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# **RHETORICS OF GLOBALISM**

**By**

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B.A., Syracuse University, 1987  
M.A., University of Louisville, 2001**

**A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of the University of Louisville  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of English  
University of Louisville  
Louisville, KY**

**December 2006**

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A Dissertation Approved on

November 13, 2006

by the following Dissertation Committee:

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Dissertation Director

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Kelly.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my director, Dr. Marc Bousquet, for introducing me to the discourse of equity and putting me on an important scholarly path. This project's success is foremost because of Marc's thoughtful suggestions and remarkable patience. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Amy Elizabeth Willey, Dr. Aaron Jaffe, Dr. Julia Dietrich, and Dr. Avery Kolers, for their comments and assistance. Chris Carter was kind enough to read early drafts of two chapters and offer me his suggestions. Also, many thanks to Dr. Yusheng Yao and his daughter Mengdi Yao at Rollins College for their assistance with Chinese characters and translation. Finally, this project would never have met its completion without my wife Kelly's loving support and keen insight.

ABSTRACT

RHETORICS OF GLOBALISM

Steven Wexler

November 13, 2006

This project examines the rhetorics that enable nations to tap into and deploy capital transnationally. Its primary focus is on China. China's globalism promotes a version of Western neoliberalism, including tropes such as efficiency, individuality, and freedom, to underwrite inequality, consumerism, and masking of surplus labor/value. While an ostensible boon for China's marginalized, China's globalism continues to increase the gap between wealthy and poor.

Chapter One introduces the project with an overview of theoretical and disciplinary responses to globalization. This chapter demonstrates how the discourse of transnational capital supports consumerism, competition, and simultaneous "universality/difference" worldwide. Chapter Two offers a rhetorical analysis of "China's Progress in Human Rights in 2004," an official document published in political organs such as *People's Daily* and *China Daily*, to show how China's party-state appropriates neoliberal discourse to appease international trade organizations. It is argued that China's neoliberalism is a "roll-out" *political neoliberalism* that maintains state participation in its increasingly privatized provinces. Paradoxically, the market's valorization of an interest-based social order must coexist with the nationalist call for a unity that would raise "the people" above "the individual." Chapter Three offers a

discourse analysis of the narratives of the *dagongmei* (“working sister”) and the *dagongzai* (“working son”), China’s “floating population” of migrant laborers who often work in urban factories and reside in hostile dormitories where the laboring body is alienated and sexualized. Migrant literacy is shown to resist and sustain China’s dominant discourse, an internal Orientalism that pejoratively constructs migrants as “country bumpkins.” The project’s final chapter presents an interview with a factory worker in Kaifeng City. This interview and other worker testimonies represent a clash of neoliberal, Confucian, and Maoist discourse, a “rhetorical borderlands” that bears new ways of talking about solidarity and workplace democracy.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
CHAPTER	
I. THEORETICAL AND DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES TO GLOBALISM.....	1
II. GLOBAL “GREATER CHINA”: DISCOURSE, POWER, AND THE WORLD FACTORY.....	35
III. RHETORIC, LITERACY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN POST-MAO CHINA.....	71
IV. SUBALTERNITY AND INSURGENCY IN THE BORDERLANDS.....	101
V. EPILOGUE: SOUND THE MIRROR.....	134
REFERENCES.....	138
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	160

## CHAPTER I

### THEORETICAL AND DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES TO GLOBALISM

If colonialism is the dark side of European capitalism, what is the dark side of globalization?

Fernando Coronil, "Towards a Critique of Globalcentrism"

#### **Preface**

Globalization's dark side is its deterritorialization: power manifests itself horizontally, capitalism ubiquitously, and neither is easy to pin down. Whereas colonialism is transparent and localizable, globalism is indeterminate and shifting. It is more difficult today to find surplus value's labor, and outsourcing and informatics tempt one to ask, *where is the human in the space of flows?* That important question begs another, the answer to which this project assumes as its primary task: how might global subjects recognize and resist exploitation? The chapters herein propose that oral and written accounts of global capitalism lay bare for author and audience complicity with consumerism and corruption as well as new rhetorics that might lead to organized resistance, what Marx saw as "the ever-expanding union of the workers" (*Manifesto* 63).

The discourse of power and the discourse of resistance emerge from dynamic, disjointed structural transformation, and each informs and challenges the other rhetorically. This chapter's concise look at globalism's privileged ontology and knowledge economy paves the way for subsequent chapters on China's reform. China is emphasized here since global capitalism is relatively new in that country. Chapter II

argues that China's "roll-out neoliberalism" incorporates rhetorics of individualism and human rights so that China might participate in transnational markets. This is China's discourse of power, written largely by the party-state, influenced in part by Occidentalizer rhetorics. Such unprecedented, multivalent political discourse places economic responsibility on citizens rather than institutions, fostering China's own internal Orientalism. Those laborers who cannot participate in China's new consumption schemes (and thereby complete the circuit of surplus value) are further marginalized. These Occidentalizer-Orientalist strands are evidenced in Chapter III's discourse analysis of migrant worker narratives. Migrants are often devastatingly poor but will appropriate neoliberal rhetorics and pronounce Horatio Alger life goals, a posturing that theorist James Paul Gee claims is distinctly upper-middle class in the UK. Some migrants resist such complicity by refusing neoliberalism and turning to Confucian morality and Maoist community. With the help of literacy sponsors and new media, the migrants' written accounts of laboring in the city are slowly disseminating into China's public sphere, promising a new worker consciousness and real solidarity. These opportunities are substantiated in Chapter IV, with a further look at Chinese factory worker testimonies. That chapter claims that ruptures or new ways of talking about reform emerge through the clash of Anglo-European and Chinese discourse in China. LuMing Mao's concept of "rhetorical borderlands" theorizes how this clash manifests itself as Chinese "face," what might be seen as the performative element of the borderland's discursivity.

## Introduction

Globalization impacts selfhood, working class solidarity, and opportunities for social change. Some activists have looked closely at labor internationalism and found that globalization does not necessarily threaten trade union organization (Wills 112). Stanley Aronowitz, for one, sees a working class emerging “on a world scale out of the enormous expropriation of peasants by the new enclosures,” a proletariat “that may become one of the constituents of resistance and power against empire” (131). Nancy Fraser suggests that “once nationally-focused labour unions look increasingly for allies abroad,” and cites the Zapatistas for having inspired “impoverished peasants and indigenous peoples” to “link their struggles against despotic local and national authorities to critiques of transnational corporate predation and global neoliberalism” (71). Capital functions transnationally but then so do the “democratic elements” of opposition. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri explain, “No longer is ‘the people’ assumed as basis and no longer is taking power of the sovereign state structure the goal” (*Multitude* 83).

In post-Mao China working class resistance is costly but necessary. Timothy B. Weston suggests that economic reforms “have delivered great prospects to the new elite in China’s coastal cities, [but] they have also resulted in a far greater income gap than before” (259). These changes may well have brought “tens of millions of new jobs,” but the majority of people who benefit from such growth are “young male college graduates” (259). Many more women than men are being laid off and young workers are privileged over old. A large part of China’s migrant labor body, the “floating population,” remains unemployed with little prospects. According to Weston, “China’s coastal cities have provincial ghettos, entire neighborhoods peopled by poor immigrants from the same rural

region” (260). These rural laborers often clash with their urban counterparts, as the latter believe the former to be new competition—even though migrants “are forced to accept second- or third-class social status” (260). Yet many are quick to emphasize that migrants are disenfranchised, not powerless. Hein Mallee has argued that migrants will often form groups for protection and establish communicative relations with authorities. Larger migrant labor organizations based on “native place, kinship, and occupation” are now “tightly organized, with strict rules governing work and leisure” (98).

It is perhaps easy to imagine, then, how “unofficial” collective movements spring up. Though striking is currently illegal in post-Mao China, street demonstrations are becoming more common (Pei 27). These movements are often met with anti-riot police, as in 1997 when a thousand workers in Zigong, Sichuan Province rallied against low pay from a Radio Factory (261). Yet a year later, police permitted similar protests in Shanxi, Henan, Hubei, and Gansu. As Weston explains:

The situation is so tense in some palaces that the police don’t interfere in strikes for fear of sparking wider confrontations. For example, when 4,000 unpaid pensioners blocked a railroad in the northeastern city of Fushun in April 1999, the police did not attempt to move them. The workers left only after a city official promised they would receive the back pay they were due. (261)

Growing unrest and radical urges have surfaced alongside increasing layoffs, and China’s laborers have found an ally in political dissidents (261). This new relationship has succeeded in pressuring China’s CCP to permit trade unions independent of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), China’s “official,” state-sanctioned worker

collective. One positive result has been China's signing of the United Nation's International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). ICESCR maintains that everyone has the right "to form trade unions and join a trade union of his choice" (262). There has followed "an increasingly large community of dissidents who are putting workers' rights at the top of their agenda" (262-63).

### *Goals, Methodology, Concerns*

Any direct translation of political struggle into a mere mirroring of economic 'interests' is doomed to fail, just as is any reduction of the economic sphere into a secondary 'reified' sedimentation of an underlying founding political process.

Slavoj Zizek, "Parallax View"

To better understand the nature of social change in post-Mao China it is necessary to look at the rhetorics of official (state) and unofficial (subaltern) discourse. This project builds on the discussion above with a rhetorical analysis of the state-sanctioned White Paper entitled "China's Progress in Human Rights in 2004" and a discourse analysis of oral and written reflections by bar hostesses, factory workers, and union representatives. These state and subaltern texts, respectively, are examined through the discourse of the West. "West" since universality, at this juncture, has not bridged each nation's experience of the global, and I cannot speak conclusively for my Asian counterpart. Arjun Appadurai suggests this sentiment when he asks, "What does the South Korean leadership mean when it speaks of discipline as the key to democratic industrial growth?" and I acknowledge my own situatedness within a particular "synopticon of politics" (36).

It is because of these discursive gaps and my own Western positioning that I approach China's globalism *via* the language and spectacle drawn from neoliberalism and postcoloniality (that is, I examine the language and spectacle knowing that I am to some degree bound to them). These rhetorics, influential tropes such as individuality, efficiency, freedom, and democracy, underwrite five overlapping global phenomena: opening of domestic economies to transnational capital, overvaluation of consumption and masking of surplus value/labor, internationalization of the proletariat, streamlining and bureaucratizing of higher education, and simultaneous blanching and sanctioning of diversity. The latter—"universal/difference" *ontology* created for and by "global/local" *economics*—is of particular interest here, since the project assumes that paramount to facilitating social change is recognizing how capitalist rhetorics write economic ontology. The ontology is capitalist: subjects are global (universal) via transnational markets and media *as well as* local (individuated) through the packaging, distribution, and consumption of "difference." By extension, one might conclude that political boundaries remain significant even as economic boundaries are erased because the state's only remaining function is to sustain its local economies (Kolars) and universalize-individualize its citizens. So while Appadurai is correct to suggest that the gap between "East" and "West" problematizes any effort to *speak* transnationally, universality is nonetheless a crucial aspect of self-conception and consumption in the new world order. Insofar as Zygmunt Bauman argues that universality and globalization are entirely different from one another, where "universalization" reflects an order-making rigidity and "globalization" the random, "untamable" contingency of the new world order (60), my claim is that *neoliberal discourse produces simultaneous universality and difference*.

Discourse expresses ideology through rhetoric. The texts analyzed herein therefore demonstrate how rhetorics and their discursive phenomena influence China's citizenry. I am interested in how global capitalism shapes Chinese selfhood *rhetorically* and how Chinese citizens might resist that kind of oppression through literacy and collective action. First, I examine what might be called the discourse of power in China, looking for the state's conscious appropriation of neoliberalism in an effort to appease the World Trade Organization and other international committees that permit China's capitalism. I then look at the discourse of resistance, China's subaltern discourse. My method of discourse analysis borrows from James Paul Gee's study of British working and upper middle-class teens and LuMing Mao's conception of "rhetorical borderlands" as manifested in the meeting of Chinese and European-American rhetorics.

Briefly here, Gee suggests that British working class and upper middle-class teens have different ways of speaking and writing about themselves. Gee suggests that working class teens emphasize everyday concerns, the here and now as it applies to day-to-day survival. Upper middle-class teens emphasize life goals and long-range career trajectories. I examine Chinese laborer reflections with Gee's conclusion in mind. I am interested in whether China's laborers, like Gee's British teens, speak, write, and think about themselves in a way that is class-bound. The analyses also consider the extent to which laborers *transcend* these discursive class boundaries by deliberately adopting what Gee would call an upper middle-class discourse in an effort to cast off the state's and media's negative construction of them; migrant workers are typically described as "country bumpkins" and often resist this pejorative label in their written and oral accounts of their daily experiences. Furthermore, since China's global capitalism



necessarily brings Western influence I look for neoliberal rhetoric (in China, a new way of thinking about oneself in terms of individual rights and ownership). A close examination of these texts demonstrates how a number of discourses—Confucianism, Maoism, and Neoliberalism—are dialogically present as Chinese laborers make sense of their lives and the new world order.

LuMing Mao's rhetorical borderlands might be seen as the discursive component of Mary Louise Pratt's "Contact Zone." Both Mao's and Pratt's notions suggest a clashing of cultures; the key difference between the two is that Pratt emphasizes a unidirectional transmission from "dominant or metropolitan culture" to marginal or colonized, and LuMing Mao a multidirectional interweaving of all involved. For Mao, the clash dialectically yields potential radical discourse that resists dominant hegemony and gives subalterns a way of speaking about collectivity and change.

It should be stated here that this project does not attempt to prove anything precisely because it cannot. Rather, this project presents a textual analysis in light of contemporary Western rhetorical, economic, and political theory: Chinese texts translated in English are analyzed through Western discourse. The interpretative lens is always-already value laden, but then this is the case with interpretation itself. One might recall Gyatri Spivak's introduction to Derrida's *Of Grammatology* and her concern for the impossibility of translation's finality: "And translation is, after all, one version of intertextuality. [. . .] If the proper name or sovereign status of the author is as much a barrier as a right of way, why should the translator's position be secondary?" (lxxxvi). Her quoting Derrida is significant here:

Within the limits of its possibility, or its apparent possibility, translation practices the difference between signified and signifier. But, if this difference is never pure, translation is even less so, and a notion of transformation must be substituted for the notion of translation: a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another. We shall not have and never have had to deal with some “transfer” of pure signifieds that the signifying instrument—or “vehicle”—would leave virgin and intact, from one language to another, or within one and the same language. (lxxxvii)

Like Spivak, I, too, hope for a reader who might assist me in deconstructing the texts herein, beyond what their authors “as controlling subject[s] [have] directed in it” (lxxxvii). In this sense, the project still holds merit for scholars interested in how politics, economics, and subjectivity intersect rhetorically. In any case, before turning to China exclusively, it is worth taking a look at the way globalization shapes nationalism and selfhood.

### **Theorizing Globality**

Globalization extends through political, economical, and cultural trajectories. These trajectories bear “universality” in behavior and form yet also yield plurality and difference. *Globalism*, a new form of imperialism that finds the nation-state tapping into transnational capital in a more accommodating, less liquidating way, requires these ostensibly contradictory schemes (Wallerstein 1990; Featherstone 1995; Wolff 1997; Buell 1998; Coronil 2000). Many scholars point to alternative globalizations and

subglobalizations as evidence of localized resistance to economic or cultural imperialism (Oakes 2000; Aoki 2002; Berger 2002; Yan 2002), while others suggest that these “emitter cultures” readily capitulate to or synthesize with dominant hegemonies to form hybrids and heterogeneous dialogues (Bhabha 1994; Appadurai 1996; Pieterse 1998; Shapiro 1999). Still other theorists posit a friendlier coexistence between cultures in “global ecumene,” spaces of mutual acknowledgment that ultimately shift from a powerful center to a less-powerful periphery (Hannerz 1996; Dutton 1999; Gu 1999; Zhang 2004). Several, however, are quick to dismiss center-periphery frameworks as illusory in a world of global flows; even North-South and East-West spatial discriminations make little sense with postmodern globality (Kearney 1996; Bauman 1998; Dyer-Witherford 1999; Castells 2000; Gikandi 2001). These models are varied yet all fall back upon a narrative of globalization to explain or endorse changes in transnational relations and the redistribution of culture.

Since I am approaching China’s globalism via the West, it is necessary to point out that the rhetorics that shape the West’s stories of globalization come directly from Enlightenment narratives and postcolonial grammars. Simon Gikandi, for one, suggests “postcolonial theories of globalization have been influential in the mapping of global culture because they have appeared to be focused on tropes that speak powerfully to the experience of migration” (640). Appadurai posits frameworks such as “mediascapes” and “ideolandscapes” that manifest a tension between colonialisms like “cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization,” while Jan Nederveen Pieterse considers a “momentum of newness” that unites the “universal and the local”—these theories all depict a “strategic deployment of postcolonial theory” (Gikandi 627). Globalization’s

neoliberalism launches tropes such as “individuality,” “efficiency,” and “competition” in order to instruct “mass production, mass communication and mass consumption” (Bill Ashcroft, qtd. in Szeman 94). According to Coronil, these tropes promote “economic ‘growth’” while at the same time erode “a sense of national belonging” (362). One might see the range of neoliberal globalization in China’s and South Africa’s Westernization. Yongnian Zheng, for example, has recently argued that many Chinese nationalists see a loss of governmental control over domestic affairs coinciding with a loss of “identity as a unique nation-state in world affairs” (xvi). Similarly, Ann Bernstein suggests that in South Africa “the inevitability of westernization and Americanization is coupled with a sense of ‘quiet mourning’ at what is styled as a loss of traditional values” (216). Bernstein posits a “cultural pragmatism” among the “black economic elite” that displays little regard for long-established practices (216). While such accounts of one-sided Westernization are understandable (that is, the media bombard us daily with a ubiquitous Nike) many miss how transnational capital promotes difference while citizens become global consumers. If there is a “McWorld,” there are still McCultures diversifying the menu.

In his discussion of Michel Aglietta’s regulation theory, Paul Smith speaks to capitalism’s ability to interpellate and integrate its citizenry into an “economic expansion of the means of consumption.” According to Smith, “subjects need to be called into place and kept there in order to achieve the transformation to a new regime of accumulation.” This absorption into a global consumptive scheme yields

an effective dialectical relation between economic processes and everyday life, a relation which does not simply construe cultural and civic life as a

superstructural byproduct of economic processes but which regards those realms as part of a structured whole wherein capital's relation to labor power is, the shifting focal point of all transformations. (46-47)

For Smith, then, "everyday life" is as determining as the relations of production.

Jonathan Friedman posits "a strong functional relation between changes in the flows of and accumulation of capital in the world arena and changes in identity construction and cultural production" (169). One finds here the very space where citizen and state appropriations of "West" clash and give way dialectically to a viable language of resistance or what Chen Xiaomei calls a "counter discourse" (Dirlik 110). Whereas reductive analyses of "Westernization" often depict the Other's submission to ideology, one should instead see a *dialectic of Occidentalism* generating a particular "contact zone" that problematizes familiar one-sided accounts of "West." This contact zone gives a greater role to the oppressed, marginalized, or colonized in the shaping of ideology. By extension, Said's "Orientalism" risks its own orientalism since it ignores the Orient's role in the West's initial construction of it *as well as* the Orient's continual negotiation of the alien hegemony cast upon it—that is, "Orientalism" neglects its contact zone (Dirlik 111). Chinese migrant worker narratives, for example, are complicated accounts of consumerism, sexism, and exploitation. These oral and written testimonies reveal the subaltern's dialectical condition—a state of being that is at once resistant to and complicit with dominant discourse—and can manifest ruptures in "discursive knowledges [that] constitute the political consciousness of class-differentiated subjects" (Ong 141).

Occidental dialectics and Oriental contact zones are only two manifestations of global capital's drive for simultaneous universality and difference. Abetting the

individual's integration into global consumerism are commodified microcosmic localities that serve both transnational capital and the nation-state; the state's active role in the endurance of localisms is often the state's only remaining function. Tim Oakes has written extensively on globalism's reliance on regional culture as important criteria for investment, and "how localities now endeavor to represent themselves in terms of cultural dynamism and uniqueness" (673). As long as the packaging and distribution of cultures bring profits, localisms will endure. The complexities of "universal/local" might be further delineated through a close look at four factors upon which the discourse of globalization depends: individual and multitude, pragmatist globalism, information technology and the knowledge economy, and consumerism and transnational capital. These four are laid out briefly below.

### **Global Discursivity, Corporate Epistemology, and Transnational Consumption**

But the capitalist use of language is different in nature; it is realized or becomes concrete within the field of immanence peculiar to capitalism itself, with the appearance of the technical means of expression that correspond to the generalized decoding of flows, instead of still referring, in a direct or indirect form, to despotic overcoding.

Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*

#### *Individualism and the Multitude*

The tension between globalization and nation-state mirrors that between what some have called their two subjectivities, "Multitude" and "People." The former is Spinoza's term for the "social and political existence of the many" that refuses to

surrender to a “One” (Virno 21). The latter is Hobbes’s, the antithesis to “multitude” since these individuals unite as a single body on behalf of the State (22). For Hobbes, multitude is a more primitive and dangerous ontology than a national “people” since a multitude turns its back on political unity and “resists authority.” Arguably, the neoliberalism of the last thirty years is to an extent an effort to appease the global multitude in what Paulo Virno calls the “communism of capital” or the socialization of the means of production (110). Virno suggests that capitalism purports to address the concerns of the post-Fordist multitude, adopting a communist posturing for instance by reducing the role of the State in direct coercion and “as a ‘monopoly of political decision-making’” (110). Globalization is antagonistic to the “totalitarianism” of a nation-based “people” embodying “universalizing discourses” that animate “structures of power” at the level of a national totality (Hardt and Negri *Empire* 139). Globalization instead depends on fragmentation and multiplicity to unfold a universal economics throughout the globe. Postmodernism provides one dimension of the symbolic space in which this economics plays out. For instance, as Hardt and Negri point out, postmodern values such as “[t]he affirmation of hybridities and the free play of differences across boundaries” are “liberatory only in a context where power poses hierarchy exclusively through essential binaries, binary divisions, and stable oppositions” (142). But where power’s hierarchies are more diffuse, adaptable, and productively unstable, a ruling logic of “empire” without the direct governing implied by “imperialism,” hybridity and difference can often be understood as cooptable tactics. What’s more, the postmodern condition offers the feelings that we are “beyond emancipation.” One version of this is the sense that we have to “abandon the notion of total liberation by revolutionary transformation,” and

instead, according to Boucher, “adopt a multiplicity of liberation projects that cannot be totalized into one universal act of emancipation.” On the other hand, while Hardt and Negri agree that truth will not make us free, they argue that “taking control of the production of truth will.” For these theorists, “Mobility and hybridity are not liberatory, but taking control of the production of mobility and stasis, purities and mixtures is” (156).

### *Pragmatist Globalism*

The economic instrumentalism appropriated by globalism is a more recent pragmatism with origins in United States mass industrialization during the early twentieth century. Here one finds a specific moment in pragmatism’s evolution when the instrumental varieties such as managerial efficiency schemes branched off from the liberatory varieties, surfacing then as assembly line production and intelligence testing and today as “Toyotism” and academic bureaucracy. It is this “instrumental rationality” that has single-handedly occluded Marxism’s utopian elements from realization and bore the petty-bourgeois socialism of the 50s. Toyotism, a modernized, and to some degree ostensibly humanitarian response to a mechanized, dehumanizing Taylorism and Fordism (Toyotism’s answer is to provide workers with a sense of agency and solidarity as most believe they are being consulted about their work—now hierarchized and casualized according to skill—and think they have a stake in the company), is typically seen as something unique to Japan. Yet Toyotism’s “just-in-time” philosophy has its source in Western manufacturing strategies *and* rhetorics, and is ultimately “the product of a synthesis between distinctive premodern business practices and technological and



managerial-organizational elements *introduced from Europe and America*” (Aoki 80-81, my emphasis). It is not surprising to learn that like its Western equivalent, Toyotism endures through a “management by stress,” coopting unions and creating worker competitiveness. Interestingly, Tamotsu Aoki suggests that with its “life-time employment, promotion according to seniority, and company-based labor unions” Toyotism is now considered *impractical* in the “context of global competition” (80-81). In China, intellectuals are shifting their allegiances from Confucianism to the modern nation-state (Zhang 115). The new ideology of modern nationalism and its emphasis on rights and transformation contains an economic rationality that “incorporates culture within global strategies” (115). According to Zhang, new discursive inventions such as “Greater China” and “Industrial Asia” drive new market and capital configurations across the Asian Pacific (115). Though on the surface these rhetorics bear a striking similarity to the language of western neoliberalism, where the rational and calculating individual is an “expert of the self,” they are rather the product of a “culturally sanctioned collectivity represented by the state,” that permit “the state to take account of the skills, consumer power, and interests of the middle classes as a way to attract faster development” (Ong 196).

Globalization’s pragmatism continues to impact education; schools are the primary locus for the development of “mental laborers” for today’s “information society” (see below), and the training is narrowly suited to that end. Whereas Dewey’s pragmatism offered a “rhetoric and politics of social change [. . .] fundamental to broad educational as well as more narrowly disciplinary forms of learning” (Downing, *Knowledge* 162), higher education’s pragmatism continues to streamline curricula,

pedagogy, and departmental bureaucracy while simultaneously producing “just enough” PhD *students* to maintain a cost-effective flex labor base. This exploitation of surplus labor, according to Bousquet, endures through a “hidden idealism” that manifests a “market” when there really isn’t one (“Composition” 24-28). The university has taken great pains to casualize its labor force producing what Joseph Harris calls “comp droids” and Susan Miller a “rotating bottom,” a class of part-time and adjunct teachers and graduate assistants with little if any agency. Moreover, Stanley Aronowitz has described a university downsizing that began in the mid-eighties with a “restructuring” that has further intensified the competitiveness already present in academic professionalism, preventing camaraderie and improvement in working conditions, with consequences that directly influence our discipline. The university has become big business, and its embrace of managerial instrumentalism has shaped curriculum so that the sciences matter most and the humanities least, evidenced by continual funding and support for the former and the discontinuing of entire departments of the latter. According to Slaughter and Leslie, “faculty, professional officers, and administrators were reshaping their epistemology of science to accommodate professorial interactions with the market” (184). Within this corporate, efficient environment, technical skills are held in high regard while critical, reflective education, such as cultural studies, is not only deemed expendable social epistemology, but ultimately detrimental to the student’s professional well-being. The pragmatic academic bureaucrat proclaims that “multiculturalism” will not serve the student on Wall Street or in Acme Pharmaceuticals, so therefore such radical moves are ambiguous at best, that is, their value “unresolved,” since exploring, say, the “politics of diversity” could count, if only because of global capital’s demand for plurality,

relativism, and regionalism. Another way to state this idea is that regardless of the strategy, in our corporate climate the student's interior is externalized and propertyed by instructor, university, and patron much like the individual in the assembly line whose "soul," according to Maurizio Lazzarato, becomes "part of the factory" (134). This shift in emphasis is tricky business. As Bousquet contends, "By concealing its own market idealism underneath a rhetoric of exclusive purchase on reality, pragmatist ideologues have had a fair amount of success at discouraging the effort to realize any *other* ideals than those of the market" (24). It is easy to see that the university's "pragmatist turn" neither begins nor ends in the classroom. There are at the moment several pragmatisms finding legitimacy in administrative policy—pragmatisms that not only constrict our curriculum but also narrow the educator's very orientation to her student.

Disciplinary responses to globalization, then, are to some degree an attempt to clarify and resist the pragmatism of the corporate university, what Marc Bousquet, David Downing, Richard Ohmann, and others suggest is higher education's increasing dependency on business and government, an "education [. . .] packaged and sold as a complex commodified event" (*Beyond* 10). This streamlining is so powerful that even a reflective ironist such as Richard Rorty cannot escape the hegemony of "proper English" (Olson 1). Yet educators have available to them at least two means of resisting the scientizing and corporatizing of education: collective activism and the *rhetorical action* that involves engaging students in the analysis of the production of truth. As for the latter, I have in mind here the "semiotics of Other" and composition's role in rewriting these semiotics, what might be called at this present juncture the *rhetorics of monstrosity*. Jacqueline Joyce Royster and Jean C. Williams, like James Berlin, emphasize

composition's efforts to lay bare the discursive knowledges that define the axiological parameters of constructs such as gender, race, and ethnicity. Roster and Williams contend that "[w]hen we render stories of composition from points of view other than dominant academic perspectives, we have the opportunity to see the historical page in ways that subvert the negative effects of primacy" (581). Since the "negative effects of primacy" increase with globalization it is necessary to examine pedagogical theory that retheorizes the other from a *supranational perspective*.

### *Consumerism and Transnational Capital*

Coronil reminds us that even though "[n]ations have become increasingly open to the flow of capital," they still "remain closed to the movement of the poor" (368). Global capital serves only the world's wealthiest, who are "integrated in transnational circuits of work, study, leisure, and even residence" while "their impoverished majorities are increasingly excluded from the domestic economy and abandoned by their states" (368). According to Robert Howse, "At the hands of this trade policy elite, 'embedded liberalism' came to be recast as *economics*, and *economics* became *ideology*, the *ideology of free trade*" (99). Some have argued that there are "supranational and nonnational 'cultural' criteria playing an increasingly large role as markers and collective identities" even though nations remain viable political units (Coronil 369).

Globalization in post-Mao China demonstrates the extent to which transnational capital shapes intersubjective relations. Neoliberalism and pragmatism have fueled China's reforms, including decollectivization and the reallocation of household labor to urban manufacturing, and citizens are "adjusting" to the shift in all-too familiar ways: the

*language* of democracy typically leads citizens to exercise their “right” to “choose” the alienation and exploitation of surplus labor. Those who opt for urban industry work over commercial agrarian activity often do so because free-market hegemony in China has contributed to unprecedented consumerism there, and manufacturing jobs, although exploitative, promise higher wages. Pun Ngai, president of the Chinese Working Women Network, has suggested that the *dagongmei* (“migrant working daughter”) and the *dagongzai* (“migrant working son”) are persuaded to leave their rural homes and familial labor for the “opportunity” to work in urban factory assembly lines, typically under abhorrent conditions such as unfair wages/hours and hostile dormitories (where the laboring body is not only alienated but sexualized) (70). Their motivation, as described by and others, strikes a familiar chord: rural migrants desire their city counterparts’ cultural capital, to obtain the clothes, technology, and Anglo-Sino posturing that signals “success.” This directive, once thought to be distinctly Western, now defines the Other’s cityscape and sense of self.

Chinese media have taken great lengths to cover the migrant worker “phenomenon” (Sun 110). Their construction of the *dagongmei* has resulted in her “indoctrination, fetishization, and compassion, and subjected her to a ‘controlling gaze’” rather than articulate her “agency” (111). Yet a number of migrants have begun to record their experiences in an effort to complicate these biased portraits. The accounts of the hopes and horrors promised by the road to “urbanity” force readers to rethink the media’s and state’s construction of “migrant laborer” since the language itself expresses tensions between centripetal and centrifugal impulses—between state and citizen heteroglossia—that continually destabilize dominant discourse. Tamara Jacka has argued that the

media's narrow take on migrant laborers ignores how migrant narratives are complex artifacts that represent real moments of radical thinking. Jacka's caveat is an important one since the rural worker (and the countryside itself) has long been criticized as inferior and imprudent in comparison to China's new urban, global citizen (2004). What many have failed to recognize is that state-imposed collectivization bound Chinese peasants to their villages as well as to the state, and that the *state* has been responsible for perpetuating a "hierarchical power relationship between the self (city) and the other (countryside)" (Zheng 85) and the migrants' denigrated signification. Migrants are in fact quite aware of state-propagated discourses that label them passive, pre-modern "country bumpkins" (85), and many, particularly the bar hostesses, estimated as 80 percent of the migrant population, often try to overcompensate by participating in commodity consumption and commodified sexual activity. As Tiantian Zheng argues, the migrants' parodic reworking of their construction ultimately "reinforces and reproduces hegemonic asymmetrical power relations and their marginality" (82).

### **Laboring the New World Order: Informatics, Virtuosity, Surplus Knowledge**

In the post-Fordist economy, surplus value is no longer extracted from labor materialized in a product, it resides in the discrepancy between paid and unpaid work—the idle time of the mind that keeps enriching, unacknowledged, the fruits of immaterial labor.

Sylvère Lotringer, "We, the Multitude"

Manuel Castells's important work on informationalism and globalization suggests "It is the historical linkage between the knowledge-information base of the economy, its

global reach, its network-based organizational form, and the information technology revolution that has given birth to a new, distinctive economic system” (77). Castells, echoing David Harvey’s work on the geographies of production and consumption, considers how the vast, connective field of “spatial flows” gives way to nefarious identarian politics and solidified class boundaries: “[E]lites form their own society, and constitute symbolically secluded communities, retrenched behind the very material barrier of real-estate pricing. They define their community as a spatially bound, interpersonally networked subculture” (446). On the one hand this communicative expansionism makes the rhetorics of globalization all the more a crushing “political weapon, serving to cement the hegemony of capital as it reverses the gains made by labor in the 1960s and 1970s” (Wills 114). On the other hand, liberatory rhetorics such as “globalization from below” can also serve as political weapons.

The degree to which the new knowledge economy supports, subtends, or eliminates traditional manufacturing jobs, what Paul Smith calls the “deprivileging of industrial production” (2000: 31), and contributes to a rise in the service sector still remains to be determined. For Smith, the arguments focusing on knowledge and skill are “obfuscatory” since “they hide the normal and habitual practices of capitalism [and] ignore the downgrading of labor” (25). William Hutton and Anthony Giddens open their book on global capitalism contrasting various speculations on the subject. Hutton, like Smith, suggests that “information’s” role in the growth of service labor has been grossly overstated if for no other reason than the service sector has created jobs since the 1930s and many of these have little to do with the knowledge economy (Hutton and Giddens 2000). According to Hutton, rather than credit “web and e-commerce” as the source of

economic transformation, one should consider that “the growth in household services is the result of the emergence of two-earner households who have to buy in services because the woman is no longer at home [and] the explosion in financial services has been driven by the growth of home ownership and the decline of the welfare state” (6). Even if all sectors now require personal computers and information technology, it is not an “IT revolution that has created their growth” (6). Contrary to Hutton’s position, Giddens, Castells, and Richard Sennett see technological change directly affecting economic development, leading to a transformation in character, in “how we live and work” (Hutton and Giddens 2000: 5). For these theorists, technology and science have resulted in a reduction in manufacturing and agricultural occupations—the once “very large working class” is in most Western countries “under 20 percent and still declining” (5)—and an overall reorganization of time (Castells 407). Castells, who has argued that neoliberalism has created a sense of urgency for “free markets to operate economic and institutional miracles” (144), sees the knowledge economy’s emergent “telecommuting [. . .] telecenters [. . .] increasing urban decentralization [and a] greater physical mobility for a labor force that was previously confined to its working sites during working hours” (426). According to Castells the “the new spatial logic expands, creating a multiplicity of global industrial networks whose intersections and exclusions transform the very notion of industrial location from factory sites to manufacturing flows” (424). The result of increased activity and time compression due to new networking enables “simultaneous globalization and localization” (458).

Italian autonomists such as Maurizio Lazzarato, Mario Tronti, Paolo Virno, and Antonio Negri have done more to level the divide between “mental and manual labor” or



“material and immaterial labor” than any other collective (Lazzarato 134). For this reason alone the autonomists could be credited as having forced capital to enter Italy’s post-Ford era when they broke from the Italian Communist Party (CPI) in the early 1960s (Fuller). On the one hand, the autonomist strike at Fiat then, the first since the 1940s, exposed CPI and union complicity with Italy’s emergent capital class; to permit the Italian unions to manage worker affairs was to participate in the very machinery that was exploitative. On the other, their actions, like many at that time, contributed to society’s subordination to a new phase of capitalism, “the emergence of entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets, and, above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation” (Harvey *Condition* 147).

The autonomists represented a radical departure from “capitalism at a political level” toward genuine working class autonomy—the “mass worker” was reified as the “key revolutionary subject” (Fuller). Although they have appeared in various forms (e.g., Operaists, Red Brigade, Potere Operaio, Autonomia) the autonomists have always remained faithful to a paradoxical version of Marxism that resists the notion that work is “the defining factor of human life” (Lotringer 7). Rather than idealize labor as the individual’s *raison d’être*, the autonomists look to “technological knowledge and socialized intelligence” to replace the very need to work (7). This relationship between technology and proletarian struggle is a historical one. As Marx held, the working class alone drives capitalist development by putting a “constraint on capital to adopt ever higher levels of technology and thus transform labor process” (Hardt and Negri *Empire* 208). The autonomist futurist glance, then, is neither passive nor isolated: *technological*

*hope* is a function of a “pragmatic and militant” workerism that denies “the Fordist rationalization of work” through mass strikes and migration—a positive, dynamic response dependent on grand scale solidarity (Lotringer 9). Their demand for an extensive networked collective—“one big union”—is also necessary. Hardt and Negri explain the position in severe terms: “Empire cannot be resisted by a project aimed at a limited autonomy” (*Empire* 206). But the theorists warn that while expansive solidarity is essential, mass migration can be destructive: “Desertion and exodus [. . .] constitutes a spontaneous level of struggle [that] most often leads today to a new rootless condition of poverty and misery” (213). Regardless of this concern, the autonomist emphasis on a working class divorced from capitalist schemes remains true to Marxian teleology.

As with classical Marxism, the autonomists maintain that revolution begins with the working class, but “working class” is seen as a deterritorialized and fluid mass, a multitude “defined less by what it actually produces than by its virtuality, its *potential* to produce *and* produce itself” (Lotringer 12). Negri, for example, argues that the “object of exploitation and domination tend not to be specific productive activities but the universal capacity to produce, that is, abstract social activity and its comprehensive power” (Hardt and Negri *Empire* 209). The potentiality of value (rather than the materialization) is a surplus value because it is buried in the “idle time of the mind” (Lotringer 12). *Surplus knowledge* challenges “the old dichotomy between ‘mental and manual labor’” since the dichotomy ignores “the new nature of productive activity” when mental/manual is transcended and transformed “within the ‘labor process’ and reimposed as political command within the ‘process of valorization’” (Lazzarato 134). Apropos of this

distinction, Virno reiterates Marx's definition of mental labor as a "product not separable from the act of producing" (qtd. in *Grammar* 53). Whereas certain kinds of mental labor

[result] in commodities which exist separately from the producer [. . .]  
books, paintings and all products of art as distinct from artistic  
achievement of the practicing artist," there are also "activities [. . .] which  
find in themselves their own fulfillment without being objectivized into an  
end product which might surpass them. (53)

A significant distinction to be sure, yet activities, talents, and skills are always dormant commodities awaiting their spectacle and consumption. For Lotringer, "The more creative and adaptable the workers are—the more *self-valorizing*—the more surplus of knowledge they can bring to the community at large" (12-13). This then begs the question: how does unfinalized or non-productive "virtuosity" tally with post-Fordist directives, where communication and social organization are the primary goals of a new regime of accumulation? The answer begins with an epistemology that simultaneously fosters "innovation-communication" and conceals its labor, the subjugated knowledge-making behind the production of the new. Such epistemology enables late capitalism's individuated, "just-in-time" consumption strategies. Harvey explains that Fordism's "mass consumption of consumer durables" demanded a fixed "spatial division of labour" and "homogenization of regional labour markets" (178), whereas today's post-Fordist accelerated consumption of high-turnover product depends on "spatial integration" and "labour market diversification" (178). Manuel Castells has likewise argued that "publicly organization of space" is paramount to the "informational, global economy" (409). Frank Webster makes the case succinctly:

As Fordism is transformed from a production to a consumption-oriented system, not only is there a decline of the mass industrial worker, but also there emerges a more individualist and consumption-centered person.

Information necessarily takes on a greater role in his her life, first because consumers must find out about what is available to consume and, second, because in the individualized present they are eager to make statements about themselves through their consumption. (152-53)

If in the post-Ford information age labor remains the sole source of value—“every qualitative alteration in the labour process appears to be irrelevant” (Marx *Capital* 439)—and labor is at once deterritorialized *and* interconnected, the task then becomes to locate the production site, the “spheres of production that operate with much *variable capital*” (Caffentzis 41, my emphasis). That is, innovation-communication yields today’s surplus value through a “factory without walls,” but the factories creating value are necessarily human (Dyer-Witheford 83).

Could mental labor, then, be capital’s desperate reach for profit in the age of the machine and large retail absorption? Capitalism’s cyclical renewal slows as globalization increases the divide between the haves and have-nots, further concentrating wealth and the means of production. Since machines cannot produce value and small private enterprises are disappearing, mental labor—writ large as the “information society”—is capitalism’s temporary fix, what might seen as a final grasping, gasping for some semblance of surplus-value. As Robert L. Heilbroner puts it,

Each renewal leads to the same ending: competition for workers; higher wages; labor-displacing machinery; a smaller base for surplus value; still

more frenzied competition; another period of crisis—*worse than the preceding one*. For during each period of crisis, the bigger firms absorb the smaller ones, and when the industrial monsters eventually go down the wreckage is far greater than when the little enterprises buckle (160).

The information society is not only what has necessarily emerged in history's "advancement," but also how capitalism deliberately sustains itself with decreasing surplus value in what is arguably the beginning of capitalism's end.

### **China Now**

This project takes as its primary subject matter the rhetorics of economic and political reform in post-Mao China. While China is set to become the world's largest economy, it should be noted that some have argued how much has remained the same. China's globalism began to take shape with the economic and political reforms of the early 1980s. The economic "success" that ensued is explained in four ways: first, the retention of state ownership of means of production, where China used the market "wisely" not "stupidly" like other post-communist parties; second, market liberalization (i.e., freeing prices; allowing enterprises to seek and keep profits, to lay off workers, to make joint ventures domestically and internationally; and joining the international free trade system of the WTO); third, "wise" Communist Party macroeconomic management of fiscal, monetary, and foreign exchange system, as well as an initial regulation of food/agricultural system; and four, massive capital and technology transfers by the overseas Chinese, and more recently foreign direct investments by non-Chinese

companies into China, usually in joint ventures or brand new operating companies, multinational companies outside China (Rock).

Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, for one, believes that recent changes in China “signify a shift of approach within the framework of the Chinese Communist system” (xv). China remains committed to the four basic principles of the socialist line, the proletarian dictatorship, the leadership of the Chinese Communist party, and Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao” although “a new order has emerged” (xv-xvi). China’s reforms are predicted by some to mobilize competitive profit-driven efforts while at the same time protect China’s population from the worst abuses of private coercion and criminal exploitation—that is, China “gradualist” guiding process of liberalizing economic life with a strong party/state will adequately address problems of poverty, inequality, and social exclusion (Rock). Nevertheless this “new order” is enough for others to claim that the regime’s “political legitimacy” has “declined drastically” while its “foundation of traditional morality has weakened” (Yongnian Zheng, *Discovering* 85). Some see China’s moral decay foreshadowing substantial growth falling before the intrinsic inefficiency of the Communist Party controlled authoritarian *laissez-faire* (a true free market system will not be attained since the party will continue to intervene to keep control of politics) (Rock). For Yongnian Zheng, China will face a crisis of national identity and moral decay. This crisis can only be met with a new Chinese nationalism. Reiterating the work of the Chinese intellectual Zhao Jun, Zheng states that

the new Chinese nationalism must be based on three factors: the political regime as the institutional base of the new nationalism, comprehensive national power that enables the regime to cope with internal and external

crises, and Confucian morality which enables individuals to overcome their excessive individualism and contribute more to the nation as a whole. This is where the meaning of Confucian ethic *tianxia weigong* (the whole world as one community) lies. (85)

Aihwa Ong has likewise argued that Asian values are often call upon “for its familiar ‘traditional’ appeal to articulate discourses and categories that regulate society while culturally authenticating policies that produce social conditions desired by global business” (202). Thus, for Ong, a Chinese nationalism that embraces, say, Confucianism simultaneously creates a strong disciplinary apparatus *as well as* taps into transnational markets. Min Lin contends that the rise of Neo-nationalism in post-Mao China, what ostensibly represents the “sacrifice” of the “individual self and the particularity of each citizen” for the “collectivity and totality of the national construction project,” is in reality “intrinsically linked with the search for and affirmation of individual subjectivity and the dignity of the individual self” (170). This version of neoliberalism makes sense if in fact we are witnessing a transitory phase in China’s march to an unrestricted category of multi-party democratic, market economy with universal private ownership (where a free market, *laissez-faire* system is the ultimate end.

With the notion of Western neoliberalism, Confucianism, and Maoist excess in an age without Mao, it is suggested here that both China’s “official discourse” and “subaltern discourse” negotiate a range of rhetorics emerging from East and West. For example, the ideology circulating within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is no longer purely Maoist but rather an amalgam of Deng’s pragmatism, Confucianism, neoliberalism and other national vocabularies. Subaltern discourse, in turn, appropriates

these strains as China's marginalized attempt to rise above the state's and media's pejorative construction of their "floating population"—factory laborer and bar hostess who have left the countryside for the city wish to transcend the political and cultural boundaries set upon them as well as just survive.

### *The Discourse of Power*

A close look at state and worker texts regarding global capitalism and political reform in China provides an invaluable look at the effects of consumerism and exploitation for the Western reader. "China's Progress in Human Rights in 2004," an official document released by the Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China in April 2005, is a good example of what might be called "the discourse of power." It is suggested that this "white paper" reflects the state's commitment to persuade international opinion that the country is behind political and civil rights. Yet, like many political tracts in the West, "China's Progress in Human Rights in 2004" obliquely shifts the emphasis from "economic exploitation, racial domination, [and] sexual oppression" to the individuals and groups themselves. So what should be a genuine article of good faith, the state's sincere efforts to improve conditions, is in the end a doctrine perpetuating status quo. According to Randy Martin, "Poverty and race could then become risk factors for failure" (109). When, for example, China does admit to its troubles, like its widening gap in income, "the most serious social problem in China," the economic structures enabling the gap are reasoned away in neoliberal rhetoric as the result of "[i]rrational income distribution" between the rich and the poor ("Widening income gap"). Slavoj Žižek explains that the rhetorical



maneuvering of “risk” has gained currency through “human rights” itself: “universality’s return” essentializes subjects and removes them from their sociality; “re-naturalization” of the individual means “public issues” are “translated” as “personal idiosyncrasies” (“Human Rights” 117), while “universality’s return” deprives one of his “particular socio-political identity” and exchanges one’s “concrete social or cultural background” for “contingent embodiments of abstract-notions” (129). For Žižek, the rhetoric of human rights suppresses collective resistance as it ushers in “liberal-democratic capitalism.” (126).

The rhetoric of risk and the exchange of future for present are evident in state propaganda that legitimates current policy and enables international relations by pointing to “the future.” Pun Ngai suggests that “[a] neoliberal discourse of modernity and development that justifies exploitative controls simultaneously contributes to the subalternity of this newly emerged Chinese working class, which is not even given an enuciative space to speak of its existence” (*Made in China* 48). Hence, while globalization is necessarily dialogic (all the elements in a contact zone can be transformed upon convergence with others), the exchange “does not always take place on a level playing field” (van Elteren 172).

### *The Discourse of Resistance*

This project also looks closely at China’s unofficial texts or the discourse of social change. Minxin Pei argues that “issuing open letters, appeals, and declarations [are] the preferred tool of protest for dissidents”(Pei 27). China’s subalterns, including migrant factory workers, bar hostesses, and cab drivers, have begun communicating their

experiences with reform. This project includes examples of subaltern written and oral testimonies published in Arianne M. Gaetano and Tamara Jacka's *On the Move: Women in Rural-to-Urban Migration in Contemporary China*, Michael Dutton's *Streetlife China*, and Sang Ye's *China Candid*. It should be noted that none of these books offer a discourse analysis. These subaltern texts are examined in light of James Paul Gee's method of discourse analysis. Briefly here, Gee argues that working class adolescents in Britain and upper middle-class have markedly different ways of speaking about themselves. Britain's working class teens construct themselves in a way that is "closely attached to a world of 'everyday' social and dialogic interaction" (41) with rarely ever voicing their concerns for future (144). Gee's upper middle-class teens, however, emphasize life goals and "achievement space" (141). Gee's method informs this project's analyses, though more so theoretically than empirically since the reflections examined are English translations. It is suggested that China's subalterns appropriate Gee's upper middle-class discourse in an effort to transcend class boundaries and stereotypes. Taking Gee's methodological assumptions to heart, where one might expect to find Chinese workers consumed with the here and now, there are moments with explicit emphasis on life trajectories. My reasoning is twofold: *this* emphasis is in part performative, the laborer's deliberate attempt to refuse the "country bumpkin" stigma, *as well as* indicative of China's neoliberalism. In addition to Gee's method of discourse analysis, subaltern texts are considered in light of LuMing Mao's conception of "rhetorical borderlands" in the U.S., where Chinese face, a Goffman-like concept that includes "lian" (面子) or society's respect for an individual's moral character and "mianzi" (臉子) or social perceptions of a person's prestige, comes in contact with

European American face, that is, either “positive face” or “negative face,” with positive suggesting a “desire that one’s wants be appreciated and approved” and negative, “the basic claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition” (435). It is argued that China’s reforms include a newer Western influence so that LuMing Mao’s understanding of U.S. rhetorical borderlands has some bearing on China’s rhetorical borderlands—economic reforms have brought a clash of West and East in China, too.

## **Conclusion**

It has been this chapter’s aim to lay the foundation for a project on rhetoric and social change in post-Mao China. It is suggested that a close look at the discursive space where politics, economics, and culture meet globally and locally offers a more comprehensive picture of the new world order. The Chinese migrant worker, as one example of an emergent global subjectivity, is viewed as a rhetorical construct. Her oral and written testimonies are shown to reveal her dialectical condition; her writing and posturing signal the tensions between dominant and marginal discourses. These examples often reveal a subject’s complicity with and resistance to official ideology, a political discourse that serves capital before citizenry. With seemingly better incentives to work harder and work more hours as well as an overall reduction of state owned enterprises (SOE), China’s new working class finds itself removed from consumption schemes and instead wondering whether the “Iron Rice Bowl” promise of pensions for life. These dialectics therefore suggest an individual’s working-through a crisis of agency and a nation-state’s negotiation of its role within a larger global economy.

## CHAPTER II

### GLOBAL “GREATER CHINA”: DISCOURSE, POWER, AND THE WORLD FACTORY

The “neoliberal state” is no longer, if it ever was, simply a deregulationist, absentee state, but has demonstrated a capacity to morph into a variety of institutional forms, to insinuate itself into, and graft itself onto, a range of different institutional settlements, and to absorb parallel and even contending narratives of restructuring and intervention, in response both to internal contradictions and external pressures.

Adam Tickell and Jamie Peck, “Making Global Rules”

Economic reform in post-Mao China has been euphemistically described as socialism with Chinese characteristics. This union between new and old is an economic rationalism that reflects China’s efforts to integrate its culture and citizenry into global capitalist schemes. Deng Xiaoping initiated these reforms in the 1980s when he convinced the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that communism and socialism are not mutually exclusive, no small feat considering that Maoism had been secure in that country for some 40 years. The first post-Mao congress was held in 1982, and by the early 1990s the CCP was recruiting capitalists under the neoliberal banner “importation of Western state products strengthens, not weakens, the Chinese state” (Zheng *Globalization and State Transformation* 57). This rhetorical framing is particularly important since China could not enter the global market without reconciling disparate

ideologies such as nationalism and globalism, importation and innovation (58). The compromise necessitates a positive response to international demand for democracy and human rights, and China's recent emphasis on universal equity is ultimately self-serving and capitalist (see "China's Progress in Human Rights in 2004" below). Global capitalism in China has thus had to develop within a discursive infrastructure that formulates hegemonic devices that include "Industrial East Asia" and "Greater China" as well as powerful tropes such as the "rational subject."

One approach to illuminating China's "communist-neoliberal" hegemony is with rhetorically oriented cultural studies or what Steven Mailloux calls rhetorical hermeneutics (*Reception Histories* 61). According to Mailloux, all texts are rhetorical and "acts of persuasion always take place against an ever-changing background of shared and disputed assumptions, questions, assertions, and so forth" (17). The text is unstable and open-ended, theoretically and politically polyphonic from the outset and always in play thereafter, morphing in the hands of readers who are in turn situational. One must therefore approach a text as if the text is a product of the discourses in which it emerges *and* responds. As David Bleich puts it, "The response must therefore be the starting point for the study of aesthetic experience" (135). Rhetorical hermeneutics, then, begins with a foundationless real yet at the same time grounds general theory in "specific interpretive acts," diachronically and synchronically (61). The emphasis on ideology's historical trail is important since ideologies, according to Mailloux, "are sets of beliefs and practices serving particular socioeconomic interests in a specific historical context" (*Rhetorical Power* 60). In "Discourse and Politics," Paul Chilton and Christina Schäffner suggest such a rhetorical hermeneutics when they outline four functions of political discourse.

These functions will aid the present discussion on the language of power in China.

Briefly, they are: (1) coercion: speech acts backed by sanctions such as commands, laws, agendas, and edicts; (2) resistance, opposition, and protest: speech acts that counter coercive discourse including media and specific linguistic structures (e.g., slogans, chants, appeals, and rallies); (3) dissimulation: the quantitative and qualitative control of information, and (4) legitimization and delegitimization: the techniques that facilitate political agenda including ideology, charisma, and positive self-presentation for the former and xenophobia (e.g., ideas of difference and boundaries), and blame, accusation, and insult (212-13). Overlapping, to be sure, these four functions of political discourse provide the rhetorical framework for state managed media such as *People's Daily*, *China Daily*, and *China Today*.

### **Centrifugal Neo-Nationalism or “Roll-out” Neoliberalism?**

China's official ideology functions strategically to secure state influence in the cultural affairs of its citizens as well as advance China's commitment to transnational capital. Although some have argued that China's state influence has waned since the advent of economic reforms (see Fairbank 1998; Zhang 1998), what has more likely happened is that official ideology has become something other than Mao's version of communism or Deng's pragmatism. China, like all nations new to the global marketplace, has had to embrace a form of neoliberalism, the “retreat of official regulation” from individual rights, private enterprise, and a nation's drive toward modernization (Scholte 34). Yet the state continues to shape China's public and private spheres. As Pun Ngai contends, “Far from resulting in the demise of the state, the party-

state has become increasingly stronger since incorporating market discourse to legitimize its political power, change its political technologies, and enlarge its bureaucracy” (*Made in China* 190). Gan Yang suggests that it is “Anglo-American liberalism” itself that provides the state with the intellectual currency to impede democratic movements: both state and market prosper with a “negative freedom” that protects only the few (81). China’s official ideology should thus be seen as a distinct, multivalent discourse that sanctions a specific kind of decentralized or neo-authoritarian regime—a “roll-out” *political neoliberalism* that involves the “development of new forms of statecraft” comprised of “an extensive network of policy functionaries and technopols” (Tickell and Peck 162).

Underwriting this centrifugation of political power is China’s Neo-nationalism, a “deep-rooted” ideology “based on the broad civil consciousness of the masses and universal political participation of the people” (Lin 180). China’s Neo-nationalism emerged alongside the economic reforms of the early 80s, when intellectuals embraced Westernization as the *sine qua non* of development. Following the Tiananmen incident in 1989, however, and the “collapse of European communism,” nationalism became a dominant discourse that sought to prevent “social disintegration” and protect cultural boundaries (Zheng *Discovering Chinese Nationalism* 51). China’s intellectuals changed their tenor from admiration of all things Western to vigilance (51). What has evolved in China’s intellectual community is a bifurcated nationalism of “New Left”—a Maoist conservatism that would bring modernization without Westernization—and “Radical Reform”—an enthusiastic embrace of cosmopolitanism without “Chineseness” (53).

If nationalism “reactivates and transforms traditional cultural values into the service of a new political and ideological hegemony” (Liu 199), it is understandable how China’s Neo-nationalism is bound to its neoliberalism both *intellectually* and *politically*—intellectually since the threat of Westernization or cultural imperialism is perceived to be much greater when economic and cultural borders are easily crossed, politically so that the state, a power-center that rhizomatically works a “Greater China,” might maintain some control over the “free market.” China’s Occidentalism has in fact given Chinese nationalists a construction of “Westernization” to bolster their “search for a new cultural and national identity” (Zheng *Discovering Chinese Nationalism* 48).

Paradoxically, then, the nationalist call for a unity that would raise “the people” above “the individual” must coexist with the market’s valorization of an “interest-based social order,” where the “individual” provides the “rational calculation” that determines “prospective costs, benefits, satisfactions, and the like” (62). Weber had confirmed the latter when he wrote that “all economic activity in a market economy is undertaken and carried through by individuals to make provision for their own ideal or material interests” (319). Xudong Zhang complicates nationalist unity by noting a difference between the “nationalism of the social sphere” and the “nationalism of the state” (112). For Zhang, the popular discourse of nationalism is “fundamentally different from the state rhetoric of patriotism” since the former “indicates a voluntary, rather than a coerced, overlap between the nation and the state” (112). It is within this overlap, a “semiautonomous social and culture space,” where Zhang finds opportunities for China’s emergent middle class to fashion a “new sense of equality, democracy, individualism, and community” (110)—even if the state continues to manage most of China’s infrastructure (112). A



national consciousness is foremost possible because of China's globalism, which, through the "free flow" of capital and "boom in information and cultural signs and images," has defamiliarized for China's citizenry the once intangible nation-state (112).

Such schizophrenia in China is a condition of globalization itself, and the tensions are ultimately seen anywhere a national subject is simultaneously a global citizen. Proof of this duality may be found in the new political discourse that fosters China's new economics. Now strategizing "*capitalism* with Chinese characteristics," a savage capitalism based on the brutal exploitation of the Chinese proletariat ("Capitalism With Chinese Characteristics," emphasis mine), China addresses the world market in double-voiced discourse or multi-vocal Sino-Western political rhetoric. So, for example, when U.S. manufacturers appeal for trade quotas to control imports from China, China answers in the language of capitalism, the directive coming from the CCP. Consider the following from an 8 April *People's Daily*:

The U.S. textile trade manufacturers feel pressure and hurt in face of the competitiveness of Chinese textiles. On the one hand, it is a reality while on the other hand it is a necessary result that all industries have undergone reconfiguration and diversion in the world under the system of global free trade and under the tendency of economic globalization. ("Made in China").

Tropes such as "competitiveness" and "free trade" are now markedly intertwined with declarations of the "end of Maoism" and the "death march" of state-owned companies (Fishman 74). China's private enterprises have in fact swiftly replaced and rebuilt the some forty thousand state-owned industries that have closed since 1978 (74). As Ted C.

Fishman points out, “The private sector now accounts for half of what China makes and about one-quarter of its GDP. That percentage will only keep rising” (75). Enabling the transition to the private sector are rhetorics that help “[co-opt] economic power as the presentation of civil power” (Pun 37). This is one way that ideology functions “strategically” as a “multiplicity of acts” performed *through* discourse that serve a political, heuristic, informative, or playful purpose (Chilton and Schäffner 212). Ideology depends upon the “tropes of cultural debate” that infuse communities with what Clifford Geertz calls “maps of problematic reality” and “matrices [of] a collective conscious” (qtd. in Mailloux *Rhetoric of Power* 61).

It is necessary to begin with a review of China’s recent socioeconomic and political past since this chapter’s rhetorical hermeneutics seeks to unveil China’s discursive strategies as they “manipulate the social practices, political structures, and material circumstances in which they are embedded at particular historical moments” (Mailloux *Reception Histories* 55).

## **Socioeconomic and Historical Background**

### *Agriculture*

Chinese leadership has long depended upon a paternalistic state apparatus that ensures local compliance through shared ideology, bureaucratic control of local politicians and policy, and fiscal and national security. From 1949 through the mid-50s, China committed itself to a wholesale adoption of Soviet Centralized planning (state administered production targets, state determined pricing, and state wage policies). Agricultural collectivization transpired on a massive level, with a new focus on the

development of heavy, basic industrial state owned enterprises. Mao and his inner group determined an incentive system based on moral, cultural, and political enforcement in economic life. Notable attempts at culturally determined economic change occurred in the late 1950s, with China's Great Leap Forward. The "Great Leap Forward" exhorted people to produce locally with "backyard steel furnaces" (Rock). This ideological charge from the center would disappear, with Mao's temporary stepping-down after the Great Leap's horrendous failure that resulted in unprecedented famine, and then reappear in the mid-60s, with the Cultural Revolution, Mao's return and decree to eradicate all vestiges of bourgeois elitism and wherever political life disrupted economic activity by the people. The communes that supported the Great Leap Forward and survived the Cultural Revolution lasted until the mid-1980s. In 1978, Deng oversaw an initial adoption of the Household Responsibility System (HRS), with contracting land and output quotas to individual households and any excess available to family to consume or sell on market or to the state. By 1981 the Central Government generally promoted HRS, and by 1985 HRS covered nearly all of the rural population. These reforms led to significant growth in agriculture and the communes were completely disbanded.

With the communes officially abolished, land ownership was transferred to local village and township governments. These localities now had authority to negotiate contracts. The length of these contracts was extended to 15 years and then 30 years in 1995 to promote long-term investments such as trees for fruits. Households could now transfer its contracted land to other households (Rock). Through the mid-80s, China became a net exporter of grain, and income distribution remained relatively equal within the provinces. China's rapid agricultural growth, twice as fast as in Mao's day, is

generally reasoned as due to new policies that focused on changed labor, including better incentives that swayed people to work harder and for more hours, or because there was no longer a clear distinction between collective land and small private plots, so people worked more efficiently (Rock).

### *Industry*

By the end of the Maoist period China's industry was nearly all state owned enterprises (SOEs) and, based on the Soviet model, massive and inefficient. 1978's reforms included experimentation with 100 enterprises with profit retention schemes. New drafts of constitution adopted language about legality of the small-scale private enterprise; by 1985 some five million-plus such enterprises were counted. In 1984, the CCP announced its intention to create a "Socialist Commodity Economy" and further broadened the arrangements within private firms, including a variety of association among cooperative, state, collective, and individuals.

When rural communes were disbanded in 1984, their existing industrial enterprises were transferred to new units of local government and became known as Town and Village Enterprises (TVEs). Their share in total production grows from 10 to 25 percent from 1985-1990. TVEs are seen to be a very dynamic (perhaps foremost) sector of non-centralized economy as they supply good in short supply (light manufactures) from big SOEs and alliances and form alliances with each other, with SOEs, and with foreign investors. Areas without TVEs seek to establish them.

In 1992 State Council declared that these SOEs would no longer be "state-run" but free to make their own decisions in some areas of decision-making (product-mix,

pricing, investment, personnel, and foreign trade). A later plan of 1996 declared that the State would only support a small percentage of loss-making medium and large SOEs into the future, with others subject to sale, merger, internal, internal buyouts, or bankruptcy. The SOEs gained an increasing autonomy that led to a variety of developments that vary greatly by sector (layoffs, increased profits, increased foreign ventures, product developments) and industry. The State decided to keep majority ownership in SOEs in 1997 (Rock).

Today the state's unwavering hand on China's free-market consequently gives way to a *communitarian capitalism* that interpellates citizens as global consumers and nationalist functionaries. Whereas the West's welfare state would ostensibly protect those who cannot fairly compete, China's communitarianism fosters a bureaucracy that establishes stability and enables global capital to extend as easily as possible—always under the aegis of the state (Ong 201-02). The “Chineseness” that underwrites China's globalism is the language and ethical structure of “Asia” summoned “to articulate discourses and categories that regulate society while culturally authenticating policies that produce the social conditions desired by global business” (202). This emphasis on state control is necessary since the ubiquitous images of China's global capitalism would perhaps lead those unfamiliar with China's communitarianism to believe that China's embrace of the West goes unchecked. But China's Sino-Western posturing is never unreflective nor staticized: the United States' pressure on China over “human rights, nuclear proliferation, and Taiwan,” for example, is typically interpreted as “U.S. self-interest and power diplomacy” (Zhang 112), while books such as *China Can Say No* emerge from intellectual circles as strong protests to Westernization.

## *Intellectual Currents*

Amid the economic reforms of the 80s and 90s were disparate waves of radicalism that sought to rethink global influences as well as rewrite the “debasement of tradition and knowledge during the Cultural Revolution” (Guo 360). As Liu Kang suggests, Mao’s discourse of a new nationalism “integrated Marxism with nationalism and radically reinvented a ‘national culture,’ breaking away from Confucian and other traditional values.” But this break did not succeed in laying down the “necessary cultural and ideological foundations for social reconstruction or modernization” (201). One reason for Maoism’s shortfall was the new ideological current emerging as a response to the horrors of the Cultural Revolution. Philosopher Li Zehou, a pragmatist in Marxist clothing who profoundly influenced Deng’s “modernization program” (Lin 42, 45), provided the intellectual framework for the post-Mao government. Along with other influential scholars of the early 80s, Li helped persuade Chinese society to embrace a version of Enlightenment humanism, one that affirmed education and individualism. Li’s determining, creative individual (within-the-social) diverges from orthodox Marxism *existentially*, by claiming that the “objective content of human praxis is inseparable from the human subject” (Lin 49). At the same time, however, the ontology resists existentialism’s naiveté by valorizing the historical process of social praxis, anticipating the recent rereading of Foucault’s antihumanism and its liberatory potential, “the continuous constituent project to create and re-create ourselves and our world” (Hardt and Negri 92).

Though Li's new Enlightenment gave intellectual integrity to Deng's reforms, Mao's revolutionary impulse never really disappeared. "Mao nostalgia" circulated alongside the once-defiled Confucianism. Songs from the Cultural Revolution were reproduced that "eulogized Mao" as the "Great Helmsman" (Liu 196) while a spectacle of Chineseness was promoted that included national karaoke contests with revolutionary folk songs and traditional Peking opera as well as films that served up "exotic representations of China's antiquated, folkloric, and superstitious cultural past" (196). And when Western pop culture such as MTV was introduced through the global market, the CCP appropriated it for "an effective propaganda tool" (195).

Chinese scholars resistant to Western modernity—"its teleological, deterministic logic"—are particularly sensitive to the West's intellectualizing of China's recent past. Philip C. C. Huang has suggested that China's emergent "critical reflexivity" has worked to shed "Western-centric scholarship" that positions itself from a privileged position against an "inferior" China. Guo Jian has similarly made the case that theorists such as Fredric Jameson are careless in the way that they abstract moments such as the Cultural Revolution as a semiotic event *par excellence* (e.g., "the unbinding of 'material signifiers'" [353]; the renaming of street signs, museums, and libraries [*China*]), especially when Maoism is elevated to a "'collectivity which has become a new 'subject of history'" (Jameson qtd. in Guo 351-52). According to Guo, these theorists forget the "crimes and atrocities committed in the name of revolution" (355) and neglect that the Cultural Revolution merely preserved China's "feudalist ideology of inheritance" rather than keep to a "hegemony of proletarian ideology" (365). Hence during Mao's era "one's moral standing was [still] determined by inherited class labels" (Chao 101). Liu

in the same way challenges the “monolithic modernity” presented in Benedict Anderson’s influential *Imagined Communities* as simply a product of “Western capitalist modernity” (199). Liu finds that Anderson and others neglect alternative modernities “in which nationalism and nationhood serve revolutionary purposes in *opposition to Eurocentric modernity* (199, emphasis mine). While China’s liberal intellectuals have “always been an ideological ally of reform bureaucracy” (Zhang 131), the strong reaction from China’s conservative intellectuals against Western ideology reflects an overall anxiety shared by many nations concerning global capitalism and the full-blown absorption into the “world system” (Liu 194). It is not uncommon today to hear jingoistic pronouncements such as “China should follow its own path,” echoing loudly in various public forums (Lin 161, 170). The Neo-nationalism surfacing from such remonstrations should be seen as more than merely emotive; the West’s overconsumption is openly criticized as selfish and apocalyptic, sparking debates on “economic rationalism versus spiritual-ecological humanism” (162). China’s Neo-nationalism, no longer the amalgam of empire, civilization, and universe promoted through Mao’s *tianxia*, gives emphasis to “individual rights” and demonstrates an inherent anxiety between “universal principles and national boundaries” (Zhang 115-117). It is as if Confucianism has fused with American pragmatism. Lin considers the apparent paradox of coexisting ideologies when he concludes that a “Greater China” signifies an “ever-growing sense of pan-Chinese cultural identity”—a new urgency to return five thousand years in search of China’s “spiritual heritage”—as well as an embrace of “pragmatic materialism,” a “rational form of nationalism.” Liu sheds light on the paradox by suggesting that China’s neo-Confucianism is never an “indigenous ideology” because Confucian discourse is



always-already “constituted globally as an integral part of the ideology of capitalist globalization” (203). While Mao’s rejection of Confucianism was always part of his nationalist discourse, Deng’s rejection of Mao’s hegemony reified “heritage” (200, 201). Deng’s celebration of Chineseness through China’s deep history *and* Western influence became China’s nascent globalism.

There is perhaps no better example of China’s cultural, political, and economic ambidexterity than Hong Kong. Hong Kong, along with Macau, is one of China’s two “special administrative regions” (SAR). As such, Hong Kong enjoys a large degree of autonomy that includes its own legal system, currency, and immigration laws. While the West continues to receive a capitalist Hong Kong, even after the PRC regained sovereignty of the former British “crown colony” in 1997, the region is nevertheless home to a vibrant radical “left-wing” intellectual base. W.O. Lee, for one, contends that Hong Kong bore a “rich ground for political activities, and diverse interpretations of and aspirations towards democratisation” (70). Hong Kong remained depoliticized while it was “defacto ruled” by Britain and China (61) and, in many regards, anticipated the mainland’s reforms. The Hong Kong under British-China rule was a “consultative democracy” with “pragmatic orientations” emphasizing “political experience rather than political system” (62). According to Lee, the public believed they had some stake in decision-making since “all the draft policies were published as Green Papers for public consultation before White papers were published as policies” (62). According to Lee, if there was no true representative democracy, Hong Kong subjects nevertheless believed “that their views were heard when they saw policy revisions after the period of public consultation” (62). This version of democracy, together Hong Kong’s Confucian

tradition and overall depoliticized climate, left inhabitants “contented in life”—“prosperity and stability” were emphasized before and during Hong Kong’s transition to Chinese rule (63). Yet the transition “triggered demands for democratisation” (65). According to Geremie R. Barmé, Hong Kong’s intellectuals regularly criticize Western liberalism as well as China’s socialism and political corruption. Hong Kong’s intellectuals publish in major journals such as *Twenty-first Century* often on behalf of China’s educators, artists, and laborers. These intellectuals and their causes continue to generate enthusiastic “support among mainland-based writers” (Barmé 211) even though Hong Kong’s return to China inevitably strengthened the political legitimacy of China’s leadership (Zheng *Globalization and State Transformation* 56).

### *The Rhetoric of Leadership*

With the state’s continual appeal to a unified China, it is no surprise that some have found that the cultural dynamism and diversity promised by globality falls short there—that transnational capital has left China even “more level and homogeneous” than in Mao’s day, when the general population remained virtually immobile, illiterate, and destitute (Zhang 111). Yet others such as Dorothy J. Solinger and Tim Oakes see a healthy and ubiquitous localism bearing vitality and difference. The reforms that began in the 1970s, argues Solinger, gave way to a new economic policy, “all loosening vertical links in allocation and exchange processes” (*China’s Transition* 156). Oakes problematizes the usual depiction of local regions as inert sites for state interests and global capital, and suggests that though China’s local regions are an “important criteria for investment” for global capital they are never passively coerced by capital (674).

Local cultures in post-Mao China (e.g., the provinces and their kinship relations) produce their own cultural imaginary that *acts on* global networking. Pun's example of one village's transformation from Maoist "production brigade" to "industrial company" is particularly telling. According to Pun, when an industrial plant opened in a village in the Nanshan district of Shenzhen, the local government itself "not only formed a company but completely turned itself into a collective enterprise" with a total of thirteen companies (33). The village, like many in the reform era, is a Foucauldian heterotopia, where "socialist society meets global capitalism" (32). As Oakes sees it, "Global localism is [. . .] a two-way process: while transnational corporations seek to manipulate local culture to naturalize the consumption of a particular product, localities themselves seek to create a local culture that is attractive to global capital" (674). In other words, localities profit from transnational capital's dependency on their unique relations to the market.

This logic explains why China's leadership has supported the idea of effective localisms, vocally endorsing "organs of self-government of autonomous areas to independently develop cultural undertakings in ethnic languages and with ethnic characteristics" ("China's Progress"). Hu Jintao's ascendancy to China's chief military post and "de facto top leader" (Kahn A1) is significant here. Hu, echoing Mao, has already promised valorization of China's rural regions, the historically devalued counterpart to the nation's powerful and prestigious cities. Hu's attention to China's countryside is one aspect of the new nationalism that urges fiscal decentralization under political totality. Hu's efforts are to a certain degree committed to improving the image of China's poorest areas with higher incomes for workers and peasants and an overall increase in state spending, something his immediate predecessors Jiang Zemin and Deng

Xiaoping failed to do (Kahn A6). There is resistance to Hu's reforms, ironically enough, from the localities themselves since "many township and village cadres [are] reluctant to loosen their grip on land by providing farmers with [. . .] new rights" (Schwarzwalder). Whether Hu's efforts, which include the implementation of a new rural land contracting law that gives farmers a thirty-year tenure if not full private ownership (Schwarzwalder), will change the perception of the rural laborer is yet to be seen, but a few have already noted that such barriers are nearly impossible to overcome.

Hu's reforms (and conservatism) tally with China's recent commitment to ameliorating its social conditions, an urging that comes from the CCP itself. China's leaders recognize that appeasing international demands for democracy, human rights, and reasonable living conditions are paramount to China's acceptance into the global market. Yet Xiao Qiang, former executive director of Human Rights in China (HRIC) and vice-chairman of the steering committee of the World Movement for Democracy, has made the case that China's "increased prosperity" has not "increased the Chinese government's commitment to human rights" (99). While human rights are *rhetorically* indispensable to China's economic reforms,

the current leadership has no intention of liberalizing its political system and no vision to lead the country in the direction of greater protection of human rights. The broadly democratic goals expressed during the popular movement of 1989 remain unfulfilled. Economic development is essentially a project aimed at enhancing the power of the state rather than promoting the enjoyment of rights—political, economic, or social—by the Chinese people. (99-100)

Activists such as Xiao see through these efforts. For Xiao and others, the state-sanctioned special economic zones leave migrant laborers “unprotected” and without medical insurance, benefits, and the right to unionize (100). Perhaps most disturbing is the fact that “one quarter of China’s 14 million migrant construction workers are child laborers, some of them as young as ten” (100). This enormous child labor pool may be due to the paucity of educational opportunities—schooling is virtually nonexistent for these workers, “despite rhetoric that would suggest otherwise” (100). As Xiao notes, “In 1993, 7.4 million children under age sixteen had not gone to school or had dropped out” (100). China’s adult illiteracy had reached a staggering 220 million by 2000. If Xiao is correct when he says that the Chinese government has no policies addressing these exploitative strategies, how should one make sense of the party-generated human rights campaign? A close look at the much-publicized White Paper on human rights below is telling.

#### **“China’s Progress in Human Rights in 2004”**

The Chinese government attaches great importance to the protection of laborers’ rights.

#### **“China’s Progress in Human Rights in 2004”**

China may have as many newly unemployed industrial workers, especially older ones, *as the rest of the world put together*.

Ted C. Fishman, *China, Inc.*

“China’s Progress in Human Rights in 2004” is an official document released by the Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in April 2005. The document might be seen as an example of the state’s recent efforts to

persuade international opinion that the country has committed itself to political and civil rights, only now on behalf of state *and* market. This move comes as no surprise since the “economic expansion of modern capitalism depends upon the close integration of the state and the corporations” (Aronowitz 238). According to Roy Denny, China’s interest in global markets, their accession to the WTO 2001, and precarious status as a “Most Favored Nation” have forced a shift in internal affairs that has extended into China’s vast rural peripheries (154). For Oakes, the changes throughout “greater China” suggest a “broader civilizational discourse of ‘Asian values’ and flexible accumulation of global capital” that promote “competitive liberalization”—an “explosion of ‘zone fever’” where localities scramble to offer attractive sites for the subcontracting operations of transnational corporations” (673, 675). Oakes’s understanding of regionalism implies that a “conservative set of elite values” is unfairly advantageous for provincial elites (673), while the *Proletarskaya Gazheta* points out that labor conditions determined by legislation are often enforced arbitrarily or worse completely ignored by local authorities. So encouraging human rights in the agricultural sector becomes especially important. As stressed in the 12 April 2005 *People’s Daily*, a primary organ for the state, “The year 2004 is an important year for China to build a well-off society in an all-round way. It is also a year that saw all-round progress in China’s human rights undertakings.” There has been a demonstrated implementation of “administration according to law [where] effective measures were adopted to standardize and restrain administrative power, and safeguard and protect citizens’ rights and interests” (“China to publish”).

Denny suggests that Deng had long recognized the relationship between human rights and reform, but at the same time knew that international pressure ultimately served Western interests:

The real goal of American and other critics of the Chinese government is “not to protect human rights, but to force China to be ‘Westernized’ and ‘decentralized.’” Human rights provides the “pretext” for foreign enemies to “meddle in the internal affairs of other countries” and weaken states such as China that might obstruct America’s global domination project. Seen in this light, the strength and hostility of China’s reaction to international human rights pressure is not surprising. (154)

China’s vocal endorsement of “human rights” is neither an abandonment of party interests nor a radical shift in public policy, but rather a necessary modification of official discourse in light of globalization. As P. M. O’Neill explains, “The geographies of product, finance and labour markets that it seeks to construct require qualitatively different, not less, state action” (qtd. in Tickell and Peck 163). While these concerns emphasize human rights, they are in reality rhetorics that serve a new economics for China. Neoliberalism has become “deeply embedded in international law,” and China’s political rhetorics have had to change, including a “tempering” of “discursive liberalism” for a new emphasis on “participatory politics” and “poverty agendas” (164). The state’s plan for creating this version of a neoliberal market economy was already in place by 2001, when China had “four hundred billion US dollars in foreign direct investment” and great success overall “attracting an enormous amount of foreign direct investment” (Lardy). China’s globalism required that China liberalize its political machinery; the

project would transform China into a world factory by the dawn of the new millennium (Pun 78). Yet, according to one party official, the CCP-adopted “Decision on Strengthening the Party’s Governing Capability” only reinforces state control over a “scientific and democratic” framework. Since taking office, President Hu has promised a program to “satisfy the masses” by cultivating the CCP’s “advanced nature”:

“Our Party has its root, blood and power in the people.” [. . .] “The fundamental goal to strengthen the building of the Party’s *ruling capabilities* and advanced nature is to maintain the flesh-and-blood links with the people and to realize, maintain and develop the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people.” (“Hu Jintao on campaign”)

Denny delineates China’s position on rights as five responses to international pressure: (1) Human rights are an internal affair and therefore immune to global mandates, (2) the U.S. is disingenuous since so many of its citizens are left “unprotected from crime, poverty, and racial injustice,” (3) China has already begun providing its citizens with basic needs including “food, education and employment,” (4) “China has no political prisoners” but rather incarcerates people for criminal acts that any “reasonable government would consider dangerous to public safety and order,” and (5) China’s human rights issues should not be associated with economic issues (154-55). The state’s resistance to Western hegemony has nevertheless acquiesced to some degree. According to Zhao Qizheng, minister of China’s State Council Information Office, a “good international opinion environment” is necessary to “win initiative in the complicated and fierce international competition” (“Make great efforts”). As just one example, 700



political prisoners were released and, beginning in 1994, products manufactured by prison labor were no longer exported (Denny 156).

It is important to emphasize here that there is often an economic motive underwriting democratic moves such as civil rights, and, as Denny surmises, “Even with economic pragmatism rather than moral idealism in command [. . .] China’s human rights performance will not soon disappear as an international political issue. Increasing numbers of foreign traders recognize that human rights violations are another manifestation of one of the basic difficulties of doing business in China” (157). These abuses are seen always to have an “economic dimension,” so that for example, “the employers of forced laborers, of which there are untold thousands in PRC prisons and labor camps, need only provide workers with enough food, shelter, and medical care to remain productive” (157). The result, according to Denny, is that “Chinese export industries enjoy lower overhead costs” (157). The Tibetan Youth Congress, the largest and most active Tibetan NGO, issued a strong reply to the “White Papers,” claiming the release to be filled with doctored facts and deliberate misrepresentation. Since human rights entail intellectual property rights, it is not surprising that the TYC quoted acting U.S. Trade Representative Peter Allgeier, and pointed to the fact that China was “elevated to the priority watch list of countries failing to give adequate protection to intellectual property rights (IPR). Immediately following the release of “Human Rights,” the 2005 *Special 301 Report* stated that piracy and counterfeiting rates remain high due to “China’s inadequate and non-deterrent enforcement system” (TYC).

Published 13 April 2005, “China’s Progress in Human Rights in 2004” marks the eighth installment since the initial release in 1991. The forty-one-page document is

divided into eight sections including a “Foreword.” Each section addresses a particular concern regarding domestic policy, and both the policies and their rhetorics bear a striking resemblance to the U.S.’s. The aping of ideology is deliberate. Since China’s Human Rights document could be seen as the state’s efforts to persuade the global community of China’s legitimate concern for the welfare of its people, and consequently gain entry into international markets, China must situate itself *dialogically* at the center of Western discourse—“ideologies,” Mailloux reminds us, characterize “positions within the cultural conversation” (*Rhetorical Power* 60). The “White Paper,” then, is an example of double-voiced discourse that skillfully manages an alien voice for the benefit of the host.

The document’s “Foreword” sets the tone of the piece, so it is worth beginning with the excerpt below. It should be noted that these two paragraphs appeared earlier (12 April 2005) in a story run by the *People’s Daily* titled “China to publish white paper on human rights progress in 2004”:

In 2004, China adhered to the scientific view of development by putting people first, and made every effort to build a harmonious society. New progress was achieved in its reform, opening-up and modernization drive. Along with continuous economic growth, more democratic practices were seen in the political arena, and the society progressed in a comprehensive way. Further improvements were made in people’s living standards, and China’s human rights conditions were continuously improved and developed in all fields.

China is a developing country, and its human rights conditions are in a process of sustained development and perfection. The Chinese government pays special attention to respecting and safeguarding human rights. It will take effective measures to promote the development of human rights and to raise the level of human rights and basic freedom enjoyed by the Chinese people. (*People's Daily*)

The emphasis here on evolution and teleology is Marxist, but the neoliberal juxtaposition of “economic growth” and “democratic practices,” and conspicuous emphasis on “putting people first,” suggest Western advertising rather than official ideology. This sloganese is in fact an overextended promise to amend the growing schism between classes. It is no secret that workers in state industries have seen their status and wages quickly decline during the post-Mao era (Fairbank 436). According to Fairbank, the “economic and social differences” witnessed between managers and workers in “collective industries” and farmers relegated to fieldwork “were intensified by the accelerating geographic disparities between the coastal areas involved in international trade and the poorer inland provinces” (436). In 2002, 35 million workers lost jobs in state-owned enterprises, contributing to an increased number of labor demonstrations and growing inequality. As Lardy puts it: “I do not think one can find a society, perhaps with the exception of wars or natural disasters, which has had such a rapid deterioration in income distribution in a twenty-year period” (Lardy). The disintegration of the former soviet republics is a testament to the false promises of economic reform. Russia’s industrial production has intensified exploitation of its workers while an overall lack of internal capital investment has seen the virtual collapse of economic reforms (“Capitalism With Chinese

Characteristics”). While liberal discourse argues that China’s economic shortcomings will be ameliorated once the country is fully, freely integrated into the world market, a new left discourse has been challenging “capitalism-driven globalization,” demanding a strengthening of state power (Zheng *Globalization and State Transformation* 185). A similar shift in ideology can be seen throughout the former soviet republics. According to the *Proletarskaysa Gazheta*, by 2000, 60% of Russian capital in the form of oil and gas had been exported, while a “large-scale” importation of food and consumer goods—items that “Russia can produce inside”—went untaxed, damaging Russia’s state budget. Ironically, yet sharing the very pulse originating from China’s new Left, the demand for increased state intervention in Russia is understood as the only way to head off the devastation wrought by privatization and global capitalism.

The document’s first section, “People’s Rights to Subsistence and Development,” does a good job at masking these iniquities through neoliberal rhetoric and an overall emphasis on positive growth in the economic sector. 2004, according to this section’s opening, was a particularly strong year for development and individual rights, especially for subsistence farming. China’s GDP enjoyed a 9.5-percent increase from the following year, to reach a high of 13,650 billion yuan, and consequently, “the overall standard of living and quality of life were improved considerably” (“China’s Progress”). This improvement parallels a shift in the China’s consumption pattern from “basic living” to “modern living.” The claims seemingly endorse unprecedented individualism and are always pragmatic or result oriented on the state’s behalf, ideological residue from Deng’s rule. Farmers’ incomes, for example, increase only when effective measures are set that ensure an increase in agriculture. The government suggests that China’s nine-percent

increase in total grain output to 469.5 billion kg in 2004 represents their embrace of “the scientific view of development” that puts “people first.” Such efforts might summarily be seen as the reduction in taxes, improvement in housing conditions, special attention to the poor, concern for safety (“above everything else”), health, preparation for natural disasters, monitoring food and drugs, and environmental protection. Each of these mandates is considered necessary in order to protect the rights of individuals, what might be called a Keynesian network that joins reform programs with policy agencies.

Likewise, the government is said to have made “effective” efforts to help the rural poor “shake off poverty,” while “housing conditions and living environment” also continue to improve. The latter ostensibly finds success through an urban housing security system that has yielded 23.7 and 27.2 square meters of per-capital living space in cities and towns, respectively. Yet, if Fishman, Weiping Wu, and others are correct, there are millions being forced from their homes in the name of modernization and global appeal. Beijing, for example, has been determined to “catch up” to Shanghai, which has been a center of commerce since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and now asks its residents to evacuate their *hutongs*, the traditional neighborhoods that date back to the 1300s (106), often at a moment’s notice. The writer Li Yong Yan has called such displacement strategy “compitalist,” an amalgam of “official communist-style rule by fiat and market economy opportunism” (107). Wu has noted that with the end of welfare housing in 1999, via municipal and work unit distribution, and the enthusiastically encroaching “urbanization process,” the rental market has been permitted to carry on unregulated (100). Depending on the laborer’s classification, housing conditions can be precarious at best. Temporary migrants, for example, especially those without *hukou*, the registry system that gives

permits and labor allocation, typically rent private housing (100) or live in dormitories for four to five years—“transience is the dominant characteristic of the lives of Chinese dagongmei” (Pun 5).

Section II, “Civil and Political Rights,” emphasizes immediately the bond between political development and “political civilization”—“to guarantee the citizens’ civil and political rights.” According to this section, in 2004 the National People’s Congress (NPC) Standing Committee oversaw amendments to the Constitution that are “closely related to human rights.” These amendments are said to improve China’s overall election system by standardizing procedures and ensuring citizens’ right to vote. There is now an increased transparency of the “activities of judicial departments,” a strengthening of “citizens’ supervision over such activities,” and a “guarantee for the procedural rights of citizens.” What these claims speak to is the legacy of corruption that has plagued China’s government since Mao and is now more severe with economic reform. There was documented abuse from the political center to all along the periphery during China’s collectivism, where regional heads and party cadres took more than their fair share of farmers’ yield and went as far as to permit peasants to starve. But even then there was still an allegiance that is missing today. As Zheng sees it, the “Chinese state has played an extremely important role in pushing the process of economic transformation. But during this process, the state has become increasingly corrupt” (*Globalization and State Transformation* 146). For Zheng, “‘Money’ has now replaced party loyalty. Corruption has undermined not only the effectiveness of the government, but also popular confidence in the government” (72). The public sector has not gone unaffected. As consumption becomes valorized and corruption goes unchecked, citizens have seen the

system as being unfair to them and have turned to burglary and assault, crimes “unthinkable during Mao’s time” (147).

Section IV’s “Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” presents the clearest example of how China’s government deploys capitalist policy through a rhetoric that rewrites capitalist values as communist virtues. Here the language of communitarianism approximates liberalism so closely that the opening paragraph’s assertion that the state promotes “all people’s equal participation in development” could be Mao’s or Jefferson’s. This affected dialogism echoes much of what appears in other state documents.

For example, in a 8 April 2005 *People’s Daily* piece on Hezhai, a village in south China’s northern Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the state critiques true laissez-faire economics while simultaneously endorsing a “legal organization of self rule” loyal to a “scientific view of development”:

Lax administration in the rural areas in the wake of the fall of the people’s communes in the 1970s resulted in worsened social order in Hezhai, which sits on the juncture of three different counties. Incidents of theft, gambling and illegal logging rose. [. . .] To reverse the trend, representatives of 85 households with Guozuotun, one of 12 settlement centers of Hezhai Village, held a congress in February 1980 and elected a villagers’ committee to exercise management over affairs of the village. (“Self-governance brings prosperity”)

The urge to put foreign publicity work into practice depends on each piece’s effectiveness and an “accelerated media.” As shown here, the *People’s Daily* responds

by typically conflating communist rhetoric with neoliberal on behalf of state interest in the global market. In a write-up on Zhao Qizheng, minister of China's State Council Information Office, the *People's Daily* suggests that good "relations with people" is "beneficial to individual development," while "a country's international image" reflects the "overall national strength of a country" ("Make great efforts to explain the world").

Similarly, in Section IV the Chinese government claims to "[attach] great importance" to the protection of laborers' rights, farmer's "legitimate" rights, students' rights, and women's rights. From 1996 to 2001, 53 million people working in China's state sector lost their jobs. These numbers stand in stark contrast to Mao's pledge of an "iron rice bowl" (*tie fan wan*) of life-long employment (Dutton 48). Mao had guaranteed his military personnel, civil servants, and those working in state run enterprises job security and benefits. Most of these jobs were lost when Deng began his reforms. As Zheng stresses, "Although the government initiated various re-employment programs to cope with the problem, they failed to improve the situation" (*Globalization and State Transformation* 157). Furthermore, the state document declares that a "minimum-wage guarantee system has been established in all areas" and that most standards have been "readjusted" in a "timely and appropriate way" ("China's Progress"). Yet the minimum wage for Chinese workers in the industrial regions is set at a .50 per hour, U.S. dollars, while laborers from outside the regions "earn considerably less after all forced deductions" ("Capitalism With Chinese Characteristics"). These conditions as well as unemployment and managerial corruption have led to a rise of labor movements (Zheng *Globalization and State Transformation* 156). According to the *Proletarskaya Gazheta*, the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) is the only trade union association in



the country—like the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FITUR), the ACFTU is a bourgeois union federation whose head is appointed by the “revisionist party-state apparatus” and whose members include “both exploited and exploiters” (“Capitalism With Chinese Characteristics”). The *Proletarskaya Gazheta* suggests that the ACFTU presents an amenable façade to the WTO by simultaneously acting apathetically toward its workers and as a “watchdog of the interests of capital.” While the CCP does not permit direct challenges to power and policy (China’s leaders have “accorded the highest priority to stability and economic development” and forbid “challenges to the regime [140]) the party does allow NGOs and the new generation to express a commitment to individual rights (Forney 46-47). This reflects the ostensible efforts being made since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre to change China’s reputation as repressive or intolerant of oppositional views. For example, according to the *Peoples’ Daily* the *Workers’ Daily* ran an article that stated the following four labor crises: total labor supply is over demand, an imbalance in inter-regional development, a prominent structural contradiction, and a re-employment issue for laid-off worker in collective run enterprises (“China’s Employment Problem”). Whereas this “negative publicity” would have been anathema in Mao’s day, the state now uses opposing attitudes to respond in ways that will, at the present moment, appease the international community. Perhaps another reason the display of dissatisfaction is permitted is because the state is always producing its own critique of neoliberalism, a common enemy, even though the state incorporates neoliberalism in its reform. In an excerpt from a published dialogue between Wu Shuqing, chairman of the Social Sciences Committee, and Cheng Enfu, vice chairman of China Association of Foreign Economic Doctrine Studies, neoliberalism

is taken to task, criticized as causing the former Soviet Union, Eastern European, and Latin American countries “ten years in retrogression” (“Washington Consensus”). Yet, as suggested above, China’s “guiding theory of the reform,” the “Marxism, Deng Xiaoping Theory” (“Washington Consensus”), clearly shares important features with neoliberalism. How else should one interpret China’s intentions to build a “grass-roots democracy in the countryside” overseen by a “democratic management system based on the ‘Regulations on Villagers’ Self-government?’” (“China’s Progress”). Globalization’s schizophrenia masks these antagonisms. The “world factory,” says Pun, is China’s global labor base that represents a colonizing project that conceals the “hybridization characteristic of the new international division of labor and its very mixed and ‘located’ labor practices” (*Made in China* 78). The “new Chinese transglobal labor force” is realized by a specific history with a particular language (79) so that its participants are already shaped by a particular discourse. The narrative surrounding the mingongs (peasant or temporary workers), for example, and more specifically the dagongmei (working daughter) works to justify exploitative practices. Mainland Chinese workers, according to Pun, are deemed “unfit for capitalist production” by Hong Kong’s business strata:

Together with fiery public discourses, visible in newspaper and magazine articles, the bodies of these migrant workers were inscribed with a blindness and unruliness threatening the order and stability of the city. [. . .] [I]f this flood of migrants could not be properly regulated they would tear down the “achievements” of economic reform. (79)

The media's prejudice has not only seeped deeply into industrial bureaucracy, so that laborers must continually face their manager's distrust and disdain with little hope for fair wages and better working conditions, but into the *laborer*, too. The migrant finds that she must resist the exploitation and alienation of factory surplus labor as well as transcend the negative construction cast upon her by her exploiters.

### **Conclusion: China's Neoliberal Subject**

The spectacle of consumption promotes a ubiquitous neoliberal posturing within China's new bourgeoisie and proletariat, extending from China's major cities such as Shanghai, where "free trade zones" are permitted to run smoothly with little or no state bureaucracy, to rural areas such as Changsha City in Hunan Province. Like her Western counterpart, China's laborer is driven to participate in global capitalist schemes because her few available employment options—factory and bar entertainment work—produce and circulate the urge to purchase. The similarities between China's and the West's neoliberal subject should not be surprising since China, like the United States, uses the same rhetorics to produce fully-functioning consumer-laborers as well as to categorize and correct non-functioning ones. Capitalist rhetorics are internalized to work panoptically so that "good citizens" willingly—enthusiastically—desire both repression and consumption (Deleuze and Guattari 30).

The individual's internalization of such rhetorics cannot be overemphasized. The West's doctrinaire faith in "private property," as the most obvious example, "fixes" subjects into juridical relations to one another and defines their obedience to the law as an acceptance of the rights of private property (Smith 83). Randy Martin has suggested that

one important rhetorical framing employed by the state to oversee the private sector's manipulation of its consumer-laborers is the routinization of risk (107). According to Martin, the routinization of risk is the direct result of late capital's promotion of the business model to an ideal in which to judge all others. Martin's "risk," much like Bill Readings's "excellence," is a trope that obliquely controls global subjects by placing them ideologically in a community of responsible and accountable citizens. Whereas Readings had argued that "excellence" is a signifier with no external referent that figures in education's streamlining and bureaucratizing to ultimately serve big business needs (23)—Martin suggests that a "contentless" risk draws together concerned and proactive citizens by displacing economic responsibility on them rather than on society's inequitable structures (109). As Martin sees it, "Instead of talking about economic exploitation, racial domination, or sexual oppression, the attribution of risk shifted the burdens of these exclusionary social effects to the groups themselves. Poverty and race could then become risk factors for failure" (109).

Yuezhi Zhao's analysis of China's tabloid journalism is particularly telling. Zhao recalls how in many tabloid accounts, "property criminals and prostitutes were explicitly blamed from deviating from the norm: 'the getting-rich-through-hard-work road'" (127). In one instance, Zhao mentions a *Tibetan Youth News* article on a peasant highway robbery gang. The article states:

The collapse of personal values systems is the main cause for the actions of these death row criminals. In their eyes, enrichment policies are not enough. Robbery is a heaven-mandated means to get rich quick. . . . A distorted personal philosophy leads to the violation of laws and the

degradation of morality. However, an evil person one should not be; a devilish action one should not take; and a gangster philosophy one should not have. These robbers' fates offer the best warning for the rest of us.

(127)

Zhao, echoing Martin, correctly points to author's interpellation, his internalizing the ethical position that would shift blame from society (e.g., economics) to individual:

The lack of economic opportunities for the rural poor, the shortage of jobs for migrant workers, their harsh working conditions and meager incomes in the urban areas, and the lack of effective supporting social structures in rural and migrant communities are seldom considered as possible macrostructural reasons for crime. (127)

(And isn't one is reminded here of Slavoj Žižek's critique of Christian Fundamentalism in the U.S.? The fundamentalists complain that there is moral decay, yet they wrongly point to citizens instead of economics when capitalism *necessitates* such decay.)

In a paranoiac, Orwellian way, the individual in such a society becomes a "risk manager of [his] own life" who "must use [his] own judgment in applying advice and information supplied by others" (Dan Borge qtd. in Martin 115). One then finds China's socialist subject, like Professor Xu Yong of Central China Normal University, for the first time saying things like, "As a necessary product of China's rural economic reform, villagers' self rule is of great vitality" ("Self-governance brings prosperity").

Perhaps most interesting here is how risk management works hand-in-hand with China's roll-out neoliberalism and communitarian capitalism. The distribution of state power from center to local depends upon a peripheralization of corporate ideology, where

province heads behave like (and are treated as if they are) “smart” portfolio brokers who oversee consumer-laborers’ self-monitoring and panoptic surveillance. The scope is daunting: risk management represents a naturalization of economics where “the market is treated as an ecology” and risk-taking becomes “part of the trajectory of self-actualization” [104, 111]). Such naturalizing includes the manipulation of perceived time. Martin suggests that the stock market’s price-setting “present,” which claims to understand the “future,” is an ideology that might be found in everyday relations, economic and cultural, anywhere that the “moment” is privileged over the past, and the “rhetoric of the future that is really about the present” (105). “Financialization,” Martin’s term for the thing that enables the routinization of risk, demands that the individual be a risk taker who “lives for the moment” in which “risk management ascends to common sense” (106). When, for example, China does admit to its troubles, like its widening gap in income, “the most serious social problem in China,” the economic structures enabling the gap are reasoned away in neoliberal rhetoric as the result of “[i]rrational income distribution” between the rich and the poor (“Widening income gap”). The rhetoric of risk and the exchange of future for present are evident in state propaganda that legitimates current policy and enables international relations by pointing to “the future.” In the U.S. one sees such presentism in George W. Bush’s 2001 tax cut (Martin 108), while instances in China are found throughout official doctrine and publicity work. As a good example, one might consider the 9 April 2005 *People’s Daily* article “To invest in China means an investment for future.” Here, under the banner “exploration, development and creation,” France and China are depicted as having coming to a profitable “cooperation” that will facilitate France’s investment in China. Yet China is

“*approaching* closer and closer *towards* the requirement of the market economy” because it “enjoys a very strong *competitiveness* in the fields of workforces, raw materials, and services” (emphasis mine). It should be noted that China’s presentism, though understandably urged on by Western influence, has one source in China itself. According to J. A. G. Roberts, China’s nascent pragmatism and neoliberalism of the mid-1970s found rhetorical authentication in China’s first emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi (221-210 BCE), and the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BCE), paragons of progressive rule that bore “an ideology which stressed the present and slighted the past” (Roberts 42).

### CHAPTER III

#### RHETORIC, LITERACY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN POST-MAO CHINA

With one designation, one Chinese character, they are marked as the eternal undesirable. That character is *liu* and it means “to float.” In combination with other characters, *liu* marks out the social lepers of Chinese society.

Michael Dutton, “Street Scenes of Subalternity”

State, citizen, and corporate readings of a multifarious “Chineseness” fundamentally shape the space where East and West clash in post-Mao China. This dialectic represents a citizen’s working-through a crisis of agency and a nation’s negotiation of its role within a global economy. As reflected in the short stories of Xu Xing and the migrant reflections considered below, there is today “a deep and complex sense of ontological dislocation [. . .] experienced by many of China’s ‘lost generation’ who are unable to find their proper place in the ‘normal world’ and who are keenly aware of their own alienation” (Lin 104). Millions have chosen urban industrial work over commercial agrarian and often do so because free-market hegemony in China has contributed to unprecedented consumerism there—manufacturing jobs, exploitative to be sure, promise higher wages that would ostensibly make consumption realizable. The media’s construction of China’s migrant laborers, the “dagongmei” (打工妹) (“migrant



working sister”) and “dagongzai” (打工仔) (“migrant working son”), has resulted in the migrants’ indoctrination and fetishization as pre-modern “country bumpkins” (Sun 111). Sun emphasizes that “whether a *baomu* [maid], a prostitute, or an abducted woman, the rural migrant woman is portrayed as a social vagrant, occupying a liminal space between the ‘civilized’ and the ‘uncivilized,’ the urban and the rural, the public and the private” (117). Such “transgression” as relayed by China’s media “promises both voyeuristic and fetishistic pleasures” (117). Many face the disparaging narrative through commodity consumption and commodified sexual activity. As Tiantian Zheng argues, the migrants’ parodic reworking of their construction ultimately “reinforces and reproduces hegemonic asymmetrical power relations and their marginality” (82).

Yet a number of migrants have responded to these biases in more positive ways, by joining organizations such as the Chinese Working Women Network and recording their experiences in journals. Their accounts of the hopes and horrors promised by the road to urbanity force China’s readers to rethink the construction of “migrant laborer.” Journal entries and oral testimonies of industrial workers, taxi drivers, and bar hostesses who have relocated to the city from the countryside (or have returned home to the countryside) articulate the tensions between state and subject, city and country, and East and West. These tensions in turn reflect a dialectic that yields a viable language of resistance, what Chen Xiaomei in his work on Occidentalism (that is, on how the East constructs the West) calls a “counter discourse” (qtd. in Dirlik 110). Whereas reductive analyses of “Westernization” often depict the other’s submission to ideological oppression, to both the state’s representation of Western ideology (“official Occidentalism”) and to what the West itself brings (e.g., U.S. media that arrive

unadulterated), one should instead see a dialectic of Occidentalism generating a particular “contact zone” that problematizes familiar one-sided accounts of East and West. In the same way, Arif Dirlik has observed that Said’s “Orientalism” risks its own orientalism since Said ignores how the East is always coauthoring the West’s construction of East *and* West—that is, orientalism neglects its contact zone (111).

Given that China’s subaltern literacies operate within an Occidentalism that is to some degree written by the Chinese state, my claim here is twofold. First, with recent economic reform and transnational influence, China’s official Occidentalism turns the West’s capitalist gaze on China’s own subaltern population via an internal Orientalism: state, media, and urban elite orientalize those subjects who cannot participate in China’s new production and consumption schemes. Second, subaltern literacies are potentially a counter discourse that resists such Occidentalism-Orientalism by manifesting ruptures in “discursive knowledges [that] constitute the political consciousness of class-differentiated subjects” (Ong 141). Yongnian Zheng suggests that China’s Occidentalism has given nationalists a construction of “Westernization” to bolster their “search for a new cultural and national identity” (48). Here one discovers authentic moments of *anti-official Occidentalism* that incorporate “the Western Other as a metaphor for political liberation against ideological oppression within a totalitarian society” (Yeh 201). As Xiaoye You has argued, the rupturing could manifest itself on the grand scale, such as the catastrophic Tian’anmen Square demonstration of 1989, or on the small, with open criticism of rhetorical framing like “socialism with Chinese characteristics” (645). In this sense, China’s subalterns could enable global subjects to discern the tragic effects of

transnational capital on an emergent political consciousness as well as recognize the capacity to rewrite the ideological sphere encompassing all.

It is easy to see why one of the greatest obstacles facing China's subalterns is their high rate of illiteracy. W.O. Lee points to research documenting a "direct correlation between education and concern for democracy," and that "people with higher educational levels were much more likely to have an opinion on the nature of the political situation *and* were much more likely to be dissatisfied with the situation" (66 emphasis mine). What is perhaps less obvious is how literacy contributes to globalism's class divide. In her analysis of literacy in the U.S. Deborah Brandt finds that "[w]here in the past, social and economic stratification determined one's chances of sharing or not in a common literacy, today literacy itself is more complexly stratified and contributes to widening gaps in social and economic status" (29). For Brandt, changes in socioeconomics over the last century saw written documents playing a greater role in "struggles for power," where "[r]eading and writing became more tightly associated with the exercise of economic and political rights" (195). Just as literacy could enable citizens to better their lives, those in control of literacy could "exploit and blunt literate skills as part of struggles for advantage" (195). Market reforms in China are no different in this sense and have increased the divide between rural and urban; education has been hit particularly hard: "China now has 220 million illiterate adults" (Xiao 100). According to John Fairbank, "Expenditures on education rose slightly in urban areas, but fell in the rural areas after the dismantling of the communes" (435). Fairbank suggests that the unprecedented collapse in state industries has removed an important revenue source for education while an overall decrease in provincial and local tax revenues has significantly

challenged the party-state's role in socioeconomic amelioration: "[O]f the 22 percent that made up the illiterate population, 70 percent were female, with a larger percentage of female illiterates in the younger generation—73 percent of those in the 15-24 cohort compared with 68 percent over 45 years of age" (434-35). These numbers are certainly disturbing as are the 450,000 teachers who left their jobs in 1992 (Xiao 100). Education itself, when available, is often complicit in the state's stratification of its citizenry.

Brandt has made the case that U.S. schools tend to "devise curriculum and assessment tools that protect society's pecking order and justify its reward system" (170). China's education is similarly class-based and further bolstered by a legendary patriarchy that has in no small part contributed to the decline of female literacy during the post-Mao era. Young women rarely go to school in the countryside, and instead typically marry into their husbands' families. Their lives are relegated to the household for farming and domestic chores. Arranged marriages are not always happy ones. Some migrants have written about abusive husbands who gamble and beat their wives and children. Not surprisingly, many women find a way out through suicide (Jacka 281).

### **Conspicuous Spectatorship**

Is it not natural that proletarians should focus their attack on that unique point at which they approach capital from the position of a buyer, and, consequently, at which it is capital that is forced to court them?

Slavoj Žižek, "The Parallax View"

But what serves as the driving organizational strategy for China's subalterns?

With seemingly better incentives to work harder and work more hours as well as an

overall reduction of state owned enterprises (SOE), the dagongmei and dagongzai are persuaded to leave their rural homes and familial labor for the “opportunity” to work in urban factory assembly lines, typically under abhorrent conditions such as unfair wages/hours and hostile dormitories, where the laboring body is not only alienated but sexualized (Pun 140). Their motivation is familiar: rural subalterns desire their city counterparts’ cultural capital, the opportunity to obtain the fashion and technology that signal “success.” Furthermore, since these consumption habits are “state-recognized” and “state-propagated” migrants might repudiate their “country bumpkin” stereotype by adopting them (Tiantian Zheng 81). Yet it should be emphasized here that the overvaluation of consumption is not the same thing as equal opportunity to purchase. China’s new working class finds itself wondering whether the “Iron Rice Bowl” promise of pensions for life? Migrants certainly participate in China’s “free market,” but do so largely as spectators. One might then answer Louisa Schein’s important question, “How can we make sense of a rich culture of consumerism not commensurable with the exchange practices of acquiring commodities for money?” by suggesting that the 75-percent who don’t actually purchase commodities nevertheless participate in the commodities’ *fetishization*.

The spectatorship—the “window shopping” that Schein and others observe in China’s “modern shopping malls”—works circularly to feed global capitalism’s demand for a consumerist drive and the increase in commodity production itself. Schein elucidates this phenomenon with a brilliant comparison of the “cargo cults” that appeared throughout the Far East during the early part of the twentieth century and the “Chinese commodity envy” that has surfaced with China’s recent economic reforms (293-96).

Briefly, Schein suggests that from the 1850s to the 1950s Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Japan colonized a number of islands throughout the Pacific, including New Guinea, and that these colonialisms had a tremendous impact on native cultures and economies. Natives were at once subordinated to new labor activity as well as introduced to never before seen goods. Although the natives lacked the economic and cultural capital to benefit from these new products, they “regularly referenced wealth in the abstract as well as in the specific objects of use and symbolic value that were absent or in short supply in their societies, except among whites, who were seen as monopolizing goods and wealth with fragrant selfishness” (293).

Collectively, in the form of cults, the natives took part in the commodities’ symbolic valorization—a fetishism that served the natives’ and colonizer’s organizational schemes:

Instead of being enriched by the growth of the cash economy, natives felt impoverished and incredulous that so little of the “cargo” that white flaunted ever trickled down to them. From this indignant longing, cults rose around the quest for “cargo,” defined as that to which indigenous people were entitled but which whites were withholding in morally consequential ways. Typically, a charismatic leader would emerge, distinguished by his visions of magical means by which the desired cargo would be obtained. His followers gave him their loyalty on the basis of his prescribing rituals and social practices that would effect material gains. (294)

Schein's point is not to make the racist reduction that would conflate contemporary Chinese culture and 1920s Pacific island. Rather, Schein shows two very different manifestations of the consumerist drive and commodity fetish—that is, what happens when marketization is first introduced to a culture and when only a few can consume the products of the market. For the cargo cults, the desiring, valorizing “gaze” is one that internalizes “white man culture” in order to serve a sealed off socioeconomics, i.e., the colonization of an island and the contact zone which negotiates the “indigenization” of a European ideal, *as opposed to* the contemporary “Chinese commodity envy” that necessarily taps into—out to—transnational capital and cultures (296).

Like the Pacific island native, the Chinese migrant participates in the spectacle of consumerism though typically not in the purchase. Ultimately, both native and migrant contribute to commodity fetishism as an effort to “efface the differentials of power and wealth that otherwise constitute exclusion” (297). Yet, unlike the island native, the Chinese migrant internalizes *and* externalizes national and international cultures. As Schein puts it, Chinese commodity envy suggests a “Chinese imagining of cosmopolitanism” that would transcend “the spatial constraint of locality” and enter “onto the global stage by means that circumvent geographic mobility” (297). According to Schein, the migrants’ externalizing/internalizing global/local via commodity fetishism could only happen with the recent influx of an *international imaginary* due to China’s “policy changes regarding the dissemination of imported media,” the “availability of media products and programming from abroad” (297).

## Migrant Women's Stories: A Discourse Analysis

We girls who've left the village are poor, ignorant, and have such low self-esteem. We long for the respect of society. But if we don't stand up for ourselves, who will take us seriously?

Mian Xiaohong, "Burdened Youth"

This study presents a discourse analysis of the political and socioeconomic rhetorics represented in three reflections written by Chinese migrant women on their experiences living and laboring in the city. These reflections, translated in English, are taken from Arianne M. Gaetano and Tamara Jacka's *On the Move: Women in Rural-to-Urban Migration in Contemporary China*. They originally appeared in the journal *Rural Women Knowing* as part of a "story-writing competition with the theme 'my life as a migrant worker'" (279). The journal, "published monthly under the auspices of *Chinese Women's News* and the All China Women's Federation," is itself "unusual" since its readership is largely rural women. It cannot be overemphasized how important these organizations are for China's marginalized. *Chinese Women's News* and the All China Women's Federation, not to mention scholars such as Gaetano and Jacka, represent influential and committed "literacy sponsors," Brandt's term for "agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, and model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy—and gain advantage of it in some way" (19). These sponsors provide an all-too important platform for a repressed voice to be heard. As Jacka notes, most of the reflections in her book illustrate an individual's "difficult journey or rite of passage" with only one explicitly endorsing official ideology (228). Yet, if examined closely, all reveal the disjointed, dialogic nature of global selfhood, the



discursive tensions manifesting as binarized global/local, state/subject ontology. China's "dagongmei," like other emergent laboring bodies, are "displaced subjects produced by the hybrid conjugation of state and market machines" (Pun 193).

James Paul Gee's method of discourse analysis as described in *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* informs the study's theoretical framework. At one point in his book, Gee suggests rather succinctly if unintentionally the interrelation between language and human geography, providing what could be an apt metaphor for capital's discursive reach:

Imagine you have a giant map. Each Discourse is represented on the map like a country, but with movable boundaries that you can slide around a bit. You place the map on top of any language, action, or interaction you participate in or want to think about. You move the boundaries of the Discourse areas on the map around in negotiation with others or as your reflections change. (32)

Gee is defining here the role of what he calls "big D" Discourse, the union of "little d" discourse or the localizable, practical "language-in-use" that linguists and sociolinguists study, and the "non-language 'stuff'" that includes material manifestations such clothes, tools, values, and beliefs (7). Viewed from this chapter's perspective, big D "Discourse" provides global capitalism's form: subjects are semiotically tapped into a reflexive or reciprocal relationship with transnational markets, where market rhetorics are identitarian and vice-versa. Not only does language "simultaneously [reflect] and [construct] the situation or context in which it is used" (97), language is what gets individuals recognized "as taking on a certain identity or role" (99).

Echoing Bakhtin, Gee suggests “socially significant identities are mutually constructed in language” (138). Such a self, as William Coles once argued, is “a set of perspectives,” a subject “that can only be seen in relation to something else” (Harris 36). By extension, the text and reader should be seen as engaged in dialogic activity that situates both in open-ended meaning-making against a web of belief systems. This dialogic concept of self and speech has particular resonance for the present study: as suggested above, when the migrant laborer composes her reflections, she has on hand the self-image cast upon her by the state—a multi-nodal subjectivity determined by an official discourse that is itself the state’s attempt to negotiate or work through Orientalist and Occidentalist rhetorics—as well as the image that she would like to present, a self-fashioning that would either transcend or submit to the negative stereotype determined by Orientalism and Occidentalism. The migrant, then, works through an Oriental-Occidental purview, an othering determined in part by a paternalistic China that has long frowned upon the rural subject, as well an imaginary constructed by the West—that is, *how China imagines the West would define its migrant* (a “backwards, country bumpkin” is anathema to U.S. economics as well). Following Gee’s conclusion, one finds that the migrant laborer writes “to get recognized as taking on a certain identity or role, that is to build an identity here-and-now” (100).

Gee’s comparison of the discourse of working class teens to upper middle-class teens resonates with what is found in an analysis of migrant narratives. Gee suggests that working-class teens use language “to fashion their identities in a way that is closely attached to a world of ‘everyday’ social and dialogic interaction”—the Habermasian “lifeworld” (141)—and furthermore “talk about activities in of themselves and without

such a sidelong glance as their implications for the future” (144). Conversely, in the same study Gee found that upper middle-class teens

use language to construct their identities in a way that detaches itself from “everyday” social interaction and orients more toward their personal biographical trajectories through an “achievement space” defined by the (deeply aligned) norms of their family, schools, and powerful institutions in our society. (141)

While Gee’s working-class teens emphasize “social, physical, and dialogic interactions” and articulate a “disalignment” among “family, school, community, adult, and teens in terms of norms, values, and goals,” his upper middle-class sample demonstrate that all these relations serve a personal achievement space that will eventually lead them to “success” (146-47).

Gee reveals these disparate appropriations of discourse through a close look at what he calls “I-statements,” when speakers “refer to themselves in the first-person as ‘I’” (141). According to Gee, I-statements can be divided into five categories of statements: cognitive, affective, state and action, ability and constraint, and achievement. Briefly, cognitive statements are those statements that emphasize thinking and knowing, e.g., “I think,” “I know.” Affective statements emphasize desiring and liking, e.g., “I want.” State and action statements emphasize the speaker’s states and actions, e.g., “I am mature” and “I ate my dinner,” respectively. Ability and constraint statements refer to a speaker having the capacity or responsibility to do something. Achievement statements have to do with achievement and goals, e.g., “I will become an engineer” (141-42). Gee surmises that these class-based discursive orientations not only represent a distinct

construction of “socially situated identities in language” but also “different worlds” (146).

We should recognize that the following reflections were originally written in Chinese and consequently present sociolinguistic barriers that are to some degree unbridgeable. Yet since these subjects, like Gee’s, are in their teens and twenties when they first leave home, their “literal rite of passage” (Gaetano and Jacka 284) necessarily shares some discursive commonality with those represented in Gee’s study. Migrant narratives that describe the experiences of living and laboring in the city expectedly manifest a working-class discourse that is closely attached to the lifeworld—a world that marginalizes if not erases dagongmei as Eastern *and* Western Other—but the reflections also yield an upper middle-class discourse that emphasizes personal trajectory and achievement space. What is significant here is that the discourse that Gee finds particular to upper middle-class teens shares a telling likeness to the discourse emerging as China’s “official” neoliberalism. China’s dagongmei and dagongzai, aiming to transcend their negative stereotypes, often appropriate the state’s amalgamated discourse and fashion themselves as “savvy” neoliberal socialists who wish to participate in China’s new consumptive schemes.

The migrants’ oral and written testimonies could thus be seen as a parodic reworking of China’s new market ideology even as the state continues to ground them in their working-class fates. Factory workers and bar hostesses will at times speak and write like experienced consumers. It is now not uncommon to hear young laborers demand their rights to property and profits as well as emphasize long-term goals. That this strident neoliberalism is permitted in the first place is a testament to China’s political

reforms. While it is difficult to measure the extent of political reform, it is clear that for some analysts China's neoliberalism has resulted in the "emergence of a 'soft authoritarianism'" and an "advance of democratizing processes within the Chinese polity" (Perry and Selden 10). Even as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) "retains *de facto* veto and *de jure* power over the enforcement of laws and electoral results, reform measures have opened new space for expressing local interests and checking arbitrary abuses" (10-11). The "implications of internationalization" now promise greater exposure of China's human rights abuses, environmental problems, and intellectual disenfranchisement (12). But the party-state, too, appropriates market discourse. In contrast to the factory laborer's more vocal neoliberalism, the CCP's is typically veiled, strategic, and self-serving, often used to "legitimize its political power, change its political technologies, and enlarge its bureaucracy" (Pun 190).

This unprecedented blend of neoliberal-socialist and global-local discourse renders the majority of the migrant narratives in Jacka's book complicit with the dominant narrative structure of Mao-era discourse, where the "past is criticized but the present and future are depicted with optimism" (284). The narratology remains true to form precisely because the subaltern voice is always-already mediated by dominant discourse—rather than reveal an "authentic" subaltern voice, the experiences "challenge some aspects [of dominant discourses] and reproduce others" (281). The following analysis will illustrate specifically the ways migrant laborers resist *and* embrace the consumerist, individualist drive and country identity that engulf her.

In "Let Bygones Be Bygones," Cui Jingyu talks about her experiences as a restaurant waitress and the hardships of working continuous hours, from well before

sunrise to late at night. Cui candidly discusses the pressures to perform sexual services that she and other migrants endure, in most cases as a way that owners might continue to attract customers. In the end, Cui is fired from her job with half a month's pay deducted for no reason. "The Law is By My Side" by Huang Zhihua demonstrates the possibility of positive change through direct confrontation. Huang, a factory worker, complains to her boss about the insufferable conditions that she and other migrant workers endure. She brings him a copy of the Labor Law and argues that his treatment is illegal. Whereas Cui is fired for insubordination, Huang receives a promotion and witnesses an improvement in those conditions. Perhaps most important, Huang's account emphasizes that hard work and knowing the law are advantageous to migrant. As Jacka suggests, Huang's potential indictment of capitalist labor relations is undermined "by the message that if you are able to work the system, you can be successful" (283). Zhou Rencong's "Leaving Huaihua Valley—A Sichuan Girl's Own Account of Being a Migrant Worker" is the competition's first-place winner. Zhou tells how women are pressured to marry and why some choose suicide as a way out. For Zhou and other migrants, the move to the city is an equally traumatic alternative that more often than not proves alienating and tragic. Her experiences of hunger and isolation as a new salesperson for a health care product company reveal the empty promise of economic reform.

### ***"Let Bygones Be Bygones"***

Cui Jingyu is seventeen and "full of dreams" when she embarks on a life in the city. The reader never learns the city's name nor from where Cui comes. Cui, in fact, offers little background in her narrative, "Let Bygones Be Bygones," the first migrant

reflection in Jacka's book. Cui's goal is to make her "own mark" in "that bustling place" (286), and the reader is immediately drawn to the workplace.

Cui and "two other northeastern girls, Little Wu and Little Liu," find a job in a "private restaurant" during tourist season, when "business is booming" (286). Her labor is grueling and dehumanizing:

We started busily selling breakfast at five o'clock every morning, by nine o'clock we began preparations for lunch, at two or three in the afternoon we finished tidying up and then it was nearly dinnertimes. In this way, we worked nonstop still ten o'clock at night. Every day we were like machines that were wound up to work. Even when we were exhausted and sore all over, the boss was still unsatisfied and gave us housework to do. Because we were outsider girls, nobody told us what our rights were. Nor would anyone speak up on our behalf. We had to go on working because we had to survive. (286)

If not entirely a Taylorist automaton, Cui is still forced to make tremendous physical and psychological sacrifices for the restaurant. In many ways, Cui becomes the very clock that monitors her existence, a result of the "capitalist mode of construction of temporality" that takes over "peasant time in regulating daily life" (Pun 100).

Cui never reveals how much she earns, but she does say that the restaurant's escorts receive "more than 50 or 60 *yuan*" daily in tips, what is equivalent to 50 cents. The restaurant's move to employ "public relation girls" is described as an effort to "compete for customers" (286). Cui sees escort work as easier, but turns her back on her boss and the opportunity when he urges her to consider its "advantages":

All [the public relations girl] needed to do was dress up like a flower, to accompany rich customers. [. . .] But I really felt sorry for her when I saw her being kneaded like dough by the customers. Yes, everyone needs money. But no amount of money can buy back a lost soul. (286-87)

Cui's friends do "give in," foremost, as Cui reasons, because their boss threatens to withhold their pay—there are no options available to the rural migrants. As Cui puts it, "We were at our wits' end because we couldn't get the money that we had earned with our blood and sweat, but we had nowhere to go to seek redress. Who could help us outsiders to seek justice?" (287).

Finally, Cui is "expelled" when her boss suspects her of "having an 'adverse' effect on the group"; she is the "bad apple" (287). Cui's pay is deducted by half, and again she asks her reader to recognize the hopelessness of her situation: "Who'd be willing to offend a rich and powerful local boss on behalf of a working sister from outside of town?" (287).

Sometime after, Cui learns that the restaurant has been closed and her boss arrested. It is then that she makes a powerful leap in her critique, a subtle rhetorical gesture that extends the anticipated, safer attack on the "bad boss" to the world protecting him:

At long last I heaved a sigh, but I felt sad about Little Wu and Little Liu's misfortune. If it hadn't been for the boss's pressure and blackmail they would never have gone astray. They too were victims! *When they needed justice, there was no one there to hold out a helping hand!* It was lucky that the mills of God grind slowly but they grind exceedingly small, and



that boss who grew fat on the blood of outsider girls was finally finished off. (287, emphasis mine)

Such a claim as “there was no one there” might appear like a cliché to the Western reader. Yet here the claim is significant, especially considering that a large part of the *dagongmei*’s ethos is built around her resignation that there is no access to legislative, political, or police assistance. A close look at Cui’s word choices suggests other attempts to transcend that ethos. When, for example, Cui’s friends Little Wu and Little Liu decide to become escorts for the restaurant, Cui says, “I implored them not to lose their integrity for some money” (287). While the Western reader might have a single definition in mind, Cui’s emphasis on “integrity” could very well signify several referents, including her religious allegiances, if she is religious (evidenced perhaps by her closing comments about “the mills of God”). Or “integrity” could be an appeal to a more ubiquitous Confucianism that embraces personal integrity via commitment to family, community, and sovereign. Yongnian Zheng has argued that Confucianism remains steadfast in an ideological current that has seen the influence of patriotism, nationalism, and Maoism ebb and flow: “Confucianism [. . .] represents the collective experience of the nation formed through China’s long process of adaptation and response to the challenge of its natural and social environments” (73). Confucianism has ensured that “[p]eople’s dependence on mutual relations is clearly the most important thing in China” (Dutton 28). Although there are several Mandarin words for “integrity” one in particular, “zhengzhi” (正直) (“straight and upright”), evokes the Confucian “fazhi” (法治) (“rule of law”) and “renzhi” (人治) (“rule of man”) (Xia 25). Cui’s emphasis on integrity is likely bound to these terms as well as to the common saying “buyi zhicai” (不义之财) which

means wealth gathered through unrighteous means. This popular phrase has its source in Confucian ideology, and all three suggest a reliance on “individual obligation and morality” and behavior “in accordance with propriety” (Xia 25). As Gee points out in his discussion of another marginalized group, American Indians, such a strategy signifies an individual’s efforts to be recognized as part of a larger citizenry:

A “real Indian” is not something one can simply be. Rather, it is something that one becomes or is *in the doing* of it, that is, in the performance. [. . .] It requires the participation of others. One cannot be a “real Indian” unless one appropriately recognizes other “real Indians” and gets recognized by others as a “real Indian” in the practices of doing being-or-becoming-a-“real-Indian.” (24).

Dialogically, Cui has on hand not only the women’s group who will be reading her text and the media who have portrayed migrants as helpless and backward, but also a larger, national-ethical sphere in which she might claim solidarity if not refuge: “I wish with all my heart that other working sisters will not run into similar experiences” (287). China’s “coalescence” is ultimately tied to its national character—a Confucianism that insists on loyalty, hierarchy, and harmony (Zheng 73).

### ***“The Law is By My Side”***

Huang Zhihua is a factory worker in Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, a region specifically planned for commercial development to “to attract foreign investment” (306). Like Cui, Huang omits biographical background and focuses primarily on her work. Unlike, Cui, and as the narrative’s title suggests, Huang finds an ally in the law: I started

as an ordinary worker on the factory production line. Now I'm a skilled worker in management. I owe my good fortune not only to my diligence and effort but, in even greater part, to the law, which time and again has set me on the right" (287). Huang's narrative reveals what might be seen as an effected "official" voice: the privileging of both loyalty and hard work. Yet Huang also enables the critical, reflective voice to cut through the discourse of power.

Following her declaration that the law has helped her, Huang informs her reader that Shenzhen is "a city full of temptation," where stories abound about "the 'big money' people who throw away cash like dirt" (288). Huang emphasizes a work ethic that would mirror her readers' yet at the same time defamiliarize that ethic by transcending class discourse:

I'd think about the wages I earned with my sweat and toil each month and how there was hardly anything left after my living expenses, and I'd wonder when I would ever be able to *realize my own dreams*. The *feeling of inequity* kept welling up involuntarily and pushed me to think every minute about *how to make more money*. (288, emphasis mine)

With Gee's analysis of class discourse in mind, one might reason that Huang's voicing of a sincere concern about her dreams coming true is the individualistic, "achievement space" characteristic of upper-middle class (or neoliberal) discourse. This posturing could be seen as (1) an effort to deliberately exploit the situation in order to point out its faults—Huang recognizes the "privileged" voice and consciously adopts it to better make her case about workplace inequity; (2) Huang not seeing herself as a neoliberal subject transcending class boundaries, working toward that goal; or (3) both: she imagines

herself shedding dagongmei status through the conscious manipulation of neoliberal discourse and aims to improve her working conditions. Yet regardless of the posturing, Huang's discourse would doubtless influence most of her readers—from those judging the writing contest to the various media sources in which this literacy disseminates. Many would take seriously Huang's concerns since she constructs herself as a principled, neoliberal-socialist subject. Her wages are "earned" through "sweat and toil," echoing her readers' work ethic (as defined earlier, an ethic borne from Confucianism, Maoism, and neoliberalism) and gaining their acceptance (that is, for the author to emerge heroic, her *commitment* to work must still be demonstrated *even if* she is exploited—arguably, indicative of a deep-rooted work ethic sourced in imperialist China). But at the same time Huang makes clear that her hard work brings little material gain, the necessary "suturing of consumption practices to the hopes of social mobility" (Schein 292), and she does so specifically by adopting an upper-middle class voicing that marks individualism and achievement. Since Huang has not really (if she ever could) transcended her migrant identity, she must manipulate the alien discourse of power. This manipulation, even if initially unreflective (as with 2 above), serves reflexively to bring Huang to class-consciousness and to a better understanding of workplace inequity. The difficulty of such reflexivity is that the very discursive tools available to Huang and other migrant laborers are derived from power itself. As Pierre Bourdieu explains,

Dominated individuals make common cause with discourse and consciousness, indeed with science, since they cannot constitute themselves as a separate group, mobilize themselves or mobilize their potential power unless they question the categories of perception of the

social order which, being the product of that order, inclined them to recognize that order and thus submit to it. (131)

If change is to begin to occur, it must come through the dialectic of a migrant identity utilizing dominant discourse. In Huang's case, the utilization is enabled through literacy.

When Huang learns that young girls are being "duped" into prostitution, she comes to "appreciate the dangers of not understanding the law" (288). She goes to a bookstore and purchases a copy of *Reader on the Basic Legal Knowledge for Workers and Staff*. When she finds the time, Huang reads the book and explains "to the other girls how to learn, apply, and abide by the law" (288). The narrative's climax comes when Huang illustrates for her readers how a literacy of law can ameliorate working conditions as well as set her on the road to success.

While working in a "joint venture factory," Huang stands up to her boss, who has "demanded overtime [. . .] every day":

[T]he workshops were overcrowded with machines and equipment and the heat was like being inside a steamer basket. Some working sisters got so tired that they truly couldn't bear it and didn't want to do overtime. After learning this, the boss threatened to send them packing. Looking at the overworked, exhausted faces of these working sisters, I felt some responsibility to seek redress. I prepared to be sacked by the boss. The next day I took a copy of the *Labor Law of the People's Republic of China* and went to the boss's office. I showed him the relevant clauses, saying, "The workers' overtime has far exceeded the limit set by the Labor Law

and, furthermore, you did not pay wages in accordance with the law.”

(288)

Where Cui had been a silent “victim,” fired after her boss learned she had warned her friends about escort work, Huang confronts her boss through the discourse of the law and survives: “I said to him calmly, ‘[Y]ou cannot gamble with workers’ health just to speed up production. Moreover, what you are doing is illegal. If the workers go to the Labor Department to complain, you will land yourself in serious trouble’” (288).

Huang’s literacy proves triumphant. Her boss considers her suggestions to “lower the temperature,” “invest in better food,” and “pay overtime according to the Labor Law” (289). But it is perhaps Huang’s final comment to him that is most telling. Temporarily leaving aside her newfound legal discourse, Huang speaks the language of profit, signaling to her readers a successful transformation from “bumpkin” to “neoliberal”:

“If the workers’ enthusiasm is aroused, the efficiency will most definitely double, and then you won’t have to worry about not fulfilling the order, will you?”

Realizing that what I said was reasonable, the boss clapped his hands and said, “Let’s do it your way” (289)

That the boss gives in to Huang’s “way” is equally important here since Huang’s strategy, much like Cui’s reflection, puts forth a version of neoliberal individualism, heroism on behalf of the group, and seeks neither far-reaching change (that is, a change in the larger economics that fosters workplace inequity) nor collective action, as both are anathema to the post-Mao bourgeoisie. In fact, Huang’s individualism serves *her* well. She is promoted to assistant to the deputy manager, a life-lesson for all migrant women:

“I hope that I can pass on to all the migrant women workers what I have learned from my personal experience: let the law be your protection on your journey in life!” (289). One should still recognize that Huang’s neoliberal discourse is not exactly the same as the West’s. She is not only caught between the disparaging construction of “migrant” and her dreams of a better life, but between her country’s political and economic motives. Huang’s neoliberal discourse manifests these tensions: she is implicitly in sync with state’s socialist mandate of nation first—a drive toward modernization by way of “Chineseness”—and China’s emergent yet seemingly ubiquitous overvaluation of production and consumption. Hence, migrant reflections can sustain desires for liberation and agency from a workerist point of view and in a workerist tradition and grammar, and simultaneously, contradictorily also promote bourgeois individualism.

***“Leaving Huaihua Valley—A Sichuan Girl’s Own Account of Being a Migrant Worker”***

Zhou Rencong’s “Leaving Huaihu Valley—A Sichuan Girl’s Own Account of Being a Migrant Worker” is the winning entry in the *Rural Women Knowing All* writing contest. Zhou is among the few entrants to include in her narrative some background information. She is from Huaihua Valley, Fushun County, Sichuan Province. Zhou describes Huaihua as a “two-hour walk on a tractor path” away from the lush hill of Fushun. Huaihua has “no real forest or running streams,” but instead “children chasing tractors, breaking the endless monotony” (297-98). For Zhou, who early on in her narrative sets herself apart from the other young women, the town is uninspiring and often tragic:

There had been enough tragedy among the women around me, including the suicide of Auntie Yinxing, who cared for me when I was young. I had always considered myself no ordinary person. I was a girl with some ideas and some know-how, already rewarded for years of struggle with the fortune of publishing a collection of short stories called *Bamboo Walls*. In our county, which has a population of over a million, I became the only female member of the provincial writers' association. (298)

Zhou's literacy is a self-declared talent that manifests itself as an individualism that gives Zhou the incentive to leave behind her mundane existence. She has published a collection of short stories called *Bamboo Walls* and has gained membership to an exclusive literary group. She uses this construction of confidence to turn her back on her mother's demands that she fulfill the provincial—fated—narrative that necessitates that a woman marries and rears children. Zhou "runs away" at twenty-four, to the "strange, big city" Chengdu.

Once in Chengdu, Zhou meets her old friend Xixi. Before that moment Zhou is desperate: "If I couldn't get in touch with Xixi, where could I go?" (299). Like many migrants new to the city, "Survival comes first." Zhou's diet consists primarily of noodles and steamed buns. Her "top priority" is "to find a job or, more precisely, an income as quickly as possible" (299).

Zhou takes a job at a health care product company that requires her to bicycle some distance each day from the Bali district in Shuinianhe. Her life is trying to say the least: in addition to her long commute, Zhou is "forced" to eat a bowl of hot, sour noodles every day, "because that was cheapest" (300). At one point, after eating



homemade steamed buns purchased from peasants, she gets violently ill. Zhou is dizzy, vomiting, and doubled over in pain. She eventually goes to a doctor who immediately upon seeing her asks Zhou when the last time she has menstruated: “Suddenly I understood what she was implying. I felt so wronged and angry that I couldn’t utter a word” (300).

After the visit, Zhou goes an entire day without eating—in fact, her greatest concern is always where her next meal will come from:

The desire to survive made me want to eat anything I could, but I only had one *yuan* left, and if I spent it all my supplies would have run out. My lips parched, I couldn’t help looking at the enticing food shops and eateries lining the streets. They looked better than heaven in my eyes. My hunger got greater and greater, but I just had to turn my head and walk away.

(300)

Zhou’s comments above on being so hungry yet not having the money to purchase the food that is right in front of her is certainly emblematic of the migrants’ non-participatory consumerism described earlier. The desire is there—here, as hunger, the drive is natural enough, to get food in order to survive, whereas the drive to purchase other commodities is at least in good part a manufactured one. In both scenarios, however, the migrant finds herself on the perimeter of the spectacle, but not reaping from it; Zhou, like many others, contributes to the good’s valorization, which in turn profits China’s new capitalists, but rarely in its consumption.

Zhou continually emphasizes the importance of literacy and education. Whether it’s her ability to seek out job announcements (“It was the Chengdu newspapers that

finally got me on the right track” [301]) or learn technological skills, Zhou insists that without literacy a migrant cannot survive. So, for example, after being accepted to Electronics University and taking a computer training class, Zhou says, “I acquired another practical skill and more confidence in the belief that you make your own life” (302). Zhou’s rhetoric of “practical skill” and “confidence” suggests an aspect of the achievement space written by China’s neoliberal socialism.

Zhou’s narrative ends happily: she finds employment as chief editor of the *Sanwang Group News*, a company newsletter for the Sanwang Group in Chengdu, a “famous enterprise” that is among “the top five hundred private companies in the country” (302). What is most significant about her description of her job is that she is simultaneously teaching her reader the amalgam of “capitalism with Chinese characteristics,” what might be seen as residue of Confucianism, Maoist socialism, and neoliberal market—something all subjects participating in the new economy will have to know:

I select and write articles and I also manage the literary supplement, which I love dearly. I like the *vitality and the rather formal management*. The company deals mainly with people from the countryside and that makes me, a country woman, happy to work as hard as I can. The wages are not bad; I could buy more than a hundred steamed buns per day, or one or two dozen bowls of hot, sour noodle soup. *Some acquaintances thought I got this job by pulling strings. In reality this wasn’t so.* I remember standing in a crowd filling in forms, handing in my curriculum vitae, already numb from looking for jobs for so long. The person in charge of recruitment for

the Sanwang Group carefully read my papers and said right away, “Come and register for work tomorrow.” [. . .] [T]he person in charge told me that he thought highly of my “experience.” Of course, he also thought highly of my membership card and my “big book,” which had been disregarded by all those previous employers. (303, emphasis mine)

Arguably, one finds here the unconscious juxtaposition of China’s “official” or “roll-out” neoliberalism against the Western variety by way of Zhou’s Occidentalism. In other words, that Zhou prefers “formal management” to unbridled professionalism could be seen to mirror China’s hands-on relationship to its free market *as well as* how China views the West’s neoliberalism. Further, that Zhou gets her job without “pulling strings” is tribute to an older Confucian hierarchical meritocracy, where “the person in charge,” here Zhou’s superior, recognizes Zhou’s “experience” and literary accomplishments and *bestows upon* Zhou her new position.

Yet the narrative’s hero is neither Zhou nor her book but rather literacy itself. For it is the ability to read and write that enables migrant laborers such as Zhou to devote their “heart and soul to getting to know unfamiliar things about the economy and society, and about news and voicing opinions on politics and the like” (304). As Zhou herself emphasizes, “*These changes will probably make me a new person*” (304, emphasis mine).

Zhou’s celebration of literacy reflects a moralism worth noting: ostensibly one can better oneself via reading and writing primarily because reading and writing are a *way into* the new world order—into the complicated, exclusionary transformations localized in China, regionalized in Chengdu, and personified by the “successful migrant” myth. The majority of migrants who remain excluded, such as Zhou’s friend Xixi, an

“unremarkable girl” who early on saves Zhou from destitution but then later “shocks” her with her confession that she is an escort (303), never achieve the kind of “civility” that late capital demands if one is to enjoy a life a little less exploited.

### **Conclusion: Illiberal Literacies**

Brandt ends her important book on literacy in America by noting literacy’s role in empowering and disempowering various populations within an emergent democracy. She suggests that a “documentary society,” a literate society where “founding fathers” valorized reading and writing’s capacity to unite and organize the demos (e.g., “Thomas Jefferson’s famous preference for newspapers over government as the basis of a republic” [205]), had “allowed some people to amplify their right over the rights of others”:

Those who could write (or hire writers) potentially had more ways to activate and exercise free speech. Just as economic change introduced instability into the potential worth and reach of literacy, literacy introduced instability into the potential worth and reach of basic rights. [. . .] Although rising literacy standards and new communication technologies potentially can expand the civil rights of all citizens, they just as easily can (and do) damage them. (206)

Like Brandt’s analysis of literacy in the U.S., this chapter has tried to demonstrate that literacy both enables and appropriates subversive discourse. China’s official discourse disseminates a version of Western neoliberalism and democracy through various political media in an effort to placate international trade organizations, and often these rhetorics find an unintentional target. China’s migrants absorb and negotiate, if not

outright resist, the pejorative construction cast upon them. This construction—the backwards, “country bumpkin”—signifies not only the historical disenfranchisement of China’s rural citizenry but also the more recent dialogic, Occidental devaluing of *all* non-participatory, illiterate global subjects (that is, coextensive with China’s internal Orientalism). China’s migrant laborers are beginning to find viable means of collectivity through organizations and literacy sponsors such as Pun’s Chinese Working Women Network and the All China Women’s Federation mentioned above. Their battle, of course, is not only with the hostile, alienating work conditions brought on by China’s globalism, but with the ubiquitous consumer culture that now reaches from China’s cityscapes to its rural provinces.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUBALTERNITY AND INSURGENCY IN THE BORDERLANDS

Politically and socially, we had never had the chance to be ourselves, as individuals or even as working-class people; we had not been able to base our thinking on what we needed. We were trying to make a leap, but it was our first leap, and we didn't know how.

Han Dongfang, Director of China Labour Bulletin

Herein lies China's current political and social dilemma—the confrontation between an emerging “rights conscious peasantry” and hungry or entrepreneurial bureaucrats.

David Zweig, The “Externalities of Development”

I suggested in the last chapter that migrant laborers appropriate what could be seen as neoliberal and anti-official Occidental discourse in an attempt to cast off the media's and government's negative construction of “migrant” (*dagongmei* and *dagongzai*) as a “country bumpkin”; that is, migrants emphasize life trajectories and career goals rather than the “here and now,” a distinct way of talking about oneself that Gee suggests is indicative of England's leisure class. This chapter extends that discussion with a look at worker narratives through LuMing Mao's concept of rhetorical borderlands (CCC 56.3) as well as general economic theory as it applies to China's reforms. According to LuMing Mao, rhetorical borderlands occur “wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different classes touch, where the space

between individuals shrinks with intimacy” (Gloria Anzaldúa qtd. in LuMing Mao 431). “Rhetorical borderlands” might be seen as the discursive component of Mary Louise Pratt’s “contact zones,” defined by Pratt as “the social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in high asymmetrical relations of power” (qtd. in LuMing Mao 432). The key difference between the two, perhaps, is that Pratt emphasizes a unidirectional transmission from “dominant or metropolitan culture” to marginal or colonized, and LuMing Mao, echoing Dirlik, a multidirectional interweaving of all involved. For LuMing Mao, Chinese American rhetoric “selects and invents from *both* Chinese rhetorical tradition *and* European American rhetorical tradition” (432-33).

While LuMing Mao’s subject matter is the Chinese American and mine China’s Chinese, we share the view that language is dynamic and open-ended, always in transition and *always producing an excess* (431). This excess is particularly important here since one discovers the very source of divergent thinking—not only because of language’s indeterminacy but also because there is an “excess of meaning yet to be processed, yet to be fully grasped. It is this excess of meaning [. . .] that further aggravates this sense of ambiguity and indeterminacy” (431). Keeping with LuMing Mao’s theorizing I would like to suggest that China’s subaltern discourse manifests radicalism *dialectically* at the border zone. To fully recognize the clash in a rhetorical borderland, I feel it is helpful to bracket individual discourses rather than seek their totality or weaving. This idea of examining sustained contrary forces in a dialectical field comes from Kojin Karatani’s attempt to resolve the political and philosophical claims to resistance to capital (“Parallax View” Žižek 121). Karatani’s purpose is to find common ground between economic reductionism and a larger socio-political structuralism, and

while I am not entirely convinced with his conclusion, I believe his understanding of Kantian antinomy is particularly useful here. Briefly, Karatani suggests that “the point of radical critique” begins in the “irreducible gap” or “parallax dimension” between opposing positions (Kant’s “antinomy”). Rather than see things from a particular fixed viewpoint—one’s own or another’s—one should “face the reality that is exposed through difference” (121-22). This space of difference between bracketed opposites resembles Hegel’s negative, where positives clash, yet for Kant and Karatani the opposites are irreducible (synthesis denied) and obfuscatory if perceived in sum. As Žižek concludes, those who emphasize the socio-political degrade the “field of economy”; “if one tries to keep all these in view simultaneously, one ends up seeing nothing—their contours disappear” (129). One *should* see the trees for the forest. What this theoretical aside means for a rhetorical analysis of worker narratives is that neoliberalism, Maoism, and China’s Neo-Nationalism must be recognized as separate rhetorical entities that shape interpersonal relations and selfhood. China’s global capitalism brings Western rhetorics. One could therefore examine LuMing’s Chinese-European American rhetorical clash in China as well, particularly by examining the space where China’s subjects negotiate—pick and choose—Eastern and Western ideologies, discourses. It is this space where the rhetorics are fixed yet, in a Kierkegaardian sense, new subjectivities are born. The excess has the potential to reflexively dispose author and audience for collective resistance. In other words, subaltern radicalism begins in the borderland’s excesses, through the clash of rhetorics, and disseminates in the public sphere via the written page.

As this project has suggested, Chinese worker narratives are subaltern texts infused with Confucianism (political morality via devotion to family, state, and



patriarchy), Maoism (classlessness and justice via revolution of the rural proletariat), and neoliberalism (individualism via personal rights and ownership). Each narrative struggles for legitimacy as an authentic discourse through its negotiation of those rhetorics. For LuMing Mao, Chinese American rhetorics represent a space where cultures clash (I prefer here ideologies). But what exactly is “clashing” in LuMing Mao’s scenario? LuMing Mao suggests the rhetorical borderland that comes of Chinese American rhetoric manifests two versions of “face,” Chinese and European American. LuMing Mao defines face as “a *public-self* image that people across discourse and culture want to claim for themselves in face-to-face communication” (434). LuMing Mao’s definition of face resonates with Erving Goffman’s. Goffman had made the term famous in the West with his version, defined as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (330). By “line” Goffman means a “pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself” (330). Because face comprises “self delineated [. . .] social attributes” it is at once individuated and shared (330). Returning to the parallax discussion above, within the *gap* between faces or appearances and actors exists the opportunity to challenge and transcend status quo. In this sense, a close look at face *rhetorically* reveals the political, cultural, and ideological aspects of an individual’s posturing, even if the face-posture is not always intentional.

Another way to see “face” is as the performative aspect of the discursive strands discussed in the previous chapter. Whereas migrant worker literacy manifests Occidental privileging of consumption and competition as well as resistance to that privileging, the

deliberate posturing of face is discourse physicalized. That is, the dialectic of neoliberalism, Confucianism, and Maoism appears in bodily form.

Most important in terms of the present discussion on transcending negative constructions (e.g., “country bumpkin”) is Goffman’s contention that a person “maintains” face when his line is “internally consistent” with the “judgments and evidence conveyed by other participants” (331). Conversely, an individual is in the “wrong face” when his line is not consistent with his “social worth” as seen by others (331). The Chinese laborer’s challenge, then, is to “maintain face” when he clearly adopts an “alien” line—an utterance or posturing that would be perceived by others as internally inconsistent with the speaker. Goffman provides one answer to this dilemma when suggests that often face is given to the individual. Goffman looks to the Chinese usage “to give face” or “to arrange for another to take a better line that he might otherwise have been able to take, the other thereby gets face given to him” (332). I would suggest that face is given, rhetorically, through the clash of said discourses; the laborer *finds* his face through this clash. Goffman has in mind specific occasions or moments where/when the line manifests itself, and here we consider the written and oral testimonies represented here and their consumption (when the reflections are viewed and/or heard).

For LuMing Mao, Chinese face is quite different from European American. Chinese face is a “public image that the self likes to claim or enhance from others in a communicative event” (436). According to LuMing Mao, both Chinese face and European American face are comprised of two components. Chinese face includes “lian” (面子) or society’s respect for an individual’s moral character and “mianzi” (臉子) or

social perceptions of a person's prestige. European American face can be either "positive face" or "negative face." European American positive face emphasizes a "desire that one's wants be appreciated and approved." European American negative face, on the other hand, is "the basic claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (435). Clearly, one can see the difference between Chinese face and European American: whereas Chinese face proposes "interconnectedness between the self and the public" and emphasizes outward-to-inward influence, European American face "focuses on the self and on the ideology of the individual" (438). So, as LuMing Mao puts it, the question becomes, what happens when these two faces meet? According to LuMing Mao, the "articulations" of such disparate faces aim to "negotiate [. . .] differences, giving voice to individual face-experiences on their own historical and ideological terms" (438-39). This kind of rhetorical exchange is a communication that has the potential to resist hegemony, primarily because

the emphasis is not on adjudication, assimilation, or dissolution, but on coexistence punctured by discursive tensions, asymmetrical relationships, and semantic vagueness, such articulations promote, and in fact become part of, what Ang calls "togetherness-in-difference"—"in which borders and ethnic boundaries are blurred and where processes of hybridization are rife inevitably because groups of different backgrounds, ethnic, and otherwise, cannot help but enter into relations with each other." Out of this interaction emerges a new sense of identity that is both relational and expansive. (439)

Hence, the dialectics of Western and Eastern face, as well as a larger posturing that includes directness (European American) and indirectness (Chinese)—the latter, says LuMing Mao, is the Chinese capacity to communicate through “subtle, indirect strategies, through innuendos and allusions” (444)—bear neither passive coexistence nor homogeneity in the U.S. Rather, both faces at their “border zone” produce rhetorics that “coalesce, yielding multiple acts of signification ambiguity, and contradiction” (431). These spaces or “rhetorical borderlands,” in turn, give way to new “identities that are implicated in the old relationships and indicative of the new ones” (431). The new identities, resultant of “discursive tensions” and “asymmetrical relationships,” create the very hybrids and heterogeneous dialogues posited by Bhabha and Appadurai (see Chapter 1). Such heterogeneity carries transformative potentialities. One finds in China today a contact zone of complex “Chineseness.” This space includes laborers and officials grappling with Orientalism and Occidentalism—how the Chinese media, state, and citizen absorb and refashion a Western perspective of East as well as produce an Eastern construction of the West.

### **Reform or Inequality?**

Although the emphasis here is on rhetoric, discourse, and textuality it is important to recognize that the heterogeneous nature of China’s rhetorical borderlands is generated by China’s global capitalism—transnational markets necessarily bring cultural diversity if not cultural imperialism. It is therefore worth noting at least one economic analysis explicating China’s capitalism in order to better grasp the rhetorical situation in which the speakers below find themselves.

Economists John Knight and Lina Song present a revealing study challenging the Kuznets hypothesis, an influential theory that the two economists claim has shaped studies on income distribution in poor countries. Briefly, the Kuznets hypothesis suggests that as “an economy develops, income inequality initially increases but eventually peaks and thereafter declines” (85). More specifically, early in economic development

the relative expansion of the small, high-income sector raises the inequality index. [ . . . ] [T]here may be greater inequality in the high-income than in the low-income sector. Eventually the further relative expansion of the high-income group lowers the inequality index, and intersectoral transfer depresses the sectoral gap that contributes to inequality. Thus beyond a certain point, the equalizing forces may outweigh the disequalizing forces, and inequality declines. (85)

The Kuznets seeming “trickle down” effect (i.e., “the expansion of high-income group lowers the inequality index”) is challenged by Knight and Song’s look at 1988 and 1995 national surveys of household incomes. According to Knight and Song, the “inequality of household income per capita increased sharply in both rural and urban China over the seven-year period from 1988-1995” (177). Andrew Glyn has likewise argued that although China’s increase in “real incomes” has contributed to a “reduction in the inequality of the distribution of income on a world scale,” there are nonetheless “major increases in inequality *within* China” (19). For Ching Kwan Lee, “Inequalities across the regions, ownership sectors, industries and occupations are concealed behind figures of aggregate growth and prosperity” (44). As Lee surmises: “Veteran permanent workers

and retirees find their employment security, welfare benefits and workplace status vanishing” (44). Knight and Song suggest that growth in inequality is due to “an increased importance of wage income and individual business income in total rural income. The return to labor from these sources were higher than the returns from other sources, and they accrued largely to high-income households” (117-18). They claim that males with greater education and Han nationality benefited most from the growth of rural inequality (118). Finally, the two contend that in the rural regions “locality—where a household lives and, thus, in China, where it originated—is very important to the process of income polarization” (118).

Much like what had happened in China’s countryside, Knight and Song found an increase in inequality of urban income per capita in urban areas. They looked at economic reform across ten provinces and determined “greater labor market discrimination and segmentation, involving gender, ownership, and province. Overall, labor earning became much more unequally distributed [. . .] with the earnings of low-paid workers actually rising very little in real terms” (118).

Admittedly, this synopsis does not cover Knight and Song’s entire strategy, but their findings as outlined above support laborers’ claims as well as much of what this project proposes: the official rhetorics supporting China’s localism, ageism, and gender bias contribute to economic disparity. Their study’s final summation of China’s growing inequality is particularly telling, and is included here in brief:

[The Chinese government] eschewed egalitarianism in favor of allowing some areas and some people to prosper, with the expectation that their prosperity would assist others and be spread: “Prosperity to some, to most,

then to all.” Indeed, the government promoted inequality in various ways, for instance by giving special privileges to coastal cities and Special Economic Zones. Two decades after the economic reforms began, there is now a good case for reconsidering priorities. (120-21)

Knight and Song conclude that their work could contribute to China’s “policy making” since it points to “trends in inequality and the nature of trade-offs between efficiency and equity objectives” (121). Just as telling are the rhetorics represented in the three testimonies analyzed below. As Michael Dutton stresses, “The depth of change cannot be appreciated by the simple statement of economic facts” (4). One should consider, then, how economic inequality is reasoned through Chinese neoliberalism and socialism *vis-à-vis* Chinese-European American face.

### **Resistance at the Border: A Rhetorical Analysis of Worker Reflections**

The following rhetorical analysis examines Chinese worker reflections on economic and political reform in China. The narratives have been translated in English and appear originally in Sang Ye’s *China Candid* and Michael Dutton’s *Streetlife China*. It should be noted that the responses featured in Sang’s book are listed anonymously. Like LuMing Mao’s analysis of Chinese American rhetoric, Geremie Barmé writes in his introduction to *China Candid* that worker testimonies are neither linear nor conform to any one politics. According to Barmé, each narrative “confronts and challenges many of the dominant views of China” while speaking “to the past from the perspective of the present” (xv-xvi). Dutton contends that China’s subalterns, confronted with Neoliberalism, Confucianism, and Western neoliberalism, represent the real heterogeneity

suggested by the “subaltern.” The “people’s voice” is complex and unstable yet, like all subaltern discourse, has produced “‘knowledge effects’ that have complicated the unity of the historical narrative by producing and inserting ‘murmurs’ of other ways of writing and other historical objects” (Dutton 3). According to Dutton,

In the context of Chinese history writing official Party class discourse colonizes the space available for a subaltern history. The “effect” of the reinsertion of the term subaltern, which includes its propensity to heterology, leads to a non-linear historical account which, in turn, offers a dynamic rendition of classes that draw breath from the mercurial nature of China as it undergoes economic reform. (3)

Barmé’s and Dutton’s analyses resonate with LuMing Mao’s in that the latter, too, emphasizes emergent, conflicting discourses continually seeking legitimacy. For LuMing Mao, Dutton’s “murmurs” could be the punctuated subtext manifesting as “discursive tensions, asymmetrical relationships, and semantic vagueness.” I wish to complicate LuMing Mao’s “Chinese vs. European American” borderland scenario by ascribing a specific ideological component to these rhetorics, the aforementioned weaving of neoliberal, Maoist, and Confucian discourses as well as urban-cosmopolitan and rural-provincial posturing. With LuMing Mao’s analysis of Chinese and European American face in mind, I take seriously Barmé’s contention that the narratives in *China Candid* are “polished and performed” and “represent the efforts of individuals to make sense of their lives” (xvi). While these “performances” mirror and validate for speaker and audience the outer-to-inner *communal* “lian” (面子) and “mianzi” (臉子) they also resist and rework dominant or official discourse (the ideology in “lian” and “mianzi”).



The dialectical Chinese-European American face (as it occurs in China) potentially exceeds Althusserian interpellation and, by extension, a Socratic hegemony of reason (where the urge to be rational citizens is a top-down directive). The import of this excess might be better grasped as the obverse of Jean-Luc Nancy's account of *logos* and *mimesis* in Athenian theater: "The Athenian theater appears to us as the conjunction of *logos* and *mimesis*, but when we see it in this way, we systemically efface the moment of *mimesis* in favor of the moment of *logos*" (71). That is, where Athenian spectator believes what is dramatized to be the thing itself—he loses himself *in* the performance—the *resolution* or *synthesis* of Chinese-European American face may well forbid the *spectacle of face* to be naturalized: the discursive rupture breaks the voluntary ethical ["lian"] and honorific ["mianzi"] embrace of the normative.

***"The Union Rep: A Worker against the Party"***

"'Stability and unity' means keeping a lid on everything. No one can make waves. That's the real principle behind politics in China today."

Anonymous Factory Worker

In "The Union Rep: A Worker against the Party," the unnamed speaker is an "old worker" who had been moved from Beijing to Xichang. According to Sang, the workers in "Xichang" have a reputation for being "tight-lipped," so it was no small achievement to get this particular respondent to participate in the interview. In fact, the speaker immediately professes his reluctance, citing Deng's Four Cardinal Principles: "[t]he nation was enjoined to uphold the socialist path, uphold the people's democratic dictatorship, uphold the leadership of the Communist Party, and uphold Marxism-

Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought” (Sang 59). Yet it is clear from the beginning that like most of his generation, the speaker is loyal to Mao’s socialism rather than Deng’s pragmatism, more so perhaps because he is his union’s chair for a decade (61). Only with the People’s Republic, he says, “did you begin to see decent, educated workers who’d gone to school and weren’t just apprentices. I was one of them. I went to a technical school” (61). Hence, his reflection begins in the past, with commentary on China’s collectivization and industrialization that began in the 1950s:

Ordinary folks farmed the land for a living, and they had to trade their crops for foreign fuel. Even the rickshaws were foreign-made. What mines and railroads there were had only a few workers—and they were just muscle, breaking their backs for a living. There were hardly any real skilled workers. The machinery was all foreign made, so that workers could only try their luck when it needed repairing. Pretty much all of them did apprenticeships, learning under a master for three and a quarter years. They ended up with a license that was useless if you got injured, fell sick, or decided to quit. That’s how you learnt your trade, hand to mouth. (60-61)

Represented here is the Maoism that prefigured, sustained, and ultimately doomed China’s Great Leap Forward, the period of industrialization between 1958 and 1962. Mao Zedong’s aggressive attempt to modernize his nation coincided with a string of natural disasters including floods and droughts. These disasters along with a forced collectivization in the name of steel production brought on unprecedented famine and the

loss of 30 million lives. This catastrophe is generally regarded as the worst in world history.

In the excerpt directly above, the speaker refers to rural workers as “ordinary folks,” a subjectivity that resonates with Mao Zedong’s valorization of the rural subject in light of how the speaker perceives China’s new cosmopolitan urbanite. The speaker emphasizes “lian” (面子)—society’s respect for an individual’s moral character—yet arguably the society in which he dialogically has on hand is Mao Zedong’s, that is, an older China. The speaker continually makes clear divisions between a new and old China and a new and old Chinese subject. When for example he describes Mao’s early years and Stalin’s profound influence on the Chinese—“We had to learn everything from the Soviets then, copying our Big Brother and even picking up his way of saying things”—the speaker remonstrates angrily through nationalism, a deep, insular Chinese history: “Those damned Russian words were everywhere, but within a year or two we’d forgotten them all. China’s got an ancient culture of its own” (61). But the speaker does not endorse any China, and the interview soon becomes an attack on the new:

It’s not that I oppose reform. But I can’t figure out just what this reform adds up to. Do you call it reform? Don’t they say that the test of reform is in the results? Well, one of the outcomes has been to hypnotize workers with money. Their lives are getting more and more empty; now everything’s about money. There’s no sense of duty or being the country’s masters. What reform amounts to is that if you’re rich, great! But the nation isn’t rich. They’ve changed all the rules. [. . .] It’s getting tougher and tougher for the factory to scrape by. The workers, the masters

of the country, aren't in charge any more; now they have to scrounge around for scraps; and a perfectly good factory has been taken over by slick operators who know how to hustle for work. Your politics, or whether or not you can do your job, doesn't matter—even if you're a hopeless case, it doesn't matter—just as long as you drum up business so the factory can pay out wages and bonuses. If you can do that, you're top stuff, a reformer. You call that reform? (66-67)

As Xiaoye You suggests, “The restructuring of state-owned enterprises into private enterprises produced massive layoffs in cities and towns in the late 1980s and 1990s, and led to intensified social dissatisfaction and cynicism” (65). The speaker above has felt the full brunt of these changes: “I was in my prime back then. When I got my first job assignment, there were state-owned, local state-owned, and joint state-private factories, as well as totally private ones. [. . .] Now all it's been turned upside down, and the private ones are top dogs. With the state-owned factories, the bigger they are, the worse shape they're in. They can't even pay wages on time” (62). Simply put, China's capitalism has not enabled the masses to prosper. This China, according to the speaker, is quite the opposite of China during the 50s and 60s, when the labor had real agency: “[W]e workers were now the masters. What we were doing, industrializing China, meant a lot for keeping the world peaceful” (62). For Lee, “targeting the state industrial sector for an overhaul that brings about massive layoffs, reformers have confronted many state workers with a drastic reversal of fortune, from being ‘masters’ of their enterprises to becoming destitute” (41).

While his country has changed, the speaker believes he has remained the same, a worker faithful to the old party:

I've always stayed loyal to the party. Whatever the party told me to do, I put my heart and soul into it. [. . .] Without the Communist Party, the best I could have been was a bum with a street stall, never even sure where my next meal was coming from. [. . .] Nowadays, people take me for a fool, just some bastard who blindly stuck by the party. They think I'm the fool and that those slick organization climbers are the smart ones. (63)

The speaker's appeal to Mao Zedong's China is in dialogue with China's neoliberalism, that is, his is a dialogic response to today's reforms. He is aware of being thought a "fool" by those who've followed the more "modern" directive to return to blindly embrace reform, yet what should be his overt concern for "mianzi" (臉子) or the other's perception of his prestige is instead refused in favor for a loyalty to or faith in Mao Zedong. The speaker is clearly caught in ideological ambiguity. He emphasizes that model workers in Mao's day earned "material and moral benefits" (64). Yet when changes begin under Mao's rule, such as the Cultural Revolution, the speaker acknowledges problems, though perhaps less severely: "During the Cultural Revolution I was the puniest of 'power holders,' but still I got denounced as a 'revisionist black element' and a scab" (64-65). His experiences with the "Three Combinations" (*san jiehe*), an organization that "consisted of representatives of the revolutionary organizations, leading cadres, and the People's Liberation Army" (65), brought the realization that he was neither a "capitalist-roadster or a revolutionary smasher" (65). He was instead "stuck in limbo" (65). Nevertheless, he is loyal to his country, and he speaks

of it as a Maoist (“Running a country is like running a big family”) yet speaks of remedies in pragmatist terms (“The party leadership and the State Council don’t plan anything; they’re not taking charge of the family. [. . .] Nothing is planned. We just throw up our hands and let the market go to it, liberalizing so that workers are not even getting paid. You tell me what sense there is in that” (66).

The speaker demonstrates a keen sense of reform’s rhetoric as well as the larger implications suggested by those rhetorics. Consider, for example, the speaker’s highlighting of reform’s rationalism, pragmatism, and individualism:

Not long after the flood, our factory was ‘reassigned and reintegrated.’ That’s the new expression. Sounds harmless enough, but it means being swallowed up by a big conglomerate. It’s surrendering to the market and ditching the socialist planned economy. [. . .] These days you count yourself lucky if someone wants to swallow you up. There are lots of factories out there begging to merge with profitable enterprises, but nobody wants them. Soon after the merger, they started sacking people; pardon me, I mean “rationalizing.” But that’s just another way of sacking people. [. . .] All those contributions you’ve made for the nation, being the class that is master of the country—that’s all gone now. In the first year the motor corporation offered shares, and of course we went along with it. You’ve got no choice when you’re not your own person. (70-71)

China’s embrace of “Deng Xiaoping Theory” has not necessarily forgone Mao Zedong’s revolutionary ideals. Deng’s pragmatic rationalism has tried to keep in line with Mao Zedong’s version of Marxist-Leninism. As Oakes and others contend,

“Socialism with Chinese characteristics” is the rhetorical justification that would enable China to get through its “primary stage of socialism” (Oakes “China’s Market Reforms” 300). Yet, as the speaker here attests, the state’s system of centralized control has gone hand in hand with the promise to increase personal incomes. For Oakes, “Progress is no longer being measured by in terms of production, as in Mao’s day, but rather in terms of consumption” (300). Some have suggested that capitalism itself needs to be redefined since China’s “Party-state, *rather than an independent middle class*, continues to dominate the social means of production” (301, emphasis mine). Hence, one might better understand the speaker’s declaration that “being the class that is master of the country—that’s all gone now.”

In Chapter 2, I discussed the notion of political role-out neoliberalism and the CCP’s increasing presence in “the development of China’s productive resources” (301) suggests just that. Timothy B. Weston, writing in the late 1990s, depicted a true “hybrid economy” in China that included state-owned enterprises (SOE) as well as domestic and foreign-invested private firms. The SOEs at that point still dominate “major sectors such as coal, metals, chemicals, textiles, printing, tobacco, fertilizers, motor vehicles, electronics, and defense” (247). And in 1996, these SOEs are “highly inefficient” bringing first-time losses. As Weston notes, the state-owned industries output is decreasing rapidly, “whereas in 1978 it accounted for 80 percent of output, by 1995 it had fallen to under 50 percent” (248). The speaker above, some ten years later, describes a “swallowing up” of these inefficient state factories by private corporations. Nevertheless while unprecedented profits are made, only a few enjoy windfall: the “logic of Chinese

capitalism is leading not only to dramatic ‘downsizing’ but in many cases to harsher and less egalitarian work environments in state-owned enterprises as well” (251).

Weston anticipates the speaker’s complaints when he asks, “What, if any, means do workers toiling in these privately owned sweatshops have in protecting themselves?” As mentioned above, speaker sees right through the Party’s insistence that China’s laborers are “masters of society.” Yet there have been moments where fair collectives have contributed to positive social change.

According to Weston, a “national labor code went into effect in 1995 establishing basic workers’ rights regarding wages, benefits, and overtime pay, but there continue to be widespread violations of the law” (257). Chinese laborers are no longer permitted the right to strike and are instead urged to express their concerns to the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). Weston notes that the ACFTU is an official union originally created to disseminate Party interests to the workers and vice-versa (257). Lee suggests that a majority of state sector workers have looked to “informal networks” for protection since the ACFTU, like other official unions in China, is typically controlled by management and in reality receives little of its expected contributions (Lee points to a paltry 38 percent in 1993) (55). Weston points to the unofficial workers’ group unions and attempts at autonomous workers’ unions during 1989’s demonstrations (257). These efforts, such as the Beijing Workers’ Autonomous Federation, were squashed once they were deemed antithetical to the Party and “socialist interests” (257). Yet, as Lee stresses, Workers Autonomous Federations (WAFs) have had a lasting impact on “the tradition of democratic movements,” since their many demands ruptured the solidity of



official discourse. According to Lee, the Beijing WAF's radicalism included the demand for

price stabilization, the right to change jobs, an end to discrimination against women workers, investigation of official incomes and privileges, [as well as] a "fight for democracy," a struggle for the right to "supervise the Communist Party," and the right to supervise the legal representatives of the company in state and collective enterprises. (56)

With the introduction of the Trade Union Law, the ACFTU became the sole trade union with legal status; "[a]ll efforts to establish trade unions outside the purview of the AFCTU are considered illegal and crushed" (257). Nevertheless, China's workers have had a dramatic impact on bringing their concerns to the public sphere. Further, laborers have found an ally with China's political dissidents—intellectuals, academics, and writers who have begun to rally behind their cause. At least one major effect has been the 1997 signing of the United Nation's International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) where for the first time there were explicit terms giving all laborers the right to form trade unions and to choose unions. The state still comes down on these unofficial unions, but as Weston contends, the ICESCR "has handed labor activists a normative standard to rally around. The pages of *China Labour Bulletin* are full of information about worker attempts to take advantage of their legal right [. . .] to form labor unions and to get permits to march in the streets" (263).

The speaker, however, does not see things so optimistically. He is "still the chairman, but it's a sham" (Sang 71). As an older worker, the speaker admits to having certain privileges that others do not: "Nobody cares if I show up or not." Yet with this

ostensible privileged status, the speaker is savvy enough to realize the corruption behind such advantages:

When they introduced this share system, they allotted me some first-issue shares. Do you know what first-issue shares are? I didn't. Anyway, I didn't want them. I told them I wanted none of it. [. . .] They sell you some lousy shares, then tell you you're part owner of the factory, get out there and work. Who would be dumb enough to believe this is still socialism? (71-72)

Workers find their attention drawn more frequently to China's inequities as reform eases political oppression. This growing awareness of exploitation coupled with the increased participation of local authorities on the workers' behalf (as Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden argue, even if "local officials frequently crack down on popular resistance, in numerous cases their leadership is instrumental in shaping, legitimating, and articulating the demands of social movements" [10]) has paved the way for various new social movements and change.

***"Down to Earth: Reflections of a Former Red Guard"***

"Don't people say that reform is about pluralism? Doesn't that mean I can be disgusted by their lifestyle if I want to?"

Anonymous Former Red Guard

The speaker tells Sang Ye about being the only one of his former friends in Mao Zedong's Red Guard, the youth "sent down" to China's countryside during the Cultural Revolution, to remain in the country after Deng's reforms. Contrary to what he says in

the epigraph, the speaker really isn't so disgusted with reform, but rather he has accepted a class-bound fate; he is confused by all the commotion surrounding China's reform and believes that there is nothing he can do about it. For example, he states, "My former classmates think I'm an oddball. They think the reason I refuse to go back to the city is that I'm against the reforms and I disagree with the new policies. But I'm a peasant. What right do I have to disagree with anything" (267)? His question begs another: why the resignation of class identity? Whom or what does it serve?

The speaker's resignation shouldn't be surprising. Having been sent down with as a Red Guard meant internalizing a privileged identity in Mao Zedong's day. As he writes, "I was psychologically prepared for everything that happened" (268). While Mao was attempting to valorize the countryside, his Red Guards saw the disparities between country and city, to some degree subverting Mao's plan: "We came to realize that the country was incredibly harsh, very different from the cities. It was as though there were two countries in China. You could say it was one system, two countries; and it's much worse now than it was back then" (268). As Weston confirms, "Many workers, especially women and older, unskilled people, have little chance of improving their conditions or of finding new work once they've been laid off" (259). Much like the speaker here, Weston says that many feel as if "they've been betrayed" and direct their anger toward management and "by extension the Party-state" (259). That said, the speaker claims that the collectives set up during the Cultural Revolution approximated a "primitive communism," where things were divided equally (268). His straightforward "before and after" history favors the older socialism. When, for example, some communes began to disband, "gradually things changed, and everyone began setting

aside small stashes of private property” (268). The speaker astutely points to his peers’ hypocrisy and emergent individualism, the latter suggested by the hoarding of private property and “good food and stuff [. . .] so they could enjoy it alone” (268). Interestingly, while he is at one point in his account “just a peasant,” a little while later he emphasizes difficulty transcending a *privileged* class background. The speaker comes from “an old academic family,” three generations of teachers. “We were important people once,” he says, a nod to his culture’s “lian” (面子) and “mianzi” (臉子). The speaker’s father was a “famous professor” when the Cultural Revolution took hold, and while many scholarly pursuits and academic posts were deemed Rightist or Bourgeois, antithetical to Mao Zedong Thought, the speaker claims he “was okay about the whole thing” since he “was sick and tired of school” (268). Fueling this resentment is that the “mianzi” (臉子) surrounding the workers, particularly those still employed, is one that suggests that factory managers are doing well while workers are “suffering” (Weston 250).

#### **“‘Life on the Outside: An Interview with an Itinerant Worker,’ Lu Naihong”**

Dutton’s interview with Lu Naihong, a migrant laborer, illustrates the intense and persistent desire to have male children and avoid paying fines for breaking population control laws in the effort to do so (144). Part of this urge comes from China itself, that is, from what might be seen as the ideological vestiges of Confucian and Maoist principles. Like most of his countrymen, Lu positions family as his primary concern. Family is a key to identity, labor, and protection, and is an important aspect of “lian” (面子). According to Tyrene White offspring are “valued for their contribution to the family

economy, and males [are] especially valued both for their economic contribution and for their role in preserving the family line” (102).

Lu was born in 1962 and lived most of his life in Huaiyuan, Henan province. Dutton describes Lu as “typical” of one of China’s floating population, the migrant laborers who leave the rural regions for cities such as Beijing. According to Li Zhang, most of the floating population are peasant workers (*migong*), “young, unmarried men and women from the countryside who struggle to make al living by selling their labor” (277). The *migong* take on “low-end, low-pay, sometimes dangerous manual or strenuous physical work in such urban economic sectors as construction, manufacturing, food services, street cleaning, and domestic work” (277). Lu is no different. He tells Dutton that his hometown was “plagued by a lack of land and a very high population density” (144). He typically received a “few shillings for each kilo of wheat,” with “a yield of 600 to 800 kilograms per *mu* (1 *mu* is 0.667 hectares) (144). The land allocation was for Lu and his wife but not for his three children. This small provision, along with a 90-kilos-per-annum grain tax, made it impossible to “survive on the land” (144-45). He moved to Beijing and has lived there for six years, now with wife and children. Lu prefers Beijing to Henan, and says that in the summer he “can earn up to 1000 *yuan* (\$US120) per month” selling fruit and in the winter 500 *yuan* (\$US60) per month selling vegetables and rice. It should be noted that while these numbers are shockingly low, they are still a far cry above what China’s begging class brings in. China’s beggars are less fortunate than Lu and other migrants who have a trade or commodity to sell. Fernández-Stembridge and Madsen claim that, in addition to working migrants, the number of beggars is increasing in the major coastal cities, with many projecting “an appearance of

total abjectness” (208). While sometimes beggars solicit alone, many are accompanied by “small, listless children” or with their entire family—“three-generational families, including grandparents” (208). Lately, beggars have arranged in their own groups or “confederates” called *bangshui* (216). The *bangshui* are typically arranged like gangs, hierarchical with a strong leader who has experience with street life (216).

So it is perhaps understandable how Lu can be content with his income and state with conviction that he is “a lot better off now” (145), even after paying costly fines for his breach of China’s one child policy as well as high living expenses. More surprising to the Western reader, is the fact that Lu will continue to try to have a son even with three girls (his oldest is five): “People in the countryside all share this view. We must have a boy” (145). But Lu is not exaggerating here. White has made the case that there continue to be efforts to resist China’s one-child campaign, though typically these efforts are individual rather than collective. For White, resistance take three forms: “direct confrontation between policy enforcers and targets; evasion of enforcement, either through deceiving rural cadres or colluding with sympathetic ones; and the middle ground of accommodation [e.g.] female infanticide [and] infant abandonment” (102). China’s one-child law might be breached but there is a heavy cost. Lu says he was fined 1000 *yuan* (\$120) in Henan. After Dutton points out that land allocation is dependent on the size of one’s family, and that additional land is not allocated for additional children, Lu responds matter-of-factly, that the allocation was for fifteen years and “that is all I am going to get for quite a while” (145).

Perhaps most telling are Lu’s opinions on China’s migrants. He believes the increasing numbers of China’s floating population in the cities are inevitable. Lu says,

“They stopped us from moving but could not provide enough for us to feed and clothe our families. Now, if there is no money around, we can at least move on to places where there is money” (146). This is not to say that Lu gave up his land in Henan: “My parents look after that. The way we work it is as follows. I’ll pay the land tax, which as I have said is about 80 to 90 *yuan* (\$9.50-11) per person per annum, and they take care of the land.”

Then there is the trader tax of 10 *yuan* (\$US1.20) per day that Lu must pay. His city has gotten worse with respect to crime, with “transients” involved in robbery and theft. Lu is sure to distance himself from these “lazy loafers” who “should be heavily punished” (146). One could argue that some of this distancing reflects Lu’s awareness of the migrant construction. He is from the country, but considers himself pragmatic and hard working. The “country bumpkin” enjoys no “*mianzi*” (臉子), that is, neither honor nor prestige. Just as damaging is a migrant laborer’s “*lian*” (面子), workers are bumpkins *with little ethical scope*. According to Li Zhang, the growing migrant population in China “exacerbates existing rural-urban differences and creates tensions between them as the two groups compete for limited urban space and resources” (276). The *hukou* registration system has acted like an “emblem or a badge” that “defines rural migrants in the cities as noncitizens” (276). If migrants can obtain *hukou*, then they’ve a right to work in the cities yet they are not entitled to “welfare benefits and social services that urbanites received as their natural birthright” (Solinger qtd. in Li Zhang (276). According to Li Zhang, *hukou* has “divided the entire Chinese population into two distinct, hierarchal ‘nations’ or ‘caste-like groups, namely, the urban *hukou* holders versus the rural *hukou* holders” (275). This “*hukou* barrier” makes personal relations

between rural migrants and permanent urban residents virtually impossible. Lu's distancing himself from the criminals therefore serves a double purpose: he attempts to rise above what the urbanite frowns upon as well as offer a powerful critique of the corrupt relations between China's nascent managerialism and the state itself. When Dutton asks Lu if he is forced to pay bribes, Lu responds, "No. That sort of thing really only happens at the wholesale market where there is a lot more money. It is the wholesale managers who pay off the police" (147). Like many of the floating population, Lu finds that his greatest enemy is often not the unfair legislation itself but the "smart-arse Beijing types" who take advantage of China's subalterns and are protected by the police. Lu recounts how "one smart-arse Beijinger" came around to collect taxes:

We paid him, only to find out a little later on that he was not the responsible officer at all and had done this to shake us down. Well, of course, we went after him and taught him a bit of a lesson. So what did the police do? They dragged us in over the bashing. I was fined 50 *yuan* (\$US6) for starting a fight. Can you believe that? It was worth it, though. We certainly won't be getting any more Beijingers pulling that sort of a stunt again. (147)

That Lu finds some success in his organized resistance could be proof enough of the dormant radicalism mounting within China's working class. As represented here, even if the police side with Beijing's managers, Lu's actions have effectively contributed to some resistance.

While such difficulties might have the Western reader anticipating Lu's return to the safer countryside, Lu states adamantly that he prefers the city to the country and plans



to remain there. For Lu, the country offers no work and “nothing to do.” In spite of the hostility, exploitation, and general hardships that he faces daily, Lu is foremost concerned with caring for his family and doing whatever is necessary to live happily and honorably.

### **Conclusion: Collectivity and the Politics of Protest**

“They are trying to make Hong Kong a colony of Disney.”

Lee Cheuk-yan, Labor Leader and Legislator

Interestingly, Barmé contends that the worker reflections “are possible *only* because of the rise of the ‘cult of the individual,’ the individuated subject and consumer-actor, that has been the most egregious feat of social engineering in reformist China” (xii, emphasis mine). Yet such a position ignores the complexity of China’s ideological sphere. China’s nascent individualism can undoubtedly be observed along its vast cityscapes, from Shanghai to Beijing to Hong Kong, but even China’s new consumerism depends on an “older China.” So, as LuMing Mao puts it, it really is “too simplistic to rely upon an (imagined) opposition between valuing individualism and promoting harmony to characterize traditional Chinese rhetoric” (437). Instead, here as with any rhetorical situation, grasping dialogism—the cultural, political, familial weavings that extend beyond China itself—is paramount to elucidating global subjectivity within a healthy nationalism as well as recognizing the potential for change. Subaltern testimonies thus continue to play a greater role in shaping perceptions of socioeconomic conditions. Anita Chan’s study of the aftermath of a fire at Zhili Toy Company in Shenzhen is particularly telling. According to Chan, the toy company’s management had “violated regulations by bribing local authorities and safety inspectors, bolting all exits,

barring all windows, and blocking passageways with stock. When the fire broke out, the workers were trapped by the inferno” (163). After a close look at seventy-seven personal letters written by workers, friends, and relatives (“letters piled up to be discarded”), Chan found that out of forty-three possible items of concern, those most mentioned (that is, number of mentions per item) were the amount of wages, amount of overtime work each day, length of work hours, and relationship with the opposite sex (3, 4, 5, and 6, respectively). Last on the list at 43 was “Life is satisfactory in the factory” (164-65). While the West perceives a Chinese factory laborer who is dutiful, loyal, and generally happy about his work, these letters tell a different story: workers are concerned about their total hours and the kind of work that they do—work often described as “boring and tiring” (180). Yet, as Chan points out, factory workers expressed little anger or bitterness. Like Lu above, these workers considered their factory labor preferable to what awaited them in the countryside once their household registration expired (180).

China’s individualism has not hurt efforts to collectively protest bureaucratic abuses from rural cadres and the like. Fayong Shi and Yongshun Cai show state power fragmentation on the local level and opportunities for social networks (*guanxi*) that “promote trust,” “generat[e] moral pressure,” and ultimately lead to “solidarity and participation in collective action” (314-15). According to Fayong and Yongshun, these social networks serve three functions: a “source of information” for resistance strategies, a “channel through which citizens influence decision-making,” and a means by which citizens might “access political sources under the control of the party-state, such as the media” (315). Lee and others have recognized that “[o]rganized labor dissent, among all forms of labor resistance, has provoked the most severe repression by the Chinese state”

(55). Whereas the ACFTU “has proved to be too weak to protect worker rights under the combined onslaught of economic reforms and the government decisions to cut back sharply on state enterprises,” autonomous trade unions and their alliances with intellectual and human rights dissidents” are emerging in forceful numbers (43). According to David Zweig, “Widespread demands by citizens for social justice and conflict resolution challenge the capacity of state institutions that remain rather ill-equipped to manage [. . .] higher levels of popular political participation” (121). While China has been slow to establish a “formal legal framework” to its rising “commercialization” and “generation of wealth” (128), there have been since 1978 a “new set of political and legal institutions” put in place to deal with rural unease. Some of these institutions, says Zweig, “emerged autonomously from society and were then borrowed by the state, while others were introduced by a state deeply concerned that rural demands [. . .] could trigger massive rebellions” (121). Zweig suggests that village elections, contract law, and court involvement to mediate “villager-cadre conflicts [. . .] have helped villagers express their grievances, influence local economic decisions, and seek redress for unfair cadre behaviour” (121). Central elites have openly supported “public petitioning,” demonstrations that have “emerged as a new norm” (122). For the first time, “citizens can challenge local bureaucratic decisions and cadre corruption” (122). As Zweig explains:

Under this procedure, higher level officials are informed of corrupt behavior by local officials so that festering issues can be resolved without moving into the formal realm of courts. By righting wrongs on their own, cadres need not lose their positions thereby preserving rural order. (122)

Yet at the same time there have been studies to show just how *ineffective* these institutions have been. “Unscrupulous business activity,” which has the potential for “large-scale political or legal ramifications,” is taking advantage of China’s “fragile” market and legal system—economic reform without determined institutions “could bring on the regime’s collapse” (123). Contrary to the state’s “effort to promote petitioning as a peaceful, system-supportive means of conflict resolution, many petitions have been rejected by higher level authorities, forcing villagers to include civil disobedience as part of their repertoire of protest activity” (125). Nevertheless there have been and continue to be successful protests. Lee argues that “by the late 1990s, incidents of worker unrest had become so routine that government and party leaders identified labor problems as the ‘biggest threat to social stability’” (41). Zweig recounts how in October 1998, villagers from Guiyang, capital of Guizhou Province, marched in protest of the “low level of compensation they received after being forced off their land to make room for new urban housing” (129). In another instance, when a developer “failed to pay villagers for land he had acquired” the villagers went as far as stopping development by blocking the construction site with huts (129). Still another: when “police arrested four villagers, 300 peasants marched into Changsha and surrounded the provincial government buildings” (129). Surprisingly, perhaps, while the Chinese media has habitually contributed to the rural subject’s marginalization, most recently the media has “emerged as a critical resource in the villagers’ struggle for social justice” (129). Both newspapers and television have proven effective vehicles for suburban villagers, and the Chinese government is “very afraid of the publicity” (139). Consider as just one example media’s role in publicizing the fiasco at Hong Kong Disney’s opening, when a Disney official

prohibited government food inspectors from going on premises with caps and badges. Labor activists such as Elaine Hui of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions took the ensuing “public furor” as a key opportunity to pronounce state workers’ dissatisfaction with Disney administration—“Their management is very backward”—and the desire to unionize (“Miscues mar opening”). As recorded in *U.S. Today*, “Labor activists charged Disney is forcing staff to work 11- to 13- work days, providing inadequate breaks and rewriting daily work schedules without notice” (“Miscues mar opening”). So even though a Disney Hong Kong representative pointed to its “cast members” system as proof of Disney’s sensitivity to worker rights and community—“We have operated our resort successfully without union representation. [. . .] And we believe it is more effective for us and our cast alike to work and communicate directly with each other”—the damage had already been done; the rupture-through-print expressed labor exploitation and the need for unionization. According to Lee, with growing support from media, intellectuals, and independent organizations, “the unattached and underprivileged workers have become a potent source of rebellion and protest and perhaps the most serious threat to the party’s monopoly on power” (55). There is now a “more restive Chinese working class in the making, as shown by the massive eruption of collective actions over the past two decades” (55). “Marxist and Maoist rhetoric of exploitation and inequality” continue to help “unite a broad spectrum of veteran laborers in the state sector” (57). These rhetorics disseminate into migrant populations, too, with opportunities for insurgency and social justice. Perhaps it as Minxin Pei suggests through his astute reading of Alexis de Tocqueville’s analysis of “sensibility” and revolutionary change: “a grievance comes to appear intolerable once the possibility of removing it

crosses men's minds" (Tocqueville qtd. in Minxin Pei 21). (21). If one accepts that China's reforms have lessened the degree of political oppression, even as class divide continues to grow, then, following Tocqueville, there is greater attention to and less tolerance for exploitation. Such recognition is essential to Marx's notion of class-consciousness and revolution, and in China suggests the possibility of equity.

## EPILOGUE

### SOUND THE MIRROR

Is this not yet further proof of how, even in this tragic moment, the distance which separates Us from Them, from their reality, is maintained: the real horror happens *there*, not *here*?

Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*

People run from miles around / when they hear that mirror sound / I'm gonna try to sound mirror now.

Mike Wexler, "Sound the Mirror"

I have often been asked since beginning this project, "Why China?" My response has taken various forms depending on the venue and audience, but it usually resembles something like "A close look at China's neoliberal rhetorics offers the Westerner an opportunity to see capitalism unfolding and the writing instructor an invaluable heuristic for transformative education. What better way to *defamiliarize* capitalism than by looking to a country where consumerism, competition, and exploitation are relatively new?" (I've used the formalist term throughout my graduate education so I emphasize it here.) If I were more honest, I would have to admit that my interest in China began before such refined objectives, in childhood, with the Orientalist East Asia depicted in the early James Bond films. Like many American nine-year-olds, I was drawn in by the faraway "exotic" and 007's manipulation of that imaginary.

There are no Bond films that transcend such Orientalism—the James Bond

franchise depends on its nationalism, paternalism, classism, racism, and sexism. *You Only Live Twice* and *The Man with the Golden Gun*, in particular, present the East through an imperialist gaze, certainly the residue of 19<sup>th</sup>-century political and economic imperialism but also late 20<sup>th</sup>-century cultural. *The Man with the Golden Gun*, shot in Hong Kong and Thailand, offers a one-dimensional Asian but also two kinds of Westerner, with Clifton James as country bumpkin County Sheriff J.W. Pepper and Roger Moore as the Cambridge-educated secret agent Bond. At one point, Pepper and Bond are side-by-side in a speeding car, with Bond behind the wheel:

SHERIFF J.W. PEPPER  
What's goin' on with you? What the hell you  
doin' now, boy? The bridge is that way!

Sheriff Pepper sees Bond is about to drive over a WRECKED BRIDGE.

SHERIFF J.W. PEPPER  
(continuing)  
You're not gonna. . .

JAMES BOND  
(mimicking)  
I sure am, boy! Ever hear of Evil Knievel?

Bond ensures that we laugh correctly; he adopts Pepper's abrasive drawl ("boy!") and low sensibilities ("Evil Knievel?") and lays bare U.S. simplicity. The natural response, of course, is to see spy and "redneck" momentarily reduced to the same subject as the two spin 360, mid-air, over an anonymous wrecked bridge somewhere in rural Bangkok. Yet even in potential death, the centrifugal force of that spin maintains their separation. When Bond and Pepper successfully land things are as they have always been: the "English secret agent from England" on one side and the county sheriff on the other. (David Mamet would write their divide in more severe terms: "You see, pal, that's



who I am, and you're nothing.") *Golden Gun*'s imperialist-meets-colony moments, like those in *You Only Live Twice*, parallel China's internal Orientalism. The sophisticated Bond signifies (and secures via audience interpellation) a superior British identity by lampooning the base American, even as both operate within an Anglo-American socio-political sphere. Nevermind that the James Bond character is named after an American ornithologist.

I mention the Bond films and my childhood engagement with them not to reiterate this project's thesis, that China's subaltern literacy resists and sustains China's dominant discourse, but rather to affirm the most important lesson learned while defending it: a Westerner's take on the East is necessarily limited and risks the very thing that the Bond films embrace—paternalism, racism, and so on. The Chinese factory worker is a human being yet here reduced to an object (or discursive field) under a microscope called "rhetoric." I didn't realize as a nine-year-old that Bond's savoir-faire was imperialism-commercialism writ small, but I have been overly conscious of my own situatedness here, as Westerner, doctoral student, and lecturer. This cautionary introspection was no doubt fostered by emails from dissertation committee members and Tamara Jacka, whose book on Chinese migrants presented me with worker reflections for analysis. Where Jacka's email drove home the fact that migrant workers are very real and that their equity depends in part on an audience ("I'm delighted that you're working on this topic—it does vindicate my own view that, both for political and epistemological reasons, these migrant workers' narratives need to be read/listened to and taken seriously"), committee emails suggested the impossibility of a viable analysis. In truth, I had already been having these doubts: who am I to write about China? I have never been to China and have not

mastered any of its dialects (the Chinese would say “languages”). (Though as of this writing I have begun formal lessons in Mandarin.) But then it occurred to me that even if I did know, say, Mandarin Chinese, I could not transcend my Western position to offer anything remotely objective. Of course, such logic presents one with never-ending relativism, and with that in mind I find some peace knowing that this project has never attempted to be conclusive. One should instead find here a Westerner’s engagement with the East, a sensitive conversation informed by teaching and training in English rhetoric and composition.

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Mirgant Worker." Gaetano and Jacka 297-304.
- Žižek, Slavoj. "Against Human Rights." *New Left Review* 34 (2005): 115-31.
- . "A Plea for Leninist Intolerance." *Critical Inquiry* 28.2 (2002): 542-66.
- . "The Parallax View." *New Left Review* 25 (2004): 121-34.
- Zweig, David. "The 'Externalities of Development': Can New Political Institutions  
Manage Rural Conflict?" Perry and Selden 120-42.



## CURRICULUM VITAE

### Steven Nathaniel Wexler

1369 Glenwick Drive  
Windermere, FL 34786

#### Education

University of Louisville, Louisville, KY  
Doctorate in English Rhetoric and Composition, 2006

University of Louisville  
Master of Arts in English, 2001  
Henry James Fellow

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ  
Graduate coursework in Comparative Literature, 1997

Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY  
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, 1987

#### Publications

"Rhetoric, Literacy, and Social Change in Post-Mao China." Forthcoming in *College Composition and Communication*. 36 pp.

"Global 'Greater China': Rhetoric and the World Factory." Under consideration at *JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory*. 37 pp.

Invited Review Essay: "Beyond the Knowledge Factory: A Review of David B. Downing's *The Knowledge Contract: Politics and Paradigms in the Academic Workplace*." Forthcoming in *Studies in the Humanities*. 38 pp.

Invited Review Essay: "Review of *How Class Works: Power and Social Movement* by Stanley Aronowitz." *Workplace: A Journal for Academic Labor* 6.2 (2004).  
<<http://www.louisville.edu/journal/workplace/issue6p1/6p1.html>>.

"Terminal Narcissus and the Posthuman: Reflexivity and Augmentation Through the Hypertext Mirror." *Kairos* 7.3 (2002).  
<<http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/7.3/binder2.html?coverweb/wexler/index.html>>.

"Freedom in *Frankenstein*." *Proceedings of the Image of the Outsider in Literature, Media, and Society: Selected Papers*. Ed. Will Wright and Steven Kaplan. Pueblo: Society of Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery and the University of Southern Colorado, 2002. 67-71.

"Bibliography of Critical Work on James and Film." *Henry James Goes to the Movies*. Ed. Susan M. Griffin. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 2001. 359-65.

## **Teaching**

Multiple sections of introductory, intermediate, and advanced writing, including computer-aided instruction and a range of themes:

Lecturer. Rollins College, Winter Park, FL, 2002 - Present:

- Expository Writing: Argument
- Expository Writing: Informal Essay
- Composition and Rhetoric: Writing about Comedy
- Composition and Rhetoric: Writing about You
- Composition and Rhetoric: Writing about Monsters
- Composition and Rhetoric: Sources of Self

Composition Instructor. University of Louisville, Louisville, KY, 1998 - 2002:

Intermediate College Composition: "Authoring from the Underground" (computer-aided instruction)  
<<http://www.louisville.edu/a-s/english/gta/wexler/102home.html>>

Introduction to College Composition: "I, Intertext" (computer-aided instruction)  
<<http://www.louisville.edu/a-s/english/gta/wexler/101home.html>>

Adjunct Faculty. Spencerian College, Louisville, KY, 1999 - 2000:

- Business Correspondence
- Anatomy and Physiology I
- Records Management
- English II
- English I

Writing Consultant. Rutgers University Writing Center, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 1997

## **Conference Presentations**

"Global 'Greater China': Discourse, Power, and the World Factory." Rhetoric Society of America Conference, 26 May 2006

"Conspicuous Consumption as Campus Culture." Conference on College Composition and Communication. National Council of Teachers of English, 22 March 2006

"Literacy and Resistance in Postsocialist China." Conference on College Composition and Communication. National Council of Teachers of English, 16 March 2005

"Writing Center Pragmatism." 5th Biennial Thomas R. Watson Conference on Rhetoric and Composition, "Writing at the Center." University of Louisville, 7 October 2004

"Motivation and Melancholy in 'After the Storm.'" Eleventh Annual Biennial International Ernest Hemingway Society Conference, "Key West Hemingway." 7 June 2004

"Rewriting the Sign of Terror in First-Year Composition." College English Association, 3 April 2003

"De/Composing Identities in English B." Conference on College Composition and Communication. National Council of Teachers of English, 19 March 2003

"The Invisibility of Negation: Debunking Dialectical Dreams in *Invisible Man*." Twenty-Seventh Colloquium on Literature and Film. West Virginia University, 10 October 2002

"Terminal Narcissus and the Posthuman: Reflexivity and Augmentation Through the Hypertext Mirror." Computers and Writing. Illinois State University, 16 May 2002

"Freedom in *Frankenstein*: What We Can Learn from a Marcusian Monster." Society of Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery. University of Southern Colorado, 28 February 2002

"The Neurotic Intertext." Writing as a Human Activity. University of California at Santa Barbara, 6 October 2001

"This is Allan Benkle." Twenty-First Annual Twentieth-Century Literature Conference. University of Louisville, 24 February 2000

"Bipolar Affective Illness: Results of Linkage Analysis Using Microsatellite Marker, AJHG, s51, A374." Straub, R.E., Baron, M., Lehner, T., Loth, J.E., Luo, Y., Shao, W., Wexler, S.N., Sharpe, L., Simon, R., Gibbon, M., Endicott, J., Ott, J., Gilliam, T.C. Annual Meeting of American Society of Human Genetics, San Francisco, CA, November 1992

"Genetic Linkage Analysis of Bipolar Affective Illness." Straub, R.E., Baron, M., Lehner, T., Luo, Y., Wexler, S.N., Ott, J., and Gilliam, T.C. Eighth International Congress of Human Genetics, Washington, D.C., October 1991

"Linkage Analysis of Bipolar Affective Illness Using DNA Markers." Straub, R.E., Endicott, J., Lehner, T., Loth, J.E., Napiorkowski, P., Wexler, S.N., Luo, Y., Ott, J., Gilliam, T.C., and Baron, M. Conference of Psychiatric Genetics, London, August 1991

## **Administration and Professional Development**

Faculty Organizer and Participant. *Žižek!* Organized department viewing of Slavoj Žižek documentary and subsequent discussion "Teaching the Language of 'Unfreedom.'" Rollins College, 2006

Faculty Organizer and Participant. "Writing with New Media." PowerPoint demonstration and discussion on incorporating Web technology (Websites, blogs, and hypertext) in the composition class. Rollins College, 2006

Faculty Organizer and Participant. Living and Learning in Community (students living together and taking courses together). Created a linked interdisciplinary writing course with a sociology professor and developed activities for the program itself. Rollins College, 2003 - Present

Member. Transformative Education Task Group of the All-College Planning and Priorities Committee. Rollins College, 2003

Textbook Reviewer. *Decisions: A Writer's Handbook*. By Leonard J. Rosen. Longman, 2003

Selected Monograph. Review of Andy Pickering's *Mangle of Practice*. History of Science, Social Studies of Science (HSSS). KLI Theory Lab.  
<<http://www.kli.ac.at/theorylab/Areas/HSSS.html>>

"How to be an Eighteenth-Century English Gentleman." *Eighteenth-Century Resources -- History*. Ed. Jack Lynch. June 2004. <<http://newark.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/18th/history.html>>

---. Early Modern Bibliographies. *Early Modern Resources*. Ed. Sharon Howard. Sep 2003. <<http://www.earlymodernweb.org.uk/embiblios.htm>>

Database designer for instructor Web-projects. Department of English. University of Louisville

Moderator. "Cowboys and Outlaws." Society of Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery. University of Southern Colorado, 28 February 2002

Organizing Committee Member. University of Louisville English Graduate Organization. Watson Conference. University of Louisville, 2000

Organizing Committee Member. University of Louisville English Graduate Organization. Twentieth Annual Twentieth-Century Literature Conference. University of Louisville, 1999

## **Editorial Work**

Editor. *The Fox: Rollins College Journal of First-Year Writing*, 2003

Editorial Assistant. *Henry James Review*, Louisville, KY, 1999 - 2001

Copy Editor (freelance). *Instructor* and *Scholastic*, New York, NY, 1991 - 1993

## **Additional Experience**

Account Executive (full-time and freelance). Costanza Group Advertising, Marketing, and Public Relations, Edison, NJ, 1986 - 1997

Research Associate. Columbia University and NY State Psychiatric Institute, New York, NY, 1990 - 1992

## **Awards**

Teaching Fellowship, Rollins College, 2002 - Present

Henry James Fellowship, University of Louisville, 1999 - 2001

Graduate Teaching Assistantship, University of Louisville, 1998 - 2002

## **Professional Academic Memberships**

National Council of Teachers of English

Rhetoric Society of America

Modern Language Association