Exactly four years ago, in June 2008, a group of seven Brown faculty members—from the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, the Cogut Center for the Humanities, and the Department of East Asian Studies—travelled here to inaugurate the Nanjing-Brown Joint Program in Gender Studies and the Humanities. These three Brown academic units have since worked closely with Nanjing University’s Institute for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences and the Humanities to advance and develop our joint program through scholar and student exchanges, annual professional events, and publications. Today’s inauguration of the Center for Gender Studies and the Humanities at Nanjing University, first and foremost, manifests four years of great progress and achievements in several areas related to gender studies and feminist theory. As the Brown Director of the Joint Program, I want to thank our Nanjing colleagues, especially Professor Zhou Xian, Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences and the Humanities, and Professor Chengzhou He, Associate Director of the Institute and the Nanjing Director of the Joint Program, for their great intellectual vision, their enthusiastic dedication to the Joint Program, and their hard work to establish such a transnational collaborative center for gender studies in China.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate briefly the rationale and goal of the Brown–Nanjing transnational collaboration on gender studies and the humanities.

The study of gender has profoundly and significantly transformed the humanities, social sciences, and sciences in both the United States, since the 1970s, and China, since the 1980s. Due to limits of national policy and the contradictory effects of globalization, however, gender studies and feminist theory are facing local and global challenges. Feminist scholars are reexamining gender as a critical approach to geopolitical power relationships, global capitalism, and higher education; the Nanjing-Brown Joint Program in Gender Studies and the Humanities aims to address both the potential and the problems produced by capitalist globalization.
The fundamental goal of this transnational collaboration is to forge important and concrete alliances among scholars in gender studies and feminist theory in China, the United States, and other parts of the world, thereby creating a critical platform to promote and stimulate important dialogues about the global future of gender and feminist studies. By re-situating gender and gender studies in a broader, transnational context, the Nanjing-Brown collaboration encourages production of new theories and political strategies that take histories of dynamic (re)configuration of the local and the global into primary consideration. This Joint Program advocates translation as a critical and reflective enterprise, endorsing cross-national/cultural intellectual engagements and at the same time producing concrete strategies for issues arising from different geopolitical locations and historical moments. Last but not least, the program emphasizes the critical importance of gender as an analytical and political category and its applicability to interdisciplinary practice in teaching and research in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.

I know many at this conference share our vision of, and commitment to, transnational gender and feminist studies. Participating scholars hail from diverse backgrounds, such as history, literature, philosophy and the social sciences, and several are great pioneers and leading figures in Chinese gender or women’s studies in China and the United States. A number of extremely promising young scholars are also here for the conference, members of a new generation who have emerged to forge future directions for teaching and research in transnational gender, queer, and feminist studies. I believe this gathering will provoke unprecedented and stimulating discussion and debate on gender research in Chinese studies, set against a backdrop of transnational history and theory. I very much look forward to your talks here at the conference, as well as to more engagement and collaboration in the future.

Thank you very much!