IN THE HEAT OF SENTIMENTS: NATIONALISM, POSTSOCIALISM, AND POPULAR CULTURE IN CHINA, 1988-2007

by

YIPENG SHEN

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This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of East Asian Languages & Literature by:

Tze-lan Sang, Co-Chairperson, East Asian Languages & Literature
David Leiwei Li, Co-Chairperson, English
Maram Epstein, Member, East Asian Languages & Literature
Bryna Goodman, Outside Member, History

and Richard Linton, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies/Dean of the Graduate School for the University of Oregon.

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Approved: _____
Tze-lan Sang, Co-Chair

Approved: _____
David L. Li, Co-Chair

My dissertation delves into the recent articulation of popular nationalism in Mainland China, with particular emphasis on the changes that globalization and transnationalism have brought about to the representation of the Chinese nation in sentimental terms. Complementing the rich existing literature of Chinese nationalism that focuses mainly on the pre-1949 period, my study explores the less-treaded contemporary era characterized by the new historical condition of postsocialism, which features a residual of the socialist past as well as its reinvention under new overwhelming trends of globalization. Postsocialism and its consequences—the deepening of a neoliberalist

economic reform, the state-intellectual promotion of cultural economy, the emergence of a dominant consumer culture, etc.—have produced new issues existing scholarship on Chinese nationalism has yet to address. One such issue is how the paradoxical entity of the "nation" in time and space has been fragmented by the accretion of diversified voices from a wide spectrum of Chinese society. In postsocialist China, the agents imagining the nation include not only regulars like the state and intellectuals, but also new players like mass-media elites and netizens (*wangmin*). I argue that these voices of different social forces that break up the hegemony of the state in representing the nation—the result of which being not that the state is excluded from this enterprise but that it now tells only part of the story—become expressed as modes of national sentiments (*minzu qinggan*) when the nation is imagined under the historical condition of postsocialism. My study then explores in detail the fashioning and refashioning of contemporary Chinese subjectivity, as it relates through the joining of national sentiments to the literal and figurative body of the nation and the social power structure, by analyzing these specific voices in a broad range of popular texts from TV, film, and the Internet. The detailed examination includes four chapters dealing with specific modes of national sentiments articulated by the intellectuals, the state, the mass-media elites, and the netizens, respectively.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Yipeng Shen

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene, USA
National University of Singapore, Singapore
Nanjing University, Nanjing, China

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy, Chinese, 2010, University of Oregon
Master of Arts, Chinese, 2006, National University of Singapore
Bachelor of Arts, Chinese, 2002, Nanjing University

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Modern and Contemporary Literature and Cultural Studies

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Visiting Instructor, College of the Holy Cross, 2009-2010
Graduate Teaching Fellow, University of Oregon, 2005-2009
Teaching Assistant, National University of Singapore, 2004-2005

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My dissertation delves into the recent articulation of popular nationalism in Mainland China, with particular emphasis on the changes that globalization and transnationalism have brought about to the representation of the Chinese nation in sentimental terms. As one of the most appealing political ideologies and cultural discourses to Chinese people, nationalism persistently looms large in shaping modern Chinese subjectivity in the last one and a half centuries. Following up the late-Qing initiation of Chinese modernization, turbulent modern history sees varied yet determined cultural practices of articulating and redefining sentiments (*qinggan* 情感) as an indispensable part of the nationalist project. Under the rubric of the Chinese nation, people constantly invest their heroic aspiration and quotidian pleasure in *qinggan*, be it traditional ethical sentiments waiting to be reformed in the late Qing, romanticist free love as moral foundation in May Fourth, or national sympathy and fervor undergirding the grandiose cause of revolutions. Since China's economic takeoff in the 1980s, Chinese culture has been rigorously reassessed and reconstructed towards a more "popular"

outlook by the increasingly diversified social spectrum that results from China's relentless incorporation into a global economic system. The context of the dominance of popular culture and global capitalism actually makes articulating and defining sentiments complicated discourses replete with contestation and hybridization.

What is striking about these discussions of sentiments is how the paradoxical entity of the "nation" in time and space has been fragmented by the accretion of diversified voices from the wide spectrum of Chinese society. In sentimental languages these different layerings of Chinese society break up the hegemony of the state in representing the nation, while entangling themselves more closely with the de facto national power structure. Therefore, with the theme of "national sentiments" (*minzu qinggan* 民族情感), I group up all the meanings in an attempt to capture the particular positionalities of the contemporary Chinese nation from the perspective of popular culture, encompassing such a complex topography of the disparate "spaces of the nation" against the backdrop of the new overwhelming trends of globalization.

The probing of the role of sentiment in its historical production accords with the "sentimental turn" in academia in the last thirty-some years. Raymond Williams' study of the "structure of feeling" is well presented to evaluate the political nature of the production of feelings. Contrary to the common belief that feelings are inner emotions devoid of large social significance, Williams argues that feeling has a structure that refers

to a "particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or of a period" (1977, 131). According to Haiyan Lee, the structure of feeling captures social consciousness as lived experience in process, or in solution, before it is "precipitated" and given fixed form. Lee emphasizes that feeling is not opposed to thought, but rather embodies thought. In other words, feeling has structures that can be subjected to rational analysis (2007, 10-11). Although philosophers, ethnographers and cultural anthropologists cast different light on the interpretation and application of Williams' concept,[1] the structure of feeling nevertheless inspired many influential studies that treat discourses of feelings and emotions as social practices bespeaking power structures within diversified national contexts. For example, Arjun Appadurai's study of praise in Hindu India demonstrates that sentimental bonds underlying praise can be reproduced separately from the supposed "real feelings" of people. Setting up the contrast between "real feelings" and "voiced sentiments", he persuasively argues that the voicing of sentiments is regulated by a shared, socially constructed set of codes in the course of Indian modernity (1990).

The political nature of sentiment, or more precisely, of the representation of sentiment—which indicates the signification of sentiment as the legitimizing basis for a new social order—and its meanings to the mapping of non-Western modernities provide new possibilities to theorize the linkage between modern subjectivity and modern

political institutions, particularly the nation-state. Generally more attuned to the political culture mobilized by nationalism, political scientists emphasize its state and ideological formation as shaped by institutions and international conflicts. Literary scholars, on the other hand, reinvest the category of nationalism with the broader significance of cultural agency and prefer to examine the "nation" as a nexus for competing narratives of culture, power, and discourse (Tsu 2005, 1). The trend of examining the politics of sentiment under the rubric of the nation has had a significant impact on recent scholarship on Chinese nationalism of the pre-1949 period,[2] which, in a hope to somewhat bridge the gap between a humanistic approach to modernity and a social-scientific one, intensely constructs the connections between sentiments, subjectivities, and the national power structure. One such work is Haiyan Lee's 2007 study of the genealogy of love in China in the first half of the twentieth century. She approaches the discourses of love as articulatory practices that participate in defining the social order and producing forms of self and sociality, of which the premiere one is the linkage between modern people and the nation. Based on this point, she delineates the course of Chinese modernity in sentimental terms by proposing three structures of feelings—the Confucian, the enlightenment, and the revolutionary—that register the major shifts in the notion of love as well as the vicissitudes of Chinese history in the first half of the twentieth century. Seemingly, her most valuable contribution is a caution against taking love for granted "as

a transhistorical and transcultural constant rather than as a linguistic and cultural resource mobilized and mobolizable by the project of modernity" (8). The central issue she pursues is—in her own words—in what sense the changing meaning of *qing* was part and parcel of the changing conception of self, gender, and community in modern China (6). As she laboriously contoured in her work, the actualization of this process—defining Chinese modernity through defining the individual-nation nexus in sentimental terms—is fraught with confusions, contentions, and compromises.

These complexities in mapping Chinese national sentiments in the first half of the twentieth century bring to the forefront the fundamental aporia of the nation—that is, the nation is an "impossible unity" that must be narrated into being in both time and space.[3] The aporia of the nation consists first and foremost in the fundamental ambivalence of the time of modernity. Hegel's historical philosophy has occasioned the hitherto dominant mode of understanding time—i.e., a linear and progressive history. In the Hegelian mode of history, the history of human beings is a linear progress from the pre-modern to the modern, from the barbaric to the civilized—the course of which is steered by the Enlightenment movement that thrived first in the West, then expanded to the whole world. In this process the West successfully incorporated the non-West as its homogenous Other, through which the progressive mode of history also gained its universality. This totalizing mode of experiencing time bears insurmountable internal disjunctions as derived from the

perpetually unsolvable impasse, in which a disjunctive temporality is "given" on account of the finitude of the human life span, while a continuous temporality is "desired" by people whose subjectivity is unbound. Prasenjit Duara pinpoints in this mode a fundamental problem that the linear, progressive history is not only the dominant mode of experiencing time, but also the dominant mode of being, which enables modernity to be a possibility. This condition requires the nation to function as the only exclusive agency to achieve modernity, in the process of which the nation becomes the subject of this Enlightenment history (1995, 17-20).

The conflict of the finitude of human time (phenomenological time) and the (assumed) infinitude of time of modernity (pedagogical time) is thus transferred onto the nation-space. Using Duara's words, the nation on one hand must daily reproduce the project of recovering its national essence to secure its transparency as the always-already of the nation-space. On the other hand, it must commit itself to modernity and progress by glorifying its historical embodiment—the nation-state—as the unprecedented form of "subjecthood" in history that is able to realize the goal of modernity (29). In the context of modern Chinese history, the notion of national sentiments epitomizes the ambiguities and ambivalences in constructing the always-already of the nation-space and threads up the multiple series of events in the historical actualization of China into a nation-state. It is in this sense that Haiyan Lee argues for the centrality of sentiment in the

transformation of Chinese modernity by claiming that "the modern subject is first and foremost a sentimental subject and that the modern nation is first and foremost a community of sympathy" (2007, 7). In this light, dissecting the paradoxical notion of "national sentiments" is critical to understand, and thus breaks up a monolithic construct of the Chinese nation as the evolution of a selfsame subject through time and space.

The aporia of the nation and its grips with sentiments persist in the contemporary condition of globalization. Globalization, as Sheldon Lu puts it, is the "ineluctable human condition of our time". It concerns not only the "physical circulation of goods, commodities, industries, hardware, and capital across national boundaries", but also the personal feelings in the everyday life of people. As Lu explains, "At a deeper level, the process involves the structure of feelings and the politics of the body, the psyche, and affects" (2007, 2). In a Chinese context, globalization roughly started with the era of "Deng's China" (1979-1997)—bearing critical historical moments such as Deng Xiaoping's initiation of the "Reform and Opening" (*gaige kaifang* 改革开放) policies in the late 1970s, the "New Enlightenment" cultural fever in the 1980s, the military crackdown on the student protest in Tiananmen Square in 1989, and Deng's Southern Tour in 1992—and continued with the Post-Deng decade that witnessed Hong Kong and Macao's repatriation into China in 1997 and 1999, China's entry into The World Trade Organization in 2001, and the official canonization of Jiang Zemin's "Three Represents"

(*sange daibiao* 三个代表) discourse in 2002 and Hu Jingtao's "Harmonious Society" (*hexie shehui* 和谐社会) discourse in 2005. The national significances of the "structure of feelings" and the "politics of the body, the psyche, and affects" in Deng's era have been touched upon in some China-specific works,[4] of which Ann Anagnost's1997 study stands out in my discussion because of its focus on power and presentation in delineating contemporary national sentiments, feelings, and affects. In the introduction of her book, Anagnost notes:

> Not only does the nation mark its impossible unity in relation to time, but also in space. The nation-space is never unitary but multiple within itself. Communist rhetoric, in its exquisitely detailed language of class analysis, situated subjects in differential positions in relation to the national culture…The principle of inclusion and exclusion, however authoritatively stated, are never completely successful but are always subject to contestation by those who have been closed out or … forcibly included. All these paradoxical sites—the primordiality of the modern nation, the contestation of boundaries defining the national space, the "awakening" to self-awareness through the embrace of global process—require narrative to do its job, endlessly constructing an apparently seamless story of the nation's place in space and time.

> Narrative, however, requires the presence of an enunciating subject. This simple fact directs our attention to the power of a national imaginary to call forth subjects who "speak for" the nation. In the history of modern China, the designation of who or what class represents the agency to propel the nation forward in its historical destiny has been very much at stake in national struggles. Implicit in this contestation has been a "politics of presence" in which the speaking subject claims to or is attributed with the power to speak with the force of history. In this sense, the national subject is made to embody abstract conceptions which are not immediately present to experience (such as History, Nation, Society, People) but which become emblematic of the nation speaking with the voice of history. (1997, 4)

This central thread of the politics of presence is quite illuminating to my study of the contemporary discourses of Chinese national sentiments. At the heart of my study is the premise that contemporary sentiments must be articulated and defined by multiple national subjects holding different positions in a national power structure increasingly shaped by the overwhelming trends of globalization. The contractions, contestations, and confrontations globalization has brought into the national power structure are increasingly embodied in the diversified voices of the national subjects, of which a

central task is to empower their respective positions in the national structure through the designation of appropriate or desirable sentiments.

Hence comes the theme of national sentiments of my study, which postulates that the meanings of sentiments are historically and culturally situated and subject to the maneuvering of social power. *Qinggan* for the national subjects is the significant concept through which one negotiates one's social position or one's relationship to power. The contemporary discourses of *minzu qinggan*—social positioning, radical embodiment of oneself in relation to power, and profound emotional and intellectual identification with that position and the structure of the relationship it implies—outline the construction of Chinese national subjectivity with a globalized vision.[5] Therefore in this study I define *minzu qinggan* as a spiritual quality that integrates the individual emotions, feelings, and desires with the practical needs of the Chinese nation as dictated by the intellect of the multiple national subjects.

If *minzu qinggan* is a quality through which contemporary Chinese subjects negotiate their respective self-positions with the national power structure, the centering of *minzu qinggan* in subjectivity demands a passionate embodiment of its underlying suppositions that are closely related to the specific historical conditions of contemporary China. In my study the vicissitudes of *minzu ginggan* and its meanings to Chinese history are rigorously examined under the critical lens of postsocialism. The central argument of

my study is that the positionalities of the multiple national subjects become expressed as modes of national sentiments when the nation is imagined under the historical condition of Chinese postsocialism.

Sheldon Lu suggests, "Chinese socialism has been a dominant tradition throughout the twentieth century and beyond". As he explains, "It is no exaggeration to say that Chinese modernity has been to a large extent the development, revision, and rethinking of socialist modernity" (2007, 204). From Kang Youwei's utopian socialist vision of Great Commonwealth (*datong* 大同) in late Qing, to Chairman Mao's mass movement of People's Communes (*renmin gongshe* 人民公社) in the high time of the Cultural Revolution, socialism has played one of the highest tenors on the center stage of modern Chinese history.

In the post-Mao era, fundamental changes in politics, economics, ideology, and everyday life have occurred to every layer of the Chinese society. Deng's Reform and Opening policies introduced a new round of socioeconomic reforms to a nominally socialist state. Erstwhile prevalent theoretical models, such as postcolonialism, proved inadequate to map out such a historical condition. As a result, the term "postsocialism" has been invented to describe the new condition of China.

Arif Dirlik first used "postsocialism" in the 1989 anthology *Marxism and the Chinese Experience*. By that term he refers to the condition of socialism in a historical situation where:

> (a) socialism has lost its coherence as a metatheory of politics because of the attenuation of the socialist vision in its historical unfolding; partly because of a perceived need on the part of socialist state to articulate "actually existing socialism" to the demands of a capitalist world order, but also because of the vernacularization of socialism in its absorption into different national contexts; (b) the articulation of socialism to capitalism is conditioned by the structure of "actually existing socialism" in any particular social context which is the historical premise of all such articulation; and (c) this premise stands guard over the process of articulation to ensure that it does not result in the restoration of capitalism. (1989, 364)

Shortly after Mao's demise, Deng ousted Mao's chosen successor Hua Guofeng and proceeded with socioeconomic reforms such as disbanding People's Communes, restoring private ownership, and establishing capitalist-style special economic zones. What Deng did seems to prove the accuracy of Mao's prediction that Deng would be a "capitalist roader" (*zouzi pai* 走资派) from within the ranks of the Chinese Communist

Party. However, Deng's departure from Maoist socialist fanaticism was not necessarily the doom of socialism in China. Dirlik insists that "postsocialism, rather than signaling the end of socialism, offers the possibility in the midst of a crisis in socialism of rethinking socialism in new, more creative ways" (380).

Besides Dirlik, other scholars of China studies also applied this term in their works. In his discussion of New Chinese Cinema in the 1980s, Paul Pickowicz suggests that "we consider using a framework that might be called postsocialist" (1994, 60). "[The] idea of a distinctively postsocialist condition is best used to refer to the type of popular cultural diversity, cultural ambiguity, and cultural confusion that became so pronounced in China in the 1980s" (61). Although it thrived in the 1980s, Pickowicz dates postsocialism back to a much earlier time when "the massive disillusionment with socialism among true believers and ideological agnostics and the onset of an alienated postsocialist mode of thought and behavior began midway through the Cultural Revolution (and perhaps earlier in the countryside)" (62).

Although both Dirlik and Pickowicz focus their studies of Chinese postsocialism on the 1970s and the 1980s,[6] younger scholars have deployed this seminal concept in studies of China in the 1990s and the twentieth-century. Sheldon Lu starts his delineation of Chinese postsocialism with a discussion of the pivotal significance of the year 1989:

> As we know, 1989 was an eventful and crucial year in contemporary Chinese history, the year in which the student democracy movement in Tiananmen Square was suppressed by the regime. Furthermore, it was in the 1990s that China completed its transformation from a predominantly socialist planned economy to a diverse and largely capitalist market economy and consumer society. It was also in the last decade of the twentieth century that actually existing socialist states in Eastern Europe collapsed one after another and the Cold War between capitalism and communism/socialism ended. If the pace and manner of reform were gradual, incremental, and tentative in the 1980s, China accelerated its full-scale incorporation into the capitalist world economy in the 1990s and beyond. (2007, 206-7)

Based on such an understanding of the "watershed" status of 1989 in contemporary Chinese history, Lu posits that the post-Mao period from the late 1970s through the 1980s is the "pre-postsocialist" stage while postsocialism "blossomed fully in the 1990s and the twenty-first century" (207). In a similar vein, Xudong Zhang specifies the postsocialist period of China as the years of the "long 1990s" between the 1989 Tiananmen Incident and China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001 (2008, back cover).

The careful examination of the ups and downs of *minzu ginggan* and its meanings to contemporary Chinese history demands a genealogical understanding of postsocialism.

According to Anagnost, Michel Foucault reminds us that "the world of speech and desires has known invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises, ploys"—everything, in short, that disrupts the attempt to construct a coherent narrative of evolutionary unfolding in human cultural history (1997, 178n9). The genealogical approach "insists on tracing the trajectories of discursive elements stemming from unlikely places, deploying transformed meanings in disrupted histories" (6). Anagnost argues:

> The genealogist must be sensitive to resonances across time—not to set them into a continuous evolutionary narrative but to "isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles." Therefore, we have to be attentive to the ways in which the present reprise of notions that were current earlier in China's modern history mark a conscious retrieval of the past that is nevertheless fundamentally conditioned by the tumultuous history of the socialist era separating then from now. (6)

The genealogical approach to postsocialism—through which Chinese national sentiments are sketched out under the new context of globalization—proposes an explanation to a fundamental problem in the application of Williams' conceptualization of the "structure of feelings" to study national sentiments in a contemporary milieu. In his writing, Williams insists that structures of feeling do not respond to either dominant or

residual social formations; rather, they represent an emerging social formation still unidentifiable in an explicit way:

> It is a structured formation which, because it is at the very edge of semantic availability, has many of the characteristics of a pre-formation, until specific articulations—new semantic figures—are discovered in material practice: often, as happens, in relatively isolated ways, which are only later seen to compose a significant (often in fact minority) generation; this often, in turn, the generation that substantially connects to its successors. It is thus a specific structure of particular linkages, particular emphases and suppressions, and in what are often its most recognizable forms, particular deep starting-points and conclusions. (1977, 134)

Because of the supposed "forward" gaze of the structure of feelings—i.e. the emerging social formation it represents is to some extent still a pre-formation awaiting significant articulations to come in the future, some people believe that it is impossible to delineate the social meanings of the structure of feelings in the present. What people are capable of doing is only to study, in a backward gaze, "how particular structures of feeling, undetectable at their time of origin, managed to contribute to the solidification of a contemporary dominant social formation" (Benavides 2006, 12). It seems to me that

Benavides' notions of the forward and the backward, and the dominant and the residual still embody an attempt to construct a cohesive, evolutionary narrative in which the time follows a linear trajectory from the past to the future. The past, the present, and the future are so seamlessly united that no room is left for imagining the time other than through the "forward" or the "backward" gaze. And the demarcation between the dominant and the residual is so clear-cut and stable that in the present the dominant functions as nothing other than a repressive, exterior force over the residual.

I, however, refuse to adhere to the somehow reified unity between the forward and the backward, and demarcation between the dominant and the residual. I argue that the social meanings of the structure of feelings in the present are available for analyses only if these meanings are examined with a genealogical understanding of history. I, therefore, examine the contemporary discourses of national sentiments by identifying their different points of emergence, appropriation, and interpretation with a genealogical approach to postsocialism.

In what follows, I discuss the significances of the genealogical approach to Chinese postsocialism with regard to national sentiments from three mutually entangled perspectives: time, space, and power. The genealogical approach to postsocialism allows me to break up the linear, progressive mode of history by first calling into question the periodization scheme of previous scholarship on postsocialism that suggests a radical

break between the 1980s and the 1990s. Significant indeed in contemporary Chinese history, the year of 1989 heralds an abrupt turn more than an end to China's reform era. The overemphasization of the "watershed" status of 1989 and the exclusive focus on the "long 1990s" may keep people away from a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese postsocialism in global and local histories. On the one hand, a kind of historical continuity undeniably exists between the 1990s and beyond and the 1980s in that the social mechanisms of national representations in the 1990s and onward are deeply rooted in the socio-historical conditions and cultural policies of China in the 1980s and even earlier years.[7] A well-informed study of Chinese nationalism and postsocialism cannot afford to completely sever the 1990s from its immediate past. On the other hand, I argue that postsocialism is the Chinese condition of globalization. The historical actualization of Chinese postsocialism features convoluted interactive processes between China and the rest of the world that span both Deng Xiaoping's governing years and the post-Deng decade. Deng's economic reforms in the 1980s and 1990s are neatly contemporaneous with the dramatic reorganization of capitalism in the past three decades: an era that has been characterized as "the age of flexible accumulation", "post-Fordism", or "late capitalism".[8] I do not intend to write in this study a narrative about the 1980s and 1990s China per se. Instead, I attempt to position this part of Chinese history within the larger picture of the global development of capitalism and socialism in the twentieth century.

Applying Partha Chatterjee's schema defining the development of nationalist thought, Anagnost writes about the twentieth-century Chinese history from a global perspective:

> The early part of the century represents a moment in Chinese history when it was being pulled into the orbit of global capitalism. Because of China's semi-colonial status, however, this process operated on vastly different terms from those of the present, resulting ultimately in a rejection of capitalism. In contrast, China is now undergoing a "passive revolution" marked by the controlled insertion of capitalist forms by a powerful bureaucratic state, a revolution that is producing unimaginable wealth for those functionaries who can provide a docile, disciplined, and cheap labor force for transnational capital in a globalized marketplace. (1997, 6)

Anagnost identifies in her study three critical moments in the twentieth-century Chinese history: China being pulled into the global expansion of a capitalist economy in the first half of the century, the rejection of capitalism in socialist China, and the controlled insertion of capitalism into the national economy in the Deng's era (6-8).[9] The juxtaposition of the three moments fundamentally changes our perceptions of the history of the 1980s and 1990s in China, and of the twentieth-century Chinese history as a whole.

If the genealogical approach takes as its task to compose a genealogy of dispersed elements from disrupted histories, the history of 1980s and 1990s China undoubtedly better serves the discursive genealogy of the twentieth-century Chinese history when it is understood as but one dispersed element to speak for the revival of capitalism in China after the disruption of socialism. It is also in this sense that I combine the 1980s and the 1990s under the rubric of postsocialism as a Chinese parallel to the condition of globalization.

Relevant to the genealogical demystification of the progressive mode of history is also the disruption of the received myth of origin in the studies of Chinese postsocialism. While it is certainly true that "Chinese socialism has been a dominant tradition throughout the twentieth century and beyond" (Lu 2007, 204), it is insensible to trace the origin of everything in the postsocialist society back to the socialist era. Rather than the original birthplace of everything postsocialist, the socialist era is seen "in the density of the accumulation in which [it is] caught up and which [it] nevertheless never cease[s] to modify, to disturb, to over throw, and sometimes to destroy" (Foucault 1972, 125). The genealogical approach to postsocialism requires the reprise of *minzu ginggan*—the notion that persists in China's modern history despite its vast structural and articulatory transformations throughout history's trajectory. The reprise must be conducted with the full awareness that on the one hand the conscious retrieval of the past is "fundamentally

conditioned by the tumultuous history of the socialist era separating then from now" (Anagnost 1997, 6); on the other hand the retrieval of the past goes far back beyond the socialist era and speaks directly with diversified social memories within the complex web of cultural meanings shaped by both present national positionalities and thousands of years of historical sediments. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, disparate means of agency of the multiple national subjects are identifiable in the negotiations for their preferred modes of national sentiments with Chinese cultural memories, which both include and exceed those of the socialist era.

In addition, the idea that postsocialism is the Chinese condition of globalization poses new questions to the relationship between Deng's era and the post-Deng decade within the frame of Chinese postsocialism. As I have noted, the historical actualization of Chinese postsocialism features convoluted interactive processes between China and the rest of the world that span both Deng Xiaoping's governing years and the post-Deng decade. Ann Anagnost's work was published in 1997, the year of Deng's demise. Thus her work has a contemporary focus that mainly discusses issues of national relevance in Deng's era. I continue her interest in the nexus of power and representation of a globalized China and extend my critical attention to the post-Deng decade. Post-Deng China stays on the track of globalization as initiated in Deng's regime, while simultaneously generating new problems impinging on the articulation of national

sentiments. The postsocialist nation that underwent fundamental structural transformations under Deng's regime has tacitly welcomed a new round of challenges after 1997. After many years of marketization and reforms, Chinese people have gradually realized the menace of the capitalist market to their private spaces and personal welfares. They are believed to be "condemned to live in the worst of both worlds"—"the rampant corruption and endemic nepotism caused by the institutional structure of the one-party state, which is nothing but a perversion of the utopian longing for real socialism" in conjunction with "ruthless capitalist profiteering that creates a disproportionate disparity the haves and have-nots" (Lu 2007, 209). On another note, China's tremendous influences on the world economy and its increasingly aggressive foreign policies in the post-Deng decade have deeply upset the previous balance of world geo-political power. The "accidental" bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 by the US-led NATO air force brought on a new wave of nationalism and anti-Americanism in China. Ten years after the students' blood spilled on it under the order of the Communist Party government, Tiananmen Square ironically witnessed China's largest mass protest since 1989, in which the party-state and the masses seemed to have formed a firm alliance to fight against NATO and the United States. In the final years of Jiang Zemin's regime, wealthy businessmen and entrepreneurs were admitted to party membership and given the rank of "proletarians". According to his theory of "Three

Represents", the Chinese Communist Party represents the most advanced force of production, the most developed culture, and the interests of the broadest masses. The official rhetoric of the fourth generation of the Communist Party leadership has highlighted Hu Jingtao's discourse of "Harmonious Society", in which the building of a "harmonious society" is indispensible to the "great renaissance of the Chinese nation" (*Zhonghua minzu de weida fuxing* 中华民族的伟大复兴).

To borrow Sheldon Lu's words, Post-Deng China testifies that "the artistic and cultural heart of postsocialism lies in a pre-capitalist, socialist life-world even while the technological head of postsocialism faces in the direction of a global capitalist rationale of business management and creating surplus value" (209). The tensions between culture and technology within postsocialism itself increasingly rip the political meanings of socialism off the post-Deng era, while making nationalism the only ideology and cultural norm to hold people together. It is in this sense that I give considerable attention to the discourses of national sentiments after 1997. Two out of the four following chapters are dedicated to the post-Deng era. The state-sponsored leitmotif film in the late 1990s and the netizens' (*wangmin* 网民) cyber-literature (*wangluo wenxue* 网络文学) sensation in the twenty-first century form an intriguing conversation addressing the disparity of national sentiments in this era. The popular discourses of the state from the top and the masses from the bottom, as I will detail in these two chapters, both ratify and reject the

seemingly impossible alliance between the state and the masses on Tiananmen Square in 1999.

The genealogical meanings of Chinese postsocialism to contemporary national sentiments can also be examined through the perspective of the space. If postsocialism is the Chinese condition of globalization, it bespeaks the "reshuffling" impact of the overwhelming trends of globalization on the spaces of the nation, which constitute the national power structure in which the multiple national subjects dwell. In light of the genealogical approach, the fundamental changes globalization has brought on to the positionalities of the multiple national subjects must be analyzed through their disparate "resonances over time—not to set them into a continuous evolutionary narrative but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles" (Anagnost 1997, 6). In other words, how the national subjects idiosyncratically appropriate the past—the "different scenes"—represents their respective positionalities within the national power structure, which must be understood not as continuous evolutionary narratives, but as "isolated", case-by-case studies of the power maneuverings behind the discourses of national sentiments.

In contemporary China, the postsocialist conditionings of the national subjects' appropriation of the past in the articulations of national sentiments are most significantly incarnated in the nascent—in the sense of emerging only in the last thirty-some

years—interactions between the state and the market and their consequences. In examining the intellectual contentions of nationalism and mass culture in China in the early 1990s, Xudong Zhang contends that a new generation of Chinese nationalists has emerged from the discursive space being created by an omnipresent market and a decentralized state power (2008, 103). Intended to apply to the situations of the early 1990s only, Zhang's contention is nonetheless illuminating to the understanding of the whole postsocialist period. In Zhang's words, the "expanding gray area" between the absolute state and the intellectual-dictated civil society has dramatically changed the rules of describing and interpreting the Chinese economy, politics, everyday world, and cultural life (ibid). To my understanding, the "expanding gray area" certainly refers to the market-oriented popular culture—or the "mass culture" in Zhang's terms. The realm of the market that strives for its own expression finds its closest company of the state, which, in the new conditions of globalized productions and consumptions, is more and more tied to the capital and ensures with its power a smooth transition of China from a rigid planned economy to a market economy. The globalized conditions of the Chinese market economy require the intervention of the state. Thus it seems all the more natural to maintain the power of the state in order to seek a globalization with "Chinese characteristics".

The merging of the realms of the state and the market certainly gives rise to a new wave of affirmation of the state as the primary unit for perceiving life, society, and culture in both official and popular culture. However, this structural transformation of the postsocialist China also produces another effect:

> [A] discerned overlap between the state and the mass culture reinvention of the nation indicates a broader basis of national experience in both real and imaginary terms.... [T]he basically free flow of labor, goods, and capital, as well as the boom in formation and cultural signs and images, undoubtedly presented the nation in vivid terms for the first time for the majority of Chinese people. Until this moment, the people's sense of their nation had remained abstract and impersonal, as the state took national affairs exclusively in its own hands. (106)

The breaking up for the "majority of Chinese people" of the hegemony of the state in representing the nation gives birth to the diversified topography of the subjects "speaking for" the nation in sentimental terms. In postsocialist China, the subjects imagining the nation through the joint of *minzu qinggan* include not only regulars like the state and intellectuals, but also new players like mass-media elites and netizens. It is not that the

state has been excluded from the enterprise of articulating national sentiments, but that the state now tells only part of the story.

Moreover, these multiple national subjects are most acutely experiencing the global pulse in daily life in the interactions between the state and the market. As Xudong Zhang suggests, on one hand globalization has "exposed the Chinese market and the realm of daily life to global capital, and to international fashions and ideologies"; on the other hand "the massive entry into and by the world market also enabled Chinese consumers to encounter a world of difference, often delineated in terms of nation-state borders". In this world the Chinese were reminded of "belonging to a particular community identified by geography, economy, language, politics, a common history, and 'culture'" (107). The sentimental disquiet of the Chinese national subjects will be its ineluctable by-product as long as globalization, as the terms such as "the age of flexible accumulation", "post-Fordism", and "late capitalism" suggest, embodies the intersecting command of money, time, and space to form a substantial nexus of social power in the specific national context. One thing for sure is that benefits and burdens of globalization are unequally distributed among the multiple subjects in accordance with their respective positionalities within the power nexus of the postsocialist China. This unequal distribution deeply disquiets these subjects and in turn inspires more sentimental investments from them in appropriating different cultural remembrances of the past—in

doing so to reflect upon their respective positions in the contemporary national power structure. It is in this sense that the discourses of national sentiments under postsocialism—or the Chinese condition of globalization—seem to corroborate David Harvey's famous postulation that in the contemporary cultural milieu the changing experience of money, time, and space may be the basis for the rise of distinctive systems of interpretation and representation, and may find itself as a primary bearer of cultural codes (1989, 299).

The link between the national subjects' cultural remembrances of the past and their respective positionalities within the postsocialist power structure is therefore the lynchpin of my interpretation of the various discourses of national sentiments in the following chapters. In light of the genealogical approach, the consequences of Chinese postsocialism—as were generated from, among other things, the merging of the realms of the state and the market—to the various articulation of *minzu qinggan* must be analyzed in an "isolated", case-by-case method. However, one question remains: How does the case-by-case study of *minzu qinggan* find its points of focus in the vast tapestry of contemporary social life? At this juncture comes the third perspective of the genealogical study—power, domination, and their relationship to everyday life. Xudong Zhang points out that the market-oriented popular culture "adds a crucial variant to the considerations of notions of nationalism and intellectual discourse in the Chinese context, and changes

the historical and ideological implications of these notions in China today" (2008, 103). He keenly notes that a new nationalist sentiment emerged in China when the postrevolutionary masses—as citizens and consumers—encountered Western images of and discourses on China through their own market-based media (109). He argues that this market-oriented, popular-culture-based nationalist sentiment nevertheless exemplifies that an intellectual-dictated, theoretically articulate political philosophy and cultural vision are missing in this economic alliance between economic sphere and mass culture (112-3).

My study takes a different angle than that of Zhang's and explores the interrelations between *minzu qinggan*, the market, and popular culture. Instead of considering the effects of the absence of an elitist intellectual vision on popular articulation of *minzu qinggan*, I attempt to examine those interrelations without preferring an a priori intellectual stance and recover the original trajectories of the power maneuverings of the multiple national subjects underlying the various discourses of *minzu qinggan*. I argue that in postsocialist China popular culture is the most critical site where diversified narratives of *minzu qinggan* could make their presence and strategically enframe new realities and new political possibilities within the national power structure. Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, and Michel Foucault's observations on contemporary cultural hegemony, power, and popular culture retain their sharp relevance at this juncture.

Antonio Gramsci's original proposal to explain communities' self-imposed domination (1971) inspired critical studies of cultural hegemony in contemporary societies. Louis Althusser's study of political domination (1971) freed the discussion of power from both the economic and the dialectical determination of traditional Marxist class analyses. He placed the formative elements of ideological power in the cultural production of material processes that constrain and define political domination. His examples of state education and religious indoctrination furthered the exploration of ideology not as a mere epiphenomenon of economic production but as a quasi-independent element of cultural interaction. Despite struggling to maintain a more orthodox Marxist perspective, and significantly distancing himself from his own problematic conclusions, Althusser opened the way for addressing the independent productive power of domination instead of assessing it only in negative and repressive terms. This is precisely where Michel Foucault's work is most enlightening. Some of his main contributions are located within his studies of social institutions—prisons, asylums, hospitals—as normalizing agents as well as the elaboration of social discourse as a useful analytical tool. For Foucault, hegemony works not because it is actively operationalized from the outside but because domination is actually connected to our very inside, making us the most active imposers of our own constraints:

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (1980, 119)

> In thinking of the mechanism of power, I am thinking rather of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, leaning processes and everyday lives. (39)

In a similar vein, in his *Marxism and Literature* (1977) Raymond Williams develops elements that, according to him, serve to access hegemony and offer a better understanding of how it is deployed. He takes "structures of feeling" as such an element that helps bridge the gap between a static understanding of class formation lodged in its own formative institutions and corresponding ideology and the daily life of individuals and the production of popular culture.[10] In other words, Williams regards "structures of feeling" as a privileged entry point to behold the mutuality between the normative

cultural/political domination—or the "hegemony"—and the individual-oriented, everyday-life-participating popular culture.

It is against such a theoretical background that my focus on popular culture—for excavating the paramount meanings of contemporary national sentiments—embodies a genealogical perspective of Chinese postsocialism. In postsocialist China, popular culture is the most important entry point of the "self-imposed", "productive" power into everyday life. Paraphrasing Foucault's terms, power runs through the figurative body of the nation—the social structure conditioned by, among other things, postsocialism—to the literary body of the nation—the individual bodies of people capable of various kinds of agencies—through the joint of popular culture, in which *minzu qinggan* makes the prominent presence of the multiple national subjects and powerfully enframes their feelings, desires, attitudes, and actions on an everyday basis in regard to the Chinese nation. The various forms of present domination—as incurred by normative forces like the merging of the realms of the state and the market—are fundamentally "internalized" as a source, in integration with the residual thoughts, memories, and cultural forms from the long history, fueling the perpetuated construction and deconstruction of contemporary Chinese subjectivity in sentimental terms.

I use the term "popular culture" in a broad sense, referring it to the various popular forms targeting the vast masses in contemporary Chinese society. On this register my

usage of this term echoes Xudong Zhang's aforementioned notion of "mass culture". It is from the perspective of the vastness and breadth of the targeted audiences that I define the meanings of "popular". Moreover, the popularity with the masses of these cultural forms is increasingly determined by the extent of their "multimedia-rization". In line with the fadeaway of the vitality and impact of the intellectual cultural vision in the postsocialist society is the decline of the traditional book media as the main form of cultural communication and circulation. Multimedia, which includes a variety of visualized and non-visualized forms such us film, TV, and cyber media, becomes instead the critical venue whereby the multiple national subjects participate in the construction of *minzu qinggan* in popular culture. Thus the direct research object of my study is nothing but the multimedia-rized discourses of *minzu qinggan*. The key media-texts I will examine in this dissertation include one TV documentary *River Elegy* (*Heshang* 河殇, 1988), one TV serial *A Native of Beijing in New York* (*Beijingren zai Niuyue* 北京人在纽约, 1993, hereafter *NBNY*), one leitmotif movie *Grief over the Yellow River* (*Huanghe Juelian* 黄河绝恋, 1999, hereafter *HHJL*), and one cyber-literature novel *Cool Evil (Xieqi Linran* 邪气凛然, 2007). One commonality of all these works is that they all address human sentiments as the critical agency to connect individual subjects and the nation under the contemporary conditions of postsocialism.

Chapter II "*Heshang*: The Consciousness of Sorrow and Worry and the National Pedagogy of Reform" foregrounds the postsocialist dilemma reform intellectuals were confronted with and their cultural responses in the late 1980s. In summarizing the cultural strategies for social power of Chinese intellectuals in the twentieth century, Tani E. Barlow furnishes five aspects in point, of which three are especially pertinent to my discussion. One aspect is the instrumental use of master narrative: "Chinese intellectuals have redeployed and excessively privileged modernist discourse" (1991, 212). Another aspect is the strategy of reversal: on the one hand they "transform[ed] received ideas, formerly a part of simple, everyday common sense and intellectual convention, into something they called the Chinese tradition" and targeted it for attack; on the other hand they "located a Western authority, privileged his writing over all others, and translated his texts to serve as weapons against indigenous social custom" (212-3). The third one is the construction and vilification of multiple pasts:

> This habit of demonizing the past charged "culture" not just with the powers accorded tradition in any modernist discourses, but also with the power to infect. The infectiousness of the past, not coincidentally, keeps alive the need to purge, and make cultural critique—the province of intellectuals—into necessary political intervention and therefore a form of national salvation. (213)

Barlow's summary is inspiring in that it exposes the centrality of the desire for social power in the modern Chinese intellectual discourses of modernity, history, and the nation. Chinese intellectuals have always been endeavoring to acquire a powerful position in the national power structure by fervently establishing the necessity of their expertise—modernist cultural critiques targeting the constructed/vilified "multiple pasts" and "Chinese tradition"—in "speaking for" the nation. In the late 1980s, the merging of the realms of the state and the market in the global order of capital has caused a split of intellectuals into two influential camps: that of "establishment intellectuals"—in Barlow's term—who were largely part of the ideological state apparatus and that of reform intellectuals who were mostly scholars and teachers at universities and research institutes in big cities. Excluded from state power and political decision-making, the reformist intellectuals nevertheless demonstrated a strong will of political participation and desire for social power by furnishing popular discourses addressing the state-initiated reforms in relation to national sentiments.

Hence Chapter II looks into a special discourse of national sentiments in the influential 1988 TV documentary *Heshang* to examine how those Barlow noted strategies for social power were re-operated by the reformist intellectuals at the junctures between the state, the masses, and themselves. The reform intellectuals such as Su Xiaokang (苏

晓康) and Wang Luxiang (王鲁湘) perceptively discerned their awkward position within a national power structure where the party-state increasingly appropriated the masses—especially the peasant class—through its disciplinary practices of economic reform to new heights of productivity. The state's microtechnologies of power along with its exclusive focus on the incorporation of the Chinese economy into a global system alienated the reform intellectuals who held on to their agendas in the political and other aspects of social life. Taking the alienated condition as the point of departure, the reform intellectuals launched a "come-back" project by associating the image of the "inappropriate other" with the masses in a lashing out of the Chinese culture and tradition under the rubric of modernity. *Heshang*'s narrative of fashioning the national sentiments as a general spiritual quality shared by, and working on, the consciousness of the Chinese masses does not contradict the desire of the reform intellectuals for social power. I argue that by propagating a "correct" mode of the national sentiments—the consciousness of sorrow and worry (*youhuan yishi* 忧患意识) that both dovetailed with and went beyond the ongoing reform run by the state—as something the Chinese masses lacked, the reform intellectuals established their image as the cultural authority to enlighten the "inappropriate other" of Chinese modernity. However, in a contextual study of the media-text, I also question the self-claimed authoritative status of the reform intellectuals against the backdrop of a forming alliance between the state and the masses.

Chapter III "*A Native of Beijing in New York*: Male Desires and Patriotism on the Small Screen" deals with a mode of national sentiments fashioned by the emergent mass-media elites in the early 1990s. An important consequence of Chinese postsocialism in the 1990s is the burgeoning of the so-called "cultural economy", in which the production of cultural forms and meanings were more and more commodified and molded upon the patterns of economic globalization. The state's promotion of the cultural economy expedited both the transformation of the cultural capital owned by Chinese intellectuals into the economic capital, and the dismemberment of intellectuals as one solid social force. The mass-media elites such as Zheng Xiaolong (郑晓龙) and Feng Xiaogang (冯小刚)—the producers of the extremely popular 1993 Mainland TV serial *A Native of Beijing in New York*—emerged out of this dismemberment and assumed the role of middlemen between the market and the intellectual circles. They collaborated with the state and the international and domestic capital and made themselves powerful market manipulators and cultural trendsetters.

The relationship between male desires and patriotism functions as the pivot in *NBNY* of the mass-media elites' rumination over the notion of national sentiments. The central plot of the serial—a homosocial rivalry in New York over wealth and women between the Chinese male protagonist Wang Qiming and his white opponent—endows the economic logics underlying male desires with the aura of patriotism. The keynote of the mode of

national sentiments propagated by *NBNY* is that making money is patriotic. In order to facilitate this notion, *NBNY* appropriated the socialist past quite differently than *Heshang* in its *minzu qinggan* discourse. If it was but one integrated part of the condemned Chinese tradition in the reform intellectuals' vision, the socialist era was singled out in *NBNY* as the core cultural wellspring of discursive elements in the mass-media elites' articulation of male desires and patriotism. I argue that by creatively appropriating the cultural memories of the socialist era to validate the central notion of "making money is patriotic", the mass-media elites justified their powerful position in postsocialist China as market manipulators and cultural trendsetters. However, the ultimate failure of Wang Qiming also embodies the keen concerns and worries of the mass-media elites about the postsocialist conditions of the cultural economy, the state-sponsored rampant privatization, and the all-society celebration of profit-seeking.

Chapter IV "Orientalism, Global Consumerism, and the Chinese Leitmotif Film in the 1990s" explores the state's national agency in a specific category of contemporary Chinese film—the leitmotif film in the 1990s—under the critical lens of orientalism and consumerism. My analysis of the state's agency in an influential leitmotif movie —*Grief Over the Yellow River* (*Huanghe Juelian* 黄河绝恋, 1999)—demonstrates that the state-sponsored leitmotif film advocates a mass-appealing mode of national sentiments highlighting individual passions of romantic love (*aiqing* 爱情), familiar affection

(*qinqing* 亲情), and clan loyalty (*zongzu zhi qing* 宗族之情) as the foundation of Chinese national identities. By situating stories of these individual passions within the anti-colonial history of the 20th-century China, the leitmotif film promotes this sentimental mode in which the endangerment of individual passions gives rise to the ultimate passion of dying for one's nation. I argue that the state maintains its premier status within the national power structure under the new overwhelming trends of globalization by exteriorizing the masses' focus—through manipulating the narration of this mode of national sentiments into an orientalist discourse that promotes a superior Chinese self "being looked at" by its Western other.

Chapter V "Netizens, Counter-memory, and the Chinese Cyber-literature in the 21st Century" delineates the Chinese netizens' favored mode of national sentiments. Written and released online, and circulated and responded to on an anonymous basis, cyber-literature (*wangluo wenxue* 网络文学) provides a online space with relative freedom for 21st-century Chinese netizens to articulate their ideological thoughts and political passions through literary imagination. I analyze the commercial mechanism of the most successful Mainland cyber-literature website Qidian.com (*Qidian zhongwen wang* 起点中文网) to demonstrate how this commercialized online space has created a moderate opportunity for Chinese netizens to articulate their own feelings with their own voices. I then provide a case study of a prominent cyber-literature novel *Cool Evil* (*Xieqi*

Linran 邪气凛然, 2007). In this novel a young Chinese man struggles his way from grass roots to mafia boss in Canada, then helps the Chinese government with its expansion policy in Africa and North America, and finally gets the permission of the government to go back to China as a legal businessman. I argue that the complicated notion of *yi* (righteousness 义), that is deeply rooted in Chinese tradition constitutes the counter-memory of the writer and readers of *Cool Evil*, which simultaneously fuels and discourages the netizens' cause for more freedom.

Notes:

[1] See, for example, Lindholm (1998), MacIntyre (1984), and Abu-Lughod (1986).

[2] See, for example, Fitzgerald (1996), Tsu (2005).

[3] Many scholars have committed significant attention to this issue. See, for example, Balibar (1991), Duara (1995), and Bhabha (1990, 2004).

[4] The representative works include Wang (1996), Zhang (1997), and Lu (2001).

[5] This characterization of national sentiments is inspired by Wendy Larson's theorization of the "revolutionary spirit". See Larson (2009).

[6] The contrast between Dirlik's notion of postsocialism and Pickowicz's is discussed in Lu (2007, 206).

[7] This point will be further discussed in the following chapters dealing with the specific discourses of national sentiments by different national subjects. Each post-1989 discourse under scrutiny, as I will demonstrate in these chapters, is closely related to the pre-1989 conditions.

[8] David Harvey is one of the most influential scholars writing about post-Fordism and the economic-cultural logics of globalization. See Harvey (1989).

[9] Chatterjee distinguishes three "essential" moments in defining the development of nationalist thought: the "moment of depart", which is an elitist project of defining the national essence; the "moment of manoeuvre", in which the people are mobilized by a rhetoric of anticapitalism; and the "moment of arrival", when the nation has congealed into a stable power ensuring the "passive

revolution" of capitalist transformation. Chatterjee believes that this schema represents the general form of the transition for colonial to postcolonial states in the twentieth century. To some extent China fits this paradigmatic mode. See Chatterjee (1986), also Anagnost (1997, 6-7).

[10] Benavides (2006, 8-9) provides this summary of the theories particularly concerning contemporary cultural hegemony, power, and popular culture.

CHAPTER II

HESHANG: THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF SORROW AND WORRY AND THE NATIONAL PEDAGOGY OF REFORM

Heshang—Unnarrated National Sentiments?

River Elegy (*Heshang* 河殇) is a Chinese TV documentary series aired on Chinese Central Television (CCTV) in 1988. Its provocative condemnation of the thousand-year-old "yellow civilization" (*huangse wenming* 黄色文明) of China stirred up a tornado of controversy among Chinese audiences. Intense debates and reflections on the series have been going on both inside and outside China ever since its airing, making *River Elegy* one of the most intriguing "phenomena"[1] in contemporary Chinese culture.

The Chinese title of *River Elegy* is *Heshang*. "He" means river, and especially the Yellow River which is the cradle of China's ancient civilization. "Shang" means to die prematurely. The image of a premature death thus sets the tone for the whole documentary, which can be readily understood as a "death song" of the Yellow-River-centered Chinese civilization. Divided into six episodes—"In Search of a

Dream" (*Xunmeng* 寻梦), "Fate" (*Mingyun* 命运), "A Glimmering Light" (*Lingguang* 灵光), "The New Era" (*Xinjiyuan* 新纪元), "Sorrow and Worry" (*Youhuan* 忧患), and "Azure" (*Weilanse* 蔚蓝色), this documentary laments the decline (*shuailuo* 衰落) of Chinese civilization (Su and Wang 1988, 9) and calls for thorough reforms (*gaige* 改革) aiming at making China a modern nation. As Su Xiaokang (苏晓康)—one of the main script writers of the TV documentary—says, *Heshang* is to "reckon the issue of the Yellow River under the rubric of reform" and to "engage once again a comprehensive reflection of the national history, civilization, and fate" (1988, 1).

Interestingly, the declared "comprehensive reflection" of the documentary starts with nothing other than a visit to Chinese national sentiments (*minzu qinggan* 民族情感) through a tragic accident in 1987. The first episode "In Search of a Dream" begins with the following narrative:

> On June 13, 1987, the rafting expedition on the Yellow River that had attracted the interest of hundreds and thousands of Chinese people sent back bad news. Members of two rafting teams from Luoyang and Beijing were killed when the rafts overturned at the lower part of Lajia Gorge. Our heroes Lang Baoluo and Lei Jiansheng, who had previously rafted through Tiger's Leap Gorge on the Yangtze

River, were also swallowed up by the swift water of the Yellow River. For a while, the entire nation was engaged in heated debate.

According to the news, these young men took this great risk because they would not let the American rafter Ken Warren take away their right to be the first to raft down China's rivers. Ken Warren was very puzzled by this. He said that no one would object if Chinese came to America to raft down the Mississippi River. Of course Mr. Warren could never associate today's rafting with the history of a hundred years ago when the gunboats of the Western powers sailed China's rivers in disregard of China's rights. Yet the youth of China cannot forget.

Now that these rafters had tossed their lives away in the Yellow River, should we praise them for their patriotism or should we criticize them for their blind national sentiments?[2] (Su and Wang 1991, 101-2)

Some critics believe that the idea of *minzu qinggan* holds the key to the proper understanding of the whole documentary. According to Toming Jun Liu, this opening shows that nationalist concerns are the starting point and driving force of *Heshang*. The difference between the nationalism in *Heshang* and that of the rafters is that the latter is "blind" (*mangmu* 盲目). Assuming that the rafters' national sentiments signify "the foolhardiness and the futility of a kind of sentimental nationalism that remembers the

humiliation China", Liu believes that the main course of the nationalism in *Heshang* is to call for the rational recognition that the enclosed ancient Chinese civilization, symbolized by the Yellow River and the yellow earth, must join with the oceanic "blue" of the West (Liu 2001, 186-7).

Such a binarism between fallacious national sentiments and a more intellect-orientated—thus better in his mentality—nationalism as embodied in *Heshang* is predicated on Liu's postulation of nationalism. He argues that nationalism has two states that should be treated as separate categories in order for "a clear comprehension of the interrelationship". *Minzu qinggan*—national sentiments or sentimental nationalism—is the unconscious state of nationalism, which is often unnarrated and "specifies more or less a space of cultural anthropology and related sentiments". The conscious state of nationalism is "state nationalism" that is often narrated and denotes the sphere of governmental politics (2001, 181-3). Up to this point, the logic conclusion will be that the nationalism in *Heshang* is a form of "state nationalism" that rationalizes unnarrated, often "blind" national sentiments.

However, aside from reinforcing such a binarism by relegating to the margin of human subjectivity the unconscious and unnarrated national sentiments waiting to be rationalized, Liu simultaneously engages in his interpretation a paradoxical, sometimes even self-contradictory, reinvigoration of the notion of national sentiments. He argues

that he disagrees with critic Wu Guoguang's theory of "rational nationalism" in that it places too much faith in the nation state's rationality and gives insufficient attention to sentimental nationalism (2001, 183). Citing Johann Gottfried von Herder, he agrees that the nation is a naturally formed society bounded together by nothing other than a common culture and shared sentiments. Sentimental nationalism, in such a positive light, is an indispensible part of the identity of anyone born in the homeland (183-4). According to him, nationalism is a mnemonic dynamism constantly shaped by disquiet related to the perceived needs of a nation in the present, and the dynamic process can be explained as interactions between the two states of nationalism. Disquiet, as a manifestation of national sentiments, can be defined as the feeling of a nation when confronting the "foreign". Different types of disquiet can be analyzed and understood in terms of how a past is selectively remembered (180, 184). As the title of his paper suggests, *Heshang* as a whole is a case in point of such use of sentimental nationalism. At some point in his paper, he even suggests that the unconscious state of nationalism is a sentimental existence supported by all kinds of narratives specific to a culture. It is a huge mnemonic reservoir containing what has been accumulated in the nation's narratives—language, literature, philosophy, etc—that have been shaped by the nation's history and its natural environment (181-2).

The discursive interspersion of the relegation *and* reinvigoration of national sentiments indicates Liu's indeterminacy over the function of the national sentiments in *Heshang*. There are two directions of my inquiries to solve the doubts lurking behind Liu's ambivalent understanding of the national sentiments in *Heshang*. First, at one point Liu specifies that national sentiments are unnarrated, while at another venue he notes that the sentimental existence of nationalism is supported by all kinds of narratives specific to a culture. His ambiguous and self-contradictory descriptions of the "narratability" of national sentiments pose two relevant questions on national sentiments that demand answers: Are national sentiments narratable? If so, what changes does the narration of national sentiments bring about? The answer to the first question is a quick yes. If national sentiments do not go through a process of narration and become a narrative form, in most occasions they do not qualify to be subjected to the analyses of humanities study.

If the national sentiments in *Heshang* are narrated, what changes does the narration create? To answer this we have to go back to Liu's seminal concept of "disquiet". On the one hand, disquiet is a manifestation of national sentiments; on the other hand, it is related to the perceived needs of a nation in the present. Disquiet looms large because it, according to Liu, "shapes" nationalism in general. From this theoretical frame it seems that the nationalism in *Heshang* actually thrives upon a manifestation—that is, narration—of national sentiments, in the process of which the emotional forces of the

sentiments are integrated with the practical needs of a nation recognized through the "perception" that is dictated by human intellect. In other words, the nationalism in *Heshang* is also a kind of national sentiments that are imbued with careful consideration and intellectual thinking. In this sense it is safe to say that national sentiments, at least in the narrated form, are not only what the nationalism in *Heshang* argues against, but also what it argues for.

Relevant to this line of argument is the second direction of my inquiries. It casts doubts over the claim of the "state nationalism", which in Liu's theorization refers to the conscious state of nationalism that is often narrated and denotes the sphere of governmental politics. As Ann Anagnost notes, a narrative requires the presence of an enunciating subject. This simple fact directs our attention to the power of national imagination to call forth subjects who "speak for" the nation. In the history of modern China, the designation of who or what class represents the agency to propel the nation forward in its historical destiny has been very much at stake in national struggles. Implicit in this contestation has been a "politics of presence" in which the speaking subject lays claims to or is attributed with the power to speak with the force of history. In this sense, the national subject is made to embody abstract conceptions which are not immediately present to experience—such as History, Nation, Society, People—but which become emblematic of the nation speaking with the voice of history (1997, 4).

Liu's designation of "state nationalism" seems to rule out the possibility of subjects other than the state to speak for the nation and get involved in governmental politics, to which *Heshang* certainly gives the lie. This documentary exemplifies one of the strongest voices made by Chinese intellectuals as a social group in the 1980s. Harking back to Su Xiaokang's description of *Heshang*'s main theme, the "comprehensive reflection of the national history, civilization, and fate" of the documentary is exactly how intellectuals like Su Xiaokang and Wang Luxiang, appropriating Anagnost's words, speak with the force of history and narrate the emblems of the nation. In this process Chinese intellectuals in the 1980s fully demonstrate their agency as subjects speaking for the nation. Moreover, often associating historical wrongdoings with contemporary social ailments, every episode of the documentary implicitly criticizes the one-party political system and different government policies. The anti-official ethos of *Heshang* undoubtedly accentuates the "other-than-the-state-ness" of Chinese intellectual subjects.

Heshang—Imperial Nationalism of Intellectuals?

If Liu's work represents some critics' indeterminacy over the characterization of the national sentiments in *Heshang*, some other critics are more determined to deem national sentiments as obstacles to shaping appropriate Chinese subjects for the cause of modernity. A representative critique along this vein is offered by Jing Wang. She bases

her critique on the narrative of *Heshang* as a clear embodiment of the sentimentality of Chinese intellectual subjects. In a central section of her critique (1996, 121-7) Wang argues that Su Xiaokang and his generation of enlightened intellectuals attempt to provide us with a new perspective in place of the vision of the imperial past. And in catering to the needs of the present and future, they argue that imperial nationalism, which defined the interest of old China, must be replaced by a genuine cultural enlightenment. However, such an attempt is destined to fail because:

> Although the narrator attempts to ridicule the delusions of patriotic dreamers,[3] conflicting emotions riddle the intentionally sarcastic voice with unrelieved sentimentalism. The preaching of the futility of dreaming such a dream is unmistakably accompanied by a deeply seated, albeit unconscious, nostalgia for the golden past. Even at those moments when Su Xiaokang preaches most eloquently the elimination of such nostalgia, his vision for the future is helplessly and unconsciously embedded in the same rhetoric of imperialistic nationalism. At its heart, *Heshang* often betrays the cause of enlightenment and lapses into the nationalist discourse it is struggling so hard to free itself from. (1996, 122-3)

To facilitate her argument that the enlightenment cause of *Heshang* degenerates ambivalently into its own opposite—imperial nationalism—because of the sentimentalism of Chinese intellectuals, Wang brings forth the example of the dragon metaphor. In Wang's opinion, the long-lasting, awe-inspiring dragon metaphor in Chinese history that is mocked and repudiated by Su Xiaokang and his fellow iconoclastic intellectuals at the beginning of the documentary, firmly comes back to haunt them with its potent symbolism in the final episode because these intellectuals "never successfully sever their deep emotional ties to what dynastic history symbolizes". In Wang's eyes, *Heshang*'s project of liberating the present from the burden of history is thus contradictory. When the construction of new mental categories is embedded within the old nationalist and imperial discourse, such a project is doomed to contradict itself (123-4).

Predicated on the idea that history is both the dream and the nightmare from which the Chinese intellectuals under discussion have not awakened, Wang's narration depicts *Heshang* as nothing but an atavistic effort modeled on the futile enlightenment cause of the May Fourth intellectuals. She claims that "little has changed since the May Fourth Movement" and Su Xiaokang and his fellow intellectuals inherited both the iconoclasm and the "superiority-inferiority complex" directly from their May Fourth predecessors. As she explains, "Since iconoclasm was generated by the external force of imperialism in the

case of May Fourth, the enlightenment program could quickly reverse itself and be transformed from a discourse of genuine self-reflection into a counterimperialist and eventually nationalist discourse". The driving force behind such a "reverse" is the "superiority-inferiority complex" that refers to "an ambivalent attitude that makes Chinese intellectuals at once proud of and hostile toward their own cultural and national heritage, while defiant toward and subservient to the imported Western culture at the same time". It is this emotional complex that doomed the May Fourth Movement from the beginning and compelled the enlightened reformers to give up the agenda of enlightenment for the cause of patriotism (124).

Paralleling Su and his cohorts with the May Fourth intellectuals whose enlightenment project, according to Wang, was drowned out by the cause of the national salvation, Wang proceeds to argue that the tension between intellectual emancipation and nationalism continues to characterize the struggles China is engaged in today in shaping and articulating its own modernity. Constantly misguided by the obsession with the wealth and power (*fuqiang* 富强) of the nation, therefore equating *fuqiang* with modernization, the post-Mao intellectuals like Su Xiaokang are still motivated by the compulsion to recover the status of the "Dynasty of Heaven" and their modernity is ultimately identical to the political and economic hegemony of a nation. Thus the claims of enlightenment that are predicated on the autonomy of the individual inevitably

contradict the utilitarian and collective interests of nationalism (124-6). With such recognition of the historical function of the Chinese intellectuals in the twentieth century, Wang delivers a quite "sentimental" and pessimistic message to conclude her analysis:

> Until enlightenment is generated from the genuine impulse of self-examination, until China's intellectuals resolve their superiority-inferiority complex toward their own culture and history, the project of enlightenment will remain a spurious one, forever submerged by the thousand-year-old discourse of power. The lesson that *Heshang* delivers is dire: The nationalist complex that characterizes the way the elite intellectuals look at China's historical past determines the deep structure of their historical imagination for the future. This is a vicious cycle that Su Xiaokang himself warns against, but which he involuntarily reproduces. (126-7)

Wang believes that *Heshang* is a vivid embodiment of how the "nationalist complex" discouraged the genuine cultural enlightenment. Her critique of *Heshang* creates more problems worthy of further exploration. A central thread of Wang's critique is that the cultural enlightenment cause of *Heshang* lapses into a kind of imperial nationalism that contemporary Chinese intellectual subjects claim to argue against, but deeply identify with. Thus she establishes a dichotomy between enlightenment and

imperial nationalism in forming Chinese intellectual subjectivity. The first issue the proposed dichotomy brings about is how to understand the "imperial nationalism" in question. From various places in Wang's narration we can garner three points: first, the imperial nationalism is a kind of unrelieved sentimentalism of Chinese intellectuals; second, it is an unconscious nostalgia for the "golden" imperial past when China as a dynastic state possessed wealth, power, and the hegemonic status in the pre-modern age; third, it is a compulsion to recover the status of the "Dynasty of Heaven" in the contemporary world. Based on the three points, Wang's imperial nationalism is intended to characterize the national sentiments of Chinese intellectuals throughout the twentieth century.

The second issue concerning the dichotomy is the validity of the enlightenment project. Wang believes that "enlightenment" is a genuine self-critique leading to intellectual emancipation of individuals. Applying a historical parallelism to the *Heshang* producers and the May Fourth enlightened intellectuals, she argues that in the context of modern Chinese history the claims of enlightenment that are predicated on the autonomy of the individual inevitably contradict the utilitarian and collective interests of nationalism. And the intellectuals' nationalism-shaped perspective on China's past determines their historical imagination for the future, which produces a "vicious circle" from which the Chinese enlightenment can never break away. Wang's narration brings to

the fore the two statuses of enlightenment. One status is enlightenment in ideal or in "claim", which is supposed to be a genuine self-critique; the other is enlightenment in practice or in history, which refers to the historical facts of Chinese enlightenment in the twentieth century. Ironically, if the enlightenment in practice is always how it "reversed" into nationalism, it nevertheless attests to the historical significance and omnipresence of nationalism, which to some extent invalidates the dichotomous construct of enlightenment versus nationalism. In other words, the genuinely "enlightened" self is so illusory that the self in reality is always fully immersed in, and actually becomes part of, national sentiments.

A more dubious issue in Wang's characterization of the national sentiments of twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals is the relationship of the sentiments to China's imperial past. To delineate how the May Fourth intellectuals conceived the relationships between nationalism, China's imperial history, and themselves is a giant project and is certainly beyond the scope of this chapter. Here I will only focus my attention on the so-called "imperial nationalism" of the *Heshang* producers. Generally speaking, I do not agree with this characterization for a few reasons. First, this characterization has too little direct support from the *Heshang* narrative. Throughout the section centering the imperial nationalism, Wang offers only one textual example—the dragon metaphor—to support her argument that the enlightenment cause of *Heshang* degenerates into the imperial

nationalism because of the sentimentalism of Chinese intellectuals. The textual evidence in this section is too feeble to substantiate the argument. Second, the central theme of the documentary is to reflect on the decline of Chinese ancient civilization in relation to the contemporary problems of the post-Mao Chinese society, which is largely left untouched in this characterization. To Wang, the documentary narrative is not what her analysis should be based on, but that which works as a "camouflage" to the true meanings she wants to excavate. It seems that the unsubstantiated belief in the "deeper" nostalgia "behind the narrative" actually prevents Wang from looking into the documentary narrative itself in the first place. Third, the narrative of *Heshang* actually goes beyond if not belies the seemingly in-depth parallelism between the *Heshang* producers and the May Fourth enlightened intellectuals who, according to Wang, share the unconscious nostalgia for the glorious imperial past and a compulsion to recover the status of the "Dynasty of Heaven" in the contemporary world. For example, if it is arguable that the "superiority-inferiority complex" caused the May Fourth intellectuals to "reverse" their enlightenment project into national salvation, by no means can the same emotional complex and its specific historical references account for the subjectivity of post-Mao intellectuals like Su Xiaokang and his cohorts. Protean references in the documentary to history from the arrival of Western imperialism in the mid-19th century to the 1980s

indicate that in any event "the glorious imperial past" is not the only powerhouse for shaping post-Mao intellectual subjectivity.

Furthermore, the questioning of whether the documentary narrative supports Wang's argument on the imperial nationalism leads to the problematics in Wang's episteme of the nation, the state, and the intellectual subjectivity. Prasenjit Duara describes a multiplicity of historical representations of premodern political communities in China and India, which include the representation of totalizing communities that both resemble modern nations and continue to be relevant to them. According to Duara, the modern nation is formed through a process similar to that of its totalizing predecessors which deploys a narrative of *discent*[4]—the tracing of a history which legitimates its difference from the Other—to fix and privilege a single identity from among the contesting multiplicity of identifications. The representation of political community in the modern nation continues to be shaped by the transactions between historical narratives and the discourses of the modern nation-state (1995, 51-82). The nation-state—the "territorially sovereign form of the modern nation" (81) in Duara's words—is an important player in appropriating the meanings of premodern Chinese political communities—of which a crucial one is the dynastic state—to the ends of modern nation-building. As Duara renders, nation-states seek to emphasize the unprecedented nature of the nation-*state*, because it is only in this form that the people-nation has been able to *realize* itself as the self-conscious subject of

History (29). In Wang's words, the imperial nationalism that characterizes the *Heshang* producers—an unconscious nostalgia for the glorious imperial past and a compulsion to recover the status of the "Dynasty of Heaven" in the contemporary world—bespeaks the obsession with the wealth and power of the nation. In light of Duara's insightful historical analysis, it is clear that the "nation" in Wang's understanding is a highly politicized construct defined by the interests of the modern nation-state, which looks back in the imperial history and to some extent models itself on the dynastic state. Put differently, what Wang's nationalism bespeaks—the obsession with the wealth and power of the nation—is de facto the obsession with the wealth and power of the state.

Perhaps Wang is too aware of the importance of the modern state in the Chinese nation-building project that she tends to equate the nation with the modern state. An important constituent of her argument on the twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals' imperial nationalism is the parallelism between the *Heshang* producers and the May Fourth intellectuals. Specifically, she believes that the "superiority-inferiority complex"—which doomed the May Fourth Movement from the beginning and compelled the enlightened reformers to give up the agenda of enlightenment for the cause of patriotism—also explains the failure of the cultural enlightenment project of *Heshang*. It seems that Wang does not think it is necessary to differentiate nationalism—the love for one's nation—from patriotism—the love for one's state.[5] Harking back to Ann

Anagnost's observation, the designation of who or what class represents the agency to propel the nation forward in its historical destiny has been very much at stake in national struggles. However, the "politics of presence" in which the speaking subject claims to or is attributed with the power to speak with the force of history is downplayed by Wang's equation of the nation/nationalism with the state/patriotism. To Wang, any narrative of nationalism—even it is not enunciated by the state and its bureaucratic system, as in the case of *Heshang*—will always come back to the interests of the state. And the enunciating subject—in the case of *Heshang*, the intellectuals—is left with nothing other than the national sentiments deemed as an unconscious nostalgia for, and a compulsion to recover, the glorious past of the dynastic state. In this sense Wang's equation of the nation with the state actually eliminates the possibility of studying national sentiments as a narrated form to understand post-Mao intellectual subjectivity beyond a statist schema.

This chapter proposes a new perspective to read *Heshang*, tackling it as a historically situated narrative that embodies a post-Mao intellectual discourse of national sentiments. After a fallible but immense endeavor to characterize the sentimentality of twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals on the whole with the imperial nationalism, in a brief following section (1996, 127-30), Wang makes a U-turn in her approach to grapple with the documentary. She explicitly notes:

> We need first of all to remind ourselves that [*Heshang*] was not produced for the college history curriculum, but for mass consumption…The promotion of historical action rather than the transmission of pure knowledge serves as the focal point of reference to the emotive content of *Heshang*…the production of the documentary is meant to arouse the masses to action by effecting a deep structural transformation not only of society and its ethos, but also of individuals and their moral and psychological composition…The deep structural transformation that *Heshang* hopes to witness and contribute to, if not trigger, is a process that has to take place within the consciousness of the newly discovered yet precariously balanced individual. (128-9)

The recognition that *Heshang* is by nature a mass cultural product intended to bring about changes of the mass-audience consciousness points out a more productive way to interpret the documentary. That is, what the mass audiences experienced of *Heshang* is first and foremost the audio-visual narrative of the six-part TV documentary per se. And if the narrative ever works on the mass-audience consciousness—a kind of general subjectivity of the Chinese masses, the mass audiences must have understood the meanings of the documentary within the specific context of the late 1980s wherein they actually lived. Unfortunately, this section is so brief that Wang cannot engage in more

substantial discussions to elucidate how exactly the documentary narrates the general subjectivity of the Chinese masses.

This chapter will further explore the general subjectivity of the Chinese masses *in* the narration of *Heshang* by dealing with the documentary as a historically situated narrative appealing to the popular interest of the mass audiences in the late 1980s. In order to do that, this chapter will focus on national sentiments as the pivot of the documentary narrative to understand the general subjectivity at issue. Looking back on the previous scholarship on *Heshang*, especially that of Liu and Wang, what calls for attention is their problematic approaches to national sentiments. Liu is hesitant to admit, but paradoxically implies, that *Heshang* actually argues for a kind of national sentimentality that integrates the emotional forces of the sentiments with the practical needs of a nation discerned by human intellect. However, he explicitly advocates a dichotomy between sentimental nationalism and state nationalism, and relegates national sentiments to an unconscious and "blind" status as opposed to the conscious and rational—thus more superior—status of the state nationalism. In Wang's case, she mostly predicates her critique in the first place on that the national sentiments—the imperial nationalism denoting an unconscious nostalgia for, and a compulsion to recover, the glorious past of the dynastic state—predominate the subjectivity of the *Heshang* producers. Largely arguing without textual support from the documentary narrative,

Wang deploys an unsubstantiated parallelism between May Fourth intellectuals and the *Heshang* producers to establish a problematic binarism between the enlightenment and the imperial nationalism, in which the enlightenment in practice is always "reversed" into nationalism because of Chinese intellectuals' unconscious national sentiments.

What both Liu and Wang have failed to properly understand is the multiplicity of national sentiments. There are national sentiments both *within* and *out of* the narrative of *Heshang*. Liu rightly implies that *Heshang* actually argues for a kind of national sentimentality that integrates the emotional forces of the sentiments with the practical needs of a nation discerned by human intellect. These are the "within" national sentiments that can be subjected to rational analysis. But he actually confuses the "within" national sentiments that the documentary propagates with the "out-of" ones—as embodied by the deeds of the Chinese rafters mentioned at the beginning of the documentary—that the documentary argues against. The dichotomy between sentimental nationalism and state nationalism only adds to the misleading conception that national sentiments in general are unnarrated and unconscious, and thus do not qualify as an object for rational study. Wang's critique, on the other end, presupposedly characterizes the *Heshang* producers with the so-called imperial nationalism. In Wang's discussion, national sentiments are by and large associated not with the documentary narrative, but with the enunciating subject of the narrative. In other words, what Wang's study of

Heshang fleshes out about national sentiments almost exclusively falls in the "out-of" category. What's more, both the unverified binarism between the enlightenment and the imperial nationalism, and the tacit equation of the nation with the state, shed negative light on the national sentiments of Chinese intellectuals as an unconscious, out-of-narrative emotional force that "dissolves" Chinese intellectual subjectivity, which precludes Wang's critique from treating national sentiments as a narrated form that can lead to a proper understanding of post-Mao Chinese subjectivity.

This chapter will reset the critical focus onto the national sentiments within the documentary narrative, and see through the national sentiments as a viable channel to comprehend the subjectivity of the post-Mao Chinese masses. In fact, the narrative of *Heshang* argues for national sentiments as a necessary spiritual quality of the Chinese masses in post-Mao society, which integrates individual emotional forces with the practical needs of the Chinese nation. However, the narration of the national sentiments as a general spiritual quality shared by, and working on, the consciousness of the Chinese masses does not contradict the distinct position of the *Heshang* producers in the narration process. As mentioned above, the enunciating subject of the documentary narrative is undoubtedly Su Xiaokang and his fellow Chinese intellectuals. In the narration they actually decide what individual emotional forces and practical needs of the Chinese

nation are included and reckoned, and how the relationship of the two is understood and uttered—thus to form the national sentiments they are in favor of.

In what follows, I disentangle the documentary by identifying some of its most significant issues pertaining to national sentiments. I argue that the key content of the national sentiments that *Heshang* propagates is the consciousness of sorrow and worry (*youhuan yishi* 忧患意识). *Heshang*'s discourse of *youhuan yishi* aims at fashioning a general Chinese subjectivity that dovetails with the ongoing reform—the most important historical condition of post-Mao Chinese modernity. The producers—the representatives of post-Mao intellectual subjects—establish in the discourse the Chinese masses as the "inappropriate other" of Chinese modernity. Specifically, I examine how the discussion of "people quality" (*renmin suzhi* 人民素质)—an important issue concerning the consciousness of sorrow and worry—recognizes the historical crises of Chinese civilization and seek solutions to them by resorting to reform, and how in the discussion the producers defines in the frame of Chinese modernity the positionalities of the masses, the state, and themselves.

History, the Consciousness of Sorrow and Worry, and People Quality

Heshang is a six-episode TV documentary aimed at providing a comprehensive reflection of Chinese civilization and history. Each episode is equipped with a unique

angle to interpret manifold historical events and figures, in which the national sentiments that the documentary propagates are firmly grounded. Among all the episodes, the fifth episode "Sorrow and Worry" most explicitly narrates the producers' understanding of the consciousness of sorrow and worry in relation to history. The episode starts with a retrospect of the natural disasters and threats the Yellow River has brought to the people and society since the dawn of Chinese civilization. It highlights the immense power of destruction produced by the cyclic flooding of the Yellow River. However, the narrative does not stop at emphasizing the cyclic flooding as a catastrophic natural phenomenon. "What is even more frightening", the narrative continues, "is that this kind of cyclic destruction is not just a natural phenomenon in China, but a socio-historical phenomenon as well". It says, "In measuring the feudal dynasties of Chinese history by a long chronological yardstick, from their founding to their rise to a peak, from the gradual emergence of crisis to the outbreak of turmoil and to collapse, they experience a violent upheaval once every two or three hundred years". "This kind of collapse of the social structure"—that is, "the destruction of the old dynasty and the rise of a new dynasty to replace it"—demonstrates "a startling destructive force and cruelty" (Su and Wang 1991, 187).

The *Heshang* producers question the so-called "super stable structure" (*chaowending jiegou* 超稳定结构) of traditional Chinese society as embodied in the

cyclic destruction of Chinese dynasties, and warns the audiences of the possible return of its gloomy influence in contemporary society:

> This mysterious super-stable structure has dominated us for two thousand years. Yet today the gold imperial throne in the Forbidden City has long since become a museum-piece, and the huge bureaucratic network of Confucian scholars has vanished like ash and smoke. Yet it seems that the spectre of great unification still wanders across China's great land. The nightmare of social upheaval is still fresh in people's memories. Evan harder to overlook is the fact that bureaucratism, notions of privilege, and localized corruption are still doing damage to our great plan of the Four Modernizations. These ancient symbols of a sick society are very much like the sediment brought down by the Yellow River each year, which day by day silts up the river bed in its lower reaches and gradually builds up to a crisis.
>
> As man-made disasters—such as the great forest fire in the Daxingan Range, the airplane accident at Chongqing, the trains that crashed into each other, and the epidemic of hepatitis in Shanghai occur one after the other,[6] can we not say that our decaying social mechanism is sending us subtle warnings, over, and over again?

> Perhaps just as people are deeply concerned about the dikes that rise ever higher, should our eternal super-stability not make us worried too? Has history not given us enough food for thought already? (Su and Wang 1991, 196-7)

The documentary concludes this historical reflection of Chinese society and history with the commentary of Jing Guantao (金观涛)—one of the two main scholarly advisors consulted in *Heshang*:

> I think it is very appropriate to use the "the sorrow and worry about Yellow River" (*Huanghe youhuan* 黄河忧患) as a metaphor for China's history…If we take a very broad view of the two thousand years of China's feudal social history, we can discover two salient characteristics: first, that Chinese feudal society has endured for a very long time; and second, that every two or three hundred years there occurs a great cyclical upheaval and destruction in which the whole society falls apart.
>
> We think that there is a close, inherent relationship between these two characteristics. We have presented the hypothesis that China's feudal society is a super-stable system…*While history is the facts of the past, I believe even more strongly that history is an endless dialogue between past and present. In this dialogue, we can create a very deep consciousness of sorrow and worry. This is*

> *beneficial to the people of the present*... At present I think that the consciousness of sorrow and worry, whether for the Yellow River or for China, is a good thing. To have a sense of crisis is in itself an indication of an historical consciousness, which permits the entire people to stand on the height of history in order to sum up their past. I believe that if the Chinese people can, while reflecting on their history, truly come to understand their history, absorb its experiences, and then transform them into a kind of historical wisdom, then the forthcoming twenty-first century will be a new starting point from which the Chinese people can head towards prosperity.[7] (197-9)

The *Heshang* producers have made it clear that the consciousness of sorrow and worry is a historical consciousness, which reflects upon history as an endless dialogue between past and present. What looms large in the construction is the complicated concept of history, which seems to stand out as a "present past" that constantly brings to the fore the contemporary impact of past aporias. The "present past" endows the consciousness of sorrow and worry with a two-dimensional sense of urgency. On one hand, the consciousness of sorrow and worry must demonstrate its capability to understand the historical—thus both present and past—crises of China; one the other, the past is so "present" that it urges looking for solutions for the crises.

The key content of the national sentiments that *Heshang* propagates is the consciousness of sorrow and worry, the articulation of which is organized through a systematic historical reflection of Chinese civilization. Underlying the theme is a pervasive concern with China's "people quality". *Heshang* starts its inquiry on "people quality" by asking the audiences a provocative question: "Why did the industrial civilization and capitalism that bring vast wealth and power never happen in Chinese history?" The producers of the documentary then provide four examples of critical historical periods in which China missed the opportunity to develop industrial civilization and capitalism: the Song Dynasty in the 12th century; the Ming Dynasty in the 16th-17th century; the late Qing period at the turn of the 20th century; and the Cultural Revolution period of PRC. According to the documentary, that China missed the opportunity to develop industrial civilization and capitalism is fundamentally determined by the "nature of Chinese civilization"—that is, Chinese civilization is essentially an agricultural civilization (Su and Wang 1991, 159-66).

It is intriguing that the crisis of China's "backwardness" (*luohou* 落后) in the narrative is primarily established with a comparison between the agricultural China and the "capitalist West and Japan". It is "how developed the capitalist West and Japan were and how comfortably their people lived" (Su and Wang 1991, 162) that sets off the

poverty and underdevelopment of today's China, allegedly occasioned by the nature of Chinese civilization. The producers lament:

> Let us open our eyes and see our people's situation on this planet! The World Bank's annual reports reveal the following figures: Out of one hundred twenty-eight nations in the world, China's average per capita GNP ranks about twentieth from the bottom, in company with poor African countries such as Somalia and Tanzania…In 1960, China's GNP was equivalent to Japan's; by 1985, it was only one-fifth of Japan's; in 1960, U.S. GNP exceeded China by 460 billion U.S. dollars, but by 1985 it exceeded China by 3 trillion 680 billion dollars.
>
> Though we always thought we were making strides towards progress, how little we knew that others were making far faster strides than us! If this gap should continue at present rates, some people have made a frightening comparison: that in another fifty or sixty years, China will once again be in the situation of the Opium War: that foreigners will possess foreign guns and cannon, leaving Chinese with only long knives and spears. No wonder then that someone has made an even louder appeal: that if things go wrong, China's global citizenship (*qiuji* 球籍)will be revoked! " (171)

This narration of China's "backwardness" has important implications in several aspects. First, it sets the standards of industrial civilization, or the Western-style capitalism, as the universal criterion to judge the "civilization quality". That China has missed so many historical opportunities to initiate industrialization and develop capitalism results in the backward position of China in today's world. Second, by setting the universal criterion, China is put back into the mix of national competition in the contemporary globalized world. Mao Zedong (毛泽东) discussed the possibility of China losing its global citizenship in an August 1956 speech included in volume 5 of his *Selected Works*: "They say [socialism] is superior, but if after fifty or sixty years, you still can't overtake the U.S., then what will you look like? In that sense, your global citizenship would be revoked!"[8] (1977, 296) Both Mao's alert and the lament of the *Heshang* producers automatically position China as one member of the global community constituted of modern nations, and call for a sense of crisis largely engendered by the backwardness of China in comparison to the highly developed West, especially the U.S. The problematics of Chinese civilization, as the *Heshang* producers imply, continue to influence the fate of the contemporary Chinese nation. In other words, Chinese civilization is not a past issue irrelevant to the present, but continuously embodies itself in the ups and downs of contemporary China—the territorially defined nation-state.

Third, pertaining to the comparison between the agricultural civilization of China and the industrial civilization of the West is the problem of how the "advancement" of the Western civilization—the opposite of the backwardness of the Chinese civilization—is understood and demonstrated. To the *Heshang* producers, the judgment of the advancement or backwardness of a civilization is manifested in the comparison of GNP numbers. The solid, impersonal numbers of GNP most eloquently measure the material developments of a civilization/nation, or the lack thereof. The producers' focus on the material developments broaches another notion in *Heshang*'s discourse of civilization quality—the relationship between material civilization (*wuzhi wenming* 物质文明) and spiritual civilization (*jingshen wenming* 精神文明). At this juncture, civilization refers not to the entire range of cultural and technological developments characteristic of a certain time, or place, or way of production—e.g. Chinese civilization and American civilization, or agricultural civilizations and industrial civilizations—but to specific developments of a certain civilization in the former sense.

Partha Chatterjee notes that the anticolonial nationalisms in Africa and Asia cannot be subsumed within a modular adoption of the West, but are predicated on a *difference*, marked out by dual domains of the material and the spiritual, in which the latter bears the essential markers of national identity. These spiritual resources reassure that the nation is the selfsame subject emerging out of an immemorial past, that it can, indeed, claim a past

and a future (1986).[9] Although the *Heshang* producers also acknowledge the duality of the material and the spiritual, they nevertheless emphasize the congeniality of the two. After summarizing the failure of Chinese civilization to produce industrialization and the subsequent wealth and other material developments, the producers voice such comments:

> There are some scholars who don't feel that China is a "failed civilization" just because it didn't produce industrialization. On the contrary, they appreciate the bucolic atmosphere of this agricultural civilization with a low standard of living. (color: peasants driving donkey carts loaded with casks)
>
> Yet the problem lies in how this civilization has nurtured the Chinese people. As late as 1980, in a rural community forty kilometers from Lanzhou, the average per capita grain consumption was only twenty to fifty kilos; in two out of three peasants homes, the earthen *kang* (炕) lacked a mat; on the average, three people would share a single ragged quilt; and over sixty percent of people had no padded cotton clothes for the winter.
>
> (Poor mountain village of wooden shacks. A mother pig leading piglets. Camera approaches a cave-house dug beneath ground level & looks down from above.)
>
> ...

The style of small-scale production has also created a whole set of values stressing setting low targets in order to keep oneself on a psychological equilibrium. Are not philosophies of life such as "being content with one's lot", "taking things as they come", "not taking risks", and "even a bad life is better than a good death" still practiced by the great majority of people? When we asked this youth in this northern Shaanxi village why he remained at home in poverty and didn't go out to seek his fortune, he responded "my mom and dad didn't give me the guts to do so"!

(Chinese muslims in white caps praying. Close-ups of peasants' faces. Peasants burn spirit-money and incense. Film crew interviews young man in green army fatigues.)

In the vast backwards rural areas, there are common problems in the peasant quality (*nongmin sushi* 农民素质)[10] such as a weak spirit of enterprise (*chuangye chongdong* 创业冲动), a very low ability to accept risk, a deep psychology of dependency and a strong sense of passive acceptance of fate. No wonder that some scholars sign with regret: faced with the people quality such as this, not to mention the many limitations of government policy, even if a great economist like Keynes were to come back to life, what could he do about it? It's not the lack of resources, nor the level of GNP, nor the speed [of development], but rather the low people quality that is the essence of this so-called notion of "backwardness".

(Series of close-ups of peasant faces, ending with man in a blue cloth hat, with a tobacco pipe: his eyes and mouth wide open in amazement.)

(Su and Wang 1991, 166-70, 234-7)

In the lengthy citation above, the producers highlight the "style of small-scale production" of the Chinese agricultural civilization as the linchpin to understand the relationship between the material civilization and the spiritual civilization. Not only has the style of small-scale production decided the failure of Chinese civilization to provide vast wealth and improved living conditions of people—i.e. the lack of the material developments, and therefore the lack of material civilization, it has also created a whole set of values that, according to the producers, has contaminated the spirit of the Chinese masses. The low people quality is the manifestation of the lack of spiritual developments. The lacks of both material civilization and spiritual civilization are caused by the same reason—the style of small-scale production. The congeniality of the material and the spiritual is further accentuated by the last paragraph of the above citation, in which the producers indicate that the "backwardness" is embodied not only in the lack of material developments, but also, if not more essentially, in the low spiritual quality of the Chinese masses. The strongly rhetorical question concerning Keynes drives home that at least for some scholars, the low people quality even has a decisive influence on economic

activities. That is, to some extent the low people quality—China's lack of spiritual civilization—determines her failure in the pursuit of material developments.

Heshang's discourse of people quality bases the recognition of the historical crises of China on the congeniality, instead of the split, of the material civilization and the spiritual civilization. At this juncture, civilization refers not to the whole cultural and technological developments characteristic of a certain time, or place, or way of production, but to specific developments of a certain civilization in the former sense. Chinese civilization is not a past irrelevant to the present, but continuously embodies itself in the ups and downs of contemporary China—the territorially defined nation-state. As the basis of the nation's sovereignty, the people were old, and yet the people had to be reborn to partake of the new world. The nation emerged in the name of the people, but the people who mandated the nation would have to be remade to serve as their own sovereign (Duara 1995, 32). Intrinsic to the idea of the nation as deeply historical is the concept of the people as embodying the primordial character of the nation (Anagnost 1997, 79). Hence there is little surprise that in post-Mao China the issue of the "low people quality" has come to signify the root cause of China's "historic failure of the nation to come to its own" (1997, 77),[11] which constitutes the fundamental source for the "sorrow and worry" the documentary propagates.

Interestingly, if we focus on the previous citation once again, it is easy to notice that the target of the producers' criticism is exclusively peasants (*nongmin* 农民). The emblems of the low quality of the Chinese masses are the peasants, who, according to the producers, have "a weak spirit of enterprise, a very low ability to accept risk, a deep psychology of dependency and a strong sense of passive acceptance of fate". This discursive gesture indicates an interesting doubleness, in which an intellectual subject detaches itself from the masses—especially the peasants—and in turn criticize the masses as the "inappropriate other" as from a distance. Few critics will miss *Heshang*'s blunt elevation of Chinese intellectuals as the authority of the historical reflection of China's past and present. As Jing Wang puts it, in *Heshang* there is little ambiguity over who should assume the cultural authority. Nowhere can one find a better prescription of such a privileged role of intellectuals than in the last episode: "History, however, created a very unique species for Chinese people—the intellectuals…The weapons that could eliminate ignorance and superstition are held in their hands; they are those who could conduct a direct dialogue with maritime civilization;[12] they are those who would irrigate the yellow earth with the fresh sweet spring of science and democracy!" (1996, 134)

According to Ann Anagnost, this detached objectification of the other within the nation-space is what Gyan Prakash, in the context of colonial India, has called "second sight", the articulation of class difference within a colonial frame. Prakash uses the

"inappropriate other" in the sense of the subaltern as both the other of modernity—a "necessary but embarrassing presence"—and that which eludes appropriation into the project of modernity and thus engenders anxiety about the very constitution of this binary. In China today, this distanced gaze is allowed by a few speaking subjects, among which there is the group of intellectuals (1997, 77).

In tracing the history of institutionalizing Western science in museums and exhibitions in colonial India, Prakash notes that the rearticulation of the Western-prototypical science-superstition opposition into an Indian non-binary relationship between wondrous science and knowledge-seeking wonder opened up an ambivalent space for the subjectivity and agency of Western-educated Indian elites. So long as the propagandizing of Western science was construed as a conquest over Indian superstition, there was no place for these elites. But because the functioning of museums and exhibitions reformulated conquest as translation, the Indian elites could surface as subject-agents with second sight. It was precisely between the utterance of the text and the process of articulation that the elite found its second sight. Having found it, the elite went on to distinguish their visual power from the superstitious eye of the subaltern masses whose education was their task. This became possible because the functioning of museums and exhibitions required that the superstitious eye become curious (1992, 163-4).

The *Heshang* producers are similar to the colonial India elites in many aspects. First, they both depend on their reworking of the imported Western discourses to appeal to the non-Western "indigenous" peoples. Like the case of India elites importing Western science into India, the producers of the documentary have to revamp the Western-prototypical discourse of industrial civilization and work out the liaisons between the revamped version and the context of contemporary China. The elites in both national contexts can successfully do so partly because they are, or at least they claim to be, part of the indigenous cultures. What if, we can imagine, it is the British colonial government in India or the US embassy in China to preach the same Western discourses of knowledge to the Indians or the Chinese? An unwelcome gesture is almost predestined. It is precisely through their reworking aided by their identity as "one of our own", or in Prakash's words, through their reformulation of conquest as translation, that the disseminations of the Western discourses of knowledge are made possible. Second, they both establish their cultural authorities in the importing processes by appointing their own inferior others within the national-spaces. As that in colonial India the second sight of the elites emerges in the process of encountering the objects in the museum, out of the bewilderment poised in between scientific gaze and superstition (Prakash 1992, 165), the discussion of Chinese people quality in *Heshang* furnishes a distanced gaze of the producers that crafts a privileged niche within the national-space for the intellectuals in

the process of designating the vast masses as people of low quality. Third, they both rely on the visual power of their pedagogical media to educate their respective "subaltern masses". In colonial India the survival of the elites' sight necessitated that their pedagogical media—museums and exhibitions—can catch the "superstitious eye" of the Indian masses. In post-Mao China, the emergence of *Heshang* also represents a new trend in the process of intellectuals obtaining the cultural authority. "TV is after all [a] cultural [form] that focuses on visuality", the director of *Heshang* Xia Jun (夏骏) says, "and those independent, influential paragraphs of visual languages would probably leave an impression on the audiences" (1988, 107-8). Judging from the conspicuous mass fever inspired by the airing of the documentary, it is safe to say that the application of the visual media TV is critical to get the intellectuals' ideas across to, and arouse the curiosity of, the masses. In other words, what socially mobilizes the distanced gaze of the producers and endows them with distinguished cultural power is the mechanism of mass communication that focuses on visuality. It is the mass-media mechanism that guarantees the efficiency of the producers' pedagogical project to define for the masses what they should be sorry and worried for.

To sum up, the constructing of the low-quality masses as the inappropriate other of post-Mao Chinese modernity furnishes the *Heshang* producers with the position of cultural authority. In the process of tracing the origins of the "backwardness" of Chinese

civilization, the producers fashions themselves as a superior "national self" in opposition to the inappropriate other—the exact mass audiences the documentary is addressing. In their tutelage faulting the inappropriate other, the *Heshang* producers establish their powerful position as the legitimate subject "speaking for" the nation.

Reform, Spirit of Enterprise, and the Inappropriate Other

The *Heshang* producers unwaveringly turn to "reform" for the solution. At the beginning of Episode Four "The New Era", they claim with firm determination that reform is the "ineluctable current of history" (1991, 161):

> Right now we are standing at a crossroads: either we can allow our ancient civilization to continue to decline, or we can force it to acquire the mechanism of revitalization. But no matter which way we choose, we cannot shirk this historical responsibility. (162)

The rendition of a "historical crossroad" does not actually suggest an alternative to reform. Instead, the "either…or…" rhetoric highlights the vision that to revitalize the Chinese civilization is the only option because "allowing our civilization to continue to decline" is certainly out of the question. According to the producers, reform is the

channel through which the transformation of the Chinese civilization is made possible. That is, reform will realize the transformation of the agricultural civilization into an industrial one, which will mean the revitalization of Chinese civilization.

The objectification of Chinese peasants as the inappropriate other within the nation-space speaks of the low people quality as an origin of China's historical failure to accomplish such a transformation. To improve the quality of the Chinese masses is thus a primary focus of the kind of "reform" advocated by the *Heshang* producers. At one point of the documentary narrative they utter with hard-won relief:

> At present Zhao Ziyang (赵紫阳)[13] is finally able to say directly and forthrightly that:
>
> "The socialist economy is a planned commodity economy on the foundation of public ownership. This is the scientific conclusion our Party has drawn about the socialist economy; it is a great advance in Marxism and is the fundamental theoretical underpinning of our country's economic structural reform."
>
> (Reappearance of the title: The New Era)
>
> (color: close-up of Zhao Ziyang. The stage of the Great Hall of the People, Nov. 1987, with banners proclaiming the 13th Party Congress. Delegates at the meeting; camera zooms in on the red star in the ceiling.)

> Over the past century, this vast western Pacific Ocean has uninterruptedly sent our continent both shame and hardship, while today over its stormy surface there would seem to float that vast wealth which so strongly tempts us…The western Pacific is right now becoming the new stage for the world economy. Destiny is once again giving us a once-in-a-millennium chance. Our coastal areas, silent for centuries, this Gold Coast of the Chinese people, with an appetite long held in check, are now the first to rush towards the Pacific.
>
> (The Pacific Ocean. Surf breaking on the shore. Aerial view of city. Beach. Oil exploration platform moored at dock. CAAC plane lands. Waves on the beach.)
>
> The Chinese people at this moment are more eager than ever before to enter the world market (*shichang* 市场)…
>
> We have now finally understood that we want to have an outer-directed economy… (172-3, 240-1)

However, their happiness at witnessing the reform that has prompted the littoral people to develop a market economy is clouded by a deeper sense of sorrow and worry towards the people of the periphery:

(Scene of a thousand people from Ansai in northern Shaanxi playing waist-drums)

These old men and young guys, whose ancestors once erupted from this continental heartland to conquer all of China, and now still bound to this shrunken stretch of land and with it their once magnificent energy has also diminished. It's hard to believe that these few young men are actually members of this lively team of one thousand waist-drummers. Does it mean that their vitality (*shengmingli* 生命力) will forever be expended only in the frenzy of playing the waist-drums? (214)

What the *Heshang* producers feel sorry and worried about is these peasants' aimless waste of their vitality. Compared to the littoral people whose spirit of enterprise was incited by, and has in turn fueled the progress of, the reform aiming at developing a Chinese market economy, the cathartic waist-drum playing of Ansai people only lays bare northwestern peasants' torpor towards the newly-emergent reform. The producers' comparison between the littoral people and the Chinese peasants living in the periphery seems to suggest that developing the market economy is critical to improving people quality. The level of the market-economy development in a certain area to some extent decides the level of people quality in that area. In this sense the producers actually define people quality through the perspective of its "fitness" to the market-economy-oriented reform. In other words, people quality is embodied in a market–oriented spirit of

enterprise—a self-benefiting spirit that actively seeks material interests and creates value by offering a product or service, by carving out a niche in the market that may not exist currently, and by identifying a market opportunity and exploiting it through organizing available resources effectively to accomplish an outcome that changes existing interactions within a given sector.

In this light *Heshang* insists that the Chinese masses—the inappropriate other—be awakened by the market-economy-oriented reform and be made into a more "appropriate" existence within the frame of Chinese modernity. In the case of "Science goes native" in colonial India, the educated elites appealed to the masses through the reformulation of the science-superstition opposition into a non-binary relationship between wondrous science and knowledge-seeking wonder. In post-Mao China a strategy of dramatic demarcation of the national-space is deployed in *Heshang* to "make appropriate" the largely torpid Chinese masses:

> An even greater potential problem is the extreme unevenness of economic development, which is revealing itself now in a "Matthew effect" in which the backward areas get increasingly backward, and the advanced areas increasingly advanced. The daily-increasing severity in the difference between poor and rich

areas has...caused people to be greatly concerned for the homeland of our civilization—the vast yellow-soil plateau.

At the same time that the consumer expectations of city-dwellers in the south are fixed on the living standard of Hong Kong and Macao, there remain a considerable number of northern peasants who are still struggling to feed and clothe themselves.

At the same time that the commodity economy in the East has already penetrated the very cells of the family, there are some backwards areas in the West that are still waiting for the state to give them a "blood transfusion". (Su and Wang 1991, 178-9)

This dramatic demarcation of the national-space indicates a sharp contrast between the developed, wealthy, civilized regions of the littoral and the backward, poverty-ridden regions of the periphery. This discursive maneuvering "internalizes" the contrast between the Western industrial civilization and the Chinese agricultural civilization and transforms it into a domestic contrast between the developed and the underdeveloped. This contrast has a two-fold implication: First, the low people quality has greatly held back the development of the periphery; second, accompanying the crisis is the hope, which lies in that the underdeveloped areas more closely follow the steps of the developed littoral to

engage in the reform. The originally incompatible binary between the Western-style industrial civilization and the masses of the agricultural civilization has been transformed into a non-binary relationship, in which the masses of the agricultural civilization are prescriptively endowed with the capability to live up to the standards of the "high quality" through transformation. The discourse of the *difference* between the industrial civilization and the agricultural civilization has been appropriated by the *Heshang* producers into one of "*not yet*", which deterministically foresees the realization of the transformation of the Chinese agricultural civilization. What calls for attention at this juncture is the agency of the enunciating intellectual subjects. Their dramatic demarcation of the national-space seems once again to suggest their irreplaceable position as the speaking subject for the nation. Their status as the cultural authority is substantiated by their prescription of the market-economy-oriented reform as the hope to increase the quality of the Chinese masses. To some extent, the demarcation of the national-space becomes the surrogate of the distance between the speaking intellectual subjects and the "spoken-for" low-quality masses. How well the different parts of the latter can defer to the teachings of the former results in their respective statuses in the frame of post-Mao Chinese modernity. The documentary seems to suggest that the more the masses learn from the intellectuals, the better their own situations—and by extension, the Chinese nation—will be.

This section discusses how the documentary looks for solutions to the problem of low people quality. This concern with low people quality is intended to construct the necessity for a national pedagogy of reform as well as to instigate the mass emotions of sorrow and worry. The emotional force of sorrow and worry makes it even more urgent for the national pedagogy to address such poignant questions: How are the unwashed masses to be made into modern people of high quality? How are the Chinese masses remodeled from the state of backwardness and ignorance to that of modernity? In their preaching of the market-economy-oriented reform as the solution, the *Heshang* producers nevertheless deploy the strategy of dramatic demarcation of the national-space, in which the intellectuals' status of the cultural authority is consolidated.

Weak Political Agency, the Inappropriate Masses, and the Cultural Authority of Intellectuals

On another register, the *Heshang* producers relate people quality not only to the masses' entrepreneurial "fitness" to the market economy, but also to the masses' political agency in contemporary politics. Ann Anagnost rightly notes that in post-Mao China constructions of low quality reanimate a party apparatus that has willingly ceded much of its control over the economy with a new sense of mission to remodel the Chinese people from a state of backwardness and ignorance. The inflow of colossal foreign capital is

indispensible to the construction of a national structure of market economy. The speculative gaze of the foreign capital becomes translated into the party's obsessive concern with a new architectonics of disciplinary practices regulating work and leisure—inciting greater productivity with the lure of an emerging mass commodity culture and arousing the "latent potential" of the Chinese worker to produce more and better. Her field work at Jiangdong Township—the rural area located just beyond the outside perimeter of Nanjing City—indicates that through the "remodeling" and "disciplining" some rural communities of the southeastern coastal areas are ready to become integrated into global flows of capital and labor. (1997, 76-8)

Both the *Heshang* producers and the party-state agree that the Chinese masses—especially the peasants—are an "object" that must be awakened by the reform from a state of torpor. However, the post-Mao state and intellectuals are different in their reformist focuses and strategies. This kind of differences is clearly fleshed out in the relationship of power and market. The state and the intellectuals differ in who should be involved in the making of a political system that best accommodates the construction of a national market economy. As Anagnost notes, the state addresses the masses as incapable of political responsibility, thereby in need of a strong party organization to subject them to the disciplinary practices of the state's symbolic order. The project of some intellectuals, on the other hand, addresses the masses directly as a "call to arms", a plea to

aspire to political agency (79). *Heshang* embodies such a plea in its discussion of people quality. The producers appeal:

> Only when we can develop a healthy market can we ensure that opportunity, equality, and competition will start to link; yet this is precisely the thing that our people with their ancient civilization know the least about.
>
> As long as competition exists without the prerequisite of equal opportunity, then the loosening of price control, which seem to be appropriate to the rules of a commodity economy, can actually create economic disorder and dislocation; the friction between the old structure and the new one will cancel out the positive elements on each side; the many evils such as "bureaucratism", "feudalism", the use of public power for private ends, and so forth will all seem to find their "common yardstick" and reflect themselves in society in the form of commodity prices...And if for this reason we lose the support of the majority for economic reform, then China will once again be mired in stagnation. (Su and Wang 1991, 175-6)

They indicate that the market-economy-oriented reform is never only about the attraction of foreign capital or the numbers of economic growth. In order to develop a "healthy" market, China must also develop a new political system that can maintain the positive

elements of the market economy. In their words, competition must exist with the prerequisites of opportunity and equality that should be guaranteed by the political system.

Heshang bespeaks what the Chinese masses should feel sorry and worried about is not only the lack of the new system, but also their inactiveness in the participation of constructing such a system. To the *Heshang* producers, an important criterion for people quality should be the masses' political agency and participation in contemporary politics. They pungently ask:

> And yet, while reforms move ahead quickly, how many Chinese are consciously participating in them?
>
> A series of reports from the Chinese Citizens Political Psychology Research Group has indicated that Chinese citizens very commonly exhibit an overly-cautious attitude towards political participation. Of citizens surveyed, 62.41% said that "they were very careful about discussing political issues", while 73.79% said that they either "agree with", "basically agree with" or "did not oppose" the statement that "It's best to minimize one's participation in politics". They continue to worry that political participation could invite trouble for them, and they continue to lack a

> feeling of security about political participation…This will definitely constitute a serious obstacle to the progress of democracy (*minzhuhua* 民主化). (1991, 215)

To readers with attentive ears, the leap from the economical reform to the "progress of democracy" is a little far-fetched in the above citation. After all, there is no consensus on how the reform should be theoretically defined and practically conducted. The fact is that a significant portion of the Chinese population, as the producers have admitted earlier in the documentary, has "consciously participated" in the reform, especially in activities of the economic realm. However, the worry about weak political agency as another embodiment of low people quality does point at a direction of the Chinese reform deviating from the course laid down by the party-state. While the direct involvement of the Chinese masses in the establishment of a new democratic political system is not the primary goal of the party-state-dictated reform, it is the option proposed by the *Heshang* producers who truly believe in their authoritative position as the speaking subject for the nation.

How do we understand this discourse that inspires from different angles constant sorrow and worry about low people quality? How does the discourse reflect the relationship between the self-appointed authority of the intellectuals and the inappropriate masses? In the discussion of science and the subaltern in colonial India, Prakash argues:

> The project of science had begun by targeting the subaltern as the object to be transformed by the exposure to new forms of knowledge. But those defined as ignorant and superstitious could never be fully understood or completely appropriated—for if they ever became fully intelligible and completely assimilable, the project of educating them would have come to an end. Therefore, if the lower classes were silenced or made to speak only through "superstition," they were also assured an intractable presence in the discourse of colonial science; the discourse had opened an incommensurable gap between elites and subalterns that could never be accurately measured or closed. (1992, 168)

In a similar vein, *Heshang*'s blaming of the Chinese masses for their weak political agency fashions an *a priori* denial of the commensurability between the intellectuals and the masses. In a deeper sense, the incommensurability between the wise authority of the national self—the intellectuals—and the inappropriate masses is desired by the *Heshang* producers because, as Prakash has argued in the case of the colonial India, if the objects of the national pedagogy "became fully intelligible and completely assimilable, the project of educating them would have come to an end". Put differently, it is precisely the constant discursive construction of the low people quality—first the lack of

entrepreneurial spirit, then the lack of political agency, as embodiments of the "intractability" of the Chinese masses—that makes necessary a lasting second sight of the post-Mao intellectuals functioning as the cultural authority who can always come to the rescue. In this sense the existence of the inappropriate masses is crucial to the sustainability of the cultural authority of the post-Mao intellectuals.

Inasmuch as the masses are spoken for by the intellectuals, the intractability of the masses as the inappropriate other in the frame of Chinese modernity is ineluctable in the intellectual discourse speaking of the consciousness of sorrow and worry. What matters most is not so much about the authenticity of the representational content of the discourse as about the speaking gesture that bases the cultural authority of the speaking subject on the constructed intractability of the other.

The "Elusive Masses"? Contextualizing the Three Sights in Post-Mao China

Pushing further from Gyan Prakash's stance, there is one more angle we can utilize to perceive *Heshang*'s discourse of the consciousness of sorrow and worry in relation to the positioning of the inappropriate other within the national-space. As Anagnost has noted, Prakash has paid in his study enough attention to the possible agency of the inappropriate other. He calls attention to the phenomena that the subaltern India masses eluded appropriation into the project of modernity and thus engendered anxiety about the

very constitution of the binary between modernity and its other. In his seminal analysis of rumors from the Indian masses about the agricultural exhibitions held by the British colonial government in the 1850s, Prakash notes that the colonial rulers registered the intractability of the masses when, wishing to uplift peasants by dazzling them with agricultural exhibitions, they were shocked by rumors sweeping the Madras countryside that said the real purpose of the exhibitions was to plot a new tax scheme or to convert Hindu to Christianity. In interpreting the rumors the government tried to "normalize" them as attributable to the masses' ingrained superstition (1992, 168-9). Prakash argues that the very strategy of normalization by showing the far-fetched nature of the rumors opened a place for the subaltern, for its agency—rumors "designedly spread and seized"—and for its "original" speech. The very strategy of defining and appropriating the Other in rumors compels the colonial officials to give life to rumors, to make a place for "absurd" tales (169). In accommodating them, the elites opened their discourse to the wild contagion of indeterminacy characteristic of rumors, to the menace of their shadowy origins, and to their reckless reverberation once set forth in motion. Anticipating a similar outbreak of rumors due to the impending census operation, Abdool Luteef Khan, an elite Bengali Muslim, recalled the atmosphere created by rumors at the time of the Alipore Agricultural Exhibition in 1864. These rumors prompted Khan to launch a campaign of education. He issued a pamphlet in Urdu which, along with its Bengali translation, was

widely distributed by the government (169-70). Prakash concludes his analysis with the following comments:

> It is true that later exhibitions did not record similar outbreaks of rumors, but the subaltern continued to occupy an intractable position in *colonial and Indian elite conceptions*; if the lower classes did not spread the contagion of rumors, they disclosed bad cultural taste in their predilection for amusement that exhibitions had to provide in order to attract them (170).

Prakash correctly notes that the very act of eluding the appropriation of modernity—here creating and disseminating rumors about exhibitions—demonstrates the agency of the subaltern masses. Although our knowledge about these acts is totally based on the preserved narratives of the colonial rulers and Indian elites, their recordings, retellings, and rebuffings of the subaltern rumors nevertheless "give life" to the intractable agency of the masses in the frame of colonial Indian modernity. If the distanced gaze of the educated elites is the second sight, the gaze of the British colonial government can be regarded as the "first sight", and the agency of the subaltern masses as the "third sight". As Prakash's study has demonstrated, the second sight in colonial India usually emerged out of the tension between the first sight of "appropriating" and the third

sight of "eluding the appropriation". The national pedagogy of the second sight largely chose to side with the first sight insofar as the elites also defined the subaltern masses as inappropriate and tried to change them. In the frame of colonial Indian modernity, the third sight was usually confronted with an ally of the first sight and the second, and the national pedagogy of the second sight usually worked better on the subaltern than that of the first. We can clearly see this in Prakash's description of the result of Abdool Luteef Khan's effort to prevent the generation of the rumors about the Alipore Agricultural Exhibition in 1864. That is, Khan's effort—the embodiment of the national pedagogy of the second sight—prevented the "similar outbreaks of rumors", but the intractability of the subaltern masses remained: The subaltern continued to occupy an intractable position in colonial and Indian elite conceptions.

The historical conditions of post-Mao China are quite different from those of colonial India in the mid-1800s. This chapter deems Prakash's study as a good application of subaltern theories within a third-world national context, but does not take for granted the conclusion of his study. That is, this chapter turns a suspicious eye on the generalization of his conclusion on the situation of colonial India—the third sight was confronted with an ally of the first sight and the second, and the national pedagogy of the second sight worked better on the subaltern than that of the first.

How, in the new context of post-Mao China, do the relationships between the three sights fashion themselves through *Heshang*? What does *Heshang* tell of the relative positionalities of the intellectuals, the masses, and the state in the frame of Chinese modernity? How do we dialectically understand the documentary's national pedagogy of reform in relation to the elusive agency of the low-quality Chinese masses? With these questions in mind, I revisit *Heshang*'s claim of weak political agency as an embodiment of low people quality. In one article Wang Luxiang (王鲁湘)—another main script writer of the TV documentary—talks about the origin of the producers' concern for the Chinese masses' weak political agency:

> At Ansai we[14] met a group of young peasants. They told us that they joined the splendid thousand-people waist-drum team organized by the cultural bureau of the county when the joint Chinese-Japanese production team came to shoot the documentary *Yellow River*. The production team paid one *yuan* to each member of the waist-drum team. But the money was appropriated by the county government. When they told us this their tone was gentle, slightly complaining, but never upset. I was somewhat saddened. Chinese peasants who are so plain and docile never thought it was illegal that the county government blackmailed and exploited them under the name of "government". They silently suffer from all kinds of things like

this, do not know how to fight back, and do not know that it is their basic human right that they must strive for and defend. They regarded us as people sent from the central government. They didn't talk until they were asked. When they actually talked, they talked about this like it was some boring story of somebody else.

Then we went to Henan…The quality of the peasants here were quite different from that of the northern Shaanxi peasants. They were very emotional, and sometimes sarcastic, when they expressed criticism [of the government]. They made loud complaint about the low prices of agricultural products and the constantly increasing prices of instruments of labor (*shengchan ziliao* 生产资料). Almost all of them knew this couplet (*duilian* 对联): "I refuse to buy your overpriced chemical fertilizers; I refuse to sell my underpriced wheat—I do not give a damn as long as I have enough to eat!" They started to bargain prices with the government. They knew to sign contracts with the government. They knew the government has obligations and responsibilities. In a nutshell, they knew that their agricultural production is producing commodities for exchange instead of fulfilling a ***corvée***. This is a great historical progress for Chinese peasants…It is that the peasants are using the law of value to take revenge on the unreasonable price system—this single point is enough to prove that the thousand-year-unchanged peasants are changing. Some people may

> think they are getting illy cunning. But I think they are getting more modern. We are thrilled to see that. (1988)

Wang reiterates in the above citation the *Heshang* producers' belief in their national pedagogy of reform. To some extent the comparison between the Shaaxi peasants and the Henan peasants in the narrative falls into line with the strategy of dramatic demarcation in the proper text of *Heshang*. The comparison in Wang's article also suggests that the more the masses learn from the reform, the better-off their situations will be indefinitely. Although in such secondary materials it is still the intellectual speaker speaking for the masses, the existence of such materials nevertheless allows us to situate the documentary within a specific historical context and conduct a historical reflection on *Heshang*'s national pedagogy of reform.

In the context of post-Mao China in the 1980s, the first sight of the state realized, mostly from the gloomy consequences of the Cultural Revolution, that the Maoist ways of governing did not function well as long as China still intended to be incorporated in the global system of nation-states. One fundamental motive for the state to engage in reform was to improve the living conditions of the colossal population of China who were suffering from the dilapidated national economy as one consequence of the Cultural Revolution. It is no exaggeration to say that the state-initiated reform was originally

based on a "survival" instinct—trying to feed and clothe the vast masses. Thus to some extent the reform functions for the state as a pragmatic tool with an economic focus, a focus that aims at promoting the material wellbeing of the Chinese masses.

The second sight of the post-Mao intellectuals understands the reform differently. *Heshang*'s national pedagogy of reform firmly claims:

> [R]eform doesn't just mean that "steamed wheat buns have replaced sweet potatoes, and the bachelor gets a wife"; that it doesn't merely mean color TVs, refrigerators and higher salaries, nor even the comfortable living standard of one thousand U.S. dollars [per annum]?
>
> In the majority of cases and in its deeper sense, reform is rather a great burst of pain in which a civilization is transformed, a task fraught with danger, a difficult process which will require sacrifices from our generation and even several yet to come. (Su and Wang 1991, 161-2)

To the producers the reform is anything but a pure economic tool. Instead it is a long and painful process of a civilizational transformation which requires full mobilization of economic, political, and spiritual elements. It is in this sense that their pedagogy of reform finds in the issue of people quality the urgency to improve the spiritual quality of

the Chinese masses and makes them amenable to the economic and political reforms on schedule.

The elusive agency of the Chinese masses—the third sight—nevertheless questions the efficacy on the masses of the pedagogical project of the second sight. As mentioned earlier, the *Heshang* producers address the masses directly as a plea to aspire to political agency. However, Wang's article divulges the discrepancy between the supposed connections between the second sight and the third sight, and the actual positionality of the inappropriate masses within the context of post-Mao China. In Wang's article, the Henan peasants are singled out as the positive example of stronger political agency in comparison to the Ansai peasants. How to understand the "stronger political agency" figures importantly in the working out of this problem of the discrepancy. The Henan peasants knew to bargain prices and sign contracts with the government. They even knew how to prompt the government to make policy changes in their idiosyncratic way—threatening to not sell or buy in the government-controlled price system. In this sense they do demonstrate a kind of political agency. However, this kind of agency is de facto quite different from the kind of active political agency aiming at building a new political system that has been hoped for by the *Heshang* producers. The agency of the Henan peasants is "political" only in the sense that they actively engaged in negotiations with the government. The motive behind all their means of negotiations—bargaining

prices, signing contracts, and threatening to quit the price system—is to use the law of value to protect their material interests. The nature of their political negotiations is urging the current political system to acknowledge their material interests, instead of waging political campaigns to create a new system. In other words, Wang presumes in the comparison of the Ansai peasants and the Henan peasants the similarity between his own idealistic mode of political agency and the real agency of the Henan peasants whose efforts wind up being nothing beyond striving to secure their material interests in the current system. It is ironic that Wang's preaching of the political reform that is intended to change the politically apathetic masses—which presupposes the intractability of the masses in post-Mao modernity—is so anxious to discover evidences bespeaking the "tractability" of the masses to his preaching, no matter how feeble and erratic the evidences actually are.

This anxiety is brought into the proper text of *Heshang*. The producer's eagerness to target the masses' weak political agency as a source of sorrow and worry betrays, in an unexpected manner to themselves, the actual elusion of the masses to their national pedagogy of reform. With the contextual knowledge of the actual agency of the Henan peasants made known by Wang's article, the very attempt of the *Heshang* producers to relate the reform to establishing a democratic political system lays bare the precise elusion of the masses to such relating. The example of the Henan peasants suggests what

the producers believe a "deeper" reform should go beyond is exactly what the masses hope for from the reform. To borrow from the producers' own words, it is the "steamed wheat buns", "color TVs", and "refrigerators" that the masses hope the reform will bring them. To a large extent, the masses expect from the reform material wellbeing and improved living conditions while eluding the "pains", "dangers", or "difficulties" that the intellectual-defined reform will bring upon them. Establishing a democratic political system is certainly not as appealing to the masses as other more immediate and material benefits the reform may promise.

At this juncture a retrospective look at the state-defined reform brings forth that the "elusive" Chinese masses to the appropriation of the *Heshang* producers tend to subject themselves more amenably to the appropriation of the post-Mao state. The first sight of the state treats the reform as an economic tool promoting the material wellbeing of the Chinese masses, which to some extent dovetails with the materialistic concerns of the masses. Different from the situation in colonial India—that the second sight of the Indian elites allied with the first sight of the British colonial state and carried on an efficient educational program targeting the subaltern masses, the contextual study of *Heshang* reveals that in the 1980s the Chinese masses may have positioned themselves in the frame of post-Mao modernity closer to the first sight of the state than to the second sight of the intellectuals. The producers' national pedagogy meant to inspire the feelings of

sorrow and worry in the Chinese masses may be founded on an anxious recognition of the masses' elusion and apathy towards that very pedagogy in real life. The elusion and apathy—the third sight targeted by the second sight as the evidence of the masses' inappropriateness—may well be a more appropriate existence to the reformist scheme of the post-Mao state.

Conclusion

The 1980s' intellectual reflection on Chinese civilization culminates in the making of *Heshang*, which sets up the standards of the Western industrial civilization as the universal criteria to judge the "backwardness" or "advancement" of civilizations. In this light the *Heshang* producers engaged in a project of remaking the national sentiment that aims at fashioning an appropriate subjectivity of the Chinese masses in the frame of post-Mao modernity. The key content of the remade national sentiments is the consciousness of sorrow and worry, which focuses, among other things, the issue of low people quality. The discussion of people quality provides for the intellectuals a space—a second sight—to promote their national pedagogy of reform, in which they highlight their authoritative position as the wise speaking subject for the Chinese nation through delineating the masses as the inappropriate other of Chinese modernity, and the reform as a process of civilizational transformation requiring full mobilization of economic,

political, and spiritual elements. However, a contextual study of the documentary questions the alleged efficacy of the national pedagogy of the producers. The masses may have largely eluded the appropriation of the intellectual second sight while subjecting themselves more amenably to the appropriation of the post-Mao state.

Notes:

[1] The observation that *Heshang* has become a phenomenon is mentioned by Xiaomei Chen. See Chen (2002, 33).

[2] The translation is based on Richard Bodmann and Pin Wan's in Su and Wang (1991). They translated "*minzu qinggan*" as "love for one's country". "National sentiments", it seems to me, is certainly a better translation. Unless otherwise noted, all the translations of the original script of *Heshang* in this chapter are from Su and Wang (1991).

[3] The aforementioned Chinese rafters who lost their lives in the competition with Ken Warren to be the first to raft down the Yellow River make a good case of the "patriotic dreamers" here.

[4] All italicized items in this paragraph are by the original author.

[5] "The love for one's nation/state" are certainly not strictly academic definitions for nationalism/patriotism. They are used here to highlight the central difference between nationalism and patriotism this chapter discusses.

[6] The forest fire in the Daxingan Range burned from May 6th to June 2nd, 1987. The airplane accident at Chongqing occurred on January 18th, 1988 when Flight 4146 crashed into a mountain causing the deaths of ninety-eight passengers and three crew members. The crash was discussed extensively at the National People's Congress in March, 1988. On January 17, 1988 two trains crashed head-on in Heilongjiang Province; and on March 24th another two trains crashed head-on at a Shanghai suburban station, causing 127 casualties. The hepatitis epidemic occurred in Shanghai in the spring of 1987, lasting for almost one year. Several thousands of people were hospitalized and the city declared a disaster area. This note is provided by the translators.

[7] Richard Bodmann and Pin Wan translated "*Huanghe youhuan*" as "Yellow River's troubles", and "*youhuan yishi*" as "a sense of (social) concern".

[8] The translation of Mao's work is from Su and Wang (1991, 171-2n38).

[9] The recapitulation of Chatterjee's ideas is from Anagnost (1997, 80).

[10] Richard Bodmann and Pin Wan translated "*nongmin suzhi*" here as "peasant makeup".

[11] The quoted phrase is originally from Guha (1998, 43).

[12] *Heshang* applies a few highly symbolic and simplistic pairs of modifiers to characterize the dichotomy between the Western industrial civilization and Chinese civilization. For example, the blue versus the yellow, and the maritime versus the hinterland.

[13] Zhao Ziyang, Premier from 1980 to 1987; General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, 1987-1989.During the Tiananmen Incident, Zhao was suspended from his duties after failing to take part in the decision to enforce martial law on May 20, 1989. This note is from Su and Wang (1991, 172n40).

[14] "We" refers to the production team of *Heshang*.

CHAPTER III

A NATIVE OF BEIJING IN NEW YORK: MALE DESIRES AND PATRIOTISM ON THE SMALL SCREEN

The TV serial *A Native of Beijing in New York* (hereafter, NBNY) was aired on the CCTV (China Central TV) in October 1993. Between eight and nine hundred million viewers watched it (Liu 1999, 763). The main story of the media text is as follows: The protagonist, Wang Qiming, is a Beijing-born musician who comes to the United States in search of the American dream. Because of Wang's lack of English and basic survival skills, he and his wife, Guo Yan, suffer every form of discrimination and exploitation after they first arrive. Failing to receive their relatives' assistance as they had hoped, they start their new life at the rock bottom of American society. Wang begins working in a Chinese restaurant as a dishwasher, while Guo Yan becomes a seamstress in a factory owned by a white American man, David McCarthy. Before long, husband and wife drift apart. In dire financial circumstances, Wang loses his wife to McCarthy, who not only alienates Guo Yan from her Chinese husband but marries her in his place. Wang, in the mean time, develops a romantic relationship with his employer, Ah Chun, a smart,

attractive, independent Chinese American woman of possible Taiwanese origins. Through her generosity and compassion, Wang overcomes his circumstances and starts a manufacturing business that closely replicates McCarthy's—a sweater factory—in order to get even with his enemy. McCarthy is defeated by Wang in due time (783). Constantly tormented by his family tragedy and gradually corrupted by the decadent American life style, he gambles away all his fortune and becomes poor again in the end.

Mainland audiences cheered for this serial and it won almost every major Mainland TV award. Academia is also impressed by its rippling effect in Mainland China as well as in Chinese-speaking communities throughout the world. Some scholars have devoted significant attention to the TV serial, tackling it as an important media text demonstrating Chinese popular nationalism in the post-Cold War world.[1] This chapter continues the dialogues about NBNY between popular nationalism and the small screen in contemporary China, by focusing on the enunciation of a newly emergent national subject—the mass-media elites—through this TV serial. I argue that by creatively appropriating the cultural memories of pre-socialist and socialist past, the mass-media elites fashion a mode of national sentiments of which the central thread is "Making money is patriotic".

This chapter is divided into three parts. First, I historicize the process in which the NBNY producers Zheng Xiaolong (郑晓龙) and Feng Xiaogang(冯小刚)ascended to the

status of "mass-media elites" through cultural brokering. Second, I examine the ways in which these mass-media elites imagine the contemporary love for the nation from the perspective of male desires and sexuality. Third, I study the meanings of Wang Qiming as a failed man for this new mode of national sentiments against the backdrop of pre-socialist modern history.

Mass-media Elites: Cultural Brokers in Postsocialist China

In her paper, Lydia H. Liu makes a perceptive observation on the social context of NBNY:

> (The serial's) erasure of the social landscape in the United States coincides with the making of a new social elite in contemporary Chinese society, the so-called nouveau riche know as *dakuan* (big bucks) and sometimes *dawan* (big wrists) … Wang Qiming would fit the image of this new class of social elites who own private homes and luxury cars, play golf, buy apartments in Paris or Canada, go to expensive clubs, flaunt their wealth and young mistresses, and are admired and resented by common folks … It is hardly surprising that Wang Qiming's story strikes a sympathetic chord among some Chinese audiences and arouses a tremendous voyeuristic interest among others. (Liu 1999, 790)

What Liu does not mention is that this TV serial actually helped the mass-media practitioners involved in its production—especially Zheng Xiaolong and Feng Xiaogang—become part of the emergent social elites in her description.

Contributing to their ascendance to the elite class is the rise of "cultural economy"—a prominent symbol of Chinese postsocialism in the 1990s. After the 1989 Tiananmen Incident, especially after Deng Xiaoping's southern trip in the spring of 1992, the rampant wave of marketization promoted by the Party-state gave birth to the phenomenon of the "cultural economy", or *wenhua jingji*. Mass-media practitioners acquired opportunities to collaborate with domestic and international entrepreneurs to make profitable popular cultural products. In this process some mass-media practitioners successfully used their prestige, access to resources, and popular appeal of mass media to become brokers between culture and capital. Through their mediation cultural references were cashed in to enhance the monetary value of a cultural project, and these cultural brokers became powerful elites.[2]

The production of NBNY is a good example of such cultural brokering. It is worth noting that the main plot of the TV serial—the homosocial rivalry between Wang Qiming and David McCarthy—is absent from the original novel[3] from which the serial is adapted. The fabrication of this plot was a strategic move of the serial producers to

instigate sensations among Mainland audiences and to expand market returns. Through his connections with Bank of China—the state-owned bank in charge of China's international financial business, Zheng Xiaolong secured a joint investment of 1.2 million US dollars from both domestic and international investors. After the production was finished, China Central TV bought the copyright of the serial, whose first round of airing only brought CCTV an income of about 5 million US dollars.[4]

NBNY won almost every major Mainland TV award and became a textbook case of TV marketing for later TV producers in Mainland China. It is also an important step to fame and fortune for Zheng Xiaolong and Feng Xiaogang. Zheng Xiaolong is one of the most powerful "TV-serial *dawans*"[5] in Mainland China. Since he became head of Beijing TV Arts Center—the largest TV production center of its kind in Mainland China—in 1984, he has produced some of the most popular Mainland TV serials like *Yearning* (1990), *Stories of the Editorial Staff* (1991), and *The Golden Marriage* (2007). In 1991 he established in the United States *Huayi* Film and Video Co. Ltd, which still dominates the North-America distribution of Chinese-language programs produced by Beijing TV Arts Center and China Central TV. The success of NBNY gave Zheng an opportunity to reshuffle the domestic TV-serial market as the industry leader. In 1995 he aligned with 28 province-level TV stations to establish the first united TV-serial broadcasting

system—The Ivy Theater. In recent years major players of the international mass-media market like Sony (America) have also become his business partners.[6]

For Feng Xiaogang, this serial's success provided him the necessary fame and prestige to leap from the "small screen" of TV to the "large screen" of film, where he demonstrated his skills of practicing and representing cultural brokering to a fuller extent. According to Yomi Braester, Feng Xiaogang is a prominent figure among Chinese directors practicing filmmaking as cultural brokering in the 1990s cultural economy:

> Whereas Maoist thought required artists to "unite with the masses," directors now merge with the commercial production and distribution units. Filmmakers take over not only directing but also advertising and promotion, and their work expands far beyond the artifact screened in theatres. A new mode of filmmaking is in the process of emerging, which is akin to other forms of entrepreneurial use of culture. A certain symbolism may be found in that both masterful artists and real estate moguls[7] are referred to as *dawan'r*, a term reserved for large-scale market manipulators. (2005, 550)

What makes Feng Xiaogang distinct from other filmmaker-as-cultural-brokers is that he not only relies on practicing cultural brokering in making films, but also makes films to promote the image of filmmakers as *dawan'r*.

Feng Xiaogang made the self-referential movie *Big Shot's Funeral* in 2001. It starts as a famous Hollywood director, Donald Tyler, arrives in Beijing to shoot an updated version of *The Last Emperor* and falls into a coma. The cinematographer Yoyo takes to heart Tyler's request for a "comedy funeral" and plans an uplifting spectacle worthy of the director's reputation, to take place in the Forbidden City. To cover the costs, the cinematographer takes every opportunity for direct advertising and product placement. The body of the deceased is to be placed on sponsored furniture, surrounded by large product mockups and dressed in sponsor brands. The event, attended by cultural luminaries and featuring various performances, ends up in the cinematographer's imagination as the shell for an elaborate lucrative enterprise (554).

As Braester argues, the filmic narrative distinguishes Yoyo as a cultural broker and Feng Xiaogang, like his cinematic reflection in Yoyo, makes use of his position as a mediator between culture and capital. "Both the pattern of production and the narrative reflect recent and anticipated changes in the way film business is conducted in China, and the movie lends itself to be read as an allegory of Feng Xiaogang's role as a director in an increasingly commercialized market" (555-8).

What remains vital in the activities of these mass-media *dawan*s is the mutuality between their manipulation of capital and their trendsetting of the mass culture. In the process of bending culture to accommodate the needs of the market, mass-media elites like Zheng and Wang become figures the masses look up to. Their products aim not only at success on the market but also at shaping visual experience, social networks, and cultural environment.[8] As Braester observes, these mass-media elites "could benefit from their skills as producers of artifacts of wide appeal and their proximity to intellectual circles to become influential middlemen" (551). Although in the 1980s the reformist intellectuals played the role of cultural authority to define national sentiments with mass appeal, it is in this process of "middling" that the mass-media elites assumed this role in the 1990s.

Transnationalism, Nationalism, and Gender—the Context of NBNY Study

These mass-media elites set the trends for the masses through their literary sensibility—an ability to discern, represent, and evaluate social issues and their own subjectivity with critical thinking and vast knowledge of the past, which is a legacy they undoubtedly inherited from intellectuals. The knowledge of critical discourses on NBNY since its production is important for the understanding of such sensibility.

Lydia H. Liu has done an insightful study of the TV serial in the discursive scheme of Chinese transnationalism and postsocialism. According to Liu, the fictive figure of Wang Qiming—a self-made Chinese entrepreneur (*qiye jia*) in America—and the extraordinary commendation such figures receive from both mass audiences and the government reflect the historical condition of postsocialism in contemporary China. Liu's understanding of the contemporary Chinese condition is largely based on Arif Dirlik's definition of postsocialism. By that term Dirlik refers to the condition of socialism in a historical situation where:

> (a) socialism has lost its coherence as a metatheory of politics because of the attenuation of the socialist vision in its historical unfolding; partly because of a perceived need on the part of socialist state to articulate "actually existing socialism" to the demands of a capitalist world order, but also because of the vernacularization of socialism in its absorption into different national contexts; (b) the articulation of socialism to capitalism is conditioned by the structure of "actually existing socialism" in any particular social context which is the historical premise of all such articulation; and (c) this premise stands guard over the process of articulation to ensure that it does not result in the restoration of capitalism. (1989, 364)

Liu takes the "actually existing socialism" to be a residual of the past as well as its reinvention under new historical conditions. To her understanding postsocialism does not constitutes resistance to transnational capitalism; instead, the existence of residual socialist thought, state apparatuses, and historical memory do complicate the ways in which transnationalism and its critique operate in a postsocialist context (Liu 1999, 767).

This chapter continues to use the concept of postsocialism as it is defined and interpreted by Dirlik and Liu. Liu thinks that a specific sequence from the 1993 TV serial illuminates the Chinese condition of postsocialism. The sequence she refers to is in the second half of the serial where there is a highly dramatized confrontation between the immigrant entrepreneur Wang Qiming and his daughter Ningning, both of whom now live in New York. In the heated confrontation Ningning suddenly blurts out, "You are a stinking *ziben jia* [capitalist]". Liu comments:

> "Stinking capitalist" sounds strangely familiar and ironically anachronistic to the Mainland Chinese audience (and, I am sure, to the majority of the serial's intended audience)[9] who lived through the decades of the Chinese socialist revolution and were made to hear and rehearse the language of class struggle repeatedly in this fashion. Ningning's parodic evocation of a language that has nearly been banished from people's consciousness in the 1990s brings back a history, only to bury it

> deeper in the collective memory. In other words that which stinks is no longer the capitalist, who has now got a new name, *qiye jia* (a remarkable transvaluation), but the words *stinking capitalist* themselves. (767-8)

From my understanding the televisualized trope of "stinking capitalist" points right to a subtle psychic process shared by the producers and audiences of the TV serial. To some extent, their aversion to the Maoist past of class struggle was transformed into a form of approbation of the "actually existing socialism" of China in the 1990s, when the Chinese society was increasingly shaped by transnational capitalism. Put differently, the traumatic memory of the Maoist socialist past still lingering on people' minds seems to provide, at least for the producers and audiences of the TV serial, the raison d'etre of the postsocialist reality.

In a similar vein, Liu calls our attention to how the TV serial allegorizes the remaking of official ideology in the 1990s. She argues:

> (T)he existence of the residual class discourse of the past and historical memory have played an important part both within and outside the televisional serial. A powerful ideological process emerges from these interactive moments of representation and viewing … (T)he residual elements of socialist discourse tend to

> be an enabling factor for transnationalism much like the epithet *stinking capitalist* expresses its opposite in postsocialist China … It seems also true that Chinese official discourse embraces the ideology of entrepreneurship with more enthusiasm than some Republicans display in the United States. This does not mean, however, that the Chinese government and business sectors succumbed to the transnational processes when they rejected the Maoist past. I would argue the opposite, namely, that these people are the movers and shapers of transnational processes to the extent that they have successfully transformed the potential obstacle (socialist discourse) to global capitalism into an enabling force on the ideological front. (791-2)

Sponsored by the state and the increasingly privatized business sectors, Chinese mass media timely fashions a folk hero like Wang Qiming to affirm the social and economic agenda set by the former. By investigating the production and consumption of the TV serial with sufficient knowledge of both the theoretical proliferation of globalization and the historical development of the Asian Pacific region, Liu's study persuasively argues that transnationalism and postsocialism must be treated as a simultaneous process for contemporary cultural studies.

Liu's study of the TV serial helps elucidate the complicated relationships between transnationalism and the postsocialist Chinese reality. Her critique of this media text is

supplemented by Mainland-based critic Dai Jinhua. Dai perceptively analyzes China's self-portrayal in this media text against the backdrop of an imagined global arena. She argues that this serial manifests how Chinese media constructed the screen image of the folk hero Wang Qiming to suit the needs of a nation facing an identity crisis in light of globalization (2002). Although Dai and Liu share the insights on the collaboration of the state and the mass media to embrace the capitalist logics through the production and consumption of popular cultural products like NBNY, Dai's reading of the TV serial nevertheless points to another direction of its interpretation—one that focuses on the nationalist concerns of the media text.

As the title of Dai's article—"National Identity in the Hall of Mirrors"—suggests, she thinks that the TV serial exemplifies an idiosyncratic articulation of nationalism and illustrates a specific trend of making national identities in postsocialist China. An immediate question arising from such an interpretation is: Is the nation still a significant node through which subjectivity is constructed and represented in the age of transnationalism and globalization? As Anthony D. Smith cogently argues, although the economic logics of globalization have to some extent eclipsed the political hegemony of territorially bound nation-states, the nation—especially the nation as a cultural construct—is still influential and irreplaceable in shaping contemporary human subjectivity:

> (T)he nation and nationalism provide the only realistic socio-cultural framework for a modern world order. They have no rivals today. National identity too remains widely attractive and effective and is felt by many people to satisfy their needs for cultural fulfillment, rootedness, security and fraternity. (1995, 159)

If transnationalism is the cultural specificities of globalization, it simultaneously gives rise to the thriving of nationalism because an important embodiment of these cultural localities and specificities, as they are shaped by the global flows of capital, culture, and bodies, is precisely the persistent and sometimes violent will for ethnic and cultural differences as markers of identities—which are more often than not discussed under the rubric of nationalism.

NBNY attests to such subtlety of globalization and nationalism. The emphasis of the interrelation between transnationalism and postsocialism notwithstanding, Liu's article does not ignore the equally important sentiment of patriotism generated in the production and consumption of the TV serial. Commenting on the serial applying visual technologies to accommodate the 1990s social ethos of embracing American commodities and prosperity, she nonetheless notes:

> (C)oexisting with the desire and demand for American goods and cultural products are anti-American sentiments and a rising nationalist discourse in contemporary China. In the serial *Beijing Sojourners*[10] this paradox seems to find a perfect locale of reconciliation as the serial reinvents—perhaps more than it reflects—what it means to be patriotic today without contradicting the desire for American products and commodity culture. As opposed to the outdated denunciation of the West as a source of self-strengthening discourse, an alternative and more tempting form of patriotism would be to compete with America to be the world's leading economic power. (1999, 781)

Although it is not the central focus of Liu's study within the limited scope of her article, her observation of the TV serial as a perfect site for the reconciliation between nationalism and material desires is quite illuminating. Following up this dialogue of globalization and nationalism as initiated by Liu and Dai, this chapter analyzes the patriotic sentiment of the TV serial—as a specific case of the reconciliation between nationalism and desires fashioned by contemporary Chinese mass media—with a critical understanding of postsocialism that is supplementary to Liu and Dirlik's.

One issue worth noting is that Liu uses the concept of transnationalism not only in the sense of its economic logic—i.e. transnational capitalism, but also referring to its

cultural dynamics that shape human subjectivity. In her study of flexible citizenship among Chinese diasporas, Aihwa Ong defines transnationalism as "the cultural specificities of global processes". By exploring the relationships between elite diasporic Chinese subjects and states in terms of capital and mobility, Ong brings into the same analytical framework the economical rationalities of globalization and the cultural dynamics that shape human subjectivity. She notes that people's everyday actions should be perceived as a kind of cultural politics embedded in specific power contexts. "Flexible citizenship" is narrated within particular structures of meanings about family, gender, nationality, class mobility, and social power (1999, especially 4-6)—all of which loom large in shaping human subjectivity in transnational economic flow. Liu is fully aware of the significances of Ong's study. In her article Liu cites Ong's work in positive light and supplements Ong's discussion of transnationalism with evidences from the field of Asian American studies. Sau-ling Wong's study of new immigrant groups from East Asia, as Liu notices, reveals that frequent Asian fliers across the Pacific Ocean have acquired the status of transpacific folklore in places like Hong Kong and Taiwan. The displaced wives and children of these frequent fliers—Asian American men notorious for their marital infidelity—constitute a unique generation of new Asian Americans in the 1980s and 1990s. As Liu summarizes, Wong's research "raises important questions about the gender

and class aspects of transnational Chinese cultural identity as well as their implications for the economic future of the Asian Pacific region" (Liu 1999, 774-5).

In light of the multivalent implications of transnationalism, Liu broaches in her article the issues of gender and class in relation to the transnationalist representations in NBNY. Liu argues that the central plot of the serial—the homosocial rivalry between Wang Qiming and David McCarthy—is carried out both in terms of and at the expense of Chinese women. She points out that Wang's wife, Guo Yan, is seduced by McCarthy when she is hired by him as a factory worker. The TV serial allows Guo Yan to marry her white boss after the seduction and thus displaces the gender and racial conflict in the workplace onto the level of a fight between two men over the right to a Chinese wife. The eroticized refashioning of oppressive gender/labor relations becomes the condition of Guo Yan's ultrafemininity as a desirable woman. Gender formations do not begin to gain value as potential material for fictional dramatization until the women relate to the men sexually and erotically. Liu also highlights the significance of Wang's reconciliation with McCarthy toward the end of the serial:

> (T)hese men seem to respect each other for wanting to own the same kind of manufacturing business and hire the same ethnic, immigrant female labor. As for the immigrant female laborers hired first by McCarthy and then by Wang and again by

> McCarthy, their gender identity remains the same as their class, which condemns them to low wages, long hours of work, social obscurity and utter inability to transcend their racial and class identities. (787-8)

Liu's emphases on gender and class provide a valuable feminist perspective to understand the imprints that globalization and transnational economic and cultural flows bear upon individual bodies.

Relevant to the gender-and-class perspective of the relationship between individuals and globalization in contemporary China is the problem of enunciating subjects of the nation. As Ann Anagnost notes, narrative requires the presence of an enunciating subject. This simple fact directs our attention to the power of a national imaginary to call forth subjects who "speak for" the nation. In the history of modern China, the designation of who or what class represents the agency to propel the nation forward in its historical destiny has been very much at stake in national struggles. Implicit in this contestation has been a "politics of presence" in which the speaking subject claims to or is attributed with the power to speak with the force of history. In this sense, the national subject is made to embody abstract conceptions which are not immediately present to experience—such as History, Nation, Society, People—but which become emblematic of the nation speaking with the voice of history (1997, 4). If Liu's article highlights the collaboration of the state

and the mass media to forge a sensational televisualized experience affirming the capitalist logics of the 1990s, this chapter accentuates the status of the mass media as an enunciating subject of the nation related to, but still different from, the state.

In this respect, we cannot fully understand the implications of the mass media as a enunciating subject of the Chinese nation without taking into consideration the gendered voice of the most eloquent enunciators of the serial—the two male directors Zheng Xiaolong and Feng Xiaogang. How does gender interfere with Chinese mass media's articulation of patriotic sentiments? What changes does Chinese postsocialism bring to the male gender and their self-fashioning? Whither does postsocialism affect the mass-media discourses of Chinese nationalism and the formation of Chinese national identities in the globalized world? In an attempt to answer these questions, the following discussions of NBNY proceed with the dual emphases of patriotism and the male gender, which illuminate the postsocialist articulation of the mass-media elites' national sentiments.

Patriotism, the Socialist Past, and the Male Desire for Money

Postsocialism—as the Chinese condition of globalization—is not only a variety of economic logics regulating the reforms and the global exchanges of resources, money, and labor, but also the discipline of cultural dynamics that shape contemporary human

subjectivities. Specifically, the cultural dynamics of Chinese postsocialism are embodied in the mass-media elites' literary sensibility as is manifested through NBNY. Zheng Xiaolong and Feng Xiaogang's literary sensibility is supplementary to Dirlik and Liu's understandings of postsocialism in that their sensibility of postsocialist reality is not only the reinvention of the Maoist socialist past per se, but also the integration of the represented cultural memories of both the socialist and the pre-socialist past.

In the postsocialist cultural economy, a variety of cultural memories based on the socialist past provide for the literary sensibility of these mass-media elites, whose *dawan* status guaranteed their cultural concerns to be repacked into sensational visual sequences of NBNY on the small screen. Then, what exactly are these concerns? How do they negotiate with the socialist past? Harking back to Lydia Liu's comments on the social context of the TV serial, if Wang Qiming fits the image of the *dawan*, what do the directors and the audiences make of men like Wang Qiming "who own private homes and luxury cars, play golf, buy apartments in Paris or Canada, go to expensive clubs, flaunt their wealth and young mistresses"? What kind of audiences is the life style of men flaunting wealth and young mistresses most appealing to? Although Liu does not explicitly state it, hardly can we miss the intriguing gendered network here: the two male directors making a TV folk lore of a male hero favorably consumed by a (heterosexual) male audience.

In light of the perspective of the male gender, the pivot of the whole serial—a Chinese man Wang Qiming making/losing money—entails a central question of the literary sensibility of these mass-media elites: How does the TV serial justify the male desire for money in representation? A central strategy of the serial is to situate the desire under a dramatized environment of the Chinese-American clashes so that the personal pursuit of wealth is discursively constructed as a patriotic sentiment. Few people having seen this serial would neglect the prologue, in which two verses made up of pure-white, motionless Chinese characters occupy the whole black screen, with a resolute male voice reading them in English:

If you love him\
Bring him to New York\
For it's heaven

If you hate him\
Bring him to New York\
For it's hell.

What this prologue features are undoubtedly stark contrasts, contrasts between white and black, love and hate, Chinese and English, and heaven and hell. It heralds a Chinese *ta*—i.e. "him" in Chinese—who travels to a completely alien environment, which, being either heaven or hell, is different from his own world. America in this discourse is not so much a developed and civilized country as a de-humanized, natural frontier waiting to be explored by Chinese men like Wang Qiming.

To some extent, the narrative of NBNY radicalizes the difference between China and America, viewing the two as incommensurate entities. This radicalization readily echoes Samuel Huntington's claim of "the clash of civilizations" (1996). The claim's implied incommunicability and hatred between nations are often dramatized in the TV serial. In a conversation between Wang and Ah Chun taking place almost halfway through the serial, she tells Wang Qiming that the Americans can quite easily imagine a world without China but can never conceive of a world without themselves. Wang bursts out, "Fxxk them! They were still monkeys up in the trees while we were already human beings. Look at how hairy they are. They're not as evolved as us—just 'cause they have a bit of money!"[11] This telling detail about "monkeys" and "money" furnishes the image of Americans—monkeys with money—that Zheng Xiaolong and Feng Xiaogang are anxious to articulate. Asserting the truthfulness of the Darwinist theory, Wang Qiming obtains his moral ground—however feeble it may actually be—to pursue money in order

to reaffirm that Chinese are more evolved than Americans. Through the mediation of the Darwinist theory, the homosocial rivalry between Wang and McCarthy for wealth is constructed as a rivalry between two nations, and the Chinese male desire for money is interpreted as an embodiment of patriotism.

How do Zheng and Feng understand such desiring patriotism with regard to the socialist past? Another sequence of the TV serial helps to illustrate this issue. Immediately after the Lydia Liu-mentioned sequence in which Ningning calls Wang Qiming a "stinking capitalist", Wang bitterly responds as follows:

> Have you had enough of this? Do you know what I was like when I did not have money? … … I am a stinking capitalist?! In order to make my first fortune, you know, your father! Me! I slept only two hours every day for seven straight days. I almost drowned myself in the bathtub.[12] That is your father. Do you know that? I am a stinking capitalist?! To be a capitalist I have to drink my own fxxking blood first!"[13]

Beyond the overt expression of agony over his daughter's disrespect, Wang's emotional outburst also indicates that the premise of his success is nothing but a painstaking move of "drinking his own blood". It does not take much effort for Chinese audiences to relate

this idiosyncratic metaphor to the socialist discourse the mass-media elites appropriates here—that class struggles were vividly in-carnated as capitalists drinking the blood of the working class. The metaphor of "drinking one's own blood" has double implications. On the one hand, it reaffirms the exploitative relationship between capitalists and the working class as defined by socialist discourses. Both Ningning and Wang Qiming seem to have no objection to this recognition that capitalists are born to exploit the labor of—that is, to "drink the blood of"—the working class. On the other hand, an identifiable discursive "self-relocation" emerges here. While Ningning's claim of the "stinking capitalist" certainly puts herself at the position of the working class and her father capitalists, Wang Qiming's defensive response fashions a simultaneous self-positioning and self-relocation. That is, he does not deny his identity as a capitalist but identifies himself as a capitalist "drinking his own blood".

While speaking from the position of capitalists—to suck out blood, Wang ironically includes the vision of the working classes—blood to be sucked out—to secretly relocate himself to the position of the working class. In other words, while Ningning attempts to radicalize the class antagonism by making capitalists "stink", Wang Qiming neutralizes the antagonism by endowing himself the status of the exploited to "de-odor" the image of capitalists. This sequence manifests that historical memories of the socialist era are still an important source for the literary sensibilities of the postsocialist mass-media elites.

The socialist discourse that provided the moral superiority of the exploited working class resurfaced in NBNY and was re-appropriated by the mass-media elites to justify the male desire for money.

In a nutshell, postsocialism has remarkably shaped the 1990s mass-media articulation of patriotism through the venue of the male desire for money. These mass-media elites relied heavily on their literary sensibility inspired by the socialist past. The aforementioned sequences reveal how the NBNY directors have produced the discourse of the male monetary desire as the embodiment of patriotism in contemporary China.

"To Screw Foreigners Is Patriotic"? The Sexual Desire as a Surrogate for the Monetary Desire

From a perspective of gender and class, Lydia Liu cogently argues that in NBNY the homosocial rivalry between Wang Qiming and David McCarthy is carried out both in terms of and at the expense of Chinese women. It is interesting that Liu applies a similar angle to analyze the situation of white women in NBNY. She remarks:

> One of the most bizarre moments in the serial occurs when Wang visits a white prostitute after losing Guo Yan. As if he were reenacting the unequal power

> relationship between Guo Yan and McCarthy, Wang slams dollar bills on the naked back of the white prostitute and forces her to say "I love you" repeatedly. This sadistic and impotent revenge ... has something to do with race hatred and Chinese masculinity and its symbolic connection with the dollar bill. The scene makes a strong yet disturbing statement about who owns the dollar and power, and where to spend it. Gender, class, and race all collapse into a single assertion of troubled Chinese masculinity. (Liu 1999, 788)

Liu's seminal observation of the "troubled Chinese masculinity" bespeaks the centrality of the male gender in the postsocialist cultural matrix created by Chinese mass media. The mixed background of class and race—as it is noted by Liu in the prostitution sequence—complicates the NBNY articulation of the desiring patriotism.

Wang Qiming's sadism is one important factor Liu picks up in the prostitution sequence. Its sexual connotation is commensurate with the duality of the male desires in NBNY—that is, the desires for both money and sex. As a cultural critic, Liu's treatment of white women—here the white prostitute in particular—as victims sexually exploited by men nevertheless presents only part of the troubled Chinese masculinity.

At first glance, the NBNY producers seem to celebrate another nationalist triumph in this sequence. The fulfillment of Wang Qiming's sexual desire achieves its national aura

of greatness with a postcolonial vengeance projected onto a gendered and raced object—the white prostitute. The political implication of colored men sexually possessing white women could not be better expressed than in Franz Fanon's lines:

> I marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness.
> When my restless hands caress those white breasts,
> they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine. (1968, 63)

To sexually possess a white woman means for colored men to get a genuine hold of white civilization. The ritual of claiming modernity as their own for Third World male subjects could not be accomplished without resorting to the eroticism of white female bodies. As Colette Guillaumin puts it, the natural characteristics of ethnicity, gender, race, or nation inscribe the system of domination on the body of the individual, assigning his/her place as a dominated person (1995). While the colonial power hierarchy leaves its most ingrained trace on dominated bodies, the bleaching of its influence carried out by postcolonial national subjects starts paradoxically with similar strategies, only in an opposite direction. In contrast to previous narrative paradigms in which amorous encounters between Chinese men and Caucasian women usually bring to light the passiveness, impotency, and unrequited desires of Chinese men, the story of Wang

Qiming features how a Chinese man satisfies his sexual desire by possessing a white woman. It is in this sense that Geremie R. Barmé argues in his paper with a sensational title—"To Screw Foreigners Is Patriotic: China's Avant-Garde Nationalists"—that Wang Qiming's action is of a paradigmatic significance and is the most eloquent recent statement (and inversion) of the century-old Chinese-foreign dilemma (1996, 183-4).

However, a close look at the media text tells a more complicated story. The consummate moment of the sequence is undoubtedly the interaction between Wang Qiming and the prostitute in the motel. After a seductive foreplay, the prostitute stops and insists that Wang pay her first. Wang asks her with a wry grin, "So you mean you can do anything if I give you money?" He starts to put money on her naked back and she keeps begging for it. However, he soon gets angry with her, pulling off her underwear and throwing her onto the bed. From this point he assumes a dominant role in their sensual play:

Prostitute: "I said get off me." (A little annoyed)

Wang Qiming: "Really?"

P: "Really."

W: "I pay you!" (Starting to pull out 100-dollar bills)

"Ok, go say you love me! You love me! 'Coz I give you money!"

P: "What do you want me to say?! What do you want me to say?!" (Confused)

W: "Say 'love me'!" (Throwing money over her body)

P: "I love you."

W: "No, say 'love me' like a lover! Very tender, soft…" (Pulling out another 100-dollar bill)

"Again."

P: "I love you." (With a more tender tone)

W: "No. Look at me, look at me. What is this? Money! Say…" (Waving money in his hand)

P: "I love you." (With a really tender tone, and smile on her face)

W: "Yeah, again. I give you money, OK?" (Throwing more money on her body)

"More, soft, like you real' love me, Ok?" (With a satisfied smile)

Although the Chinese man seems to have accomplished the revenge on the West through possessing the white female body, this sequence also implies that this revenge could not be accomplished without the power of money.

One important but often neglected element in Wang's acclaimed conquest of a white woman (Barmé 1996, 183) is its "business" nature. The white woman Wang Qiming sexually possesses is a prostitute who obviously has no feelings for him but just provides

her "service" for money's sake. In this particular sequence the only moment her true emotion is disclosed is when Wang stars to play rough with her. However, she stops acting it out when she gets more and more greenbacks from Wang Qiming. From "get off me" to "I love you", the prostitute undergoes a persona transformation in which she ends up being a self-conscious performer/feigner of emotions. Wang Qiming, on the other hand, is determined from the very beginning to stage such a performance as a director in charge.

Inasmuch as the power of money over emotions is concerned, this mutual performativity betrays its double implications: On the one hand, money does have the power to make people feign emotions; on the other hand, they are just performances short of real substance. Put differently, in the staged performance demonstrating the power of money, what is also delivered is precisely its limitation. The white prostitute, in this sense, is not only a sexual object exploited by Wang Qiming, but also a sexual mirror reflecting the paradoxical power of money. This perplexing sequence to (in)validate the power of money therefore testifies that in NBNY the male sexual desire is by and large conceived by its producers as a surrogate for the monetary desire.

The Curse of Money, the Failed Man, and the Pre-socialist Past

The ambivalence over the power of money as embodied by the prostitution sequence sheds doubtful light on the NBNY producers' advocacy of the desiring patriotism. If, as Lydia Liu comments, the mass-media elites are "the movers and shapers of transnational processes to the extent that they have successfully transformed the potential obstacle (socialist discourse) to global capitalism into an enabling force on the ideological front" (1999, 791-2), wither is the transformation "successful" on a personal level? Whence does this transformation shape the national sentiments of "making money is patriotic" in the media text? And how do these mass-media elites demonstrate their self-reflective agency in this gendered discourse of desiring patriotism? Attempting to answer these questions, this section dissects the mass-media elites' literary sensibility through which they reflect upon their patriotic sentiments defined by male desires in the transition from Maoist socialism to global capitalism.

Accompanying their advocacy of the desiring patriotism is another ethos of the mass-media elites: Money is the curse of life. After Guo Yan divorced Wang Qiming and married McCarthy, out of profound guilt and pity she reveals the sources of McCarthy's clientele to Wang, thus giving Wang a clear edge in his competition with McCarthy in the sweater-manufacturing business. Wang defeats McCarthy in the business and he hires McCarthy to work for him as revenge. At this juncture Guo Yan's sense of guilt and pity

sides with McCarthy. Deeply appalled by what a cold-blooded businessman Wang has become, Guo Yan leaves Wang for good. In his relationship with his daughter Ningning, Wang Qiming is also cursed by money. In his pursuit of wealth Wang neglects the necessary education of and communication with Ningning, who becomes increasingly decadent and disrespectful under the influence of the American materialistic way of life. She ends up being sexually promiscuous and drug addicted. When she asks Wang Qiming to disown her, she blames Wang for caring about only money and nothing of her. At another point, Wang's sweater factory is in trouble because he expands his business too fast and takes too many bank loans. Wang's mistress Ah Chun offers him two options: One is to keep all his workers—most of whom are new immigrants from Mainland just like Wang himself a few years before—and spend all his savings paying the interests generated by the loans; the other is to fire all his workers and file for bankruptcy protection—this way Wang can keep all his money and his factory but all his workers will lose their badly-needed jobs. Tormented by the hard choice between his conscience and his money, Wang nevertheless chooses to fire all his workers and keep his money.

While acclaiming the sentiment of "making money is patriotic" to a certain extent, the NBNY producers simultaneously bring to the forefront the curse of money on contemporary Chinese men through the heartbreaking story of Wang Qiming, who suffers the losses of his marriage, his relationship with his daughter, and his conscience on the

way to pursue money. It is intriguing that the NBNY producers, while fashioning the discourse of the desiring patriotism, simultaneously endeavored to shape the character Wang Qiming—the very embodiment of such patriotism—as a failed man on the social/familial and ethical levels. The staging of such a failed man in a postsocialist TV serial must be understood within a broader context of modern Chinese history. As Eugenia Lean notes, contemporary China is under the influence of a global pattern among non-Western societies of the strategic employment of pre-existing "traditional" forms of virtue and sentiment in their creation of modern societies and identities (2007, 20). In this light, I supplement Lydia Liu's understanding of postsocialism in relation to this serial by proposing that the historical contextualization of NBNY and the tracing of the mass-media elites' literary sensibility should span not only the socialist period but also the more "traditional", pre-socialist period of China.

The mass-media elites' portrayal of Wang immediately conjures up other classic figures of failed men in the century-long history of modern Chinese literature. Among these figures the most relevant to this chapter's discussion is the protagonist of Yu Dafu's *Sinking* (*Chenlun* 1921). A Chinese male student living in Japan to study Western medicine, the protagonist gradually divorces himself from the community of Chinese students by studying in distant N city where he rejects offer of friendship by well-intentioned Japanese students. He finds an excuse to sever his relations with his

elder brother and finally sequesters himself in the hillside park. He finds Japanese people hostile and believes that Japanese girls do not like him because he is Chinese. He relieves his sexual desire by masturbation, voyeurism, and visiting brothels, which severely torment his mentality. The story ends with the protagonist's attempt to throw himself in the sea while painfully lamenting the weakness of his homeland.[14]

Dissecting the male subjectivity in *Sinking* against a backdrop of Chinese national history, Haiyan Lee points out that with the aid of positioning the Chinese protagonist in a supposedly hostile foreign colonial milieu, unrequited love as the code word for failed sociability is the key to understand why the discourse of nationalism is mobilized to articulate a preeminently personal crisis. She adds that with the nation as the hegemonic referent, the sense of frustration from his failure to win love and sympathy from Japanese girls is exteriorized as a consequence of his national identity as a despised Chinaman, rather than that of his personal traits (2007, 250-1). To some extent, *Sinking* and NBNY are both national allegories grounded in male desires. However, while *Sinking* is an appropriation of the Freudian psychoanalytical theory to deliberately associate the unrequited sexual desire—disguised as a romantic quest for love though—with national humiliation, the central desire under scrutiny in NBNY is the monetary desire that is sometimes refashioned as a sexual desire. If *Sinking* still features a comparatively straightforward link between the unrequited male sexual desire—as a symbol of personal

failure—with the national failure, NBNY fashions Wang Qiming as a more insinuating failure, a failure based not on the insatiation of, but on the fulfillment of, his desires.

The protagonist of *Sinking* and Wang Qiming nonetheless share much in common: a Chinese man sojourning in a supposedly hostile foreign country; failure in sociality and familiality; further failure in ethics because of prostitution; and the association of their mental pains generated by these personal failures with the Chinese nation. Modeled on the protagonist of *Sinking*, Wang Qiming's visit to the prostitute and his subsequent mental pains bespeak another dimension of the curse of money that questions the sentiment of "making money is patriotic". The somewhat simple-minded acclaim of "screwing foreigners is patriotic" misses an important message the NBNY producers attempt to convey—that the nationalist "triumph" of a Chinese man possessing a white prostitute is actually not that triumphal on a personal level.

The necessary intervention of money in Wang's fulfillment of sexual desire through prostitution testifies his failure as a man to attract a woman. More importantly, visiting a prostitute brings about guilt and pains that severely torment Wang's mentality. Right after his wild night with the prostitute, Wang Qiming takes a very long shower during which he keeps knocking his head against the wall and restlessly rubs his skin with lotion. After he got out of the bathroom he throws away what appear to be all the clothes he wore when he was with the prostitute. This sequence unmistakably articulates Wang's guilt and

pains resulting from his visit to the prostitute. Applying this hindsight, the brief sensual pleasure the prostitute brings to Wang Qiming is like a prologue that heralds the deep and profound pains that follow. If anything, Wang's visit to the prostitution and its repercussions on his mentality evidence a new level of his personal failure—that he even fails to hold himself together under the curse of money.

All these plots telling of the curse of money seem to cast the NBNY producers' doubt on the desiring patriotism. Instead of uncritically celebrating the national sentiments of "making money is patriotic", the producers seem more inclined to portray Wang Qiming as a failed man with a failed redemption through money. Juxtaposing the patriotic sentiment defined by the monetary desire and the self-reflective agency of the producers as embodied by the curse of money, the narrative of NBNY seems to construct a utopian vision of the world built upon the double-edged power of money. This utopian vision can perhaps only be measured in its failure—in its negation which will retroactively give national means to it. As Frederic Jameson theorizes the failed radicalism in literature and culture, "all the radical positions of the past are flawed, precisely because they failed…What they achieved, however, was something rather different from achieved positivity; they demonstrated, for their own time and culture, the impossibility of imagined Utopia" (1991, 208-9). Put plainly, it is precisely the emergent

impossibility from the triumphalist tone of money as panacea that marks the desiring patriotism with a dark streak of personal failure.

In her theorization of visual representation and identity, Shu-mei Shih calls for attention to the necessity and importance of contextualization in analyses of visualized identification:

> As the particular practice and usage of a medium relies heavily on local and other contexts for its signifying function, the geopolitical, spatial, as well as historical contexts of a given articulation become necessary knowledge to understand, not the infinite but the necessary, elements to different overdeterminations in visual representation. (2007, 11)

In this insight, this chapter searches for possible reasons for the mass-media elites' persistent interest in associating the cultural archetype of failed men with the new patriotic sentiment defined by the male monetary desire with a careful historical contextualization, which revolves around Chinese postsocialism and the male mass-media elites' literary sensibility that speaks to the postsocialist reality, the socialist past, and the cultural memories of pre-socialist China.

First, the mass-media elites, as the middlemen of intellectuals and the market, retain a keen intellectual concern with current social issues. Although they have made up their mind to say "farewell" to the traditional social responsibilities shouldered by intellectuals, their intellectual heritage—as centrally embodied in their literary sensibility in NBNY—does not diminish. The mass-media elites retain their self-reflective sensibility in their cultural articulation despite being beneficiaries of the rapid transformation of China into a postsocialist country—which is epitomized in the cultural economy, the rampant state-sponsored privatization, and the all-society celebration of the profit-seeking *dawan*s. They must feel troubled by the clash between their gained interests and their critical sights of the social illnesses in the transformation. Their doubts on the patriotic sentiments that are constructed by themselves is transposed to the personal failure of Wang Qiming. These felt issues of postsocialist development and social illnesses by the mass-media elites will be more eloquently broached by Chinese netizens through the venue of cyber-literature in ten years, which is the topic of another chapter of this dissertation.

Second, the historical memories of the socialist period still linger in the mass-media elites' cultural representations. The legacies of Maoist class struggles in postsocialist China include not only the overt aversion to the bloodsheds and political persecution, but also the covert obsession with the moral superiority of the working class and the poor.

The ingrained sense of guilt for being rich, as it is the case with the mass-media elites, may prompt them to cast a less triumphal image of Wang Qiming.

Third, the cultural sediments generated from the long history of China still influence the postsocialist negotiations of the Chinese national subjects with both their positionalities within the national power structure and their activities of cultural rememberance. The reprise of the postsocialist national subjects' appropriation of the past must be conducted with the full awareness that on the one hand the conscious retrieval of the past is "fundamentally conditioned by the tumultuous history of the socialist era separating then from now" (Anagnost 1997, 6); on the other hand the retrieval of the past goes far back beyond the socialist era and speaks directly with diversified social memories within the complex web of cultural meanings shaped by both present national positionalities and thousands of years of historical sediments. After the emergence of Neo Confucianism in the *Song* dynasty, its advocacy of "Preserving heavenly reason and eliminating human desires" became one of the most eloquent voices of the bureaucratic/intellectual/mainstream Chinese culture. The time-honored hostility to a complete validation of the fulfillment of human desires in Chinese tradition may also contribute to the portrayal of Wang Qiming—a full-fledged "desiring subject"—as a failed man.

Conclusion

As Sheldon Lu describes, postsocialism is a socioeconomic condition in which capitalist modes and relations of production haven been increasingly implemented in nominally socialist China. It is a cultural logic in accordance with which artists, filmmakers, and writers negotiate the residual socialist past and the emergent capitalist present to concoct new imaginaries of a transitional society (2007, 208). As a representative masterpiece of Mainland Chinese TV serials in the 1990s, NBNY's discourse of the desiring patriotism firmly participates in such a negotiating process. Through the small TV screen, the contradictions and anomalies of the Chinese nation in the global era are vividly represented and reconsidered.

NBNY tells the story of Wang Qiming—an ambitious native of Beijing moving to the United States to realize his "American Dream" that is largely comprised of the male desires for money. Through the TV serial NBNY, the male mass-media elites such as Zheng Xiaolong and Feng Xiaogang fashioned a mode of national sentiments with mass appeal, whose central thread is "Making money is patriotic". The male desire for money functions in NBNY as the lynchpin that connects the male body, the nation, and the postsocialist reality and imagination. Wang Qiming' fate comes full circle at the end of the serial. He gambles away all his fortune and becomes poor again. If making money is patriotic, the loss of all his money ironically hollows out the meanings of Wang as the

embodiment of such desiring patriotism. The ultimate failure of Wang Qiming embodies the keen concerns and worries of the mass-media elites about the postsocialist conditions in China.

Notes:

[1] See, for example, Barmé (1996).

[2] The ideas of "cultural economy" and "cultural broker" are inspired by Braester (2005).

[3] See Cao (1991).

[4] http://yule.sohu.com/20081124/n260814254.shtml, accessed August 15, 2009. The currency exchange rate of 1993 is used here.

[5] This term is used in http://tvshow.smgbb.cn/dianshi/zixun/qifenzhiyi/2009-06-22/14662.html, accessed August 16, 2009.

[6] http://baike.baidu.com/view/68947.htm, accessed August 16, 2009.

[7] According to Braester (2005), Chinese real estate tycoons like Zhang Xin and Pan Shiyi are examples of businessmen making use of culture.

[8] The description of the cultural function of these mass-media elites as cultural brokers is inspired by Braester (2005).

[9] The parentheses and italicizations in this citation are Lydia Liu's.

[10] The translated title of the TV serial in Liu's article is "Beijing Sojourners in New York". This chapter adopts the translation "A Native of Beijing in New York" from its international DVD version.

[11] The translation is mine.

[12] Here Wang refers to the situation after he manually finished his first big order of clothing-making.

[13] The translation is mine.

[14] The summary of the story is inspired by Denton (1992).

CHAPTER IV

ORIENTALISM, GLOBAL CONSUMERISM, AND THE CHINESE LEITMOTIF FILM IN THE 1990S

The publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978 marks a critical moment in the development of modern Western humanities and social sciences. According to Said, the cultural difference between "the Orient" and "the Occident" is a discursive structure made possible by the Western capitalist world rather than a basic truth of the history of human civilization. The Orient is rendered as a necessary Other of the Eurocentric Self of the West. Providing a new critical space and path to self-cognizance and reflexivity, *Orientalism* ranks as one of the most significant contributions to Western sociocultural critical theories (Dai 2002, x). Saidian Orientalism brings to the fore the constant efforts of European culture to represent and reconfigure the Oriental Other in relation to the Occidental Self, and directs critical attention to the imbalanced power relations inherent in such practices. Orientalism is necessary to "understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively

during the post-Enlightenment period". As Said says, "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (1978, 3).

Said's discussion pertains to Western representations of the East, particularly to the Muslim "orient" with which his study was primarily concerned (Schein 2002, 387). However, "his critics and supporters alike have extended his model far beyond the confines of that part of the world" (Chen 2002, 1) and Saidian Orientalism has inspired the productive explorations of the manifold representations of the "self-other" nexus in different local contexts. Critics have pointed out that the Saidian paradigm excludes the "West" as a potential object of essentialist representation, stopping short at the conclusion that the "East" is mute and is therefore inherently incapable of othering (Schein 2002, 387-88). Ever since the publication of *Orientalism*, many derivative studies inspired by it have identified in non-Western cultural locations creative "othering" practices that do not necessarily cohere with the Saidian paradigm.

This chapter examines such a creative Orientalist cultural practice by the Chinese state in postsocialist China. The central concern of the chapter is how the state—as one of the national subjects whose positionality within the national power structure was fundamentally complicated by postsocialism—negotiated the Orientalist structures of feeling in the Leitmotif Film in the 1990s. The dominance of consumerism in Chinese

society—an overwhelming consequence caused by the postsocialist conditions—prompted the state to deploy consumerist venues such as cinema spectacle for a mass-appealing project of nationalism in the 1990s. The Orientalist structures of feeling in the Leitmotif Film were an important vehicle of the Chinese state to conjure up mass-appealing nationalist ethos through cinema narratives and thus become the key spot for the investigation of the state's agency in the postsocialist articulation of nationalism.

This chapter is divided into three parts. First, I offer an interpretation of the historical context of the 1990s Leitmotif Film from the perspective of global consumerism in relation to the novel positionality of the Chinese state. The postsocialist Mainland film industry is shaped by the demands of a globalized market economy, the state's novel needs to reaffirm its legitimacy as both the political ruler and the champion of the new economic order on an everyday basis, and the desires of Chinese people who have integrated into the global capitalist system and become the largest group of consumers in today's world. The state is confronted with dual pressures: one is from the long tradition and still ongoing need of holding on to film as an important part of the ideological apparatuses of the Communist party-state; the other comes out of the unstoppable trend of commercialization of Chinese film in which the market and consumers persistently accumulate their sway over the production, circulation, and

reception of Chinese film works. The Leitmotif Film with overt nationalist claims came out as a response of the state to such double pressures.

The second part explores the state's appropriation of the Orientalist structures of feeling in an influential leitmotif movie *Grief Over the Yellow River* (*Huanghe Juelian* 黄河绝恋, 1999, hereafter *HHJL*). In *HHJL* the invocation of China's anti-Japanese history in the twentieth-century as the main story setting and the maneuvering of an "internalized" Western character as a main participatory element of story telling fashion a mode of national sentiments that romantic love (*aiqing* 爱情), familial affection (*qinqing* 亲情), and clan loyalty (*zongzu zhi qing* 宗族之情) give birth to the ultimate passion of dying for China. I argue that the Chinese state, through the instrument of the director, reworked Orientalism to foreground the transformation of the Western character into yet another embodiment of this mode of national sentiments. This reworked Orientalist mode of national sentiments bespeaks the Chinese state's endeavor to govern the people through cinematic narratives.

Finally, a comparison between the Orientalist trends of Chinese film making in the 1980s and early 1990s, and that in *HHJL*, is followed by a contextual study of Chinese audience responses to *HHJL*. Its vast popularity in Mainland and general unpopularity beyond China proper prove that *HHJL*—and by extension, the Leitmotif Film in the 1990s—encodes and projects an indigenous audience susceptible to its sentimental power.

I argue, through the case of *HHJL*, that the film media's efficacy of enunciating the state's nationalist agenda is increasingly integrated with its ability to mobilize the indigenous audience/consumers through the configurations of Orientalist structures of feeling. It is in this sense that my study of the 1990s Leitmotif Film provides a point of convergence between nationalism and consumerism in postsocialist China.

Global Consumerism, Cultural Imagination, and the Postsocialist Film Industry

Consumerism, in a narrow sense of economics, refers to the belief that the free choice of consumers should dictate the economic structure of a society. In a broader sense of cultural studies, consumerism is a way of thinking that tends to perceive and define all the social relationships through the central social behavior of commodity consumption. In the era of globalization, consumerism features changes in both the "objective" and the "subjective" dimensions of consumption. On one hand, "signs rather than just economic/materialist forces are dominant" (Clammer 1997, 9) in the consumptive objects. Signs—words, images, sounds—and the encoded meanings they carry become prominent commodities contemporary people consume. On the other hand, the subjectivity of consumers—their minds, desires, and sentiments—is liable, in a self-willing fashion, to the influence of their own consumptive activities. Film is a major venue for encoding the changing experience of money, time, and space in the age of global consumerism. The

"image-making" business of film simultaneously endows it with the most robust capacity to handle the global theme of space-time changes (Harvey 1989, 308), and makes it a primary cultural commodity for consumption. According to Arjun Appadurai, "[t]he image, the imagined, the imaginary—these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: the imagination as a social practice…the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility" (1996, 31). The same "form of work" appears in his elaboration on consumption:

> [C]onsumption has become the principal work of late industrial society…Consumption has now become a serious form of work, however, if by *work*[1] we mean the disciplined (skilled and semiskilled) production of the means of consumer subsistence. The heart of this work is the social discipline of the imagination, the discipline of learning to link fantasy and nostalgia to the desire for new bundles of commodities. (82)

Put plainly, from a perspective of global consumerism, a large portion of the critical global processes of cultural imagination are now embodied in people's consumption of filmic images—through which their subjectivity is shaped.

Global consumerism has greatly changed the Mainland film industry since the mid-1980s. Since film was introduced to China in the 1900s, it has provided Chinese people with vast new possibilities to experience modern life. Filmography, film criticism, and various histories regarding film production and consumption constitute an indispensible part of pre-1949 Chinese modernity. Some studies on Chinese film of this era have been published.[2] In the socialist period (1949-1978) film was first and foremost a tool for political propaganda justifying the Communist regime through, among other things, glorifying the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the twentieth-century revolutionary history. The film industry was under direct control of the state and was an important part of the "ideological state apparatuses" (Althusser 1998). Film's political function largely eclipsed its other values, such as the entertaining value and the commercial value. The free flow of capital, technology and cultural signs that globalization produces started to alter the development trajectory of the Mainland film industry by transforming Mainland Chinese people into consumers of filmic images. When postsocialism became the main theme of the social changes of China, the economic reform and China's integration with the global capitalist economy also promoted the

reform of the film industry per se. The reform of Chinese film industry since the mid-1980s is clearly reflected in aspects such as film financing, film subjects (*zhuti* 主题), and film distribution (Yu 2008, 90-126). Underlying these changes are the self-adjusting cultural politics of the Chinese state in accordance with its new position—as both the political ruler and the champion of the new economic order—in the postsocialist national power structure.

Wang Hui reflects upon the formation of the new political and economic orders of postsocialist Mainland China in his seminal 2003 book. He disagrees with the clear-cut explanation of the events of 1989 as the final victory of the Western social system and insists on reading them as a violent, in both figurative and literal senses, adjustment of the Party-state to the new historical conditions of globalization. To him 1989 stands as an abrupt turn—but certainly not an end—of China's reform era and must be understood within a larger temporal and conceptual frame. In a case study he analyzes the implementation of the price reform around 1989 as follows:

> The price reform that had been called to a halt in the second half of 1988 just happened to begin to be fully implemented in September of 1989, three months after June Fourth, with the adjustments concentrated in the areas of price, exchange, and interest rates....But we should still ask how it came to pass that two market reforms

> that had failed to be implemented in the late 1980s just happened to have implemented in the post-1989 environment? The answer is that the violence of 1989 served to check the social upheaval brought about by this process, and the new pricing system finally took shape. In other words, the new market system and the pricing mechanisms that lay at hits heart were the result of political interference or arrangement, and the relationship of exchange between political power and the market could not help becoming an integral part of the economic system. (65-6)

Based on such an observation, he argues that the creation of today's market society was the result of "state interference and violence" (65). In a similar vein, Xudong Zhang continues his observation of the state's interferences with the market in the 1990s:

> When the Chinese state engineered a new round of economic liberation in 1992, the state itself was by far the biggest shareholder, stakeholder, and employer in an already diversified, mixed economy. The state controlled key infrastructures such as energy, transportation, telecommunication, finance, and foreign trade; state enterprises still represented close to 50 percent of the gross national product (GNP), and there were more than 100 million people on the state's payroll. (2008, 106)

It is clear that to a large extent the state power has integrated itself with the economic rationalism of globalization in postsocialist China, making the state both the political ruler and the champion of the new economic order.

However, the reorganization of the postsocialist political and economic orders also challenged the legitimacy of—as much as it established—this new position of the state. As Wang Hui notes:

> [T]he 1989 social movement originated out of general protest against the unequal devolution of political and economic power, out of dissatisfaction of local and Beijing-based interest groups with the central government's policies of adjustment, out of internal splits within the state, and out of the conflictual relations between the state apparatus and various social groups. (2003, 63)

> The upheaval of 1989 revealed the signs of social disintegration, and, with this as backdrop, the state took stability as the premise of its own legitimacy. Because the state apparatus of violence came to be regarded the sole force for maintaining stability, it eventually obscured the crisis of state legitimacy that had gradually come into being since the onset of the reforms. The basic historical fact (or paradox) was that while governmental economic policy had brought about social upheaval, the

> need for stability following the upheaval became the justification for state power to expand into society. (62)

The 1989 social upheaval is a central embodiment of the tensions between the state and the masses in the processes of deepening the state-initiated economic reform. The state's effort of calling for "stability"—such as the famous slogan of "Stability Overwhelms Everything Else" (稳定压倒一切)—after the violent suppression of the upheaval cannot disguise the fact that although it de facto contained the mass discontent with the state policies and smoothened the process of the economic reform, the state's suppression automatically put an end to the moral legitimacy of its ruling. A relevant ramification is that the violence in 1989 has perpetually driven the masses and various social groups away from the political sphere. To a large extent, the post-1989 period witnesses the political disintegration of the society from the state. Allowing the masses more access to the state power being out of the question, the state must figure out new means to reintegrate the society with itself and reaffirm its legitimacy as the political ruler/economic champion.

The promotion of nationalism in cultural imagination is an important maneuver of the state to culturally reintegrate the society with itself. Borrowing from Ernest Gellner's (1983) insights of nation and nationalism, Xudong Zhang furnishes a persuasive

interpretation of the historical inevitability of the thriving of nationalism in postsocialist China. The premise of his interpretation is that postsocialist nationalism is a mass-appealing, popular-culture-oriented process, which I agree with on principle. Zhang notes:

> In short, the nineteenth-century European industrialization and social mobility described by Ernest Gellner resonated in China at the end of the twentieth century. In the global system of capitalism, postrevolutionary China may find its situation similar to Gellner's imagined Ruritania. Surrounded by the modern, dynamic Empire of Megalomania, the local, agrarian, and dialect speaking Ruritanians not only find the will to modernize, that is, to join the "universal high culture" of industrialization, but they also discover the will to become a nation. (2008, 108)

He places two important qualifications onto this parallel though. First, he argues that the assimilation of Geller's Ruritania into Megalomania is not a valid option for postsocialist China. Contributing to this conclusion are factors such as China having the longest centralized state tradition in documented history, the uncompromising pride associated with its regional cultural and political hegemony, and the recent memory of its semi-colonization by the Western powers. Second, the kind of "universal high culture"

that mobilizes postsocialist China towards modernization and nation-building is quite different from that which once mobilized Ruritania in the nineteenth-century Europe. As Zhang notes, the cultural norms that mobilize postsocialist China are consumerist, mundane and pleasure centered, and generated from "post-Fordist production and postmodernism" (ibid).

The thriving of postsocialist nationalism at both the state and popular levels is indispensable with the dominant milieu of the consumer culture. On one hand, "[a]s modern transportation and communication reach the majority of the Chinese population, a modern, secular notion of the nation becomes possible for the first time in a land where it has historically been the political state, and not the 'natural' socioeconomic relations of a community, that gives form to the nation"; on the other hand, the progressive integration of the state power with the economic rationalism of globalization, "combined with a modernizing socialist bureaucracy, allowed the state to be an integral, indeed omnipresent part of the new image of the nation" (106). In short, the postsocialist reorganization of the political and economic orders simultaneously established and challenged the legitimacy of the state's new position as both the political ruler and the champion of the new economic order. It also produces the consumption-driven Chinese masses ready to embrace a secular, everyday-life based notion of the nation. Nationalism therefore becomes the new cultural "glue" for the state to reintegrate itself with the

society and mass consumers. It is in this sense that the appeal of the state's nationalist imagination to the Chinese mass consumers—or the lack thereof—is crucial to the state's adaptability to its new positionality within the national power structure.

The state's nationalist agenda is saliently embodied in its governing policies of the film industry. Generally speaking, the Mainland film industry since the mid-1980s is still under tight control of the state. Although in this era many profit-driven entertainment movies were produced by Chinese filmmakers backed by non-state and overseas capital, the trend toward entertainment film was "a simple matter of commerce" and "no political freedom was granted (by the state) to endanger the Party control" in the reform of the film industry (Yu 2008, 100). An equally powerful trend is the state's promotion of the Leitmotif Film to emphasize official ideologies and shape social ethos. The literal meaning of "leitmotif", or *zhuxuanlü* (主旋律) in Chinese, is main melody in music. In the late 1980s this term started to appear in state policies regarding the film industry. At the official National Filmmakers' Conference in 1987, "highlighting the leitmotif" (*tuchu zhuxuanlü* 突出主旋律) became a new official guideline to regulate the film industry. Under this guideline, entertainment film productions could be granted only when the mainstay of filmmaking remained a political tool of propaganda and education. A special fund to subsidize the Leitmotif Film was also set up by the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television (MRFT), the then state bureau administering the film industry (101).

The "main melody" of promoting contemporary Chinese film as "a political tool of propaganda and education" was further endorsed by the state in the 1990s. At the National Propaganda Conference held in 1994, Chinese President Jiang Zeming reiterated that the Party guideline on propaganda is to "promote model heroes in contemporary society through patriotism, collectivism, and other philosophies that are constructive to reform: modernization, social progress, and ethnic coherence". Based on the aforementioned special fund of MRFT, a national film foundation was established by the central government for the exclusive purpose of supporting Leitmotif Film production. According to Hongmei Yu, the Leitmotif Film usually includes: 1) films focusing on the revolutionary history (of Chinese people) since 1840, with some made in quasi-documentary style; 2) biographical films of heroic characters, especially communist revolutionary models; 3) films representing the achievement of contemporary political and economic reform (106-7). Clearly, nationalism is the central theme and imperative to the postsocialist, state-sponsored Leitmotif Film.

HHJL: The Orientalist Mode of National Sentiments

Orientalism provides a productive entry point for the postsocialist Leitmotif Film to conjure up nationalist narratives appealing to the consumption-driven Chinese masses. In his analysis of the contemporary triumph of the prototypical Orientalism—the

West-centered cultural paradigm persistently producing the various images of the Oriental Other—in non-Western locations, Edward Said pinpointed consumerism in the Orient—that is, the Arab and Muslim world in his study—as the major factor contributing to this triumph:

> The Arab and Islamic world as a whole is hooked into the Western market system. No one needs to be reminded that oil, the region's greatest resource, has been totally absorbed into the United States economy....Arab oil revenues, to say nothing of marketing, research, and industry management, are based in the United States. This has effectively made the oil-rich Arabs into huge customers of American exports: this is as true of states in the Persian Gulf as it is of Libya, Iraq, and Algeria—radical states all. My point is that the relationship is a one-sided one, with the United States a selective customer of a very few products (oil and cheap manpower, mainly), the Arabs highly diversified consumers of a vast range of United States products, material and ideological.
>
> This has many consequences. There is a vast standardization of taste in the region, symbolized not only by transistors, blue jeans, and Coca-Cola but also by cultural images of the Orient supplied by American mass media and consumed unthinkingly by the mass television audience. The paradox of an Arab regarding

> himself as an "Arab" of the sort put out by Hollywood is but the simplest result of what I am referring to. Another result is that the Western market economy and its consumer orientation have produced (and are producing at an accelerating rate) a class of educated people whose intellectual formation is directed to satisfying market needs....So if all told there is an intellectual acquiescence in the images and doctrines of Orientalism, there is also a very powerful reinforcement of this in economic, political, and social exchange: the modern Orient, in short, participates in its own Orientalizing. (1978, 324-5)

Using as an example the imbalanced consumptive liaisons between the Arab world and the United States until the 1970s, Said made the seminal conclusion that the modern Orient participates in its own Orientalizing. I agree with Said's conclusion on principle, but in a different light. If in Said's theorization the Arab world until the 1970s was largely the "unthinking" consumer of American material and cultural commodities, the "Orient" in a broader sense—i.e. not only the Muslim Orient but the vast regions of Central Asia, South Asia, and East Asia—has a long history of not being the mute object of the Western gaze and the passive receiver/consumer of the Western ideological and cultural products, but establishing its own national identities through actively appropriating time-honored Orientalist epistemes.

The discrepancy between the Saidian paradigm and the local histories of the vast Orient especially looms large in the contemporary, post-Fordist cultural environment. In critiquing Said's book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Ernest Gellner points out that although Said's arguments of Orientalism aim against Western imperialism, they fundamentally neglect that "the industrial/agrarian and Western/Other distinctions cut across each other, and obscure each other's outline". The current economic prosperity along the Pacific Rim may well call for a critical refashioning of the power structure of the Saidian paradigm, since one may be able to argue that industrialism—one of the crucial criterion with which Said developed his binary categories of the Orientalist and Orientalized entities—might be better run in a Confucian-collective spirit in the non-Western societies (1993, 3-4).[3] Geller's critique is corroborated by Aihwa Ong's study of "petty Orientalism". She argues that Overseas Chinese from Hong Kong and Southeast Asia rework in "the transnational context of corporate and media circulation" Anglo-European academic concepts—the grand Orientalist discourses—into confident pronouncements about Oriental labor, skills, deference, and mystery. In contrast to Said's assumption that the object of Orientalism cannot respond, she suggests that Asian subjects selectively participate in Orientalist formulations as they negotiate shifting discursive terrains in the world economy (1993, 746). These studies have brought to the fore the significant agencies of the indigenous states and educated elites in contemporary

cross-cultural imagination and communication between the Orient and the Occident. The globalized, information-based modern economy has created non-Western, indigenous societies with readily-made consumption-driven masses, in which the state and the elite class of the Orient exert their agencies through appropriating various Orientalist epistemes and establish "Oriental" identities that, in many occasions, appeal to the indigenous masses.

The coincidence of the publishing of *Orientalism* and the Party-state's initiation of the Mainland economic reform in 1978 seems to tell of the intricate entanglements of the state power and Orientalist epistemes. As mentioned previously, nationalism is the new cultural "glue" for the state to reintegrate itself with the society and mass consumers and thus is the central theme of the state-sponsored Leitmotif Film in the 1990s. This section will examine the articulation of *mingzu qinggan* in an influential leitmotif movie *Grief Over the Yellow River* (1999, hereafter *HHJL*) to elucidate how the state appropriates the Orientalist structures of feeling in cinema narratives to facilitate its nationalist agenda.

HHJL tells the story of Owen, a grounded American pilot during the Second World War who learns about the noble spirit of the Chinese people and the greatness of the Chinese culture when he is rescued by the Communist-led Eighth Route Army after an emergency landing near the Great Wall. Owen joins a detachment of the Eighth Route Army to march to the Communist base across the Yellow River. On the way to the base

Owen falls in love with a girl soldier An Jie (安洁), whose lingering memory of being raped by the Japanese makes her a determined fighter. The detachment is disarmed and jailed by the militia force of the An clan, whose members have a long feud with the clan of the detachment leader Heizi (黑子). The leader of the militia force is An Jie's father, who eventually releases the detachment and tries to help them ferry across the River. Both Heizi and An Jie die from a Japanese ambush by the River but Owen survives it. Half a century later, Owen returns to the Yellow River to pay his respects to the native people who rescued him.

HHJL was directed by Feng Xiaoning (冯小宁), a filmmaker who graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 1982 along with Fifth Generation directors such as Zhang Yimo and Chen Kaige. Different from his classmates, Feng is known for his persistent exploration of the themes of patriotism and nationalism in film making. Besides *HHJL*, he was handpicked by the state film bureau to direct a series of influential leitmotif movies such as *Red River Valley* (*Hong He Gu* 红河谷, 1996) and *Purple Sun* (*Zi Ri* 紫日, 2000), which made him one of the most distinguished Leitmotif Film directors in the 1990s and after. After its release in 1999, *HHJL* won the three major film awards in Mainland China: the Golden Rooster Award (*jinji jiang* 金鸡奖), the Hundred Flowers Award (*baihua jiang* 百花奖), and the Palace Column Award (*huabiao jiang* 华表奖).

The Golden Rooster Award is awarded by the China Film Association (*Zhongguo*

Dianyingjia Xiehui 中国电影家协会)—a professional association of Mainland film practitioners; the Hundred Flowers Award by the magazine *Popular Cinema* (*Dazhong Dianying* 大众电影)—a film magazine having a vast audience in China; the Palace Column Award by the state film bureau. In the current one-party totalitarian system, the professional and popular film awards in Mainland China cannot shed off the immense influence of official imperatives. The vast endorsement *HHJL* received from the layers of the professional, the popular, and the state testifies to its significance in the developmental history of the 1990s Chinese film industry and therefore makes it a good venue for the investigation of the state's agenda for the Leitmotif Film.

The reason that *HHJL* received the state's endorsement is partly explained in a talk given by Zhao Shi (赵实)—Vice Chief of the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT)[4]—in 2005. Zhao claims that patriotism is a good tradition of film of China and leads it to "share the fate of the nation and apportion the breathing air with the people" (*Yu minzu gong mingyun, yu renmin tong huxi* 与民族共命运，与人民同呼吸):

> Surveying the hundred-year history of Chinese film, it embodied prominent patriotic themes at every critical historical moment of the national journey. Examples are movies such as *Along the Sungari River* (*Songhuajiang Shang* 松花江上, 1947), *Lin Zexu* (林则徐, 1959), *Guerrillas on the Plain* (*Pingyuan Youji Dui* 平原游击队,

> 1955), *Zhang Ga, a Boy Soldier* (*Xiaobing Zhang Ga* 小兵张嘎, 1963), *Grief Over the Yellow River*, *My 1919* (*Wo de 1919* 我的 1919, 1999), and *The Moon* (*Yilun Mingyue* 一轮明月, 2005). Patriotism in Chinese film—which has enriched and developed itself from the vicissitudes of history and the fate of the nation, and has extended (its influence) into contemporary film making—is always the symbol of national spirit and the spiritual momentum for the progress of the time.[5]

In Zhao's grandiose rendition of the correlation between patriotism and Chinese film is a time-honored concern of the Chinese Party-state that comes to grips with the anti-colonial history of China—especially the twentieth-century anti-Japanese history—for its nationalist agenda. All but one movie[6] mentioned in Zhao's talk narrate stories of Chinese people fighting the Japanese invasion and reflect upon the critical issues of national subjectivity under this single most overwhelming crisis confronting China in the first half of the twentieth century. Zhao's talk embodies the contemporary phase of this concern that keenly addresses the liaisons between the film media and national subjectivity. Highlights have been given to film's capacity to fashion—or fabricate—national subjectivity of contemporary Chinese people under new historical conditions.

In this process of shaping contemporary national subjectivity, patriotism is the symbol of the "national spirit"—or in my terminology, the central thread of the state-sponsored mode of national sentiments in the leitmotif movies such as *HHJL*. Based on the vast scholarship on human subjectivity, sentiments and feelings, and the nation and nationalism, Haiyan Lee's study of modern Chinese literature and history fosters the intriguing claim that the modern subject is first and foremost a sentimental subject, and that the modern nation is first and foremost a community of sympathy (2007, 7). Citing Jean-Luc Nancy, Richard Sennett, and Naoki Sakai, she argues that nationalist ideology represents the modern nation as a transparent community united in its affections and its commitment to abstract, universal values. Its members identify with one another primordially, regardless of each person's particular position in the national power structure (226). Within the context of modern China, this vision of the nation as a community of sympathy is subject to the power maneuverings of multiple national subjects, of which the state is the most powerful and skillful one. As Naoki Sakai points out, the principle of national sympathy demands that the circuit of feeling be coterminous with the boundaries of the nation as defined by the state, that one extends sympathy to one's fellow countrymen and antipathy to those designated as enemies of the nation, and one maintains a practical, interactive, and empathetic relation with one's fellow countrymen, and an epistemic, objectifying, and antipathetic relation with outsiders (1997,

142).[7] In the first half of the twentieth century the overt national crisis of the Japanese invasion provided occasion to harden the national boundaries between China and Japan, the process of which was heavily participated in by the two statist political groups—Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party and Mao Zedong's Communist Party. At the price of huge warfare and millions of Chinese and Japanese lives, this historical hardening process solidified the object of the originally abstract national sympathy and transformed the general love for China into specified loyalties to either of the two groups. In other words, overt historical crises such as the Japanese invasion gave the state naturalized power to speak for the nation and transformed the abstract, universal national sympathy into specified, hardened loyalties to the state-represented nation—or, the nation-state.

Film of China after 1949 refurbished and reinvented these critical historical moments in cinema spectacles. The Communist Party-state constantly resorted to the cinematic representation of the anti-Japanese history to instigate mass allegiance to its various causes. Patriotism—the ideology to sacrifice individual welfare, happiness, and lives for specified causes of the state in the name of the survival and glory of the nation—comes right out of such maneuverings of the state power. As Jing Tsu puts it, antiforeignism has always served as a sure catalyst in consolidating national communities and professions of national sovereignty occur most passionately with injuries done by

perceived outsiders (2005, 2-3). *HHJL*'s well-crafted narrative setting of the anti-Japanese history powerfully foregrounds the patriotic theme that the Communist Party-state anxiously promotes under current circumstances. That is, its shaky position of the political ruler/economic champion in postsocialist China entails the Communist Party-state's even greater need of patriotism to demand loyalties from the masses. In this light, *HHJL*'s patriotic theme is not only a recast of historical wounds but also a starting point for reading contemporary Chinese society.

However, the sole emphasis of the state's schema on patriotism—consolidating its central status in "speaking for" the nation under contemporary conditions—is not enough to tease out the complicated relationship between postsocialism, the state, and the consumption-driven masses as exemplified by *HHJL*. Patriotism is one of the most prominent traditions of the politically sensitive Mainland film from 1949 through the early 1980s.[8] How does *HHJL*—the representative work of the Leitmotif Film in the late 1990s—stand out in this time-honored tradition of Mainland film? Upon answering this question the state's appropriation of Orientalist epistemes comes under my scrutinization. Although patriotism is the central thread of the state-sponsored mode of national sentiments in *HHJL*, it cannot be successfully delivered without the state's reworking of Orientalism. I argue that the Chinese state reworked Orientalism to transform the Western character Owen into but another embodiment of the mode of national sentiments in which

romantic love (*aiqing* 爱情), familial affection (*qinqing* 亲情), and clan loyalty (*zongzu zhi qing* 宗族之情) give birth to the ultimate passion of dying for China. It is the state's appropriation of Orientalist epistemes that made a mass-appealing project of *HHJL*'s mode of national sentiments. The following discussion of *HHJL* will explore the state's agency in this appropriatory process from three interrelated perspectives: the construction of the "internalized" Western character, the gender politics of China-West interactions in the articulation of national sentiments, and the significant trope of "dying for China".

Abdallah Laroui understands Western Orientalism as follows:

> Orientalism is Western when it takes the West not as an event, but as an idea preordained in all eternity, complete and final from the beginning. And if it starts from this point, it has to construct its subject-matter as an explicitly, totally different item, reduced to the form it had at its birth. The two assumptions are clearly related; if the West is a fulfilled promise, the non-West has to be unfulfilled since unannounced. If the first is predetermined the second is necessarily accidental. In both cases no evolutionary process is ever conceived. Positive changes, when detected in the West, are predicated on preexistent seeds, and so are defects, flaws, wants in the non-West. One is a welcome miracle, which can change and remain the

> same, while the other, particularly Islam, is an unwelcome accident, not permitted to change without betraying itself. (1997)

This characterization of Western Orientalism brings to light the imbalanced relationship between the Western "gazer" and the non-Western "gazed" on an epistemological level. The subjectivity of the Western gazer is a preordained eternity—a wellspring of wisdom from an external, perfect realm that sheds light on everything of this imperfect, non-Western world. However, *in HHJL* the incarnation of the Western gazer—American pilot Owen—is displaced from his advantageous epistemological position as an external referee. Owen's epistemological adventure—that is, his "knowing" of China—is "internalized" into the cinema narrative and actually becomes a key element of the state's imagination of national sentiments.

In the narrative of *HHJL* Owen is positioned as a truthful witness to the anti-Japanese history of the Chinese people. The movie starts and ends with Owen's trip back to China in the 1990s and his experience with the Eighth Route Army detachment in the Anti-Japanese War is told in a flashback style. His "witness-ness" is highlighted in a formal introduction issued by the publisher of the film's VCDs:

> .....a detachment of the Eighth Route Army saved an American pilot and escorted him to the Communist base...The pilot witnessed (*mudu* 目睹) the unyielding national spirit of the Chinese people in front of the cruel invader and deeply felt the great bosom (*xionghuai* 胸怀) of the Chinese people and the Eighth Route Army...

The literal meaning of *mudu* in Chinese is "eye-witness". This function of Owen as a truthful witness is upheld by two narrative strategies. The first is that the cinema narrative is interspersed with English voice-overs produced by Paul Kersey—the American actor playing Owen--himself. Since Paul Kersey's native voice gives a "formal" sense of truth to what he states, the voice-overs are deployed to expose the "real thoughts" of the Western character—or put in a more accurate way, what the Chinese state likes the Western character to think. The second strategy is that the different parts of the flashback-styled narrative are threaded by several photos featuring Chinese people Owen met in the War. As Roland Barthes argues, compared to "motion pictures", the genius of photography—"still pictures"—is the specificity of the subject of the image, that the subject "really was there" (1981). The semiotic authenticity of photography also contributes to the formal truth of Owen's story.

The creation of this American pilot character in *HHJL* not only adds to the formal truth of its anti-Japanese story, but also participates heavily in its discourse of national

sentiments. Owen is projected as a genuine lover of Wartime Chinese people. As an elderly man sitting on a Chinese flight when the movie begins, Owen reflects upon his experience in Wartime China:

> Everyone has special times in their life; one of my greatest memories is a few short days I spent in China more than 50 years ago. I'll never forget the land ravaged by the War, or the valiant Chinese people who faced the challenges of their incredibly hard lives with unwavering courage and spirit, the cave dwellings and the ancient temples built on the foundation of silt clay, and the magnificent Yellow River…

Not only is Owen a lover of Wartime Chinese people in a general sense, his love is specified in his engagement with various female and male Chinese characters in his journey through China. In the movie the Chinese state plays with the gender politics of Orientalism and bends Orientalist paradigms to its own ends. Orientalism brings to the fore the Western cultural hegemony usually defined by a dominating, exploitative gaze. For instance, in his work on Egypt, Timothy Mitchell writes that the West is characterized since the nineteenth century by an "ordering up of the world itself as an endless exhibition". Everything seemed to be set up as though it were the model or the picture of something, arranged before an observing subject into a system of signification,

declaring itself to be a mere object, a mere "signifier" of something further (2002, 496 & 500).

Not surprisingly, the dominating Western gaze and its object are recast in cross-cultural communication as an imbalanced gender relationship. Non-Western females are perceived as vulnerable objects under a dominating Western male gaze. As Wendy Larson argues in discussing the gender implication of Western fascination with China's tradition of foot binding, the interest in this practice makes clear that "Westerners both eroticize and exoticize Chinese culture. Their obsessive interest in the prurient aspects of China serves to set them apart as [male] masters looking down on a vulnerable [female] subject, as well as to situate Chinese culture as the object of their gaze and the cause of their pleasure" (2002, 185). The first encounter between Owen and the Chinese girl soldier An Jie is staged in a classic Orientalist style. After his emergency landing Owen is attacked by a Japanese fighter jet and faints on the ground. He wakes up and finds himself on the Great Wall. He is greeted by a beautiful Chinese girl speaking fluent English. Then the voice-over cuts in:

> It was a miracle to meet an English-speaking girl in such a small village. So I was rescued by a group of Chinese soldiers in the Eighth Route Army…An Jie was a medical student in Peking. She resolved to join the Eighth Route Army while the

> war was breaking out. Because of her medical training and English-speaking skills, she was assigned to accompany me. It seemed that God had sent me an angel…

When An Jie treats Owen's wounds, he starts calling her "Angel". He keeps calling her that and she eventually gets used to—even starts to like—her new name. On their way back to the Communist base, Owen and An Jie fall in love with each other. After their release by the militia force of the An clan, they hid in an ancient temple while Heizi went out for help. At this moment Paul Kersey's passionate voice comes in, "Within the walls of the temple the war seemed faraway; I was lost in the mysterious ambience of the oriental culture. The birds and the other greens were our companions. Angle and I had our own little paradise…" Accompanying the voice-over are visual sequences of their romantic life in the ancient temple. These narratives embody many elements of typical Orientalist clichés: that a Western male gets lost in a mysterious non-Western land; that he finds his God has prepared everything in his favor, including having an indigenous girl ready as the company of his exotic—mostly also erotic—journey; and that the indigenous girl can speak—in other cases she can be taught to speak—his language and is willing to be named and loved by him. What seems to be restaged at this juncture is the Orientalist paradigm of an indigenous girl being named and penetrated by her Western

master—one of the bluntest heralding non-Western people being "enlightened", mentally and physically, by the preordained, unique Western culture.

Although to a certain extent An Jie does function as an erotic object of Owen's exploitative gaze, the Chinese state bestows on the female character more culturally intervening power than a mere vulnerable object under the dominating Western male gaze would have. This intervening power is first embodied in the female body's challenge to the erotic Western gaze. On their way to the Communist base the detachment takes a break by a brook where people can bath. When An Jie is bathing alone at the brook edge, Owen walks close to sneak a peek at her. In contrast to the paradigmatic female body in an Orientalist peeping game—an indigenous female nude body full of sexual temptation, An Jie's body is mostly covered by clothes and features two unusual "adornments": bruises on her leg—the only exposed part of her body besides her face and hands, and a grenade hanging in front of her chest. The bruises tell of the physical sufferings the Chinese female has been through while the grenade reveals a more symbolic danger that her life could come to an end at any moment. The erotic pleasure Owen hopes for from his voyeuristic peek is abruptly intercepted by An Jie's body. He starts to look intimidated and scared even before An Jie notices his existence. At this moment An Jie is alerted by Heizi who finds out Owen's peeking from the distance and gives a warning yell. An Jie is so angry that she starts to stare back at Owen.

Under her fierce gaze Owen loses his composure, recoils from the brook edge, and ends up slumping on the ground. In this sequence Owen's erotic gaze is challenged by the Chinese female body, which successfully disrupts the erotic pleasure of the Western gazer, bringing out shocking visual and psychic impacts he cannot bear. In this sense, An Jie's body becomes a weapon that the gazed Chinese female—the supposed "vulnerable object"—uses to overwhelm the gazing Western male—the supposed "master". The erotic object of the Western gaze notwithstanding, An Jie manages to transfer her prescribed sexual vulnerability back to the Western gazer through her "body weapon".

The challenge of the Chinese female body to the Western male gaze tells only part of the story in *HHJL*'s portrayal of the romantic love between An Jie and Owen. An Jie's intervening power as an atypical Orientalist object is also manifested in that her love works well on Owen as a catalyst for political conversion. That love is never a purely individual passion, but is always mixed with a sense of political duty to "convert" the Western other into one of "our own". During their stay in the secluded ancient temple, for instance, their dates are hardly distinguishable from political lectures. Sitting close to each other, An Jie teaches Owen how to say and write in Chinese "Flying my plane to fight the Japanese" and "I am a friend of the Chinese people". Owen's eagerness in learning is part of his courtship in which he nevertheless voluntarily surrenders himself to his Chinese lover's political agenda. In the Chinese state's imagination this

pedagogical process is necessary for a "right date" between China and the West, in which the former subjugates the latter—emotionally and politically—in the name of love.

Thirdly, An Jie's intervening power on Owen's subject-matter is fully embodied in her voluntary sacrifice of her romantic love and her very life for China. When they are detained by the militia force of the An clan, Owen intensely argues with An Jie on whether they should surrender to the Japanese in exchange for their lives. Owen insists that they should value their lives but An Jie says, "We would rather lose our lives than our dignity as soldiers". In an intimate atmosphere at the ancient temple An Jie finally opens herself up to Owen. When Owen asks why she does not value her life and wears the grenade all the time, An Jie says, "I am a soldier and I am also a woman…When I have to make a choice between death and imprisonment I have to choose death because I know exactly what kind of demons the Japs are". Then a flashback cuts in and tells An Jie's experience in Peking where she got raped by Japanese soldiers. Terribly sorry for what has happened to An Jie, Owen gently comforts her while the voice-over narrates, "I finally understood this dear Chinese girl standing in front of me. The Japanese had forced her and her countrymen to live under terrible conditions. The Chinese would rather die fighting the Japanese than lose their dignity and live." The secret of the grenade lays bare the significance of raped female bodies in the statist imagination of national sentiments. An Jie's rape bespeaks the loss of Chinese people's "dignity" and thus puts in danger the

greatness of the nation. The only acceptable *minzu qinggan* for An Jie, it seems to the Chinese state, is to die for China so that her utter sacrifice of individuality—love, happiness, and life—may redeem the threat that her rape has posed to the greatness of the Chinese nation. An Jie's voluntary wearing of the grenade—a literal weapon and a figurative symbol of war—embodies her commitment to such *qinggan*.

Right before they leave the ancient temple for a ferry by the Yellow River, Owen asks An Jie to quit the army and go the United States with him. Owen argues that they have both served their military terms and from then on they deserve the right to pursue their own happiness. Although she is deeply moved, An Jie firmly declines Owen's invitation and says, "My countrymen are still fighting....Military service term? When others put a sword on your neck, you do not have any right". Here contrasted are two means of conceiving the relationship between individual life and national duty. Owen insists that the restrictions national duty puts on individual life are limited and conditional. As long as he has served his term, his duty towards his nation is fulfilled and he has the right to pursue personal happiness. An Jie nevertheless believes that the nation rightfully demands unconditional sacrifice of its people. If China is in the middle of a war, her duty is to fight and be ready to die for China. In other words, in such conditions she has no right to love but a duty to fight and die.

This *minzu qinggan* that An Jie has exemplified—to voluntarily relinquish one's romantic love in order to die for China—totally wins over Owen and transforms him into a soldier willing to fight and die for the Communist-led anti-Japanese cause. Owen does not get upset after his de facto proposal is declined by An Jie. Instead, he walks towards her and gently takes off her grenade, saying "I will be around to protect you". He does not throw the grenade away but keeps it with his own body. In the ambush by the Yellow River, the Japanese troops hold Heizi's daughter Huahua (花花) hostage, asking for the surrender of the Chinese soldiers and Owen. Owen volunteers to go to the Japanese side in exchange for Huahua. When surrounded by the Japanese soldiers, he threatens to detonate the grenade and successfully gets Huahua back. That Owen puts his life on the line to save Huahua declares his departure from his old self and his becoming of one of "our own", who, according to the statist imagination, can sacrifice his life for China without hesitance. The eventual transformation of Owen powerfully testifies the prodigy of An Jie's intervening power that the state endeavors to bring out.

In sum, *HHJL* reworked the Orientlist paradigm of the relationship between Western males and indigenous females to foreground the culturally intervening power of the Chinese female An Jie and the national sentiments she represents. In the sentimental interplay between Owen and An Jie, she manages to challenge his erotic gazing pleasure, instill into him her political agenda, and eventually transform him into a determined

soldier ready to die for the Communist-led anti-Japanese cause. The national sentiments An Jie represents—to voluntarily sacrifice one's romantic love in order to die for China—are critical in Owen's political conversion into a Communist soldier.

It is intriguing to examine one more dimension in the state's imagination of Owen as the internalized Western character. The romantic encounter between Owen and An Jie is only part of the story that tells of Owen's fascination with Wartime Chinese people. His China complex also comes from his experience with various Chinese male characters. In *HHJL* there are three major Chinese male characters: Heizi, An Jie's father, and a subordinate of An's father named Sanpao (三炮). Not only an issue between the Western male and the non-Western female, the imbalanced gender relationship of Orientalism is also embodied in the interactions between the Western male and the non-Western male in which the former often renders the latter as a feminized other. Male Sexuality is a point of departure in order to look at the Chinese version of this issue within a global context. Jackie Chen's (成龙) "emasculation" in Hollywood is a case in point. In classic Hong Kong movies of the 1980s Jackie Chen is usually portrayed both as a dare-devil fighter and as a humorous man winning ladies' love. However, after starting his career in Hollywood in the 1990s Chen's filmic characters in American productions have been largely stripped of male sexual appeal. It seems that in Hollywood movies his charisma lies only in "his uncanny capacity to withstand pain and his relentless tenacity in

defeating his evil opponent" (Choi 2005, 208). Certainly involved in this transformation is the long-time Orientalist bias of Hollywood film that stereotypes Asian men as sexually-unappealing as compared to "masculine" Western men.

Interestingly, in *HHJL* the Chinese state does not defy the Orientalist episteme on Chinese males' sexual inferiority as many thought it would. Instead, the Chinese state strategically deprives the Chinese male characters of their sexual appeals to set off a Chinese form of masculinity that is grounded not in sexuality, but in familial affection, clan loyalty, and the passion to die for the nation. Contrasted to Owen's sexuality-driven body, the Chinese male bodies in representation are prescriptively rid of their sexual appeals. The detachment leader Heizi is portrayed as a father caring much for Huahua and as a widower deeply mourning his wife who was killed by the Japanese. Neither of these two identities has sexual potentials in the story. Similarly, An Jie's father is also a widower whose sentimental drives are exclusively embodied in his paternal affection for An Jie and his sorrow for losing his wife in a clan fight. As Hongmei Yu suggests, the widower identity of both Heizi and An Jie's father indicates a suspension of their male sexuality (2008, 246). If the male sexuality of these two characters is suspended, Sanpao is physically deprived of his male potency because of a wound from a fight with Heizi's clan.

The weakening of the three characters' sexual appeal nevertheless highlights their non-sexual affective power. In the statist imagination, the asexualized male bodies connect family, clan, and the nation through their perceived losses and sufferings of their beloved people. These losses and sufferings endanger the male sentiments for families and clans, driving the Chinese males to die for the nation. On their way to the Communist base Owen tries to strike a conversation with Heizi by complimenting the red undergarment (*hong dudou* 红肚兜) Heizi wears. However, Heizi gets upset when Owen asks about where he bought the undergarment. Owen finds the answer for his confusion about Heizi's reaction when Huahua tells him that her mother died and the red undergarment originally belonged to her. At this moment the camera moves back and provides a medium close shot of saddened Heizi with his machinegun. With a flashback of the Japanese troops killing Chinese people, a voice-over cuts in to tell Heizi's family tragedy:

> I learned later that his hometown had been attacked by the Japanese three years earlier [to] test the effectiveness of the newly-invented gas bombs. More than a hundred villagers were captured by force and locked in a temple. Among them were Huahua's mother and brother. Shortly after Heizi found his wife's body, he removed her red undergarment and carried it with him as he rejoined the Eighth Route Army.

This sequence indicates that the loss of his wife and son—the endangerment of Heizi's familial affection—fuels his determination to fight and die for China. In order to protect Owen and An Jie, Heizi eventually fights until death by the Yellow River.

In a similar vein, the paternal love of An Jie's father trivializes his other concerns such as the clan feud, the collaboration with the Japanese, and his own life. When the An clan attempts to execute Heizi as revenge, An Jie rushes into the execution court and threatens to kill herself if her father orders the execution. The father is surprised, then amazed by An Jie's behavior. He orders the release of all the detainees and says with pride, "Only my daughter can play this trick". Another telling sequence takes place when Heizi goes to the father for help with An Jie and Owen staying in the ancient temple. Heizi tells the father about An Jie's rape and entreats him to fight the Japanese troops. At this juncture a medium shot comes in featuring the father gazing at a photo album in dim light. Then the camera gives a close shot of two old photos of him holding An Jie when she was still a little girl. Finally a medium close shot displays the father's face. Tears in his eyes, the father seems to have made a decision. The following narrative tells that the father gets killed in a failed attempt to send An Jie, Heizi, and Owen across the Yellow River through his collaborator within the Japanese troops. These sequences and narratives work towards shaping the character as a caring father who would sacrifice

anything for his daughter. Behind the father's story of self-sacrifice lies the logic that the sufferings of An Jie—the endangerment of the father's familiar affection towards his beloved daughter—makes possible his passion to die for China.

Compared to Heizi and An Jie's father, Sanpao is a more morally ambiguous figure. He is a member of the An clan and works as the intermediator between the clan and the Japanese army. He is portrayed as a corrupt, cowardly collaborator for the majority of the movie. However, what is unquestionable is his personal loyalty to An Jie's father, and by extension, to the An clan. When the militia force first detains the detachment, An Jie's father asks for Sanpao's opinion on dealing with the detainees. Sanpao answers without hesitation, "My lord, your daughter is family (*qinren* 亲人), foreigners is outsiders (*wairen* 外人), and Heizi is the enemy (*chouren* 仇人). The foreigner is not worth all the lives of the clan. As for Heizi, he is the long-time enemy of our clan and must be killed". This answer manifests Sanpao's loyalty to the An clan. Whether turning in Owen to the Japanese or taking revenge on Heizi, his morally questionable proposals come out of his genuine concerns for the An clan. At the final climax of the movie—the Japanese ambush by the Yellow River, An Jie's father is trapped and killed by the Japanese troops who have known of his smuggling plan in advance. Sanpao is jailed in a hut where the detachment and An Jie's father are supposed to meet, deeply terrified by the brutality of the Japanese troops. However, a brief flashback of the father's last gaze on Sanpao comes

in at this moment, suggesting the clan leader's will to fight the Japanese and protect the detachment. Sanpao winds up burning the hut to alert the detachment of the ambush and being buried alive by the Japanese. The endangerment of his loyalty to the An clan—the Japanese murder of An Jie's father —empowers Sanpao to alert the detachment at the cost of his life. The endangerment of Sanpao's clan loyalty becomes the key in transforming a cowardly collaborator into a martyr for the cause of national salvation.

The death of the three male characters by the Yellow River comprises one of the strongest beats of the national sentiments in *HHJL*. However, the male sentiments intervene with the internalized Western character differently from the female ones represented by An Jie. Compared to An Jie who takes the initiative to transform Owen and frequently puts him under her gaze, the three male characters intervene through being viewed by the Western character rather than viewing. As Owen recalls of his first impression of Heizi, Heizi is "a dark-faced fellow of few words". The represented communication between Owen and Heizi is never as rigorous as that between Owen and An Jie; the encounter between Owen and An Jie's father is also quite brief; throughout the movie there is no exchange of words between Owen and Sanpao at all. The Chinese male characters' lack of initiative in viewing largely shifts the task back onto Owen. In this sense they more readily fall in the category of "traditional" Orientalist objects than An Jie.

The Chinese male characters nevertheless loom large in preparing Owen to die for the Chinese nation. Although the viewing initiative between the Chinese male characters and Owen by and large falls back onto the Western man, the male sentiments intervene with Owen in a more intangible way. If An Jie's intervening power work on Owen through detailed conversations, moves, and gestures, its male counterpart relies on music, a form whose sentimental effects go beyond the descriptive ability of words and images. Soon after Owen and Heizi's squabble over the red undergarment, Heizi walks away and starts playing some sad folk music through a leaf whistle in his mouth. The most flamboyant still shots of the movie—presumably as the gaze of Owen—are used at this point to portray, first in a medium shot and then in a long shot, Heizi sitting alone among trees while playing the music. Owen shows great interest in the leaf-whistle music and soon becomes a master of it. He plays it at different critical moments in his life: his romantic stay in the ancient temple, An Jie's confession of her rape, and the commemoration by the Yellow River of his lost comrades in the 1990s. Although Heizi never conveys verbally to Owen his passions for family and the Chinese nation, Owen feels them and is transformed by them through the mediation of music. Premising that music is the sound of heart and can make communicable sentimentalities of different people, the Chinese state suggests that despite the lack of direct communication Owen still inherits the passion of dying for China from Heizi, and by extension from all the

male Chinese characters. However intangible it is, the lasting intervening power of the male Chinese sentiments on Owen is brought to the fore by the repetitive music theme in the cinema narrative.

The intangibility of the male characters' intervening power by no means implies its inferiority to its female counterpart. Instead, the different strategies of intervention attest to the versatility of the Chinese state's appropriation of Orientalist epistemes. In the case of the female sentiments, the ultimate passion to die for China necessitates the endangerment of An Jie's romantic love. The romantic, sexually appealing female body must go through a rite of passage—the rape by the Japanese in *HHJL*—to bring about its national agency. As for the male sentiments, the state fashions an *a priori* link between the male body and the nation. The asexualized male body ensures that the endangerment of the male sentiments for family and clan suffices it to generate the death passion of Chinese men. Either way, the internalized Western character is subjugated to the Chinese passion to die for the nation—admiring it, cherishing it, and willing to be assimilated by it. Through these appropriatory strategies the Chinese state successfully transformed Owen into but another embodiment of the mode of national sentiments in which romantic love, familial affection, and clan loyalty give birth to the ultimate passion of dying for China. The relegation of the Western character to a position of "but one of our own" generates an imagined superiority of the Chinese national culture.

In *HHJL* the state pitches the individual sentiments against a significant intruder of the nation-state—the Japanese who endangered them in various ways—to bring about a situation in which the needs of the nation-state are firmly grounded in those gendered sentiments. On one hand, the Japanese in the story are the perpetrators who bring marks of national shame to An Jie's body, the contamination of which gives rise to her willful sacrifice of romantic love for the sake o the Communist-led anti-Japanese cause; on the other hand, the violent murder of Chinese compatriots causes the Chinese men's losses of beloved people, which suffices to mobilize the Chinese men into dying for this cause. The overt national enemy sutures the fulfillment of the individual sentiments—or the lack thereof—and the needs of the nation-state, producing the patriotic mode of national sentiments in which romantic love, familial affection, and clan loyalty give birth to the ultimate passion of dying for the Communist-led cause of saving China from the Japanese invasion. This patriotic mode of national sentiments is constructed by the state to offer to the masses an alternative Orientalist discourse of East-West cultural communication. Harking back to Abdallah Laroui's rendition of Western Orientalism, a typical Western Orientalist discourse has to construct the Western subject-matter as an *a priori* existence. Accordingly, in terms of "changes", the West is a welcome miracle that can change and remain the same, while the Oriental other is an unwelcome accident that is not permitted to change without betraying itself. The state largely reversed the power

relationship in the representation of national sentiments in *HHJL*. The Western character Owen is internalized into the world of the Wartime Chinese people. His subject-matter—that is, his experience and memories with these people—is to validate the *a priori* existence of this world, instead of that of himself. As the VCD introduction of the movie puts it, throughout the movie Owen the Pilot is intended to "witness" and "feel" the national sentiments of the Chinese people and the Eighth Route Army when they are confronted with the cruel Japanese invaders. Owen's changes indicate his betrayal of his old self and embody the overwhelming intervening power of the Chinese national sentiments. Through such a reversed representation, the Chinese state fashions this mode of national sentiments as an *a priori* existence that bears dominant power of cultural conversion in East-West communication.

This Orientalist reworking of the patriotic mode of national sentiments generates a productive reading of the postsocialist Chinese society. As *HHJL* demonstrates, the Party-state invites the contemporary Chinese masses to project an "outward and backward" gaze in cultural imagination through vehicles such as the Leitmotif Film. The patriotic mode of national sentiments lures the contemporary Chinese masses to review the Wartime history with heartwarming nostalgia and to retrospect on the external communication of China with the West regardless of the Party-state's internal faultlines. This "outward and backward" gaze creates the habitual consumption of alternative

Orientalist spectacles which also normalizes the Communist Party-state's status of speaking for the Chinese nation. In this sense the less heavy-handed, emotionally appealing mode of national sentiments in *HHJL* provides a new possibility for the postsocialist state to govern its increasingly diversified masses.

"Zhang Yimo Mode", Indigenous Consumers, and the Convergence of Nationalism and Consumerism

As recently as the early 1980s, Chinese film barely constituted an academic subject in the West (Zhang 2002, 43). Things have changed since and in the last thirty years Chinese film study has become a vibrant field in Western academia. More studies are devoted to the development of Chinese film after the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC). "New Chinese Cinema"—works of the Fifth Generation directors like Zhang Yimo and Chen Kaige, their associates, and other prominent directors since 1980 (Zhang 2002, 24)—in particular has received immense attention from Western critics.[9]

Marked by global consumerism, New Chinese Cinema embodies Orientalist aesthetics especially appealing to the Western audiences. Said rightly argues that consumerism in the Orient has made major contributions to the triumph of Orientalism (1978, 324-5). A revamped version of his argument seems in order in the case of New Chinese Cinema. That is, consumerism in the Occident has promoted Orientalist

discourses in New Chinese Cinema. A prominent example supporting this renovated argument is the trend of "autoethnography film" in New Chinese Cinema. The autoethnographic films of Zhang Yimo and Chen Kaige were closely examined by Rey Chow in her trend-setting study *Primitive Passions* (1995). She detects in Zhang and Chen's cinematic reinvention of ethnic Chinese culture a voluntary confirmation of China's status as an object-of-gaze in cross-cultural representation. "Woman", for example, is a prominent object of such an object-of-gaze. As Chow puts it, "[i]n *Red Sorghum*, *Judou*, and *Raise the Red Lantern*, women occupy the traditional spaces of frustrated, dissatisfied, or tortured young wife, widow, mother, adulteress, and concubine, who despite their strength of character remain always trapped in a hopeless situation" (1995, 44).[10] In these directors' willing exhibitionism, China's primitive passions are displayed in seductive surfaces to the Western audiences. Thus, by means of looking at oneself (China) being looked at by others (the West), New Chinese Cinema seems to ethnographize China and becomes, in the end, an "autoethnography".[11]

In Zhang Yimo's authethnographic works such as *Red Sorghum* (1987), *Judou* (1990), and *Raise the Red Lantern* (1992), the so-called "Zhang Yimo Model" gives special prominence to "young women with numerous pseudo-traditional Chinese rituals" (Lu 1999, 13). Accompanying those young women as fetish objects ready for the Western audiences' consumption are always sexually impotent Chinese men who cannot satisfy or

control their female partners' sexual desires. Despite harsh criticisms of his ideological inclination and aesthetic taste in these works both within and outside China, these works nevertheless brought Zhang Yimo many internationally-renowned film awards and made him the biggest winner in the global trend of consuming ethnographized Chinese culture.

Yingjin Zhang examined the deterministic influence of global consumerism and the Western audiences on contemporary Chinese autoethnographic film in the analysis of the cultural politics of international film festivals. According to Zhang, contemporary Chinese autoethnographic film is "not so much a result of the automatic or voluntary consent from Chinese directors as that of transnational economic coercion or unequal power relations". "Such a situation", as he suggests, "seems to have implicated contemporary Chinese cinema in a prefixed cycle of transnational commodity production and consumption: favorable reviews at international film festivals lead to production of more 'ethnographic' films, and the wide distribution of such films is translated into their availability for classroom use and therefore influences the agenda of film studies, which in turn reinforces the status of these films as a dominant genre" (2002, 34-35). To a large extent the popularity of contemporary Chinese autoethnographic film in the West results from the nature of the Western audiences' habitual consumption of things from China. On one hand, the Western audiences are eager to find differences in China and Chinese culture; on the other these differences must be exotic, erotic, harmless and

entertaining—in a nutshell, they must be able to be effortlessly incorporated into the self-same Western cultural hegemony to which the Western audiences are accustomed. To a significant extent contemporary Chinese autoethnographic film satisfied the Western audiences' needs by ethnographizing Chinese culture and packaging it as a museum object ready for exhibition.

The autoethnographic trend of Chinese film in the 1980s and early 1990s marks a sharp contrast to the Leitmotif Film in the 1990s, which certainly encodes and projects an indigenous audience rather than Western audiences. In *HHJL* the Chinese culture is no longer an object-of-gaze for the Western audiences. Instead, it forms its own hegemony that significantly shapes and transforms its Western other—e.g. Owen the Pilot. *HHJL*'s patriotic mode of national sentiments with an alternative Orientalist style wins over the favor of domestic film critics. Many writings have been published in esteemed domestic film magazines like *Contemporary Cinema* (*Dangdai dianying* 当代电影) to pay homage to the movie and to Feng Xiaoning's accomplishments in the Leitmotif Film.[12] On a more plebeian ground, ordinary consumers have found the Internet as a convenient platform for their voices. In the *HHJL* forum at an influential Chinese film website—douban.com (*douban wang* 豆瓣网), User "Light Ferryboat past Tens of Thousands of Mountains (*Qing zhou yi guo wan chong shan* 轻舟已过万重山)" posted on March 4, 2008, claiming that *HHJL* is "one of the best films in China". All the users

who replied to this post supported this claim and offered their own praises of this movie. User "Tangtang (汤汤)" commented that this movie is absolutely a good movie (*juedui hao pian* 绝对好片) and one of his/her favorites. User "aka" even asserted that this movie is the pinnacle of domestic film products (*guochanpian de dianfeng* 国产片的巅峰).[13] The popularity of *HHJL* to ordinary consumers, it seems to me, results by and large from the "tear-jerking" effect of this mode of national sentiments on the consumers.

Chinese consumers have been so moved by the movie that many of them cannot hold back their tears. In addition, the sentimental drive of *HHJL* is so persistent that even after five or ten years the "tear-jerking" effect still works on many re-watchers of this movie. Many users of douban.com offered their sentimental reactions to watching *HHJL*. User "Fantasia~" wrote on March 10, 2007 about his/her personal experience of watching it for a second time:[14] "To my surprise *HHJL* was shown in the outdoor theater at my school last night. I stood in the tender rain of March until all the people were gone. I concede that I am an eye-shallow (*yan qian* 眼浅)[15] person. Although it was my second time [watching the movie], my tears dropped again—luckily it was dark already". Following Fantasia~'s story, on April 09, 2008 User "Foggy Flower April (*yanhua siyue* 烟花四月)" added on the same webpage:

> Very good movie. Ten years. It has been ten years [since *HHJL*'s release]. Tears still came down my face when I re-watched it. I like its music. I like the beautiful smile of Ning Jing (宁静).[16] I like the gentle feeling of the foreigner when he calls her "Angle". I like the national pride in it. When moved to tears I always feel heartened…

Another "tear experience" was provided by User "Mao Xiaomao (毛小懋)" in a post dated April 26, 2008, in which the user recounted that his/her tears even went down his/her neck in the re-watching.[17] All the cited experiences of the Chinese Internet users here attest to the powerful tear-jerking effect of this state-sponsored mode of national sentiments on the domestic audience.

Compared to its general popularity in China, *HHJL*'s reception in the United States is a different story. A sensational title—Heart of China—was chosen for the movie's US-exported edition[18] and it was submitted by the Chinese government to compete for the Best Foreign Picture of the 72nd Academy Awards. The title "Heart of China" embodies the Chinese state's anxiety to promote its own version of "China" when it is faced with the "crisis" of contemporary Chinese film that "China" is largely what has been represented by the "non-official" autoethnographic film of the Fifth Generation and the unrulier works of the Sixth Generation in the eyes of Western consumers in general

and American consumers in particular. Deeply upset by the massive Western applauses given to those non-official film works, the Chinese state has determined to win over the acclaim of the Western consumers with its own products. The submission of *HHJL* to the Academy Awards, the single most representative voice of mainstream Western film consumers, epitomizes the effort of the Chinese state in this regard. However, the fact that *HHJL* did not even get nominated for the Best Foreign Picture of the 72nd Academy Awards indicates its failure to gain the general acceptance of the Western consumers.[19]

It is at this juncture that I attempt to broach the Mainland Chinese audience's habitual patterns of film consumption in the postsocialist society. It seems that the Mainland Chinese audience is more attracted to the very sentimental mode in which individual desires and passions integrate with the imperatives of the historical nation than to the specific ideological contents of the mode. The popularity of Hollywood blockbuster movies in contemporary China manifests this point. Hollywood blockbuster movies became favored cultural commodities in a globalized China in the 1990s. Thanks to globalization, Sheldon Lu notes, "[r]esidents of third-world countries can gain easy access to the cultural products of the first world such as film, TV programs, popular music, and fashion". Lu then pinpoints two examples of the popularity of recent Hollywood blockbuster movies in China. One is *Titanic* in 1998, which was widely seen and hailed in Mainland China and "even won the praise of former Chinese president

Jiang Zemin". The other is the Disney anime *Mulan* that was released in China in 1999, which, "[a]s a Western hi-tech rendition of a centuries-old Chinese folktale", "has now entered the film market of the original home country and further proves the invincibility of transnational media" (2007, 115-6). Compared to their predecessors whose selection of foreign movies were mostly limited to the politically didactic products of the (ex-)Communist countries, Chinese consumers of the 1990s enjoyed Hollywood blockbuster movies made possible by high technologies and investments of millions of dollars. Faced with the overt propaganda of American statist ideologies in those introduced blockbusters such as *Forrest Gump* (1995)[20] and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), the Chinese consumers were nevertheless intoxicated by their articulated national sentiments in which the American characters' individual, quotidian desires and passions are seamlessly amalgamated into the imperatives of the American state.

Forrest Gump is a simple man with limited intellectual capacity but good intentions. He struggles through childhood with his best and only friend Jenny. Although he can only think of his childhood sweetheart Jenny, Forrest joins the army for service in Vietnam, helps initiate the diplomatic relationships with China through table tennis, creates a famous shrimp fishing fleet, inspires people to jog, and meets the president several times. As for *Saving Private Ryan*, in the Allied invasion of Normandy on 6 June 1944, two brothers of the Ryan family are killed in action to secure a beachhead. Plus the

fact that earlier in New Guinea a third brother is killed in action, their mother is to receive all three of the grave telegrams on the same day. The United States Army Chief of Staff, George C. Marshall, is given an opportunity to alleviate some of her grief when he learns of a fourth brother, Private James Ryan, and decides to send out 8 men led by Captain Miller to find him and bring him back home to his mother. In the cause of saving Private Ryan, Captain Miller and his soldiers trade their own lives for the safety of the private. These two movies strike the beat of the "American leitmotif" in that they highlight ordinary American people's emotions challenged and motivated by the critical imperatives of their nation in the twentieth-century history. Through the rhetorical mechanism of melodrama, the protagonists' individual desires and passions smoothly converge with the historical imperatives of America. Although they did not necessarily agree with those American statist ideologies *per se*, the Chinese film consumers undoubtedly enjoyed and endorsed the articulated mode of national sentiments that has brought them intense emotional fluctuation and resonance along with the characters on screen.

As Haiyan Lee argues, the fundamental predicament of modernity is how to affirm the value and dignity of ordinary life without abandoning a sense of the heroic (2007, 301). Although history does not have a definite solution to it, people are always looking for solutions. Film promises to confer on its consumers, at least in the process of

consumption, an experience of binding up the two. *HHJL* advocates romantic love, familiar affection, and clan loyalty as the foundation of Chinese national identities. By situating stories of these individual sentiments within the anti-Japanese war and thus integrating the quotidian enjoyment with a heroic promise of defending the nation-state, *HHJL* promotes a mode of national sentiments in which the endangerment of individual sentiments gives rise to the ultimate passion of dying for China. Juxtaposing the Chinese consumers' fascinations of "American leitmotif" movies such as *Forrest Gump* and *Saving Private Ryan* and the Chinese leitmotif movies such as *HHJL*, it seems that what the Chinese film consumers need is an emotional experience of combined quotidian enjoyment and heroic promise indifferent to specific ideological preferences.

Besides ideological indifference, Chinese film consumers do care about the alterity to Western Orientalism. In the heyday of classic European Orientalism, French and British "gentlemen" relished the opportunity to see their superiority from the mute "others" of the Near and Middle East. With a more "modern" American Orientalism, popular Hollywood film allows the non-Western other to speak while largely confining the utterance of the other to a more vivid proof of the Western superiority. Taking a 2008 big hit *Australia* as an example, the aristocratic Lady Sarah Ashley travels in 1939 from Great Britain to meet her husband in northern Australia. The husband's drover comes to the city of Darwin to bring Sarah to their farm; however, when they reach Faraway

Downs Farm, they find her husband murdered and their farm in crisis. Sarah befriends Nullah, who tells her that the administrator Neil Fletcher is stealing her cattle; has killed her husband; and is working for the cattle baron King Carney. Sarah, the drover, and Nullah ride together to take the cattle to supply the army and win a tender in times of war. But the ambitious Fletcher has other intentions and uses Nullah to press Sarah. When Japan attacks the Northern Territory, the newly formed family of Sarah, the drover, and Nullah scattered but finally managed to reunite. Nullah the "creamy" boy, whose father is white and mother aboriginal, is undoubtedly the most favorable character for the Western consumers. In his rusty English and through his innocent aboriginal perspective, the "white" nobility of Lady Ashley (Nicole Kidman) and the drover (Hugh Jackman) is persuasively brought to the fore. Going through a moving layer of familial affection created by the well-orchestrated plots, what is left is a delicate dictation of the white superiority. That the little Nullah addresses Lady Ashley "Mrs. Boss" with whole-hearted love and respect epitomizes the ingrained Western Orientalism of popular Hollywood film, whose symbolic Western superiority aptly inspires favorable emotions of the Western consumers.

The entrenched Western Orientalism of popular Hollywood film has in turn shaped the preferences of Western consumers who, in consuming non-Western film products, still expect to find certain affirmations of Western superiority one way or another. The

symbolic Western superiority on the consumer end is largely embodied in the process of "looking at" non-Western film products. Although the direct acclaim of the Western superiority is hard to find in non-Western products *per se*, the Western consumers nevertheless enjoy the craved position of superiority by being the "looker" in the imbalanced power relations between the looker and the "being-looked-at". Even if there are certain forms of the "non-Western" self, to the Western consumers the "non-Western" self must be put in the position of "being-looked-at", or represented as an ethnographized object ready for their appreciation/consumption. This is certainly exemplified by the autoethnographic trend of contemporary Chinese film. In discussing the decisive impact of the Western consumerism on contemporary Chinese film, Yingjin Zhang notes that "not only film directors but film critics as well have yielded to market demand in general and international film festivals in particular". A Chinese film "most likely to satisfy Western expectation (or aesthetic taste)" should include formulaic elements of China as follows:

> primitive landscape and its sheer visual beauty (including savage rivers, mountains, forests, desserts); repressive sexuality and its eruption in transgressive moments of eroticism (read "heroism"); gender performance and sexual exhibition (including homosexuality, transvestism, adultery, incest) as seen in erotic operas, rituals, or

> other types of rural custom; and a mythical or cyclical time in which the protagonist's fate is predestined (2002, 32).

If anything, the Western consumers believe that the non-Westerners can, and must, only represent "them-selves" in a passive, ethnographic way. The popularity of the autoethnographic film in the West derives precisely from that it displays to the Westerners "China", and "China" only. The metaphor of a tinted-glass box helps to explain the nuances of the Western consumers' attitude towards non-Western film products. The non-Western films in the West are like aboriginal cultural exhibitions in a Western museum. The Western patrons pay to get in to see all the exhibited aboriginal objects that are kept in tinted-glass boxes. The Western patrons try very hard to see, and see only, every detail of the exhibited objects. If such an attempt ever fails, for example, they by chance seeing their own reflected images on the tinted-glass, they get upset and think that the exhibition is not worth their money. The underlying logic is that they do not come to the exhibition to see themselves, or more exactly, they think that the tinted-glass box of an exhibited aboriginal object is not good enough for the display of their images.

HHJL challenges such a symbolic Western superiority and offers an alterity to the ingrained Western Orientalist traditions through the maneuverings of the state. It

provides solid grounds for the indigenous audience to imagine cross-cultural communication as they like. The reverential voice of the American pilot paying homage to the Chinese people and the Chinese culture facilitates the indigenous audience's wild imagination to build a new Chinese cultural hegemony while overthrowing the old Western one. The Chinese film consumers seem really fascinated by *HHJL*'s reworked Orientalist discourse promoting a symbolic Chinese superiority.

The indifference to ideological contents and the fascination with the alterity to Western Orientalism constitute the essences of the habitual consumptive patterns of the contemporary Mainland Chinese audience, which also gave birth to the situation that the film media's efficacy of enunciating the state's nationalist agenda is increasingly integrated with its ability to mobilize the indigenous audience through the appropriations of Orientalist structures of feeling. With such habitual patterns of film consumption, the Leitmotif film must package the patriotic theme with a layer of "sugarcoating"—the Orientalist epistemes reworked in a way that can instigate mass fever among the Chinese audience. The contemporary Chinese audience is susceptible to various ways of emotional appropriation. The case of *HHJL* illuminates that the state's adjustments of self-fashioning in the Leitmotif Film can be effective to Chinese film consumers and that the state's voice is still powerful and sound in the polyphonic articulation of postsocialist Chinese nationalism. It is in this sense that my study of the 1990s Leitmotif Film

provides a point of convergence between nationalism and consumerism in postsocialist China.

Conclusion

The postsocialist Mainland film industry is increasingly shaped by the demands of market economy and by the desires of Chinese people who have integrated into the global capitalist system and become the largest group of consumers in today's world. The Chinese state undergoes double pressures from the ideological imperatives of utilizing the film media for its political ends and the overwhelming trends of film commercialization in globalization. The Leitmotif Film with overt nationalist claims came out as a response of the state to such double pressures. The case of *HHJL* evidences that the Mainland Chinese audience is fascinated by its reworked Orientalist mode of national sentiments in which romantic love, familial affection, and clan loyalty give birth to the ultimate passion of dying for China.

An appropriate understanding of the relationship between self and other in the dominant consumer culture—a trend permeating "the world system of nation-states" (Duara 1995, 8) in postmodern nation-states in general and in postsocialist China in particular—requires more than an essentialized and universalist interpretation of Orientalism. The state-sponsored mode of national sentiments in the 1990s Chinese

Leitmotif Film bespeaks that the construction of a non-Western self both disrupts the Western/Other paradigm and affirms the Western influence in the making of indigenous non-Western identities. In this process the relationship between self and other is historically and culturally situated, and there is no universal set of principles from which derives, in a deterministic fashion, a singular type of this relationship. On the contrary, the relationship between self and other is always embodied in dynamic politics of cultural difference. Orientalism operates through the dynamic politics of cultural difference in which the contrasts and comparisons between self and other are subject to the enunciators' maneuverings and positionality within the national power structure. It is in this sense that the 1990s Chinese Leitmotif Film furnishes a good venue to look into the specifics of the state as a national subject speaking for the nation in postsocialist China.

Notes:

[1] Italicized by the author.

[2] For example, *Cinema and urban culture in Shanghai, 1922-1943* (Zhang 1999); *Building a new China in cinema: The Chinese left-wing cinema movement, 1932-1937* (Pang 2002); *Projecting a nation: Chinese national cinema before 1949* (Hu 2003).

[3] Geller's reflection on Said's Orientalism was also introduced in Chen (2002), 7.

[4] SARFT has been the state bureau administering the film industry since 1998.

[5] The translation is mine.

[6] The only exception is *Lin Zexu*, which deals with the confrontation between China and the British Empire in the Opium War (1839-42).

[7] This recapitulation of Sakai's ideas is from Lee (2007, 227).

[8] See Zhang (2002), 182-5.

[9] For a brief history of Chinese film study in the West, see chapter 3 of Zhang (2002).

[10] *Red Sorghum* (1987), *Judou* (1990), and *Raise the Red Lantern* (1992) are all directed by Zhang Yimo. According to Chow, Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimo differ in representing women in line with the themes of "nature" and "culture" (1995, 45-8). However, in a more general sense both directors self-willingly exhibited Chinese women as an object-of-gaze for the largely West-based film consumers.

[11] This introduction of Chow's ideas is based on Yingjin Zhang's recapitulation of her book. See Zhang (2002), 34.

[12] See He (1996), Wu (1999), Jia (2002) and Zhao(2002).

[13] http://www.douban.com/subject/discussion/1153789/, accessed April 19, 2009.

[14] http://www.douban.com/review/1010103/, accessed April 20, 2009.

[15] An "eye-shallow" person is a person who is easy to be moved to tears.

[16] The name of the Chinese actress who played An Jie. Ning Jing won in 1999 the Best Actress of the Golden Rooster Awards because of this role.

[17] http://www.douban.com/review/1363118/, accessed April 20, 2009.

[18] See the relevant information at imbd.com—the most authoritative Internet-based movie database. Available at http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0229539/, accessed April 21, 2009.

[19] A quick look into the comments about *HHJL* made by the Western consumers at imdb.com helps us understand the reasons the Western consumers do not like this movie. Available at http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0229539/usercomments, accessed April 23, 2009.

[20] *Forrest Gump* was originally released in 1994, but was not officially introduced into mainland China until 1995.

CHAPTER V

NETIZENS, COUNTER-MEMORY, AND THE CHINESE CYBER-LITERATURE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In 1994, China was first connected to the World Wide Web. Thousands of Chinese-language websites and millions of Internet users have emerged in Mainland China since. In as short as four years, 40 million Chinese people became frequent users of the Internet-related services.[1] The Internet, as Liu Kang puts it, is "an important aspect of globalization, and plays an increasingly actively role in China's transformation from its Maoist past to a post-revolutionary, post-socialist society" (2004, 187). The cyber space that the Internet technologies have created furnishes a novel site where manifold political agendas, ideological thoughts, and private emotions are articulated. The first ten years of the twenty-first century has witnessed the flowering of nationalism and various forms of counter-memories in Chinese cyber space.

Since Michel Foucault initiated the discussion of "counter-memory" through a series of papers in the late 1960s (1977), it has inspired many scholarly discussions. One important application of the Foucauldian idea of counter-memory in the studies of

nationalism is Lauren Berlant's discussion of early American national imagination, as is embodied in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). Berlant suggests that nations provoke fantasy and Hawthorne's work is the "fantasy-work of national identity" (1991, 2). In *The Scarlet Letter* different official and popular subjective modes of national identity characterize both the narrator's representation of the 17th-century Puritan history of North America and his allusive construction of the national-political reality of the United States of America around 1850. These subjective modes of national identity, whether official or popular, explicate how American citizens have been "positioned" within a national domain. As Berlant argues, while the official modes of national identity are based on the official memory—usually the state-sanctioned meanings of "public or national figures, bodies, monuments, and texts", the popular subjective modes draw on the counter-memory, "the residual material that is not identical with the official meanings of the political public sphere". The popular knowledge that constitutes the counter-memory, contradicts the official material that so often becomes the "truth" of a historical period and political formation. Official memory and counter-memory do not, however, necessarily oppose each other. Their relation represents the dispersal of experience and knowledge that constitutes the social realms (6).

This chapter looks into the intertwined relationship between official memory and counter-memory through the venue of cyber-literature (*wangluo wenxue* 网络文学), a

new popular cultural form appropriated by the emergent national subject—netizens (*wangmin* 网民)—in contemporary China. The chapter is roughly divided into three parts. In the first part, I reconstruct a brief history of the development of Chinese cyber-literature by examining the commercial mode of the most successful Mainland cyber-literature website Qidian.com. The cyber space created by Qidian.com provides an "easy to write & easy to read" platform for Chinese netizens. It bolsters the communication between cyber-literature writers and readers through virtual dialogue, and literally makes cyber-literature writing a process of "mass production". And it also provides new possibilities for Chinese netizens to circumvent—at least partially—the Party-state's censorship. I argue that the counter-memory of Chinese netizens has historically thrived upon the official meanings of the public sphere that has given birth to the commercialization of Chinese cyber-literature.

I then provide a case study of a prominent Mainland Internet novel *Cool Evil* (*Xie qi lin ran* 邪气凛然, 2007) in relation to the netizens' mode of national sentiments. In this novel a young Chinese man—Chen Yang (陈阳)—struggles his way from grass roots to mafia boss in Canada, then helps the Chinese government with its expansion policy in Africa and North America, and finally gets the permission of the government to go back to China as a legal businessman. I argue that the notion of righteousness (*yi* 义)—an important tradition of Chinese popular literary imagination—constitutes the

counter-memory of the author and readers of *Cool Evil*, which gives birth to a mode of national sentiments that simultaneously fuels and discourages the netizens' pursuit of political and economic freedom in contemporary China. The second and third parts of this chapter focus on the processes of "fueling" and "discouraging" on two discursive levels.

Qidian.com: The Thriving of Chinese Cyber-literature

By July 2008, the number of frequent Internet users in China had reached 253 million,[2] roughly one fifth of its whole population. Out of the vast number of frequent Internet users emerged a brand-new national subject—the netizens. In a broad sense "netizen" can refer to any "active participant in the online community of the Internet".[3] However, as Jack Linchuan Qiu notes,

> [M]ost importantly, the role of grassroots user networks should be emphasized because their everyday activities not only ensure the continuation of China's Internet but also embody personal experiences that transform the new technology from an abstract cyberspace to meaningful places of social significance. User networks at the grassroots level constitute the most innovative source of change in China's virtual

> landscape, forming an unpredictable dimension imbued with tremendous potential for liberalization which is just beginning to be understood.(2004, 102)

In this light a more productive understanding of Chinese netizens must be achieved through investigating their "social significance" and political "potential" within a historically specific context. To anticipate my argument, in the specific context of postsocialist China the netizens become a significant national subject through actively negotiating with the neoliberalist state politics on behalf of people at the grassroots level. Therefore the working definition of "Chinese netizens" in this chapter is "representatives of Chinese grassroots people with self-appointed authority as generated from their Internet-based negotiating activities with the neoliberalist state".

Not until recently did academia start to give serious attention to the Internet-based activities of Chinese netizens, of which the new social and cultural phenomenon of Chinese Internet nationalism has interested many scholars. To the best of my knowledge, Xu Wu's book (2007) is by far the most comprehensive research on this topic in English. Wu defines Chinese cyber nationalism as a "non-government sponsored ideology and movement that has originated, existed, and developed in China's online sphere over the past decade (1994-present)" (2). He argues that the waning of Communist doctrines, the reach and power of online technology, and nationalism's inherent grassroots appeal are

the main reasons that made Chinese cyber nationalism a powerful factor in China's overall policy decision-making process (3). Although his research provides some ice-breaking insights on contemporary nationalism, its limited focus on the direct political responses of Chinese Internet users to international conflicts between China and foreign countries[4] leaves unexamined many critical issues.

First, Xu's approach focuses on the monolithic function of the cyber space—that is, as a transparent and immediate channel—in the formation of political ideologies and ethos instigated by anti-foreignist nationalism, while largely leaving out the complexity of cyber space in the figuration of the nation. Nationalism is never a pure socio-political movement dedicated to its state and ideological formation as shaped by institutions and international conflicts. It is also a process in which people conceive their relationship with this imagined community of the nation through various representational activities. In such representational activities in contemporary China, the cyber space functions more than a transparent and immediate channel.

Second, despite a prominent trend of contemporary Chinese nationalism, anti-foreignism certainly does not equal nationalism. In arguing for rejoining Chinese nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century to a global history, Rebecca Karl notes that the historical process of nationalism—as concept formation—and that of statism—as either the retrospective renarration of the nation in light of the achievement of

nation-statism or as the purely functional pursuit and institutional elaboration of state power—should be, but are often not, disentangled (2002, 17). The tendency to conflate state and nation in China studies persists and is reflected in Xu's study too. The anti-foreignist ethos in Chinese cyber space that Xu studied is by and large the contemporary reincarnation of the conflation of the grassroots nationalism and the statist nationalism, which is but one of a variety of forms of contemporary popular nationalism.

It is precisely from these two perspectives that this chapter broaches Chinese Internet nationalism in a different light. The Chinese cyber space is not only a transparent and immediate channel for the Internet users to articulate their instant responses to recent international conflicts, but also a passionate public space for the netizens to negotiate with state politics in the name of national sentiments. The netizens' modes of national sentiments are grounded in their various forms of counter-memory, which simultaneous connect to and contradict the official meanings of the public sphere. Through the privileged angle of cyber-literature, this chapter brings to the fore a prominent mode of national sentiments shared by a significant number of Chinese netizens.

Cyber-literature has yet to have a unanimous definition. In this chapter "cyber-literature" refers to fictional texts that are (1) created by netizens; (2) originally released online; (3) almost exclusively circulated and responded to on an anonymous basis in cyber space. Chinese cyber-literature has existed since China was first connected

to the World Wide Web in 1994, but its "golden age" did not come until the new millennium. Chinese cyber-literature in the 2000s has firmly taken the path of commercialization, rhyming with the general trend of "everything looking towards money" (*yiqie xiang qian kan* 一切向钱看) in the increasingly consumerist society.

Qidian.com has since October 2003 launched the "*Fufei yuedu*" (Pay to Read 付费阅读) service. Writers usually serialize their novels online on a daily basis. Readers can read some beginning chapters of a novel for free, but in order to read the whole work they have to become VIP users and pay for subscription. Writers get paid by how many subscriptions their works receive. This mode has made Qidian.com commercially successful and the website has become the leading force in the cyber-literature-related market of China. According to an interview with CEO of Qidian.com Wu Wenhui (吴文辉), Qidian.com has been making profits since the initiation of its commercial mode in October 2003. It has so far 200,000 original novels in store, 150,000 on-site writers, and close-to-300-million visits per day.[5]

Based on solid empirical studies and detailed statistics, Jack Linchuan Qiu persuasively characterizes Chinese cyber space in the following paragraph:

> State agencies, IT firms, and activist groups interact to establish, transform, and control the fundamental parameters of Chinese cyber space. Simultaneously,

> Chinese netizens are constructing their online identities in a peculiar Internet culture that bears both Chinese and universal characteristics. To a great extent, the forging of identities among Internet users is a process shaped by …the flourishing of consumerism fostered by the party-state and multinational corporations. (2004, 114)

Qidian.com is certainly one of the most seminal cases of the commercialization of Chinese cyber-literature, which fully embodies the complexity of Chinese cyber space in the articulation of Chinese Internet nationalism. As part of the Chinese public sphere, the online space created by cyber-literature bespeaks its official meanings as "fostered by the party-state and multinational corporations".

As one of the most important aspects of the public sphere, the dominant consumerism contributes directly to the commercialization of Chinese cyber-literature. Online fictional texts are produced and circulated through websites with well-crafted commercial mechanisms such as Qidian.com as ready-made commodities for mass consumption, which, among other things, greatly shape grassroots people's nationalist imagination.

By July 2008, the number of frequent Internet users in China had reached 253 million. Considering the immense popularity Qidian.com enjoys among Chinese Internet users, a significant number of the users have become cyber-literature consumers.

Qidian.com is owned by a multinational IT firm Shanda Interactive Entertainment Limited.[6] Its commercial drive makes it necessary that the website has a large variety of online fictional texts for the readers' selection. For this reason Qidian.com sets few criteria of screening the writers. Any person with basic literacy and Internet access may post their writings on Qidian.com. The production costs of cyber-stories are so low that cyber-literature becomes an affordable public access for the netizens to articulate their feelings and thoughts. Compared to film, TV series, and books in print form whose production expenses most people have no way to afford, cyber-literature offers a viable means by which the netizens could participate in the public life. Besides this, the "Pay to Read" mode focuses more on the total number of pay-to-read customers than on how much money an individual reader pays. The price to read at Qidian.com is set at a reasonably low level that most Chinese Internet users can afford.[7]

Qidian.com not only provides an inexpensive platform for producing and purchasing cyber literature works, but also creates virtual communities where the communications between writers and readers are made possible. At the homepage of Qidian.com one can easily find the access to on-site virtual communities like *geren kongjian* (blogs 个人空间), *pinglun* (forums 评论), and *julebu* (reader's clubs 俱乐部). Because the writers' financial interests are directly related to the readers' subscriptions, the writers actively partake in discussions in these virtual communities and care much about the readers'

responses to their works. The writers often ask their readers questions like "what should I write next?" and actually incorporate the ideas and thoughts from the readers into later serializations. John Fiske posits, "if the cultural commodities or texts do not contain resources out of which the people can make their own meanings of their social relations and identities ... They will not be made popular" (1991, 2). Works on Qidian.com are welcomed by mass readers precisely because those works directly embody thoughts and passions not only of the writers, but also of themselves. The virtual communities help make cyber-literature a field that invites the production of meanings *in* consumption, through which inter-subjective communication is made possible.

Freedom of speech is also partially realized in the virtual realms of Qidian.com. There is no doubt that the media laws set by the party-state in contemporary Chinese society still upholds the principle that media should serve the needs of party politics. That the 1989 crackdown on Tiananmen Square in fact put an end to the moral legitimacy of the old party-state system (Wang 2003, 116-7) has made it more urgent for the state to censor mass media so that the articulation of discontent with the state can be kept at bay. The government blocks many topics it considers sensitive or controversial and often punishes those who try to get around those bans.[8] However, to some extent cyber-literature can bypass the governmental censorship on account of the nature of its production and consumption. According to the aforementioned interview with Wu

Wenhui, more than thirty million words of new works are produced on Qidian.com every day. Readers' responses also contribute significantly to the daily increase of on-site virtual texts. With the overwhelming amount of new virtual texts posted per day, censors of the Chinese government have so far neither enough resources nor feasible technological means to set up a permanent and effective censoring mechanism over Qidian.com. Furthermore, registered users of Qidian.com mostly remain anonymous when they buy, read, and comment on cyber literature works.[9] This "invisibility" protects readers from direct surveillance and possible persecution coming from the government for giving politically sensitive speech.

More importantly, some discernible characteristics of China's Internet censorship highlight the ambiguity of the Party-state in this matter, which also allows cyber-literature writers and readers to articulate their own feelings with their own voices. The internal redundancy of the censorship regime has been increasing along legislative, administrative, and technological dimensions since 2000. This gives rise to a network of censors which includes multiple state agencies and commercial entities with relatively independent political and economic goals (Qiu 2004, 114). This redundancy and these sometimes clashing goals also help cyber-literature writers and readers to construct their own space relatively free from statist intervention.

In a nutshell, the commercial cyber-literature websites such as Qidian.com have combined profit-seeking motives, consumer desires, and Internet technologies to create the new cyber space of literary imagination in postsocialist China. The new space provides an "easy to write & easy to read" platform for Chinese cyber-literature writers and readers. It bolsters the communication between cyber-literature writers and readers through virtual dialogues, and literally makes cyber-literature writing a process of mass production. It also provides them new possibilities to circumvent—at least partially—the party-state's censorship. As the following case study will demonstrate, this newly-constructed cyber space has created a moderate opportunity for Chinese netizens to articulate their own feelings with their own voices. The existence of this space makes possible the online articulation of their various forms of counter-memory that speaks directly to the neoliberalist state politics in the postsocialist era. It is in this sense that I argue that the counter-memory of Chinese netizens has historically thrived upon the official meanings of the public sphere in contemporary China.

In the Name of Righteousness (*Yi*): Netizens' Counter-memory in *Cool Evil*

The popular knowledge of the counter-memory in Chinese cyber-literature covers a wide arrange of topics, themes, and ethos. It appropriates Chinese cultural materials through a variety of angles. However, as Eugenia Lean suggests, we can also identify a

global pattern among non-Western societies of the strategic employment of pre-existing "traditional" forms of virtue and sentiment in their creation of modern societies (2007, 20). In this light I find that the notion of righteousness (*yi*) that is deeply rooted in the tradition of Chinese popular literary imagination constitutes the counter-memory of the writer and readers of a prominent Internet novel *Cool Evil*.[10]

In January 2007 writer "Dancing" (*Tiaowu* 跳舞) started to serialize *Cool Evil* at Qidian.com. Throughout the year 2007 *Cool Evil* was one of the most popular topics in the virtual communities at Qidian.com and beyond.[11] By the end of its serialization in December 2007, *Cool Evil* became a three-volume novel of more than 2.3 million words and 503 chapters.

Yi, or righteousness, constitutes the counter-memory of the writer and readers of *Cool Evil*. The articulation of *yi* abounds in pre-modern literary representations, of which the traditional vernacular novel *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shuihu zhuan* 水浒传, hereafter *SHZ*) (Shi and Luo 1980) is one of the most prominent cases. *SHZ* is a literary representation of the insurgence led by Song Jiang（宋江） in North *Song* Dynasty (961-1125). Starting from Gao Qiu's （高俅）rise to power and persecution of the faithful and upright, the novel depicts that the heroes in the country gathered in the *Liangshan* Mountain （梁山）to start an uprising, and then they were offered amnesty and enlistment by the imperial court. After conquering the state of *Liao* (辽)and another uprising army

led by Fang La（方腊）, they were murdered by treacherous court officials. *Yi* is the central theme of *SHZ*. One interpretation of *yi* in *SHZ* is "personal honor" that tends to emphasize reciprocity among friends or brothers who are mainly from plebian backgrounds. Through adhering to the code of *yi* the *Liangshan* heroes create *Jianghu* (江湖), a private and plebeian domain that is often beyond the control of the government (Huang 2006, 98-99 & 104-5).

The literary imagination of righteousness in *Cool Evil* is significantly modeled on and develops from that in *SHZ*. In what follows, the discussion of righteousness and the netizens' national sentiments in *Cool Evil* will frequently refer to *SHZ*. Harking back to the working definition of "Chinese netizens" in this chapter—"representatives of Chinese grassroots people with self-appointed authority as generated from their Internet-based negotiating activities with the neoliberalist state", the writer and readers of *Cool Evil* become part of the netizen group when they engage in active negotiation with state politics through their specific Internet-based activity—the production and consumption of this Internet novel. In this process, the counter-memory of righteousness gave birth to a mode of national sentiments that speaks directly to the official memories shaped by, among other things, the neoliberalist state politics.

In *Cool Evil*, *yi* is first expressed as a sentiment of discontent. In *SHZ*, as Martin Huang notes, *yi* often represents a sentiment of discontent toward the society and the

government. For example, Wu Dalang (武大郎) was poisoned by his wife Pan Jinlian （潘金莲）and her adulterous lover Ximen Qing （西门庆）, a rich businessman and influential official. The local government dismissed Wu Dalang's murder case under the influence of Ximen. Wu Song （武松）, the younger brother of Wu Dalang, had no legal means to correct his brother's wrongs so he ended up joining the *Liangshan* gang after killing the two adulterers. What Wu Song did is considered behavior of *yi* because he chose to stand up and fight back when confronted with social injustice and the corrupt ruling class. Underlying his behavior is a sentiment of discontent with the social reality, and by extension, with the political system that has caused such reality. A contrast between righteous individuals and the unjust government is pitched through *yi*.

In *Cool Evil*, *yi* is recast as the protagonist Chen Yang's sentiment of discontent with the postsocialist government. Through his perspective, the readers get a sense of the many social problems in contemporary China. His sentiment of discontent toward the government is reflected throughout the long novel in many aspects, a significant one of which is his experience with female sex workers in contemporary China. Chen works in a nightclub in Nanjing. His job is to make arrangements for *xiaojie* (小姐) to provide service to customers. *Xiaojie* literally means "Miss" or "Lady", but it also refers to female sex workers in contemporary China. The mushrooming of night clubs in Chinese cities has been an impressive social phenomenon since the 1990s. Wealthy men, many of

whom are corrupt officials or businessmen with government connections, become regular patrons of night clubs, where they can find young and beautiful girls to sing, drink, and sleep with.

Chen Yang obviously hates his job because of what he sees and does in the night club. One line he often says is "I am a bad man". The author invites the readers to think of this question: "what makes Chen Yang a bad man?" *Xiaoiie* come from various social strata but a significant number of them enter the sex industry because of poverty. Poverty, a by-product of the economic reform that many grassroots people have to deal with in their daily life, has everything to do with the neoliberalist state policies. Neoliberalism, as the dominant governing mode of thought in the postsocialist China, understands development narrowly—as being only a matter of economic growth—and disregards the connection between this growth and political freedom and social benefits (Wang 2003, 104). One of the gloomiest consequences of this development mode is the polarization of the society in terms of economic and political power. On one end of the social structure are the grassroots people having little sway over political, economic, and social policies of the state; on the other end the Party cadres and their affiliates hold tight to power and capitalize on it. In Chen Yang's eyes, the contrast between *xiaojie* and their customers most vividly represents the polarization of the Chinese society. Positioned at a privileged venue—inside a night club, Chen witnesses and feels biting pain because of the way the

rich and powerful are entitled by the neoliberalist power structure to violate, psychologically and physically, the poor and powerless.

Through the character Chen Yang, the author brings on his sentiment of discontent with the social polarization caused by the neoliberalist state. In the process of asking what makes Chen Yang a bad man, the author transfers the question "what is wrong with me?" to "what is wrong with (the governing body of) the society?". By examining the ailments caused by the social polarization through Chen Yang's perspective, the author articulates his righteous sentiment against the unjust state.

In *SHZ*, *yi* is also the heroic code to form a community of brotherhood. The heroic code of *yi* ensures the cohesion of a mythic, communal and quasi-biological brotherhood (Ding 2002, 144). Although it is not blood-bound, to some extent this community replaces family and is more exclusive and politically oriented. Drawing from *SHZ*, the author "Dancing" designed in *Cool Evil* a plebeian community based on the code of *yi* the protagonist Chen Yang fully embodies in his life.

Chen Yang's nightclub career evidences his righteous principle of life—"all my co-workers are my brothers and sisters". First, he carries out his righteousness by helping and protecting other grassroots members of his self-identified community at any cost. In the first one third of the novel, his self-identified community is the night club he works for. Chen gets hurt in a fight with some hooligan customers to protect a night-club

waitress he does not know. At this juncture his *yi* creates a reciprocal community the actualization of which depends on his larger-than-life behavior to self-willingly identify with and sacrifice for the community. It is his larger-than life insistence on protecting *any* member of the night club that makes it a community for his grassroots co-workers.

The flip side of unconditional sacrifice for the community is the urge to punish those insiders who backstab other members of the community. Since the sustainability of the community relies on the mutual care and help among the community members, its own members' failure to live up to those standards is the most fundamental threat to its existence. In chapter seventy-one of the *Liangshan* heroes' "grand confluence of chivalry"(*da juyi* 大聚义), the solemn vow of setting up the brotherhood reads, "from this day on, if any of us acts in a deliberately unvirtuous manner, or offends our code of chivalry, we pray that Heaven and Earth scourge him, that the spirits and men destroy him, that he never again be reincarnated in human form and remain forever sunk in the depths" (Shi and Luo 1980, 1141). Violence is usually resorted to as a solution to such situations, and the practice of violence in such situations is also considered as an embodiment of *yi*. Just as the *Liangshan* heroes vow, Chen violently punishes his co-worker Ah-Qiang (阿强) who drugged another waitress and got her raped for money.

The desire for money and material profits is considered as a major hurdle to form and maintain the plebeian community in Cool Evil. In *SHZ* the desire for money usually

leads to morally corrupt behavior. For example, Wang Po (王婆) facilitates the adultery between Pan Jinlian and Ximen Qing for the sake of money. And all the three people are eventually killed by Wu Song. The clash between Chen Yang and Ah-Qiang foregrounds *Cool Evil*'s anti-profit ethos, which forms a dramatic contrast with the pervasive profit-seeking milieu promoted by the state and the market economy. The state-dictated neoliberalist economic reform has created the opposite of grassroots people—Party cadres and businessmen having close connection with the government, or in Wang Hui's words, specific interest groups within the state structure. One commonality of all these interest groups is their fanatic pursuit of material profits.

Cool Evil's anti-profit ethos is deeply rooted in a real grassroots sentiment against such a milieu. The "realistic" tinge of Chen's heroic story is located not so much in the noble needs of Chen as in the character Ah-Qiang. The hidden truth overshadowed by Chen's righteous behavior is that when facing a choice between profits and *yi*, few people would actually go for *yi* instead of going for profits. The threat of Ah-Qiang to the plebeian community of *yi* is fundamental because he is one of "their own". The centrifugal threat from inside, as demonstrated by Ah-Qiang, sourly attests to the influence of neoliberalism at the grassroots level. The counterposing of Chen to Ah-Qiang exemplifies the author's repulse to the neoliberalist state and the profit-driven market economy. By conjuring up a plebeian community and a grassroots hero like Chen

the authors furnished a counter-discourse to the mammonist official discourses, through which the moral authority of grassroots people is reestablished against the backdrop of the corrupt and oppressive state.

Besides being a sentiment of discontent and the code of a plebeian community, *yi* is also recycled as the revival of Maoist egalitarianism within the context of contemporary China. *SHZ* promotes the practice of "Distributing Gold Between Brothers"(*Dachen Fenjin* 大秤分金). Many heroes, especially those from the lower-class, join the *Liangshan* gang because within the community of brotherhood they can enjoy equal economic rights regardless of their class backgrounds. In this sense, *yi* represents a kind of grassroots proto-egalitarianism in the tradition of Chinese popular literary imagination.

In *Cool Evil*, this proto-egalitarianism is recycled within the contemporary context of global capitalism. By "recycling" I mean the process in which the socialist past is reinvented under the overwhelming trends of global capitalism. I argue that an important condition of recycling in the novel is that benefits and burdens of globalization are unequally distributed among the multiple national subjects due to their respective positionalities within the national power structure as shaped by neoliberalism. The grassroots people's uneasiness about shouldering most burdens while enjoying few benefits forms a complicated cultural-psychological situation that is recast in *Cool Evil* as the author' worship of Mao.

After quitting his job at the night club, Chen Yang went through a series of dramatic incidents and eventually come to Canada and become a member of a mafia organization Daquan (大圈). His new identification with the mafia organization Daquan originates in the collective memory of many Mainland Chinese—the memory of Mao's Cultural Revolution.

Although the critical reflection on the cruelty and inhumanity of the Cultural Revolution never stops since 1978, the equally gloomy and unjust social reality in post-revolutionary China has prompted more and more Chinese people, especially people at the grassroots level, to look back at the more idealistic and egalitarian period with heart-warming feelings. Daquan's founders are first-generation Mainland Chinese who were born and raised right after PRC was founded. Most of them are retired soldiers who fought the Sino-Vietnamese War in 1979 and were once red guards in the Cultural Revolution (vol.1, chp.146). Once he comes to Daquan's headquarter in Canada—a garage in Vancouver BC, Chen Yang is immediately fascinated by the people and décor there. The boss of the Canadian Daquan is Fang Bazhi (方八指), a old man dressing like an accountant in a state-owned factory (*guoyingqiye de kuaiji* 国营企业的会计) who works and eats with the other members of the mafia. Chen Yang lives in a place like a workers' group dorm (*jiti sushe* 集体宿舍) and dines in a publicly-owned canteen (*shitang* 食堂) (vol.1, chp.135-7). All of this reminds him of the "good old time". The

common history and memory reflected in the people and décor endows the mafia organization with a nostalgic sense of Maoist culture, which Chen Yang comfortably identifies with.

Chen Yang cherishes the revolutionary history of Mao's era in his "fight in exile" in North America, which inspires his new goal to build a plebeian and egalitarian community within this specific transnational setting. Whether in the night club or later in the Canadian mafia, Chen Yang never gives up his passion to build such a plebian, egalitarian community to redistribute wealth. This passion to redistribute wealth is epitomized in his big dream of Chairman Mao and White House.

Chen Yang's new roommate Xiluo (西罗), a second-generation Chinese whose father fought by Fang Bashi's side as a Daquan member, plays him an old record of music-dubbed recital of Chairman Mao's poems. The fact that "Chairman's poems ravage Vancouver's streets" inspires Chen Yang to have a more daring dream:

> "One day, I will bring an old-style microgroove machine to the White House and play Chairman Mao's poems with the machine pointing right to its windows for a whole day. Let the great revolutionary leader's poems ravage the heart zone of the hegemonic capitalist power!" (*Cool Evil* part.1, chp. 136)

The dramatic juxtaposition of Chairman Mao with the derogatorily inferred capitalism easily bestows on Chen Yang and his fellow Daquan members a plain sense of moral authority. Instead of criticizing specific policies of the neoliberalist state, Chen Yang's dream embodies an antagonistic gesture of Chinese grassroots people toward the fundamental hotbed of these policies—the global capitalist economy per se. Not only does this provide Chen Yang a certified reason to go on his adventure in exile as a righteous person—making Daquan a plebeian community as he did the night club, Chen Yang's big dream demonstrates the author's will to tear down the neoliberalist capitalism with Maoist egalitarianism. In this sense the author's worship of Mao has integrated with his advocacy of *yi* to make righteousness the revival of Maoist egalitarianism in postsocialist China.

One important thing to keep in mind is that cyber-literature is more than a transparent and immediate channel for Internet users to articulate their spontaneous thoughts. From the production and consumption of *Cool Evil*, the form of cyber-literature creates a passionate public space for the author and readers to negotiate with state politics in the name of national sentiments, in the process of which they become a significant part of the netizen community.

The production mechanism of cyber-literature ensures that the novel reflects the collective will of the readers' community, instead of only the author's will. This result

certainly benefits from the "easy to write & easy to read" function of cyber-literature and its capability to circumvent censorship. But more importantly, it results from the author's self-conscious application of author-reader communication. "Dancing" is one of the earliest Qidian writers who applied the mode of mass production in his writing. Using his net alias "Dancing's Sword" (*Tiaowu de jian* 跳舞的剑), he was frequently online to communicate with his readers about plots, themes, and controversies during his writing. His idiosyncratic method of incorporating the readers' ideas was to wage online votes. He usually wrote a few possible subsequent plots after hearing his readers' thoughts, posted all of them for the readers' votes, and then picked the one with the highest votes as the real subsequent plot. In this sense all the aforementioned applications of righteousness—to negotiate with neoliberalist state politics in the novel—are done not only by Dancing but also by his vast online readers.

In addition, the consumption of cyber-literature becomes the readers' way of active participation with political significance. Going beyond participating in producing the meanings of the texts, the readers participate in the passionate public space by having heated discussions and debates over these meanings in cyber space. The online sensation over "People's Police" in the consumption of this novel epitomizes the readers' participation in this public space in this respect.

At one point of the novel, Chen Yang becomes a victim of police abuse of power in Nanjing. He holds off several hooligans who try to harass his friend. But because one of them is the brother-in-law of the local police chief, Chen is taken into custody and persecuted at the local police bureau. He is handcuffed to the heat pipe,[12] slapped in the face and tasered. A biting sense of irony lurks in the following description:

> ..... a young policeman shouts, "Behave yourself! Don't you know what place this is?" "What place? Just the place of *Renmin jingcha* (People's Police)!" I knock the heat pipe with my handcuffs...

Chen's ironic mentioning of the term "People's Police" ("*Renmin jingcha*"人民警察) points to the very falseness of the state-sanctioned official memories. "The people" is the legitimate subject of a modern nation. The nation is based on the formation of "the people" in human imagination, which naturalizes "its juridico-utopian promise to protect the local while abstracting the person from his body and everyday life experience to another, more stable, symbolic order" (Berlant 1991, 12). This symbolic order of "the people" legitimizes the existence of the nation. Although the 1989 Incident fundamentally shook the party-state's legitimacy to represent the nation and the people, the Party-state still holds power tight and has become an increasingly oppressive structure over

grassroots people with the deepening of the neoliberalist reform. The Party-state habitually manipulates the rhetoric of "*renmin*" (the people 人民) in the political public sphere. In China, the names of government offices at all levels carry a prefix of "*renmin*", such as *Renmin Jiefangjun* (People's Liberation Army 人民解放军), *Renmin fayuan* (People's Court 人民法院), *Renmin jingcha*, etc. The official memories of the Party-state create a legitimate sense of its regime generated from its self-claims of "*daibiao renmin*" (representing the people 代表人民) and "*wei renmin fuwu*" (serving the people 为人民服务). The juxtaposition of the glorious term "People's Police" and the actual treatment Chen receives from the local policemen fashions a sharp contrast through which the falseness of the official memories concerning "the people" is brought to the fore. By implying that "People's Police are persecuting the people", this story adds a biting sense of irony to the depiction of state apparatuses like the police in contemporary China.

The author's sentiment of discontent toward the police soon created heated online discussions through reader-reader communication in the virtual communities of the novel. User "Late Sunshine" (*Chimu yangguang* 迟暮阳光) initiated a discussion in the Qidian forum of *Cool Evil* on July 29, 2007.[13] He claimed that he was a policeman and was tired of the negative descriptions of the police in the novel. He thought that Dancing did not have enough breadth of knowledge (*zhishi mian* 知识面) and should learn more about

Chinese laws. Late Sunshine's defense of the Chinese police at once ignited counterstrikes from other users. User "Suiyuan-Piao" (随缘-飘) ridiculed Late Sunshine by saying "LZ thinks Little Five does not have enough breadth of knowledge; the people think you are too assertive."[14] Many readers furnished personal stories on the police's corruption, abuse of power, and violent suppression of grassroots people.[15] Even more used derogatory terms for the police in their replies. User "Once Witness of Wars" (*Jiceng shi gan'ge* 几曾识干戈) commented that Late Sunshine could not blame any one (giving negative descriptions of or comments on the Chinese police) because what the police did had "kindled the people's indignation" (*ji qi min fen* 激起民愤).[16] He continued, "Usually we dare not say anything although we are furious (*gan nu bu gan yan* 敢怒不敢言). Now is there anything we dare not say here?"[17] The comments of Once Witness of Wars testifies that cyber-literature and the space it creates do provide a viable channel for grassroots people to actively participate in the public life of politics in contemporary China.

Some other users went beyond the emotional charges against the police and pointed out that the origin of the police's problems was nothing but the political system itself. User "2006 Jingzhe" (2006 惊蛰) argued that blame should go not to the policemen but to the political system. The system has many loopholes (*loudong* 漏洞) the policemen could utilize and in a sense the policemen were also victims (of the system).[18] Following

up the thoughts of 2006 Jingzhe, User "Opposing Wind Shattering Moon 2003" (*Nifeng suiyue* 逆风碎月 2003) lamented:

> Too much the government has lost of its authority (*wei xin* 威信) and people's faith (*min-xin* 民心) in it…Who is to blame? Let's blame our Party. Let's blame Deng Xiaoping's "Opening and Reform" (*gai ge kai fang* 改革开放) that boosted the economy at the cost of the ideology(*si xiang* 思想). We miss Chairman Mao who was resolute in taking down corrupt officials and ill-behaved policemen. Let's eliminate all the capitalists and brutal (*shou xin* 兽心) officials that harm the interests of us—the people.[19]

In his speech Opposing Wind Shattering Moon 2003 is openly critical of the Chinese government, the Communist Party's leadership, and its fundamental policy (*guo ce* 国策) of the economical reform in the last thirty years. The militant slogan of "eliminating" capitalists and government officials that "harm the interests of us—the people" delivers two messages from the grassroots people: first, it is the state-sponsored neoliberalist reform that has recreated a class society, in which "we"—the people—belong to one class and "they"—capitalists and officials—belong to another; second, "we the people" will take action to protect our interests.

As Wang Hui suggests, the principal embodiment of Chinese neoliberalism lies in the benefits accruing to specific interest groups within the state structure. Neoliberalism, "with its core content being the intensification of reforms calling for great devolution of political and economic power and the contract system", germinates "the furtherance of a comprehensive course of spontaneous privatization under the guiding premise of a lack of democratic guarantees, and the legitimization through legislative means of the polarization of classes and interests" (2003, 59). The lament of Opposing Wind Shattering Moon 2003 is a popular response to Wang Hui's observation. It does not take much effort to notice that the targeted "capitalists and brutal official" in his speech fall exactly into Wang Hui's category of the "interest groups within the state structure" that have benefited from the economic reform. And the speech has made it clear that people at the grassroots level will not acquiesce in allowing those interest groups to appropriate the state power to take their interests away. The historical paradox of the state—the withering of the capacity of the state and the over-involvement of the state in the working of the market at once diminish and necessitate the power of the state in contemporary Chinese society—renders it impossible for any demands for freedom from the grassroots level to separate a critique of the state from a critique of the move toward a consumerist, market-oriented society. The trajectory of the readers' criticism under discussion—from

targeting the police itself to criticizing the Party-state system, "Opening and Reform", and the capitalist economy—seems to evidence this point.

Echoed and elaborated on by the readers, the author's political discontent becomes a collective voice of Chinese grassroots people that wrestles with the neoliberalist state. Through these criticisms most readers of *Cool Evil* shared the author's sentiment and found their own way of practicing *yi*—that is, to enunciate their voice of political discontent in the online space of cyber-literature. It is in this sense that the author and readers of *Cool Evil* have created a netizens' public space of righteousness.

To sum up, *yi* is the counter memory of the author and readers of *Cool Evil* that contradicts the official memories created by the neoliberalist state. *Yi* is a sentiment of discontent toward the government; it is a heroic code that promises the formation and sustainment of a plebeian community; it is also recycled as Maoist egalitarianism in the contemporary condition of global capitalism. The form of cyber-literature per se creates a passionate public space for the author and readers to negotiate with state politics in the name of national sentiments, in the process of which they become a significant part of the netizen community striving for more political and economic freedom under the current social structure.

Neoliberalism: Ambivalences and Contradictions of *Yi*

The netizens' advocacy of *yi* in *Cool Evil*—especially in the first volume—targets the neoliberalist state and its policies, which seems to give such an impression that neoliberalism is the attribute of an oppressive third-world state structure over grassroots people in economic globalization. However, this impression is problematic if we analyze the transformation of righteousness in the latter part of the novel. Much has been written about Foucault's concept of governmentality (Burchell, Gordon, and Miller 1991). These writings have emphasized how power operates not just from the centralized locus of the state toward citizens but in a dispersed and diffused manner through experts, leading citizen-subjects to take it upon themselves to monitor their own conduct.

Recently the concept has been used to develop the idea that neoliberalism is a form of governmentality in which economic policies, regimes of power/knowledge, and subjectivities structurally line up together in a coherent manner (Rofel 2007, 176). Recent work on neoliberalism raises critical questions about transformations in the relationship between capitalism, governance, and subjectivity (15). Nikolas Rose traces the assemblages of each stage of history that link "the regulation of public conduct with the subjective emotional and intellectual capacities and techniques of individuals, and the ethical regimes through which they govern their lives" (1996, 38). Advanced liberalism (a term he uses coterminously with neoliberalism) was sparked by a set of political critiques

on how to overcome the interventionist nature of the liberal welfare state. These critiques led to a neoliberal mentality of government. Rose argues that neoliberal political theorists do not take the market to be a natural entity but rather believe government needs to ensure that the market functions properly by, paradoxically, governing less. Advanced liberal rule devises new technologies of governance by reconstructing individual citizens as subjects of entrepreneurial choices. It seeks to marketize expertise within calculative regimes of competition, accountability, and consumer demand.

Where Rose implicitly discusses Great Britain, Wendy Brown explicitly situates her analysis of neoliberalism in the United States. For Brown, neoliberaqlism is a response to the challenges from the left as well as a provocation to the left. She delineates the political rationality that subtends neoliberalism. When deployed as a form of governmentality, neoliberalism "reaches from the soul of the citizen-subject to education policy to practices of empire" (2003, 2). She describes four main characteristics of neoliberal governmentality: (1) It extends and disseminates market values to all institutions and social action. (2) The market provides the organizing and regulative principle of the state not only because the state responds to the needs of the market but is itself rendered as an enterprise organized by market rationality. (3) Economic rationality extends to formerly noneconomic domains. (4) Profitability becomes the criterion for

good social policy. In a word, in American neoliberalism market economics are offered not merely as the path to democracy but as the measure of democracy.

Finally, while Brown and Rose examine neoliberalism within the nation-state, Aihwa Ong interrupts both of their versions of neoliberalism by describing a global structure of sutured differences. The subjects of Ong's story—diasporic Hong Kong capitalists, Southeast Asian governments, and Cambodian refugees in the United States—implicitly furnish the opportunities of rethinking on the versions of neoliberalism by Rose's experts and Brown's US leftists. In the case of diasporic Hong Kong capitalists (1999) she examines the phenomenon of "flexible citizenship", by which she means the ability of these professionals and entrepreneurs to both circumvent and benefit from various nation-state regimes by selecting distinct sites for investment, work, and family relocation.[20]

Based on her exploration of works on neoliberalism by Rose, Brown, and Ong, Lisa Rofel contends in her book about contemporary Mainland China that neoliberalism is not "a universal set of principles from which derives, in a deterministic fashion, a singular type of neoliberal subject". She argues that neoliberalism has been an ongoing experimental project that began in the global south, in which nation-state—China being one of the most prominent and peculiar examples as her book testifies—reorder themselves to participate in the post-Cold War world and is particularly germane to

"Chinese citizens in a postsocialist humanity" (2007, 2-3). As she defines her own study of Chinese neoliberalism, she inquire about the role of public culture in fostering novel subjectivities by asking "how non-expert, ordinary citizens grapple with broad-ranging public discourses and how they actively negotiate, ague about, desire, and differentiate the kinds of subjectivities they are encouraged to embody"; and by asking "how differentially positioned citizens in China grapple with the market economy in their lives and how they evaluate questions of freedom and constraint in relation to it" (19).

Inspired by Rofel's treatment of Chinese neoliberalism as a "national project of global reordering", this chapter attempts to analyze the cultural meaning of the Chinese public sphere as shaped by it from the perspective of cyber-literature. My study focuses not on any citizen, but on the particular group of netizens—citizens who, with the help of Internet technologies, most passionately participate in producing and defining the meanings of the public sphere on behalf of grassroots people. Specifically, I explore in the case of *Cool Evil* how the counter-memory of *yi* negotiates in the name of national sentiments with neoliberalism and its multifaceted consequences/conditions—consumerism, historical re-evaluation of freedom, and reconstructing subjectivity through economic logics.

It is advisable not to dissect counter-memory from official memory when defining and constructing cultural meaning of a public sphere within a specific national context.

Nor is it wise to conceive the two as totally contradictory to each other. Harking back to Berlant's rendition of the relationship between the two, it is the intertwinement of them represents the dispersal of experience and knowledge that constitutes the social realms. Within the specific context of *Cool Evil*, the counter-memory of righteousness and the official memory of neoliberalist state policies combine to fashion a complicated picture of neoliberalist governmentality.

As the last section manifests, in the first volume of *Cool Evil* the counter-memory of *yi* forms the netizens' mode of national sentiments contradicting the neoliberalist state that to some extent looms as an oppressive overarching structure and as a constraint on grassroots people's pursuit of political and economic freedom. In this light the national sentiments of righteousness seems to promise a herald and champion of emancipatory grassroots freedom.

However, the transient discourses of national sentiments in the latter part of the novel complicate such a pursuit of emancipatory grassroots freedom. The development of Chen Yang's character—especially in the second and third volumes—indicates that righteousness as the netizens' counter-memory does not necessarily contradict but sometimes collaborates on a deeper level with the official memories fashioned by the neoliberalist state.

There is clear class differentiation among the *Liangshan* heroes in *SHZ*. The grassroots heroes like Wu Song usually struggle at the bottom level of the social hierarchy before they join the *Liangshan* brotherhood. Rich and powerful heroes like Chai Jin (柴进) and Chao Gai (晁盖) often provid economic support and political refuge to their grassroots friends in need. Rich heroes invariably have the fame of "executing *yi* by disseminating his fortune" (*zhang yi shu cai* 仗义疏财) and a premier quality of these grassroots heroes in *SHZ* is the strong will to repay others' kindness and help, or put in a popular Chinese saying, "to return others' drops of kindness with an overflowing spring" (*dishui zhi en, yongquan xiang bao* 滴水之恩，涌泉相报). The reciprocal relationship between the two types of heroes is the foundation of the mythic community of the *Liangshan* brotherhood. However, from another perspective the grassroots heroes' righteous quality is especially tied to the trade of their valor and life for material profits provided by their rich friends. In this sense the most indicative speech is given by two grassroots heroes Ruan Xiaowu (阮小五)and Ruan Xiaoqi (阮小七), who overtly claim that "We sell this column of hot blood to the man who appreciates its worth" (*zhe qiang rexue, zhiyao mai yu shihuode* 这腔热血，只要卖与识货的) when they join Chao Gai's robbery.

The entanglement of righteousness with material profits is also reflected in *Cool Evil*. Starting from the second half of the first volume, Chen Yang's experiences with the harsh

reality in China have purged him of some idealistic ideas about *yi*. He gradually realizes the importance of "strength" (*shi li* 实力) in practicing *yi* in this world. Fang Dahai (方大海)—a veteran member of the mafia organization Daquan—offers Chen two choices: first, to hide in a small village in China and "be a docile man at the bottom of the social hierarchy for the rest of your life" (*yibeizi anfen de dang yige zuidiceng de xiaomin* 一辈子安分地当一个最底层的小民); second, join Daquan and fight a way to wealth abroad (vol.1, chp.123-24). That Chen Yang takes the second option without hesitation reflects the very will of Dancing and his readers to change their current grassroots lives through pursuing wealth.

Chen Yang's righteous life in North America is grounded in an intersubjective self-benefitting motive. In the "exile" stage of Chen Yang's growth, Dancing portrays Chen's *yi* in three mutually related aspects: compassion (*ren* 仁), wisdom (*zhi* 智), and courage (*yong* 勇). Compassion denotes the capability of understanding others' aspirations and fulfilling them. With the goal of pursuing wealth on his mind, Chen Yang soon finds similar aspirations in other Daquan members. However, Daquan's boss—Fang Bazhi—turns out to be a very manipulative leader and is not willing to give Chen and other members opportunities to make fortunes. Fang Bazhi's governing style soon leads to a series of betrayals and one of them ultimately costs Fang's life. When Chen Yang is sent to finish off Tiger—a betrayer who used to be a senior subordinate of Fang Bazhi,

Chen and Tiger have a conversation in which Tiger asks what people like him have got after risking their lives twenty years fighting for Fang Bazhi (vol.1, chp. 172-3).

The death of Tiger promotes Chen Yang to seriously rethink his fate in Daquan. He makes up his mind to be a compassionate leader who understands and helps other members' aspiration to make fortunes. Chen Yang believes that the Chinese saying-- "A person who does not plan for himself should be eliminated by the heaven and the earth" (*ren bu wei ji tian zhu di mie* 人不为己 天诛地灭)—makes much sense. There is nothing wrong fighting for oneself, unless it involved selling out fellow brothers (vol.2, chp.66). Under such a guideline Chen Yang tries his best to lead Daquan toward the goal of making fortunes for every member. During such processes his courage and wisdom help him survive extremely harsh conditions. His efforts prove effective and he soon advances to Daquan's highest leadership.

From the night club in Nanjing to the mafia organization in Canada, the switch of Chen Yang's self-identified community is accompanied by the transposing of the relationship between righteousness and material profits. From the major hurdle of forming and sustaining a plebeian community to the embodiment of a compassion that holds together a community of self-benefitting individuals, the transformation of material profits highlights that Chen Yang's practice of righteousness has gained new meanings. Obtaining material profits becomes an emancipatory tool for the netizens to economic

freedom. That to guarantee material profits for Daquan members is righteous testifies that neoliberalist governmentality has greatly shaped the subjectivities of Chinese netizens. It bespeaks that economic logics have extended to the subjective dimensions of the author and readers of *Cool Evil*, who firmly embrace the self-benefiting actions.

The emancipatory nature of righteousness through obtaining material profits poses new questions for the author and readers. One central issue is how to better justify the self-benefitting motive of righteousness. First, race and ethnicity play an important role conjuring up a chauvinist zeal to glorify the profit-seeking motive of Daquan. The explicit threats to the development of Chen Yang's Daquan are "the four troubles: the Vietnamese gang; the Indian gang; the Iranian gang; and the native Chinese gang" (vol.1, chp.146). Chen Yang provokes fights among these gangs by "muddying the waters of Vancouver" (*ba Wengehua zhe tan shui jiao hun* 把温哥华这潭水搅浑).[21] When the gang fights escalate and the Canadian government starts to intervene, Chen Yang steps in as the mediator between the government and other gangs. And finally a new peace agreement between the gangs and the government is achieved on the basis that both the underworld and the "over-world" acknowledge Daquan's leadership of the Vancouver underworld (vol.2, chp.28-68). Without much difficulty people can identify in Chen Yang's strategies the influence of traditional Chinese military intelligence.[22] To some extent the fights between Daquan and the other gangs for material benefits become racial

wars between Chinese and the Vietnamese, Indians, and Iranians. Race is an important criterion for Chen Yang to differentiate the "self" and the "other". He is involved in a gunfight between Daquan and the Vietnamese gang the first day he disembarks in Vancouver:

> I actually do not need to make a judgment.
>
> I am in between two gangs fighting each other. One is Chinese, one is Vietnamese.
>
> Even a fool knows which side to help! (vol.1, chp.134)

The statement of "choice without judgment" undoubtedly attests to his racial loyalty. The Vietnamese gang directly confronts Daquan and it ends up being totally eliminated. The Iranian and Indian gangs later become Daquan's secondary allies/subordinates. These gang fights over material benefits are generally applauded by the Chinese readers as a proof of the superiority of the Chinese race.

Similarly, an imagined ethnic absolutism that "both predates and colors contemporary Chinese notions about the nation"[23] also influences Chen Yang. The complicated relationship between Daquan and the native Chinese gang brings to the fore this pro-Mainland absolutism. On the one hand, Chen Yang's Daquan does not want to confront the native Chinese gang because "we are both Chinese and should not let the

foreigners laugh at us fighting each other"(vol.1, chp.139). On the other hand, Chen Yang and other Daquan members are infuriated that the native Chinese gang is "a plate of scattered sand" (*yi pan san sha* 一盘散沙) so that every other gang bullies the Chinese (vol.1, chp.151). Looking at the terms Daquan members use to describe themselves and the native Chinese gang tells how Chen Yang and other Daquan members—at this juncture the representatives of Mainland Chinese—understand this issue. Daquan members call themselves "purebred Chinese" (*chunzhong de zhongguoren* 纯种的中国人) and the native Chinese "AB boys" (AB *zai* 仔)[24] (vol.1, chp.135). "Purebred" alludes to the central, authoritative, and legitimate position in the genealogy of a species or breed. By claiming "purebred" identity, Daquan assumes the centrality and authority of their ethnic "Chineseness". The opposite of "purebred" is bastard and accordingly, the "Chineseness" represented by the bastard is not as legitimate and authoritative as its "purebred" fellows. Although the pairing of the "bastard" with the "purebred" may also tacitly recognize the belongingness of the bastard to the Chinese, the contrast of "people" (*ren* 人) and "boys" (*zai* 仔) indicates the constructed ethnic hierarchy within the Chinese race. Compared to the general term *ren*, *zai* is an informal and sometimes derogatory term for people, especially immature males. *Zai* as the preliminary or imperfect form of *ren* should receive purgative practices in order to be *ren*. In the novel one of the most significant "purgative practices" is violence—e.g., Chen Yang kills the

best fighter of the native Chinese gang with his own hands (vol.1, chp.150-3). Not surprisingly the imagined superiority of Mainlanders' "Chineseness" is welcomed by its Mainland-based readers. The advancement of Chen Yang to the highest power in the Canadian underworld fashions an imaginative power map of the world in which Mainland Chinese triumph over people of other races and their "bastard" fellow people.

Second, justifying the new profit-seeking motive of righteousness involves the reinvention of the righteousness-loyalty (*zhong* 忠) nexus from the tradition of popular Chinese culture. In chapter seventy-one of *SHZ*, Song Jiang's leadership in the *Liangshan* brotherhood is sanctified by the unearthed stele (*shi jie* 石碣). After the ritual of "receiving the edict from the heaven" (*shou min yu tian* 受命于天), his will becomes the only legitimate will of the whole community as a symbol of the heavenly will (*tian yi* 天意). When Song Jiang proposes the surrender of the whole brotherhood to the *Song* court (*quan huo shou zhao'an* 全伙受招安), the grassroots heroes such as Wu Song and Li Kui (李逵) vainly express their discontent but still stand by Song's side for the sake of preserving their loyalty and righteousness (*yi quan zhong yi* 以全忠义). The concern of "preserving loyalty and righteousness" has broached an important issue of the relationship between loyalty to the government/state and righteousness. The targets of the righteous *Liangshan* heroes are always those corrupt officials and their affiliates instead

of the symbol of the state itself—the emperor. This is most explicitly represented in Ruan Xiaowu's song:

> Kill all those corrupt officials and their cruel affiliates.
>
> This is my way of repaying the Zhao emperors.[25]
>
> *(Kuli zangguan dou sha jin* 酷吏赃官都杀尽,
>
> *Zhongxin baoda Zhao guanjia* 忠心报答赵官家)

Compared to the unanimous hatred for those evil officials in *SHZ*, Chinese people's attitude toward the *Liangshan* heroes' loyalty to the *Song* state is more ambiguous. The heroes' deeds to embody their loyalty—especially their courage in warding off the invasion of the *Liao* army under the command of the *Song* state—are largely perceived in a positive light. To some extent their loyalty is integrated with their righteousness and exists as its ultimate goal.

The righteousness-loyalty (*zhong* 忠) nexus from the popular Chinese tradition is reinvented in *Cool Evil* to justify the convergence of righteousness and profit-seeking. An interesting negotiation between the author Dancing and his readers lays bare the internal tension of the netizens' counter-memory on this issue. After inspiring the initial sensation, Chen Yang as a mere mafia boss alone could no longer satisfy the majority of his readers.

Many readers started to criticize Dancing's plot design.[26] Some pointed out that the reason for their dissatisfaction with Dancing's writing was the "malaise" (*yumen* 郁闷) because of Chen Yang's inability to return to China.[27] While Dancing initially insisted his more individualist plot design featuring Chen's adventure of making fortunes for his gang members and himself, the downfall of *Cool Evil*'s subscription at Qidian.com prompted him to seek alternatives to develop this character.

Cool Evil was produced in the commercialized system of cyber-literature. The readers' subscription literally decided Dancing's financial interests. In discussing the influence of consumerism on Chinese netizens, Jack Linchuan Qiu points out that they "care more about subjects that can be discussed and celebrated, generating instant gratification for mass consumption than the grand narratives of modernity: rationality, liberalism, or 'social democracy'" (2004, 114). The notion of loyalty is a subject with such profound emotional appeal and cultural-psychological impact to Chinese netizens that Dancing wrote the last volume of *Cool Evil* featuring Chen Yang's return to China to contemplate the nexus of loyalty and righteousness in the netizens' counter-memory.

The urge to go back to China manifests a delicate psychology of *Cool Evil*'s readers regarding the new economic initiative of righteousness. Although they agree with Dancing on practicing *yi* through obtaining material profits, they believe that obtaining material benefits should not be the ultimate goal of righteousness. In other words,

obtaining material benefits must be accompanied with something else—something they believe to be more glorious and sublime. It is at this juncture that the notion of loyalty cuts in to provide this something "glorious and sublime". Combining profit-seeking and providing service to the nation-state becomes the ideal mode of righteousness for *Cool Evil*'s readers, who are eager to see Chen Yang not only as a mafia boss in foreign land but also as a hero welcomed back in China.

The author Dancing seemed to understand his readers' urge very well. In the last volume he wrote about how Chen Yang embodies his new sense of *yi* as a Chinese—to serve the Chinese government with his money and power as a mafia boss. Chen Yang helps the Chinese government with its expansion policy in Africa and North America. In an African country he helps the Chinese government obtain military aircraft technology originally from the United States. In the United States he buys off some American politicians to represent Chinese interests in the House and the Senate. The new development of Chen Yang's *yi* soon won back the readers' support and created a new round of online sensation.

The new developed meanings of *Cool Evil*'s *yi*—the profit-seeking initiative and the loyalty to the nation-state—drive home the complexity between righteousness and neoliberalist governmentality. Throughout the novel it is clearly manifested that the economic logics of global capitalism gradually ascend to the center in defining the

netizens' righteousness. Harking back to Chen Yang's initial dream of using Maoist egalitarianism to demolish the global capitalist order, his Daquan career ironically evidences the firmness of global capitalism and its overwhelming impact on grassroots Chinese people. If in Mao's era Chinese people were called upon to build a Communist society and to "liberate the whole humankind" (*jiefang quanrenlei* 解放全人类), this ideal is twisted in Chen's Daquan community into the urge to survive the capitalist competitions and to distribute wealth among the small circle of Daquan members. Revolutionary slogans—such as "using the intrepid revolutionary spirit to overthrow any evil" (*yi dawuwei de geming jingshen sao qing yiqie niuguisheshen* 以大无畏的革命精神扫清一切牛鬼蛇神) and "flying the red flags all over the world" (*wu zhou si hai hong qi yang* 五洲四海红旗扬)—are cited by Chen and his followers. However, those slogans have been stripped of significant political meanings enjoyed in Mao's era and exist only to provide some aura to Daquan's economic war in a transnational setting.

Chen Yang's service to the Chinese government—as a central embodiment of the righteousness-loyalty nexus in the novel—is also intertwined with his capitalist profit-seeking drive. When he is approached by the Chinese government and commits to the secret task of obtaining aircraft technology in Africa, his first reaction to the task is nothing but "Here comes the business" (*shenyi shang men* 生意上门). Besides obtaining the technology the government wants, Chen makes a deal with the dictator of this African

country and achieves the exclusive right to exploit the local oil and diamond resources. In the United States, in exchange for his help to buy off American politicians the Chinese government helps Chen Yang become a large shareholder of Las Vegas casinos and Hollywood film industry.

Another illuminating detail in this respect is Dancing's explanation of the significance of Chen Yang's trip to Africa. In the postscript of chapter twenty-five of volume three, Dancing explains to his readers that Chen's adventure in Africa is a special *toumingzhuang* (投名状) for him to go back to China. In *SHZ* the *toumingzhuang* is a required ritual of new heroes to join the *Liangshan* brotherhood. In chapter eleven of *SHZ* Zhu Gui (朱贵) explains to Lin Chong (林冲), "We demand a membership certificate from any bold man who wants to join our band. That means you have to go down the mountain, kill a man, and bring us his head to prove yourself" (Shi and Luo 1980, 180). If anything, the requirement of the *toumingzhuang* as a "membership certificate" for joining a brotherhood reveals the ambiguity of righteousness. The *toumingzhuang* tests the new member-to-be on whether he has the required "strength" (*shi li* 实力) to benefit the community. Martial prowess, smartness and courage to break law—the embodiments of strength in *SHZ*—can be tested in the experiment of killing. The consequence of the *toumingzhuang* binds the outlaws with the shared pragmatic concerns (*li hai* 利害).

Killing costs a person's legal status and thus he has to join the community of outlaws for survival and protection.

Dancing's equation of Chen Yang's adventure in Africa—a major embodiment of his righteous loyalty to the Chinese state—with a *toumingzhuang* indicates the author's awareness of the two-fold significance of Chen's loyalty to the state. First, Chen's service to the Chinese state evinces the immense power brought by his fortunes, which, to borrow the title of the third volume, represents the "summit" (*dianfeng* 巅峰) of his personal growth. Second, Chen Yang's re-alliance with the Chinese state is based not on utopian principles but on pragmatic concerns. The words describing Chen's negotiations with the state in this African operation—such as "business" (*shengyi* 生意) and "transaction" (*jiaoyi* 交易)—lay bare his concern of material interests, or *li* (利), in his offering of *yi* to the state.

After he successfully accomplishes his tasks in Africa and the United States, Chen gets government permission to go back to China. As the title of chapter twenty of volume three suggests, Chen continues to bargain (*taojiahuanjia* 讨价还价) with the Chinese government concerning the terms of his return. He promises to abide by Chinese laws in exchange for full protection of and special treatments to his businesses in China (vol.3, chp.19-21). Compared to the majority of his readers who simply applaud Chen's loyalty

and his return to China, the author persistently portrays Chen's righteous loyalty as an opportunity for further development of his business empire.

To some extent the development of Chen Yang's righteousness is commensurate with the new tendencies of the neoliberalist state policies. As Lisa Rofel notes, Chinese neoliberalism is an "ongoing experimental project" that fashions and is shaped by various kinds of neoliberalist subjects. Many scholars have paid attention to the ways in which the Chinese state—as one of the neoliberalist subjects—shapes its citizens in global capitalist economy. For example, focusing on the influences of the economic reforms on Chinese peasants in the 1980s and 1990s, Ann Anagnost registers in her book various state efforts to reform the peasants into a better-quality population that will deliver to the state an educated and disciplined labor force (1997). With China's increasing economic and political influences on a global level in twenty-first century—e.g. its economic expansion in Africa and its attempt to influence US domestic politics[28]—the shaping process is unavoidably diversified too. Compared to the early stage of the economic reform in the 1980s, in the expedited neoliberalist reform since the 1990s the Chinese state finds it increasingly attractive that a small number of entrepreneurial citizen subjects—especially in a transnational setting—collaborate with the state to facilitate its global expansion.

Central to modern governmentality is the power intended to subjugate the people in a pastoral way—a power "bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them" (Foucault 1990, 136). In twenty-first-century China, such power looms large with the irreversible trend of economic globalization and the concomitant flow of body, capital, and cultural forms on a transnational scale, which has brought about new modalities of subjectivity. As Nikolas Rose observes, in the regimes of neoliberalism one can best fulfill one's obligations to one's nation by most effectively pursuing the enhancement of one's own economic well-being. The public benefit and the private one are reciprocal, with the functioning of a free subject who while enjoying his freedom also enhances the national economy (1999, 145). Although the historical conditions of Britain and China in the twentieth-century are disparate, Rose's depiction of the twentieth-century British experience nonetheless sheds some light on China in the twentieth-first century, which seems to firmly catch up Western capitalist countries in terms of social economic reconstructing under globalization. The power of freedom has fashioned entrepreneurial Chinese subjects who unabashedly pursue material profits and self-expressively endow the process with the aura of national greatness. These subjects find their voice in the netizens' counter-memory of righteousness in *Cool Evil*, whose inclusion of

profit-seeking drives and loyalty to the nation-state in the name of righteousness is to some extent commensurable with the official memories defined by the neoliberalist state.

From a disenfranchised citizen struggling at the bottom of the polarized Chinese society to a powerful mafia boss walking over the legal margins in a transnational milieu, Chen Yang's development reflects Chinese people's passions and disillusions in participating in the Chinese neoliberalist project. The Chinese state *and* grassroots people do not merely embrace the cultural and political situations that constitute the order of our post-Cold War world but rather participate in creating it. While the neoliberalist state intends to shape its grassroots citizens into docile and efficient labor in the transnational economy, people at the grassroots level also articulate in cyber-literature their hope to utilize the transnational cultural and economical flow to their ends for emancipatory economic freedom.

However, more critical thinking is required to evaluate the emancipatory economic freedom introduced by *Cool Evil*'s notion of righteousness. Although the emancipatory function of economic freedom is upheld by both the specific netizen group—the producer and consumers of *Cool Evil*—and the neoliberalist state, its evaluation needs to break free from an evaluative paradigm based on interests of any specific nation-state or nation-race group. Relevant to Daquan's economic logics of capitalism is its rampant ethos of anti-civility in the pursuit of material profits. If compassion is the goal and fundamental

principle of the community of *yi*, wisdom and courage are the specific means to realize the goal of compassion. Chen Yang's wisdom is demonstrated in his novel and efficient strategies to tackle legal problems in Daquan's development in Canada. The legal problems Daquan faces in its development revolve around how to conceal the nature of Daquan as a crime organization. Chen Yang implements various strategies to dress up the Daquan organization as a legal business and successfully wins the support of the Canadian government. To lead a crime organization like Daquan to success also needs courage to challenge the civil orders of foreign countries. In the novel Chen is tested by his lawyer Baoya Zhou (龅牙周) on whether he has enough courage to be Daquan's leader. According to Baoya Zhou, courage has three different levels: the lowest level is blood courage (*qi xue zhi yong* 气血之勇); the intermediate level bone courage (*gu yong* 骨勇); the top level spirit courage (*shen yong* 神勇). And only a person with spirit courage can be a successful mafia boss that leads Daquan to "manipulate the laws and disturb the social order" (*fan yun fu yu* 翻云覆雨). Without surprise Chen Yang passes the test and demonstrates his great spirit courage in "playing the laws" (*wan nong fa lv* 玩弄法律) (vol.2, chp.57) in his Daquan career.

It is interesting to notice how closely the qualities of compassion, wisdom and courage are tied to the outlaw practices that defy the civil orders of foreign countries. Chen Yang's re-alliance with the Chinese state not only continues his racial-territorial

understanding of the national community that demands his loyalty—which has been demonstrated in his exile career—but also implies his problematic longings for civility in China and for chaos in foreign countries. Careful readers will notice that Chen Yang's mafia organization creates social problems in foreign countries that he does not want to see in China. Chen Yang does not deny it:

> (Chen monopolizes the smuggling business on the west coast of Canada after quitting the drug business)
>
> Fundamentally the damage of smuggling is no less than that of drugs… …But I am doing this in Canada. I am not a Canadian. I come from China. Canada is not my motherland (*zuguo* 祖国). I do not have belongingness (*guoshugan* 归属感) to this country… … I do not give a damn about whether the fiscal income of the Canadian government will be influenced by the smuggling or not. (vol.2, chp.88)

Chen Yang justifies his crimes with his lack of identification with non-motherland Canada, which seems to suggest that one's racial-territorial identity prevails over his civil codes. His attitude of "not giving a damn" indicates xenophobia among Chinese netizens.

The problematic relationship between upholding *yi* and the violation of laws questions the emancipatory function of economic freedom for Chinese netizens. The

netizens' unanimous acclamation to Chen Yang and his Daquan gang seems to advance a logic that righteousness justifies the violation of civil laws in foreign countries. The discourse of civility in contemporary China is integral to the modernization project of the state, particularly the drive to become integrated into global capitalism. It is also a top-down effort to dress up the realm of public authority as a voluntary but compliant public sphere.[29] Far from acquiescing in being docile, disciplined and law-abiding citizens as the statist discourse of civility has imagined, Chinese grassroots people articulate in *Cool Evil* their determination to overcome the legal barriers of civility to pursue individual wealth and prosperity. By exiling themselves to be heroic outlaws in foreign countries, Chen Yang and his brothers pursue the vast opportunities provided by globalization and neoliberalism without directly confronting the Chinese state. On the one hand, being heroic outlaws in foreign countries furnishes Chen Yang and his Daquan gang the opportunity to be neoliberalist, entrepreneurial citizen subjects and therefore fosters the netizens' pursuit of economic freedom. On the other hand, the netizens' imagined economic emancipation is based on a rampant anti-civility ethos that promotes the specific interest of China at the cost of political stableness and economic development of other nation-states. This anti-civility ethos reeks of chauvinist, xenophobic trends of Chinese grassroots nationalism, which eliminates the possibility of pursing grassroots

economic freedom on a democratic and egalitarian basis. It is in this sense that the netizens' country-memory of *yi* simultaneously discourages this cause.

Conclusion

David Harvey argues in his seminal book *The Condition of Postmodernity* that the more unified the space, the more important the qualities of the fragmentations become for social identity and action. He explains that the shrinkage of space that brings diverse communities across the globe into competition with each other implies localized competitive strategies and a heightened sense of awareness of what makes a place special and gives it a competitive advantage. This kind of reaction looks strongly to the identification of place, the building and signaling of its unique qualities in an increasingly homogeneous but fragmented world (1990, 271). This identification of place is germane to the Chinese netizens' national imagination, in which "nation" and its variants are still the most important narrative resources for conceiving of globalized identities based on those Harveyan "unique qualities", and closely tied to the historical, political, and cultural meanings of the Party-state.

Cyber-literature is a venue through which the emergent national subject—the netizens—negotiates its positionality within the national power structure. As the case of *Cool Evil* has demonstrated, the country-memory of righteousness gives rise to the

netizens' mode of national sentiments which simultaneously fuels and discourages their pursuit of emancipatory freedom in negotiation with neoliberliast state politics. The production and consumption of cyber-literature in contemporary Chinese public shphere is a vivid case of neoliberalist governmentality with "Chinese characteristics", The aesthetic representation of nationalism in Chinese cyber literature is part of a larger process of constructing Chinese identities in the era of globalization, which depicts in detail how "in an era of promised technological communicability between cultural localities, the desire for separate and, in many cases, incommensurable ways of life and identities has not faded", and how "the insistent and violent will for ethnic and cultural difference as markers of identities persists amid visions of new world order" (Tsu 2005, 4).

Notes:

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[1] According to Miaomiao Xu, it took radio and TV 38years and 18 years respectively to have the same amount of frequent users. See Miaomiao Xu (2004, 8).

[2] See the twenty-second CNNIC (China Internet Network Information Center) official report, available at http://www.cnnic.cn/index/0E/00/11/index.htm?877541270=1240513137.

[3] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/netizen.

[4] The point could be illustrated by the titles of some individual chapters of his book, like chp.2 "Say No to Indonesia's Anti-Chinese Riot"; chp.3 "Sino-U.S. Cyber Wars"; and chp.4 "Post 9/11 Transition of Priority".

[5] http://www.cnii.com.cn/20080623/ca499371.htm. A more objective report on Qidian.com could be find at the Alexa online-traffic ranking report at http://www.alexa.com. On Nov. 2, 2008, the traffic of Qidian.com ranks 579th globally, and 62nd among all Mainland Chinese-language sites.

[6] According to its website (http://www.snda.com), Shanda Interactive Entertainment Limited is "is a leading interactive entertainment media company in China". It offers a portfolio of diversified entertainment content including some of the most popular massively multi-player online role-playing games (MMORPGs) and advanced casual online games in China, as well as online chess and board games, e-sports game platform and a variety of cartoons, literature works and music. Its stocks are traded at Nasdaq (NasdaqGS: SNDA).

[7] The price is 0.02-0.03 *yuan*/ 1000 words. See http://www.qidian.com/Help/vipshenqin.aspx.

[8] http://www.cnn.com/interactive/world/0603/explainer.china.internet/frameset.exclude.html.

[9] Though asked to fill in personal information, users have the option to leave little, or even fake information to make sure they are untraceable in the real world.

[10] http://www.qidian.com/book/93122.aspx.

[11] *Cool Evil* forum at Qidian.com is at http://forum.qidian.com/BookForum.aspx?forumId=93122; Outside forums for *Cool Evil* could be found at Chinese portals like Baidu.com and Sina.com.

[12] This will result in an awkward gesture that exhausts the body quickly.

[13] http://forum.qidian.com/ThreadDetail.aspx?threadid=24380209&IsNewForum=false.

[14] See Reply No. 57. "LZ" is the acronym of the *pinyin* (拼音) of *louzhu* (楼主), which usually refers to users who initiate a discussion in an online forum or bbs. "Little Five" (*xiaowu* 小五) is a nickname both of Dancing and of Chen Yang in the novel.

[15] E.g., Reply No. 10, 36, 37, 48, 53, etc. The police abuse of power has been so serious an issue that even official medias could not deny its existence.

For a recent case reported on the website of the official China Daily (*Zhongguo ribao* 中国日报), see http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2008-11/11/content7192004.htm.

[16] The grassroots people' reactions to a recent sensational case of police killing in Shanghai also bespeaks their indignation toward the law-enforcements in China. See "Confessed Police Killer Lionized by Thousands in China: Crime Seen as Blow Against Oppression" at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/13/AR2008111304384.html.

[17] Reply No. 23.

[18] Reply No. 87.

[19] Reply No. 96.

[20] The recapitulation of Rose, Brown, and Ong's ideas of neoliberalism is from Rofel (2007, 15-8).

[21] The basic strategy of "disturbing the water" is: if there are two mafia organizations A and B Daquan wants to fight, Daquan attacks A and pretends it coming from B. When B fights back for revenge, it goes for A and thus the real engagement between A and B is produced.

[22] The most obvious example of traditional Chinese military intelligence that can be associated with Chen Yang's strategy is the twentieth of the "Thirty-Six Strategies" (*Sanshiliu ji* 三十六计): Catching a Fish in Disturbed Water (*hun shui mo yu* 浑水摸鱼).

[23] Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1999), 56.

[24] "AB" is the acronym of "America Born".

[25] The surname of emperors of Song dynasty.

[26] http://forum.qidian.com/ThreadDetail.aspx?threadid=26130444&IsNewForum=false.

[27] http://forum.qidian.com/ThreadDetail.aspx?threadid=22270210&IsNewForum=false.

[28] A quick search in recent titles of *The Economist* and *Far Eastern Economic Review* will provide sufficient information in this respect. Although there is no guarantee that this information is totally accurate, it nevertheless bespeaks the general tendency of China's global expansion.

[29] This summary of contemporary Chinese civility is from Lee (2007, 307), which is based on Anagnost (1997).

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

My dissertation delves into the recent articulation of popular nationalism in Mainland China, with particular emphasis on the changes that globalization and transnationalism have brought about to the representation of the Chinese nation in sentimental terms. Complementing the rich existing literature of Chinese nationalism that focuses mainly on the pre-1949 period, my study explores the less-trod contemporary era characterized by the new historical condition of postsocialism, which features a residual of the socialist past as well as its reinvention under new overwhelming trends of globalization. Postsocialism and its consequences—the alienation of intellectuals from the center of political power, the deepening of a neoliberalist economic reform, the state-intellectual promotion of cultural economy, the emergence of a dominant consumer culture, etc.—have produced new issues the existing scholarship on Chinese nationalism has yet to address. One such issue is how the paradoxical entity of the "nation" in time and space has been fragmented by the accretion of diversified voices from a wide spectrum of Chinese society. In postsocialist China, the agents imagining the nation

include not only regulars like the state and intellectuals, but also new players like mass-media elites and netizens (*wangmin*). I argue that these voices of different social forces that break up the hegemony of the state in representing the nation—the result of which being not that the state is excluded from this enterprise but that it now tells only part of the story—become expressed as various modes of national sentiments (*minzu qinggan*) when the nation is imagined under the historical condition of postsocialism. My study then explores in detail the fashioning and refashioning of contemporary Chinese subjectivity as it relates through the joining of national sentiments to the literal and figurative body of the nation and the social power structure, by analyzing these specific voices in a broad range of popular texts from TV, film, and the Internet. Under the current structure of my dissertation, the detailed examination includes four chapters dealing with specific modes of national sentiments articulated by the intellectuals, the state, the mass-media elites, and the netizens, respectively.

As one of the most appealing political ideologies and cultural discourses to Chinese people, nationalism persistently looms large in shaping modern Chinese subjectivity in the last one and a half centuries. Generally more attuned to the political culture mobilized by nationalism, political scientists emphasize its state and ideological formation as shaped by institutions and international conflicts. Literary scholars, on the other hand, reinvest the category of nationalism with the broader significance of cultural agency and

prefer to examine the "nation" as a nexus for competing narratives of culture, power, and discourse. Within the context of contemporary China, my study is intended not to join either group, but to bridge the seemingly unbridgeable gap between the two by concentrating on national sentiments—the spiritual quality that is, despite a pivot of nationalist articulation in popular culture, long overdue for academic consideration. Departing from the common assumption that national sentiments are transhistorical and transcultural inner emotions, I treat contemporary discourses of national sentiments as articulatory practices that participate in (re)defining the social order and power structure, and (re)producing forms of subjectivity and sociality. My study therefore demonstrates a possibility of uniting the nation's historicity and its figuration through the key construct of national sentiments.

My interdisciplinary approach to national sentiments brings to light some new materials that hitherto have been overlooked in the studies of contemporary Chinese nationalism. The leitmotif film in the 1990s demonstrates how the Communist party-state adapts its self-fashioning style to "go pop" in grappling with the immense and threatening impact of the Western popular culture—especially that of the Hollywood film. The brand-new form of popular representation—cyber-literature in the 21st century provides the venue for netizens—the representatives of grassroots Chinese people with self-appointed authority as generated from their active negotiations with the politics of

the neoliberalist state in cyber space—to articulate their version of imagining the nation. My devotion to the production and consumption of popular nationalist (media-)texts also entails critical reassessment of some widely-studied materials like the 1988 Chinese documentary *River Elegy* within a new discursive scheme of intellectuality in relation to popular nationalism in postsocialist China. The central notion—national sentiments—threads together all the individual chapters of this dissertation. I treat contemporary discourses of national sentiments as articulatory practices that participate in (re)defining the social order and power structure, and (re)producing forms of subjectivity and sociality. Therefore I look into not only the meanings of these popular media texts per se, but also their production, consumption and circulation within the specific context of Chinese postsocialism and global capitalism.

As a result of my dissertation, I hope to make a significant contribution to the understanding of the ambiguous possibilities produced by the integration of China into the global capitalist system and the merging of the realms of the state and the market, as well as their implications to the postsocialist articulation of issues like race, class, and gender in the name of national sentiments. Addressing the fundamental issue of how people, as historically situated subjects, articulate their attachment for the imagined construct of the nation with full awareness of the persistent divide between a humanistic and social-scientific approach to modernity, I hope to furnish a productive way to

theorize the linkages between modern subjectivity and modern political institutions, particularly the nation-state. It is in this sense that my dissertation provides an unconventional, popular-culture-oriented study of the intriguing yet complicated theme of Chinese modernity.

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