

Chapter Seven: China Writes Back: Reading Stories from the Chinese Diaspora

This chapter focuses on stories from the Chinese diaspora written in the Chinese language, and their portrayal of multiple and overlapping national identities. Unlike the best-selling women's autobiographies in the West such as *Wild Swans*, which begin by stressing on the suffering in China and end usually in celebration of a “free” West for an English-speaking audience,¹ these stories were written in the Chinese language—some by overseas students themselves—for an audience at home who shared their vision of a troubled and yet hopeful China. Situated in the native circumstances, these narratives provide a dialogic space that transforms geographical regions into diverse cultural conceptions of the self and others. As these authors search for their own identities in a cross-cultural context, they inevitably express their own subjectivities—either in terms of “Chinese” or “non-Chinese” or everything else in between—against multifaceted nationalist and imperialist backgrounds.

I put “Chinese” in quotation marks to indicate the complexity of the very concept of Chineseness, which has undergone scrutiny in critical investigations of the Chinese diaspora. In *Ungrounded Empires*, an informative study of the cultural politics of modern Chinese transnationalism, Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini argue against an essentialist approach of equating “Chineseness” with having Chinese values and norms. They propose to understand it as inscribed and multiple “relation[s] of persons and groups to forces and processes associated with global capitalism and its modernities.”² Terms such as “Chinese culture” and the like are thus studied as discursive tropes “constantly cast and recast in cultural terms”; they “do not merely explain Chinese identity” but “in large part *constitute* Chinese identities and transnational

practices, and are therefore in need of deconstruction and study.”³ I agree with Ong and Nonini’s project of exploring “the multifaceted and shifting experiences of diaspora Chinese living under, yet reworking, the conditions of flexibility” without granting China “a privileged ontological or epistemological position.”⁴

My discussion of these stories of Chinese diaspora, however, furthers this project by focusing on an unstudied aspect of Chinese transnationalism. Before these writers’ sojourn abroad, what were the native circumstances and conditions that motivated their emigrant experience? During their sojourn abroad, how did *they* define themselves as “Chinese” in order to construct their own identities in opposition to everything else they construed as “un-Chinese” in cross-cultural and global contexts? In addition to, or in the midst of, their Asian Pacific economic and cultural activities, what were the discursive powers at work that negated or compensated for their status in their immigrant countries? When we talk about Chinese transnationalism in the geopolitics of the twentieth century, to what extent can we recover the subject positions of Chinese writers who narrated their own diaspora experience in the Chinese language for a domestic readership within China? In addition to a “business speak,” as discussed in Ong and Nonini’s work, can one detect a “China speak” that explores the use of cultural capital, such as storytelling and image making, to advocate a special kind of Chinese identity, as a critical strategy of speaking out against global capitalism in reaction to local conditions? Can Chinese stories—however problematic they are in epistemological and critical terms—be seen as narrative forms against late capitalism and modernization when examined within their local contexts?

Furthermore, to connect with the central concern of this study, I would like to address the issue of what happens to the construction of foreign countries after Chinese writers travel abroad and see the life of others with their own eyes. Stories of the Chinese diaspora, therefore, can to some extent be seen as a series of sequels to *Heshang* and Chinese Shakespearean theater, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2. Unlike the previous works in this study, however, stories of the Chinese diaspora, precisely because their writers have traveled to other shores, reveal more complex and paradoxical views of the West and other countries. Although some of the writers still idealize the West in order to address issues at home, others continue their China-oriented critique but also express their disillusionment with the West and other places. In nationalist terms, some of the protagonists' experiences abroad as inferior others indeed create new impetus for them to embrace China as the motherland that they had once reluctantly left behind but whose spiritual rejuvenation they have continuously longed for. In ideological terms, after rejecting socialism in China as a totalitarian regime, they wonder, once abroad, if capitalism can become the solution to the prevailing social problems both in China and the rest of the world. Negotiating this in-between space, they examine the diversity between what they perceive as "Chinese" and "non-Chinese" values, while sorting out the lessons to be learned from these cultures. It is from this in-between space that they write back, with multicultural subjectivities constantly in flux and in negotiation with each other.

This is not to claim, however, that the 1980s and 1990s representations of the other are essentially different from each other. Neither do I imply that *Heshang* and Chinese Shakespearean theater were the only kind of Occidentalism available in this same period of early post-Mao China, or that the stories of the Chinese diaspora discussed below are exclusive or

monolithic in their views of China and other cultures. For anyone familiar with the landscape of cultural China, it is clear that the constructions of the West and China are almost always dialogical, multifaceted, and paradoxical in every period, and different from writer to writer, or even from piece to piece authored by the same writer. For this reason, I will discuss two very different works written by Hu Ping—one written in 1987 and the other in 1997—to demonstrate how his construction of America varies according to the changing perspectives of the author and his different understandings of America and China at given historical moments.

This chapter continues to consider the complex and paradoxical role of Occidentalism in the construction of Chinese identities both at home and abroad. The chapter also continues the discussion of the question “can China speak” as its own agent and in its own voice against a persistent anxiety expressed by some scholars in Chinese literary and cultural studies, whose works—while valuable in many other aspects—have reduced twentieth-century Chinese writings to mostly subjugations to Western colonialism and imperialism. Shu-mei Shih, for instance, in her recent study *The Lure of the Modern*, argued that “The global context of imperialist expansion, which successfully instituted modernity as the telos of all histories, was the condition of possibility for modernist cultural positions in the local context.” Even when one “restore[s] agency to the Chinese modernists as actors in the local area of cultural production,” Shih wrote, one still must “contextualize this agency in the global arena of unequal cultural and political relations” since the “local manifestation” of these unequal relations “was semicolonialism.”⁵ While taking into consideration the importance of the colonial experience imposed on the Chinese people in the twentieth century, this chapter reminds its readers, once again, that twentieth-century Chinese literary and cultural histories cannot be seen as always *reactive* to and

pre-conditioned by a so-called predominant Western colonialization, but as formative sites where Chinese writers can and have been *actively* constructing their own stories, from their native perspectives, and with a voice of their own. As I have shown in the introduction, overemphasizing Chinese experience in the twentieth century as predominantly colonial and semi-colonial not only plays into the Maoist game of official Occidentalism, which utilized its anti-Western and anti-imperialist agendas to oppress its own people; more significantly, it virtually grants the West more power than it deserves, indeed discursively constructing a more powerful West than it actually was militarily in the first half of the twentieth century. Even in the 1990s, when globalization and modernization presented more challenges than ever before, Chinese writers spoke up against such domination in their own Chinese diaspora writings. These stories, I hope, will demonstrate that Chinese intellectuals in the twentieth century have not simply occupied a passive position vis-à-vis Western domination. As my discussion below of Cao Guilin's *A Chinese Nightingale in the Sky of New York* (*Niuyue shangkong de Zhongguo yeying*, 1994) will show, writing about diasporic life in the Chinese language can produce a particular kind of discursive power that rewrites one's sojourning experience in America, thus empowering one to speak in an *active* voice against global capitalism.

In talking about an active diasporic voice in cross-cultural contexts, I am fully aware of the pitfalls of Chinese nationalism, or what Michelle Yeh rightly characterizes as assumptions that “stem from a nationalistic, sinocentric framework that reifies China and the West.”⁶ What I want to challenge in the following discussions is precisely the dualistic divide between China and the West and the thorny issues of sinocentrism on the one hand and eurocentrism on the other. As I have already pointed out in earlier chapters, the critical debates that have appeared in the form

of “China versus the West” are indeed cultural, ideological, and linguistic constructs to validate a particular agenda, on the part of the official ideology, in the form of a counterdiscourse conducted by Chinese intellectuals to counter such an ideology, or as a collaborative effort by both parties to construct the West for their sometimes commonly shared goals. In other words, this picture of the dualistic China/West, or official/anti-official, is the very one I intend to disrupt as a discursive strategy of political and cultural identities. The tendencies of sinocentrism and eurocentrism can indeed be found in the stories of the Chinese diaspora. I intend to investigate the native circumstances—and most significantly, the cultural, political, and economic factors at work—that provided fertile ground for such contradictory sentiments at different moments of historical narratives.⁷

While pursuing similar critical issues treated in the previous chapters on television documentaries, poetic texts, and theater productions, this chapter considers narrative genres in the forms of short story, novel, reportage, and autobiographical writing. Although the limited space of one chapter does not allow me to delineate the historical scope of these genres in their earlier prototypes, a brief analysis of some of the precursor texts seems necessary to provide readers with some of the persistent themes and critical issues at stake. I therefore choose, in the first part of this chapter, a few representative stories of Chinese abroad from the 1920s, a particularly significant moment in Chinese literary and cultural history, when some May Fourth writers traveled to different foreign countries in search of an elixir that would rescue China from decline. By comparing stories of the 1920s with the 1980s and 1990s, I do not mean to present them as coherent narratives in a linear line of historical development, nor to suggest that stories of Occidentalist writings about the diaspora can be explained within a single theoretical

framework. In fact, I intend to explore how the motivations of the students in post-Mao China resemble or differ from those in the twenties, and how post-Mao inherited even more complex cultural and ideological traditions, Confucian and Maoist, capitalist and postsocialist.

Yu Dafu's "Sinking" (*Chenlun*, 1921), one of the most popular pieces in the May Fourth literary canon, reflects the complexity of the Chinese diaspora stories. The story portrays a Chinese student studying in Japan, then a popular destination because of the relatively low tuition fees and shorter distance from the homeland, and because more schools were open to Chinese students there than in its American and European counterparts. Considered the "Eastern foreign land" (*dongyang*) in contrast to the "Western foreign land" (*xiyang*) of America and Europe, Japan also appealed to Chinese students as a place where Western knowledge and technology had already been incorporated into its own culture. Kirk A. Denton has succinctly depicted this paradoxical position of Japan for Chinese students: this "symbolic ambiguous" island nation stood, in the minds of Chinese intellectuals, as "both the cause of Chinese national humiliation (i.e. defeat in the 1894-95 war, the Twenty-one Demands, and the Treaty of Versailles) and the shining paragon of an Asian nation which had successfully modernized along the Western model."⁸ Apart from "a sense of national shame" and "haunting questions about why Japan had succeeded in national modernization when China was failing so miserably," Denton points out, Yu Dafu's work also reminds its readers of the dramatic "contrast with the days when China was learned master and Japan humble pupil."⁹

Like many Chinese students in Japan at that time, the protagonist in "Sinking" is studying medicine, as so willed by his elder brother, but he finds himself drawn to English and German

romantic poetry as an escape from his depressing experience as an inferior Chinese looked down upon as a “Shina,” a derogatory word used by the Japanese to discriminate against the Chinese. His situation becomes worse as he struggles without success against what Denton calls a “profound sense of lack, both sexual and national.” After sleeping with a Japanese woman, he feels worthless as a weak Chinese (nation) who could not find the inner strength to resist outside power.¹⁰ In the in-between space of Japan, Denton points out, the protagonist’s dilemma cannot be explained simply as being torn between traditional China and the modern West. Furthermore, the protagonist is, like many other writers of this times, “at once attached and repelled” by both iconoclasm and nationalism in response to the impact of Western imperialism, since “the Western model of self needed for the iconoclastic stance is ultimately terrifying to the Chinese intellectual because it cuts him off from the possibility of linkage as a means toward social and national renewal.”¹¹ As we shall see in the following discussion, May Fourth writers related to various discourses (such as Chinese traditionalism, Western enlightenment, Japanese modernism, Korean colonialism, Soviet socialism, and American liberalism) in ambivalent ways at different historical moments. Protagonists in such stories as “Sinking,” therefore, cannot be reduced merely to “victims of Japanese imperialism’s subjugation of China.”¹² From a different perspective, one could even argue that “Sinking” pioneered a form of Chinese diasporic writing that locates the land of the other as an inevitable space of awakening, both in personal and political terms. By situating his protagonist in Japan, the author brings out even more acutely the protagonist’s sense of being an inferior Chinese. The author speaks out, in a distinctively “Chinese” voice, against deteriorating circumstances back home (in an iconoclast spirit) and against racial discrimination (in a Chinese nationalist spirit) through the narrative space of his

protagonist. Viewing Yu's works as mere reflections of colonial experience dramatically reduces the complexity of the May Fourth writings, especially those written away from China, which sometimes take a different perspective on things Chinese and foreign. Furthermore, such monolithic readings also disregard the complexity of the narrative structure, which inevitably consists of dialogues, distances, and ironic tensions among author, implied author, narrator, reader, implied reader, and protagonists, as Denton has cogently described.¹³

Equally important in modern Chinese literary history, but less studied in the English language scholarship, is Lu Xun's short story "Professor Fujino" (*Tengye xiansheng*, 1926). A more upbeat story than "Sinking," "Professor Fujino" expresses another paradoxical view of the Japanese. In this autobiographical piece, Lu Xun (the "I"-narrator) describes Professor Fujino, his anatomy teacher at the Sendai Medical School, who treats him with respect as a new student from China. Unlike some of his contemporaries, Professor Fujino does not look down on the Chinese; on the contrary, he studied Chinese in high school and admires Chinese culture.¹⁴ Concerned that the narrator's Japanese might not be fluent enough to follow his lectures, Professor Fujino decides to look over his student's class notes, and he carefully corrects them. After the narrator is ranked 66th among the 142 students for his examination scores,¹⁵ however, prejudiced Japanese classmates accuse him of cheating, citing as evidence the many marks Professor Fujino had made in his notebook, which apparently indicated where the exam questions would be. Since China is a weak country, the narrator reflects, it is assumed that an average grade is too good to be true for an inferior Chinese man with "low intelligence." Such a racial sentiment was popular in Japan especially after the Russo-Japanese War, which, although fought in Chinese territory, resulted in Japan's control of China's Lüshun port and the South

Manchurian Railway as well as other privileges after Russia's defeat. Worse than this national humiliation, the narrator has to bear the insult of the Japanese student who writes the anonymous letter accusing him of cheating, which begins with a quote from the New Testament: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was a popular phrase in Japan at the time, because Tolstoy used it to advise the Russian czar and the Japanese emperor against their war policies. Nevertheless, it is absurd to use this phrase to hurt an innocent Chinese student.¹⁶ Pondering over the foreign aggressions against China in the past sixty to seventy years, including Japan's condescending view of the Chinese as poor citizens of a declining Qing dynasty, the narrator wonders if medicine is the best means to help bring about a healthy China. His sense of mission becomes clearer after the famous slide incident, in which he sees Japanese soldiers executing a Chinese man accused of spying for Russia, while other Chinese look on indifferently. This becomes a turning point for him in his decision to give up medicine in order to pursue a literary career, whereby he can educate the Chinese people.

In her *Primitive Passions*, Rey Chow describes the same incident, but from an earlier and much-cited text: Lu Xun's preface to his *Call to Arms* (*Nahan*). Exploring this occasion as "the beginning of a new kind of discourse in the postcolonial 'third world,'" Rey Chow goes beyond the usual autobiographical reading by defining it as the beginning of a "discourse of technologized visuality" that explains "an experience of the power of a spectacle transmitted by the film medium"—hence, an emerging modernity.¹⁷ Lydia Liu, on the other hand, discusses the same incident from both texts but focuses on "the violence of representation," which raises important issues in the formation of Lu Xun's discourse of Chinese national characters, a theory

he borrowed from the American missionary Arthur Smith, though not without reservation, given “his situated subjectivity as a Chinese.”¹⁸

Whereas both postcolonial readings enhance our understanding of the problems confronting a major Chinese writer under imperialist conditions, I want to emphasize the other side of the story: Lu Xun’s portrayal of a Japanese man as an inspiring model for his literary career, which subsequently enabled him to write against Japanese imperialism. Paying particular attention to the context of “Professor Fujino,” one might argue that his contact with Professor Fujino as a Chinese abroad played an equally important role in his “turning point”; it facilitated the slide incident and situated it in the narrative space of his depiction of a sympathetic Japanese teacher/mentor. He saw in the professor an embodiment of their shared hope for a new China. He treasured him as a “great man,” even though his name remained unknown in Japan.¹⁹ He regretted that he never fulfilled his promise to send him a photograph of himself, nor did he ever write to him. Yet he hung the professor’s photograph in his study to remember him by, especially to inspire him when he felt lazy or tired in the middle of the night. It was therefore in Japan, where racism against the Chinese ran rampant, that Lu Xun/the I-narrator spoke against such experiences in his creation of a positive other in Professor Fujino. Lu Xun’s depiction of Professor Fujino as a Japanese mentor can be seen as disrupting the stability of an ontological “Chinese” or “Japanese” identity, or as either “the oppressed” or “the oppressor.” It provides a narrative space in which binary categories such as these are interrogated in their local and personal contexts.

In the following discussion of other stories of Chinese abroad, we witness a similar pattern in which foreign role models, mother figures, and women friends (especially lovers) in

remote countries play a significant role in the construction of what the protagonists believe to be their “Chinese” identities, although the protagonists usually live among racist foreigners. It is sometimes in a seemingly strange foreign land that Chinese protagonists find a catalyst by which they transform themselves into stronger persons, whose stories abroad, in turn, become significant ingredients for their creative writings as literary figures of the May Fourth period. Even in an unequal relationship between China and its “superior” others, there are particular moments when some of the foreigners provide the Chinese abroad opportunities to liberate themselves from their trapped past, and from a sense of subjugation to colonialism.

An interesting case in point is Guo Moruo’s “Late Spring” (*Canchun*, 1922). Also set in Japan in the 1920s, the story reads almost as if it were a critical response to the dark world of “Sinking.” Whereas the protagonist in “Sinking” thinks about drowning himself after a sexual liaison with a Japanese prostitute, in “Late Spring” the I-narrator takes care of a Mr. He, who had attempted to drown himself in the sea upon hearing of his father’s death in China. After visiting his friend in the hospital, however, the narrator, while away from home for the first time, dreams about the Japanese nurse he met during the day who takes care of Mr. He. At the very moment when he is about to examine her shapely body for possible tuberculosis (since he is a medical student), his friend interrupts him with the shocking news that his wife has just killed his two sons in revenge for his infidelity. Awakened from his nightmare, the narrator rushes home, only to find his sons and wife safe and sound, his wife smiling at his confession of his fleeting thought of betrayal. In a way similar to “Sinking,” “Late Spring” expresses the loneliness and alienation of Chinese students abroad. The narrator laments that Mr. He would choose to die in a foreign land, away from home. While helping his friend to overcome his grief, however, the narrator, in

an almost comic manner, comes to appreciate the love and understanding of his wife only after his encounter with a Japanese woman. Rather than a sexual lure to decadency and despair, as seen in “Sinking,” here the dream world of an imagined sexual endeavor allows the narrator to fantasize about an *affaire d’amour* that never materializes in the “real” world of the narrative space. The encounter with the Japanese woman thus functions as a catalyst for him to appreciate his own family and culture. This instructive event thus frees him from the otherwise subjugated position as a Chinese in the diaspora. Against such local and personal backgrounds, the meaning of “Japanese” becomes fluid, changeable, and subjective according to the narrator’s specific experience in the land of the other. The stories of the “Chinese” turn out to be those not of a downtrodden racial group but of individuals, such as a friend trapped in his own tradition and an overseas student confused by his sexual desires while seeking his personal and cultural identities.

In contrast to Guo’s story, which focuses on the libido and the unconscious world, Li Yeren’s “Sympathy” (*Tongqing*, 1923) records a more down-to-earth experience: the sixty-two days the I-narrator spends in a French hospital, where he overcomes the fear of dying in a foreign land. Indeed, one way to read “Sympathy” is to interpret it as expressing the narrator’s ambiguities about both modern French society and his own Chinese traditions. In a clearly iconoclastic spirit, for instance, the narrator begins his diary by stating that after having searched for “sympathy” for many years without success in China, he unexpectedly finds it in Paris after only ten months. “Whatever you fail to find, your best luck is to search outside of your own country,” he declares.²⁰ He feels fortunate to have received high-quality care in a hospital established for poor people who cannot afford medical treatment and is especially grateful to an amiable doctor and a blue-eyed, beautiful nurse. He discovers that the city of Paris is in fact

divided into twenty *arrondissements*, many of which have established hospitals free of charge for poor people. He also depicts a loving relationship between himself and Mrs. Simon, who, having lost her own son in World War I, offers a motherly love for a “sick child” from China.²¹ When she visits him in the hospital, he cannot help but embrace her as if she were his own mother. The war-torn history of both countries has resulted in bonding between otherwise strangers. He does not suffer any discriminatory treatment as an inferior Chinese, even though the Chinese had been depicted as the “sick men of East Asia” (*dongya bingfu*); instead, he is taken care of as a “sick man” in a foreign country without money, family ties, and relatives.

It is, however, from the position of a Chinese intellectual who is proud of his own ancient civilization and culture—which he feels all the more keenly once he is away from home—that the narrator also expresses his misgivings about what he understands to be the “French culture.” Mrs. Simon finds it hard to comprehend the fact that because of his determination to study abroad, it will probably be eight years before he sees his wife again. In the past thirty-eight years, Mrs. Simon declares, she has followed her husband everywhere he has gone; unless one is not in love or has no choice but to be drafted for the war, we French couples can never be parted, even for a week. The narrator wonders how he can possibly help a French woman understand his situation: his wife still lives in his hometown in China with his mother, and he bid his farewell only a few days after their wedding. Above all else, how can a French woman understand that both he and his wife are indeed very much in love? Nor can she understand that for a Chinese couple, geographical distance can only make their hearts grow fonder, and that they can indeed resist any temptations while apart. In his belief that the Europeans have stronger sexual desires than the “Far Eastern peoples,” the narrator further essentializes the French as being

physiologically different from the Chinese. In his view, European women seem to believe that women are born for love whereas men are born for the sake of providing such love; under no circumstance would men sacrifice their love for a woman. By contrast, Far Eastern people, the narrator claims, are gentler and more implicit in their expression of love and hence prone to being misconstrued as lacking unconditional or passionate love.

Yet as soon as the narrator essentializes the Chinese as spiritually more sophisticated than the French and hence advances a Chinese nationalistic position, he is perhaps at the same time led by his own iconoclastic stance to advocate a “strong subject, perceived as autonomous from political power and conventional social values.”²² Echoing the May Fourth sentiment of “saving the children” from a cannibalistic Confucian society, he expresses his concerns for the future generations in China if Western individualism, enlightenment, and humanism are not properly introduced. It is perhaps why he goes so far as to claim that the French are indeed an innately superior race to the Chinese: French women enjoy robust and physically impressive men, and French men adore healthy, mature women; shouldn’t we Chinese worry about a weaker quality of offspring, since we Chinese men prefer weak, delicate, precious, and useless women, like Lin Daiyu in the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, while our Chinese women desire effeminate men?²³

The story is ultimately more complicated than what I can account for in the limited space here. Suffice say that the author/narrator’s search for a better model for social progress in the West leads, in part, to a self-imposed racial view that favors the French over the Chinese. Such a stance becomes even more problematic when the narrator depicts the so-called equality between black men and white women in France. He encounters in the hospital, for instance, a middle-aged black man who is visited by a gorgeous white woman; apparently, she is deeply in love with him.

He claims that it is not uncommon for the French to see black men walking arm in arm with white women in the streets, but for people from the Far East such as himself, it nevertheless takes a while to get used to. Does the author/narrator depict the French as less prejudiced toward the black than the Chinese, or does he construct a Chinese national identity that is at once inferior to the French and superior to the black? Or does he construct a series of contradictory images that reflects his ambivalent attitude toward his own culture and others?

In my view, one way to explain the ironic tensions between iconoclasm and nationalism in this story is to examine the narrator's personal circumstances at the moment of writing. The narrator states that although being sick far away from home is not desirable, his misfortune nevertheless turns out to be a good thing, for he has a chance to see the "real picture" of France from the unique perspective of commoners in a hospital established for them, which is a perspective unavailable in China.²⁴ Being poor, sick, and foreign, he is particularly impressed by the social equality between the rich and the poor, which the French at least attempted to address. The issue of class equality, therefore, might have affected his view of racial equality and explain his particular attention to the seemingly acceptable practice of interracial relationships. A reversal in class status, from cultural elite at home to commoner in a foreign land, therefore, may have played a role in his perceptions of the race/nation issues in France. This overemphasis on equality could also partially explain his comment that even poor French workers appear to have the same kind of mannerisms and sophistication as the senior advisors to the prime minister, unlike China, where one can hardly miss the differences between the elite (*shangdeng ren*) and the commoners (*xiadeng ren*). The essentialist racial characterization in this text, however problematic, stems from the author's overall concern with social equality both in China and

abroad and account for his construction of what he calls “the true spirit of the French commoners (*Faguo pingmin de zhen jingshen*)” after his own near-death experience.²⁵

These intersecting views of class and race can also be understood from the intellectual contexts of the period. One can trace, for instance, this image of France as a mythical place where one can pursue social equality to the time prior to the May Fourth period. As Peng Ming points out, Chen Duxiu, in his pre-Communist days, looked to the “French civilization” as an inspirational model for the future of a better China. In an essay entitled “The French and Modern Civilizations” (*Falanxi ren yu jinshi wenming*), published in the first issue of *Youth (Qingnian)*, Chen declared that although people from other Western countries contributed to European civilization as a whole, the French were indeed the pioneers who had made the earliest and most significant contributions. Like many of his contemporaries, Chen was attracted to the French Revolution, to its “Declaration of the Rights of Man,” and to its motto, “Every man is equal before the law.”²⁶ This intellectual tradition partially led to the work-study program for Chinese students in France that began in 1912, a program that from 1919 to 1920 alone brought as many as 1,600 Chinese students to France. In his 1920 farewell speech to students departing for France, Wu Yuzhang explained their purposes abroad: France was “the center of European civilization with new academic achievements and technological innovations”; it was also an important site for investigating the unfolding Russian revolution.²⁷ From a different, yet related, perspective, delving to the bottom of this advanced capitalist society to work alongside the proletarian class was seen as one of the most valuable training experiences for the first generation of Chinese Communists.²⁸ Against such diverse intellectual backgrounds, the narrator’s positive, yet

questionable depictions of France²⁹ can be seen as reflecting his own search for a spiritual China yet to emerge as an equal player to the West, however imagined that West turns out to be.

In contrast to Li's "Sympathy," which constructs France as a place of paradoxes, Jiang Guangci's "On the Yalu River" (*Yalujiang shang*, 1926), set in the early years of the Soviet Union, depicts a socialist country as an inspirational space to collect heroic stories. In an interesting structure of a story-within-a-story, the narrator, a Chinese student studying in the Soviet Union, recounts the story of Yungu, a Korean woman who sacrificed her life in the nationalist struggle against Japanese occupation. While staying in Moscow at a nunnery that serves as a makeshift dormitory for foreign students, the narrator and his Persian roommate take to heart the tragic love story of Li Menghan, their Korean roommate. The fates of Li and Yungu, who grew up together as sweethearts in Korea, were sealed by their common family and national history. After Japan's occupation of Korea in 1910, the Japanese murdered Li's father after he assassinated a Japanese police officer; Li's grief-stricken mother threw herself into the sea to protest her husband's murder. Yungu's parents took Li in, and Yungu comforted and took care of him as a mother. To flee from Japanese persecution, Yungu sent Li across the Yalu River to escape to China and later on went across the Chinese border to join the Soviet Red Army to fight for the independence of Korea and other oppressed countries. Six years later, however, Li was grief-stricken by the tragic news that Yungu had been tortured to death in a Japanese prison in Korea as a leader of national independence. Li still mourns for the beauty, purity, and nobility of his fiancée, a saintly woman who is irreplaceable in his heart. This story of a Korean heroine—a story that traveled across various countries—helps a Chinese national in the Soviet Union confirm his shared destiny with other oppressed peoples in the world. This story of multiple

perspectives and geopolitical locales thus *constitutes* for him a new Chinese identity, which is not confined by his own national and racial boundaries.

At the intersection of race and nation, moreover, gender politics also plays a role: a maternal figure becomes inspirational to male audiences both in the dormitory and beyond the immediate narrative space, thereby validating the Russian revolution, a model for the Chinese and Korean revolutions. Indeed, the image of Yungu adds an interesting dimension to the group of new women Hu Ying insightfully studies in her *Tales of Translation*, which “traces the production, circulation, and appropriation” of imported images of Western women in the late Qing period, such as the Lady of the Camellias, Sophia Perovskaia, and Madame Roland. Similar to Madame Roland, Yungu has also been “cast in a range of roles, from a helpful mate to her husband to a powerful political activist in her own right.”³⁰ She thus helps “narrate the complex relationship between imagining a foreign other and reimagining the self amid the interplay of local and global forces.”³¹ She is depicted at the same time, however, as a virtuous woman who showed filial piety to her parents and her fiancée, according to the decrees of traditional society. The image of Yungu might suggest a possible solution to the dilemma of the May Fourth generation with regard to its ironic tension between iconoclasm and nationalism. One might argue, for instance, that a happy medium is achieved in the characterization of Yungu as a self-conscious nationalist against Japanese colonialism and her filial piety to her parents, who, although aristocratic in family background, nevertheless became patriots against foreign occupation, thus preempting the necessity for the iconoclastic stance sometimes required of modern heroes and heroines.

The reimagining of the self and other at the intersection of the local and the global becomes more intricate in Zhang Wentian's novel *Journey (Lütu, 1924)*, set in 1920s America, where he lived from August 20, 1922, to the end of 1923.³² Historians have neglected this chapter of Zhang's life and stress instead his later and longer experience in the Soviet Union, where the CCP sent him in 1925 to receive formal Communist education. An emerging young leader by the age of twenty-five who was thoroughly trained in Marxist and Leninist theories of socialist revolution, he was dispatched back to China in 1931 by the Comintern to assume a leading position in the CCP.³³ In our context of stories of the Chinese diaspora, then, what does Zhang's early piece on America, written before his Soviet experience, tell us about his perception of a capitalist country? How did he construct an America in relationship to his knowledge of other foreign cultures and literatures? What in his views of America reflected his experience as an overseas Chinese in the 1920s? Similar to many of his contemporaries, Zhang was influenced by progressive journals such as *New Youth (Xin qingnian)* and *Shenbao*, and had already published numerous essays, other prose, and new poetry while participating in the political debates on labor issues, rural society, cultural movements, and marriage and family relationships.³⁴ He also brought out scholarly essays on the literary theories of Tolstoy and Oscar Wilde, and was among the first few Chinese scholar to examine Goethe's *Faust* and its spirit of fully participating in life's journey, in spite of all obstacles.³⁵

Recognized as a young literary talent and translator, Zhang Wentian was invited by fellow members of the Youth China Study Association (*Shaonian Zhongguo xuehui*) to study in San Francisco while working as an editor for a Chinese newspaper. Three months later, however, after his arrival in the United States, Zhang expressed his resentment at the racial discrimination

and materialist pursuits in America in a letter to Yu Dafu on November 22, 1922. As a lonely foreigner living in the “Sahara desert” in the West, Zhang also missed China, his homeland.³⁶ In the library at the University of California at Berkeley, Zhang continued his study of world affairs, which only confirmed his belief in socialism, especially after he had lived in America and witnessed its social evils with his own eyes. To his Chinese readers, he wrote about his excitement over the successful new economic policies in the Soviet Union. He also analyzed the political situations in postwar England, Germany, France, and America. He predicted (rightly, as it turned out) that in spite of the ongoing negotiations of treaties and war reparations between these countries, the irreconcilable differences among them as both new and old imperialist rivals would no doubt bring about another world war some twenty years hence. He urged the Chinese people to overthrow the capitalist system and to build China into a “shining and gigantic country” that could become a model for all oppressed people from the so-called “weak nations.”³⁷

On one level, *Journey* can be seen as a blueprint of how these idealistic visions can be achieved through one individual’s quest for love and for the meaning of life. Writing in America at this particular moment in his life, Zhang combined his Marxist tendencies with his romantic spirit—acquired through Western literature—in his depictions of the numinous journey of Junkai and his entanglement with three women: a Chinese woman and two American women. Instead of assigning to each woman the distinction of being either a Chinese or American woman, however, the author creates in each a substitute for what is missing in the protagonist’s life at a particular moment. The first part of the novel, for instance, begins with Junkai, an engineer in an American company in California who is dispirited by racial discrimination and boredom. He has

just received a heartbreaking letter from Yunqing, his lover in China who is about to marry a stranger, according to her mother's wish. Yunqing's letter plunges him into a deep depression, which results in his lying in bed for eight days. It is during this period that Anna enters his life. This blue-eyed, blond, American woman seems to understand his pain without any explanation. Although an American in appearance, Anna acts and speaks in a way very similar to Yunqing; indeed, she replaces Yunqing as his loving companion in America, in a foreign land where the protagonist misses his female companion even more than before.

The story then shifts back to China, explaining in a flashback Junkai's reason for coming to America in the first place. Two years earlier, in the suffocating, humid city of Tianjin, he was working at an engineering company in a job he resented and was living a tedious life without purpose. Drowning in alcohol and loneliness, he accepted an invitation to work in San Francisco. He knew that living in America would not necessarily mean a better life; he might feel even more lonely than before and perhaps might even die as "a dog" overseas.³⁸ In this moment of despair, with no prospect of happiness in either country, he encountered Yunqing on his way from Tianjin to Shanghai. An innocent, lively, and beautiful woman who breathed new life into his existence, Yunqing revived his spirit and inspired him to search for a better life. Although she had agreed to fulfill her mother's wish and go ahead with her arranged marriage, Yunqing promised Junkai to remain his true love forever, and to cheer him on as he journeyed to America. In this depiction of Yunqing, the author provides the protagonist with a timely object of romantic love to substitute for his unrequited love for his motherland. Whereas her suffering allegorizes the misery of China under Confucian bondage, Yunqing's devotion energizes him while at the same time releasing him from his ties to China.

It is important to note that in the character of Yunqing, Zhang Wentian also was speaking from his own experience as a victim of the system of arranged marriage. Similar to Yunqing, he had married a stranger for fear of breaking his mother's heart. When he writes of Junkai's forgiving the "cruelty" of Yunqing's mother, after Junkai's realization that an arranged marriage is what a loving mother is expected to do in a Confucian society,³⁹ Zhang is in effect forgiving his own mother. Zhang further depicts Junkai as having been trapped in the same dilemma, but in this case the timely death of his parents relieved Junkai of the need to go through with his arranged marriage. One detects here a strategy of double substitutions: by offering Junkai a way out of his arranged marriage, Zhang rewrites his own life experience in a scenario that best resolves the tension between his filial piety and his rebellion against such tradition. By projecting onto Yunqing his own past experience, Zhang accentuates the tragic effects of Confucianism on a female victim while at the same time preserving for the male protagonist the role of her supporter against tradition.

Whereas the first part of the story begins in America and traces the protagonist's life back to China, the second part focuses on his experience in the United States. Projecting his own view of China into his American characters, Zhang depicts Anna's mother as extremely progressive; she does not take for granted China's inferior position in the world. In their first conversation, Anna's mother voices her dissatisfaction with a hostile world in which human beings are divided by national and racial boundaries, such as the Chinese, Japanese, Americans, and British, whose prejudice and hatred have resulted in world wars. She also expresses her resentment upon hearing Chinese being addressed as "Chinamen" and "Chinks," or Japanese as "Japs." To her, such racism merely proves the ignorance of those Americans who fail to appreciate China's ancient

civilization.⁴⁰ Such views have apparently deeply affected Anna, who admires the Chinese so much that she falls in love with Junkai. She writes him weekly letters to discuss world affairs, especially with regard to China, and comforts him during their walks together along the moonlit river in Yosemite. He cannot, however, allow himself to return her love for fear of forgetting Yunqing, who depends on his love letters to help her endure her meaningless existence in China.

While distancing himself emotionally from Anna, however, Junkai is drawn to Margaret, a Berkeley student of French literature who is equally devoted to China. Margaret becomes even more irresistible after she finally confides her own tragic love story to Junkai. She vowed never to get married again after her conservative New England mother drove away her true love, a struggling novelist without much financial prospects. Upon hearing Margaret's story, Junkai feels happy for the first time since his arrival in America, for he has finally found a soul mate, who resents the materialist aspects of America as much as he resents China's centuries' old traditions. He discovers in Margaret an equal, who, similar in fate to Yunqing, proves nevertheless stronger in her will to fight against her mother's prejudice. Embodying the same kind of femininity as Yunqing and Anna, Margaret demonstrates a braver spirit than his own. As a leftist from Berkeley, Margaret indeed revives his early desire to participate in the Chinese revolution. Inspired by the recent establishment of a revolutionary party in China, Margaret encourages him to go back to his home country, where he can make a difference. The second part of the story ends with Margaret's death in a hospital in Chicago, on her way to join Junkai in the West Coast before their journey together to China. No longer able to fight alongside him in China, she urges him to overcome his sentimental mentality: her last words are "charge on, my Junkai." The third part of the story shifts back to China, where Junkai has been appointed deputy

commander of the revolutionary army. After Yunqing nurses his wounds, he returns to the battlefield, where he dies. He is remembered by his comrades as a worthy member of the revolutionary party of the “Grand China” (*Da Zhongguo*).

Before all this happened, there had been one more important moment in the story back in America: after having discovered that Junkai was indeed attracted to Margaret, a heartbroken Anna threw herself into the river. Eventually, he lost two American women, whose memory urged him on in the struggle for a better and stronger China. This episode reminds me of an intriguing scene in David Huang’s play *M. Butterfly*, which premiered in 1988. The play, based on a true story, is a reversal of the Western masterpiece *Madame Butterfly*, in which a Japanese woman kills herself for an American GI. Huang’s play tells the story of Rene Gallimard, a French diplomat whose fantasy of being loved by a butterfly lures him to fall in love with Song Liling, a Chinese woman who turns out to be a man. Huang’s play thus pokes fun at the cultural stereotype of “yet another lotus blossom pining away for a cruel Caucasian man, and dying for her love.”⁴¹ In one scene, Song challenges Gallimard’s favorite fantasies about submissive Oriental women killing themselves for cruel white men. Whereas the French man considers such stories “beautiful,” he would probably consider a blonde homecoming queen a “deranged idiot” if she fell in love with a short Japanese man who treated her cruelly while turning down “marriage from a young Kennedy.”⁴²

Suck an unlikely story of a Western woman falling in love with an Oriental man, however, indeed occurs in Zhang Wentian’s *Journey*, in which not just one but two beautiful American women—one blonde, one brunette—die for a Chinese man. Not only did a beautiful blonde kill herself for the love of a “sickly” Chinese without financial prospects, but an

intelligent American brunette even began her own journey to follow him to China to fight for his country. Zhang did see his story as “beautiful,” one for which he had fought all his life, as his later revolutionary career proved. Almost seventy years before Huang, then, Zhang concurred with Huang’s critique of a racist America where “race and sex intersect the issue of imperialism.”⁴³ In Zhang’s story, however, the Westerners who die for an Easterner are women and not men, therefore further dissecting the stereotypical and binary view of the imperialist (masculine) West and colonized (feminine) East that Huang so brilliantly satirizes. On different levels of narrative strategy, the signifiers attached to the West and the East are constantly in flux, having to do less with geographical divides than with diverse cultural conceptions. At certain moments in the story, both China and the United States are seen as inspirational: the romantic landscape in California with its waterfalls, moonlit rivers, camping grounds, and national parks seems to coexist in Junkai’s mind with the peaceful rural area of his home in China,⁴⁴ inspiring his wish to serve it better upon his return from America. At other moments, however, America is seen as equally corrupt and demoralizing and, like China, in need of political reorientation. Taken as a whole, the story depicts America neither as an ideological ideal against which China should measure its progress nor as a monolithic space of capitalist evils without spiritual pursuits. In the combined voices of one Chinese man and two American women in their quest for a better world, the story cuts across boundaries of sex, race, and nation to critique the negative aspects of both countries while embracing their constructive elements. Whereas the criticism of America’s racial discrimination and unequal power relationships, voiced by Anna’s mother and Margaret, demonstrates that the West is not monolithic, Junkai’s protest against China’s stagnating history and his people’s lack of spirit questions the simple equation of “West

= imperialism, China = victims of such imperialism.” To some extent, the story reads almost like an international romance between an enlightened Chinese man and two renaissance American women, who bridge two cultures in their imaginary ideal. In this romantic entanglement, a “perfect” Chinese woman in Yunqing provides another soulmate to Junkai, who understands his journey between East and West.

Considering the Chinese diaspora stories of the 1980s in the intellectual contexts of the 1920s stories discussed above, how did the motivations of the students in the eighties resemble or differ from those in the twenties? How did the writings of the Chinese diaspora help us understand the Chinese conceptions of the self and others in a postsocialist state grappling with the aftermath of Maoist China, which also demanded a reintroduction of Western science and democracy? Despite their obvious differences, the 1980s shared a surprisingly similar cultural atmosphere with that of the 1920s. Like the 1920s, which witnessed intellectual ferment and a sense of immense possibilities, the 1980s marked a new era, welcomed as a chance to overcome the cultural and ideological legacy of Maoist China. Both periods expressed a sense of backwardness when China opened up to the outside, with a steady flow of Chinese students going abroad. In their very popular reportage entitled “Exchanging Revolutionary Experience in the World” (*Shijie da chuanlian*, 1987), Hu Ping and Zhang Shengyou recorded the historical contexts of this new wave of students going abroad.

In borrowing the phrase “exchanging revolutionary experience,” Hu and Zhang were drawing from their immediate past history. The phrase originally referred to the mass movement in 1966 of more than fifty million Red Guards who traveled to different parts of China to spread

Mao Zedong's message about the necessity of the Cultural Revolution. Hu and Zhang saw this movement as one of the origins of the overseas-student movement of the 1980s; some of these students were indeed ex-Red Guards themselves. Similar to the Red Guards, whose destinations were revolutionary sites such as Beijing, Yan'an, Shaoshan, and the Jingguang Mountains, Chinese students also had their clear goals, North America, Japan, France, and Italy, with the United States as the most popular destination. Unlike the Red Guards, however, who returned to their hometowns a few months later, Chinese students seldom went back to China, many of them settling down instead as overseas Chinese. In contrast to the passionate yet quickly waning Red Guard movement, moreover, the trend of Chinese students going abroad was still gathering momentum and would consequently exert a lasting impact on China.⁴⁵ How did the country respond to this tremendous change? Was this trend beneficial to China? What were the reasons behind this trend? What did this phenomenon tell us about the mentality and hopes of the people going abroad and the people they left behind? These were some of the issues that drove the writing of Hu and Zhang's reportage, which was supposedly based on real people and real events.

To explore these questions, Hu and Zhang began their study by examining the devastating impact of the "brain drain" on China. At the China Opera House, for instance, four out of five actresses who had played the title role of *Carmen* in five years during the early 1980s had left the country to become foreign stars.⁴⁶ Its symphony lost one third of its players, who after having received training worth tens of thousands of government dollars, were easily lured away to music schools abroad by small financial aid packages. One professor lamented that throughout his teaching career in half a century, he had never seen so many students so eager to leave him for foreign universities. To answer the charge that these students worshipped things foreign and had

deserted China, which needed their talents the most, Hu and Zhang explored the roots of the problem: China's neglect of its own talents. In a 1986 article, for instance, the *Wenhui Bao* reported that at least two thirds of the technicians and scientists in Shanghai had not been able to put their expertise to use, with another third never appointed to the positions appropriate for their training. Consequently, many intellectuals sought employment unconnected with their training because it paid better salary and benefits. In an opening bid for managing positions in a Hilton Hotel, three hundred people applied, most of whom were university professors and advanced graduate students in other fields. In tough competition, one out of eight were hired, almost the current ratio for the competitive selection of graduate students in Chinese universities.

To further explain why some young people were anxious to leave China, Hu and Zhang narrated the story of Ouyang Caiwei, whose parents and grandparents were returned students from foreign countries. Because her mother had studied English at UCLA in 1947, Ouyang was denied entry to college during the Cultural Revolution, in spite of her mother's explanation that her study abroad was sponsored by a woman's association that supported Asian and African students, which had nothing to do with the imperialist U.S. government. At the age of thirty-seven, Ouyang decided to follow in her mother's footsteps. She wanted to make more money abroad while training herself to be a better scientist in a more advanced country. Ouyang made it clear that her journey abroad would be for only a few years and that she would definitely return to China. "I am from the Third World. I will come back after I have improved myself. Who would rather live in the First World only as a Third-World citizen?"⁴⁷

Through this story and others, Hu and Zhang demonstrated that "worshipping things foreign" could not fully explain why so many Chinese people chose to leave. By going abroad to

improve their livelihood, these people had succeeded where their government had failed. The movement to study abroad could thus be seen as “tidal waves gushing through the two valleys of hope and disappointment.” Until we have established a new system of respecting individual talents, Hu and Zhang argued, the movement to “exchange revolutionary experience in the world” would continue to gain momentum. “We pin our hopes on the economic and political reform of China,” Hu and Zhang concluded. When China eventually becomes a strong nation in its own right, they predicted, another global movement to “exchange revolutionary experience in the world” would begin; the final destination, however, would be China, with a constant flow of talents from the West to the East. Such a prediction was not a self-congratulating and farfetched daydream, Hu and Zhang claimed, since many experts already believed that the twenty-first century would indeed be the century of Asia, with the economic and political success of the Pacific Rim.⁴⁸ In Hu and Zhang’s reportage, one detects an approach that assumes China will become a superpower, a vision of a “grand China” such as Zhang Wentian projected into his nationalist heroes in the 1920s. It also echoed the optimistic post-Mao discourse of openness and reform expressed by *He Shang* and Shakespearean theater in the 1980s, which addressed mostly the domestic situation in China.

Hu Ping’s reportage provided a look at the sociopolitical circumstances within China that influenced Chinese students’ going abroad in the 1980s, giving the point of view of one outside the movement. Zhou Li’s *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan (Manhadunde Zhongguo nuren, 1992)*, in contrast, offered an insider’s account of her personal journey, with a focus on her life in America and its impact on her reflections of China’s past.⁴⁹ It has been reported that within five months of its initial release, Zhou’s book was reprinted four times with at least 500,000 copies

sold throughout the country. One private book-dealer profited from such a sudden demand of the book by reportedly wholesaling 60,000 pirated copies. Eventually, this book made it to the top of the list of best-selling literary works in the Fifth National Book Exhibition, a fact that, according to one critic, testifies to "readers' enthusiasm unprecedented in the past few years."⁵⁰

First published in Beijing, in July 1992, as "autobiographical fiction," supposedly based on the exotic experiences of a native-born Chinese woman living in the West, *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan* was said to have touched many hearts⁵¹ with its exceptional tale of how a poor Chinese woman, presented in the text as a "I" narrator, became rich and famous in Manhattan in less than four years after her arrival in the United States in 1985. Added to this "American-dream" story, were passionate accounts of the narrator's unrequited love for various Chinese men during the Cultural Revolution when love affairs, where they took place at all, were sometimes made or broken on the basis of political considerations. For many Chinese readers, this cross-cultural success story surely seemed to continue the literary traditions of "Wounds Literature" and "Reflective Literature" (*fansi wenxue*), which depict the suffering and sacrifice of young people and of their parents during the Cultural Revolution and which were popular in the days after the death of Mao. Yet at the same time, this book was noted for its having moved beyond post-Cultural-Revolutionary traditions in its creation of a new world of literature, where an ordinary Chinese woman had risen to the top of the American world through her extraordinary talents and by the sheer force of her will.⁵²

The book was so popular in 1992 with its wide spectrum of readers, many of whom read, cried, and admired the "spiritual strength" of the author.⁵³ What is the charisma, one critic asks, of this Chinese woman in Manhattan that appeals simultaneously to old and young, to men of

letters and to entrepreneurs as well?⁵⁴ The solution to the mystery of the book's attraction to contemporary Chinese readers can probably be discerned in a discussion of the book in a recent Chinese publication, which enthusiastically describes its "enlightening revelation of a success story of a single Chinese woman across the oceans," its "intimate remembrance of the arduous journey from Shanghai to the Northeast wilderness during the Cultural Revolution," and finally, its "inspiring emotions of Chinese national pride" and a longing for the motherland which permeated the book, as one critic claimed.⁵⁵

Yet *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan* became an even bigger hit when several overseas readers in the New York Chinese community furiously challenged it. Several recent immigrants who personally knew Zhou Li accused her of falsely using their names in her fiction in order to emphasize her success while fabricating her accounts of the way that other Chinese failed in American business while she succeeded spectacularly. Contrary to the claim made in the book that the author lived in a luxurious apartment near Central Park and traveled all over the world for business and pleasure, they pointed out that she actually continues to live with her family in a shared apartment in one of the poorest neighborhoods in New York.⁵⁶ In contrast to the claims of being a millionaire, they said she could not even afford her own office space to carry out her business activities.⁵⁷ "Not being rich is, of course, no crime," they argue, yet it is a crime to poison the mind of young Chinese who are naively deceived by Zhou's fantasy of an easy access to the "American dream."⁵⁸ By the standards of her overseas critics, Zhou's book is especially "harmful" since she claims that ninety-five percent of her "autobiographical fiction" was based on factual and personal experience. Yet this is not the case and that very fact challenges the thematic and ideological claims of the book in a very fundamental way. "How many tragedies

would this book help bring about for young people" who read it with sincerity and good will?⁵⁹

The "myth of the West" has to be quickly exposed to gain a balanced and realistic view of the West."⁶⁰

Elated by the successful sale of her book in China, however, Zhou Li declared that her next "biggest dream" was to produce an English translation so that it would become a "best seller" in the West as well as in China. If this really was a wish on her part, and not part of the elaborate fiction about herself that she has already constructed, it seems surprising. At the beginning of the book, the "I" narrator brags of her success in America while describing in great detail the failure of the American people in their own country. She remarks on the racial differences between herself, a poor Chinese woman who became a millionaire in a foreign land where she had to overcome numerous linguistic, cultural, and social obstacles, and those "gorgeous" American waitresses and secretaries working under her. These unfortunate Americans, who, "although blessed with all the advantages granted by God"--"white skin," "blue eyes," and "native language"--could only "live a poor life" with minimum wages and "extreme pressure from work."⁶¹ She asserts the superiority of white Western men over their non-Western, non-white counterparts in telling how she snatched such a man away from her American girl-friend, who had helped her since she first came to America. Having experienced many sorrows in her relationships with different men in China, Zhou says, it was this Western man, with "white, smooth skin," and beautiful European features," who had finally given her true love, genuine sexual pleasure, and a beautiful son who had European features. In contrast to her admiration of white males, however, Zhou deeply resents African-Americans. She reports how she felt insulted as a Chinese national when an African-American policeman attempted to stop an illegal Chinese

artist painting in the street of New York: "Aren't you blacks usually drug-dealers, robberies, murderers, and rapists your self?" she asks indignantly, "Why don't you punish them?"⁶²

In perhaps the most ironic aspect of these remarks and of the book as a whole, (See Kirk's comment--is that while self-complacent about a Chinese supremacy over the others in the West, p.34), the "I" narrator consciously acts both as a subordinate in Western hierarchical society and an active agent in pursuing its colonial interest in her native land. She depicts herself as a broker constantly shuttling between China, where third-world cheap labor and raw material were willingly provided, and metropolitan New York, the center of world trade. She celebrates the image of New York City as the center of Western imperialism and colonialism: "Park Avenue represents the splendor, luxury, generosity, and might of a golden empire."⁶³ "Manhattan is a miracle";⁶⁴ and New York is the "most charming city in the world."⁶⁵ Some Western readers are likely to read such claims as hilarious and unintended affirmations of their author's ignorance of the United States. But as the earlier ideologically questionable remarks about race and gender make clear, such an overt affirmation of Western imperialist power has serious ramifications. One of these has to do with the image of China as a nation that emerges from this discourse. The image of China as one's motherland is mixed together with the "I" narrator's self-esteem; being successful in America somehow testifies to the power of her motherland, which produces glorious offspring. The image of a Chinese nation as a soft, feminine, forgiving "motherland," embracing its children from overseas in spite of their condemnation of her past abuses, may evoke what Homi K. Bhabha calls the revelation of an "ambivalent margin of the nation-space" which can "contest claims to cultural supremacy, whether there are made from the 'old' post-

imperialist metropolitan nations, or on behalf of the 'new' independent nations of the periphery."⁶⁶

Yet it is precisely this questionable nationalist discourse that has touched the hearts of so many Chinese readers. He Zhenbang argues, for instance, that the "I" narrator's so-called "arrogance" is indeed "an expression of patriotism"--"every single business deal she helps to bring into China from America is itself a concrete act of such patriotism."⁶⁷ From a slightly different angle, Zeng Zhennan also believes that many readers were attracted to *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan* not because it "aroused one's curiosity about making a fortune overseas," or because it somehow "offered the knack of successful business" from a "young Chinese woman." Rather, many readers were won over by "I" narrator's depiction of commercial practice which "has already been elevated to a spiritual world of self-definition and self-perfection," thus "entering the temple of literature with aesthetic values."⁶⁸

At least at the time of this writing, Zhou has not seen the fulfillment of her wish that her "autobiography" be translated into English. Were it available in a Western language, however, it is easy to imagine what the response would be. Some Western reviewers and readers would find it an easy object of angry criticism for its self-imposed Orientalism, imperialism, and nationalism. Its glowing celebration of the West could readily be utilized by "third-world-born" critics writing in the West to advance their own agenda of trashing Western culture even while enjoying its benefits. Other critics, foreigners and native-born alike, might find in this book a vivid demonstration of how China is in dire need of a grand Western theoretical framework in order to be aware of its subject-slave position. It would be difficult to fault any of these

perspectives as valid responses, but only partially and incompletely so, to Zhou's extraordinary work.

Yet any one who attempts to chronicle the course of the Chinese debates on this book will be struck by how the Chinese critics and readers heatedly discussed this book in their own terms. Let us briefly examine, then, the main issues of the debate in the reception of this work in the China of 1992. Some critiques were concerned with the "literary value" of the book. Bewildered by the almost unanimous positive reactions, which claimed it to a "masterpiece," Wu Liang argued that *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan* lacked literary creativity. It is, on this critic's account, at best nothing more than a journalistic account of overseas experiences, the factuality of which could never be verified. Although sharing certain features with "Wounded Literature," *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan* is for him nevertheless a step backward from such tradition both in linguistic and ideological terms. It expresses, he says, nothing more than a familiar "bourgeois world view" that "defines flowers, banquets, holiday vocation, sex, and affluence as the index of one's happiness;" the author was thus only "intoxicated by her own success."⁶⁹

In contrast to such a view, Yang Ping believed that the author of *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan* functioned as a Chinese huckster selling to her home market an "American dream" of individualism, which Arthur Miller already criticized in his play *The Death of Salesman*. Added to this American dream, Yang correctly pointed out, was a "Chinese 'ugly duckling's'" dream of a "white knight," which was drawn from the author's own values, and a broader "rich-and-famous dream" which "permeates our own historical times."⁷⁰ Yet at the very moment when we "join the parade celebrating the American dream, we have at the same time lost our own dream." But, the critic says, such an American dream, nevertheless, will "eventually be destroyed because the

Chinese people will never accept an American way of life based on plundering resources in the world.”⁷¹

Many others, however, argued that there was nothing wrong in indulging an American dream if it simply means striving for individual happiness, a dream that everyone in the world shares. Why shouldn't we, they ask, import an American dream in order to realize our own dream? Why are so many people having problems accepting other people's success, especially a woman's success?⁷² Following the same line of argument, one critic further states: "it is extremely irritating for a male reader if a 'small woman' can demonstrate her success through economic power."⁷³ What hides behind the image of a "bragging business woman," Li Shidong claimed, was a real Chinese experience that demonstrates the strength of spiritual qualities.⁷⁴ For the Chinese reader, the questions that this book raise are, and rightly so, about the Chinese experience, its past and present and its hopes for the future.

There are, of course, many reasons for the popularity of *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan* and the intensity of discussion it provided. It is important to note that the American success story is situated at the very beginning of the first chapter, and this account serves as a point of departure for the narrator's journey into a tragic past. Chapter Two revisits her happy and innocent childhood and her traumatic initiation into adolescence during the Cultural Revolution. Chapter Three and Four detail her passionate and frustrated love experiences in the wilderness and are followed by the last chapter, which depicts the protagonist's fulfilling career and happy family life in America. Throughout the book, a depiction of the West that is readily seen as largely imaginary by those who have lived there is rendered credible to those who have not by the precise, realistic, and vivid representations of a Chinese past that was personally witnessed by

many of the book's Chinese readers. The positive depictions of her white American man and her new country as a land of milk and honey are then not so much expressions of a craving for everything that is Western as of a longing for a China free of tyranny and abuse. There is also a longing for the happy adolescence she could have had if the social and political conditions in China had been different. Indeed, at the end of the book, there is even a temporary moment of reconciliation with her past sufferings. The protagonist is depicted as sitting around a campfire at the Grand Canyon, a quintessentially American location. Yet here she nostalgically finds in her Western man's face the familiar features of the Chinese man she fell in love with fourteen years earlier in the Chinese wilderness. Both Western and Chinese man are for a moment equally "charming, smart, and brave." For a long time before this moment of peace and happiness, it was China's rejection of her both as an acceptable citizen and as a passionate lover that made a Western man's affection and the Western order of individualism so enchanting for her.⁷⁵

Close examination will show how this coming together of American and Chinese experience recurs throughout this book, even as it sets about at every turn to separate East and West in an almost Manichean manner. Even in Zhou's account of life in America, one finds constant allusions to Chinese experience. Oliver Stone's 1991 motion picture *JFK*, for example, reminds her of an episode in her childhood when she and twelve other girls quietly mourned the "heroic" act of Lee Harvey Oswald, who sacrificed his own precious life to assassinate John Kennedy, thus heralding what they were told was the inevitable end of capitalism and imperialism. They did not realize, however, that Kennedy was deeply loved by the American people as "the youngest president in American history" who, among other things, "successfully handled the Cuban Missile Crisis and saved America from destruction." She thus gains insight to

and questions the making of history as ideological impositions separating peoples from different cultures.⁷⁶ Here, as elsewhere in the book, one finds an implicit critique of the official Chinese Occidentalism imposed by the ruling ideology in Maoist China, which imagined a West as an “other” subversive of revolutionary and proletarian China. And it is this critique that makes what for the Western reader is regarded as little more than a wholesaling of the Western imperialist and patriarchal system something quite different for his Chinese counterpart. For many Chinese the book can be read as a discourse of power against the official culture of the state-party apparatus. The fictional depiction of an imagined West, rendered as all the more believable by the author's claim that it is an autobiographical fiction, is particularly appealing to many Chinese readers as an alternative to the social reality of contemporary China, where success is usually attributed to family background and privilege. It is only from the perspective of the cultural specificities of contemporary Chinese society that an overt celebration of American imperialism and colonialism, can “be liberated from the symbolism of the fetish and serve as the real source of inspiration for those who now turn toward it in search of an answer,” to borrow Wang Jing's powerful critique of *He Shang*.⁷⁷ The sense of history, albeit of the contemporary period and from a cross-cultural perspective, is similar to that conveyed in *He Shang*, whose “project of the liberation of the present from the burden of history” is both “contradictory” and “paradoxical.”⁷⁸

To understand *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan* in this way is not, however, to claim that it cannot be appropriately understood in other, and markedly different, ways, including those advocated by critics speaking from a post-colonialist perspective. It would be difficult for a Westerner, or even someone who has lived in the West as a foreigner, not to be troubled by the book's racism and sexism. Its constant tone of self-promotion is bound to disturb many readers.

Yet the conclusion to be drawn from these differences is not that its author is ideologically naive or the hapless and helpless victim of an irresistible Western ideology, but that writing and reading are always initiated as local activity, always at least partially determined by the exigencies of time and place. Critics who miss this point, who constantly lament an Occidentalism or Orientalism which, their protests notwithstanding, consists of essentialist perspectives often condescending both to West and East, may advance what they think of as Western theory, but will utterly misconstrue the experiences of those whom they claim to describe and whose interests they claim to advance. The success of *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan* is hardly surprising and is certainly not to be lamented, at least from a native Chinese perspective. By narrating a personal story that highlights her seduction of a Western man and her conquering Western culture, the Chinese female protagonist of this autobiography has captured a Chinese readership which, against the constraints of both its own national government and theorists in the West, aspires to "Western" experiences, surely not as they "really are" but as they are imagined by the other who understands and uses "the West" for its own theoretical and pragmatic interests.

In the process of the occidentalizing manifest in Zhou's book, the paradoxical relationships between selves and others, between various kinds of East and West, are made clear. On one level the protagonist's experiences in the West place her in a hegemonic relationship to her own people. Here the universalizing Western master narrative finds a problematic voice in the China-woman subject, whose own national tale of an oppressive Chinese society, especially during the Cultural Revolution, is ultimately lost in her exotic tale of her adventure in the West. The tale of the others thus renders silent the tale of the selves, paving the way for a globalizing discourse

which glorifies the image of the others, which are still imagined even by one who has physically been there herself. In this regard, the critique of the post-colonialist theorist is apt.

Yet even such overt colonialist and orientalist discourse in *Chinese Woman in Manhattan* is not monolithic, despite initial impressions. It cannot in the last instance be reduced to binary oppositions, which either speak for or against the selves or the others, for or against diverse views of the East or the West. In this book, as always in a discourse that is cross-cultural in its concerns, the reflection of the selves is embedded within the representation of the others. A good example is the manner in which the book's narrative voice employs a racist discourse to describe Afro-Americans who ruthlessly murdered a Chinese artist in New York. The message that this voice bears is, on the one hand, all too recognizable as an expression of the prejudiced and unjustified beliefs of white Americans. But on the other hand, it is also clearly home-bound, since it immediately raises questions about who should shoulder the responsibility for those talented Chinese artists plying their trade in American streets: "Oh, my motherland, why do you force your splendid offsprings to drift in a foreign land?"⁷⁹ Similarly, the nostalgic feelings toward one's childhood, lost love, and longing for the homeland form the central messages of *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan*, in spite of the fact that such *Occidental* discourse is and will remain problematic when expressed through the image of the other.

How had these paradoxical views of America and China evolved five years later in 1997 in Hu Ping's second popular piece of reportage,⁸⁰ entitled *Immigrating to America (Yimen Meiguo)*? As if echoing Zhou Li's autobiography, which narrated her own reasons for living in America, Hu Ping provided a more personal picture than that of his 1987 reportage with regard to

the irreversible trend of immigrating to America in the late 1990s. After his own trip to America and interviewing many new Chinese Americans, Hu admitted that he was wrong in 1987 to believe and report as a fact an expert's prediction only one tenth of Chinese students would choose to stay in America. Neither was he right when he forecast that the destination of the "brain drain" would redirect itself from the West to the East. Indeed, the statistics now seemed even more astonishing: each year, more than 40,000 students still were flooding into America from China, surpassing Japan (30,000), and South Korea (10,000). Among the nine million Asian Americans, two million are now Chinese Americans. Confronted with a shared choice made by numerous Chinese people, one cannot simply dismiss Chinese immigrants as isolated cases. Nor can one easily reject America by producing a series of "Say No" books to boost a self-deceptive Chinese nationalism, Hu declared. Looking back at the twentieth-century history of China and the West, Hu argued that, whereas on the one hand China had no doubt suffered from a hundred years of imperialist aggression and humiliation, it was important to remember that China's isolation and rejection of modernization and individualism had also contributed to its national disasters. During his trip to America, Hu felt obligated to listen to, understand, and narrate the stories of new Chinese immigrants in order to decipher the history of the nation and the souls of the Chinese people.⁸¹

To achieve this goal, Hu divided *Immigrating to America* into two parts. The first, entitled "The Trials and Tribulations of the Insignificant" (*Jiemo cangsang*), narrated a story that "belongs to the era of isolation and complacency" in the early 1960s, when China rejected everything foreign as either imperialist or social-imperialist. Not only America and Europe were denounced as imperialist enemies; even students from a few socialist countries were closely

watched to make sure they they live by the strict rules of this purely revolutionary country in the East. An Yi was one of the unfortunate ones, a girl from Beijing who in 1963 fell in love with Qiaodi, a blond-haired, blue-eyed Albanian student. For this innocent love, An Yi paid the price of two years in prison without a trial and many more years of labor on a prison farm. An Yi could not understand why it was criminal to date an Albanian from our “brother” country, “the only socialist lamp in the Europe,” as the official media had so claimed. After all, she did not love just any Caucasian from a capitalist country. She was told that it was a criminal offense nevertheless because, with so many Chinese men available, she had chosen instead to love a foreigner. She was accused of being a “foreign prostitute” (*yangji*) and, as such, was criticized in prison study sessions by a real prostitute, who claimed that at least she had provided sex for workers, officials, and college students. Hence, she served the Chinese people and did it only for money. An Yi, on the other hand, shamelessly loved a foreigner for free.

An Yi could never fathom why anyone would forbid love relationships among people of different skin color and nationality. Neither could she understand that her affair had indeed crossed boundaries of sex, class, race, and nation. In the early 1960s, people involved in love affairs outside of wedlock could be accused of being “a bad element” (*huai fenzi*) and even end up sentenced to prison, as she was. One also needed to worry about the party doctrines against marriages across class lines. A member of a worker’s family, for instance, was discouraged from involvement with someone born into the family of an ex-capitalist or a KMT official. In addition to these taboos of sex and class politics, dating an Albanian raised the complex issue of race and nation. Even at the time when China promoted friendship with a few socialist states, it still could not approve of Caucasians, who suggested colonialist history and Western imperialism. The

category of “foreign,” therefore, could become suspect, especially for those who ventured into the dangerous territory of love and sex. In Qiaodi’s case, though he was from a socialist country and born into a revolutionary family, being white was a mark against him.

It is interesting to recall here our earlier discussion of Zhang Wentian’s *Journey*, in which idealist relationships indeed transcend the boundaries of class, race, and nation. In the real world of 1960s socialist China, however, where Zhang’s dream of equality for all people had supposedly been realized, An Yi had to endure punishment for a crime she never understood. After working on a prison farm and experiencing public humiliation during the Cultural Revolution, she finally married a man seventeen years her senior and was sent back to his hometown in a poverty-stricken village in Hebei province, where she could not even feed her son. She finally managed to leave in 1982 after her divorce. In her subsequent years, while raising her two children from two marriages, An Yi sometimes thought about Qiaodi: as a son of a guerrilla fighter during World War II, how did he manage an increasingly harsh life in postsocialist Albania, where “the red flag had already fell to the ground”?⁸² She had also heard from Meng Baige, her former inmate friend who was also accused of being a “foreign prostitute” for having married a Russian. Calling from Japan, Meng advised An Yi to come there to marry a rich man for a better life. An Yi also heard from Jiang Ying, another former inmate friend. In 1975, when the PRC granted special amnesty to ex-KMT officials, Meng quickly married one of them, whose hometown was Beijing, thus becoming eligible to return to Beijing with him. She mocked her own fate years later: “The KMT has finally brought me back to Beijing after the CCP had kicked me out.”⁸³

Indeed, An Yi's fate turned out to be worse than that of those ex-KMT and other wrongly accused such as foreign spies and counterrevolutionaries, whose verdicts were usually reversed in the post-Mao era. Her case could not be cleared, since there was no official party document with regard to merely a few convictions of "foreign prostitutes" before the Cultural Revolution. Worse still, she heard that nowadays there were so many *real* "foreign prostitutes" that a high-ranking official had recently ordered they be severely punished with jail sentences or even labor farms. One African man even published an article in his home country claiming that Shanghai girls were indeed the best prostitutes, who always took the initiative, had good hygiene, and charged a low fee. An Yi's brother lamented her misfortune of being a falsely accused "foreign prostitute," whose chance for being vindicated had recently been ruined again, this time by real "foreign prostitutes." Just when China's door had been opened a crack, he complained, how could Chinese women use that opportunity to perform such shameless acts?⁸⁴

These stories of the insignificant explored the cultural and historical circumstances that motivated Chinese people to leave China. Hu Ping warned his readers that nowadays many young people took for granted their undeniable rights to marry foreigners and live abroad without being aware what a high price An Yi had paid for her rights to love across national boundaries. Remembering this past history would not only make sure that China did not slide back into the Maoist era; it would also help people fully understand why so many Chinese are still leaving China in search for a better life. In the second part of *Immigrating to America*, which "belongs to a new era of openness and reform," Hu Ping was particularly interested in discovering "the psychological space" (*xinli kongjian*) of Chinese Americans who had immigrated to America in the last ten years. Why did they decide to stay on? What were their dreams and aspirations?

Some of them, according to Hu, wanted to “experience a different way of living” (*huan yizhong huofa’r*), one not controlled by the changing policies of the party nor confined by the Chinese mentality of jealousy and pettiness.⁸⁵ Tired of iron rice bowls offered by a collective society, they wanted to see for themselves to what extent they could achieve their potential as individuals. One couple, for instance, gave up the husband’s comfortable party position in China to start a restaurant in Mineral Well, Texas. Using Mao’s strategy of “surrounding the cities from the countryside,” they avoided major cities where restaurants faced tough competition and finally won the business of this small town. They also integrated themselves with the Western cowboys and Texas culture, following the spirit of one of Mao’s sayings made popular during the Cultural Revolution: “We Communists are like seeds and the people are like the soil. Wherever we go, we must unite with the people, take root and blossom among them.”⁸⁶ Contrary to their Maoist heritage, however, they were not there to liberate people from poverty in Texas but to realize their own modest dream of owning a small farm and traveling all over the world just like their American neighbors. To make this dream come true, they worked from nine in the morning to midnight every day, knowing full well that “accumulated working hours were printed on the other side of each green dollar note they make.”⁸⁷ Ironically, these former urban youths who were sent down to rural areas during the Cultural Revolution had given up their once passionate dream of building collective farms in the socialist countryside. As it turned out, it was finally in America that they could look forward to their own private farm in a foreign land. They therefore could not accept the dark depiction of Chinese American life in recent Chinese television dramas, which characterized Chinese Americans as suffering “coolies” in a racial and capitalist

America. If that were the case, many illegal Chinese would have left the country on their own, without any help from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Hu Ping did not, however, present a rosy picture of America without a racist past and present. Tracing the civil right movements, Hu analyzed the two hundred years of continued struggle on the part of African Americans to achieve equality in racial, social, and political terms. He believed, however, that a subjugated racial group also needed to look within itself for a catalyst for change. The Irish immigrants, for instance, who came in large numbers to build the transcontinental railway, were looked down upon by many of the British immigrants who had settled in Boston and other East Coast areas. The way some of the British Protestant settlers treated the Irish Catholics was similar to the way Shanghai urbanites treated rural people from the northern part of Jiangsu Province (*Subei ren*), Hu claimed. After generations of united effort, however, Irish Americans surpassed other ethnic groups in political power, in effect taking over the Boston city hall: since the 1920s, almost all the mayors there had been Irish, except for two Italian Americans. Moreover, in 1960 John F. Kennedy became the first Irish American president. Likewise, Japanese Americans, despite having been rounded up in interment camps during World War II, had also improved their social and economic status through their own achievements, as especially evident in the Japanese American influence in Hawaii. Chinese Americans, Hu Ping believed, were increasingly becoming aware of their collective history in order to improve their life in America. Many have said that even though they felt, as first-generation immigrants, “marginal” to the mainstream (*bianyuan ren*), they believed their children would become more integrated into American society. Perhaps one of them would even become the first Chinese American president.

At the conclusion of *Immigrating to America*, Hu Ping noted that thirty years had passed between the story of the insignificant “foreign prostitute” and that of Chinese Americans, with the theme of revolution giving way to the theme of construction. The only thesis of his book, Hu claimed, is that “it is not necessary to invite historians to repeat the familiar story of the closed-door policies and missed opportunities for China since the late Qing dynasty. The post-1949 history itself has already taught us that China must be open. The most recent events in the last 18 years have demonstrated that China must open up even more to the world.”⁸⁸ Declaring that China and America were two of the most creative countries in the world, Hu pinned his hope for a better China and for the world on the mutual understanding and acceptance among people of diverse cultures and histories. In Hu’s work, one witnesses an interesting case of Occidentalism, in which America is constructed as an equally “great” other to China through two sets of double-images. American history is characterized both by racial discrimination against minority groups and by the collective efforts of the minority groups who have overcome such discrimination to achieve economic, cultural, and political success. On the other hand, contemporary China is depicted both as backward and hopeless in the closed-door period of Maoist China and as vibrant, dynamic, and hopeful, as seen in the success stories of the overseas Chinese, once freed from its past. By claiming that Chinese Americans would eventually become equal to and as influential as any other ethnic groups in America, Hu Ping expressed his hope that mainland China would benefit from the enterprising spirit of both Chinese Americans and other ethnic Americans.

Hu Ping’s upbeat reportage, however, did not represent exclusive pictures of America and China in the 1990s. Whereas Hu’s work continued to promote economic reforms in response to a

Maoist past that had rejected materialist pursuits, other writers in the 1990s depicted the consequences of such reform: the search of wealth at the expense of spiritual fulfillment and moral values. Such a double-edged critique against Maoist and post-Maoist ideologies found its best expression in Yan Li's short story "The Behavior of Blood" (*Xueye de xingwei*, 1993), written in Manhattan, New York. The main character of the story is Li Xiong, who has inherited the practice of "blood transfusions" from his grandfather. Having been publicly humiliated as a former landowner before 1949, his grandfather insisted before his death that he undertake a series of blood transfusions. In this fashion, his landowner's blood, which the Red Guards had once said would flow through his arteries forever because *his* father, Li Xiong's grandfather, was a landlord before the 1920s, could be replaced with the blood of poor peasants, so that his offspring would be free from political persecution. This anti-Maoist plot satirizing the Maoist "blood theory," which divided Chinese into opposing social classes according mostly to their family background, is juxtaposed with the anticapitalist plot of the protagonist's story in America. After unsuccessful attempts at studying in universities, investing in the stock market, and running his own company in America, Li Xiong adopts his grandfather's solution to replace his own blood with Coca-Cola, the most potent fluid from the most successful business in the world, which he believes will remake him into an promising entrepreneur. Naturally, Li Xiong's chain restaurant business turns out to be such a success that he is well on his way to becoming a billionaire. Li then discovers a talented poet, who happens to have written these words before their meeting: "New York washed the blood of the world's heart, / transferring it into Coca-Cola that flows into the world."⁸⁹ Elated that "great minds think alike," Li invites the poet to write a

biography of his own life in America, so that the poet's vision (could be proven to have already been realized) in Li's commercial success story.

Li's biography, however, turns out to be a best-seller, with the unfortunate result that many aspiring young people begin imitating Li's blood transfusions in hopes that they too can become rich and famous. They end up instead in hospital emergency rooms, where they are treated for serious illnesses resulting from the transfusions. To stop such a crisis, Li Xiong has no choice but to sign a contract with the U.S. government specifying that Li declare his biography science fiction written by a crazy poet, while keeping his real story a secret for five years to allow the government time to conduct research on his blood transfusions. The story ends with Li Xiong's commercial success remaining relatively intact, rescued by his poet friend's reluctant agreement to declare himself, and his poetic imaginations, illusionary and hence unacceptable to the mainstream culture. With these fanciful plots told in the manner of science fiction, Yan Li indeed satirized a capitalist society that neglects poetic talents while taking any kind of incredible financial success at face value. By situating his story in the cross-cultural space between China and America, Yan Li discarded the extremes of both Maoist China and post-Mao ideology, which promoted an American economic success story under the pretext of improving the livelihoods of Chinese people, while on the other hand denouncing the former when a different nationalist agenda warranted such an attack. The story raises crucial questions: Is post-Maoist China a better alternative to the Maoist era? What price does a postsocialist society have to pay to avoid the pitfalls of its socialist past?

At this point, one can note the possible autobiographical aspects of the story. Yan Li's grandfather committed suicide in 1968 during the Cultural Revolution; Yan Li was a *menglong*

poet who hand-copied Alexander Pushkin poems at the age of sixteen in 1970⁹⁰ and had participated twice in the controversial Star Exhibitions (*Xingxing Huazhan*) of 1979 and 1980.⁹¹ After coming to America in 1985 as a self-sponsored college student, Yan Li probably experienced a dilemma similar to that faced by Li Xiong and his artist friend between business and artistic pursuits. What marks him as different from the characters in the story, however, is that Yan Li has successfully established his own Yixing Poetry Club in New York as a known poet, painter, and photographer.⁹² One can thus imagine that Li Xiong's struggle to reconcile his successful business career with a struggling artist's attempt to achieve poetic recognition expresses at least in part the author's desire to live in an ideal society, which is available neither in the Maoist nor in the post-Maoist models. In this regard, Xu Xiao was correct in pointing out that some of the *menglong* poets, who were once "spiritually homeless" in socialist China, remained so even after they had joined the "movement to exchange revolutionary experience in the world." After having lived in the United States, their disillusionment with the American dream prompted them to embrace Marxism again and reject capitalism. For instance, Mou Zhijing, the former editor of the *Middle School Red Guard Newspaper* (*Zhongxue Hongweibing bao*) who had courageously published Yu Luojin's controversial essay "On Blood Theory" (*Chushen lun*) during the Cultural Revolution, made attempts to join the American Communist Party but ultimately failed to do so, for fear of losing his job. He now has no choice but to remain homeless forever—the destiny, Xu Xiao believes, of this entire lost generation that went from being Red Guards, to *menglong* poets, and finally to Chinese Americans.⁹³

If part of Yan Li's story is about poetry, Cao Guilin's fiction *A Chinese Nightingale in the Sky of New York* (*Niuyue shangkong de Zhongguo yeying*, 1994) is about performance and

writing. *A Chinese Nightingale* picks up where his earlier novel, entitled *Beijing Sojourners in New York* (*Beijing ren zai Niuyue*, 1991), left off. *Beijing Sojourners* tells the story of an ex-musician, Wang Qiming, and his relentless search for financial success in America.⁹⁴ In *A Chinese Nightingale*, the plot is reversed: here, Wang Qiming rejects his business career to pursue his literary efforts. After his wife and daughter steal his property and business, Wang buries himself in writing. He writes in his basement, in the park, sometimes even without eating and sleeping.

In fact, in writing his autobiographical fiction, *A Chun*, in which he relives his first few years in America, Wang is honoring his devoted lover, A Chun, the female protagonist in *Beijing Sojourners*. In rewriting A Chun's story within the narrative framework of *A Chinese Nightingale*, however, he focuses on the loving relationship between the two, not on their efforts to achieve financial success. In another story, entitled *Green Card*, Wang Qiming depicts the sorrows and sacrifices of Beijing girls who are reduced to prostitution in order to eke out a living in America.⁹⁵ Writing of Chinese diasporic life, therefore, is another way of reliving immigrant life, providing him a second chance to "do it right." A Chinese American writes back in his own voice, against his own enchantment with the American dream and the postsocialist fantasy of economic success that justifies corruption and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor.

The character of Yeying reverses the image of the Chinese musician whose artistic talents cannot be recognized in a foreign country. Yeying (which means "nightingale") is an opera star who has conquered the stage in America and other countries with her brilliant performances. Most significantly, as the first reader of Wang's works, she convinces him that he is pursuing a worthy career in writing the real-life experiences of first-generation immigrants, the broken

dreams and struggles that they seldom shared with friends and relatives at home. At the same time, Yeying also writes. As an adjunct professor of music, she writes scholarly essays on Chinese folk opera, its history, development, and significant contributions to world music. As if to accentuate this theme, all characters in the story are divided into two camps according to their attitudes toward writing: the bad characters (such as Wang's wife, his daughter, and her greedy American boyfriend) destroy Wang's writings; the good characters (a priest, his American friends, and other struggling artists) support and protect Wang's writings.

One such ally is Yeying's former teacher in China, who is now pursuing a Ph.D. in America. He composes Western opera with Chinese stories as a way of introducing Chinese civilization to the world. He therefore appreciates Wang's efforts to "give up a business career to pursue literary writing" (*qishang congwen*). The teacher perceives the journey to the West undertaken by "cultural immigrants" (*wenhua yimen*) as worthwhile only if they can succeed in the challenging project of "transplanting Chinese culture to the West."⁹⁶ Here we see an interesting repetition of the earlier concept of "ti-yong," or "using Western means while preserving Chinese essence." Caught between the tensions of their socialist past and postsocialist realities, while equally disillusioned by communist and capitalist systems, Chinese American writers such as Cao Guilin in the 1990s felt even more at a loss about their identities, ambitions, and values, and they had no choice but to resort to a kind of Chinese nativism. Successful artistic performance was now seen as the superior means of using Chinese cultural and symbolic capital to override the values of business success. Performing artists such as Yeying and her teacher thus believe in using Western operatic form to preserve and promote Chinese culture. They fail to realize, however, that in the very process of transplanting their culture, they have already changed

it to fit into a Western environment. Their belief in Chinese folk opera as representing Chinese cultural essence becomes a cultural form of filial piety. Unlike their predecessors in the stories of the 1920s who were torn between iconoclasm and nationalism, Chinese intellectuals in the 1990s were confronted with even more complex burdens of various traditions: Confucian, socialist, liberal, capitalist, modernist, popularist, and what can be grouped under the umbrella of “Western.” On the other hand, they also had to deal with various kinds of nationalisms, such as colonialist nationalism, anticolonialist nationalism, socialist nationalism, cultural nationalism, military nationalism, state nationalism, and popularist nationalism, which is a task much more complex and multifaceted than that confronted by their predecessors in the 1920s.⁹⁷ Such are also the new challenges of understanding Occidentalist writings in the 1990s, where the constructions of selves and others involve explorations of diverse traditions and varied reactions in cross-cultural and cross-historical circumstances.

Cao’s fictional works, of course, cannot resolve all of these issues, but suffice to say that in *Beijing Sojourners* and *A Chinese Nightingale*, Cao created a new Chinese identity, one of multicultural perspectives that do not take for granted any ideological legacies without seriously challenging their pitfalls. In her combination of two Chinese lovers, A Chun as a business partner and Yeying as artistic mentor, one also witnesses a return to the idealistic pursuit expressed in Zhang Wentian’s *Journey*, in which two American women sacrificed their lives for Junkai’s love and his revolutionary career. Despite a seemingly similar plot structure of two women loving one man (albeit from different nationalities) to provide him the perfect romance, the irony remains that Junkai does not survive, while Wang Qiming does. Wang, however, does not choose to live in Junkai’s cherished homeland of China, where he dies, but in America, a paradoxical place as

described in his favorite A Chun's lyric: "If you love him, send him to New York / because it is heaven, / if you hate him, / send him to New York, / because it is hell."⁹⁸ While rejecting his earlier pursuit of materialism, as Junkai had, Wang nevertheless has also abandoned Junkai's belief in socialist China, thus inviting readers to reflect upon the intricate relationship between postsocialism and postcolonialism, a new experience beyond Zhang Wentian's story of the twenties. As Lydia Liu rightly points out in her insightful study of Cao's first novel, socialist histories in China and other countries from the former Eastern European bloc, though important parts of Marxist movements in the world, have not received enough critical attention in transnational studies, raising the possibility that transnationalism and postsocialism will cancel each other out in "their theoretical possibilities."⁹⁹ Though the story reverses the plot structure and character portrayals of *Beijing Sojourners*, *A Chinese Nightingale* expresses similar concerns about the relationship between postsocialism and transnationalism. It provides us with another opportunity to examine the overlapping and coexisting phenomenon of Occidentalism at the intersection of postsocialism and postcolonialism, without taking lightly what has happened in the native land that produced such discourses in the first place.

I hope I have made it clear through this brief discussion of Chinese diasporic stories that the constructions of selves and others in this genre are always multivoiced and locally oriented, even when, as in expressions of Orientalism and Occidentalism, it may seem otherwise. What makes the stories of the Chinese diaspora in the 1990s more complicated than their predecessors in the early 1980s, however, is that they express more disparate expressions of Occidentalism that can take aim at Maoist China as well as post-Maoist China, against ideological isolation from the West and against pursuing the American dream without political critiques. They are

mixed with even more multifarious images from the popular and informational cultures in the form of television dramas and best-sellers. One also needs to consider seriously the impact of popular media such as television series, talk shows, movies, popular music, best-sellers, CDs, and DVDs on the Chinese imagination and the exploration of what Geremie R. Barmé has called the “nonofficial” or “counterculture.”¹⁰⁰ In our sensitivity to forms of discourse, therefore, we need to be attentive to their local positioning and above all to the ways that in their discursive use and consumption they may well be strategies of bondage in one world yet strategies of liberation in another. If Chinese producers of culture choose Occidentalist discourse for their own utopian ends, it ill becomes those who watch from afar to condescendingly tell them they do not know what they are doing. I can only hope that the account given here of Occidentalism in contemporary China might aid Orientalists and Occidentalists alike in understanding this fundamental axiom of any form of cultural studies, which is faithful to its own founding notion of culture.

¹ *Wild Swans* has been widely adopted as a textbook to teach American students about modern Chinese history, culture, politics, and women's history. It depicts the lives of three generations of women: a warlord's concubine, a Communist woman warrior, and a little girl growing up in the chaotic Cultural Revolution. For a study of this and other similar texts, see Peter Zarrow, "Meanings of China's Cultural Revolution: Memoirs of Exile," *Positions* 7:1 (1999):165-191, and Xiaomei Chen, *Acting the Right Part: Political Theater and Popular Drama in Contemporary China* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 2002), 26-32.

² Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini, eds., *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 4.

³ Ong and Nonini, 9. Italics theirs.

⁴ Ong and Nonini, 12.

⁵ Shu-mei Shi, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2001), 15.

⁶ Michelle Yeh, "International Theory and the Transnational Critic: China in the Age of Multiculturalism," in Rey Chow, ed., *Modern Chinese Literary and Cultural Studies in the Age of Theory: Reimagining a Field* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2000), 251-280, 262.

⁷ Due to space limitations, this chapter cannot address the issue of what Rey Chow called "volatile realities of ethnicity," which argued for the inclusion of other Chinese experiences outside the PRC and in non-Mandarin speaking ethnic and linguistic groups. A full-length study would naturally take up these matters. Rey Chow, "Introduction," in idem., ed., *Modern Chinese Literary and Cultural Studies in the Age of Theory*, 1-25, 5.

⁸ Kirk A. Denton, "The Distant Shore: Nationalism in Yu Dafu's 'Sinking,'" *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 14 (1992): 107-123.

⁹ Denton, 110.

¹⁰ Denton, 112. C. T. Hsia, in his classic *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, characterized Yu's story as autobiographical "portrayal of a lonely and patriotic youth bent on self-destruction." It descended from "the Japanese and European decadent writers as well as those Chinese poets and essayists who have habitually bewailed their loneliness and poverty as outcasts from philistine officialdom." See C. T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 3rd ed., with an introduction by David Der-wei Wang. (Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Press, 1999), 105, 103. In his trailblazing study, Leo-Oufan Lee placed Yu's "Sinking" in the intersection of sex, racism, and nationalism. Although sex is part of a process of reaching maturity, Lee argues that what made "Yu's case interesting was that his sexual awakening should have taken place in a foreign

land with foreign women.” The political and ideological reading in nationalist terms, therefore, must be also understood in the context of psychological and personal factors. See Leo Ou-fan Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973), 91, 89.

¹¹ Denton, 122.

¹² Shu-mei Shih claimed that “in every one of the Japan stories written during 1921 and 1922, Yu’s Chinese protagonists were victims of Japanese imperialism’s subjugation of China.” See *idem.*, *The Lure of the Modern* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2001), 120.

¹³ See Denton’s article for a insightful analysis in this regard.

¹⁴ Niu Daifeng, *Lu Xun zhuan* [Biography of Lu Xun]. Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubangongsi, 1999, 82. Niu also pointed out that Lu Xun was the first Chinese student to study in Sendai, a small town which gave Lu Xun a friendly welcome. In contrast to racial discrimination against Chinese, residents of Sendai treated him warmly, fearing even to lose him to other cities. See Niu, 79-80.

¹⁵ In “Professor Fujino,” the protagonist scored “above 60 points” in his exam. Niu Daifeng recorded in his *Lu Xun zhuan* that among the 142 students in his class, Lu Xun was ranked 66 after the final examination. See Niu, 84.

¹⁶ Lu Xun, “Tengyie xiansheng [Professor Fujino],” in his *Lu Xun quanji* [Complete works of Lu Xun]. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1981, 2: 302-309, 305-306. For an English translation, see his “Mr. Fujino,” in his *Selected Works of Lu Hsun* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1956), 4:402-409.

¹⁷ Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1995), 5.

¹⁸ Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice* (Stanford, Stanford Univ. Press, 1995), 64-65, 61.

¹⁹ Lu Xun, “Tengyie xiansheng,” 307.

²⁰ Li Jieren, “Tongqing” (Sympathy), cited from a reprint in *Jinxian dai xiaoshuo juan* [A compendium of Chinese overseas student literature [Zhongguo liuxuesheng wenxue daxi], *Jinxian dai xiaoshuo ju* [Modern fiction volume]. Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 2000, 481-556, 481-482. Li Jieren (1891-1962) was a writer and translator in the May Fourth period. In 1919, he started *Xingqiri zhoukan* [Sunday weekly] and went to study French literature and literary criticism in France. He returned to China in 1926. *Sympathy* was written in 1923 in France and was first published in *Youthful China* [Shaonian Zhongguo] 4:4-6 (June-August, 1923).

²¹ Li Jieren, 521.

²² Denton, 117.

²³ Li Jieren, 516-517.

²⁴ Li Jieren, 515-516.

²⁵ Li Jieren, 552.

²⁶ Peng Ming, *Wusi yundong shi* [A history of the May Fourth Movement]. Revised ed. (Beijing: Remin chubanshe, 1998), 139-144.

²⁷ Peng Ming, 548.

²⁸ Peng Ming, 548-554. Peng Ming cited Chen Yi and Wang Ruofei, early leaders of the CCP, as saying that their experience in French factories was so oppressive that it made them realize the cruelty of capitalist exploitation (549). The work-study program in France is a complicated issue

that can not be fully addressed here. For those interested in the topic, see Marilyn A. Levine, *The Found Generation: Chinese Communists in Europe during the Twenties* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press), 1993. In comparison with America as an destination for Chinese students, Levine noted: “During the postwar period, when the exclusion laws were still in effect in the United States, France was the destination for the refugees of the world. At the same time that over one hundred Chinese students were accepted into the scholastic community at Montargis, hundreds of Chinese were employed at the nearby Langlee factory, as were some twelve hundred Russian refugees. The French were very generous toward the Chinese who reached their shores. The government encouraged the placing of Chinese in educational institutions and factories and provided personnel and economic support” (91-92). Levine also presented a Chinese view of the France as inspirational: “As the ‘oldest’ civilization in Europe, French civilization was deemed to be the most advanced in Europe with respect to its intellectual, philosophical, and moral development. The elegance of the French language and the expressiveness of the French personality were also much admired” (91).

²⁹ The Chinese imagining of the French warrants a book-length study. One can point out at least three important strands in this period: 1) the May Fourth discourse of seeing France as part of the West where Chinese intellectuals looked for science and democracy; 2) early Chinese Communist movement to work and study in France to “seek for the truth for the Chinese revolution”; 3) The PRC depiction of France as one of the oldest imperialist countries, although its relationship to China differed from that of Britain, Japan, and Russia, which were viewed as the major imperialist powers craving Chinese territorial rights and special privileges at the beginning of the twentieth century. With its imposition of the 1844 Sino-French Treaty of

Whampoa, however, France “attached special importance to the privilege of propagating Christianity in China.” As a result, the Manchu government recognized Catholic and Protestant faiths as lawful, and Western missionaries “began to infiltrate into China.” See Hu Sheng, *Imperialism and Chinese Politics* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1955), 15. France also played a part in the eight allied countries that suppressed the Boxer Uprising in 1900, which resulted an indemnity that specified 70,878,240 taels for the French share. See Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, “Late Ch’ing foreign relations, 1866-1905,” in Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, eds., *The Cambridge History of China: Vol 10: Late Ch’ing, 1800-1911, Part 2*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980) 70-141, 127.

³⁰ Jiang Guangci (1901-1931) went to study in Mosco with Liu Shaoqi and Ren Bishi in 1921 and returned to China in 1924. “On the Yalu River” first appeared in his collection of writings entitled *Yalujiang shang* [On the Yalu River] published by Shanghai yadong tushuguan in 1927. A reprint of the story can be found *Zhongguo liuxuesheng wenxue daxi* [A compendium of Chinese overseas student literature], *Jinxian dai xiaoshuo juan* [Modern fiction volume], 576-596. 10.

³¹ Ying Hu, *Tales of Translation: Composing the New Women in China, 1899-1918* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2000), 5.

³² Cheng Zhongyuan noted that Zhang Wentian left San Francisco somewhere between the end of 1923 to the beginning of 1924. He arrived in Shanghai around January 20, 1924. See his *Zhang Wentian zuan* [Biography of Zhang Wentian]. (Beijing: Dangdai Zhonguo chubanshe, 1993), 60, 70, n.46.

³³ During the crucial moment of the Long March (1934-35) at Zunyi, Zhang was the only member of the Secretariat to oppose the unsuccessful military strategy of Otto Braun, the Comintern representative, and Bo Gu, the Chinese party chief, and assisted Mao Zedong rise to power. Despite his important role as the party chief in the latter part of the Long March and his many later achievements, Zhang's leadership was marginalized in CCP history until recently, because he criticized Mao's economic policies during the Great Leap Forward in 1959. One important point about the story of Zhang Wentian (1900-1976) is that because of the complicated history writing of the CCP, Consequently, his major contributions, such as his support for Mao's policies in Zunyi conference, remain relatively unknown. Rarely mentioned also is his crucial role at the Wayaobao conference in December 1935, in which the CCP decided to promote a united front with the KMT to fight against Japanese aggression. From 1951 to 1955, Zhang served as Chinese ambassador to the Soviet Union. After Zhang supported Peng Dehui's criticism of Mao and the Great Leap Forward at the 1959 Lushan conference, he lost his position as the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was persecuted during the Cultural Revolution and died in Wuxi in 1975 under a false name. He never fulfilled his last wish, which he had expressed several times in his letter to Mao Zedong, to return to Beijing to see, once again with his own eyes, the "new look" of his socialist motherland, after a life-long devotion to it. In post-Mao China, a few scholarly works have attempted to present a more complete biography of Zhang. They see him as one of the most important CCP leaders wronged in party history. See Cheng Zhongyuan, *Zhang Wentian zuan*. See also, Shi Songhan, *Zhang Wentian sixiang yanjiu* [On Zhang Wentian thought], Beijing: Zhongguo dangshi chubanshe, 1993. Shi's work focuses on Zhang's work as a party chief in the Northeast (Manchuria) from 1945 to 1949, another

episode erased in party history. For an study in English of Zhang's diplomatic career, see Xiaohong Liu, "A Revolutionary Institution-Builder: Zhang Wentian," in her *Chinese Ambassadors: The Rise of Diplomatic Professionalism since 1949* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2001), 31-52.

³⁴ Cheng Zhongyuan, 23.

³⁵ Since literary histories have hardly mentioned Zhang Wentian's career as a May Fourth writer (and a very talented one at that), a brief account of his literary career is in order. His interest in literature matured only after he returned from Japan, where he had studied from July 1920 to January 1921. As a member of the Youth China Study Association, he befriended fellow members such as the dramatist Tian Han and the new poet Kang Beiqing, then also residing in Japan. His first scholarly essay, entitled "*Tuo'ersitai de yishu guan*" [On Tolstoy's concept of art, 1921], was published in a special issue of *Xiaoshou yuebao* (The short story magazine) on Russian literature. This issue marked the first systematic introduction of Russian literature to Chinese readers, with contributions from major writers such as Lu Xun, Shen Yanbing, and Zheng Zhenduo. Zhang also coauthored an essay that introduced Oscar Wilde and co-translated his *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Countering the attack on Wilde for "art for art's sake" concept, Zhang believed that Wilde's individualism was not self-serving but sought to tap fully the individual's potential talents; he urged Chinese people to change their way of thinking in order to give real meaning to their lives. By the same token, in his essay introducing Goethe's *Faust*, he urged conservative and fearful Chinese to learn from Faust's spirit and fully participate in life's journey, despite the obstacles encountered in a suffocating Confucian society. See Cheng Zhongyuan, *Zhang Wentian zuan*, 38-43.

³⁶ Cheng Zhongyuan, 46.

³⁷ Cheng Zhongyuan, 47. 44-50.

³⁸ Zhang Wentian's *Lütu* [Journey] was first published in installment in *Xiaoshuo yuebao* [Short story monthly] 15: 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 (1924), and later as a separate volume by Shangwu yinshuguan, 1925. A reprint of the story can be found in *Zhongguo liuxuesheng wenxue daxi, Jinxian dai xiaoshuo juan*, 597-729, 607.

³⁹ Zhang Wentian, 632.

⁴⁰ Zhang Wentian, 651.

⁴¹ David Henry Huang, *M. Butterfly* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 95.

⁴² Huang, *M. Butterfly*, 17.

⁴³ Huang, *M. Butterfly*, 99.

⁴⁴ Zhang Wentian, 613.

⁴⁵ Hu Ping and Zhang Shengyou, *Shijie dachuanlian* [Exchanging revolutionary experience in the world], in Ke Ling et al., eds., *Ci'an yu bi'an* [This Shore and That Shore]. (Shanghai: Wenhui chubanshe, 1999), 88-145, 89-90.

⁴⁶ Based on Prosper Mérimée's novel, *Carmen* (*Kamen*) was adapted by Tian Han into a modern spoken-drama version in June 1930. It was performed by Tian's Southern Country Society to "borrow a foreign story to express the revolutionary sentiment to bring changes to Chinese reality," as Tian claimed in his postscript to *Carmen*, published in 1955 by Yishu chubanshe. After only three performances, *Carmen* was banned for advocating "class struggle"; so was the Southern Country Society. Zong Hui (Xie Weiqi), who played the male lead, was arrested and executed by the KMT government. *Carmen* has also occupied a central position in the Western-style opera in the PRC period. For an essay on its European contexts, see Robert L. A. Clark, "South of North: Carmen and French Nationalisms," in Claire Sponsler and Xiaomei Chen, eds., *East of West: Cross-cultural Performance and the Staging of Difference* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 187-216. What Clark describes as one of the reasons for the lack of success of the 1875 premiere of Georges Bizet's opera version, to some extent, applies to the success

of the play with Chinese audience: it is a “a study in transgression.” Every dimension of Carmen “is placed under the sign of the other: female; doubly foreign and radically other, as a gypsy in Andalusia; working class (she works in the tobacco factory at the beginning of the opera); sexually dissident in relation to the bourgeois mores of the day; and, finally, an outlaw (she and her friends run contraband). And so she remains, defiantly, to the end” (186).

⁴⁷ Hu Ping and Zhang Shengyou, *Shijie dachuanlian*, 111.

⁴⁸ Hu Ping and Zhang Shenyong, 145.

⁴⁹ The English title printed next to the Chinese title in the 1992 Beijing edition is *Manhattan's China Lady*. The change of the English title is mine.

⁵⁰ Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, "Manhadun de Zhongguo nuren zai zhengyi zhong" [A Debate on *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan*], in Xiao Yi and Yi Ren, ed. *Kwayue dayang de gong'an—Manhadun de Zhongguo nuren zhengyi shilu* [A law suit across the oceans: A factual account of the controversy on *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan*]. Beijing: Guangming ribao chubanshe, 1993, 1-2.

⁵¹ It has been reported that within five months after its initial release, the book was reprinted four times, with at least 500,000 copies sold throughout the country. As if to profit from such a sudden demand for the book, one private bookdealer alone was reported to have wholesaled six thousand pirated copies. See Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, 1-2.

⁵² See Xiong Yuanyi and Zhang Yulu, "Liuxuesheng wenxue yantaohui zongshu" [A seminar held on overseas student literature], *Renmin ribao* (overseas ed.) 4 Feb. 1993, 8.

⁵³ Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, 1.

⁵⁴ He Zhenbang, "Yiqu rensheng fendou zhige—du Zhou Li de Manhadun de Zhongguo nuren" [A song of dedication: Afterthoughts on Zhou Li's *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan*], Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, ed., 85.

⁵⁵ He Zhenbang, 85.

⁵⁶ Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, “*Manhadun*,” 8-9.

⁵⁷ You Zunming, et al., "Zhou Li qishu qiren" [Concerning Zhou Li's personality and her book], in Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, ed., 65.

⁵⁸ Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, 8.

⁵⁹ Xiao Yin, "'Kwayang' caifang zhaji" [Overseas interviews], in Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, ed., 36.

⁶⁰ Xiao Yin, 21.

⁶¹ Zhou Li, *Manhadun de Zhongguo nuren* [A Chinese Woman in Manhattan] (Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe, 1992), 2. All citations from the book are from the

sixth printing of this edition, which has a different pagination from an earlier one. The English translations are mine.

⁶² Zhou Li, 264.

⁶³ Zhou Li, 1.

⁶⁴ Zhou Li, 374.

⁶⁵ Zhou Li, 334.

⁶⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, "Introduction," *Nation and Narration*, ed., Homi K. Bhabha (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 4.

⁶⁷ He Zhenbang, 88.

⁶⁸ Zeng Zhennai, "Manhadun de Zhongguo nuren duhou" [Afterthought on A *Chinese Woman in Manhattan*], in Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, ed., 90-92.

⁶⁹ Wu Liang, "Pipinde quexi" [An absence of criticism], in Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, ed., 99.

⁷⁰ Yang Ping, "'Meiguomeng' de tuixiaoshang" [A saleswoman of American dream], in Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, ed., 101-4.

⁷¹ Yang Ping, 103.

⁷² Xiao Li et al., "Zhongren fenshuo Manhadun de Zhongguo nuren" [Different opinions expressed on A *Chinese Woman in Manhattan*], in Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, ed., 105-6.

⁷³ Xiao Yin, "Kwayang," 18.

⁷⁴ Li Shidong, "Qingting yidairen de shengyin" [A voice of one generation], in Xiao Yin and Yi Ren, ed., 94-96, 95-6.

⁷⁵ Zhou Li, 490.

⁷⁶ Zhou Li, 97-8.

⁷⁷ Wang Jing, "He shang," 31.

⁷⁸ Wang Jing, 25.

⁷⁹ Zhou Li, 277.

⁸⁰ Hu Ping claimed, as have other writers of reportage, that his stories were based on real people and real stories and that literary techniques were used when needed. For studies of Chinese reportage in English, see Perry Link, ed., James Feinerman, trans., with Perry Link, *People or Monsters? And Other Stories and Reportage from China after Mao* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1983); Yin-hwa Chou, "Formal Features of Chinese Reportage and an Analysis of Liang Qichao's 'Memoirs of My Travels in the New World,'" *Modern Chinese Literature* 1:2 (Spring 1985): 201-18; Xiaomei Chen, "Genre, Convention and Society: A Reception Study of Chinese Reportage," *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 34 (1985): 85-100; Rudolf Wagner, *Inside the Service Trade: Studies in*

Contemporary Chinese Prose. (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992); Zuyan Chen, "'River Elegy' as Reportage Literature: Generic Experimentation and Boundaries." *China Information* 7: 4 (1993): 20-32; Thomas Moran, "True Stories: Contemporary Chinese Reportage and Its Ideology and Aesthetic," (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1994); Charles A. Laughlin, "Narrating the Nation: The Aesthetics of Historical Experience in Chinese Reportage, 1919-1966," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1996) and "Narrative Subjectivity and the Production of Social Space in Chinese Reportage," *Boundary* 2: 25, 2 (Fall 1998): 25-46.

⁸¹ Hu Ping, *Yimin Meiguo* [*Immigrating to America*]. (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1997), 106.104,

⁸² Hu Ping, *Yimin Meiguo*, 92.

⁸³ Hu Ping, *Yimin Meiguo*, 94.

⁸⁴ Hu Ping, *Yimin Meiguo*, 89.

⁸⁵ Hu Ping, *Yimin Meiguo*, 107.

⁸⁶ Mao Zedong, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tsetung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1972), 273. Hu Ping, *Yimin Meiguo*, 135.

⁸⁷ Hu, *Yimin Meiguo*, 136.

⁸⁸ Hu, *Yimin Meiguo*, 253.

⁸⁹ Born in 1954, Yan Li went to the United States as a self-sponsored student in 1985 and founded the Yixing Poetry Club (Yixing shishe) in 1987 while pursuing writing, painting, and photography. His "Xieye de xingwei" [The behavior of blood] was first published in the collection *The Best Funerals* (*Zuigao de zhangli*), published by Xianggang tianyuan shuwu in 1998. A reprint of the story can be found in *Zhongguo liuxuesheng wenxue daxi* [A compendium of Chinese overseas student literature], *Dangdai xiaoshuo Oumei juan* [Contemporary fiction volume, Europe and America], 506-535, 527.

⁹⁰ Yan Li, "Wo ye he Baiyangdian zhan dian bian'r" [I am also somewhat related to the Baiyangdian group of poets], in Liao Yiwu, ed., *Chenlun de Shengdian* [The fall of the sacred hall]. (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang qingshaonian chubanshe, 1999), 277-281, 277.

⁹¹ Huang Rui, "Xingxing jiu hua" [Old stories of the Star Exhibitions], in Liao Yiwu, ed., *Chenlun de Shengdian*, 462-466, 466. Huang Rui listed Yan Li as one of the 18 artists who had participated in both Star Exhibitions of 1979 and 1980, 466.

⁹² Ma Desheng, "The Age of Reflection" [Fanxing de shidai], in Liao Yiwu, ed., *Chenlun de Shengdian*, 467-472, 468.

⁹³ Xu Xiao, “Jintian yu wo” [*Today and I*], in Liao Yiwu, ed., *Chenlun de Shengdian*, 379-410, 393.

⁹⁴ In her informative study of the television series *Beijing Sojourners in New York*, based on Cao’s fiction, Lydia H. Liu describes it as “a local product of the transnational coauthorship of the ideology of business entrepreneurship between the postsocialist official discourse of China and that of the mainstream American media.” See her “Beijing Sojourners in New York: Postsocialism and the Question of Ideology in Global Media Culture,” *Positions* 7:3 (Winter, 1999), 763-797, 790.

⁹⁵ In *Lüka* [Green card], published by Xinshijie chubanshe in Beijing in 1993, Cao Guilin depicts two girls from Beijing: Xiaoni, who immigrated to America at the age of twelve with her parents, suffers from AIDS after working as a prostitute, and possibly commits suicide, though her body is never clearly identified. Chang Tiehua, while trying to help Xiaoni, does everything possible to get a “green card,” including becoming sexually involved with an “ugly” man who works in a Chinese restaurant. Although writing about life in America, Cao uses a typical Maoist discourse that depicts American society as if it were the “old society,” China before 1949—a society full of exploitations and oppressions for Chinese women. Chang Tiehua’s story, indeed, might remind one of “The White-Haired Girl,” the gist of the story being that the “old society” of post-1949 China had turned her from a woman to a ghost; the “new society” of the PRC eventually transforms her back into a human being. In Chang Tiehua’s story, we see a parallel narrative of “her turning into a ghost in order to get a green card, and transform[ing] herself back into a human being again only after obtaining a green card.” (See the blurb on the back cover of the Beijing edition). Here we see an interesting case of Maoist discourse being used to depict post-Maoist society transplanted in America, a tendency shared by other stories of Chinese diaspora written by immigrants from the PRC.

⁹⁶ Cao Guilin, *Niuyue shangkong de Zhongguo yeying* (A Chinese nightingale in the sky of New York). (Beijing: Xiandian chubanshe, 1994), 296.

⁹⁷ Wang Hui listed these different kinds of nationalism as hitherto unstudied by Chinese intellectuals and believed that further differentiations and explorations of their various manifestations would ultimately free Chinese intellectuals from any uncritical expressions of eurocentrism and sinocentrism. See his “Yijiubajiu shehui yundong yu Zhongguo ‘xin ziyoushui’ de lishi genyuan” [Social movements of 1989 and historical roots of Chinese neo-liberalism], *Zhongguo xiandia wenxue* [*Modern Chinese literature*] 19 (2000): 451-501, 482-483.

⁹⁸ Cao Guilin, *Niuyue shangkong de Zhongguo yeying*, 247.

⁹⁹ Lydia H. Liu, 772. I agree with her conclusion to her study on *Beijing Sojourners*, in which she states that “*postsocialism produces transnationalism just as much as transnationalism produces postsocialism*. These mutually embedded processes cannot but present a major challenge to the future study of ideology in transnational studies and cultural studies.”

¹⁰⁰ For an informative study on the PRC counterculture in the past twenty years, see Geremie R. Barmé, *In the Red: On Contemporary Chinese Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).