers, especially in the initial stage, took on uninhibited pro-war, pro-America rhetoric.

Relying on international sources is not necessarily equal to the subscription of a pro-war perspective; however, the power of the political economy of the visual images has predisposed local television and newspapers to the visual power of the U.S. military and the U.S. media. Cutting across all mainstream media is the hegemony of images. The mediated events have been constructed around visual references of the WTC bombing spectacular, the superiority of U.S. war machines, the criminalized images of Osama bin Laden, and the sheer visualized firepower of the U.S. attack. However, in and through the net and e-mail networks, we have encountered furious anti-American discourses and even terrorist impulses among Chinese news groups. These politically incorrect discourses are a wild mix of Sino-U.S. rivalry, hot nationalism, decontextualized cinematic pleasure, dehumanized visual spectacular, and anti-hegemonic desire.

While Peter, as a young aspiring scholar, is more actively engaging in the Internet communities, I (Eric) was using e-mail communication as a substitute for traditional networking of various groups of local activists, commentators, and columnists, who shared and circulated alternative anti-terrorist, anti-war, de-Orientalized, and de-Westernized discourses. The chain e-mails I received after the incident included a piece by Noam Chomsky, a piece by a Pakistani writer, and some other anti-war pieces by local writers. Similar alternative discourses have also been articulated in local elite newspapers, which attempt to un-imagine the imagination of the Islamic, delegitimize the military bombing of Afghanistan, and recontextualize the incidents into the fragile power balance of the Middle East.
Hong Kong's mainstream media have been steering away from politics and have taken a predominantly economic interpretation of the 9.1.1 incident, reflecting a (a)political culture with a much longer history. The irony is that the only big political fuss generated locally out of this global media event was its rearticulation into anti-Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) government discourses. A couple, who sent out anti-government terrorist threat letters, made the headlines for a few days, were arrested, and were named "Hong Kong Laden" by the press. The public broadcaster RTHK's television program *Headliner* drew a parallel between the Taliban and the local SAR government in a political satire. The political joke stirred up populist anti-government sentiments but also triggered a massive attack from pro-China fractions on RTHK, demanding that the public broadcaster resume the role of a government mouthpiece. Here, a highly significant global media event was inflected into seemingly "trivial" local politics.

Hong Kong has been stereotyped in the media by our local leaders and the British colonialists before them as a case of (old) Eastern tradition meets (modern) Western lifestyle, and the internet has been lauded by Western politicians and scholars as a technology of freedom (often against Chinese authoritarianism). However, in this case at least, Hong Kong refuses to submit to these Orientalist desires and the Internet refuses to promote an American version of freedom and its implicit policy allegiances. Hong Kong is indeed a juxtaposition of old and new, East and West, but the old is a Western-style mass media producing consent for the sake of appearing pro-business, pro-foreign investment, and pro-United States, whereas the new is a China-based grassroots internet overspilling untamed, and sometimes corrosive, discourses against Western cultural and media hegemony in spite of a calculatedly neutral official Chinese stance.