

Re-Incarnating an Ancient, Emergent Superpower:  
The PRC's Epideictic Extravaganza, Public Memory, and National Identity

by

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## ABSTRACT

The People's Republic of China's inexorable ascendancy has become an epochal event in international landscape, accentuated by its triple national ceremonies of global significance: 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, 2009 Beijing Military Parade, and 2010 Shanghai World Expo. At a momentous juncture when the PRC endeavored to project a new national identity to the outside world, these ceremonial occasions constitute a high-stake communicative opportunity for the Chinese government and a fruitful set of discursive artifacts for symbolic deconstruction and rhetorical interpretation. To unravel these ceremonial spectacles, a public memory approach, with its versatile potencies indexical of a nation's interpretive system of social meaning, its normative framework of ideological model, and its past-present-future interrelationships, is contextually, conceptually, and analytically diagnostic of a rising China's sociopolitical constellations. Thus employing public memory as a conceptual-methodological matrix, my dissertation focuses on the prominent texts in these ceremonies, excavates their historico-memorial invocation and sociocultural persuasion, and plumbs their discursive agenda, rhetorical operation, and sociopolitical implication. I argue that the Chinese government deliberately and forcefully strove for three interrelated communicative objectives at these three ceremonies—re-imaging, re-asserting, and re-anchoring its national identity as an ancient, emergent superpower. Yet in contemporary Chinese context, its discursive (con)quest to recast its leadership as a historically continuous, culturally orthodox, and ideologically legitimate regime has always been compromised by its

mythologized historical representation and hegemonic rhetorical reconfiguration, countervailed by its political and ideological fragility, and contested by domestic and global publics. Besides its contributions to the current conversation on the PRC's ceremonial phenomena, discursive formations, and communicative dynamics, this dissertation further offers its diagnosis and prognostication of this projected leading country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## DEDICATION

To my parents, Yaosheng Gong (龚尧生) and Yongchao Liu (刘永超), and elder brother, Yong Gong (龚勇)

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Try to imagine what everyday life would be like in a society in which no one knew any history. Imagination boggles, because it is only through knowledge of its history that a society can have knowledge of itself. As a man without memory and self-knowledge is a man adrift, so a society without memory (or more correctly, without recollection) and self-knowledge would be a society adrift.

—Arthur Marwick

People are not solely rational actors who use history to their own ends, nor are they merely cultural puppets pulled by the strings of deep-set values. They are, instead, I believe, creatures who are themselves inescapably historical. In the notion of humanness is a temporal dimension, a necessary orientation both to past and to future, an understanding of self for which a sense of the past is not instrumental but of defining.

—Michael Schudson

The solidarity that derives from similarities is at its maximum when the collective consciousness completely envelopes our total consciousness, coinciding with it at every point.

—Emile Durkheim

Amid the significant political, economic, and cultural developments in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the PRC's phenomenal transformation has become one of the most epochal events in global landscape. In effect, China's inexorable ascendancy has been intensely underscored by a worldwide plethora of political observations, economic forecasts, scholarly studies, and media commentaries, focally centering on whether this ancient nation's emergence will lead to an "irresistible shift of global power to the east."<sup>1</sup> Martin Jacques, in his influential *When China Rules the World*, cautions that "China's impact on the world will be as great as that of the United States over the last century, probably far greater."<sup>2</sup> "Like the rise and fall of Rome, the Ottoman Empire, the British Raj or the Soviet Union [from which] grand narratives are wrought," Mark Leonard, in his popular *What does China Think*, predicts, "[China's rise] is the big story of our age and its after-effects could echo down generations to come."<sup>3</sup> *Global Language Monitor*, a media analytics company that tracks and analyzes sociocultural trends in language usage around the world, tracked 50,000 print and electronic media over the past decade, and announced that "Rise of China" emerged as the decade's top search phrase, eclipsing even "The Iraq War" and "The 9/11 Terrorist Attack."<sup>4</sup> Such a far-reaching trend has been catalyzed by China's triple ceremonial productions—2008 Beijing Olympic Games, 2009 Beijing Military Parade, and 2010 Shanghai World Expo, the last of which "caps a trio of landmark events"<sup>5</sup> of China's grand epideictic orchestrations. Altogether, these ceremonies have attracted worldwide political attention and media interpretation. Such intense limelight around the world on China's ceremonial orchestrations is nothing but understandable,

especially when these tripartite events are situated within the broader context of China's internal evolutions and external perceptions at the dawn of the new millennium.

## Introduction

Domestically, driven by its sustained double-digit economic growth since the late 1970s, China has made phenomenal strides in political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. Such transformative momentum has not just recently catapulted the country into the second largest economy in 2010 (next only to the U.S.), but also witnessed China's increasing confidence in political administration, ideological system, and social management. Indeed, China's political democratization, economic liberalization, and cultural dynamism have never been so vibrant, dynamic, and irreversible in its modern history.

Externally, China's sturdy rise has also brought unprecedented opportunities and challenges for the international community. On the one hand, China's massive population and increasing wealth have provided the world with abundant labor force and strong consumer demand. On the other hand, China's economic expansion, technological progress, and business competition have caused growing worries and protectionist/nationalist reactions from the world. Moreover, as one of the remaining communist countries, China's political stability, ideological viability, and military intention have always been major sources of regional skepticism and global concerns, particularly compounded by

China's increasingly assertive stance in international politics and economic negotiation.

For contemporary political, economic, and cultural observers, China's emergence as a forthcoming superpower is no longer a matter of debate; rather, it has become a pressing set of political priority, economic adjustment, and policy challenge: When will China finally consolidate its superpower status? How will China handle its upward trajectory while disciplining its internal/external behavior in light of domestic contradictions and international concerns? What kind of country will China become in its inevitable assumption of a globally dominant position? What will China's superpower status mean for the rest of the world? These complex yet vital questions have already become the forefront issues at almost every global politico-economic convention and multilateral diplomatic consultation.

In the face of such hectic national developments and intense global spotlight, especially over the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) prospect amid China's profound historical trajectory of political, social, and cultural matrix, the Chinese government in many ways reached a communicative juncture, particularly given its drastic shift from Mao's rigid self-isolation and self-sufficiency to the irresistible opening-up and reform nowadays. For Chinese leaders, one of the foremost issues today is no less than this one: Vis-à-vis its national transformation and international limelight, how should it re-construct a new national identity in front of domestic and global publics—a positive and favorable image that would accentuate its political, ideological, social, and

cultural legitimacy among the Chinese public, meanwhile assuring the international community of its political progressivism, economic sustainability, and social dynamism?

### Thesis Development

It is within such significant circumstances that the PRC orchestrated three national epideictic productions—the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the 2009 Beijing Military Parade, and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. For the Chinese government, these threefold ceremonies constitute, among other institutional and international implications, a preeminent communicative occasion and momentous rhetorical situation. My juxtaposition of them together as a discursive exigency is justified by the following contextual dynamics surrounding these ceremonies:

Internally, first, with the advent of “the China Century,” Beijing was eager to underline its “symbolic return to international eminence, as the rising power of Asia hosting the world's iconic sporting festival”<sup>6</sup> and major global commercial events. Second, responding to the West’s growing concerns over China’s political, economic, and military clout, the Chinese government felt obligated to reassure the world with a brand-new national persona of peaceful rise. Third, the period from 2008-2010 was a time of ominous gravity for China. In 2008, in the wake of devastating natural disasters, the Chinese government urgently needed a morale boost to heal national trauma and recover public confidence. In 2009, the CCP confronted a series of momentous anniversaries replete with historical sensitivity and political volatility: the twentieth anniversary of the June 4 Incident in 1989,

which witnessed the most violent confrontation between the communist government and the public since 1949; the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic—another stressful juncture when the Chinese government was increasingly deadlocked between economic liberalization and political ossification. In 2010, the worldwide financial downturn further worn down Chinese economy, and aggravated China's political, social, and ethnic tensions.

Externally, overshadowed by a host of scathing censures and hostile atmosphere, the Chinese government's politico-communicative situation was equally grave: several Western politicians likened the Beijing Games to Hitler's Berlin Olympics in 1936;<sup>7</sup> worldwide protests and obstructions against the Olympic global torch relay, a supposedly rallying ritualistic "vehicle for [global] community involvement in the Games,"<sup>8</sup> became so dramatically violent that IOC President Rogge admitted "the Olympics is in crisis";<sup>9</sup> many western countries skewered the Chinese government's high-handed policies in Tibet and Xinjiang;<sup>10</sup> international media headlined China's pervasive human rights abuses, tightening press censorship, and rising social revolts; global concerns over Beijing's industrial pollution and public security turned acutely vitriolic.

Under these convoluted contexts, these three ceremonies, potentially as "a mode of altering reality ... by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action,"<sup>11</sup> proved politically crucial and rhetorically critical. For Chinese leaders and people, hardly any other national occasion had presented such "an actual or potential exigence"<sup>12</sup> which was so politically charged, symbolically imbricated, and emotionally infused, with the

stakes overwhelmingly high, the process harrowingly intense, and the outcome intolerably uncertain, that these ceremonies collectively pressed for a discursive solution for “the significant modification” in “a rhetorical audience ... who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change.”<sup>13</sup> It is precisely due to such rhetorical intensity and political significance that the three ceremonies present a rich set of rhetorical artifacts, demonstrative and indexical of:

First, how the Chinese government discursively conceptualized, orchestrated, and appropriated China’s historical traditions and cultural resources toward its political, ideological, and social objectives;

Second, how such rhetorical assertions were alternatively interpreted and oppositionally deconstructed by Chinese and global publics;

Third, how such a discursive conceptualization and rhetorical execution highlight China’s contemporary political, ideological, and social undercurrents, as well as the consequential implications of this projected ancient, emergent superpower.

As *NBC* commentators remark in its live broadcast during the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the opening ceremony functioned as “a gigantic statement to the world about the host’s self-regard,” and warranted being “deconstructed for social, cultural and political meanings.”<sup>14</sup> In fact, all three ceremonies intimately implicate China’s historical tradition, collective consciousness, and communicative pattern in their own ways, thus they together afford an opportune hermeneutic prototype to examine China’s current political, social, and cultural



realities. As sociologist Barbara Misztal aptly points out, when memory practices have increasingly defined contemporary politico-cultural formations, “studies of social memory are becoming an important part of any examination of contemporary society’s main problems and tensions.”<sup>15</sup> In this sense, a history-oriented approach, especially a public memory interrogation, to China’s highly symbolic and intimately memorial renditions is contextually enriching, conceptually illuminating, and, in John Bodnar’s words, discursively diagnostic of “the inherent contradictions of a social system.”<sup>16</sup>

From a communicative standpoint, a memorial scrutiny of these three ceremonies is fruitful for at least four reasons: first, national ceremonies have their inherent, significant values as the central locale of political, cultural, and social analysis, for such representations invariably reveal the hosts’ self-location within their historical, cultural and social configurations, especially for such a past-centered nation like China, seasoned by its millennia of dynastic vicissitudes and textured with an expansive temporal horizon.

Second, a mnemonic anatomy of these ceremonies is important in political, social, and cultural senses, for such national orchestrations productively highlight the Chinese government’s self-perception in the eyes of the domestic public, and underlying discursive imperatives in engaging the latter toward specific political, ideological, and cultural objectives.

Third, an extended overview of global memorial repercussions accruing from such events further discloses how such rhetorical efforts are perceived by the international public, and how the Chinese authorities projected itself as a

politically progressive, ideologically legitimate, and culturally vibrant power, especially from the historical recesses of global audiences.

Last, as these ceremonies are the most prominent communicative engagement by the Chinese government, a discursive study into them holds substantial promises of identifying contemporary Chinese communicative characteristics and rhetorical transactions within its historical heritage and cultural tradition, as well as perceptual dynamics and symbolic interaction between the PRC and the international community—a still uncertain yet crucial linchpin where the world’s peace and development are vitally involved.

Hence, in this dissertation, I approach these ceremonies from a public memorial vantage point, exploring their communicative intentions, rhetorical operations, and sociopolitical consequences. Through this research project of rhetorical analysis, I intend to investigate the following thematic issues: How did the Chinese government craft a new national identity, through historical, cultural, and social reconstructions of Chinese and international collective remembrances?; How did the Chinese government deploy historico-memorial resources to engage/invoke public recollection, political recognition, and ideological identification of domestic/global publics?; and What deeper political, ideological, cultural, social agendas intensely underlie China’s ceremonial spectacles while profoundly shaping its (inter)national trajectory in the new century?

Specifically, my research project focuses on addressing the following three interrelated questions:

RQ1: How did the Chinese government mnemonically employ these three ceremonial productions to achieve its communicative agendas and rhetorical objectives? Specifically, this question involves two subsidiary inquiries: first, domestically, how did the Chinese government enlist China's historical discourse to underwrite its political legitimacy, ideological relevance, and social status quo? Second, externally, how did the Chinese government engage global memorial remembrances to project its surging national persona and emerging superpower prospect before the global public?

RQ2: How were the Chinese government's rhetorical endeavors and publicity achievements challenged, contested, and deconstructed by domestic and international publics? What alternative/oppositional interpretations and perceptions were asserted? What implications and consequences did such political refutations and public contestations reveal about China's current political realities and discursive circumstances?

RQ3: How did the Chinese government's memory-oriented epideictic discourse extend traditional Chinese culture and communication? Further, what did such ceremonial renditions reflect China's contemporary communicative dynamics and rhetorical transactions? Finally, what did the Chinese government's politically invested, ideologically refracted, and socially inflected identity from these ceremonies presage for the PRC's political prospect and national future?

## Literature Review

To understand contemporary China, a nation “imbued with the writing of history since as early as 841 BC”<sup>17</sup> and a people endowed with “pride in sharing a continuous tradition whose civilization and empire led the world for two thousand years,”<sup>18</sup> a fundamental sense of the context is essential. In fact, “the Chinese had a prouder and more distinctive tradition,” John King Fairbank explains of China’s national vagaries wrought by its historical depth and modern trauma, “[thus they] responded more slowly to its collapse, suffered the humiliations of backwardness longer than any other major people.”<sup>19</sup> Consequently, since its fateful encounter with the West during the mid nineteenth century, subsequent Chinese governments—feudal, feudal-colonial, nationalist, and communist—was not only “driven simultaneously by a sense of national grievance over perceived humiliations ... but also by growing and even arrogant self-confidence.”<sup>20</sup> For most of the twentieth century, China’s redemption of national prestige from its “century of humiliation”<sup>21</sup> charted a tortuous, tumultuous course in its relationship with the world. In assessing its national trajectory, public memory, for a history-oriented country, provides a highly relevant, instrumental prism to interpret these grand ceremonies and this emergent country as a whole.

Almost as long as China’s chronicled history, the study of memory in the West traces at least back to 500 BCE in ancient Greece. As one of five canons in classical rhetoric, memory was conceived as “a system of mnemonic devices based on visualization of what was to be said.”<sup>22</sup> Such a mostly utilitarian notion of memory as a mechanic facilitator for speech delivery persisted until the early

twentieth century, when French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs relocated memory from Henry Bergson's individualistic philosophy, and resituated the sociological study of memory within a collective context. For Halbwachs, though memorial capacity resides with individuals, an endurable memory is impossible without such individual recollection "connected with the thoughts that come to us from the social milieu,"<sup>23</sup> for only "the framework of collective memory confines and binds our most intimate remembrance to each other."<sup>24</sup> Conceptually, Halbwachs extrapolated from Emile Durkheim's "collective conscience," and defined collective memory as "a current of continuous thought whose continuity is not at all artificial [which] retains from the past only what still lives or is capable of living in the consciousness of groups keeping the memory."<sup>25</sup>

Halbwachs's germinal work henceforth animated multidisciplinary interests and interdisciplinary exploration into memory's communal/national dynamics. In fact, the recent passion for memory study has already "established it as one of the main discourses that is increasingly used in social sciences, not merely to explain the past but also to explore the present."<sup>26</sup> At a time when an array of critical perspectives—poststructuralism, postmodernism, feminism, post-colonialism, and multiculturalism, to name a few—have intensely interrogated and invigorated contemporary intellectual landscape, public memory offers a productive resource to pursue political movement, cultural reclamation, and social critique.

Indeed, over the past two decades, memory has emerged as one of the most discussed topics in a wide range of fields. In delineating public memory's theoretical parameters, scholars from different disciplines have offered a host of

enlightening conceptualizations. For example, cultural historian Michael Kammen defines it as “a slowly shifting configuration of traditions” that is both “selective” and “contested.”<sup>27</sup> Social historian John Bodnar designates it “a body of beliefs and ideas about the past that help a public or society understand its past and present, and by implication, its future.”<sup>28</sup> Rhetorical scholars also reconceptualized memory’s discursive texture and rhetorical potency.<sup>29</sup> A rhetorical study of public memory, among others, can generate revealing insights into the vital dynamics between our temporal existence and the constructed past, reflective present, and formative future. Stephen Browne characterizes it as “a shared sense of the past, fashioned from the symbolic resources of community and subject to its particular history, hierarchies, and aspirations.”<sup>30</sup> James Jasinski terms it “an intersubjective and interactive phenomenon (memory as something that exists among a group of people).”<sup>31</sup> These productive conceptions thus supply a solid groundwork to inform rhetorical investigation and cultural dissection of public memory’s communicative functions and sociopolitical implications in our contemporary world.

Conceptually, a systematic investigation of public memory entails a comprehensive understanding of rhetorical transaction from political, social, cultural, psychological, ideological, and intercultural standpoints. As an eclectic approach incorporating both micro-level scrutiny and macro-level overview, a public memory framework explores, identifies, and assesses important patterns of historical reconstruction, memorial invocation, cultural recourse, and political mobilization undergirding momentous communicative phenomena and rhetorical

operation. As such, a public memory perspective lends itself particularly well to critically illuminating the interconnections/interactions between episodic/local mnemonic engagements and holistic/national discursive objectives, such as political motive, ideological agenda, and collective identity. In this sense, a rhetorical inquiry into public memory is especially suitable for unpacking ceremonial production, historical discourse, and national self-conception.

Methodologically, given that theory and method in rhetorical studies have a distinctly symbiotic and holistic relationship, a public memory approach to rhetorical criticism can function as an interanimating conceptual/analytical matrix, and provide a productive range of conceptual dialectics and analytical utilities. First, public memory functions as a community's reflective system or, in sociologist Barry Schwartz's term, "a model of society" reflecting "its needs, problems, fears, mentality, and aspirations."<sup>32</sup> Normally the past remains dormant unless some current issue disrupts the societal equilibrium, calling for change or action. Thus, despite its inherent constancy in content and structure, public memory, when conceived and evoked from a presentist focus, tends to marshal available historical sources and symbolic forms toward producing desirable representations of historical experiences for its members. In constructing a credible remembrance, memory is "an expressive symbol—a language, as it were, for articulating present predicaments."<sup>33</sup> Therefore, public commemorations are symbolically embedded and socially indexical of political hierarchy, social conflicts, and public sentiments.

Second, public memory operates as a community's normative framework, or "a model for society" that "defines its experience, articulates its values and goals, and provides cognitive, affective, and moral orientation for realizing them."<sup>34</sup> Emotionally, collective memory can hardly resonate with its subscribers without invoking its primitive appeal of orientation and exemplarity, especially vis-à-vis current sociopolitical problems. As a result, such a prescriptive function underscores public memory's instrumentality for social control and political manipulation, rendering memorial reconstruction/representation especially meaningful for political analysis and ideological critique.

Third, public memory works multi-directionally and multi-functionally, and poses an intensely contested terrain where "the shaping of a past worthy of public commemoration ... involves a struggle for supremacy between advocates of various political ideas and sentiments."<sup>35</sup> On the one hand, collective memory, as historian Iwona Irwin-Zarecka points out, provides "one of the most important symbolic resources we have, imbued as it often is with quasi-sacred meanings and capable of evoking very powerful emotions."<sup>36</sup> On the other, "what we remember and how we remember it," in Barbara Biesecker's view, "can tell us something significant about who we are as a people now, about the contemporary social and political issues that divide us, and about who we may become."<sup>37</sup> Thus, for prevalent political circumstances and cultural phenomena, including cultural rites, public rituals, and national commemorations, a mnemonic inquiry into their constitutive/competitive process can fruitfully illuminate contemporary political realities and social relations.



Last, public memory serves as a penetrating endoscope into the interrelationships between the past and present, particularly on how historical experiences are reconstructed as a relevant interpretive grid for the present. A community is always a memorially consensual grouping, constituted and sustained by shared narratives among its members. A look into its mnemonic evocations thus discloses a collective's historico-psychological sediment, politico-ideological foundation, and sociocultural constellation. Hence, when a community reverts to its past for discursive resources and persuasive inspirations, such a communicative process inevitably brings to light not only its sociocultural stances toward the past, but also its politico-ideological imperatives at present.

True, as a cultural practice, public memory often “outsteps established genres, eludes intent and improvises on both material and symbolic resources.”<sup>38</sup> Despite its conceptual, intentional, and artifactual fluidity, collective memory, with significant political, ideological, social, and cultural dimensions and implications, intimately imbricates/explicates many vital issues like domination, resistance, power, voice, and agency. A rhetorical investigation of public memory enactment can deepen our perception of important communal phenomena, such as political spectacles, social rituals, cultural traditions, and public memorializations. “Rhetorical critics and theorists and teachers,” as Barbara Biesecker urges, should “critically engage these extraordinarily popular and rapidly multiplying commemorative rhetorics in whose renovated narratives of national belonging our future may (not) lie.”<sup>39</sup>

By integrally implicating national identity, public memory can offer “a conceptual framework for critiquing articulations of national identity.”<sup>40</sup> At a time when memorial discourses have increasingly landscaped national reconstruction and international interaction, especially for those with a view to reconstituting, redefining, and re-appropriating the past experiences in support of contemporary political, ideological, and cultural configurations, such an investigative function is especially crucial for rhetorical scholars, who, after all, have been tasked as the “physicians of the state and of human character” since ancient Greece and Rome.<sup>41</sup>

### Chapter Organization

Proceeding from these ceremonial productions, and revolving around the above research questions, I structure my dissertation along the following chapter structure and topical analysis, with a view to, from a public memory perspective, exploring discursive dynamics and rhetorical operations underlying the Chinese government’s persuasive engagement with domestic and global audiences. Through this project, I seek to investigate discursive conceptualization and rhetorical transaction textured and layered via historical consciousness and collective remembrance, in order to contribute to the current conversation on China’s contemporary ascendancy, and our understanding on one of the most fundamental humanistic qualities and social activities—public remembrance.

## *Chapter 2: Rhetorical Context of the PRC's Epideictic Extravaganza*

This chapter provides an overarching national/international context for the PRC's ceremonial events and an overall conceptual/analytical background underlying my project. The primary purpose is to situate the relevance, significance, and implication of the present study within China's contemporary political, social, and cultural circumstances, as well as domestic/external communicative imperatives. Towards such ends, I review Lloyd Bitzer's concept of the rhetorical situation and its major dimensions, then use them as the conceptual foundation to develop my explication of the PRC's rhetorical circumstances on the eve of these ceremonies. Specifically, I outline three rhetorical exigencies at political, economic, and sociocultural levels which the PRC intensely confronted and must respond appropriately. Then I discuss the current intellectual/scholarly landscape regarding those ceremonies, and identify the conceptual/analytic niche which a rhetorical approach, particularly a public memory inquiry, can contribute and propel the understanding of China's epideictic spectacles, communicative phenomena, and rhetorical operations. At the end, I delineate three central research questions, with their conceptual interrelationships explained to structure the subsequent analysis and discussion.

## *Chapter 3: Public Memory, National Identity, and Rhetorical Criticism*

This chapter mainly furnishes a comprehensive and historical overview of memory studies across a wide range of disciplines, such as philosophy, literature, sociology, psychology, and political science. Then a distinct, progressive strand of rhetorical conceptualization is extrapolated and elaborated for its conceptual

merits and analytic values in unraveling China's ceremonial phenomena and penetrating into their communicative dynamics. Specifically, a set of perceptual dialectics will be distilled to illuminate public memory's conceptual values in unpacking complex, large-scale rhetorical phenomena toward (re)shaping national identity and public perception.

For the subsequent three analytical chapters dealing with the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, 2009 Beijing Military Parade, and 2010 Shanghai World Expo, I pick a set of central texts from each ceremony, and undertake a close reading into their discursive enactment, rhetorical operation (particularly memorial deployment), and communicative consequence. My criteria for text choice are based on several interconnected benchmarks: first, the text should be among the most prominent/salient component/artifact, which tend to assume definitive impression of these events. Second, the text should rhetorically embody distinct historical elements, engender public recollections, or yield past reflection/comparison among the audiences. In a word, a historical/memorial trigger should be visible/palpable in the text. Third, the text should generate substantial media commentary, public attention, and sociopolitical controversy, especially related to Chinese historico-cultural traditions. This last empirical orientation aims at grounding my rhetorical analysis and memorial deconstruction in material public responses and media receptions.

With such criteria, I exclude those texts which are more artistically/performatively prominent but not historically oriented (such as the 2010 Shanghai World Expo's opening ceremony), or historically associative yet

not thematically significant (the 2008 Beijing Olympics' display of Chinese ancient imperial costumes and etiquette), or visually/historically eye-catching but not focally heeded by the public or media (the 2009 Beijing Military Parade's hardware display). To analyze these chosen rhetorical artifacts systematically, I primarily employ Chinese and global media sources, including Chinese official media, Western media institutions, and other regional media organizations. In the process, my focus is on their interpretations, commentaries, and evaluations reflective of communicative impacts, rhetorical efficacies, and memorial effects arising from those ceremonies. To these ends, I resort to *the Lexis/Nexis's* databank to search for relevant reports, editorials, and opinion pieces, as well as online sources to expand and complement the range and depth of my data and analysis.

Through a careful process of review, screening, and choosing, including basic considerations of topical manageability, conceptual promise, analytical depth, comparative insight, and empirical evidence, I select the following texts for discursive analysis, mnemonic scrutiny, and rhetorical interrogation, with their respective rationales explained below:

*Chapter 4: Re-Imaging an Ancient, Emergent Superpower: The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games*

As “the most widely watched Games in Olympic history” in the words of Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee,<sup>42</sup> the Beijing Olympics affords “a gigantic statement to the world about the host’s self-regard,”<sup>43</sup> and its opening ceremony warrants being “deconstructed for social,

cultural and political meanings.”<sup>44</sup> Out of this four-hour-long spectacle, this chapter centers on four key rhetorical artifacts for a close reading of their memorial deployment and persuasive operation. The rationale and significance for each artifact follow:

- *Opening Countdown & Fou Performance*

This part predominantly serves as a crucial barometer and framing device of how the Chinese government conceptualized the Games and its rhetorical rendezvous with Chinese history and cultural traditions, and how it recontextualized and reconfigured the occasion to underwrite its historical, political, and ideological objectives.

- *Ethnic Unity & National Flag*

This part symbolically highlights what aspect of national identity, social unity, and authoritarian system that the Chinese government privileged and promoted as the national vision and political consensus. Moreover, such ideological mythologization also underlines the Chinese government’s paramount political concerns and pressing social problems.

- *Movable Type*

This part thematically crystallizes Chinese philosophical, cultural, and intellectual heritage, which, upon inspection, demonstrates how the Chinese government selectively represented and ideologically mobilized Chinese and global publics’ historical repositories and mnemonic susceptibility.

- *Yao Ming & Little Hero*

This part emphatically underscores how the Chinese government rhetorically weaved sports and politics together toward larger political and ideological priorities, and how such interanimation between memorial consciousness and patriotic awareness was measured against China's sociopolitical realities.

*Chapter 5: Re-Asserting an Ancient, Emergent Superpower: The 2009 Beijing Military Parade*

As China's 14<sup>th</sup> military parade and the first one in the new century, this "largest military parade in its history" marked China's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the national founding since 1949.<sup>45</sup> In unraveling this spectacle which showcases China's "transformation from an impoverished, war-racked country to an economic and diplomatic power,"<sup>46</sup> this chapter concentrates on the following significant artifacts for rhetorical scrutiny and discursive excavation:

- *Tian'anmen Square*

This site has been China's sociopolitical epicenter and the witness of major events in modern/contemporary times, thus how it was packaged and exploited during the ceremony, especially in light of China's contemporary political and social circumstances, contains significant clues for memorial deconstruction and rhetorical investigation.

- *Chinese President Hu's keynote speech*

Hu's speech is the only textually signified part of the ceremony, and hence functions as a pivotal device of the Chinese authorities'

discursive direction, definition, and constitution. As the supreme leader of the Chinese government, Hu's speech provides an important glimpse into China's internal self-conception and external self-projection, and, consequently, the rhetorical nature/dynamic of mnemonic invocation enacted to sustain such an envisioned national identity.

- *Display of Chinese Successive Supreme Leaders' Portraits*

This high-profile exhibition of Chinese leaders' portraits holds substantial promise in explicating the Chinese government's presentation of its partisan history. Despite the PRC's complex vicissitudes over its 60-year course, such an ostensibly linear yet factually convoluted personality parade obviously attempts to mask but contrarily exposes significant contradictions lurking through the PRC's trajectory and pervasive in contemporary Chinese society—contradictions that are most likely to yield insightful perceptions into historical, political, and ideological dynamics and prospect of this ancient, emergent superpower.

*Chapter 6: Re-Anchoring an Ancient, Emergent Superpower: The 2010 Shanghai World Expo*

This chapter examines how the Chinese government employed the World Fair, especially its institutional mission and worldwide prominence to showcase a host country's industrial strength and technological innovation, as an effective platform for China's national promotion, political publicity, and economic exemplification. This is especially so because the Expo's global reputation is



particularly appealing for a developing country like China, whose dogmatic ideological system and less internationally integrated politico-cultural institutions have long constrained its leverage to promote national persona through globally acknowledged channels. Thus the World Expo affords an exceptionally kairotic occasion for the Chinese government to prosecute its communicative agenda and rhetorical objective. In this chapter, I focus on three central rhetorical artifacts as below:

- *The Shanghai City*

This metropolis serves as not just an exhibition venue, but also a critical framing device to contextualize the Expo, interweave the Chinese Communist Party's partisan trajectory with Shanghai's historical journey, and project its memorial implications for Chinese and global audiences.

- *The China Pavilion*

This artifact is a meticulously selected as the architectural representation of the PRC's national identity, and possesses profound political, ideological, cultural, and rhetorical undertones beyond a pure exhibitionary prototype or engineering project.

- *Along the Riverside during the Clear-Autumn Festival (清明上河图, China's premium 3D painting exhibit based on one of Chinese most famed drawings)*

This work vividly depicts a panoramic river-view of urban vibrancy and rural serenity in China's ancient capital, Bianliang (now Kaifeng in

Henan province) during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127AD).

The deliberate choice of this drawing out of China's vast cultural heritage and artistic repository, together with its subtle portrayal and visual nuances, reveals Chinese official organizers' communicative motives, rhetorical expectations, and politico-ideological objectives.

### *Chapter 7: Implications & Conclusions*

This section summarizes what has been analyzed before, and discusses what communicative contributions and sociopolitical implications arise from examining the PRC's historico-memorial evocation and politico-ideological persuasion at these three ceremonies. Specifically, I review the PRC's rhetorical performances in its epideictic reproductions, assess what its problematic persuasion reveals about contemporary Chinese discursive terrain, explicate how such rhetorical spectacle highlights contemporary Chinese communication and rhetoric, particularly its continuity and disjuncture of Chinese sociocultural traditions. At last, I extrapolate from the above discussion to probe the nature, status, and prospect of the PRC as an ancient, emergent superpower from the perspectives of its rhetorical circumstances, sociopolitical aspirations, and historico-cultural representations, as a way to contribute to the current conversation surrounding the PRC as the projected leading country.

### Conclusion

Within the increasingly complex/interdependent context of globalization and exchange at all levels of individual, communal, national, and international

interaction, China's political, economic, and cultural ascendancy at contemporary times has drawn broad attention and not rarely deep concerns, especially over the PRC's political, economic, and military prospect. While on the Chinese side, the ruling Chinese communist government strove to project its positive persona by re-incarnating an ancient, emergent superpower, for which these three national ceremonies offer an almost once-and-for-all PR opportunity of discursive reconstruction and rhetorical proselytization. In this intensely communicative and competitively interpretive process, the Chinese government and domestic/global publics encounter at a discursive rendezvous, a rhetorical crucible which holds important clues to not only decode a forthcoming superpower's contemporary emergence from its historical projection and memorial conceptualization, but also illuminate memorial potentials and constitutive possibilities that human beings (not just the Chinese people) are so intimately engaged but have yet to fully understand and civically mobilize. More important, this project attempts to elucidate one of human society's foundational phenomena—public remembrance, both within the communication discipline and beyond, toward fuller international/intercultural understanding and more meaningful human co-existence.

## Chapter 2

### RHETORICAL CONTEXT OF THE PRC'S EPIDEICTIC EXTRAVAGANZA

More than 150 years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville famously predicted that the relationship between Russia and America would shape the destiny of the world. I suspect, if he had returned to earth as the new millennium dawned, he wouldn't ignore Russia, but he would write first about China.

—Madeleine Albright

The world is witnessing, in effect, a new stage in a national dialogue about the nature of Chinese power, influence, and aspirations that has gone on fitfully since the West first pried open China's doors. ... After an uncertain and sometimes harrowing journey, China is finally arriving at the vision cherished by reformers and revolutionaries over the past two centuries: a prosperous China wielding modern military capacities while preserving its distinctive values.

—Henry Kissinger

If “rhetoric is situational,” according to Lloyd Bitzer, then the rhetorical situation may be conceived as “a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance.”<sup>47</sup> Among the complicated rhetorical constellations preceding and underlying China’s ceremonial productions, there equally lay, in Bitzer’s terms, “a complex of broad range of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence.”<sup>48</sup> In fact, hardly any other contextual statement has ever encapsulated so concisely yet cursorily the PRC’s rhetorical circumstances on the eve of its epideictic extravaganza.

Amid significant political, economic, and cultural developments in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China’s inexorable ascendancy has become one of the most epochal events on global landscape. Indeed, China’s dramatic transformations in almost all aspects of its national lives have been underscored by a plethora of worldwide political observations, economic assessments, and media commentaries during the past ten year. Among the most indexical, *Global Language Monitor*,<sup>49</sup> after analyzing 50,000 print and electronic media over the past decade, announces that “Rise of China” emerged as the decade’s top search phrase, beating even “The Iraq War” and “The 9/11 Terrorist Attack.”<sup>50</sup>

Toward the end of the decade, such a far-reaching trend has been catalyzed by China’s triple national ceremonies—2008 Beijing Olympic Games, 2009 Beijing Military Parade, and 2010 Shanghai World Expo, the last of which “caps a trio of landmark events”<sup>51</sup> of China’s grand epideictic projections. As a result, these national ceremonies further attracted and invigorated worldwide

media attention, cultural interpretation, and scholarly investigation. Such extensive limelight around the world on China's self-presentations is nothing but understandable, especially when these events are deeply grounded within the profound backdrop of the PRC's internal configurations and external perceptions at the dawn of the new millennium.

### Conceptual Foundations of the PRC's Epideictic Context

To portray a comprehensive canvas of China's contemporary rhetorical situation before these epideictic events, China's profound changes in political, economic, and sociocultural spheres must be comprehensively surveyed and systematically evaluated, even at the risk of belaboring the obvious or even bordering on attempting an impossible task to which normally a series of topical/thematic volumes can do justice. Yet it is still, I think, a worthwhile work to do before starting the rhetorical scrutiny of these significant ceremonies. Such conceptual groundwork is especially necessary in light of what Lloyd Bitzer outlines as the rhetorical situation's six salient characteristics:

C1. Rhetorical discourse is called into existence by situation; the situation which the rhetor perceives amounts to an invitation to create and present discourse.<sup>52</sup>

C2. Although rhetorical situation invites response, it obviously does not invite just any response. Thus the secondary characteristic of rhetorical situation is that it invites a fitting response, a response that fits the situation.<sup>53</sup>

C3. If it makes sense to say that situation invites a “fitting” response, then situation must somehow prescribe the response which fits. ... A situation which is strong and clear dictates the purpose, theme, matter, and style of the response.<sup>54</sup>

C4. The exigence and the complex of persons, objects, events and relations which generate rhetorical discourse are located in reality, are objective and publicly observable historic facts in the world we experience, are therefore available for scrutiny by an observer or critic who attends to them.<sup>55</sup>

C5. Rhetorical situations exhibit structures which are simple or complex, and more or less organized.<sup>56</sup>

C6. Finally, rhetorical situations come into existence, then either mature or decay or mature and persist—conceivably some persist indefinitely. ... Every rhetorical situation in principle evolves to a propitious moment for the fitting rhetorical response.<sup>57</sup>

Proceeding from Bitzer’s conceptual foundations and applying them to China’s contemporary context, the rhetorical situation possesses special relevance to investigating China’s epideictic phenomena in six ways:

First, by C1, those ceremonies are not simply institutional events (2008 Beijing Olympic Games), temporal coincidence (2009 Beijing Military Parade in celebration of the PRC’s sixtieth founding anniversary), or routine occurrences (2010 Shanghai World Expo), but rather have deeper contextual dynamics and discursive imperatives. Hence, a rhetorical reading of China’s national

ceremonies can hardly penetrate into their underlying motives and objectives on the part of the Chinese authorities unless such a study incorporates a contextual purview grounded in historical and contemporary China's politics, society, and culture.

Second, by extension, according to C2, Chinese official organizers must tailor their ceremonial presentations to such contextual exigencies and construct fitting national messages within the parameters of their imperatives. In other words, it is the context that fundamentally dictates the motivation, felicity, and efficacy of China's epideictic productions. Without such a well-rounded discussion of the weighty contextual dynamics confronting the Chinese authorities, it is impossible to evaluate and critique, in a meaningful way, the Chinese government's discursive conceptualization, rhetorical execution, and communicative consequences during these momentous ceremonies.

Third, C3 stipulates that contemporary China's backdrop not just elicits a discursive response—and a fitting one appropriate to its context, but also prescribes/constrains the nature/content/format of such a fitting response. In other words, an in-depth understanding of China's contemporary circumstances is indispensable to unpack and elucidate China's ceremonial discourse, and more importantly assess and foresee its rhetorical outcome and sociopolitical implication.

Fourth, C4 points to the empirical basis of the rhetorical situation in reality, which “are objective and publicly observable historic facts in the world we experience, [and] are therefore available for scrutiny by an observer or critic who



attends to them.”<sup>58</sup> Regarding Bitzer’s philosophico-conceptual orientation, his realistic ontological ascription of the rhetorical situation probably provokes most controversies by some rhetorical scholars. Challenging Bitzer’s empirical attribution of “the nature of meaning,”<sup>59</sup> Richard Vatz refutes that “meaning is not intrinsic in events, facts, people, or ‘situations’ nor are facts ‘publicly observable.’”<sup>60</sup> In response, Vatz proposes a range of counter-realistic positions: “situations are rhetorical; ... utterance strongly invites exigence; ... the rhetoric controls the situational responses; ... situations obtain their character from the rhetoric which surrounds them or creates them.”<sup>61</sup> Bitzer and Vatz’s exchanges are notable and worthy of elaboration here, because their contrary positions, seemingly contradictory and hardly reconcilable on the nature of the rhetorical situation, in fact can organically complement each other and instrumentally propel many argumentative perspectives throughout this project of rhetorical investigation into China’s epideictic phenomena.

On the one hand, Bitzer raises an important issue of the conceptual gap in the nature of context during rhetorical transaction, for “the presence of rhetorical discourse obviously indicates the presence of a rhetorical situation.”<sup>62</sup> Bitzer’s conception supplements and enriches the notion of genre in rhetorical study, since “From day to day, year to year, comparable situations occur, prompting comparable responses; hence rhetorical forms are born and a special vocabulary, grammar, and style are established.”<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, Bitzer’s theorization of the rhetorical situation seems to verge toward a deterministically realistic direction and categorically deny any subsequent autonomy for rhetorical

intervention. In this regard, Vatz rightly contends that Bitzer's concept proves mostly informative "as to the phenomenological perspective of the speaker,"<sup>64</sup> yet ignores the fact that "meaning is not discovered in situations, but created by rhetors."<sup>65</sup>

On this significant yet moot polemic, I think Bitzer and Vatz actually converge in the belief that there exists such a valid conceptual phenomenon, and their differences primarily lie in the nature of this concept: Bitzer argues for a realistic, empirical ontological position, whereas Vatz upholds a constructed, interpretive alternative. Their counterpoising arguments can be integrally unified if we conceptualize the rhetorical situation along a temporal progression: within such a processual nature, the rhetorical situation must start with a more or less publicly consensual—though often historico-culturally invoked or sociopolitically motivated—exigency, so rhetoricians have a fundamental basis to gauge social sentiments, construct their fitting responses, and intervenes in political/social discourses. Without a relatively stabilized, shared consensus on social/political realities, it is inconceivable that rhetorician could navigate their interpretations from something sociopolitically recognizable to something sociopolitically consubstantial. In this sense, for a dynamic, comprehensive conceptualization of the rhetorical situation, Bitzer empirically orients us to a concrete, material starting point, while Vatz reminds us of a robust, potential prospect of fluid, autonomous discursive (re)configuration. Related to my dissertation project, it is necessary to commence, as Bitzer suggests, with contextualizing my research in contemporary China's politico-ideological and sociocultural circumstances, while

it is equally crucial to heed Vatz's caution to qualify such antecedent sociopolitical configurations, by injecting alternative/critical voices arising in the public sphere.

Fifth, C5 touches on the structural dimension of rhetorical situation, contingent on various political, social, and cultural factors. In Bitzer's words, "A situation, whether simple or complex, will be highly structured or loosely structured."<sup>66</sup> On the one hand, Bitzer describes that "It is highly structured when all of its elements are located and readied for the task to be performed."<sup>67</sup> This characterization relates to my analysis of China's epideictic discourse in the sense that all three ceremonies took place under their respective institutional, organizational, and historical milieus, thus their overall contextual constellations prescribe certain sets of specific standards and structural norms for their performative contents and discursive representations. For this reason, China's ceremonial productions, even under the predominant control of its CCP government, must also conform to these ceremonies' institutional traditions and structural benchmarks. On the other, as Bitzer distinguishes, "Situations may become weakened in structure due to complexity or disconnectedness."<sup>68</sup> The inherently disruptive, incompatible multiplicity among discursive exigencies, audience identities, and circumstantial constraints can often render impossible the rhetorical situation's structural uniformity/conformity to its institutional or performative traditions. As a result, China's epideictic orchestrations, within the profound background of Chinese historico-cultural heritage and sociopolitical complexities, necessitate an enlarged contextual vision in reading beyond these

ceremonial spectacles for more important politico-ideological implications and sociocultural consequences.

Last, C6 denotes the temporality of the rhetorical situation, and potential uncertainty/(in)adequacy of rhetorical response vis-à-vis such kairotic opportunities. This characteristic indicates two things related to my project on the PRC's epideictic rhetoric. For one, the Chinese authorities strove to fully utilize these ceremonial occasions by crafting specific rhetorical responses and forceful national messages in front of domestic and global audiences, fashioned out its politico-ideological agendas and sociocultural objectives. Yet for another, such rhetorical performances, despite its national mobilization, artistic achievements, and wide-ranging impacts, remains intensely controversial in discursive execution, historico-cultural representation, and sociopolitical ramification, particularly under the contemporary context of the PRC's ascendancy as an ancient, emergent superpower under the CCP reign.

Based on such a point-by-point explication of the significant relationships between Bitzer's rhetorical situation and my dissertation project, it should be clear now that it is essential that, within contemporary China's historical, political, ideological, social, and cultural matrix, an in-depth investigation into China's epideictic phenomena must start with a brief overview of the PRC's historical heritage, politico-ideological constellations, and sociocultural realities since its founding in 1949, and from the late 1970s in particular, when it finally decided to discard its unviable policy of self-isolation and rejoined the world.

## Rhetorical Context of China's Epideictic Extravaganza

As the only continuous ancient civilization in the world, Chinese history ranges far back in spatio-temporal expansion for 5,000 years, with a chronicled history for over 3,000 years. Under the sweep of its tortuous historical course and vicissitudinous national evolution, subsequent Chinese political, ideological, economic, social, and cultural developments have been profoundly constituted and cumulatively textured by its historical experiences, political systems, ideological doctrines, social norms, and cultural traditions. Under this broadly preconfigured context, an examination of the current China's politico-ideological phenomena, sociocultural manifestations, and discursive-rhetorical transactions cannot but start, at least, with a focal survey of the PRC's modern and contemporary permutations at political, economic, and sociocultural levels, particularly, in this project, how they crucially related to the PRC's communicative imperatives and discursive dynamics.

## Political Legitimacy and Ideological Mandate

Politically, as a party state with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) dominating all aspects of national life, the PRC traces its political beginning to the CCP's founding in the early 1920s. It was a tumultuous time when the country just shook off its feudal heritage, and managed to establish the first republican entity in 1911—the Republic of China, yet this regime proved so fragile among the competition between feudal diehards, military warlords, nationalist partisans, and Western colonial powers. Such fluid circumstances were further complicated

by two concurrently surging national awakenings: national rights and aspirations for peace, stability, and prosperity. These public awarenesses were particularly acute since the country had declined from its historical heyday in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to its precarious feudal-republican transition at the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In fact, such national strivings became so irresistible and intransigent that China's national politics assumed brand-new political dynamics and social sentiments: externally, the Chinese people became increasingly impatient with the government's pacifist foreign policies, particularly over new concessions in favor of the Western powers. The most striking example is the May Fourth Movement which witnessed an unprecedented scale of nationwide demonstration against the military government, who conceded national rights and territorial integrity under The Treaty of Versailles at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.<sup>69</sup> Such diplomatic setbacks and political betrayals at the hands of the Western countries disillusioned the Chinese public, and strengthened their pursuit of national independence, territorial integrity, and economic development. It is at this critical juncture that the CCP entered the convoluted sociopolitical arena, with its politico-ideological programs pointedly advocating revolutionary struggles toward such objectives and prospects for the Chinese people. From its founding days, the CCP had unequivocally proclaimed such mandates, thus hitching its politico-legitimacy to the fulfillment of these national goals. In other words, the CCP, despite its dominance in China's sociopolitical life, has been constantly measured by the Chinese public between its original proclamations and its factual delivery of those commitments. Consequently, deep in the CCP's apparatchiks and Chinese

public's mindsets, such performance review always lurks behind political debate and public discourse.

Just as *The USA Today* comments on the PRC's 60<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary that "Many Chinese are justifiably proud of what China has achieved,"<sup>70</sup> the Chinese government certainly had many things to celebrate its achievements on the occasion of those epideictic events. Yet sixty years after the PRC's founding, the CCP had found itself inextricably deadlocked in its political ossification and ideological obsolescence, vis-à-vis China's growing political clout, ascending global prestige, and pluralizing social climate. In fact, the PRC's anachronistic politico-ideological vulnerabilities and aggravating sociocultural tensions had developed to such an extent that the CCP leaders continually split over the gravity and urgency of political reform, while its lack of paramount strongmen nowadays often rendered its leadership reluctant to undertake any substantial institutional overhaul. Such conservatism and rigidity underlay major political crises in the PRC's contemporary history, particularly during the June 4 Incident in 1989 when the CCP government confronted the most serious challenge against its political legitimacy and ideological supremacy by the Chinese public. Though this nationwide movement was swiftly and tragically suppressed by the Chinese government's high-handed measures, the PRC had hitherto remained gridlocked in negative perceptions and politico-ideological skepticism by domestic and global publics.

As a result, for the three ceremonial events, the Chinese government's primary PR mission was twofold: first, to shake off the June 4 Incident's negative

legacy and public dubiety against its political leadership and ideological legitimacy; second, to recast itself as an open, vibrant, and progressive politico-ideological entity, which has been historically mandated to govern this ancient nation while steadily converging with global political liberalization and democratizing trend.

### Economic Progress and Systemic Issues

Undoubtedly, the PRC under the CCP government has achieved extraordinary accomplishments and economic transformation over the past sixty years. This fact has been frequently recognized and unreservedly acclaimed by Chinese and global publics. Yet its economic record proves ambivalently complex. Despite its heartening beginning in the 1950s and self-destructive mismanagement during the Great Leap Forward during the 1960s,<sup>71</sup> the CCP's economic credentials were generally lackluster only until the late 1970s, when Deng Xiaoping switched the country back from the Mao-era's ideological radicalism to politico-economic pragmatism. Since then, China has embarked upon a fast track of economic takeoff characterized by its double-digit growth for most of the subsequent decades. Such robust economic advances have brought far-reaching changes to the country's national physiognomy and catapulted itself into unprecedented global prominence: in 2007, China overtook Germany to be the third largest economic entity;<sup>72</sup> in 2009, China surpassed Germany to be the world's largest exporter<sup>73</sup> while its import volume ranking the second worldwide;<sup>74</sup> in 2010, China outstepped Japan as the second largest economy,<sup>75</sup>



and will—if present estimates hold—replace the U.S. as the largest entity by 2020.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, into the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China’s influence and involvement have become omnipresent in almost every global political institution and economic forum.

At national level, China’s economic progress has been impressively reflected in its growing national wealth, exploding consumer demands, and advancing social prosperity. According to its Eleventh Five-year (2006-2010) Plan statistics, China’s GDP grew at an annualized rate of 11.2% (far above the world’s level of 3.5%) during this period, with the its 2010 GDP accounting for 10% of the world total and its per capita gross national income (GNI) reaching \$3650 in 2009.<sup>77</sup> The Boston Consulting Group estimates that by 2020 the percentage of China’s middle-class families will surge to 51% of national households, and China’s consumption volume will rise to 24% of the world total, next only to the U.S.<sup>78</sup>

Parallel to China’s commendable economic strides is an expansive range of issues and problems related to China’s economic model, social consequences, and global ramifications. To a large extent, such extensive concerns are fully justified, given that China’s economic development has been achieved via its centralized planning economy, cheap labor forces, and natural resources exploitation, often at the cost of political justice, social equality, and environmental quality. In effect, China has made full use of its late-start advantages to pursue economic renaissance, and not rarely in a self-centered, nationalistic manner, which resulted in a long list of divisive issues between

China's national management and external negotiations with Western partners and regional neighbors.

Internally, for all economic benefits and national developments, the CCP government practices a statist policy of decision-making, in which the CCP government plays a dominant role in economic operation through heavy interventions out of political, ideological, and social considerations. Consequently, behind contemporary China's remarkable economic accomplishments, there has been an increasing level of political fragmentation, social stratification, and environmental degradation. Ironically, in recent years, the CCP has witnessed a dramatic transition in the political foundation from its previous constituencies—workers and peasants—to sociopolitical elites, entrepreneurs, and even capitalists: while the former have been relentlessly sidelined amid industrialization and privatization, the latter now assume more political weight and social prominence. Similarly, China's disparity in terms of economic incomes has reached an alarming level, with the latest income gap between different industries reaching 15 times, the highest in the world.<sup>79</sup> Such drastic economic differentiation has resulted in a variety of social consequences, such as widespread hatred of those politically powerful and economically advantaged, heightening tensions between the governments at all levels and the public, popular self-identification as the politically powerless, economically unfortunate, and socially vulnerable across a wide swathe of social classes, including professors and civil servants.<sup>80</sup> On the environmental front, as a developing country whose GDP accounts for only 10% of the world, Chinese economy disturbingly consumes a disproportionate amount

of natural resources (e.g., 46.9% and 10.4% of the world's coal and petroleum respectively).<sup>81</sup>

Externally, China also has a litany of chronic and emerging issues with global partners: trade imbalance, export dumping, intellectual property piracy, opaque investment policies, political interferences in business, statist monopoly of profitable industries, and environment pollution. Moreover, while those traditional issues remain unresolved, China's growing strength further compounds global concerns over the current and prospective problems. Major outstanding contentions regularly surface: China's rapid economic expansion in Africa and Latin America have triggered widespread suspicion about China's potential neo-colonial tendency; China's status as the global largest holder of foreign exchanges has caused deep qualms over its high saving rates and insufficient domestic consumption; China's ownership of a major share of US treasury bonds has stimulated intense discussion about China's politico-strategic intentions.

Altogether, in its economic field, the PRC certainly has a lot to celebrate and exemplify during these three ceremonies, yet beneath euphoric national celebration and politico-ideological showoff, the Chinese government must produce more to discursively compel two beliefs: first, while it is anybody's guess when the CCP has the determination to overhaul its political monopoly, ideological hegemony, and social dominance, it can at least continue to bring economic prosperity to its people, thus it can presume its legitimacy as a historical inevitability mandated by "the Heaven"; second, despite its admirable economic advances, the CCP government must demonstrate to the international

community that its ascendancy presages not a destructive, threatening challenge, but rather a constructive, cooperative stakeholder, with positive sociopolitical implications, sustainable economic developments, and indefinite business opportunities for everyone.

### Social Fragmentation and Cultural Pluralism

As “the most successful of all systems of conservatism,”<sup>82</sup> Chinese society, through dynastic vicissitudes, colonial subordination, and nationalist reclamation, remained resilient and continuous, sustained by its historical tradition, social foundation, and cultural values. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, resulting from its political and military vulnerabilities in face of Western technological superiority and economic intrusion, China’s national humiliations and sociopolitical chaos awakened the public to the unsustainability of its traditional model, and propelled Chinese intellectuals to pursue new ways to rejuvenate the nation through Western science and democracy.

Chinese intellectuals’ radical departure from the traditional recourse to the country’s history and culture underlay the CCP’s importation of Marxism to guide its political and military struggle against the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) led by Chiang Kai-shek. After WWII, the CCP’s swift victory from its bitter civil war with the KMT further emboldened the communist leaders’ conviction to discard Chinese traditional values and social norms, and transform Chinese society along the Marxist vision. By pigeonholing the whole society along political identity and class hierarchy, and enhancing industrial production through ideological

mobilization and mass movement, Chinese society since the 1950s had been completely subordinated to the CCP's political control and ideological supremacy. Anything incompatible with its official line was condemned as ideologically reactionary, culturally decadent, and morally moribund for political persecution and social exclusion.

While the CCP's socialist transformation steadily shook traditional social norms and cultural values, such politico-ideological hegemony over Chinese society reached its hysteric peak during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), when Mao Zedong launched a radical movement to purge political rivals and reconsolidate his paramount authority. It was during this devastating ten-year turmoil that Chinese society and culture suffered the most fatal destruction at the foundation. Hardly has any period in Chinese history witnessed its societal relations been so disrupted and cultural values so destructed, with family members telling on each other for self-protection or political correctness, while cultural institutions destroyed extensively and irredeemably. This period proved not just a deep national tragedy, but also a partisan nightmare in the CCP's administrative record of politico-ideological legitimacy.

After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping's return quickly switched the country back from paranoiac political infighting and zealous ideological movement to a pragmatic orbit. As the CCP keenly realized the necessity of recovering Chinese social norms and cultural heritage to restore traditional order, salvage its tarnished partisan image, and repair its undermined political standing, the Chinese government adopted an active tack to revive Chinese cultural tradition and

historical heritage. Not coincidentally, in 1982, Deng Xiaoping distanced the CCP's ideological orientation from its previous Marxist purism, and qualified it as "building socialism with Chinese characteristics."<sup>83</sup> This localization move, coupled with the CCP's reform and open-up policy, made for prosperity and diversity of Chinese societal values and cultural expressions nowadays.

While the recovery of Chinese traditional culture was intimately appropriated to stabilize/rationalize the CCP's political leadership and social recognition, the dissemination of Western liberal thoughts ineluctably sensitized the Chinese public to reflect on the CCP's dictatorial system and politico-ideological excesses since its reign. Such public awakening and the CCP's intransigent stance resulted in open confrontations and culminated in the tragic June 4 Incident in 1989, when the CCP could not tolerate public appeals for democracy, freedom of press, speech and assembly, and violently suppressed this spontaneous sociopolitical movement.

Since then, the CCP has practiced a dual approach in social control and cultural management: vigilantly safeguarding political hierarchy and social stability, while cautiously utilizing traditional values in support of the status quo and guarding against Western liberal thoughts' subversive penetration. At a time when the PRC had entered its 30<sup>th</sup> year of reform and opening-up while globalization and information technology have inexorably impacted Chinese society, such an expedient tactic, though so far ensuring sociopolitical order, has fermented more tensions and contestations between the authorities and the public.

Under these complex circumstances, contemporary China under the CCP has been besieged by growing throngs of social forces and cultural values, traditional and modern, domestic and international. Caught up in the twofold task of proving itself as the orthodox sociocultural inheritor of Chinese historical traditions and concurrently as the competent vanguard of Chinese progressive political forces amid global liberalization and democratization, the CCP has found itself constantly pressed under double discursive imperatives: internally, invoking Chinese sociocultural traditions to highlight its historical continuity and political legitimacy; externally, rebranding the PRC's compatibility with global sociopolitical trend to project itself as a cooperative member to the international community. In this sense, the PRC's triple national ceremonies provide a kairotic opportunity for the CCP's communicative ambition and rhetorical objective in front of domestic and global audiences.

#### Whither China? Current Scholarly Inquires and Rhetorical Studies' Contributions

In many ways, on the eve of these three ceremonies, the Chinese government had reached a momentous juncture, at which the CCP strove to present a brand-new national persona in front of the world. Over the PRC's sixty-year course, probably at no other time had CCP felt so impelled to rebrand its partisan image and national identity, especially under increasing pressure and challenge from the domestic public over political democracy, economic rights, and social equality, as well as growing skepticism and concern of the international

community regarding the PRC's political prospect, economic sustainability, and social stability.

Not surprisingly, over the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there has been an abundance of scholarly publications and media commentaries surrounding the full potentialities and possibilities behind China's ascendancy on global landscape, with a wide range of diagnoses and predictions proffered by politicians, economists, and journalists from diverse perspectives of political science, economics, diplomacy, sociology, history, and cultural studies.<sup>84</sup>

In this respect, the PRC's ceremonial productions heightened global interests in China's epideictic representation of its national self-conception and symbolic projection, which, if subject to discursive deconstruction and rhetorical anatomy, can help the world to percolate through the CCP's dazzling ceremonial extravaganza, and plumb its underlying politico-ideological realities and sociocultural constellations.<sup>85</sup>

Besides, this dissertation also constitutes a broad project of communication study into China's epideictic orchestrations, specifically explicating its significant ceremonies by way of rhetorical analysis. As a conceptual and methodological matrix, a public memory perspective is deployed to scrutinize these ceremonial productions to excavate their communicative objectives, discursive dynamics, and rhetorical consequences.

Analytically, for China as "a very past-conscious society,"<sup>86</sup> the appropriateness and instrumentality of a public memory approach to the PRC's ceremonial events are justified not just by the fact that rituals, as "the key to an



understanding of the essential constitutions of human societies,” often “reveal [group] values at the deepest level,”<sup>87</sup> but also because they deeply implicate China’s historical narrative, collective consciousness, and cultural heritage. As Barbara Misztal points out, when memory practices have increasingly defined contemporary cultural formations, “studies of social memory are becoming an important part of any examination of contemporary society’s main problems and tensions.”<sup>88</sup> Hence, a public memory-oriented investigation into those epideictic phenomena can produce “especially rich reservoir of data, with their high degree of articulation of different framing principles making for analytically easy access,”<sup>89</sup> and, consequently, prove diagnostic of “the inherent contradictions of a social system.”<sup>90</sup>

Through this rhetorical analysis project, I intend to investigate an array of important questions (e.g., What deeper political, ideological, cultural, social agendas underlay China’s rhetorical spectacles?; How did the Chinese government project a new national identity, through historical, cultural and social reconstruction of Chinese and international collective remembrances?; How did the Chinese government deploy historico-cultural resources to engage/invoke the domestic/global publics’ public recollection, political recognition, and ideological identification?; What politico-ideological, sociocultural, and discursive consequences arose out of the PRC’s rhetorical endeavors?). Specifically, my project revolves around the following three interrelated questions:

RQ1: How did the Chinese government mnemonically employ these ceremonial performances to achieve its communicative agenda and

rhetorical objective? In effect, this involves two subsidiary inquiries: first, domestically, how did the Chinese government enlist China's historical discourse to underwrite its politico-ideological legitimacy, national consensus, and social status quo? Second, externally, how did the Chinese government deploy global memorial resources to project its surging national status and emerging superpower vista before the global public?

RQ2: How were the Chinese government's rhetorical endeavors and achievements challenged, contested, and refuted by domestic and global publics? What alternative/contrary interpretations, perceptions, and implications were asserted? What implications and consequences did such social refutations and public contestations reveal about the PRC's current politico-ideological realities and cultural-discursive formations?

RQ3: How did the Chinese government's memory-oriented epideictic productions reflect/extend traditional Chinese culture and communication? Equally, what did such renditions reveal about China's contemporary communicative dynamics and rhetorical operations? Finally, what did the Chinese government's politically invested, ideologically refracted, and socially inflected national identity from these epideictic spectacles foreshadow the nature, status, and prospect of the PRC as a projected ancient, emergent superpower?

Before undertaking to analyze these three ceremonies, I first offer a literature review and theoretical overview of public memory as a rhetorical conceptual-methodological matrix, out of its multidisciplinary sources and interdisciplinary

hybridity. Thus, Chapter Three provides in-depth discussion on public memory's conceptual and methodological evolution, utility, and status as a rhetorical approach. Relatedly, for the sake of conceptual development, theoretical extension, and disciplinary contribution, this chapter also addresses: 1) Why public memory as a conceptual prism assumes increasing prominence and discursive significance in our contemporary times?, and 2) Why public remembrance as an analytic point of entry possesses unique relevance to China as an ancient civilization and the PRC as its contemporary sociopolitical incarnation?

## Chapter 3

### PUBLIC MEMORY, NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND RHETORICAL CRITICISM

No memory is possible outside of frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections. . . . He feels diminished and humiliated, is distressed and sometimes irritated because he cannot manage to keep or to recover his place in the social group.

—Maurice Halbwachs

A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and those of that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible fact, namely, consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life. A nation's existence is, if you will pardon the metaphor, a daily plebiscite, just as an individual's existence is a perpetual affirmation of life

—Ernest Renan

Identities and memories are not things we think *about*, but things we think *with*. As such they have no existence beyond our politics, our social relations, and our histories. We must take responsibility for their uses and abuses, recognizing that every assertion of identity involves a choice that affects not just ourselves but others.

—John Gillis

## Chinese Historical Character and Memorial Consciousness

In contrast to the PRC's relatively brief trajectory, Chinese civilizational foundation traces profoundly back in history, with its chronicled record ranging as far as 3,000 years. In fact, not only that historical writing "has been prevalent in China since at least 841 B.C.,"<sup>91</sup> but also, as Lynn Struve, American scholar on traditional Chinese history, notes, across millennia "recorded memories in the immense extant corpus of Chinese writings run the gamut of qualities that one expects to find in any maturely experienced, sophisticated body of literature."<sup>92</sup> Indeed, "in the Chinese context, to live humanly is to be historical oriented."<sup>93</sup> Such historical consciousness has definitively constituted and configured every aspect of Chinese political, ideological, social, and cultural lives, resulting in a unique people whose historical thinking is saliently characterized by analogy and coherence.<sup>94</sup> In effect, if "in the notion of humanness is a temporal dimension,"<sup>95</sup> then William Faulkner probably best encapsulates Chinese ever-intimate sense of the past with his famous line in *Requiem for a Nun*, "The past is never dead. It's not even past."<sup>96</sup> If time, "as an objectively given social category of thought produced within societies, varies from society to society,"<sup>97</sup> then this everlasting historical immediacy and temporal condensation for the Chinese people have transformed them into what historian Chun-chieh Huang terms "*Homo Historiens* in every sense"<sup>98</sup> or, in historian Iwona Irwin-Zarecka's words, "a people of memory"<sup>99</sup> who habitually extract from historical processes universal principles for descriptive and prescriptive purposes. Such inherently dual functions have henceforth constituted a "hermeneutic circle" in Chinese history study, which

“guides the daily comportment of each individual on the one hand, and the vast cosmic activities of the entire world on the other.”<sup>100</sup>

By extension, such essential relevance, omnipresent presence, and ultimate importance of history for the Chinese have inevitably catapulted historical representation and memorial reproduction into a prominent position and fertile locale to examine Chinese politico-ideological phenomena and sociocultural dynamics, including communicative activities and rhetorical transactions within its indigenous context and across cultural/national boundaries. This is particularly true in contemporary times when the PRC has become inextricably integrated into closer global political, economic, cultural institutions and interactions.

Paradoxically, at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when the past has seemed to be elapsing at a faster speed than ever for most countries and societies, historical experiences and memorial repositories have become all the more relevant and valuable to re-orient and inspire our consideration and solution on many vital issues today, not least the PRC’s contemporary emergence as the forthcoming superpower, both within its own historico-cultural trajectory and global international/intercultural exchanges.

### Multidisciplinary Studies of Public Memory

Comparable to Chinese prolonged historical horizon, the study of memory in the West traces at least back to 500 BCE, when memory was privileged as the master source of all the arts and sciences in ancient Greece. In Roman times,

memory was also prioritized as the core of all teaching, learning and thought.<sup>101</sup> In fact, “no art was more carefully studied, or esteemed, from Plato until Enlightenment, than the art of memory.”<sup>102</sup> From philosophically mythologized as the embodiment of the goddess Mnemosyne, psychologically symbolizing the power of imagination, to sociologically indexing the totality of cultural activities,<sup>103</sup> memory study has traversed a complex course in its conceptualization, manifestation, and function from a wide range of intellectual and disciplinary perspectives.

Among the earliest philosophers, memory was mostly admired by Socrates for its practical utilities in social lives,<sup>104</sup> and acclaimed by Plato and Aristotle for its mystical values to soul/moral transcendence.<sup>105</sup> Subsequent scholars echoed such a metaphysical vision: St Augustine stressed memory’s spiritual dimension as a depthless storehouse,<sup>106</sup> while Cicero insisted on its ethical aspect as “the soul’s highest ability.”<sup>107</sup> On the whole, memory in ancient times was considered as essential to the formation of virtue cultivation and moral character.

Through medieval period, memory was conceived as a vital instrument for moral education. Such pedagogic orientation of memory in education persisted until early modern era when John Locke contested such conception’s educational values,<sup>108</sup> and began to associate memory with identity by underscoring “the importance of memory for anchoring a sense of individual continuity over time.”<sup>109</sup> David Hume continued to accent the vagary of memory in constituting knowledge and self-identity. In general, Enlightenment philosophy contributed to

individualizing memory into “a notion of the continuous self ... across different times and places.”<sup>110</sup>

During the early-modern nineteenth, the accelerated process of industrialization destabilized many traditional ways of life, and produced a period of “memory crisis” characterized by individual subjectivity being overwhelmed by the weight of the persistent past.<sup>111</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche argued that “the unhistorical and the historical are necessary in equal measure for the health of an individual, of a people and of a culture.”<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile, Sigmund Freud reintroduced Plato’s notion of memory as “wax tablet” to illustrate his psychoanalytical concept of the unconscious, and reclaimed memory’s status “as so ubiquitous or so sovereign” in memory study.<sup>113</sup>

Since the early twentieth century, memory studies have undergone a series of dramatic permutations and drastic re-orientations, especially given the emergence of nation states, two traumatic World Wars, and global political, economic, and cultural convergences. If the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed a “memory boom” in scholarly study (due to the necessity of nation-state formation and past retention), then contemporary “memory revival” over the recent three decades can be variously attributed to the disillusionment with postwar modernist narratives of progressivism, the post-Cold War geopolitical changes and regional autonomy, nation-states’ increasing recourse to the past as the substitute for politico-ideological legitimacy and social unity, and ethnic self-awareness and self-government, at all levels of political participation, social interaction, and cultural activities. Facilitated by quickening globalization



and information technology, such a profound trend has unprecedentedly problematized, challenged, and expanded many disciplinary conceptualizations of memory.

In history, memory had long been dismissed as an anti-factual, counter-positivist discourse incompatible with history's empirical, rigorous benchmarks. But since the dissolution of major international tensions (the WWII and the Cold War) and the traumatic Holocaust, there has been a steady ontological shift to emphasize individual/ethnic remembrances and their epistemological validity in historiographical field. As a matter of fact, "in the last quarter century, memory has become, to all appearances, one of the central preoccupations of historical scholarship."<sup>114</sup> In this process, memory has offered not just a new subject matter, but also a new category of organizing, labeling and describing knowledge. This transformative pattern has been evident across a host of other disciplines—psychology, literary studies, anthropology, cultural studies, folklore studies, archaeology, museology, musicology, and sociology. For example, Frederic Bartlett, commonly known as the father of the modern psychology of memory, titled his classic study "Remembering" to denote the inherently dynamic, constructed, and processual nature of memory as the "effort after meaning."<sup>115</sup>

By comparison, sociology has probably provided the most conceptual resources on the symbolic analysis of memory—especially the discursive dimension of public remembering—for the communication discipline.<sup>116</sup> In sociological genealogy, memory used to be conceived as a largely instrumental faculty for social interaction and personal reflection until the early twentieth

century, when French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs relocated memory from Henry Bergson's individualistic philosophy, and resituated the sociological study of memory within a collective context. For Halbwachs, though memorial capacity resides with individuals, an enduring memory is impossible without such individual recollection "connected with the thoughts that come to us from the social milieu," because only "the framework of collective memory confines and binds our most intimate remembrance to each other."<sup>117</sup> Moreover, Halbwachs extrapolated from Emile Durkheim's "collective conscience," and defined public memory as "a current of continuous thought whose continuity is not at all artificial [which] retains from the past only what still lives or is capable of living in the consciousness of groups keeping the memory."<sup>118</sup>

Halbwachs's germinal work has henceforth rekindled multidisciplinary interests and interdisciplinary exploration into memory's communal/national dynamics. This is quite understandable, since "memory's multifaceted involvement in human life means that any intellectual approach to it is bound to be a partial one."<sup>119</sup> In fact, the recent passion for memory study has "established it as one of the main discourses that is increasingly used in social sciences, not merely to explain the past but also to explore the present."<sup>120</sup> At a time when an array of critical perspectives—poststructuralism, postmodernism, feminism, post-colonialism, and multiculturalism, to name a few—have profoundly interrogated/invigorated contemporary philosophical figuration and intellectual landscape, public memory offers a productive resource to pursue political struggle, ideological critique, cultural reclamation, and historical agency.

Over the past two decades, public memory has emerged as one of the most intensely debated topics in a wide range of fields. In delineating its conceptual vectors and analytical parameters, scholars from different disciplines have constructively extended Halbwachs's conceptualization. Among major theorists, cultural sociologist Iwona Irwin-Zarecka underlines public memory's collectivity and ubiquity, asserting that it is "a set of ideas, images, feelings about the past ... located not in the minds of individuals, but in the resources they share. There is no reason to privilege one form of resource over another."<sup>121</sup> Social historian John Bodnar points to its cognitive and predictive valence by terming it "a body of beliefs and ideas about the past that help a public or society understand both its past, present, and by implication, its future."<sup>122</sup> Cultural historian Michael Kammen echoes Halbwachs's emphasis on artificiality and uncertainty by defining public memory as "a slowly shifting configuration of traditions" that is both "selective" and "contested."<sup>123</sup> Social psychologist Barry Schwartz underscores public memory's symbolicity and secularity, designating it as "a pattern of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which... [people] communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."<sup>124</sup> Sociocultural anthropologist James Wertsch stresses public memory's mediacy and thematicity, characterizing it as "more a matter of accurate reorganizing, or reconstruction, bits of information into a general scheme than it is a matter of accurate recall of the isolated bits themselves."<sup>125</sup> Historian Peter Novick juxtaposes public memory against history's objectivity, complexity and detachment from the past, contending that collective remembrance "simplifies;

sees events from a single, committed perspective; is impatient with ambiguities of any kind; reduces events to mythic archetypes.”<sup>126</sup>

As Barbie Zelizer summarizes, contemporary studies of collective remembering is based on a set of basic premises, namely it is processual, partial, unpredictable, usable, particular/universal, and material, while deeply embedded and inextricably intertwined within two vital dimensions—time and space.<sup>127</sup> Consequently, such fruitful, multidisciplinary theorizations have laid a solid, extensible foundation for contemporary public memory studies, especially regarding its discursive properties, functions, and consequences along social, cultural, political, and critical dimensions.

#### Multidisciplinary Foundation of Public Memory’s

#### Discursive Properties, Functions, and Consequences

In public representation of the past experience, John Bodnar points out that “images and messages conveyed to the public would have to ‘make lasting impressions’ because it was not possible to tell everything.”<sup>128</sup> Hence, public remembrances, in his view, necessarily “have to be selective and, therefore, symbolic.”<sup>129</sup> Specifically, within the context of public memory’s symbolic materialization and rhetorical execution, multidisciplinary discussion and conceptual exploration into public memory have converged on some foundational judgments regarding its discursive properties, functions, and consequences at social, cultural, political, and critical levels.

Socially, public memory cannot stand as a distinct cognitive category, unless memory—people’s notion of how time passes and how the past relates to the present—can be validly conceived as a social construct and collective practice. On how human beings are situated in social timeframe, Anthony Giddens observes that people “do not just live in time, they have an awareness of the passing of time which is incorporated in the nature of their social institutions.”<sup>130</sup> Emile Durkheim is the first to define time as social,<sup>131</sup> because “a calendar expresses the rhythm of the collective activities, while at the same time its function is to assure their regularities.”<sup>132</sup> Thus, Durkheim holds that there is “a time common to the group,” rendering social time “a veritable social institution.”<sup>133</sup> Inheriting Durkheim’s innovative conceptualization, Halbwachs systematically elucidates how memory is not merely mediated by social structures, but in fact dictated by them. In his view, to remember, “one cannot in fact think about the events of one’s past without discoursing upon them. But to discourse upon something means to connect within a single system of ideas, our opinions as well as those of our circle,”<sup>134</sup> hence “there are no recollections which can be said to be purely interior, that is, which can be preserved only within individual memory.”<sup>135</sup>

Precisely because “It is in society that people normally acquire their memories ... that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories,”<sup>136</sup> Halbwachs believes that it is possible that different groups have different collective remembrances since they “are capable at every moment of reconstructing their past.”<sup>137</sup> Historian Michael Schudson further elaborates

memory's social entailments, as memories, even "located idiosyncratically in individual," remain social for "they generally operate through the supra-individual cultural construction of language ... [and] come into play in response to social stimulation, rehearsal, social cues."<sup>138</sup> Such continuous theorizations have served to propel and testify to the trend that memory's social ramifications in recent years have increasingly drawn diverse scholars' attention to excavating its previously neglected social foundations and collective functions, not least its momentous operations within a national domain.

Culturally, public memory, as a repertoire of cultural resources constantly under negotiation and mobilization, reveals various political interests, ideological agendas, and cultural forces intensely entangled and competing for control, supremacy and monopoly. The conception of memory as culture's conceptual distillation and material embodiment has a long history. Archaeologist Jan Assmann notes that in ancient times, "by subsuming all cultural activities—thus our personification of memory, the Greeks were viewing culture not only as based on memory but as a form of memory itself."<sup>139</sup> Halbwachs further points out that memories "never actualize as authentic reflections of some contingent occurrences but are overtaken by some ready appropriate stereotypes which are kept by the entire group."<sup>140</sup> As "a form of mediated action," in James Wertsch's view, remembering "entails the involvement of active agents and cultural tools," and "both must be involved in an irreducible tension."<sup>141</sup> Thus, as Michael Schudson contends, "if every society's symbols form a vast cultural system whose job is that of telling stories that represent and reproduce the existing society, then

for good or ill, and whether or not it accords with our ‘interest,’ culture constrains how we tell the tale.”<sup>142</sup> Situating public memory within “the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions,” John Bodnar elaborates that the former arises from “the concerns of cultural leaders or authorities at all levels of society” to maintain “social unity,” “the continuity of existing social institutions,” and the loyalty to the status quo”;<sup>143</sup> whereas vernacular culture “represents an array of specialized interests that are grounded in parts of the whole,” with a view to “protecting values and restating views of reality derived from firsthand experience in small-scale communities rather than the ‘imagined’ communities of a large nation.”<sup>144</sup> Because of such pervasive, deep-seated tensions between the two cultures, Bodnar insightfully points out that public memory, less rooted in a temporal dimension but “ultimately grounded in the inherent contradictions of a social system,” reflects “an aspect of the politics of culture,” and unveils “fundamental issues about the entire existence of a society.”<sup>145</sup>

Politically, public memory, as socially symbolic (re)constructions of the past, is inherently selective and fluid, thus leaving it susceptible to political manipulation, ideological inflection, and social control. “An understanding of the strategic nature of memory,” Yannis Hamilakis and Jo Labanyi assert, reveals that it “is not a passive repository (the ‘wax tablet’ model) but an active intervention—that is, practice.”<sup>146</sup> Rather than as “containers of precise, unchanging information,”<sup>147</sup> James Wertsch argues that collective remembrances “reflect strongly held commitments to a particular narrative account, commitments that are often masked by the tendency to think that our account

simply relates what happened.”<sup>148</sup> Halbwachs also points out that “instead of letting the past recur, we reconstruct it through an effort of reasoning, what happens is that we distort that past, because we wish to introduce greater coherence.”<sup>149</sup> In this ideational process, the public “chooses among the store of recollections, eliminates some of them, and arranges the others according to an order conforming with our ideas of the moment. From this comes many alterations.”<sup>150</sup> John Bodnar further notes that it is always the official authorities that “saw the past as a device that could help them, attain these goals (building a nation of dutiful and united citizens which undertook only orderly change) and never tired of using commemoration to restate what they thought the social order and citizen behavior should be.”<sup>151</sup> Therefore, Peter Burke observes, “Neither memories nor historians seem objective any longer. In both cases this selection, interpretation and distortion is socially conditioned.”<sup>152</sup> Moreover, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger stress that “the history which became part of the fund of knowledge or the ideology of nation, state or movement is not what has actually preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to (use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion).”<sup>153</sup> Consequently, public memory studies “have tended to assume that remembering is a highly contested and negotiated process in the public sphere and that it is driven to create a usable past.”<sup>154</sup>

Critically, public memory, as a significant sociocultural phenomenon, possesses consequential potentials and critical functions for political struggle,



cultural critique, and social resistance. True, many sociologists and historians strictly distinguish memory from history by contending that history, in Pierre Nora's view, as "an intellectual and secular production," has at its core "a critical discourse that is antithetical to spontaneous memory, whereas memory is forever subject to "permanent evolution," "dialectic of remembering and forgetting," "successive deformations," "manipulation and appropriation."<sup>155</sup> However, other scholars accentuate public memory's constructive nature, discursive character, and critical potency. As James Fentress and Chris Wickham point out, a memory "can be social only if it is capable of being transmitted and to be transmitted, a memory must first be articulated."<sup>156</sup> Andreas Huyssen contends that "the past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory."<sup>157</sup> John Bodnar further observes, if such articulations are monopolized and standardized by the authorities, then "their pluralist dimensions were obscured. On the other hand, their multivocal and pluralistic quality tended to constrain their ideal restatement of reality and the political objectives of officials."<sup>158</sup>

Thus by focusing on those invented, official memories, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger suggest, they become "important symptoms and therefore indicators of problems which might not otherwise be recognized, and developments which are otherwise difficult to identify and to date."<sup>159</sup> If, in sociologist Paul Connerton's judgment, "our experience of the present largely depends upon our knowledge of the past [and] our images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order,"<sup>160</sup> then public memory, as "product of individuals and groups, who come together not at the behest of the state or any of

its subsidiary organizations,”<sup>161</sup> fruitfully reveals “the fissures that opens up between experiencing an event and remembering it.”<sup>162</sup> More important, “as a practice (work in the sense of reworking),” Yannis Hamilakis and Jo Labanyi emphasize, public memory’s capability to reconstruct the past can be seen as its strength, for “while it can be used to rewrite the past in order to justify violence and repression, can also be used strategically to rework the past in ways that are enabling.”<sup>163</sup> For the study of memory to be productive, to borrow Michael Bruner’s recommendation for critical history, “it must simply serve as a perpetual ‘unmasking’ function in order to make previously unrecognized absences (politically motivated and variously egregious strategic narrative absences) available for public consideration.”<sup>164</sup>

Obviously, centrally concerned with lived experiences and temporal subjectivity, memory studies have brought together “different methods of inquiry and different traditions of representation of the past than history,”<sup>165</sup> with the above multidisciplinary conceptualizations laid a productive theoretical groundwork to investigate public memory’s symbolic dynamics, persuasive potency, and sociopolitical implications from a rhetorical standpoint.

#### Public Memory as a Conceptual/Analytical Matrix for Rhetorical Criticism

As mentioned above, the rhetorical study of memory started around 500 BCE in ancient Greece. As one of five canons in classical rhetoric, memory was conceived as “a system of mnemonic devices based on visualization of what was to be said.”<sup>166</sup> Such a practical, facilitative notion of memory’s function remained

until modern times, when memory discourse emerged in response to the formation of nation-states and the drastic, oftentimes traumatic impacts of interethnic/international conflicts over the past two centuries. Parallel to memory's transformative influences on diverse disciplines and social configurations, rhetorical scholars also reconceptualized memory's symbolic texture and persuasive efficacy.<sup>167</sup>

Among others, Barbie Zelizer centers on memory's collectivity and indeterminacy by referring to it as "recollections of the past that are determined and shaped by the group. ... [and] thereby presumes activities of sharing, discussion, negotiation, and, often, contestation."<sup>168</sup> James Jasinski grounds public memory in consensuality/consubstantiality, terming it "an intersubjective and interactive phenomenon (memory as something that exists among a group of people)."<sup>169</sup> Stephen Browne pinpoints its historicity and particularity by characterizing it as "a shared sense of the past, fashioned from the symbolic resources of community and subject to its particular history, hierarchies, and aspirations."<sup>170</sup> Given that collectivities are as much constituted by their memories as constituting these memories through their daily social activities and symbolic interactions, Kendall Phillips suggests that, "in a very real sense, to speak of memory in this way to speak of a highly rhetorical process."<sup>171</sup> Moreover, Kendall Phillips stresses that "as an art interested in the ways symbols are employed to induce cooperation, achieve understanding, contest understanding, and offer dissent, rhetoric is deeply steeped in a concern for public memories."<sup>172</sup> More recently, Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair and Brian Ott summarize and

evaluate six salient assumptions underlying public memory studies, namely presentist motivation, identity narrativity, affective animation, political partiality/contestation, materiality/symbolicity, and historicity.<sup>173</sup>

As a result, these enlightening conceptualizations supply a solid foundation to inform rhetorical investigation and cultural dissection of public memory's communicative function, political consequence, and social implication. In this era of pluralizing identities and fragmenting memories when "[n]ever before has so much been recorded, collected; and never before has remembering been so compulsive,"<sup>174</sup> a rhetorical study of public memory can generate fruitful insights into vital dynamics between our temporal existence on the one hand, and the constructed past, reflective present, and formative future on the other. Indeed, memory, "this nearly forgotten rhetorical concept," as Dexter Gordon reminds, has become "a crucial factor in coming to grips with our postmodern age."<sup>175</sup>

Theoretically, a systematic investigation of public memory entails a comprehensive understanding of rhetorical transaction from political, ideological, social, cultural, and psychological standpoints. As an eclectic tool incorporating micro-level scrutiny and macro-level overview, a public memory approach explores, identifies, and assesses significant patterns of historical reconstruction, memorial evocation, cultural recourse, and political mobilization behind important communicative phenomena and consequential rhetorical transactions. As such, a public memory perspective lends itself particularly well to critically illuminating interconnections/interactions between individual/local mnemonic reminiscence and communal/national historical invocation, such as political

spectacles, ideological propagandas, and collective identities. In this sense, a rhetorical inquiry into public memory is especially suitable to unpacking ceremonial reproduction, historical representation, and national reconstruction.

For the integrative, synergistic relationships between theory and method under the rubric of public memory, Barry Brummett's explication on the distinction between rhetorical theory and method comes in handy. While social science theory "is almost always distinct from the *methods* [original emphasis] which are used in studies designed to prove or disprove theory," Barry Brummett contrasts, in rhetorical studies "the distinction between theory and method is much weaker."<sup>176</sup> Brummett elaborates that "a rhetorical criticism based on that theory will use those concepts rather than distinct methodological tactics as the categories of analysis around which the study is formed," thus a rhetorical method is "the exercise of a trained sensibility ... to certain kinds of utterances which one can then look for in public discourse."<sup>177</sup> This way, "the method is merged with and subordinated to the theory."<sup>178</sup> With such holistic dynamics underlying public memory as a conceptual/analytic matrix, I thereby propose that, in unraveling "[t]he ways memories attain meaning, compel others to accept them, and are themselves contested, subverted, and supplanted by other memories,"<sup>179</sup> a rhetorical intersection with public memory provides a flexible gamut of perceptual dialectics and analytic guidelines, especially vis-à-vis national epideictic performances of global visibility, orchestrated by a historically-oriented, memorially constituted country like China.

First, a discursive inquiry of public memory reveals a community's reflective/semiotic system of meaning, which works as "a symbolic structure in which the reality of the community's inner life could be rendered more explicit and more comprehensible than it would have been otherwise."<sup>180</sup> Sociologist Barry Schwartz specifies this function as "a model of society" that embodies "its needs, problems, fears, mentality, and aspirations."<sup>181</sup> Normally the past remains dormant unless some current issue disrupts politico-societal equilibrium and entails necessary change/adjustment/reversal. Thus, despite its inherent constancy in content/structure, public memory, when conceived by the authorities from a presentist focus and by the public from an individual/emotional vantage point, discloses how available historical resources and symbolic forms are competitively marshaled toward producing resonant representations of historical experiences for its members. As "part of culture's meaning-making apparatus," collective recollection "establishes an image of the world so compelling as to render meaningful its deepest perplexities."<sup>182</sup> Therefore, public memory, "as a cognitive device to mediate competing interpretations and privilege some explanations over others," is symbolically embedded and politically indexical of national circumstances, social realities, and public sentiments.

Second, a persuasive examination of public memory focuses on a community's normative framework as "an ideological system,"<sup>183</sup> or "a model for society" that "defines its experience, articulates its values and goals, and provides cognitive, affective, and moral orientation for realizing them."<sup>184</sup> As Ernst Cassirer observes, "all symbolism harbors the curse of mediacy."<sup>185</sup> Rhetoric, "as

an art of shaping public remembrance through the process of conditioning enthymematic reasoning,” Kendall Phillips proposes, “crafts and utilizes forms of public remembrance in the service of disciplining memories and shaping a framework in which experience of the past is cultivated and contained.”<sup>186</sup> At the same time, public memory can hardly resonate with its subscribers without invoking primitive appeals of orientation and exemplarity, especially vis-à-vis undesirable politico-social circumstances. Either reduced to idealist abstraction or corrupted into psychological mystery, public memory’s ideological property tends to “privilege some meanings over others and functions to exclude and forget as much as it includes and remembers.”<sup>187</sup> Discursively, John Bodnar explicitly notes that public memory “takes the form of an ideological system with special language, beliefs, symbols, and stories,”<sup>188</sup> which “was entirely dependent upon a process of symbolic commemoration that simultaneously allowed for a diversity of expression and privileged some expressions over others.”<sup>189</sup> In this sense, public memory operates as what Maurice Charland designates as a constitutive rhetoric which “positions the reader towards political, social, and economic action in the material world and it is in this positioning that its ideological character becomes significant.”<sup>190</sup> As George Orwell tersely puts, “who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past,”<sup>191</sup> such a prescriptive function not only renders public memory amenable to political control and ideological manipulation, but also foregrounds memorial reconstruction/representation as a crucial locus for rhetorical interrogation and social critique.

Third, a symbolic perspective of public memory addresses its multi-directional and multi-functional potentialities/consequences. As a contested crucible participated by differently empowered communities, public memory “resorts to polysemic symbols and images that invite multiple interpretations and support counter-memories.”<sup>192</sup> Thus, it dictates that “the shaping of a past worthy of public commemoration . . . involves a struggle for supremacy between advocates of various political ideas and sentiments.”<sup>193</sup> Theodore Prosser enjoins that rhetorical critics “should vigorously encourage the recognition that history is not fixed, objective, or true, but rather that it is an interpretive, inherently moralizing, and therefore constantly contestable, process.”<sup>194</sup> A nation’s collective memory terrain, or “what we remember and how we remember it,” in Barbara Biesecker’s phrasing, “can tell us something significant about who we are as a people now, about the contemporary social and political issues that divide us, and about who we may become.”<sup>195</sup> Accordingly, for prevalent political events and social phenomena, including cultural rites, social rituals, and national commemorations, a mnemonic inspection into their constitutive/competitive process can profitably illuminate its purveyor’s contemporary politico-ideological circumstances and sociocultural configurations.

Last, a rhetorical study of public memory provides a penetrating endoscope into the interrelationships between the past and present for a community, particularly on how historical experiences are reconstructed “in the service of disciplining memories and shaping a framework in which experience of the past is cultivated and contained.”<sup>196</sup> A community is first and foremost a



memorially consensual grouping, constituted and sustained by historical narratives and shared experiences among its members. A look into its mnemonic evocations discloses a collective's historico-psychological sediment, politico-ideological foundation, and sociocultural constellation. Thus, when a community reverts to its past for symbolic resources and persuasive purposes, such a collective remembering process, in Stephen Browne's view, is productive of not only collective identity, but also "debates over the ownership of memory—its regulation, placement, and assignment of meaning."<sup>197</sup> Therefore, public memory, in John Bodnar's diagnosis, "involves not so much specific economic or moral problems, but rather fundamental issues about the entire existence of a society: its organization, structure of power, and the very meaning of its past and present."<sup>198</sup> As a result, in collective recollection, Bodnar incisively concludes, "each site and each bit of detail offered for public consumption inevitably became a representation of a larger and more complex reality and concept."<sup>199</sup>

Despite its conceptual, constructed, and contested fluidity, public memory, endowed with significant political, ideological, social, and cultural dimensions, intensely imbricates/explicates many vital issues like power, domination, resistance, voice, agency, and civic autonomy. As Barbie Zelizer emphasizes, "At the heart of memory's study is its usability, its invocation as a tool to defend different aims and agenda,"<sup>200</sup> thus a rhetorical investigation of public memory enactment can deepen our perception of important communal/communicative phenomena, such as political events, social rituals, cultural expressions, and public memorializations. As responsible rhetorical critics, Marouf Hasian and

Cheree Carlson cautions, “we should subject every such [historical] narrative to an exacting analysis, revealing as many facets of a story as possible, thus enlarging the repository of memory from which to construct competing narratives.”<sup>201</sup> At national level, Barbara Biesecker calls on “rhetorical critics and theorists and teachers to critically engage these extraordinarily popular and rapidly multiplying commemorative rhetorics in whose renovated narratives of national belonging our future may (not) lie.”<sup>202</sup>

### National Identity, Public Memory, and Rhetorical Criticism

As contemporary scholars of diverse disciplines have increasingly attended to political, ideological, social, and cultural implications underlying memory’s rhetorical dimension, especially at the collective/national level, the inquiry of identity has also witnessed a parallel multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary course. In fact, the study of identity comprised an important cornerstone in many modern human sciences, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, literature, political sciences, and linguistics. Notably, in contrast to a microsociological perspective on individual dynamics and self formation through the 1970s, identity discourse over the past two decades has embraced a significant transition from traditional individual concerns to contemporary collective and national imperatives, as characterized by three far-reaching, collectivist trends:

1. Social and nationalist movements of the past three decades have shifted scholarly attention to issues of group agency and political action.

2. Intellectual concerns with agency and self-direction have re-energized the study of identification processes.
3. New communication technologies have freed interaction from the requirements of physical copresence ... [and] have expanded the array of generalized others contributing to the construction of the self.<sup>203</sup>

Certainly, the emerging centrality of this nationalizing tendency in identity conceptualization and practice has not come about without sociopolitical imperatives. “At a time when the topographies of identity are being remapped at a rate startling even for Americans,” Stephen Browne says of contemporary commemorative terrain, “the question of who gets to be remembered is bound to take on dramatic proportions.”<sup>204</sup> In terms of the vital interconnection between identity and memory, according to Paul Ricoeur, it is John Locke who first equated “identity, self, and memory”<sup>205</sup> at the beginning of the eighteenth century, by locating “the importance of memory for anchoring a sense of individual continuity over time.”<sup>206</sup> John Gillis contends that, since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, identity “has taken on the status of a sacred object, an ‘ultimate concern,’ worth fighting and even dying for. To those who believe they do not have it, identity appears even more scarce and precious.”<sup>207</sup>

Generally, most memory scholars concur that, conceptually, identity and memory are neither static nor fixed, but “representations or constructions of reality, subjective rather than objective phenomena,” in which memory helps us make sense of who we are while we constantly revise memories to suit our current identities.<sup>208</sup> Therefore, identity and memory are both “highly selective,

inscriptive rather than descriptive, serving particular interests and ideological positions.” Moreover, memory and identity constitute an intimately interdependent, socially consequential relationship: they not only define each other, but also respectively “sustain certain subjective positions, social boundaries, and, of course, power.”<sup>209</sup> In this sense, vis-à-vis identity, memory can be employed as a constitutive rhetoric, which as “a critical rhetorical practice . . . proceeds on the notion that audiences and their identity do not transcend discourses but are fixed by the speeches, pamphlets, letters, et cetera within which they participate and by which they are persuaded to act.”<sup>210</sup> This is even more true at national level when historical traditions, cultural heritage and public remembrance are deeply intertwined and intensely contested for national reconstruction and collective consensus.

If “the nation,” as historian Ernest Renan proposes, “like the individual, is the culmination of a past full of efforts, sacrifices, and devotion, going back a long way,”<sup>211</sup> then “the core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely, a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity.”<sup>212</sup> As “one of the most powerful modern narrative forms,”<sup>213</sup> public memory integrally implicates national identity, and “enacts and gives substance to the group’s identity, its present conditions and its vision of the future.”<sup>214</sup> Thus public recollections, alongside national identity, are “not things we think *about*, but things we think *with*.”<sup>215</sup> Rather than “neutral cognitive instruments that simply assist us in our efforts to remember,” James Wertsch underscores, “we are often committed to

believing, or not believing them, sometimes in deeply emotional ways having to do with fundamental issues of identity.”<sup>216</sup> Consequently, public memory operates as “an overtly politically and emotionally invested phenomenon,”<sup>217</sup> and offers “a conceptual framework for critiquing articulations of national identity.”<sup>218</sup>

Indeed, public memory, “as the main source of collective identity, has always been employed by various social forces to boost their control and standing.”<sup>219</sup> When “a sense of shared experience through time is an important dimension of national identity,”<sup>220</sup> and the nation as the definitive mnemonic community vitally predicated its continuity on “the vision of a suitable past and a believable future,”<sup>221</sup> public memory hence “functions ideologically to provide coherence to a national community.”<sup>222</sup> Therefore, public memory has come to be studied “as an integrative force that overcomes individual and partisan interests and bequeaths to large collectivities a sense of purpose and obligation.”<sup>223</sup>

In contemporary times when memorial discourses have increasingly shaped national reconstruction and international interaction, especially for those striving to reconstitute, redefine, and re-appropriate the past experiences in support of political, ideological, and social constellations, such an interrogative function into a nation’s identity reconstruction and symbolic projection is critically instrumental for rhetorical scholars, who are uniquely positioned to contribute, among others, “a kind of critical self-consciousness about the symbolic and political character of public memory.”<sup>224</sup> In effect, as John Gillis insightfully points out, “they [identities and memories] have no existence beyond our politics, our social relations, and our histories. We must take responsibility for

their uses and abuses, recognizing that every assertion of identity involves a choice that affects not just ourselves but others.”<sup>225</sup> This is particularly true for a historically profound nation like China where “power struggle intrudes upon all memory work,” and memory study can expose “the ways in which power has historically been assigned.”<sup>226</sup>

In the case of China’s epideictic spectacles, the conceptual relevance and analytical cogency of public memory in rhetorically unpacking how the PRC re-incarnated its national identity have been substantiated by epideictic discourse’s political prominence, social consequence, and symbolic importance in Chinese cultural heritage and Western rhetorical tradition. As early as the Shang and Zhou dynasties (approximately 12<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.), China’s aristocratic class formulated a systematic set of ceremonial codes and sacrificial rituals in honoring Heaven and ancestors.<sup>227</sup> In the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., *Zuo Zhuan*, China’s first historiographical work and one of the classics in the Confucian School of Thought, pointed out that “ritual and warfare are two vital national affairs.”<sup>228</sup> Moreover, in ancient Chinese historico-cultural milieus, rites or rituals, besides their festive and commemorative significance, possess broader and more subtle connotations than their Western counterparts, as the former “are adjudged to be modes or manners that are fitting and proper for men to use to express their sentiments in certain human conditions.”<sup>229</sup> Chinese cultural scholar Wu Guozhen explains, “if a man’s behavior is said to be in accord with *li* [rituals], it means that he has acted fittingly and properly for the good of all concerned.”<sup>230</sup> Thus, in Chinese tradition, rituals always transcend ancestral worship, festive celebration, and social

commemoration, and intimately assert political legitimacy, administrative credentials, and sociocultural recognition. Amid Chinese prolonged historical trajectory, ceremonial rituals, especially those manifesting royal sovereignty, political authority, and ideological legitimacy, have consistently been instituted and deployed as a crucial but less mandatory means of ensuring imperial jurisdiction, political hierarchy, and social order. By extension, the restoration of previous dynastic glory/prosperity through recourse to ritual orthodoxy has become a salient theme in subsequent political endeavors toward national unity and social stability through many historical periods, especially when the country confronted internal chaos or external threat.

On the Western front, epideictic oratory, traditionally classified as one of rhetoric's tripartite genres, was "generally identified with discourse delivered outside judicial and legislative forums, such as speeches performed at festivals and ceremonial or symposiastic occasions."<sup>231</sup> Among its versatile, pervasive functions, epideictic delivery "shapes and cultivates the basic codes of value and belief by which a society or culture lives; it [also] shapes the ideologies and imageries with which, and by which, the individual members of a community identify themselves."<sup>232</sup> Moreover, Stephen Browne notes that, "as a genre," the epideictic form is "defined by its capacity to project back onto the audience values it believes to possess already."<sup>233</sup> In his view, "but for all of its apparent benignity, the epideictic oration can be a powerful instrument of reproduction, and those who control the space of public discourse can wield its resources in exceedingly effective ways."<sup>234</sup> Though fast-paced, progressive modernist

discourse has consistently discounted its pragmatic significance, epideictic rhetoric has nevertheless been highly valued for its potentials to “console or inspire an audience by instilling or renewing values and beliefs and a sense of group identity,”<sup>235</sup> and thus “provide public histories and cultural foundations for nationality.”<sup>236</sup> It is because of such sociocultural essentiality and symbolic-discursive efficacy in human societies that Jeffrey Walker argues that, before the conceptualization of the “art of rhetoric,” epideictic discourse stands as “the ‘primary’ form of ‘rhetoric’ on which pragmatic discourse [deliberative and forensic speeches]... is dependent for the major sources of its power—the culturally authoritative paradigms of eloquence and wisdom on which it draws.”<sup>237</sup> In this sense, epideictic oratory “reveals itself ... as the central and indeed fundamental mode of rhetoric in human culture.”<sup>238</sup>

Moreover, by “tying the past with the present and the future,” national rituals and ceremonies are not just “necessary for the construction and reinvention of the nation’s memory and consciousness,” but, more significantly, serve as “the emotional glue that binds the nation together, and without them the nation arguably cannot survive.”<sup>239</sup> Hence, through “the coordination of individual and group memories, whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation,”<sup>240</sup> epideictic productions, at the sociopolitical intersection of public memory and national identity, are crucial to determine and assess “cultural values and historical sense-making,”<sup>241</sup> as to be demonstrated in the PRC’s rhetorical designs and discursive emplotments during its epideictic extravaganza.



Based on the foregoing multidisciplinary conceptualization and circumstantial contextualization, it is evident that these three epideictic ceremonies, in each own way and also collectively, provided a kairotic occasion and ceremonial platform for the PRC to pursue its discursive agenda and publicity objective, with a view to re-incarnating its national identity as an ancient, emergent superpower in front of domestic and global audiences. Meanwhile, the appropriateness and instrumentality of a public memory approach to this epideictic trilogy are legitimated not just by the fact that rituals, as “the key to an understanding of the essential constitutions of human societies, ... reveal [group] values at the deepest level,”<sup>242</sup> but also because these ceremonies deeply implicate China’s historical narrative, collective consciousness, and cultural heritage. As Barbara Misztal argues, when memory practices have increasingly defined contemporary cultural formations, “studies of social memory are becoming an important part of any examination of contemporary society’s main problems and tensions.”<sup>243</sup> Therefore, a public memory-oriented investigation into these epideictic orchestrations in particular, and their politico-ideological and sociocultural constellations in general can produce “especially rich reservoir of data, with their high degree of articulation of different framing principles making for analytically easy access,”<sup>244</sup> and, consequently, prove diagnostic of “the inherent contradictions of a social system.”<sup>245</sup>

Meanwhile, within the context that “investigations into the rhetorical processes related to national identity construction are surprisingly limited,” as Michael Bruner points out, “This lack of development is lamentable given that

national identities, from tolerant forms of democratic civic/constitutional nationalism to chauvinistic forms of totalitarian ethnic/cultural nationalism, are constructed, at least in part, through rhetorical processes.”<sup>246</sup> In this sense, the present project of interrogating the PRC’s public memory-oriented national identity reconstruction via its epideictic extravaganza can contribute to such a pressing, promising line of rhetorical inquiry, not least when, in Bruner’s prognostication, “currently there are global transformations in national and international arrangements that will undoubtedly have a profound impact on the configuration of the future world community.”<sup>247</sup>

In the following three chapters, I employ public memory as the conceptual/analytical matrix to scrutinize these three epideictic productions, by identifying their circumstantial dynamics, locating their rhetorical deployments, and evaluating their sociopolitical implications. In enacting interpretation and constructing argument, I incorporate a broad variety of public perceptions, politico-economic observations, media commentaries, and scholarly studies to illuminate these ceremonies’ discursive manifestations, rhetorical transactions, and communicative consequences. Out of this wide-ranging collection of public-cum-media discourse surrounding China’s ceremonial events, I specifically focus on those comments and remarks that are historically oriented and memorially evocative, namely they are directly provoked from a historical perspective and intimately constituted by memorial reflections. As a substantial project of rhetorical criticism and sociopolitical critique, though my analysis draws on a substantial body of public receptions and media reports, my analytic focus and

evidential literature primarily centers on the motive, objective, operation, and implication underlying these ceremonial rhetoric, as reflected/responded by public/media perceptions. Hence my project remains distinct from other social scientific or hermeneutic/qualitative inquiries oriented toward media criticism, press coverage, or public relations.

## Chapter 4

### RE-IMAGING AN ANCIENT, EMERGENT SUPERPOWER: THE 2008

#### BEIJING OLYMPIC GAMES

There was no mistaking the power and symbolism of phenomenal opening ceremonies to the Beijing Olympic Games on August 8. Brilliantly executed, the multimedia spectacular was far more than the tracing 5,000 years of Chinese history, it was Beijing's statement to the world that China is a major civilization that demands and deserves its rightful place in the global hierarchy of nations. ... August 8, 2008 could be remembered as a sputnik moment for the USA.

— Jamie Metzl

That was last year [2008], and somehow it impressed me more than all the synchronised razzamatazz of the Olympic opening ceremony in Beijing. ... I think maybe it was only then that I really got the point about this decade, just as it was drawing to a close: that we are living through the end of 500 years of Western ascendancy.

— Niall Ferguson

From August 8 to 24, 2008, Beijing hosted the Games of the XXIX Olympiad. In the centennial history of the modern Olympic Games since 1896, Beijing was the twenty-second host nation, and third Asian country to hold the quadrennial Summer Games (Tokyo in 1964 and Seoul in 1988). As “the most widely watched Games in Olympic history” (Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee),<sup>248</sup> the Beijing Games witnessed an unprecedented number of participating National Olympic Committees (NOCs), athletes, sports events, and medal-winning countries. For the audiences worldwide, this “16-day pageant of state-of-the-art logistics and astounding athletic feats”<sup>249</sup> has proved so exemplarily grandiose that IOC effusively rates it as one of “records and superlatives,” characterized by “astonishing” athletes’ achievements, “excellent” organization, and “breathtaking” venues.<sup>250</sup> Yet, as amply evidenced by media commentaries and public receptions, no less unforgettable is its “perfectly executed and magnificently staged” opening ceremony at China’s newly crowned National Olympic Stadium.<sup>251</sup> In fact, this ceremonial production has not just been remembered as one of the most enduring impressions of the Beijing Olympics, but even canonized as the definitive benchmark for global epideictic productions.<sup>252</sup>

As the gambit of the Beijing Games, this rendition of “a breath-taking statement of intent”<sup>253</sup> elicited a plethora of political, economic, social, cultural, and artistic interpretations and prognostications over the Games and China as a whole.<sup>254</sup> At the dawn of the new century when China has been emerging as an economic, political, and sporting world power, this ceremony not just signals a

“potent cultural resource with real implications for international relations and the domestic interest of nation states,”<sup>255</sup> but accentuates “[the host’s] claims to having a leading status, mission, and destiny in the world international order and world history.”<sup>256</sup>

Despite the ceremony’s political, social, and cultural significance, there seems to be insufficient scholarly attention devoted to its communicative dimension and rhetorical operation. On the surface, this is China’s grand “coming-out party” from its century-long self-isolation to embrace the world, yet this Chinese centennial occasion<sup>257</sup> also telegraphs more political, ideological, cultural, and historical implications than a sports event normally purveys. As “a gigantic statement to the world about the host’s self-regard,”<sup>258</sup> this ceremony thus warrants being “deconstructed for social, cultural and political meanings” (NBC).<sup>259</sup> Moreover, as it intensely implicates China’s historical tradition, collective consciousness, and communicative pattern, it also affords an opportune hermeneutic prototype to examine the country’s political, social, and cultural circumstances. As Barbara Misztal points out, when memory practices have increasingly defined contemporary politico-cultural formations, “studies of social memory are becoming an important part of any examination of contemporary society’s main problems and tensions.”<sup>260</sup> In this sense, a history-oriented approach, especially a public memory interrogation, to this highly symbolic production can be contextually enriching, conceptually illuminating, and, in John Bodnar’s words, discursively diagnostic of “the inherent contradictions of a social system.”<sup>261</sup>

## Public Memory, National Identity, and the 2008 Beijing Olympics

As a cultural practice, public memory often “outsteps established genres, eludes intent and improvises on both material and symbolic resources.”<sup>262</sup> Despite its conceptual, intentional, and artifactual fluidity, public memory, with significant social, cultural, ideological, and political dimensions, intimately imbricates/explicates many vital issues like voice, domination, resistance, power, and agency. A rhetorical investigation of public memory enactment can deepen our perception of important communal phenomena, such as political events, social rituals, cultural traditions, and public memorializations. As Barbara Biesecker urges, rhetorical critics and theorists and teachers should “critically engage these extraordinarily popular and rapidly multiplying commemorative rhetorics in whose renovated narratives of national belonging our future may (not) lie.”<sup>263</sup> Consequently, by integrally implicating national identity, public memory offers “a conceptual framework for critiquing articulations of national identity.”<sup>264</sup>

In terms of cultural representations of national identity, “nowhere is the symbolic function of cultural display more evident than at the Olympic Games,”<sup>265</sup> precisely because sport “constitutes an exceptionally strong element of social interaction and as such becomes the perfect vehicle for implementing political objectives.”<sup>266</sup> The need for such national exemplification on a global platform was particularly acute for Asian hosts—from Tokyo (1964), Seoul (1988), Nagano (1998) to Beijing. Unlike their Western counterparts who only need showcase modern developments to affirm themselves as world-class cities,

Asian countries must evoke a “modern hybridity... as a syncretism of cutting-edge modern technological industry anchored in the rich cultural histories and civilization of the East.”<sup>267</sup> Over the previous Olympics Games, Asian hosts successfully renewed national images in front of the world: the 1964 Tokyo Games signaled Japan’s economic renaissance from a defeated country during WWII; the 1988 Seoul Games sped up Korea’s political democratization and economic takeoff; the 1998 Nagano Winter Games demonstrated Japanese national resilience in face of its decade-long economic deflation. In 2008, China certainly constituted no exception.

Through a public memory investigation, I argue that, by hosting the 2008 Summer Olympics, and the opening ceremony in particular, the Chinese government successfully re-erected a new national identity, through historical, cultural, and ideological deployments and reconstructions of Chinese and international collective remembrances. Yet such rhetorical accomplishments are neither unqualified nor uncontested in the globalizing world, but inevitably betrayed the Chinese authorities’ intense pursuit of politico-ideological legitimacy, which has increasingly been contested and challenged by domestic and international publics.

### Rhetorical Situation of the 2008 Beijing Olympics

Compared with other Asian host countries, the PRC was confronted with more complex political realities and rhetorical exigencies. Internally, with the advent of “the China Century,” Beijing was eager to underline its “symbolic



return to global eminence, as the rising power of Asia hosting the world's iconic sporting festival.”<sup>268</sup> Second, responding to the West’s growing concerns over China’s political, economic, and military power, the Chinese government felt obligated to reassure the world with a brand-new national persona of peaceful rise. Third, 2008 was a year of ominous gravity for China with a series of natural disasters, and the Chinese government urgently needed a morale boost to heal national trauma and recover public confidence. Fourth, the year after the Games, 2009, marked a series of momentous anniversaries replete with historical significance and political sensitivity, including the twentieth anniversary of the June 4 Incident in 1989, which witnessed the most violent confrontation between the communist regime and the Chinese public since 1949; and the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic—another stressful juncture when the Chinese government was increasingly deadlocked between economic liberalization and political ossification.

Externally, overshadowed by a litany of scathing censures and forbidding challenges, the Chinese government found its international circumstances no less grave: several Western politicians likened the Beijing Games to Hitler’s Berlin Olympics in 1936;<sup>269</sup> worldwide protests and obstructions against the Olympic global torch relay—a supposedly rallying ritualistic “vehicle for [global] community involvement in the Games”<sup>270</sup>—became dramatically violent that IOC President Rogge admitted “the Olympics is in crisis”;<sup>271</sup> many western countries skewered the Chinese government’s high-handed suppression in Tibet and Xinjiang;<sup>272</sup> international media headlined China’s pervasive human rights abuses,

tightening press censorship, and aggravating social tensions; global concerns over Beijing's industrial pollution and public security turned increasingly vitriolic.

It is within such a convoluted context that the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, potentially as “a mode of altering reality ... by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action,”<sup>273</sup> proved politically crucial and communicatively pivotal. For Chinese leaders and people, hardly any other public event had presented such “an actual or potential exigence”<sup>274</sup>—which was so nationally charged and emotionally invested, with the stakes overwhelmingly high, the process harrowingly intense, and the outcome intolerably uncertain—that the Games pressed for an imminent discursive solution for “the significant modification” in “a rhetorical audience ... who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change.”<sup>275</sup> It is precisely due to such rhetorical intensity and political consequence that this opening ceremony presents a rich rhetorical artifact on how the Chinese government conceptualized, orchestrated, and appropriated China's collective remembrance and national identity toward its political and ideological ends, and how such a process was alternatively interpreted and oppositionally deconstructed by Chinese and global publics.

### The Opening Ceremony

On August 8, 2008, the Games of the XXIX Olympiad started off with a ceremonial extravaganza, witnessed by 104 national heads and government leaders, over 11,500 athletes from 204 NOCs, 20,000 global journalists, and

estimated four billion TV viewers around the world. While many parts in this ceremony hold considerable political, historical, and cultural significance from a communicative perspective, to analyze this four-hour performance executed with the Chinese government's dominant involvement,<sup>276</sup> I focused on four central episodes for a close rhetorical reading of their communicative intention, memorial deployment, and discursive operation. The primary criteria in selecting these artifacts are based on their ceremonial prominence, memorial embedment, and symbolic salience, as illustrated by media coverage and public reception.

Specifically, the first episode, *Opening Countdown and Fou Performance*, predominantly serves as a crucial barometer and framing device of how the Chinese government conceptualized the Games and its rhetorical rendezvous with Chinese historical traditions and cultural heritage, and how the CCP recontextualized and reconfigured the occasion to underwrite its historical, political, and ideological objectives.

The second episode, *Ethnic Unity and National Flag*, symbolically highlights what aspects of national identity, social unity, and authoritarian system that the Chinese government currently privileged and discursively promoted as the national vision and political consensus. Contrarily, through this rhetorical transaction, such political idealization and ideological dramatization also discloses the Chinese government's pressing political concerns and social problems.

The third part, *Movable Type Formation*, thematically crystallizes Chinese philosophical, cultural, and intellectual configurations, which, upon close

inspection, demonstrates how the Chinese government selectively represented and ideologically commandeered domestic and global publics' historical recollections and mnemonic susceptibility.

The final part, *Yao Ming and Little Hero*, emphatically underscores how the Chinese government rhetorically wove sports and politics together toward larger political and ideological priorities, and how such purposeful interanimation between memorial consciousness and patriotic awareness reflected/refracted the PRC's politico-ideological and sociocultural realities.

To evaluate those episodes' discursive engagement with Chinese and international public memories, I resorted to two primary media sources for interpretation and assessment: first, the live broadcast of the Chinese Central Television (CCTV) (China's premium media institution and official Olympic broadcaster) to explicate the Chinese authorities' rhetorical intention and communicative objective underlying each episode; second, the live coverage/commentaries of mainstream global media (e.g., NBC and BBC). Meanwhile, for critical balance and analytic depth, I also referenced alternative Chinese/global public perceptions and cultural/scholarly critiques, in order to "rediscover the ruptural effects of conflict and struggle"<sup>277</sup> between Chinese official "discursive formation" and its deeper historico-cultural-social disjunctures.

#### *Episode I: Opening Countdown & Fou Performance*

When a digitally-projected Chinese sundial points toward 8:08pm, a flash of fluorescent light descends from the stadium roof to the ground, setting off two giant, vertical formations of 2,008 performers beating drum-like musical

instruments called *fou*.<sup>278</sup> Soon, in “symbolizing the passage of the ancient times and presaging the advent of an important moment” (CCTV)<sup>279</sup>, the formations change into a sixty-second countdown mode. At the last ten seconds, the two formations split into two display modes—one uses Arabic numerals; the other switches to Chinese numerals. The final back-counting proceeds by each second until the end of this “remarkably electrifying” prelude (BBC)<sup>280</sup>, climaxed by a dazzling barrage of exuberant firework explosion across the sky. Segueing into the first part of the ceremony, those drummers pound with varying crescendo rhythms and synchronized body movements, while intoning popular quotations from Confucius’ *Analects*.<sup>281</sup> Toward the end, an accelerating round of resounding percussion finally winds up this “rousing start” (NBC)<sup>282</sup> of “the best countdown display in human sports history.”<sup>283</sup>

Just as history can “trigger emotional, even subconscious associations ... capable of inspiring, attracting, and recruiting support for a particular political decision,”<sup>284</sup> public ceremony is often employed to enact national persuasion and political mobilization.<sup>285</sup> As integral means to maintain sociopolitical harmony, Chinese rituals, etiquette, and ceremonies are replete with historical symbolism and political overtones,<sup>286</sup> manifested by “its highly developed moral guidelines and sophisticated ritualistic norms through millennia” (CCTV)<sup>287</sup>. Likewise, a close look at this opening reveals significant rhetorical evocation of public memory.

First, the timing of the opening ceremony—exactly at 8:08pm, August 8, 2008—perfectly matches Chinese numerology, by which the digit “eight” stands

for a range of propitious connotations: prosperity, fortune, happiness, and good luck. On the surface, this ceremony appears to be inaugurated by an ancient Chinese timepiece, yet viewed from Chinese historical vision, it is a quintessential Chinese time-recording instrument, which traditionally marks a heavenly moment of national unification and political unity, that is now deployed to mobilize the Chinese public “to traverse the time and space, range the millennial-old motherland, and re-ignite the Chinese national awareness” (CCTV)<sup>288</sup>. Implicitly, the Olympics Games, as a classical Western epideictic heritage, is now recontextualized and recalibrated to narrate contemporary Chinese renaissance. Such a rhetorical transposition is further reinforced by the awe-striking presence of the 2,008 percussionists, which can make even the most incredulous spectator suspect that no other time and place could be more kairotic of such a message than what is unfolding here and now. With its “precision and sheer artistry” (BBC)<sup>289</sup>, this ceremony imperceptibly subsumes the Olympic Games under Chinese historico-cultural trajectory, and dexterously appropriated this event to underscore one key theme: China’s time has come.

Inwardly, this “impressive, limitlessly energetic, and absolutely electrifying” opening (BBC)<sup>290</sup> delivers an array of deep memories for the Chinese people: it reminds them that Confucianism has intimately shaped the country’s historical course, cultural contour, and national identity; it signals that the whole national endeavors and sacrifices during the seven-year preparations have finally paid off; it demonstrates that national prestige is ultimately bound with the CCP government’s political and ideological leadership; and, most importantly, it

pronounces that, for a once exemplar but later declining country, humiliated and marginalized for one and a half century, tonight is a memorable watershed of psycho-spiritual discharge to put behind all historical burdens and national traumas, as a Chinese viewer emotionally comments on *YouTube*'s clip of the opening ceremony, "I turn tearful each time I watch it [the ceremony]. It reclaimed our confidence which had lost for one hundred years."<sup>291</sup>

However, this opening part, like many other media events, opens space for alternative interpretation and historical deconstruction,<sup>292</sup> particularly on the musical instrument featured in the performance. By traditional Chinese culture, music serves to enlighten the audience and anchor the rigorous ritual system. Yet the instrument *fou* was more widely used as wine container during 500 BCE, and usually tapped to produce occasional tunes. Historically, *fou* was employed for three purposes: entertainment among the lower classes, elegiac musical rendition for funerals, and drinking utensils for dining. Though its musical and visual novelty in this ceremony achieved "a demonstrably confident, sure-footed and highly accessible statement to the world about Chinese history and culture,"<sup>293</sup> some Chinese scholars point out that on this festive occasion, such an indiscriminate appropriation of *fou* in pursuit of historical appeals tellingly exposes political opportunism and intellectual philistinism prevalent in contemporary Chinese society. Ma Weidu, one of China's best-known collectors, critiques that such high-profile artifact prostitution irrevocably wrecks Chinese ceremonial integrity and cultural heritage.<sup>294</sup> Zhu Dake, Chinese cultural critic, incisively quips that

*Fou* is indeed a significant Chinese cultural symbol, but its presence here precisely betrays the aggravating trivialization and moribundity of contemporary Chinese culture. What do those artistic directors intend to convey with such a funeral musical instrument? A flattering message to those communist apparatchiks or a veiled political curse?<sup>295</sup>

In effect, as an ancient country with profound historical traditions, Chinese rulers always have a dominant hand in controlling and configuring mainstream cultural interpretation, yet the country's polysemous historical repositories and resilient public remembrances never stop challenging and subverting official versions of historic-cultural reconstruction and politico-ideological appropriation, thus forfeiting the CCP government's monopoly over symbolic reproduction of the country's past and discursive signification of the present.

#### *Episode II: Ethnic Unity & National Flag*

Fifty six children, wearing traditional costumes of China's fifty six ethnic groups and holding a giant Chinese national flag, walk across the stadium floor to the accompaniment of a popular Chinese patriotic song "Ode to the Motherland." Then they transfer the flag to a group of ceremonial soldiers, who hoist the flag amid Chinese national anthem and the spectator's chorus, marking "a memorable night for a soaring, prosperous China" (CCTV)<sup>296</sup>.

By comparison, this part is densely packed with political and ideological ploys beneath memorial associations, but such explicit invocations also elicit contrary recollections and oppositional interpretations. To begin with, the choice of fifty six children to represent China's multiethnic identity serves as a strong mnemonic reminder of China's ethnic diversity, yet such a centripetal stroke unavoidably fragments the Chinese audiences' perceptions. While some people



relate this scene to China's historical tradition of multiethnic unity, others are concerned about China's current inter-ethnic tension and territorial issues, highlighted by the recent spate of violent clashes in Tibet and Qinghai on the eve of the Games.<sup>297</sup> Those conflicts also drew strong reactions from the international community. Nonetheless, the salient symbolism of these fifty six multiethnic children underscores not only the Chinese government's appeal for public support and national unification behind its ethnic policies, but also its intransigent position on safeguarding the country's political independence and internal unity from external interference.

Second, Chen Qigang, music director of the ceremony, disclosed that the cute nine-year-old girl, who sang the song "Ode to the Motherland," turned out to be lip-synching for another seven-year-old girl who had a better voice but less adorable appearance. In fact, such an arrangement was decided out of "national interests" by no less senior leaders than the members of the CCP Politburo.<sup>298</sup> Chen explained, "The child on camera should be flawless in image, internal feeling and expression.... It is the image of our national culture."<sup>299</sup> For a country which traditionally privileges face, order, and status, especially for an emergent power eager to present its best impression for recognition, such consideration is hardly surprising, but this deliberate setup sharply polarize domestic and global publics, and diluted its rhetorical efficacy. Some hold that on such important occasions, China should present its best to the global audience, even with extra theatrics and personal sacrifices. Others refute that the government fooled all the people with "enormous psychological hurt."<sup>300</sup> *Financial Times* comments that

such fixes undercut China's image as a modern, dynamic country.<sup>301</sup> *Time Magazine*, in its selection of 2008 global events, lists this incident among the top ten scandals.<sup>302</sup>

Last, the scene of Chinese soldiers raising the national flag proves equally divisive between domestic and global publics' perceptions. In contemporary China, all national flag-raising ceremonies are executed by the soldiers, aimed at enhancing the flag's symbolism of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Yet while a goose-stepping, saber-rattling ritual may heighten many Chinese's patriotism, it nevertheless irritates many international sensibilities. Especially when those same soldiers later hoisted the Olympic flag—the symbol of an ancient, noble movement dedicated to “the search for peaceful and diplomatic solutions to the conflicts around the world” (IOC),<sup>303</sup> its incompatible tone reached a jarring climax. If Pierre de Coubertin, modern Olympics founder, intended to “contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit” (IOC),<sup>304</sup> then the Chinese government's narcissistic-cum-jingoistic appeals for national identity and political authority diametrically contradict such lofty ideals, leaving on the global audience's mind a “stifling”<sup>305</sup> impression of Chinese knee-jerk self-vindication and zealous nationalism.

### *Episode III: Movable Type*

Clad in traditional Chinese scholars' costume and modeling ancient Chinese academy, 3,000 performers wave the bamboo scrolls, and chant classical Chinese philosophers' quotations, such as “Within the four seas around the world,

all peoples are brothers” and “The utility of rite is for harmony.” Then a giant, rectangular formation of printing type blocks rises out of the central ground. Amid dazzling permutations of undulating waves, shapes, and symbols, this formation subsequently presents three orthographical versions of a Chinese character “和” (harmony) with “jaw-dropping, massive scope of minute precision” (NBC).<sup>306</sup> Toward the end, those acrobatic, synergic print blocks coordinate to simulate the Great Wall, and dissolves to become a riot of peach blossom, which “symbolizes the Chinese people’s aspirations for universal harmony and world peace” (CCTV)<sup>307</sup>.

Indeed, the visual and artistic impacts of the movable blocks’ synchrony are so compelling that this episode highlights several key elements tapping into Chinese collective memory: first, both movable type and the Great Wall draw forth Chinese awareness of cultural and technological achievements. As one of China’s four great inventions (besides the magnetic compass, gun powder and paper making), movable type was invented by Bi Sheng during the eleventh century (400 years earlier than German Johannes Gutenberg), and spread across Asia into Europe via Persia. Second, the Great Wall, built during China’s first unified kingdom (221-207 BCE) and ranked as “The New Seven Wonders in the World,”<sup>308</sup> stands as the best choice to evoke domestic and global audiences’ remembrances of China’s historical depth and national heritage.

The most significant component, however, is the character “和” (Harmony), which “holds the clue to everything else offered this evening” (BBC).<sup>309</sup> By Confucian teachings, people should first pursue “Five Constants” in their social

interactions, namely, “仁” (Benevolence), “义” (Justice), “理” (Etiquette), “智” (Wisdom), and “信” (Faith), all of which are the foundational prerequisites to harmonious society, stable government, and universal peace. By comparison, harmony, which “embodies Confucius’s humanistic tenets and Chinese historico-philosophical orientation” (CCTV)<sup>310</sup>, is more of a derivative concept. The very fact that a corollary notion so visibly accented on this ceremony is especially meaningful, because, as Carole Blair, Marsha Jeppeson and Enrico Pucci point out, the choice of “whom or what to memorialize and in what ways” reveals “registers of present and future political concern.”<sup>311</sup> Thus harmony, as the exclusive character presented in this ceremony, possesses unusual political and rhetorical implications worthy of further examination and critical scrutiny.

For the Chinese, whose beliefs remain “to an unusual degree rooted in a history consciously present to their minds,”<sup>312</sup> and whose philosophy has been infused with “the conception of the unity and harmony of man and nature,”<sup>313</sup> this character obviously invokes their historical roots and cultural traditions. Due to the communal nature of Chinese social relations, harmony has always been privileged as “the greatest need” of social priority, and consequently renders “the masses unusually susceptible to persuasion.”<sup>314</sup> For the Chinese government, probably no other character aptly captures its leadership’s sentiment than harmony nowadays. As one of the few remaining communist regimes since the end of the Cold War, the ruling Chinese Communist Party has constantly reflected on its political legitimacy, ideological relevance, and social credibility. Within such fluid transitions, the CCP has increasingly felt compelled to project a

positive, progressive image to domestic and international publics. Needless to say, on this grand occasion when the audiences are emotionally roused and memorially receptive, the ceremony provides an ideal opportunity, for the Chinese authorities, to affirm that the Games, sloganized “One World One Dream,” would contribute to “a harmonious world of lasting peace and mutual prosperity” (CCTV)<sup>315</sup>. In fact, this subtle conjuring of public memory proves so effective that the character “和” (harmony) was even picked as “The Most Symbolic Chinese Character in 2008.”<sup>316</sup>

Meanwhile, as Barbara Biesecker argues, “by inflecting the constitutive and not merely reflexive role of ... popular memory texts, ... not only what we remember but how we remember it could be different, and that collective memory could be pressed into the service of a very different politics.”<sup>317</sup> In this ceremony, when this character is juxtaposed with China’s present politico-social circumstances, there are ironically numerous contrary phenomena which virtually render its intended message particularly hollow, as evidenced by the Chinese government’s forceful mass relocation of migrant workers from Beijing, the heavy security blanket around the city, the blockage of Internet access, and suppression of public demonstrations during the Games. *NBC* observes that though a harmonious society stands at the heart of Chinese political ideology nowadays,<sup>318</sup> this character’s prominence in the ceremony exactly betrays a chilling reality that China is grimly plagued by “so many profoundly disharmonious things.”<sup>319</sup>

*Episode IV: Yao Ming & the Little Hero*

An hour into the ceremony, the parade of nations starts. When the host country, according to the Olympic customs, enters last, the 1,099-strong Chinese delegation is headed by an incompatible duo: seven-feet-six-inch Yao Ming, NBA Houston Rockets' Center, and a nine-year-old boy, Lin Hao, a national hero who risked his life to save two classmates during the Sichuan Earthquake on May 12, 2008. Then The Olympic torch arrives at the stadium, and reaches its last bearer—China's Olympic gold medalist, gymnast Li Ning. To the amazement of the global audience, Li is winched up to the roof of the stadium, runs a full circle along the upper rim of the stadium, and lights the staircase-shaped Olympic cauldron, signaling the formal start of the competition.

Equally, as “China's participation in the Olympics sprang from its humble single-athlete delegation in 1932 to its first gold medal in 1984” (CCTV)<sup>320</sup>, this episode embeds intense rhetorical operations directed at reshaping Chinese collective consciousness and global reminiscence. First, the image of Yao Ming holding the Chinese flag and marching in front of the delegation poses a quintessentially symbolic marker. As China's “Olympic flag-bearer and iconic athlete to frame the most important engagement it's ever had with the world,”<sup>321</sup> Yao provides a towering, psychological antidote to China's erstwhile stereotype as “the Asian weakling” in sports and political arenas during the past century. Moreover, Yao's appearance effectively tugs at many Chinese's reminiscent heartstrings, by embodying an admirable blend of traditional and contemporary qualities in Chinese national character: physical fitness and social intelligence,

traditional upbringing and contemporary mindset, Chinese birthmark and global trademark. His dexterity, determination, and immensity draw billions of people worldwide to watch basketball games; his grace, humor, and honor bless China with a refreshing outlook for global public to re-imagine China's national personality. For China and the world, Yao represents what Kobe Bryant calls "the bridge for all of us."<sup>322</sup> In projecting a national image of confidence and stature, hardly any other molding device could be more emblematic and transformative than Yao's presence.

Further, the boy following Yao carries no less rhetorical significance. By a brilliant rhetorical stroke, Lin Hao's visibility on such a global occasion unequivocally signifies that China has recovered from its recent national distress; that the Chinese have drawn strength from those natural disasters, and are now embarking on a new national rejuvenation. When asked by *NBC* what the boy means for China, Yao aptly responds, "He means [a lot] for China, for China's future. Even a nine-year-old kid knows how to help each other. That's a good example of our entire country."<sup>323</sup> Metaphorically and synecdochically, this fourth-grade schoolboy, cast by Yao's felicitous annotations, deeply touches and deftly carries the Chinese through a sorrow-therapeutic and patriotism-awash journey of historical introspection and national transcendence.

Yet Lin Hao's presence here is not without controversies, albeit indirectly related to this ceremony. During the earthquake that Lin managed to escape safely, there were estimated 10,000 school children who tragically fell victim under the suspected shoddy buildings. Though the parents pressed for investigation, the

local authorities tried to silence whatever appeal for public investigation, partly for fear of affecting the upcoming Beijing Olympics. Such ill-advised moves, according to Jon Alpert and Matthew O'Neill of *HBO* who witnessed local suppression and filmed a 2010 Oscar-nominated documentary *China's Unnatural Disaster*, certainly work against the CCP government's re-furbishing national image and political credentials.<sup>324</sup> Tom Shales of *The Washington Post* points out that the "sorrow, loss and bureaucratic indifference" portrayed in this film offers "insights into ways Chinese culture differs from the Western world."<sup>325</sup>

Nevertheless, into modern times when sport has emerged "as an exceptionally widespread and forceful social phenomenon, remarkably universal in its influence,"<sup>326</sup> and when the Olympic Games "as one of the most powerful expressions of sport have been and are increasingly being used by every nation-state ... as an instrument of national prestige, economic expansion, and political propaganda,"<sup>327</sup> this majestic ceremony produces a "truly exceptional" (Rogge)<sup>328</sup> performance. More importantly, for a historical people endowed with "an unquestionable sense of [national] unity/belonging,"<sup>329</sup> it provides a long overdue outlet for catharsis and patriotism. Throughout Chinese history, probably at no other national ritual have patriotism and dramatism been wedded so resolutely and seamlessly, evoked so exhaustively and compellingly, and projected so theatrically and overwhelmingly.



## Receptions & Implications

In the wake of the ceremony, global responses are swift and lavish. *AP* dubs it “a stunning display of pyrotechnics and pageantry” through which “once-reclusive China commandeered the world stage.”<sup>330</sup> *BBC* praises it as “spectacular ... explosive ... unforgettable ... chest-beating on an epic scale.”<sup>331</sup> *The Times* ranks it “a stunning visual show which ... raised the bar dauntingly high for the organizers of London 2012.”<sup>332</sup> *The Guardian* notes that “[T]he new China intends to make its presence felt.”<sup>333</sup>

But when the Chinese government promised in its bidding statement seven years ago that “Should the world give China sixteen days, China will return with a magnificent display of its 5,000 years,” it certainly wanted more than its infrastructural and sports achievements felt by the world. By hosting the Games and delivering this significant ceremony in a rhetorically memorial fashion, Chinese leaders did not let slip this once-and-for-all PR opportunity to purvey deeper cultural, political, ideological, and historical messages.

Culturally, for an ancient civilization which “has kept its evolution pace uninterrupted and maintained its cultural center unchanged for roughly four thousand years,”<sup>334</sup> any effective memorial rendition must be reproduced by and associated with China’s classical traditions and cultural achievements. All along, the opening ceremony thematically overflows with “a gorgeous series of tableaux covering China’s history and culture”;<sup>335</sup> even its theme song “You and Me” is tenderly interwoven with one of Chinese foundational values—family and communal relations. In displaying the central theme of “the ancient and long

history of the Chinese nation ... (and) the cultural aspects of Chinese society and showcase what modern China and its people are all about,” Alex Brown and Mitchell Murphy of *The Sydney Morning Herald* contends that “he [Zhang Yimou] delivered.”<sup>336</sup> *BBC* commentators acclaim that the ceremony conjures “so much resonance to the imperial China, ... [that] Confucius is back in style with the identifying marks through 5,000 years of united imperial history.”<sup>337</sup> Kent Ewing of *The Asia Times* observes that it “depicted an immensely proud nation that has made monumental contributions to humanity and seeks unity and harmony with nature.... This was China at its best.”<sup>338</sup>

Politically, for the Chinese, whose national character has been forged by the vicissitudes of ancient glory, modern decline, and contemporary resurgence, mnemonic invocation not only repurposes previous traumas, but also coalesces people’s present perceptions, making for psychological disburdenment and social reconsolidation. As a result, this historically-textured pageantry comes at a most opportune time to shake off historical melancholy, augment public unity, and project national pride. Just as Director Zhang Yimou explains, one central message through the whole ceremony was to impart a renewed image of contemporary Chinese’s dream and romance, which index genuine national self-confidence.<sup>339</sup> *AFP* observes that, for the first time, international media seem so “united” in hailing this show as “the best ever and a stunning display of China’s new-found confidence.”<sup>340</sup> Jim Yardley of *The New York Times* points out that “the astonishing opening ceremonies of the 2008 Olympic Games lavished grand tribute on Chinese civilization and sought to stir an ancient nation’s pride.”<sup>341</sup>

Jamie Metz of *The Huffington Post* diagnoses that “It was Beijing's statement to the world that China demands and deserves its rightful place in the global hierarchy of nations.”<sup>342</sup> Martin Fletcher of *The Times* asserts that with China now “miles ahead [of the U.S.] in optimism, dynamism, patriotism. ... The Chinese Dream has replaced America's.”<sup>343</sup> *Global Language Monitor*, a Texas-based media analytics company that analyzes and tracks cultural trends in language the world over, after tracking 50,000 print and electronic media over the past decade, announces that “the Beijing Olympics” emerged as the past decade’s 11<sup>th</sup> hottest search phrase, while “rise of China” easily beats “the Iraq war” and “the 9/11 terrorist attack” as the top term.<sup>344</sup>

Ideologically, for the Chinese government, the ceremony cannot accomplish its political and publicity objectives, unless the audiences’ minds, besides those pyrotechnic and artistic stunts, are imprinted with intellectual illumination and philosophical inspiration. In fact, when in today’s secular world the Olympic Games arguably “represent the only religious hero system that capitalists and communists alike can accept,”<sup>345</sup> the Chinese government’s communicative intention is subtly muted yet rhetorically pervasive throughout this ceremony: behind the large-scale participation and complex coordination of thousands of performers, what is most memorable is the ceremony’s awe-inspiring uniformity and movement precision in body alignment and individual synchronization. Aside from their artistic merits, these performative feats have far-reaching, almost evangelical functions—it demonstrates, in a visually sweeping and psychologically incontrovertible way, that the Chinese government has proved a

public administrator *par excellence*—pragmatic, disciplined, and effective in social undertaking and national development. David Brooks of *The New York Times* calls it “collectivism of the present—a high-tech vision of the harmonious society performed in the context of China’s miraculous growth.”<sup>346</sup> Joseph Nye, founder of the “soft power” concept, cites the ceremony and the Games as an example for the US to learn from China’s prowess in organizing large-scale, collective enterprises.<sup>347</sup> Nathan Gardels of *The Christian Science Monitor* attributes China’s success to “long-term thinking, planning, and continuity of governance.”<sup>348</sup> Anatole Kaletsky of *The Times* warns that in face of “the new Beijing consensus—the Chinese route to prosperity and power, the West must come up with a new model of capitalism.”<sup>349</sup>

Yet beyond those explicit assertions over political legitimacy and national accomplishments, there is another less perceptible but more crucial message lurking through this ceremony: at a time when “the symbol of ancient democracy [Athens] is looking for cash, the symbol of modern democracy, the United States, is already deeply in debt to the Middle Kingdom [China],”<sup>350</sup> this meticulously choreographed ceremony subtly affirms yet almost unabashedly showcases China’s authoritarian model of development—a centric yet liberal variety of statism grounded in Chinese history and undergirded by collectivist virtues: industry, frugality, fortitude, self-sacrifice, and social cohesion. For the first time since its founding in 1949, the CCP government has become sufficiently confident to enlighten—on a putatively apolitical, non-ideological occasion and in a subdued way—the whole world, not least the Western democracies, on its

political model and ideological system. Christine Brennan of *The USA Today* titles her report “Games a watershed for China beyond sports.”<sup>351</sup> Melinda Liu of *Newsweek* predicts that “its [China’s] soft-power campaign will do more for its overseas image in the years to come than cocky triumphalism ever could have done.”<sup>352</sup> Ian Buruma of *The Guardian* names 2008 the year of the “China Model,” and forecasts that in the realm of ideas, China’s success poses “the most serious challenge” for Western countries.<sup>353</sup>

Historically, with its continuously chronicled experiences, public memory in Chinese context has never been a gratuitous recourse underwriting any political and ideological agenda, for ideology may be superimposed on but never implanted into “a single preexisting, well-established [Chinese] nationality.”<sup>354</sup> For Chinese communist leaders, they know too well that their political leadership and historical position would eventually be juxtaposed against China’s chronological climaxes and dynastic heydays. Propagandistic blitzkrieg, ceremonial grandiosity, and political glorification may prevail at present but fall short over the long run. Without impressing on the spectators’ mind a sense of historical continuity and political parallel between China’s greatest times and the current CCP regime, this ceremony would be anything but historically monumental and memorially enduring amid China’s millennial trajectory. Thus by sampling China’s three most prosperous dynasties—Han, Tang, and Ming,<sup>355</sup> the Chinese government punctiliously shepherds the show, and effectively fashions a visual montage and cognitive mosaic that reconfigures and re-channels Chinese and global memorial perceptions. Kevin Garside of *The Telegraph*

observes that “This was history set to music and dance, every step reminding ... world leaders that Beijing stands at the centre of a universe every bit as legitimate as those born of Greece and Rome.”<sup>356</sup> Korean *The Dong-A Ilbo* editorializes that Beijing’s “hosting of the Olympics will affirm its status as the center of the world.”<sup>357</sup> Jamie Metzl, Executive Vice President of the Asia Society and former member of the National Security Council, foresees that “August 8, 2008 may someday be remembered as the first day of the post-America era or the sputnik moment.”<sup>358</sup> Niall Ferguson, Harvard Professor of history, opines that over the past decade, “we are living through the end of 500 years of Western ascendancy.”<sup>359</sup> “Looking back on Beijing 2008,” Hannah Beech of *Time Magazine* concludes, “we’ll judge the Games as the moment that China assumed the role of future superpower.”<sup>360</sup>

### Conclusion

For contemporary audiences, the modern Olympic Games provides an opportune timeframe to encapsulate and contrast modern Chinese historical patterns: when the former was revived in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Greece, China started to shake off its semi-feudal, semi-colonial period—a traumatic time when almost every Chinese today recall that their forefather were treated as dogs in the eyes of the Western colonists and denied access to basic social amenities.<sup>361</sup> In the 1932 LA Games, when China faced internal rivalry and national division at the hands of Japan and the West, sprinter Liu Changchun overcame numerous obstacles and became the first Chinese Olympic athlete. In the 1984 LA Games,

sports shooter, Xu Haifeng, won the first Olympic gold medal for the country. In 2008, 112 years after the first modern Olympic Games, China finally became the host and went on to top the gold medal table—a remarkable success story that “is likely to ripple through Chinese society and help the long-isolated country build confidence on the world stage.”<sup>362</sup>

It is against this historically macrocosmic background that the opening ceremony, as “the biggest broadcast event in the Olympic history,”<sup>363</sup> gives China a centennial chance to enact a grand narrative of national metamorphosis, a profound message which ranges profoundly larger and deeper than this ceremony traditionally conveys. In some tentative ways, this ceremony gives China—especially its politicians and ideologues—an excellent opportunity to refashion and repurpose China’s past for its present exigencies and circumstantial imperatives. In fact, their gargantuan efforts devoted to a national face-lift have proved immensely successful and far-reachingly transformative that IOC President Jacques Rogge congratulates the country on fulfilling a long dream of “opening its doors and inviting the world's athletes to Beijing,” through which “the world learned more about China, and China learned more about the world.”

Moreover, by coupling its image reconstruction with the Olympic Movement, the Chinese authorities and artistic directors benefit from many unique advantages. When their rhetorical endeavors are wrapped around the Olympic philosophy, such combination intimately interlaces China’s new persona with the Olympic values of physical prowess, endeavoring spirit, and human excellence, as epitomized by the Olympic motto "Swifter, Higher, Stronger," exemplified by the

Olympic legends, US swimmer Michael Phelps and Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt, and chronicled with over 40 new world records and 130 Olympic records during the Games. Just as “Every [host] city... becomes a famous milestone in Olympic history and the temporary guardian of our [Olympic] values” (Rogge, 2008, p. 5), this opening ceremony also becomes a defining monument in Chinese history and a permanent designator of China’s identity. In this respect, hardly any other assessment comes as a better testament than IOC’s (2008) summary, “Before the event, the Olympic Games attracted all the dissent and questions about China; once over, they were the Games of all the superlatives.”<sup>364</sup>

As a result, in achieving public persuasion and national unity at this global sports event, what the Chinese government delivered at this magnificent ceremony sheds much light on our understanding of public memory in contemporary Chinese communicative phenomena and rhetorical operation.

First, unlike many European countries and the U.S. with socially and culturally controversial past—at least in modern times, Chinese historical discourse remains politically univocal and ideologically monolithic, making for what Jorgensen-Earp and Lanzilotti would term as “official expressions” which “tends to emphasize an abstract ideal that apparently does not threaten, and in many ways supports, the status quo.”<sup>365</sup> Compared with Western politico-cultural contexts where histories are seldom politically consensual and memorially consubstantial, the Chinese authorities can readily resort to a shared sediment of historical knowledge and public remembrances, and essentialize them into, in Peter Novick’s words, “a single, committed perspective”<sup>366</sup> implicitly endorsing



political domination and ideological supremacy. In this respect, for the Chinese government and public, Confucian philosophy, cultural heritage, and ritualistic traditions remain as sociopolitically normative and symbolic-discursively fundamental as ever before.

Second, public memorial invocations at this ceremony illustrate another salient Chinese communicative pattern, namely contextual influence and implicit persuasion. As demonstrated from the foregoing analyses, the Chinese government's mnemonic renditions on this occasion are predominantly historical and cultural, without obtrusive politico-ideological imposition. This is untypical of the CCP's conventional slogan-saturated propaganda, and reflects a significant shift from its overt ideological indoctrination to traditional Chinese rhetorical trajectory, in which Robert Oliver suggests that "to be truly persuasive, one should take care not to speak overmuch."<sup>367</sup> This principle of parsimony dictates that, when historico-culturally contextualized, a "natural truth," even shorn of political coercion and propagandistic bombardment, nevertheless prevails over artificial persuasion—however ingeniously crafted. At the opening ceremony, what the Chinese government did is merely to reactivate China's best and finest in the memorial recesses of Chinese and global audiences, making its intended message automatically self-evident via subsequent public interpretation and media annotation. This is Chinese historical perception and rhetorical enthymeme interanimating at their consummate level: when the past (major premise) is vicariously reincarnated, and when the present (minor premise) is memorially

reconstituted, the future (conclusion)—even though understated or even unstated at all—would still prove unequivocally predetermined.

Last, despite China's sociopolitical realities that the CCP government dominates the public sphere in communicative interaction, public remembering, as “a site of uncertainty, contest, and change,”<sup>368</sup> is always fraught with contestation, resistance, and counter-narrative from domestic and global publics. Ai Weiwei, architectural advisor to China's National Olympic Stadium, dismisses the opening ceremony as “a propaganda show, a giant masked ball.”<sup>369</sup> Chen Danqing, artistic adviser to the ceremony, observes that many individuality-stifling elements in this performance expose most Chinese's collectivized mindset, domesticated by long-term ideological brainwashing.<sup>370</sup> Cautioning against the collective amnesia, Melinda Liu of *Newsweek* reminds, “tonight's razzle-dazzle painted the portrait of an idealized Chinese past, of a gauzily perfect what-should-have-been instead of the rather more tawdry what-really-was.”<sup>371</sup> For all the ceremony's “mathematical majesty,” Anthony Lane of *The New Yorker* questions, “What kind of society is it that can afford to make patterns out of its people?”<sup>372</sup> In effect, gone are the days when Chinese public life was monopolized by the authorities, Chinese rhetorical transactions, including historical appropriation and memorial evocation, have been inextricably intertwined with constant challenges and vigilant scrutinies from domestic and international publics.

Indeed, despite the Chinese government's “choreographed demonstration of might the like of which the Olympic Games has never seen”<sup>373</sup> and astounding publicity achievements via this opening ceremony

and the Games in general, over the long run, no magnificent epideictic orchestration, sweeping memorial reproduction or masterful rhetorical execution can sustain China's emerging national identity indefinitely. At least, vis-à-vis *Time Magazine*'s timely question "Mission Accomplished. Now what?,"<sup>374</sup> Chinese politicians and people would be well advised that—to edit Nietzsche's phrase on the value of history—"we need it [the past] for life and action, not as a convenient way" for nostalgic obsession, political legitimation, and ideological mythologization.<sup>375</sup>

## Chapter 5

### RE-ASSERTING AN ANCIENT, EMERGENT SUPERPOWER: THE 2009

#### BEIJING MILITARY PARADE

In 60 years a weak and divided country, one torn apart by wars internal and external, is about to become the second-most-powerful economy in the world. China's insolent prosperity, even if it is far from being distributed equally, China's relative political stability, even if the regime's opening remains strictly limited, are undeniable and deserving of respect.

—Dominique Moisi

China is the world's most populous and industrious nation, is the world's third largest economy and trading nation, has become a global innovator in science and technology, and is building a world-class university system. It has an increasingly modern military and commands diplomatic respect. It is at peace with its neighbors and all major powers. Its hybrid model of quasi-state capitalism and semidemocratic authoritarianism — sometimes dubbed the "Beijing Consensus" — has attracted attention across the developing world.

—David Shambaugh

On Oct 1, 2009, the PRC orchestrated a grand military parade at Beijing to celebrate its sixtieth founding anniversary. Throughout communist China's history, this ceremony is its 14<sup>th</sup> military parade and the first one in the new century, intended to exemplify "the modernization, build-up and great success of China's military since the country launched an opening-up drive 30 years ago."<sup>376</sup> At a time when China's inexorable ascendancy on the global stage has become one of the most far-reaching geopolitical events, hardly any other national ritual could better mark this emerging power's "transformation from an impoverished, war-wracked country to an economic and diplomatic power."<sup>377</sup> As the "largest military parade in its history,"<sup>378</sup> this hour-long performance not just showed off "a rapidly growing arsenal of sophisticated made-in-China weaponry,"<sup>379</sup> but also evoked "China's past glories while continuing a rebranding exercise designed to show local and international audiences that the PRC is now a thoroughly modern country that can hold its own in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."<sup>380</sup>

While this parade as a publicity move has captured global limelight and public interest from a wide spectrum of political, economic, social, and cultural perspectives, so far there seems to be inadequate scholarly attention to this important event from a communicative standpoint, especially from a rhetorical prism to bring to bear its symbolic dynamics, discursive conceptualization, and persuasive operation. In part, such research void stems from symbolic subtleties and discursive complexities underlying this ceremonial production, particularly within the context of contemporary China's historical, politico-ideological, and sociocultural circumstances. To accommodate such complex constellations, I

approach this ceremony from a public memorial vantage point, so as to explore its communicative imperatives, rhetorical operations, and sociopolitical consequences.

Traditionally, national parades have been fruitfully conceptualized as a critical site to assess how national identity is fashioned out of existing historical, cultural, and symbolic resources for instrumental functions. For analysis, I pick a set of central rhetorical artifacts from the ceremony, and undertake a close reading into their memorial deployment, rhetorical operation, and communicative implication. My criteria for artifact choice are based on several interconnected benchmarks: first, as Michael McGee suggests, in light of “the fragmentation of contemporary culture,” rhetorical discourse “ceases to be what it is whenever parts of it are taken ‘out of context,’” and thus urgently calls for an expanded, contingent sense of rhetorical textuality than before.<sup>381</sup> Second, the artifact should be among the most salient episodes of the event, which tend to assume lasting influence over the long run. Third, the artifact should rhetorically embody historical evocation, engender public recollection, and yield social reflection among the audiences. In a word, a historical/memorial orientation should be distinctly operative in the artifact. Last, the artifact should generate considerable public attention, media response, and sociocultural discussion, especially related to Chinese historical, political, and cultural traditions. Hence I designate Tiananmen Square, President Hu’s keynote speech, and display of the CCP Supreme Leaders’ portraits as three central discursive texts for discursive

deconstruction and rhetorical anatomy, so as to investigate their politico-ideological agenda, historico-memorial resonance, and sociocultural implication.

Through a rhetorical interrogation into public memory dimension of the PRC's military parade, particularly the three communicative texts, I contend that, by hosting this parade, the CCP government launched another massive rhetorical campaign (after the 2008 Beijing Olympics) to re-assert its national identity as an ancient, emergent superpower. To this end, the Chinese authorities deliberately deployed historico-cultural resources to evoke public remembrance, political recognition, and ideological identification. More importantly, China's official historico-memorial invocation and politico-ideological representation reveal an intensely discursive pursuit to re-accentuate its historical, political, and ideological credentials in leading a forthcoming superpower. Such rhetorical contentions ostensibly eulogized China's sixty-year national progress, yet factually strove to consummate the CCP's supremacy as a historically continuous, politically orthodox, and ideologically legitimate regime.

#### Public Memory, National Identity, and the 2009 Beijing Military Parade

As discussed in Chapter III, public memory, by integrally implicating national identity, "enacts and gives substance to the group's identity, its present conditions and its vision of the future."<sup>382</sup> Thus, as "an overtly politically and emotionally invested phenomenon,"<sup>383</sup> public memory offers "a conceptual framework for critiquing articulations of national identity."<sup>384</sup> At a time when memorial discourses have increasingly shaped national reconstruction and

international interaction, especially for those with a view to reconstituting, redefining, and re-appropriating the past experiences in support of political, ideological, and cultural configurations, such an interrogative function into a nation's sense of identity is valuably instrumental for rhetorical scholars, who are uniquely positioned to contribute, among other things, "a kind of critical self-consciousness about the symbolic and political character of public memory."<sup>385</sup> This is quite true for a country like China where "power struggle intrudes upon all memory work," and memory study can expose "the ways in which power has historically been assigned."<sup>386</sup>

In terms of symbolic representations of national identity, national parades, for their exemplary exhibition of a country's overall political, cultural, and social persona, have historically provided one of the most efficient vehicles for national promotion, political recognition, and ideological dissemination. This is especially so when China's National Day celebrations have evolved into a heritage of their own, characterized by "major parades, celebrations, extravagant fireworks and, on occasion, by the display of military hardware and reviews of serried ranks of striding soldiers."<sup>387</sup> Further, given that the number "60" has "a special resonance in Chinese culture not unlike that the numbers 50 and 100 have in Western ones,"<sup>388</sup> the PRC's 2009 rendition is particularly indicative of an emerging power's politico-ideological and sociocultural figurations, as reflected by its self-conception/self-projection and perceived by domestic and global audiences.



## Rhetorical Situation of the 2009 Beijing Military Parade

Along the PRC's tradition of holding national military parades every decade, the 2009 version has its specific contextual dynamics and communicative imperatives. On the eve of the parade, the *Chinese People's Liberation Army Daily* defined the parade's preparation as "an important, honorable political task," for it "fully demonstrates the CCP's administrative capabilities and the PRC's national strength; comprehensively reviews great achievements in the PLA's modernization; and forcefully enhances national spirit and patriotic sentiment."<sup>389</sup> Obviously, in outlining its rhetorical aspirations at this ceremony, the Chinese government targeted at a number of domestic and international discursive exigencies.

Domestically, the CCP leaders were eager to capitalize this event to underline its political, ideological, and social stability, at a memorial juncture when China had just hosted a globally acclaimed Olympic Games in 2008, and would mark the CCP's ninetieth founding anniversary in 2011. Moreover, China's thirty-year reform and opening-up since the late 1970s had dramatically transformed and drastically fragmented the country, especially torn apart between economic liberalization and political fossilization. The Chinese government must not only re-enlist national recognition to unify political constituencies and public consensus, but also more urgently reassert their political legitimacy and ideological relevance. Thus, grand media events, such as national military parades that thematically highlight and enhance the official authorities' political

achievement, ideological vibrancy, and social dynamism, offer an ideal outlet to project such political messages and national personality.

Externally, China's robust development over the past three decades had engendered both euphoria and misgivings, including growing concerns over China's political, economic, and military growth. Hence, the Chinese government felt obligated to reassure the world with a brand-new national image of cooperation and convergence. Further, China's political uncertainties, ideological rigidities, and economical expansionism had caused its neighbors and the world to question its politico-ideological sustainability and economic-military intention. More importantly, despite China's resounding PR success at the Beijing Olympics, the Chinese government needed this military parade to project politically benign and globally reassuring themes to convince the world of its peaceful ascendancy and international integration.

Under such circumstances, the Chinese government in many ways reached a communicatively critical juncture to craft "an image of strength to both the Chinese public and the international community."<sup>390</sup> Therefore, this parade presented "an actual or potential exigence" which was nationally charged and politically invested that it pressed for a discursive solution for "the significant modification" in "a rhetorically audience ... who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change."<sup>391</sup> It is precisely due to such national stakes and rhetorical intensity that this ceremony offers a fruitful crystal ball on how the Chinese government conceptualized, orchestrated, and appropriated China's historical remembrance, collective consciousness, and

national identity toward particular politico-ideological ends, and how such a communicative process was alternatively perceived and interpreted by Chinese and global publics.

### The 2009 Beijing Military Parade

Unlike its previous performances, the PRC's 2009 military parade in celebration of its sixtieth founding anniversary possesses unusual communicative importance. First, China's state-run television network for the first time provided live coverage over the Internet in multiple languages to global viewers. Second, as Michael Wines and Sharon Lafranier of *The New York Times* compare, if "the last such parade, in 1999, was of interest mainly to foreign military analysts and China hands," then "this time, the world's news outlets reported raptly on the significance of every detail."<sup>392</sup> Indeed, participated by over 200,000 military personnel and mass performers from all over China, this "perfectly executed and magnificently staged spectacle,"<sup>393</sup> with "a mix of old-fashioned communist-realist kitsch and newfangled weaponry,"<sup>394</sup> showcased China's "impressive accomplishments in gaining economic, military, and political power over the past 30 years."<sup>395</sup>

To analyze this communicative phenomenon, I select the following artifacts as three central rhetorical texts: first, *Tiananmen Square*, which has been China's sociopolitical epicenter of major modern/contemporary events, and served as the contextual cue for memorial evocations during the parade. Such a textual choice is deliberate because, as Michael McGee points out, amid "the fragmentation of

contemporary culture,” “Failing to account for ‘context,’ or reducing ‘context’ to one or two of its parts, means quite simply that one is no longer dealing with discourse as it appears in the world.”<sup>396</sup> Second, *President Hu’s keynote speech*, which, as the critical textual signification of the event’s theme, functioned as a pivotal framing device of this momentous occasion and a valuable microscope into the CCP’s self-presentation. Third, *Display of the CCP Supreme Leaders’ Portraits*, which, as discursive materialization and mediated representation of its paramount leaders, contained substantial leads to unpacking the CCP’s historical self-assessment and institutional disruptures/contradictions. Collectively, these three communicative artifacts exert far-reaching effects on China’s (inter)national image and public perceptions, as manifested by subsequent analyses into each artifact and their overall repercussions.

*Artifact I: Tiananmen (Gate of Heavenly Peace) Square*

From the center of Tiananmen Square, a formation of ceremonial soldiers march exactly 169 steps from the Monument to Chinese People’s Heroes toward the northern flagstaff to hoist the Chinese national flag, accompanied by the 60 salute guns and under the full gaze of a column of Chinese Communist Politburo members atop the Tiananmen Rostrum (Gate of Heavenly Peace), which overlooks the whole square from north. Here the 169 steps symbolically stands for China’s temporal course, during which the nation’s vicissitudes traversed from its dynastic decline at the hands of Western colonial powers in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to contemporary rejuvenation under the PRC.

As the staging ground and performative backdrop, *Tiananmen Square* was constructed during the early 15<sup>th</sup> century and designed as a royal court exclusive of common people. During China's last two feudal dynasties (Ming and Qing),<sup>1</sup> this square symbolized the emperors' supreme majesty and absolute monarchy. Because of its quintessential symbolism, this public place has henceforth become China's sociopolitical nerve center, where a number of definitive events shaped China's modern trajectory. For example, during the May Fourth Movement in 1919, the outraged Chinese public protested against the military regime's incompetence to defend territorial integrity at the post-WWI Paris Peace Conference,<sup>2</sup> and eventually toppled the government. During China's Civil War (1945-1949) between the Nationalist and Communist parties, this central space constantly escalated into a focal site of political contestation and public demonstration.

Since the PRC's founding, the square was continually expanded to accommodate more national establishments and political institutions. As the largest public square in the world with a total area of 44 hectares, this place witnessed many political melodramas and social tumults under the CCP administration, most dramatic of which include: Mao Tse Tung declared the founding of the New China in 1949; Mao mobilized one million zealous "red

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<sup>1</sup> As China's last two feudal dynasties, the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD) relocated its capital to Beijing; the Qing Dynasty (1636-1911 AD) witnessed the downfall of China's feudal hierarchy and the democratizing nature of Tian'anmen Square.

<sup>2</sup> During the First World War, China fought on the side of the Allied Triple Entente, under the conditions that Western powers would help resolve a variety of extraterritorial issues with China and fully restore China's sovereign rights after the war. However, at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, China's demands were mostly neglected by the allied countries in the Treaty of Versailles; particularly outrageous for the disillusioned Chinese was the transfer of the defeated Germany's rights and interests in China's Shandong province to Japan.

guards” to launch the devastating Cultural Revolution (1966-1976); Mao ordered the militia to crush public condolence of Premier Chou En-lai’s death in 1976; and Deng Xiaoping instructed military troops to suppress mass demonstration against corruption and dictatorship in 1989.

Besides its historico-social connotations, this locale has been politically textured and ideologically invested through deliberate reconstruction and intentional landscaping. Currently, surrounding the square are a mixture of old and new symbolic structures: the Chinese National Museum on the east; the Great Hall of the Chinese People (National Congress’s headquarters) on the west; the imposing Tiananmen Rostrum on the north. On the south stand two memorial structures—the Mao Tse Tung’s Mausoleum and the Monument to Chinese People’s Heroes: the former was erected to honor Mao’s preeminent leadership and immortal contributions to the PRC, while the latter memorializes the sacrifices of numerous revolutionary martyrs who laid down their lives for the New China.

Within such a profoundly sociohistorical context, the 2009 military parade’s opening scene, which blends “elements of the regimented festival with the pomp and hierarchical practices that resonated with certain kinds of imperial and republican-era grandeur,”<sup>397</sup> evidently conveys a string of political messages rooted in the square’s historical legacies. From a public memory perspective, first, the Monument to Chinese People’s Heroes as the gambit of the ceremony offers a deliberate reminder of the CCP’s revolutionary credentials and politico-ideological legitimacy, both of which the current leadership urgently needs to

consolidate its splintered persona among domestic and global audiences. Second, when the Tiananmen Rostrum is deployed as the podium where Chinese leaders inspect the ceremony, such an arrangement telegraphs an elaborate sense of geographical centrality and political continuity for the contemporary CCP's leadership amid Chinese sociopolitical traditions, as accentuated by the modern reminiscence of the once prosperous, century-long heydays during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Last, the Square's historico-political functionality serves as a framing device to implicitly juxtapose the relationship between Communist apparatchiks and the public with that between feudal sovereign rulers and common subjects, because it was here that imperial ceremonies were held by the emperors for royal coronations and national rituals.

Obviously, Tiananmen Square is meticulously exploited by the Chinese Communist Government as a rhetorical platform to contextualize and legitimate CCP's historical continuity and political orthodoxy, yet such deliberate appropriation can hardly camouflage its historical opportunism, political hegemony, and ideological imposition.

*Artifact II: President Hu's Keynote Speech*

Standing in the open sunroof of a Chinese-made Red Flag limousine, President Hu Jintao reviews the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) lined along Chang'an Boulevard. Then he returns to the Tiananmen Rostrum, and delivers a keynote speech for this national ceremony. Upon scrutiny, Hu's speech, though strewn with politico-ideological clichés about the PRC's socialist system, discloses several notable rhetorical themes.

Hu commences by defining this memorial occasion as “a cheerful and solemn moment,” at which “people from all over the country’s ethnic groups are extremely proud of our great nation’s development and progress and are confident of the Chinese nation’s bright prospect on the road to revival.” For a national celebration, such sentiment-tuning ploy is understandable and felicitous. However, Hu’s subsequent narration proves that this occasion, in his conception, was less a national celebration than a partisan chance for self-aggrandizing attribution of political achievement and ideological essentialism.

Swiftly, Hu characterizes this parade primarily a party’s commemoration, when he identified himself as speaking “on behalf of CCP, China’s National Congress, the Central Government, and the CCP Military Commission.” As such, he “pay[s] tribute to all the revolutionary pioneers of older generations and martyrs who made great contributions to realizing national independence and liberation of the people, the country’s prosperity and strength and happy life of the people.” Here, Hu clearly hints to domestic and global audiences that this parade was first and foremost installed as a self-confirmation of the CCP’s political accomplishments over the past six decades, and a self-referential appreciation for itself as the PRC’s benefactor.

To further locate the CCP’s mandate and status within China’s sociopolitical matrix of historical inevitability, Hu fine-tunes his tenor by situating this occasion within a contemporary canvas: “Sixty years ago on this day,” he recalls, marked a milestone moment that “the Chinese people achieved great victory of the Chinese revolution after more than one hundred years of blooded struggle.” Yet subtly, Hu



extends this turning point beyond its modern significance and superimposes it on an unduly expanded historical context, when he remarks that “At that moment, the Chinese people stood up and the Chinese nation with over 5,000 years of civilization began a new page of development and progress in history.”

Such historic achievements, Hu’s attributional impulse quickly reminds, were inconceivable if not for the great helmsmanship of “the three generations of Party leadership with Comrade Mao Zedong, Comrade Deng Xiaoping and Comrade Jiang Zemin as the core.” With this prerequisite, Hu acknowledges—but implicitly relegates—the role of the Chinese people, who “have joined hands to overcome the great hardship and made great contributions that have been recognized by the world.” Here, Hu purposefully collapses China’s millennial history by reducing its torturous, multifaceted national endeavors into a singular political vision, from which all Chinese modern political struggles were forcibly recast into a linear ideological movement solely dictated by the CCP’s decisive stewardship. Moreover, what is saliently lacking in Hu’s reflective stroke is an evaluative—oftentimes self-effacing—performance review of his own leadership. This is especially intriguing when Hu had assumed all the four most powerful partisan and national titles—the CCP’s General Secretary, Chinese President, Chairman of the CCP Central Military Commission, and the PRC Central Military Commission since 2005. In this high-stake speech of national/global visibility, Hu recognizes his three predecessors’ deity (including his immediate one—Jiang Zemin—as the last among the CCP’s “core leadership”), yet stops short of granting for himself a similar status. As a result, such delicate political ambiguity

renders Hu's partisan ascription and historical condensation far from secure and credible.

Nevertheless, Hu clings to a politico-ideological line, stressing that "today's modern, open China stands as a testament to a corollary that only socialism, reform, and opening-up can save and push forward China," which, "in turn, will continuously evolve socialism and Marxism." In a didactic tone, Hu enjoins that, with the above politico-historical preconditions, "Chinese people have the confidence and resources to build their country and make due contributions to the world." Again, Hu adroitly predicates China's national building on the CCP's political and ideological leadership, with which China's national renaissance and public welfare must be firmly aligned.

To enhance his politico-ideological theme, Hu follows by reeling off a long-winded list of CCP's high-flown, all-inclusive slogans through the rest of his speech

- We will unswervingly follow our path on socialism with Chinese characteristics and comprehensively implement the ruling party's basic theory, basic plan, basic program and basic experience.
- We will stick to the policy of "peaceful reunification" and "one country, two systems" to help Hong Kong and Macao remain prosperous and stable, to seek peaceful development of cross-strait relations, and to work for the complete reunification of the motherland, which is the common aspiration of the Chinese nation.
- We will follow a path of peaceful development. We will develop friendly relations and cooperation with all nations. We join hands with the people from all over the world in pushing forward the lofty cause of making the world more peaceful and progressive and building a harmonious world of long-lasting peace and prosperity.

Intriguingly, for all self-assuring confidence and almost missionary messianism pervasive in Hu's conclusive part, its politico-social irony becomes

only too evident. As Michael Wines and Sharon Lafraniere of the *New York Times* observe, while unprecedented security measures were deployed and the public cleared out of view during the ceremony, Hu pronounced that “Today, a socialist China geared to modernization, the world and the future has stood rock-firm in the east of the world.”<sup>398</sup> Moreover, Hu’s speech, laden with boilerplate bureaucratism and worn-out phrases, seem better to suit the CCP’s internal sessions, but, when implanted here, reveals that, instead of confidently commemorating its partisan victory, the CCP after its sixty-year absolutist rule remains besieged by a series of unsettled issues and unfulfilled promises, which include: the CCP still has yet to (re)define its ostensibly almighty yet perennially whimsical ideological mantras (e.g., “socialism with Chinese characteristics” and “one country, two systems”) to match China’s rapidly evolving but often self-contradictory politico-ideological circumstances, to achieve national reunification with Taiwan, and reconcile—if possible at all—the inherent sociopolitical incompatibilities between its communist superficiality and ultra-capitalist excesses.

Vis-à-vis China’s (self-)projection as an ancient, emergent superpower, those significant incongruities are far from positive indexes of the CCP’s political stability, ideological security, and administrative consistency in measuring up to such a consequential national branding.

### *Artifact III: Display of the CCP Supreme Leaders’ Portraits*

As part of the military parade, a mass parade follows with ceremonial performers “in elaborate costumes moving in exact unison, reminiscent of the

Olympic opening ceremony last year.”<sup>399</sup> With different thematic floats highlighting the CCP’s achievements in political, economic, social, and cultural fields, this section highlights the portraits of four CCP’s supreme leaders over the sixty years—Mao Tse Tung, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao. At a time when China finds itself at an upward trend with the whole world watching, how the Chinese government memorially represents its previous leaders and political transitions poses a significant entry point to probe its political dynamics and communicative tactics.

In a chronological order, the first portrait is Mao Tse Tung, surrounded by a formation of dancing youths and studded with slogan placards read “Long live the Mao Tse Tung Thought!” and “The Chinese People Have Stood up!” Meanwhile, the loudspeaker broadcasts Mao’s famous proclamation on the PRC’s establishment in 1949. Chinese official CCTV comments that the Mao Tse Tung’s Thought has proved a creative application and evolution of Marxism in China, and guided the Chinese people to herald a brand-new era of national development.<sup>400</sup>

While Mao’s display highlights the PRC’s hard-earned beginning, the second portrait feathers Deng Xiaoping’s contributions to China’s reform and opening-up since the late 1970s, accompanied by the playback of Deng’s well-known quote that “Out of the synthesis of Marxism and China’s actual conditions emerges the socialism with Chinese characteristics.” *CCTV* broadcast annotates that Deng’s generation succeeded in emancipating people’s mindset, seeking truth from the facts, and embracing a new historical period in China’s national construction.<sup>401</sup>

Inheriting Deng's post and policy, Jiang Zemin, a technocratic implementer rather than an innovative visionary, is represented in the third portrait with the loudspeaker repeating his signature slogan on "Advance the cause of building the socialism with Chinese characteristics." *CCTV* stresses that Jiang's theory has helped the CCP lead the Chinese people to achieve new breakthroughs in developing the country into a prosperous society.<sup>402</sup>

As the hand-clapping character in the fourth portrait, Hu Jintao almost incorporates all three previous leaders' political theories, which *CCTV* credits with contributing "a new outlook on scientific development" to the country's advance, with the loudspeaker replaying his call for the country to strive toward a prosperous society and a happy life.<sup>403</sup>

Together, this punctiliously mediated representation of the CCP's supreme leaders intends to produce a seamless, progressive image of Chinese leadership succession and the PRC's political continuity. The overall discursive efficacy, magnified by such an overblown scale of performative spectacle and mass loyalty, are indeed impressive and overwhelming.

### Receptions & Implications

In the wake of this parade, global media's responses are swift and effusive. Ishaan Tharoor of *Time Magazine* compares, "If last year's Olympics were China's flashy coming-out party, the massive military parade commemorating 60 years of communist rule on Oct. 1 marks a more serious side to the rise of the People's Republic."<sup>404</sup> *The USA Today* comments, "Many Chinese are justifiably

proud of what China has achieved.”<sup>405</sup> *Economist* affirms, “The country’s leaders had reason to flaunt their stuff this year. Not only has China made enormous economic and technological strides since 1999, but it has also weathered the global financial crisis with remarkable resilience.”<sup>406</sup> Michael Wines and Sharon Lafranier of *The New York Times* write, “The Communist Party has made China strong, increasingly prosperous and respected in the world.”<sup>407</sup> Highlighting a string of graphic comparisons of China’s “facts and figures” over the six decades, *BBC* praises that “China has been transformed from a backward peasant society into the greatest manufacturing economy in human history.”<sup>408</sup> David Shambaugh notes, China’s “hybrid model of quasi-state capitalism and semi-democratic authoritarianism—sometimes dubbed the ‘Beijing Consensus’—has attracted attention across the developing world.”<sup>409</sup> Even New York’s highest beacon—the Empire State Building, one of the USA’s symbols for free enterprise, also shone red and yellow as “a shining monument honoring China’s communist revolution on this special day.”<sup>410</sup>

However, if “the clamor of celebration indicates the formal nature of state power,” as Jeffrey Wasserstrom points out for this occasion, then “silences and absences have other stories to tell, the tenor of which is frequently hard to discern.”<sup>411</sup> Behind those positive observations about the parade, there are far more politico-ideological complexities and deeper sociocultural dynamics behind the Chinese government’s epideictic rhetoric, which equally provokes public contestation and warrants discursive critique.

First, the employment of Tiananmen Square as a rhetorical site to underwrite the CCP's revolutionary cachet and political legitimacy is historically problematic. True, given its historical and political symbolism, this place can be an ideal choice to deploy the PRC's emergent persona before the world. Yet its memorial ploy, though understated and even imperceptible, lays bare China's circumstantial contradictions at historical and political levels. Historically, as the dominant structure on the square, the Gate of Heavenly Peace, was initially called "Chengtianmen" ("the Gate where Chinese emperors receive the divine Mandate of Heaven"). "The Mandate of Heaven" (天命, *Tian Ming*), as the sacred credentials of moral superiority and political authority entrusted by Heaven to the emperors to oversee national affairs, uphold social order, and administer criminal justice, has been "the most popular and effective persuasive appeals" since ancient times. To such an end, this august rostrum was constructed by Chinese feudal sovereigns to sanctify their supreme jurisdiction over the country on behalf of Heaven. Such an almost religious attribution of political legitimacy runs counter to the CCP's self-styled secular identity as the vanguard of grassroots workers and peasants, and supposedly as the most faithful representative of comprehensive social classes. Consequently, by discursively co-opting this symbolic structure, the CCP seems more interested in resuscitating China's dynastic heritage and feudal hierarchy, especially the sovereign-subject relationship, instead of purportedly heralding "China's arrival as a modern superpower."<sup>412</sup>

Politically, in contrast to China's feudal politics, the CCP since its inception has all along promoted itself as a revolutionary, democratizing force to subvert and replace China's previous decadent, exploitative ideologies. Yet this continually expanded square, intended by the CCP leaders to eclipse even Moscow's Red Square to accommodate an larger scale of public participation, provides a grander place to eulogize Chinese feudal heritage and promote the CCP's partisan cult, in the same way as its supposedly moribund feudal predecessors. Not surprisingly, held on such a historico-culturally conflicted site, this "surprisingly old-fashioned" ritual, rather than memorially inspiring a forward vision, appears to be more reminiscent of "the China of the fifties" and "North Korea's mass games."<sup>413</sup> As a result, the appropriation of Tiananmen Square as a symbolic locale, with its inherent historical inconsistency and political hypocrisy, reveals this party state's discursive reductionism and rhetorical expediency in engaging national history and public remembrance.

Second, for Hu himself, though this parade was his "first military parade in Beijing as commander-in-chief and his last before he steps down as party leader in 2012 and as president in 2013,"<sup>414</sup> the underlying temporal collapse and perspectival ellipsis render his otherwise forward-looking address historically shallow, memorially truncated, and politically hypocritical. Yet the most ironical revelation probably arises from his conspicuous lack of self-assessment: at a time when the CCP has yet to secure its historical, political, and ideological status even after its sixty-year reign, it is only understandable that even Hu himself as its nominally paramount leader seems so obscure as to become "almost certainly the



least understood of the world's major leaders.”<sup>415</sup> Such a self-disorientation retrogressively counteracts Hu’s rhetorical assertions of national unity and public consensus. As Michael Wines and Sharon Lafranier of *The New York Times* note, “To foreigners, the show of firepower and Mr. Hu’s bromide-filled speech may have evoked memories of the cold war and the former Soviet Union’s performances at May Day ceremonies.”<sup>416</sup>

Moreover, though the portrait display of the CCP’s paramount leaders presents a sweeping narrative of their continuity, their continuous reigns “have not exactly been an uninterrupted period of economic growth and political stability.”<sup>417</sup> While this personality exhibition intends to underline the smooth transitions between each leadership generation, serious differences and irreconcilable interpersonal animosity inevitably betray such a far-fetched facade. For example, during Mao’s tenure whose “social engineering continually convulsed China in unrelenting political campaigns,”<sup>418</sup> Deng suffered repeated political purge for his policy disagreements. It was until Mao’s death that Deng managed to pull the country back from being “traumatized, tired and alienated by 30 years of Maoist experiments and totalitarian controls.”<sup>419</sup> Furthermore, Deng himself also created a subtle relationship between Jiang and Hu by handpicking the former as his immediate successor and the latter as Jiang’s heir apparent. Against so many of the CCP’s historical contradictions and leadership struggles, Zhang Ming, Chinese political scholar, points out that such an arbitrary montage of leader portraits only results in “a confusing hodgepodge and a contrary impression of the CCP’s historical retrogression.”<sup>420</sup>

As a result, this parade of personality exhibition winds up presenting not a harmonious vision of the CCP political unity and leadership transition, but a cacophonous mnemonic clue to the CCP's constant internal division and ruthless personal conflict, and, more disturbingly, the PRC's politico-ideological uncertainties and sociocultural unpredictability.

Relatedly, despite this high-profile exhibition of the PRC's latest military weaponry and substantial technological progress claimed by its military experts, those glossy, bulky hardware prove far less impressive with global military professionals. Among China's 52 weapons systems, 151 warplane flyovers, 12 intercontinental-range missiles, and the latest medium-range ballistic missile (the Dongfeng 21-C), probably only the last one received serious attention and positive assessment, as it may counter American aircraft carriers. Yet by some Russian military experts, even this system "still lags behind Russian Topol-M ICBM not by a generation but a century."<sup>421</sup> Overall, in their assessment, "China's military remains well behind that of many developed nations in sophistication and firepower."<sup>422</sup>

### Conclusion

In "making sense of the present and thus for extending the continuous present out to edges of the personal and collective horizons of time/space," public memory affords "a central resource,"<sup>423</sup> or more specifically "one of the most important symbolic resources we have ... for maintaining social bonds and claiming authority, for mobilizing action and legitimating it."<sup>424</sup> If "it is through

the National Day celebrations over the past sixty years that one can gauge the unsteady biorhythms of the nation-state,<sup>425</sup> and a healthy national identity can not be conceptualized without “a productive critical interrogation of the politics of public memory,”<sup>426</sup> then public memory can serve robustly for such a diagnostic function. This is particularly true for a collectivist, history-oriented country like China, who once “appeared more advanced ... [and] felt more superior” than all the civilizations of premodern times.<sup>427</sup> As a result, in achieving political recognition and public identification via this “immense, powerful and flawless” ceremony,<sup>428</sup> what the Chinese authorities delivered at this “spectacular display of nationalistic pride”<sup>429</sup> sheds significant light on our understanding of public memory in contemporary Chinese communication and rhetoric.

First, the CCP government strenuously substitutes public memory’s normative potency (“a model for society”) for its semiotic function (“a model of society”). This is particularly evident in the Chinese authorities’ “evincing ‘short-sightedness’ toward its past”.<sup>430</sup> drastically reducing modern China’s complex, multifaceted struggles for national rejuvenation to a singular narrative of the CCP’s tutelage; willfully concocting the CCP’s ideological turnarounds and political vagaries into a linear tale of doctrinal constancy and policy continuity; not least of all, intensely shifting the audiences’ attention from deep sociopolitical tensions to superficial ceremonial festivities. In truth, behind the PRC’s euphonious projection of an ancient, emergent superpower at the Square of Heavenly Peace Gate, the inherent irony could not be more extensively strident: Beijing’s security level during this military parade is even tighter than during the

2008 Olympic Games, with over one million volunteers mobilized to guard against public disorder; the public or “the great proletariat” are strictly prohibited from observing rehearsals and final rendition; local supermarkets are forbidden to sell knives and choppers; even all pigeons and kites must be grounded for security concerns. Zhang Ming, Chinese political scholar, comments that “without a single genuine spectator, this is a meticulously rehearsed farce by 200,000 performers for a handful of apparatchiks.”<sup>431</sup> As Minxin Pei, former Carnegie Endowment expert on Asian affairs, points out, “China’s grandiose military production may succeed in temporarily boosting national pride, in the long term, it will be little more than a passing distraction from the intractable problems confronting the regime.”<sup>432</sup> Tania Branigan and Jonathan Watts of the *Guardian* critique, “The huge display of might combined with the ideological slogans and massed ranks of previous parades with unprecedented security levels and extraordinary choreography.”<sup>433</sup>

Second, despite China’s sociopolitical realities that the CCP government dominates the public sphere in culture and communication, public remembrance, as “a site of uncertainty, contest, and change,”<sup>434</sup> is always fraught with contestation, resistance, and counter-narrative from domestic and global publics. In fact, gone are the days when Chinese public sphere was monopolized by the communist authorities. Rather, Chinese rhetorical transaction, including historical appropriation and memorial evocation, have been inextricably intertwined with constant challenges and vigilant scrutiny from domestic and international publics. *My Little Airport*, a Hong Kong music band, composed a popular, pun-embedded

music video titled “I Love the Country, but not the Party,” featuring such sarcastic lines as “In a party there’re many wankers and losers ... I'd celebrate Christmas Day [and] Easter Sunday. But not this party of your sixtieth birthday.”<sup>435</sup> Dali Yang, Chinese political scholar at the University of Chicago dismisses the ceremony as “a display of power and control.”<sup>436</sup> *The Wall Street Journal*, in its editorial “Today's celebrations ignore history and the Party's uncertain future,” notes that “The Communist Party will march in isolation, in a show of strength but not confidence, divorced from the people it governs.”<sup>437</sup> To most Western spectators, Melinda Liu of *Newsweek* points out, “the parade's goose-stepping soldiers and unprecedented display of military hardware will undoubtedly look like muscle-flexing triumphalism. ... Yet the regime's underlying mood is not aggression; it's insecurity.”<sup>438</sup> China’s phenomenal advances “are undeniable and deserving of respect,” Dominique Moisi, Harvard professor of political science, acknowledges, “but the success of a country that has so mobilized its energies as to transform past humiliations into massive national pride is not accompanied—and this is an understatement—by a responsible opening into its past.”<sup>439</sup>

Last, amid the PRC’s emergence as the next projected superpower, its communist government remains deeply tangled—rather than sociopolitically secured—in its relationships with the nation’s past. Throughout the parade, the whole ceremonial discourse is consistently evocative of and intimately predicated on China’s feudal hierarchy and dynastic heritage. Ironically enough, this self-styled new-type proletarian party conveys an extensively surreal drama in which, after its sixty-year anti-historical, totalitarian reign, its sociopolitical legitimacy

seems more retrogressive than progressive. Such an internally reactionary nature not only belies its externally revolutionary facade, but also reveals one of the CCP government's fundamental vulnerabilities as a forthcoming global power: if the period of sixty years chronologically marks a person's full maturity in Chinese culture, then this national ritual contrarily reveals that its communist leadership still has not outgrown its historical syndrome and memorial obsession for political legitimacy and ideological rationale, evidenced by its resorting to inordinate historical resources and mnemonic associations in service of rhetorical transaction. Indeed, such significant convolution between the past and present can hardly camouflage this party state's fundamental predicament—as a fragile regime inextricably mired “in a curiously ambivalent state of ‘stable unrest.’”<sup>440</sup>

If John Bodnar foretells correctly, that public remembering involves “fundamental issues about the entire existence of a society: its organization, structure of power, and the very meaning of its past and present,”<sup>441</sup> then Beijing's military parade conveys not a politically secure, ideologically credible, and militarily benign government, so much as a historically opportunistic, ideologically reactionary, and socially high-strung regime. In this sense, public memory functionally comes a full circle vis-à-vis the CCP's rhetorical emplotment: in its vehement pursuit of “a single, committed perspective”<sup>442</sup> “to emphasize an abstract ideal that apparently does not threaten, and in many ways supports, the status quo,”<sup>443</sup> the Chinese authorities forcefully imposes a monolithic rendition of collective recollection to service its official version's historical orthodoxy and memorial hegemony, but only ends up unveiling its

leaders' inability to encapsulate Chinese history, monopolize public remembrance, and purvey a credible vision of an ancient, emergent superpower, nationally and internationally.

True, with all the pomp and pageantry on this grand occasion, the Chinese government scores substantial publicity credits, yet by meticulously contriving its politico-ideological superiority, sociocultural prosperity, and military capabilities to project its power, prestige, and progress, Chinese communist leaders have proved that they are after all not different from ancient and modern authoritarian dictators the world over—Mesopotamian kings, Babylon monarchs, Roman emperors, Nazi Fuhrer, or Soviet tyrants. More crucially, despite its discursive dominance at this ceremony, over the long run, no sweeping epideictic extravaganza, triumphal military orchestration, or overwhelming propaganda offensive can buttress China's emerging national identity indefinitely. In this respect, Simon Elegant of *Time Magazine's* observations could hardly be more trenchant:

The specter of robotic ranks of soldiers marching past stone-faced leaders on the reviewing stand is an example of how Beijing often reveals an image of China that is completely at odds with the vision of a modern, peaceful nation the government is normally at pains to portray to the rest of the world.<sup>444</sup>

If the Chinese authorities truly intend to earn political recognition and ideological legitimacy, particularly if “it wants to progress domestically and become a respected and respectable actor of the international system,”<sup>445</sup> then it is perhaps more worthwhile to reflect upon the oftentimes dramatic discrepancies between their mythologized historical signification and untoward sociopolitical realities,

unless they want this and future grandiose ceremonies to lapse into spectacles of their own nostalgic obsession and politico-ideological fragility.



## Chapter 6

### RE-ANCHORING AN ANCIENT, EMERGENT SUPERPOWER: THE 2010

#### SHANGHAI WORLD EXPO

Shanghai has once again become truly, as it once was, a site with a one-of-a-kind mix of sensation and spectacle, exploitation and excitement, which is a magnet for international capital and international tourists, a cinematic city and a global trading hub. As for what will happen next, only one thing is clear: Shanghai's protean transformations will continue, and it will continue to reinvent itself as a complex city of the future best understood in light of its past.

—Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom

Shanghai's lavish world expo, which opened on May 1 and runs through the end of October, is a chance for China's largest city to announce itself as a cultural and economic powerhouse. . . . Of course, the [Shanghai] Expo is about far more than design—it is a brilliant act of international diplomacy.

—Fred A. Bernstein

The obvious conscious message is that China has arrived. We are basically celebrating China's emergence as a world power.

—Jose Villarreal  
U.S. Shanghai Expo Commissioner General

From May 1 to Oct 31, 2010, the Forty-First World Expo opened at Shanghai, a historically evocative and culturally stylish metropolis which marked its “comeback as a major world city after decades of spartan industrialism following the 1949 communist revolution.”<sup>1</sup> Through the World Expo’s 159-year history, the Shanghai Expo proves exemplary and arguably unsurpassable, testified by its unprecedented number of participating countries and organizations, visiting journalists and global spectators. Yet the Shanghai Expo’s implications extend even further: it is the largest Expo so far that attracted 73 million visitors, with additional 82.3 million virtual viewers to its online version—the *Expo Shanghai Online*; it is the first time that the World Fair, a supposedly industrialized countries’ proprietary party, is hosted by a developing country, and the first time that fifty underdeveloped African countries debuted in this event;<sup>2</sup> also it is the world's largest Expo hitherto with its exhibition area sprawling over 5.28 sq km. In effect, at this “biggest, most expensive expo since the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London,”<sup>3</sup> the Chinese government choreographed not merely the “greatest show on earth” in the Expo history,<sup>4</sup> but launched a massive publicity outreach at this “elaborate nation branding event.”<sup>5</sup>

While global perceptions from a multitude of political, economic, social, and cultural angles have proliferated, there seems to be not enough scholarly attention devoted to it from a communicative perspective, particularly from a rhetorical standpoint to illuminate its discursive operation and symbolic dynamics. In some ways, such research lacuna can be attributed to the broad spectrum of exhibitionary artifacts the PRC presented for this ceremonial occasion, which

poses conceptual and analytical challenges for theoretical description and discursive interpretation. To encapsulate such artifactual complexity, in this paper, I approach this rhetorical event from a public memory vantage point to extrapolate from their symbolic diversity several coherent, discursive themes. In fact, an expanded, contingent sense of rhetorical artifactuality has been justified not only by Michael McGee's proposition of "the fragmentation of contemporary culture,"<sup>6</sup> but also by Maurice Charland's elucidation of ideological rhetorical practices nowadays which "can include a range of aesthetic practices, including music, drama, architecture, and fashion, that elicit new modes of experiencing and being."<sup>7</sup> On such basis, I undertake to explicate the PRC's communicative imperative, rhetorical operation, and sociopolitical implication behind this ceremony.

For analysis, I designate the host city Shanghai, the China Pavilion, and China's premium exhibit—the painting *Along the Riverside during the Clear-Autumn Festival* (清明上河图)—as three central communicative texts for rhetorical anatomy. Conceptually, the choice of those rhetorical texts is justified by their public saliency and analytic practicality: first, they are among the most prominent and memorable artifacts encountered/experienced by the audiences; second, they emerged from political, ideological, publicity, and cultural considerations by Chinese official organizers; third, they intimately reflect/refract contemporary China's sociopolitical circumstances, and embody significant argumentative stance on the part of the Chinese authorities; last, over the long run,

all three artifacts collectively function as an enduring symbolic icon and hermeneutic prototype for both Chinese and global publics.<sup>8</sup>

Through a rhetorical interrogation into public memory dimensions of the Shanghai Expo, particularly regarding the three communicative texts, I argue that, by hosting the World Expo, the Chinese government enacted another rhetorical campaign (following the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2009 Beijing Military Parade) to reconstruct China's national identity as an ancient, emergent superpower. To this end, the Chinese authorities deliberately deployed historico-cultural resources to evoke public remembrances in pursuit of political recognition and ideological identification. More crucially, the Chinese government's historical representation and memorial invocation betray an intensely discursive (con)quest to re-anchor its political leadership as a historically continuous, culturally orthodox, and ideologically legitimate regime. Such rhetorical contentions ostensibly respond to increasing challenges from China's sociopolitical exigencies, but ultimately resist/refute domestic civic activism and global political democratization.

#### Public Memory, National Identity, and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo

According to sociologist Charles Turner, "Whether or not they have geographical extension, all human collectivities have a relationship to time," and their collective actions "contribute to the creation, maintenance, alteration or destruction of that relationship."<sup>9</sup> Historian Ernest Renan echoes that "The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a past full of efforts, sacrifices, and

devotion, going back a long way.”<sup>10</sup> By extension, in John Gillis’ view, “The core meaning of any individual or group identity is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, by intimately imbricating national identity, public memory “enacts and gives substance to the group’s identity, its present conditions and its vision of the future.”<sup>12</sup> As “an overtly politically and emotionally invested phenomenon,”<sup>13</sup> public memory offers “a conceptual framework for critiquing articulations of national identity.”<sup>14</sup> At a time when memorial discourses have increasingly shaped national reconstruction and international interaction, especially for those with a view to reconstituting, redefining, and re-appropriating the past experiences in support of political, ideological, and cultural constellations, such an investigative function into a nation’s sense of identity is highly relevant for rhetorical scholars, who are uniquely positioned to contribute, among other things, “a kind of critical self-consciousness about the symbolic and political character of public memory.”<sup>15</sup> This is particularly true for a historically authoritarian country like China, where Barbie Zelizer diagnoses that “power struggle intrudes upon all memory work,” and memory study can expose “the ways in which power has historically been assigned.”<sup>16</sup>

Given its institutional mission and worldwide reach to showcase a host country’s industrial foundation and technological innovation, the World Expo has historically provided one of the most effective vehicles for national promotion, urban recognition, and politico-ideological publicity through symbolic signification: the 1851 London Great Exhibition marked the advent of the

Industrial Revolution; the 1939 New York World Fair established the Big Apple's global preeminence; and the 1970 Osaka Expo confirmed Japan's rejuvenation as an industrial power. Likewise, the Expo's global ethos is particularly appealing for those developing countries like China whose dogmatic ideological system and less internationally integrated sociopolitical institutions have long constrained its leverage to pitch national persona through globally recognized channels. Consequently, the World Expo affords an exceptionally kairotic platform for the Chinese government to prosecute its politico-ideological agenda and symbolic-discursive objective.

#### Rhetorical Situation of the Shanghai Expo

Parallel to its rhetorical ambition at the Expo, the Chinese government faced a host of internal and external imperatives and challenges. Domestically, the Chinese authorities were eager to capitalize this event to accentuate its political, economic, and social credentials, at a memorial juncture when PRC just celebrated its sixtieth birthday in 2009, while the ruling CCP would mark its ninetieth founding anniversary in 2011. Moreover, when contemporary Chinese society was increasingly beset by political fragmentation, social polarization, and cultural pluralism, Chinese communist apparatchiks, now deprived of its once politico-ideological absolutism, had to re-secure national recognition to unify political constituencies and public consensus. Last but not least, China's thirty-year reform and opening-up since the late 1970s had drastically transformed the country. To reassert its political legitimacy and ideological relevance, for the

Chinese authorities, global media events, such as the World Expo that thematically accents the host country's political progressivism, social dynamism, and technological accomplishment, offer an ideal outlet to catapult political messages and national personality.

Externally, China's sturdy development over the three decades have engendered both euphoria and misgivings, including growing concerns over the PRC's political, economic, and military ascendancy. In this "chance to showcase China's rising clout and prosperity to a global audience,"<sup>17</sup> the Chinese government felt obligated to reassure the world with a brand-new national image of cooperation and convergence. Further, China's hectic economic growth and socio-environmental consequences have caused the world to question its development sustainability and political viability. More importantly, despite China's resounding PR success at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Chinese government still needed the Expo, as "a form of power ... of persuasion rather than of gunpowder,"<sup>18</sup> to project culturally rooted and intellectually inspiring themes to convince the world of its sociopolitical strength. "It's that attitude," as Austin Ramzy of *Time Magazine* observes, that explains "why China is fully embracing the expo, ... [and] promises to make the Shanghai expo such an extravaganza."<sup>19</sup>

Accordingly, for Chinese communist leaders, this event would not simply serve as "a perfect opportunity of public diplomacy"<sup>20</sup> to "display to the world a China with a glorious civilization of more than 5,000 years,"<sup>21</sup> but constituted what Bitzer would define as "an actual or potential exigence"<sup>22</sup> of national charge

and political investment that pressed for an imminent discursive solution for “the significant modification” in “a rhetorically audience ... capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change.”<sup>23</sup> It is due to such national stake and political intensity that the Shanghai Expo provides a weighty glimpse into how the Chinese government discursively conceptualized, appropriated, and enacted China’s historical remembrance, collective consciousness, and national identity toward its politico-ideological ends, and how such a rhetorical process was alternatively perceived and interpreted by Chinese and global audiences.

### The 2010 Shanghai World Expo

On May 1, mixed with “Sino-Western schmaltz and stiff Chinese ritual,”<sup>24</sup> the Shanghai Expo started off with an exuberant opening ceremony. This pyrotechnically lavish gambit formally announced the start of the six-month-long World’s Fair in China’s most advanced, avant-garde city, witnessed by twenty national heads and government executives, 246 participating countries and international organizations, 186,000 journalists, and a record 73 million global visitors.

To analyze this communicative event, I focus on three rhetorical texts for a close reading of their discursive conceptualization, memorial invocation, and sociopolitical implication. The first artifact is the host city Shanghai per se, for it serves as not just an exhibition venue, but also a critical framing device to contextualize the event and calibrate its (inter)national implications for the



audiences. The second artifact is the China Pavilion, a meticulously selected architectural projection of China's national identity, which possesses deeper political, ideological, and cultural undertones beyond an engineering project. The third artifact is China's premium exhibit—a giant 3D-animated display of one of China's most famed paintings “*Along the Riverside during the Clear-Autumn Festival*,” which vividly depicts a panoramic river-view of urban vibrancy and rural serenity around China's ancient capital Bianliang (now Kaifeng in Henan province) during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127AD). The deliberate choice of this drawing out of China's vast cultural heritage and artistic repository, together with its subtle portrayal and visual stunts, reveals Chinese official organizers' communicative design and rhetorical expectation.

Collectively, these public memory texts exerted far-reaching effects on Chinese and global publics' perceptions of this event and China's national image as a whole, as manifested by subsequent analyses into each artifact and their overall discursive effect and sociopolitical impact.

#### *Artifact I: The Shanghai City*

Since its successful bid with the Paris-based the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) to host the 2010 World Expo, Shanghai had undertaken “monumental”<sup>25</sup> preparation and “breathtaking”<sup>26</sup> renovation. Infrastructurally, the city cleared a two-square-mile area along the Huangpu River, relocated 18,000 families, 270 factories, and a hulking shipyard with 10,000 employees. Financially, besides \$58 billion on infrastructural improvements, it spent \$4.2 billion for the event itself—more than twice the amount of the Beijing Olympics.

Moreover, Shanghai earmarked \$700 million for renovating its trademark scene—the riverfront promenade along the historic Bund, where the colonial-style architectures, Western banking headquarters, and diplomatic institutions once concentrated, and testified to the city’s stellar cosmopolitanism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

If the World Expo has been primarily installed to demonstrate the participating nations’ industrial strength and technological creativity, especially the host country’s economic progress and innovative capability, then hardly any other locale in China possesses richer historical sensitivities and memorial sediments than Shanghai’s checkered trajectory and intimate connections with such themes. On almost any PR benchmark, Shanghai holds definitive advantages for the Chinese government to execute its national branding vis-à-vis national and international audiences.

As China’s largest metropolis with “a fascinating mix of old and new influences”<sup>27</sup> and a population of 22 million, Shanghai occupies a historically pivotal place in the country’s economic, cultural, political, and psychological geography, to the extent that virtually no local event could escape the city’s historical association and chronological annotation. In promoting this city as a national model and infusing the public with Shanghai’s past and present, the Chinese authorities opportunely strikes a tender memorial chord with domestic and global spectators.

Starting as a humble fishing village, Shanghai for many centuries remained insulated from the outside world by the early nineteenth century, as a

result of the Qing Dynasty's (1644-1911) self-isolation policy for fear of external subversive influence. Following the decisive defeat by the Anglo-French allied forces during the First Opium War (1840-1842), Shanghai was thrust open by the Western powers for international trade, and thence embarked upon a fast track of booming as a global port in the Far East. In contrast to the outsider's romanticized curiosity with Shanghai's exotic lifestyle, most Chinese could hardly recall this period without vivid remembrances of the country's traumatic experiences at the hands of the Western colonial powers. The mid nineteenth century, for the Chinese, marked the beginning of China's "Century of National Humiliation."<sup>28</sup> If today's Shanghai is China's supreme pride, then yesterday's Shanghai was a deep wound etched on Chinese national psyche. To reframe the public's historical reflection and national sentiment in support of China's current political leadership and ideological doctrine, Shanghai provides an ideal living specimen to embody the dramatic contrasts between China's modern decline and contemporary renaissance. Just as Elaine Kurtenbach of *AP* notes, "For many Chinese, the Shanghai Expo site is a modern, nationalist counterpoint to the colonial buildings down river on the historic Bund."<sup>29</sup>

Further, Shanghai's historical depth and political symbolism trace even deeper. It was here that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) convened its founding sessions in the 1920s, and formulated its political program for national struggle. Through pyrrhic guerrilla wars with Japanese invaders during WWII, bitter military conflicts with the Chinese Nationalist Party in the 1940s, ruthless political purges in the 1950s, and radical ideological movements in the 1960s, the

CCP leaders eventually switched to political pragmatism and economic development in the late 1970s. In its renewed pursuit of political legitimacy and public recognition, the Chinese government now can no longer resort to politico-ideological totalitarianism, but adapt to fledging political pluralism and social diversity. Hence, more than ever it needs this high-profile event to reassert its political prowess, ideological viability, and social credibility. Naturally, the city of Shanghai, as an ambient text elevated by the Expo's historico-institutional aura and encountered by tens of millions of domestic audiences, projects a dual message for the Chinese public: A historically reputed city brought forth the ruling CCP, which, despite its complex twists and turns over its ninety-year trajectory, has come around to turn the historical wheel of fortune for its own fate, for this great city, and for this ancient nation.

No less rhetorically operative is Shanghai's historical connotations for global audiences. As a "re-globalizing metropolis,"<sup>30</sup> this city exemplifies China's phenomenal modernization over the past thirty years, with half of the world's construction cranes once reported to be operating here. In fact, scarcely has any other Chinese city radiated so much historical and contemporary resonance with the global public's memorial recesses. Historically, as a bustling trading port during China's semi-colonial period, Shanghai metamorphosed into China's "most glamorous and cultured city,"<sup>31</sup> and lingered as a fascinating tale of cosmopolitan atmosphere, cultural exoticism, and social fashion among global imagination. Known as one of the hottest tourist destinations worldwide during the 1930s, Shanghai, nicknamed the "Paris of the East," was "more international

than just about anywhere else in the world.”<sup>32</sup> Its reputation as an international sanctuary from political tumult, cultural intolerance, and religious persecution extended proudly long: from the mid nineteenth century to the 1940s, there were three waves of international immigration, including tens of thousands of Jews from Fascist Germany and Bolshevik Russia.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, if the Expo is tasked to provide “a taste of the future via displays of new inventions and state-of-the-art machines and structures”<sup>34</sup> in contemporary times, Shanghai is replete with omnipresent evidence of futuristic vision: it has absorbed most of China’s foreign direct investment, shot up one after another record-breaking skyscrapers, and run the first-in-the-world, ultra-high-speed magnetic levitation train. For a city “where the future is an obsession,” as Adam Minter of *The Atlantic* writes, its “reported \$46 billion hat-tip to the past makes perfect sense.”<sup>35</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald* editorializes that once thriving as China’s gateway to the world, Shanghai has “come a long way” and now “finds its big feat.”<sup>36</sup> On *Time Magazine*, Austin Ramzy reflects, if “Shanghai's former glory came on the West's terms. This time Shanghai is doing it on its own”;<sup>37</sup> Hannah Beech concludes, “Shanghai is back, and bigger than ever.”<sup>38</sup>

#### *Artifact II: The China Pavilion*

Since its inception in 1851, the World Expo has become a prominent global stage to parade the host countries’ economic development and cultural tradition, including arts and architecture. To such ends, national pavilion has proved a prime technological medium and communicative channel to showcase social progress, urban vitality, and cultural heritage. The China Pavilion, now “as a

physical display of the country's pride and growing power<sup>39</sup> ranking alongside the World Expo's most memorable structures like the Eiffel Tower and Seattle's Space Needle, is one of the Expo's most eye-catching structures in physical scale, visual impact, and cultural significance.

Among five exhibition zones stretching along the Huangpu River, the China Pavilion is situated in Zone A along the Expo Axis—a central boulevard as the main entrance into the exhibition site. Surrounded by other Asian countries' modest pavilions, this \$220-million, 226-foot-high structure is, in Chinese media's words, "one of the largest and most important buildings showcasing the host country's economic power."<sup>40</sup> It towers like a red upside-down pyramid with a floor space equivalent to 35 football fields and three times the average height of the other pavilions. Titled "The Crown of the East," the China Pavilion presents a distinctive layout of roof, inspired by a quintessential Chinese architectural device *dougong* (斗拱, brackets) dating back to over 2,000 years ago.<sup>41</sup>

For the Chinese who since early times "have already developed discourses dealing with the historical construction of ordered human space,"<sup>42</sup> *dougong* has become "a classical Chinese architectural component,"<sup>43</sup> emblematic of Chinese architectural essence and conceptual ingenuity.<sup>44</sup> It plays a definitive role in structurally connecting the wooden columns and the roof beams, as a joint cushion buffering the roof weight on the columns while enhancing the building's resilience against earthquakes. Moreover, given its crucial stabilizing function, *dougong* is technically favorable to projecting ornamental roofs, which, in Chinese political hierarchy and ceremonial traditions, symbolize the strict

distinction of status and wealth: The more elaborate a building's roof, the more prominent its resident's political position and social eminence. However, over the years, with technological progress and material availability, *dougong* has become structurally less essential but stylistically more sophisticated to meticulously index political power, social status, and epideictic significance.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, it is only natural that Chinese sponsors purposely invested this imposing structure with an extended range of political, ideological, and social significations, typified by its official designations as "Oriental Crown," "Splendid China," "Ample Barn," and "Rich People."<sup>46</sup>

Yet behind the China Pavilion's seemingly cultural representation and technological materialization, more critical communicative dynamics are embedded by Chinese organizers. To begin with, this structure did not come about accidentally but was carefully selected from more than 300 entries.

Melodramatically, this design was once eliminated but re-picked by the evaluation committee to become the final choice. Its surprising success, in its designer's words, was due to the fact that "It's an abstract expression of China's 5,000 years of history and the culture of 56 ethnic groups," and "Every element used in the China Pavilion has its Chinese origin."<sup>47</sup> Obviously, the choice of *dougong* as the central design concept was highly intentional. As a subsidiary device between the column and beam, *dougong* was structurally subordinate and functionally dependent compared with other discrete components like roof, entrance, and door. Hence the prominent incarnation of such a low-key element as

the core concept to construct this high-profile structure poses an important entry point for rhetorical scrutiny as much as architectural polemic.<sup>48</sup>

From a rhetorical perspective, especially from a public memory lens, the China Pavilion reveals deeper rhetorical intention and persuasive ploy at work. First, the most visible aspect of its geometric shape—an inverted pyramid which extends wider along each upward layer—possesses intriguingly visual prompts and memorially receptive effects. Perceptively, an upside-down structure usually channels an observer’s gaze toward its roof, thus accentuating its elevated sections, particularly the top part. With its raised gravity and potentially unstable posture untypical of traditional Chinese naturalist philosophy and harmony-oriented culture, the China Pavilion purposefully manipulates the audiences’ spatial cognition and memorial perception: reducing their holistic perspective to a localized eyeshot while truncating their contextual recollection into a myopic mnemonic fragment. When such a seemingly magnificent yet factually superficial horizon obtains, the structure’s foundation turns oblivious, while its vertex becomes paramount. Consequently, such a skewed rendering of China’s architectural tradition inscribes an ideologically inflected subject position, which forcefully abridged the audiences’ vision of public remembrance and collective identity into particular version and specific direction.

Second, equally noteworthy is the China Pavilion’s subtle reflection of Chinese philosophical tenets, and more importantly political order and hierarchical tradition. To start with, this structure is deliberately painted with the exactly same color—a crimson, resplendent red—as that of Beijing’s Forbidden



City (the imperial palace where China's feudal emperors governed the country for nearly five centuries). Such conservatism reveals an anachronistic obsession with political orthodoxy and ceremonial continuity, rather than cultural evolution and technological innovation. Likewise, the China Pavilion's spatial layout is symbolically significant. Underneath its upper inverted pyramid are the Regional Joint Pavilion made up of China's 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, plus Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. By the designer's account, such a vertical placement of the nation as superior and paramount while the regions as subordinate and secondary denotes the supreme harmony between heaven and earth,<sup>49</sup> a vital dialectic in traditional Chinese culture long held to be requisite for political stability and social order. Ironically enough, on this supposedly apolitical occasion meant to prototype new ideas and technologies, the China Pavilion functions conservatively as material reproduction and cultural accentuation of China's political authoritarianism and social hierarchy.

Last, the China Pavilion's location also discloses significant rhetorical deployments. Situated at the central site within the Expo area, the China Pavilion strategically perches next to the intersection of north-south and west-east axes, with no major country's pavilion in the same zone to outshine its magnificence.<sup>50</sup> In light of its geographical centrality, Adam Minter of *The Atlantic* comments, when "the U.S. and Japanese pavilions are exiled to the far ends of the Expo site, as far from the China pavilion as physically possible, the politics are sometimes comically obvious."<sup>51</sup> Within traditional Chinese architectural layout, which "puts a premium on the built environment's dialectic unity, and treats all subsidiary

components as a synergistic whole,”<sup>52</sup> such hierarchical symbolism is especially palpable for highlighting the central structure’s dominant grandeur. Thus, as a conceptual cue to most Chinese’s cultural consciousness of its millennial-long architectural canons and political norms, the China Pavilion not only takes the pride of place, but also implicitly integrates all participating pavilions into its cultural scheme of national ranking and power distribution. As Tania Branigan of the *Guardian* aptly alludes, “It’s the 21<sup>st</sup> century equivalent to the old tribute to the emperor, we’ve all always had to pay to play in China, but wind-up clocks and oompah bands are old hat so now we have to build pavilions, sponsor things, cut cheques to officials charities.”<sup>53</sup>

As can be seen, the China Pavilion was built more than as architectural expression and cultural manifestation, but instead operates as a powerful memorial marker, intensively shaping the audiences’ perceptions at spatial, visual, political, and cultural levels.

*Artifact III: The Animated Painting “Along the Riverside during the Clear-Autumn Festival”*

Typically, participating countries at the Expo exploit this global occasion to roll out their latest industrial innovations and technological products. At the Shanghai Expo, Chinese official organizers also select their own exemplary exhibits to promote national identity. Inside the China Pavilion, re-presenting China’s historical achievements and modern urbanization is an unusual item—a giant 3D animated painting scroll based on one of China’s most famous drawings *Along the Riverside during the Clear-Autumn Festival*.

Socioculturally, this “great realistic masterpiece”<sup>54</sup> has been noted for its vivid, panoramic portrayal of urban prosperity and rural tranquility in China’s thriving capital during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127AD). Originally, this scroll, 9.8 inches in width and 208 inches in length, was created by Zhang Zeduan, a professional painter affiliated with the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. Excelling at representing social scenes, Zhang in this elaborate piece graphically reproduced an almost encyclopedic picture of China’s twelfth-century urban life and social scene. By estimate, there are 1,659 human subjects and 209 animals minutely recreated in their circumstantial activities, making for a realistic microcosm of political harmony, social tranquility, and urban vitality. For better exhibition effects, its 3D animated version is enlarged by thirty times into a perfectly proportionate, 21-foot-wide and 420-foot-long massive rolling scroll. When on display, this hefty piece entails twelve cinematic projectors working simultaneously at the background, alternating between daytime and night scenes.

From political, economic, and cultural perspectives, this remarkable work of fine art could hardly be more memorially affectionate with Chinese audience. In Chinese history, the Northern Song Dynasty ended the prolonged warlordism and national disunity, heralding a positive stint of national peace, political stability, and social harmony. It was also during this period that China achieved its pinnacle in economic prosperity, cultural vibrancy, and technological leadership in the world. In cultural field, this era embraced another heyday in China’s intellectual development, as most Chinese scholars concur that, through a millennium of evolution, Chinese culture and science, including painting, reached its peak

during this period.<sup>55</sup> French sinologist Jacques Gernet calls this time “China’s renaissance,”<sup>56</sup> and British academic Joseph Needham labels it “The Golden Age” in ancient China’s science and culture.<sup>57</sup> For the Chinese public, if this Dynasty elicits politically progressive, socially liberal, and culturally flourishing recollections, then probably no other mnemonic marker can be more vicariously reminiscent than a verisimilar, panoptic iconography of those *auld lang syne*.

Moreover, what is perhaps discursively imperceptible yet rhetorically operative is this painting’s artistic ingenuity, for what distinguishes it from its Western counterpart is the deployment of a quintessential Chinese drawing technique—the scattered perspective. Such a diffusive focus employs multiple vantage points in portraying a holistic scene of the subject, while ensuring every element is represented in its original detail and perfect proportion, without distinction of perspectivity or positionality. Such a panoramic tactic contrasts sharply with Western painting’s focused perspective, in which objects are reproduced through the painter’s sole standpoint, with everything drawn based on its perceived salience and proportion.

By comparison, a focused perspective is more suitable to distill an analytical grasp of the subject, while a scattered perspective is more instrumental to create a natural, ambient experience. This is more so when a meticulous work of considerable size is enlarged into a sprawling canvass, and punctiliously retouched/animated into a storied 3D representation: before such a historically familiar and artistically majestic exhibit, hardly any spectator would not be impressed by its immense scale and visual sweep. What is critical in this painting,

however, is not even its artistic execution, physical scale or visual impact, but its psycho-cognitive enactment of chain proselytization with the viewer: standing before such a minute, lively, and immersive spectacle, scarcely would any viewer not be awed by its creative ingenuity, neither would such an awed viewer likely question its historical facticity, nor would such an unquestioning viewer doubt China's erstwhile glory and prosperity; still less would such an undoubting viewer challenge its current government's historical continuity and political lineage. With such a rhetorical sleight of hand, the Chinese government painstakingly invokes/inspires domestic audiences' historico-cultural imagination and politico-ideological association, on such urgent issues as political recognition, ideological consensus, and social cohesion.

Indeed, constituted by "grammars that transform the perceptible into nonobvious meanings," this painting effectively functions as what Murray Edelman defines "a form of action that generates radiating chains of connotations while undermining its own assumptions and assertions."<sup>58</sup>

### Receptions and Implications

Throughout the six-month Shanghai Expo, Chinese and global observations and commentaries are extensive and effusive. China's *Xinhua News Agency* proclaims it "a fulfillment of a Chinese centennial dream, and a passionate embrace of China's 5,000-year civilization with the world."<sup>59</sup> U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon affirms that it "offers hope for tackling global challenges ... [and] will not be forgotten."<sup>60</sup> John Boudreau of *The San Jose*

*Mercury News* comments that “If the 2008 Beijing Olympics was China's postcard to the world, the Shanghai World Expo is the nation's coming out party.”<sup>61</sup> Fred Bernstein of *Architect Magazine* points out that the Shanghai Expo is “far more than design—it is a brilliant act of international diplomacy.... for China’s largest city to announce itself as a cultural and economic powerhouse.”<sup>62</sup>

Thematically, international responses converge on China’s national identity of emergent global leadership and ascending soft power. Andrew Higgins of *The Washington Post* construes that at “a metropolis that once symbolized subjugation by the West ... [the Expo] showcases their country as a potent but peaceful world power.”<sup>63</sup> Jeffrey Wasserstrom, history professor at UC Irvine, observes that it signals “how far it [China] has come in the course of a century or so, and how far behind it has left its former reputation as the ‘sick man of Asia.’”<sup>64</sup> Mark MacKinnon of *The Globe and Mail* writes that “Expo 2010 confirms how China has moved to the world’s centre stage.”<sup>65</sup> Jose Villarreal, U.S. Expo Commissioner General, opines, “The obvious conscious message is that China has arrived. We are basically celebrating China’s emergence as a world power.”<sup>66</sup>

On China’s rising soft power, global media broaden its attention to environmental and cultural dimensions of China’s urbanization and national building. Juliet Eilperin of *The Washington Post* reminds, “China surpassed the United States and other members of the G-20 for the first time as the leader in clean energy investment.”<sup>67</sup> Elaine Kurtenbach of *AP* stresses, “The Expo's theme of urban sustainability dovetails with Beijing's own agenda of shifting to a more

sustainable pace of growth.”<sup>68</sup> *Fox News* simply headlines that “Shanghai World Expo Showcases China's Soft Power.”<sup>69</sup>

Yet behind those positive observations surrounding the Shanghai Expo, there are far more problematic politico-ideological complexities underlying the Chinese government’s rhetorical transactions, which provoke sociocultural contestations and warrant further rhetorical critiques, especially around the three symbolically synecdochical artifacts.

First, the employment of Shanghai city as a discursive site to promote China’s progressive national identity is as felicitous as controversial. True, given its historical depth and political symbolism, Shanghai can be a best choice to project China’s emergent persona before the world. However, such a persuasive ploy can be historically distorted and politically reductive. To start with, it is through the First Opium War (1839-1842) that Shanghai was forced open to the outside world; otherwise Shanghai’s modern trajectory would have been very different. Further, if Shanghai’s global cosmopolitanism and economic prominence before the People’s Republic in 1949 was due to its high degree of autonomy from China’s central government, then Shanghai’s obscurity during the PRC’s early years was primarily attributable to the CCP government’s statist, self-quarantined national policy. It was only until the end of the destructive Culture Revolution (1966-1976) that Chinese ideologues realized the inevitability to reopen the country for foreign investment and advanced technology. As Jeffrey Wasserstrom notes, Shanghai remains a “controlled city,” in the sense not only of being part of an authoritarian state that limits the freedom of individuals but also

of having less autonomy as a metropolis than those in many other kinds of nation-state.”<sup>70</sup> Clearly, the appropriation of Shanghai as a discursive locale to endorse the current political apparatus reveals a nuanced rhetorical tactic of historical expediency and political opportunism.

Second, if Chinese official organizers attempted to place Shanghai as a contextual testimony to their political prowess and ideological superiority, then the Chinese authorities’ recourse to cultural heritage contrarily discloses its vehement pursuit of historical continuity and cultural orthodoxy, especially over the design choice of the China Pavilion. By disproportionately magnifying a structurally ornamental element—*dougong*—into a visually pompous and psychologically overweening structure, this ostentatiously crimson, monarchically reincarnated structure stands more as a cacophonous misfit, both in Chinese architectural and cultural traditions, as well as among the otherwise harmoniously gray-tinged, soothing Expo milieu. Furthermore, when overloaded with a blanket of Chinese philosophical, political, and cultural connotations, such an elaborate, heavy-duty architecture exposes more of its official sponsor’s nationalistic obsession and ideological parochialism,<sup>71</sup> instead of an ancient, emergent superpower’s supposedly historical maturity and cultural magnanimity.

Third, when national pavilions are intended to “exhibit the means at man’s disposal for meeting the needs of civilization” (BIE), the China Pavilion, in its purported representation of Chinese architectural, cultural, and philosophical traditions, ironically bespeaks the host’s adamant striving for ritualistic rigor, cultural orthodoxy, and political hierarchy. More tellingly, if public memory



functions as “an expressive symbol—a language, as it were, for articulating present predicaments,”<sup>72</sup> then this structure precisely betrays the CCP authorities’ intense pursuit of political supremacy, ideological centrality, and social stability, at a time when all those foundations have been unprecedentedly challenged by domestic and global exigencies.

Over the PRC’s 60-year course, especially through China’s three-decade economic growth, cultural renaissance, and social diversification, the CCP has been increasingly deadlocked between economic liberalization and political ossification, particularly when non-governmental organizations and civic groups have become increasingly vocal against political monopoly, ideological hegemony, and social domination. In light of contemporary China’s political pluralism, cultural diversity, and social stratification, such robust civic awakening has become more and more influential. Over the past decade, China undergone an exponential increase of social unrests, from 8,709 in 1993, 87,000 in 2005,<sup>73</sup> over 90,000 in 2009,<sup>74</sup> to 180,000 in 2010,<sup>75</sup> in which peasants, workers and urban citizens have become the leading social groups clamoring for civic rights.<sup>76</sup> Correspondingly, in 2009, China’s public expenditure on internal security almost equaled that of national defense, making public security the fastest-growing segment of public outlays and top priority for the governments at all levels.<sup>77</sup> Regarding China’s grave political circumstances, Chinese sociologists have pointed out that such extensive mass incidents disclose the dual crises of political governance and ideological legitimacy facing the CCP government.<sup>78</sup> Some even

warn that, nowadays “the largest threat to China is no longer social turmoil, but total social breakdown.”<sup>79</sup>

In the face of the communist government’s transgression, malfeasance, and unaccountability in politico-social administration, China’s grassroots efforts have gathered momentum toward greater political participation and civic advocacy, highlighted by a series of civic initiatives to investigate government suppression and official corruption behind public accidents and natural disasters. On the occasions of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, such a progressive movement culminated in the publication of *Charter 08* in 2008, co-signed by over 300 Chinese intellectuals, journalists, and human rights activists. Widely acclaimed “China’s Democratic Manifesto,” this document calls for a broad range of constitutional and political reform. So far, more than 10,000 Chinese intellectuals have signed it, while one of its drafters, Liu Xiaobo, even won the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize for his prominent role in China’s civic movement and political democratization.

Confronting such fermenting civic waves, the Chinese government could not afford to miss this Expo—a golden PR opportunity—to make a compelling case for its political legitimacy, ideological viability, and administrative competence. In face of these fluid sociopolitical realities, most urgent is for the CCP government to secure the status quo to accommodate political readjustment, ideological overhaul, and social reconsolidation. To this end, probably no other communicative text serves as a more effective stabilizer than the painting *Along the Riverside during the Clear-Autumn Festival*.

For many visitors at the Expo, it seems curious why such a historical Chinese painting from 800 years ago was singled out as a prime exhibit representing contemporary China's national image. Yet upon inspection, their inherent connections are neither impenetrable nor far-fetched. To begin with, no memorial artifact can be gratuitously appropriated to underwrite any political agenda or ideological dogma, without invoking public memory's inherent function as "a model of society" or what Foucault would propose as "counter-memory."<sup>80</sup> By highlighting the multi-textured nature of reality in which the old and present beliefs create "an unstable assemblage of faults, fissures and heterogeneous layers,"<sup>81</sup> counter-memory problematizes official memory's hegemony that "is fixed, through its history, in rituals, in meticulous procedures that impose rights and obligations."<sup>82</sup> Thus, when examined from a broader historical, political, and cultural context, the choice of this classic in Chinese painting history reveals what Michael Bruner may term as "narrative absences,"<sup>83</sup> which significantly countervail against the Chinese government's political romanticization and ideological mythologization.

Politically, the Northern Song Dynasty was established by a military general via a *coup d'etat*, but the new sovereign swiftly curtailed his military forces for fear of repeating his predecessor's fate. Such overtly defensive precaution centralized national administration but seriously undermined national defense, to the extent that its border peace was maintained by offering tributes to appease northern nomadic tribes. Such a pacifist policy proved so fragile that sixty seven years later its capital was taken and the incumbent emperor captured

by the invading nomadic regime—a gross national disgrace poignantly chronicled by Chinese history textbooks. In this sense, this painting actually represents a short-lived, unviable imperial reign, under which its government, out of administrative incompetence and obsessive concerns for internal security, ended up being subdued and eventually toppled by the presumably inferior, barbaric regime. Ideologically, Zhang Zeduan, the painter, served as a royal artist whose principal task was to create artistic works to cater to his master’s aesthetic taste and political fantasy. Conceivably, for his royal patron, when presented with such a scintillating vista of national harmony, economic prosperity, and universal peace under his jurisdiction, hardly any sovereign ruler could resist a self-glorious or self-illusory sense of complacency, nor would he hesitate to decree it as a prime exemplification of his capable administration or sanction it as a national vision for his subjects’ consumption, especially during less desirable sociopolitical circumstances.

As a result, this mediated, decontextualized painting exhibit, with its scrupulous secular details, magnified visual effects, and proportionate perceptual realism, implicitly furnishes an ideological spectacle—“a model for society” for its official organizers to pursue political vindication, social stabilization, and public consensus.

Last, despite the Chinese government’s selectivity, partiality, and distortion in its discursive intervention in China’s public memory terrain, Chinese rhetorical transactions, including historical appropriation and memorial evocation, have been inextricably intertwined with what Michael Bruner may call “a

productive critical interrogation of the politics of public memory”<sup>84</sup> by Chinese and global publics. In a parody of the Shanghai’s Expo’s theme “Better City, Better Life,” local artist Chen Hangfeng exhibited an installation titled “Bubble City, Bubble Life” to mock the Shanghai authorities’ pursuit of money and prestige.<sup>85</sup> Labeling it “the longest carnival in Chinese history,” Zhu Dake, Chinese cultural scholar, quips, “[the government] wants to show that we’re a big power [while] domestically they want to demonstrate that this is an extremely prosperous time.”<sup>86</sup> Dubbing it “a campaign of mass distraction,” Anne-Marie Brady, New Zealand political scientist, notes that “The hoopla surrounding it is aimed at helping Chinese people feel positive about their country ... [while] distracting them from other, more depressing issues. In China today, the non-political is in fact deeply political.”<sup>87</sup> Evidently, public memory, as “a site of uncertainty, contest, and change,”<sup>88</sup> has evolved into a competitive domain which increasingly challenges the Chinese authorities’ politico-ideological hegemony and historico-symbolic monopoly.

In light of the Chinese government’s global publicity ambition<sup>89</sup> and national identity reconstruction, such public contestations prove politically revelatory and socially diagnostic. This is especially true when juxtaposing extensive thematic discrepancies between the Shanghai Expo and the World’s Fair’s mission/status: an ancient, emergent superpower dispatches its premium metropolis to outshine for self-vindication in what many industrialized countries consider a lackluster, outdated global event;<sup>90</sup> a resurging Shanghai’s implicit politico-partisan self-justification underlies its ostentatious economic and cultural

showoff; the China Pavilion's subliminal philosophico-ideological indoctrination belies its architectural and cultural representations; and, not least of all, its prime exhibit *Along the Riverside during the Clear-Autumn Festival*, with its deeper psycho-cognitive persuasion, directs less at a genuine display of China's urban sophistication and cultural achievement, but more toward conjuring up the public's nostalgic illusion to stake the status quo.

### Conclusion

During the summary meeting of the Shanghai Expo, the Shanghai authorities stresses that the Event's success is primarily attributable to the CCP's strong leadership and the socialist system's political superiority.<sup>91</sup> Reiterating this point in its subsequent circular, the Chinese central government calls on the whole country to rally behind the CCP and uphold the socialist system with Chinese characteristics.<sup>92</sup> Clearly, behind this seemingly commercial and technological Expo lies a systematic array of the Chinese government's rhetorical stratagems, designed to memorially engage Chinese and global audiences at historical, cultural, and social levels, all of which ultimately pointed to its core communicative objectives: maintaining the status quo, vindicating its politico-ideological leadership, and resisting/refuting civic movements and political democratization on domestic and global fronts.

Broadly, in "making sense of the present and thus for extending the continuous present out to edges of the personal and collective horizons of time/space," memory affords what sociologist Andrew Hoskins defines as "a

central resource.”<sup>93</sup> Moreover, public memory offers what Iwona Irwin-Zarecka describes as “one of the most important symbolic resources we have. ... for maintaining social bonds and claiming authority, for mobilizing action and legitimating it.”<sup>94</sup> This is especially true for a historically textured, collectivistically constituted authoritarian country like China. To achieve public persuasion and repackage national identity at the Shanghai Expo, what the Chinese government delivers at this epideictic extravaganza brings light on China’s national ascendancy, communicative dynamics, and rhetorical patterns, as manifested by its public memory conception and ceremonial orchestration.

Amid China’s emergence as a global superpower, its contemporary political, ideological, and social configurations, at least in its official vision, are still memorially tethered to the nation’s historical continuity, philosophical foundation, and cultural heritage. Such a retrogressive tendency conflicts sharply with the Expo’s status as a putatively forward-looking technological and commercial event, especially when Chinese official organizers deployed inordinate historical resources and mnemonic elements in its exhibitionary artifacts. Ironically, when China is projected as the next leading nation, its communist government, after the sixty-year absolutist rule, still has not outgrown its historical syndrome and memorial obsession for politico-ideological legitimacy. Or rather, despite its progressive, prosperous facade, it remains a fragile regime which still has not reconciled the consequential relationship between the country’s deep past and unsettled present. In this respect, inasmuch as Chinese historical discourse remains politically hegemonic and ideologically monolithic, public memory,

when employed for ceremonial re-presentation and symbolical re-appropriation, would paradoxically tend not toward univocally legitimating the status quo, so much as multivocally subverting it. Therefore, Chinese public memory, in its official constellation, assumes an inherently dualistic nature as the “model for society” and “model of society”: essentializing collective remembrance into “a single, committed perspective”<sup>95</sup> for public consumption and national consensus by the authorities on the one hand, while revealing China’s politico-ideological vulnerabilities and social contradictions for the public on the other.

Deeply imbricated with its rhetorical (con)quest, the Chinese government’s political insecurity, ideological rigidity, and discursive dogmatism are hardly camouflaged by its meticulously crafted national identity. In proportion to its urbanization strides, “China’s political fragility is also evident,” David Ignatius of *The Washington Post* observes, “This new China is at once cocky and scared— anxious looking over its shoulder even as it races ahead.”<sup>96</sup> In truth, beneath the Shanghai Expo’s euphoric appearance, it is an ancient, emergent superpower that is nervously wrestling with a multitude of political, social, and civic challenges, and desperately re-anchoring its historical, political, and social status. However, “Between the remembrance of Confucius and the immediate problems of maintaining authoritarian control in a rapidly democratizing world,” as Tong Zhang and Barry Schwartz point out, “exists a relation that neither the concepts of manipulation and propaganda, nor the related concepts of dominant ideology and false consciousness, can formulate.”<sup>97</sup> Especially telling of (and counterproductive to) the Chinese authorities’ ongoing communicative endeavors



is its ill-advised criminal prosecution of the dissident Liu Xiaobo (2010 Nobel Peace Prize recipient)<sup>98</sup> to quell internal civic movements and seething democratic activism. In this respect, as John Bodnar suggests, if the central issue for American public memory has always been “how effective will vernacular interests be in containing the cultural offensive of authorities?,”<sup>99</sup> then the fundamental complexity/ stake of Chinese public memory may prove its flip side: when/how historically responsible and memorially conscientious will the Chinese authorities be in re-activating its national experiences toward individual dignity, civic vibrancy, and democratic institutionalization?

In his influential work *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500-2000*, historian Paul Kennedy (1987) cites Bismarck, “[A]ll of these powers are traveling on ‘the stream of Time,’ which they can ‘neither create nor direct,’ but upon which they can ‘steer with more or less skill and experience.’”<sup>100</sup> Part of the crux for contemporary China, as the latest forthcoming superpower, also lies in whether its incumbent government would genuinely steer its treacherous trajectory by confronting this ancient nation’s profound yet so often perverted past, before something historically ineluctable transpires again.

## Chapter 7

### IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The past is never dead. It's not even past.

—William Faulkner

Memory is not an instrument for exploring the past but its theatre.

—Walter Benjamin

China has no history, but merely the cyclical rise and fall of various monarchs, out of which no progress can emerge.

—Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

The desire for unity is genuine and admirable. The desire for national unity, in the present state of the world is genuine and admirable. But this unity, if attained on a deceptive basis, by emotional trickeries that shift our criticism from the accurate locus of our trouble, is no unity at all.

—Kenneth Burke

## The PRC's (Over)Fulfilled Ambition

If rhetoric, in Bitzer's view, "is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action,"<sup>101</sup> then epideictic rituals probably provide the most kairotic occasion for rhetors, ancient and contemporary, Western and Eastern, to transform "reality by bringing into existence a discourse of such a character that the audience, in thought and action, is so engaged that it becomes mediator of change."<sup>102</sup> Either by accident or coincidence, China's three grand ceremonies—2008 Beijing Olympic Games, 2009 Beijing Military Parade, and 2010 Shanghai World Expo—synergistically constitute a consummate rhetorical situation, which, as Bitzer suggests, entails rhetorical discourse as direct response to their institutional expectations and sociocultural imperatives. However, the national connotations underlying the composite rhetorical exigency engendered by these ceremonies extends much wider and deeper, because, as Vatz dialectically counters, "no situation can have a nature independent of the perception of its interpreter or independent of the rhetoric with which he chooses to characterize it."<sup>103</sup> Hence, alongside these triple epideictic productions' conventional performances and artistically highlights admirably executed by the PRC, what the Chinese government deployed and delivered during these grandiose events hold more significant, far-reaching clues into the CCP authorities' discursive objectives and rhetorical patterns, amid its publicity ambition to frame China's rising global prominence and emergent national identity.

Undoubtedly, these ceremonies have successfully attracted worldwide attention and global interest in the PRC's historico-cultural foundation and national achievements. Such sweeping accomplishments contain profound meanings and consequential implications for China and the world. For the Chinese people who had been deeply forged by their ancient heydays and modern decline, especially during the one-hundred-year traumatic subjugation under the Western powers from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, they had despaired, struggled, and endured through dynastic emperors, pseudo-republican demagogues, zealous nationalists, and dictatorial communists so patiently, so grievously, and so desperately, just for a messianic hope of waiting out for an ultimate political entity to rejuvenate its once exemplary yet long lost national esteem, social unity, and cultural confidence. Regardless of whatever political, ideological, social, and cultural distortions and manipulations underlying the CCP's communicative strategies, the three epideictic dramas have indisputably proved discursively forceful and rhetorically compelling, generating probably the most intensive scholarly concentration in China studies and productive multidisciplinary publications over the past decade.<sup>104</sup>

In reflection, the Chinese government effectively captured this opportune ceremonial moment, by closely integrating its rhetorical objectives with these epideictic orchestrations and seamlessly interweaving its sociopolitical agendas within the seemingly sports, military, and commercial events. To achieve their communicative objectives, Chinese official organizers ingeniously mobilized the most minute, nuanced aspect of Chinese historical heritage and cultural tradition

to purvey its politico-ideological messages and sociocultural persona—from China's ancient time-keeping device (the sundial), musical instrument (Fou) to Four Great Inventions (paper, press, compass and gun powder), from the hosting sites (Beijing, Tiananmen Square, and Shanghai) to the architectural design (the China Pavilion), from the most implicit artistic work (Chinese classical painting *Along the Riverside during the Clear-Autumn Festival*) to the most explicit display of national symbols (national flag, anthem, and leader portraits).

If the PRC's reform and opening-up since the late 1970s have diversified Chinese political constituencies, polarized social classes, differentiated public interests, and pluralized cultural values, then these theatrically memorable ceremonies once again successfully reunified the Chinese public—at least temporarily—on the CCP government's politico-ideological legitimacy and sociocultural credentials. If Chinese history is any guide, when the PRC succeeded in showcasing Chinese glorious historico-cultural achievements and exemplifying these ceremonial events as a resounding prelude to China's forthcoming national ascendancy, the Chinese people will nevertheless long remain indebted to it for national revival, social revitalization, and cultural reinvigoration through such memorable epideictic redemption. At a time when the CCP is constantly haunted by its controversial and destructive administrative track over the past sixty years, and embarrassed by its anachronistic political system and ideological doctrines since the end of the Cold War, the Chinese communist leaders have found it impossible to recycle their previous political hegemony and ideological indoctrination to enlist social consensus and public

support. Thus, the spontaneous and sweeping outpourings of Chinese national pride and public identification emerging from these ceremonial productions could hardly come at a more favorable, crucial juncture.

Indeed, by inordinately invoking historical resources and felicitously engaging collective remembrances with global audiences and participant countries and organizations, these epideictic spectacles adroitly projected enduring, momentous messages beyond sports, military, and expo themes typically disseminated by these ceremonial institutions. Moreover, over the long term, the PRC's epideictic executions and rhetorical transactions have significantly contributed to erecting a new, robust national personality in five spheres.

Politically, by securing the sports medal leadership at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, parading its notable military advances at the 2009 Beijing Military Parade, and showcasing its economic prosperity and technological innovation at the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, the PRC emphatically proclaims its national ascendancy as an upcoming superpower on global landscape.

Ideologically, amid increasing global uncertainties, Western deepening recession, and aggravating capitalism decline, the PRC boldly asserts its strong arrival as a viable alternative—"China Model"<sup>105</sup>—to national development and sociopolitical management, prompting broad speculations of the PRC's advent as another "sputnik moment"<sup>106</sup> and "the end of 500 years of Western ascendancy."<sup>107</sup> Culturally, by underscoring their lasting relevance and inherent superiority in addressing national priorities, intercultural/international relationships, and global issues, the PRC effectively refurbishes Chinese social

traditions and cultural values in front of the world, reminiscently conjuring up a “China at its best [that] has made monumental contributions to humanity and seeks unity and harmony with nature.”<sup>108</sup> Historically, through hosting these high-profile rituals with global reach and worldwide impacts and reminding domestic and global spectators that once again “Beijing stands at the center of a universe every bit as legitimate as those born of Greece and Rome,”<sup>109</sup> the PRC impressively proves that its administration is capable of re-centering China back into the world focus as a respected power comparable to China’s most prosperous dynasties and the world’s most august empires in history. Discursively, by conjoining these triple national ceremonies, the Chinese government organically incorporates them into an iconic, hermeneutic prototype for subsequent public perception and media interpretation regarding the PRC’s national identity and sociopolitical prospect. Over the long run, these epideictic renditions will collectively—and probably positively—be scrutinized, deconstructed, compared, and revisited to assess China’s national identity and future trajectory.

Taken as a whole, in many important ways, the PRC rhetorically delivers a memorial *magnum opus* during these three ceremonial events, and achieved its political, ideological, cultural, historical, and discursive objectives. Indeed, on this momentous rhetorical occasion, the PRC successfully produces what Bitzer would term as a “fitting response” to these ceremonial exigencies, as illustrated by these epideictic spectacles’ almost unsurpassable scale and exemplary benchmarks for future ceremonies to emulate. Moreover, the Chinese government also creatively conceived and employed more symbolic dynamics and rhetorical possibilities at

these epideictic productions, thus embodying Vatz's alternative conceptualization of the rhetorical situation, within which "meaning is not discovered in situations, but created by rhetors."<sup>110</sup>

### The PRC's Fluid Discursive Terrain

While refuting Bitzer's social scientific notion of the rhetorical situation, Vatz points out that "meaning is not intrinsic in events, facts, people, or 'situations' nor are facts 'publicly observable.'"<sup>111</sup> Chaim Perelman also notes that "by the very fact of selecting certain elements and presenting them to the audience, their importance and pertinency to the discussion are implied."<sup>112</sup> In this fluid, arbitrary process, Murray Edelman cautions, "the critical question is what accounts for the choice by political spectators and participants of what to organize into a meaningful structure and what to ignore."<sup>113</sup> Further, Vatz holds that "to view rhetoric as a creation of reality or salience rather than a reflector of reality clearly increases the rhetor's moral responsibility"<sup>114</sup> and—I hasten to add—the rhetorical critic's moral obligation. Given public memory's multidirectional functionalities and versatile instrumentalities in explicating and negotiating political power and social relations, it is crucial that the PRC's epideictic spectacles should be subjected to a critical scrutiny of its rhetorical operation and sociopolitical consequence. This is not just because ceremonial discourse, with its attendant ancestral/traditional authority and rhythmic/formulaic symbolism, "can make it a deeply conservative, even oppressive social force,"<sup>115</sup> but also because, in Raymie McKerrow's view, "power is expressed anonymously, in nondeliberate



ways, at a ‘deep structure’ level and may have its origins in the remoteness of our past (carried forward through a particularizing discursive formation).”<sup>116</sup>

Moreover, McKerrow argues that “On demonstrating the manner in which our social relations constrain us, often in ways that are virtually invisible, which occur at such a deep and remote level in our past as to be anonymous, the possibility of revolt is opened.”<sup>117</sup> This is particularly true for a historically authoritarian country like China, where “power struggle intrudes upon all memory work,” and memory study can thus expose, by Barbie Zelizer’s diagnosis, “the ways in which power has historically been assigned.”<sup>118</sup> Altogether, the PRC’s three epideictic productions highlight a number of historico-cultural contestations and sociopolitical contradictions in contemporary Chinese discursive constellations.

First, these epideictic productions collectively underscore a ceremonial turn in the Chinese government’s communicative conceptualization and rhetorical approach. This is a significant change from its previous political sloganeering and ideological instigation, and signals a far-reaching transition to more politically liberal, culturally indigenous, and globally compatible modalities on the part of the Chinese authorities’ publicity endeavors. In this respect, it can be said that these ceremonial occasions, with their inherent discursive potencies and rhetorical efficacies with domestic and global audiences, facilitate such a consequential communicative shift. Historically, the PRC hosted several regional and global ceremonial events, such as the 1990 Eleventh Asian Games and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women. However, none of them has the same level of public attention, international prominence, and media exposure as the Olympic

Games and World Expo; even the 2009 Beijing Military Parade has unique importance due to its coincidence with the PRC's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a number with special chronological significance and numeric resonance in traditional Chinese culture.

Throughout the PRC's history, the CCP has all along been engaged in discursive defenses of its political legitimacy, ideological relevance, and social credibility vis-à-vis the evolving domestic and global circumstances. This rhetorical burden of proof has been compounded by its whimsical political policies, tumultuous ideological movements, and absolutist social control over its sixty-year checkered, eventful administration, particularly highlighted by the controversial, traumatic 1989 Tiananmen Incident (better known as "Tiananmen Massacre" worldwide) and the contemporary polarization between its political ossification and economic liberalization.

Toward the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when China finally had the chance to celebrate its 60<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary bookended by the global-scale Olympic Games and World Expo, even its most conservative doctrinaires would not let slip this once-and-for-all publicity bonanza or, in Bitzer's words, "a propitious moment for the fitting rhetorical response."<sup>19</sup> If Chinese communist leaders needed one opportunity to settle all its tarnished sociopolitical mismanagement with the increasingly disillusioned Chinese people, and to reverse its image deficits with the unprecedentedly watchful global audiences, then these epideictic renditions offered an excellent platform to transcend its outworn propagandistic ploys, switching from its previously impositional

brainwashing to more historically continuous, culturally compatible, and socially liberal representation. Though the latter approach may not promise full guarantee of positive communicative outcome, at least the CCP authorities have already realized that their traditional publicity approach has long outgrown their discursive function and rhetorical efficiency, domestically and internationally.

Thus, within the context of “China’s larger narrative arc, wherein the old and new seems forever required to find common expression,”<sup>120</sup> the CCP government, despite its six-decade political absolutism and ideological hegemony, has finally come to recognize that, to engage its people’s discursive susceptibility and rhetorical identification, as well as the global public’s Chinese imagination and historico-cultural association, it cannot but carefully hew to the rhetorical master logic of Chinese historical and cultural narration: harking to the pulse of its past, getting hold of its sentiment, and riding with it along the way.

Second, the PRC’s rhetorical deployment of Chinese memorial resources proves socio-historically problematic and politico-ideologically opportunistic. This is especially evident in the employment of the ceremonial sites during the three ceremonies. In the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Beijing as the host city has for years invested staggering national resources, driven off hundreds of thousands of migrant workers, relocated hundreds of factories, and mobilized millions of volunteers to maintain public security on the street. Such costly, drastic security safeguards ironically present the city less as a festive, confident Olympic host, but more as an edgy, volatile citadel under siege. During the 2009 Beijing Military Parade, the hosting locale—Tiananmen Square—with its

controversial historical lineage and political connotations, profoundly caricatures and countervails the CCP's rhetorical endeavors to reinforce its revolutionary credentials and political progressivism. Indeed, the deep feudal-dynastic symbolism behind this former imperial capital stands more as a cacophonous reminder, which fundamentally invalidates the CCP's self-styled identity as the vanguard of Chinese grassroots workers and peasants, as well as the most loyal representative of comprehensive social classes. At the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, Shanghai as the rhetorical venue did not operate without its feudal and colonial baggage, for it was through the First Opium War (1839-1842) that this metropolis was forced open to the outside world, and eventually catapulted into cosmopolitan prominence under the highly autonomous system of the then Chinese semi-feudal and semi-colonial government. However, the city quickly fell into oblivion from the 1950s to late 1970s during the CCP's ideologically self-isolating policy and totalizing social control. Such historical vagaries deeply destabilize the CCP's rhetorical efforts to repackage itself as the major benefactor—if not the ultimate savior—of the city and the country as a whole.

Therefore, in the PRC's discursive projection of an ancient, emergent power, almost all rhetorical means, not least the geographical-spatial ones which have long been particularly instrumental in forging public consensus over the short term and stabilizing collective perception over the long run, have been ahistorically mobilized and ideologically calibrated in service of its contemporary political agendas and ideological objectives. Such a tendency closely accords with what Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp and Lori Lanzilotti describe as “official

expressions,” which “tends to emphasize an abstract ideal that apparently does not threaten, and in many ways supports, the status quo.”<sup>121</sup>

Third, though the CCP government’s hegemonic inflection of Chinese rhetorico-historical resources underlines the domination of “official expressions” in current Chinese discursive domain, such discursive dominance has never been settled. In this sense, the CCP authorities’ symbolic utilization of these ceremonies belies another significant dimension of its rhetorical striving: to condense the three epideictic spectacles into an interanimating system of iconic ideographical symbols, each as “a high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal.”<sup>122</sup> Here Michael McGee’s theorization of ideograph’s functions and implications in linking rhetoric and ideology come into handy in unpacking the PRC’s rhetorical ploy.

As McGee explains, “Human beings are ‘conditioned’ not directly to belief and behavior, but to a vocabulary of concepts that function as guides, warrants, reasons, or excuses for behavior and belief.”<sup>123</sup> In his view, when ideology as “a political language”<sup>124</sup> is decomposed into a vocabulary of ideographs, the latter, as “the basic structural elements, the building blocks, of ideology,”<sup>125</sup> it “warrants the use of power, excuses behavior and belief which might otherwise be perceived as eccentric or antisocial, and guides behavior and belief into channels easily recognized by a community as acceptable and laudable.”<sup>126</sup> As a result, such ideographically-constituted political consciousness “has the capacity to control

‘power’ and to influence (if not determine) the shape and texture of each individual’s ‘reality.’”<sup>127</sup>

Moreover, Celeste Condit and John Lucaites argue, at a collective level, an ideograph “is a culturally biased, abstract word or phrase which serves a constitutional value for a historically situated collectivity.”<sup>128</sup> Specifically, ideographs can produce what Maurice Charland outlines as three ideological effects: constituting a collective subject, positing a transhistorical subject, and creating the illusion of freedom.<sup>129</sup> Such potent ideological functions behind ideographical rendering certainly appeal to Chinese communist apparatchiks nowadays, who can no longer resort to the outdated Marxism-Leninism, Maoist Thoughts, and Deng Xiaoping’s Theory to secure national unity and public support, but they can at least turn to a less intrusive but equally effective alternative—dissolving explicit ideological indoctrination into implicit ideographical percolation.

With such rhetorical intention and discursive tactics, it becomes understandable that Chinese official media, together with many (unwittingly) co-opting global counterparts, produce an eruptive deluge of new national designators and social markers surrounding these ceremonies, such as “China’s centennial occasion for the Olympics/Expo,” “China’s Coming-out Party,” “China’s rite of passage into maturity,” “China’s Peaceful Rise,” “(Post)Beijing Olympic Generation,” and “Shanghai World Expo Youth.” For the Chinese government, such an effusion of positive symbols and glowing vocabulary would eventually converge into what Kenneth Burke would describe as a “terministic

screen” with crucial rhetorical outcomes on two fronts: domestically, it demonstrates to the Chinese people the CCP’s administrative prowess of mobilizing them to deliver important, large-scale undertakings of national enhancement and global recognition; externally, it showcased to the worldwide spectators its politico-ideological centrality in heralding an ancient, emergent superpower. As a result, such a dominant, monosemous rhetorical frame would henceforth function as a hegemonic discursive formation to forestall alternative interpretations and oppositional deconstructions, by constraining subsequent directions/modes of social perception and public reflection through its epideictic sweep and normative sway.

Last, amid the PRC’s emergence as the upcoming global power, contemporary Chinese sociocultural discourse remains inextricably intertwined with the vital relationships between the nation’s deep past, fluid present, and uncertain future, evidenced by its communist government’s political subtexts and ideological undertones. Throughout these ceremonies, Chinese official organizers strive to invoke sociocultural parallelism and politico-ideological analogues in the audiences’ historical consciousness and memorial association, including many historico-memorial highlights evocative of China’s feudal prosperity and politico-ideological cues reminiscent of China’s dynastic heydays. Ironically enough, this self-styled revolutionary, proletarian party, in its self-projection as the leading partisan force of an ancient, emergent power, capitalized such an extensive array of historical resources and memorial susceptibilities primarily for its contemporary *raison d’être*. Inevitably, it discloses that the CCP’s sociopolitical

legitimacy, even after its sixty-year anti-historical, counter-cultural totalitarianism, still seems less progressive than retrogressive: it is superficially progressive only to the extent that the Chinese government has finally matured out of its ideological radicalism and cultural iconoclasm, and realized that it has to switch back to China's historical tradition and cultural heritage for native sources of politico-ideological legitimacy and sociocultural relevance; meanwhile, it is inherently more retrogressive because, even though the CCP has sobered up from its politico-ideological bankruptcy, it remains adamant to make hay out of whatever historico-cultural resources available to rationalize its sociopolitical hegemony. Such compulsive backpedaling not only reveals the CCP's superficially revolutionary veneer, but also points to one of contemporary China's fundamental vulnerabilities as a forthcoming global power: if the period of sixty years chronologically marks a person's full maturity in Chinese culture, then the PRC's national rituals contrarily denote that its communist leaders still have not outgrown their opportunistic syndrome of historical expediency and memorial reductionism for political legitimacy and ideological glorification, as illustrated by its vehement recourse to extensive historical elements and mnemonic prompts in service of their rhetorical agenda.

As Dominique Moisi, Harvard professor of political science, diagnoses of the PRC's epideictic spectacles, "the success of a country that has so mobilized its energies as to transform past humiliations into massive national pride is not accompanied - and this is an understatement - by a responsible opening into its past."<sup>130</sup> Indeed, the Chinese authorities' convoluted historico-cultural invocations



and manipulated politico-ideological associations manifested in all three ceremonies can hardly camouflage a grave reality that the PRC has neither credibly implanted its sociopolitical leadership into China's historical continuity and cultural tradition, nor securely convinced domestic and global audiences of its historical inevitability and political sustainability.

### Chinese Contemporary Communication & Rhetoric

Though rhetoric was not a distinct, independently conceived discipline in ancient China, communication scholars have started to explore Chinese rhetorical tradition and practice since the 1960s, and accumulated a burgeoning body of enlightening scholarship. From Robert Oliver's pioneering survey of communication and culture in ancient China,<sup>131</sup> Vernon Jensen's renewed call for a "greater understanding of Asian traditions relevant to argumentation and advocacy,"<sup>132</sup> Mary Garrett's sobering caution against the tendency "to impose Western terms and distinctions on the Chinese materials,"<sup>133</sup> to Xing Lu's systematic exploration of "an identifiable formulation of language and persuasive discourse at the conceptual level" in early China and illuminating comparison with ancient Greek rhetoric,<sup>134</sup> Chinese rhetoric has increasingly been recognized as a valid strand of human communication. As George Kennedy argues, "There was no influence of Western ideas of rhetoric on ancient China, and Chinese rhetorical theory thus represents the best example of a conceptualized non-Western tradition for comparative study."<sup>135</sup> Mary Garrett concurs, as "a mature civilization developing a sophisticated practice of argumentation unrelated to

Greco-Roman tradition,” its rhetorical inquiry is “of special value in illustrating how argumentation and theories of argument may develop in a variety of linguistic, social, political, and cultural contexts.”<sup>136</sup> “[T]o find ways to make rhetoric—its theory, practice, and criticism—a vital part of communication studies in non-Western cultures,” Karlyn Campbell stresses, “the real challenge is to nurture the development of critical approaches suited to the ways that other languages define and categories, to the value systems and discursive expectations of other cultures, and to the distinctive circumstances in which discourse emerges.”<sup>137</sup>

Within Chinese culture and communication, ceremonial ritual stood alongside music, archery, charioteering, writing, and mathematics<sup>138</sup> as the traditional arts, in contrast to the seven liberal arts in the West (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). Hence, ceremonies have historically been an integral component of Chinese sociocultural foundation and symbolic-rhetorical practice. By extension, epideictic productions have become a primary discursive instrument for Chinese ruler to engage the public politically, ideologically, and socially.

Moreover, the importance of ceremonial rhetoric since ancient times has broader manifestations and implications. Historically, royal, national, and communal epideictic activities have played a vital role in asserting political authority, consolidating class hierarchy, reinforcing social unity, and stabilizing cultural institution. If political plurality and cultural diversity mean national progress and social advance to many Westerners, then a consensual sense of

ceremonial propriety and social hierarchy spells national stability and social tranquility for the Chinese, especially during the chaotic, tumultuous periods when social foundation and cultural values have been deeply subverted, in the wake of the toppled imperial reigns and dynastic systems.

Hence national ceremonies and public memorializations have become an essential resource for the Chinese rulers to recentralize political authority, reunify public consensus, and reconstruct social order. As anthropologist Monica Wilson points out, rituals, as “the key to an understanding of the essential constitutions of human societies,” “reveal [group] values at the deepest level.”<sup>139</sup> In this sense, the PRC’s epideictic extravaganza sheds significant light on contemporary Chinese communicative phenomena and rhetorical transaction, and affords a focal, fruitful site for discursive interrogation and sociopolitical critique.

First, these three extravagant ceremonies have emerged to become one of the definitive features of contemporary Chinese communicative domain; more crucially, they are likely to herald a distinct sociopolitical period of ceremonial predominance in the present-day Chinese rhetorical sphere. Parallel to these three epideictic events, the PRC also commemorated several domestically significant anniversaries in 2011, such as the 90<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary of the CCP and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1911 Revolution which toppled China’s last imperial dynasty and put an end to its two-millennia-long feudal system. Externally, the Chinese government hosted a number of regional and global events, such as the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games, the 2011 Shenzhen World University Games, and the 2011 Xian International Horticultural Expo. On all those ceremonial occasions,

the CCP authorities without exception spared no effort to promote its national persona and social developments in front of Chinese and global audiences.

Such unprecedented intensity of epideictic phenomena, on the one hand, clearly indicates the Chinese government's privileged rhetorical strategy nowadays, namely employing all available ceremonial *kairos* to refresh its politico-ideological personality and sociocultural identity vis-à-vis domestic and global audiences; on the other hand, inevitably exposes the CCP leaders' attempts to stabilize its increasingly challenged political leadership and social credibility, particularly amid contemporary China's political contestation, social instability, and civic activism.

Since ancient times, one of epideictic suasion's crucial functions, in Jeffrey Walker's view, has been its oftentimes underrated ability to condition "the fundamental grounds, the 'deep' commitments and presuppositions, that will underlie and ultimately determine decision and debate in particular pragmatic forums."<sup>140</sup> If the erstwhile dominant Marxism-Leninism, Maoist Thought, and Deng Xiaoping's Theory no longer hold any appeal, then these seemingly apolitical and non-ideological ceremonial productions still retain their institutional credentials, professional reputations, and historico-cultural traction to many spectators, at least they can help the CCP bring some closure to the haunting debate/doubt of its politico-ideological credentials and socioeconomic sustainability, by consummating its leadership as historical continuous, politically inevitable, and ideologically legitimate.

Second, the three epideictic renditions saliently reflect two central, interconnected Chinese communicative patterns, namely metaphoric contextualization and analogical reasoning.<sup>141</sup> As analyzed in the foregoing chapters, the Chinese government's mnemonic invocations on these ceremonial occasions are predominantly historical and cultural, without intrusive political propaganda and ideological imposition. Such a communicative approach untypical of the CCP's publicity tactics in fact did not deviate far from traditional Chinese rhetorical groove, for as Xing Lu points out, metaphoric/analogical reasoning were "prevalent and pervasive in the ancient Chinese texts. ... [and] certainly the most common rhetorical practice and skillful technique employed by the ancient Chinese in their rhetorical activities."<sup>142</sup> Upon close inspection, these ceremonies contain extensive, nuanced contextual cues for rhetorical transaction and politico-ideological persuasion.

For an ancient people endowed with "from very early times a historiographic tradition"<sup>143</sup> and obsessed with "narrating events as models, precedents, or warnings for the present and future,"<sup>144</sup> Chinese rhetoric has often operated along what Robert Oliver describes as "to be truly persuasive, one should take care not to speak overmuch."<sup>145</sup> This principle of parsimony preordains that, when historically reconstituted and culturally contextualized, "a natural truth," even absent explicit political coercion or ideological bombardment, nevertheless prevails over logical reasoning—however rigorously conceived and systematically deployed. This clearly runs counter to the typical notion of Western rhetorical reasoning, especially enthymematic logic in which either

major or minor premise may be absent but nevertheless clearly implied in getting at the conclusion. In other words, under such an elided syllogistic structure, the logical gap between the supporting premises and the conclusion is conceptually tight and structurally retrievable. However, Chinese enthymematic rhetoric, in its epideictic version, runs radically deeper than its Western equivalent in terms of premise valence and logical coherence.

To many Western minds, China's recent spate of ceremonial climaxes may seem punctilious, narcissistic, and ostentatious, without necessarily accruing proportionate benefits for its national image and social development. Yet for the Chinese, when the CCP government reactivated China's best and finest in its people's memorial repositories, then its intended message would become automatically self-evident via subsequent public perception and media interpretation. In fact, this is Chinese historical consciousness and rhetorical enthymeme interanimating at their highest level: when the past (major premise) is vicariously reincarnated, and when the present (minor premise) is memorially reconstituted, the future (conclusion)—albeit understated or unstated at all—would prove unequivocally predetermined.

Consequently, from these epideictic performances, what Westerners may come away with a sumptuous, pretentious exhibition of Chinese historico-cultural highlights would linger in the Chinese mind as an enduring, compelling proof of not just the CCP's political prowess and ideological superiority, but, more far-reachingly, its credible potentials of delivering national rejuvenation and social prosperity.

Last, despite the Chinese government's national mobilization in producing these overwhelming epideictic spectacles, contemporary Chinese rhetoric has been increasingly caught between superficial official discourse and assertive public resistance. Unlike their supreme, imperial sovereigns in the past, the CCP authorities nowadays confront unprecedented scrutiny and challenge from domestic and global publics, especially when current Chinese sociopolitical realities deeply contradict its idealized vision represented in those epideictic productions.

Besides social critique and rhetorical rebuttals directed toward these ceremonies, subsequent twists and turns in Chinese sociopolitical terrain also profoundly invalidate the PRC's propagandistic campaigns to transform its overall public image: in sharp contrast to its solemn promise of opening China wider to the outside world before the Beijing Olympic Games, in 2009 the CCP government sentenced Liu Xiaobo (co-drafter and co-signer of *Charter 08* (known as "China's Democratic Manifesto" which calls for broad constitutional and political reform) to an eleven-year imprisonment, only to catapult him to be a Nobel Peace Prize recipient; in 2010 immediately after the Shanghai World Expo which featured the theme slogan of "Better City, Better Life," a local high-rise building caught fire and dozens of residents were burned to death, while one year later this unsolved matter has unfolded more and more political scandals in Shanghai's urban administration and compensation distribution; in 2011, in light of the sweeping democratic wave across North Africa and Middle East, the CCP authorities imposed "the tightest surveillance unprecedented in China's Internet

history,”<sup>146</sup> and ironically detained Ai Weiwei (artistic adviser to China’s iconic National Stadium which hosted the Beijing Olympic opening ceremony) for three months without legal warrant or criminal evidence, only propelling him into “an international cause célèbre”<sup>147</sup> of global visibility, political recognition, and artistic admiration.<sup>148</sup>

Probably, one of the most notable contradictions in contemporary Chinese rhetoric is an inevitable and even irreversible widening between the CCP government’s politico-ideological self-delusion and symbolic-discursive superficiality, as opposed to Chinese and global publics’ experiential perceptions of China’s sociopolitical realities. In this respect, John Bodnar encapsulates the PRC’s epideictic phenomena quite cogently when he says of American public memorializations, “official culture promotes a nationalistic, patriotic culture of the whole that mediates an assortment of vernacular interests, ... [whereas] vernacular expressions convey what social reality feels like rather than what it should be like.”<sup>149</sup>

#### An Ancient, Emergent Superpower: Nature, Status, and Prospect

Undoubtedly, at these three epideictic orchestrations, the PRC delivered an extraordinary, nearly impeccable rhetorical engagement with domestic and global audiences. By aesthetic, artistic, performative, and ceremonial standards, these epideictic orchestrations have been consensually rated as exemplary and almost unrivalled worldwide. Like the dazzling, splashing pyrotechnic explosions which lightened up the night sky during these ceremonies, their spectacular visual stunts,



enduring psychological impacts, and far-reaching global implications successfully have propelled the PRC onto the world stage.

In effect, such global prominence possesses unusual historical meaning and modern significance to the Chinese government and people: since the nation's modern decline in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, this proud, aggrieved country had to wait for one and a half century to regain world attention and global recognition. When put on a broader chronological canvas, these epideictic productions probably represents a fact that, since Marco Polo came all the way from the Venetian Republic to peek at this mysterious, supposedly backward land in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it is the first time that this ancient country took the initiative to fully project itself again in front of the world. If the Venetian merchant-adventurer once proclaimed that "I have not told half of what I saw," then today's Chinese government and people were ready to meet his incomplete mission by narrating the second half, as testified by the unprecedented scale and dedication of national mobilization and mass participation across the whole country. It is because of such historical intensity and national gravity that the PRC's epideictic self-presentations assume special indexicality and predictive potency in terms of this ascendant nation's rhetorical dynamics, historico-cultural foundations, and national prospect.

First, the ceremonial turn in contemporary Chinese communicative phenomena and rhetorical patterns, though emerging as a natural offshoot of the PRC's epideictic concentration, nevertheless reveals that the current CCP government faces a dwindling range of rhetorical resources to underwrite its political agenda and ideological objective. Such a straitening trend has been

brought about by a number of circumstantial factors: the increasingly outdated Marxism-Leninism, Maoist Thought, and Deng Xiaoping's Theory amid the drastically evolving Chinese sociopolitical conditions; the CCP's extensive inconsistencies between its political ideals and rampant malpractices; the dramatic transformations in Chinese social class composition and structural tension; and the global integration and influence on Chinese society and people. Within such complex constellations, the Chinese government had to discard its impositional rhetorical approaches, and switched to more historico-culturally compatible discourse to reinforce national unity and social cohesion. Nor surprisingly, ceremonial events and their attendant epideictic discourse have become an optimal alternative for the CCP authorities to circumvent its rhetorical dilemma and achieve their politico-discursive ends. For Chinese communist leaders, if they can no longer put the society under total control to enforce absolute obedience, then the sheer scale of participants and spectators at those epideictic events can at least testify to their political centrality and ideological supremacy, however superficially and transiently.

Second, upon close examination, the PRC originally had choices of controlling the grandiosity of hosting these ceremonial productions, yet Chinese leaders seemed so determined to make them an absolute success, even beyond the most fervent expectations of domestic and worldwide spectators. Such a vehement motive is significantly indexical of the CCP government's underlying discursive, historical, and political aspirations.

Discursively, epideictic rhetoric has since early times been deployed to celebrate communal values, construct public knowledge, and reconstruct social cohesion. Far from being “merely ornamental displays of clever speech” or “limited to the reinforcement of existing beliefs and ideologies,” epideictic productions, in Jeffrey Walker’s words, “can also work to challenge or transform conventional beliefs.”<sup>150</sup> Thus when directed toward valorizing and concluding what happens in the past, China’s contemporary surge of ceremonial phenomena subtly indicates that, despite its festive atmosphere and euphonious celebration at surface level, the CCP government in fact strove for a premature discursive closure on its national identity, for which epideictic spectacles may not necessarily effect such a goal, but the more grand such ceremonial productions are, the more likely they can at least facilitate such a finalization.

Historically, just as epideictic rhetoric contributes to bringing an end to sociopolitical controversy, the PRC’s high density of epideictic activities in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century exposes its visceral mindset of historical tyranny and chronological hegemony regarding national evolution and temporal autonomy. In this sense, the Chinese government seems to futilely dictate to its historically seasoned people that Chinese progress and national trajectory have henceforth reached its ultimate end, and from now on there was no fundamental need of political progress and social improvement. By so doing, the CCP obviously attempted to stabilize—if not immortalize—its leadership as historically continuous, politically inevitable, and ideologically transcendent.

Politically, the PRC's obsession with epideictic discourse underscores deeper psychological dynamics lurking in its communist leaders' mind. By hastily closing discursive autonomy and historical progression among public discussion and global perception on China's contemporary realities and future possibilities, the CCP government reveals its instinctual anxiety and pressing concerns to forestall rising civic movements and assertive sociopolitical challenges against its anachronistic political monopoly and ideological apparatus. Apparently, vis-à-vis China's expansive millennial history, such memorial opportunism and anti-historical hypocrisy can hardly fare well, except perhaps betraying its incumbent authorities' haunting fear of political implosion and social disintegration.

Third, as illustrated above, though the PRC has successfully re-incarnated itself as an ancient, emergent superpower artistically, performatively, and ceremonially via these epideictic spectacles, yet inwardly, it remains fatally regressive and pathologically nostalgic in its national vision and social evolution. This is evidenced by how the CCP authorities intensely and indiscriminately exploited Chinese historico-cultural resources to re-assert China's imperial authority and dynastic hierarchy, instead of reviving those hegemonically suppressed and deliberately undervalued inspirations of political tolerance, cultural pluralism, and intellectual creativity which have sustained and ennobled Chinese history and society. In this sense, the PRC, together with its reigning yet dilapidating Marxist doctrine, exposes itself less of a genuine peasant-worker party natively rooted and conscientiously struggling for its constituents' rights and

welfare, than an inherently alien regime forcefully transgressed into Chinese historical, political, and social trajectory.<sup>151</sup>

It is probably no coincidence that Greek verb *epideiknumi*, from which the adjective epideictic derived its etymological origin, means not just “to display or show off,” but also “to disclose or tell.” As a result, what the PRC crowned itself at its ceremonial carnivals, albeit impressive and progressive, presents more facade than fact, possesses more pompous superficiality than perduring substance, and ultimately reveals more of a surreal, self-indulgent illusion of an ancient, emergent superpower: ancient but historically idealized and memorially mythologized, emergent yet without foundation, continuity, and direction.<sup>152</sup>

## NOTES

### Chapter One

<sup>1</sup> Kishore Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East* (New York, NY: Perseus Books Group, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World* (London, UK: Penguin Group, 2009), 15.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Leonard, *What does China Think?* (London, UK: HarperCollins Publisher, 2008), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Jason Dean, "It's Official: China is the Biggest News Story in the World," *WSJ*, Dec 9, 2009, <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2009/12/09/its-official-china-is-the-biggest-news-story-in-the-world/> (accessed March 1, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Bodeen, "Shanghai World Expo 2010 Kicks Off," *The Huffington Post*, April 30, 2008, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/30/world-expo-2010-kicks-off\\_n\\_558354.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/30/world-expo-2010-kicks-off_n_558354.html) (accessed Nov 22, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Isabel Hilton, "First city of the future," *The Guardian*, July 6, 2008, accessed Sept 25, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jul/06/china>.

<sup>7</sup> "China lashes out at British press for comparing Beijing Olympics to 1936 Nazi Berlin Games," *The Daily Mail*, March 26, 2008, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-546129/China-lashes-British-press-comparing-Beijing-Olympics-1936-Nazi-Berlin-Games.html> (accessed Sept 25, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Richard Cashman, "The Greatest Peacetime Event," in *Staging the Olympics: The Event and Its Impact*, ed. Richard Cashman and Anthony Hughes (Sydney, Australia: University of New South Wales Press, 1999), 12.

<sup>9</sup> "Olympic Crisis Muted by Real China Crisis," *AP*, May 23, 2008, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24794822/> (accessed Sept 25, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Tibet and Xinjiang are China's two autonomous regions in China, and specifically designated for Tibetan and Uighur ethnic minorities.

<sup>11</sup> Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1, no. 1 (1969): 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *The Games of the XXIX Olympiad: Beijing 2008 Complete Opening Ceremony*. DVD. NBC, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Barbara Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), 8.

<sup>16</sup> John Bodnar, *Remaking American: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 14.

<sup>17</sup> Chun-Chieh Huang, "The Defining Character of Chinese Historical Thinking," *History and Theory* 46.May (2007): 180-188.

- <sup>18</sup> Rhoads Murphy, "History and Geography: Introduction," in *The Chinese: Adapting the Past, Building the Future*, ed. Robert Dernberger, Kenneth DeWoskin, Steven Goldstein, Rhoads Murphey and Martin Whyte (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1986), 5.
- <sup>19</sup> John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 472.
- <sup>20</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Geostrategic Triad: Living with China, Europe, and Russia* (Washington, D C: CSIS Press, 2006), 4.
- <sup>21</sup> Orville Schell, "China: Humiliation & the Olympics," *The New York Review of Books*, Aug 14, 2008, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2008/aug/14/china-humiliation-the-olympics/> (accessed Sept 25, 2010).
- <sup>22</sup> George Kennedy, *Comparative Rhetoric: A Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 9.
- <sup>23</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1992), 53.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 80.
- <sup>26</sup> Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 2.
- <sup>27</sup> Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 13.
- <sup>28</sup> Bodnar, *Remaking American*, 15.
- <sup>29</sup> James Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2001), 355.
- <sup>30</sup> Steven Browne, "Reading, Rhetoric, and the Texture of Public Memory," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81, no. 3 (1995): 248.
- <sup>31</sup> Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*, 356.
- <sup>32</sup> Barry Schwartz, "Memory as a Cultural System: Abraham Lincoln in World War II," *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 5 (1996): 908
- <sup>33</sup> Schwartz, "Memory as a Cultural System," 910.
- <sup>34</sup> Schwartz, "Memory as a Cultural System," 910.
- <sup>35</sup> Bodnar, *Remaking American*, 13.
- <sup>36</sup> Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of remembrance: The dynamics of collective memory* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 67.
- <sup>37</sup> Barbara Biesecker, "Remembering World War II: The Rhetoric and Politics of National Commemoration at the Turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (2002): 406.
- <sup>38</sup> Browne, "Reading, Rhetoric, and the Texture," 237.
- <sup>39</sup> Biesecker, "Remembering World War II," 406.
- <sup>40</sup> Michael Bruner, "Strategies of Remembrance in Pre-Unification West Germany," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86, no. 1 (2000): 87.
- <sup>41</sup> Bruner, *Strategies of Remembrance: The Rhetorical Dimensions of National Identity Construction* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 1.
- <sup>42</sup> James Hibberd and Jonathan Landreth, "Beijing Olympics End with Massive

Viewership,” *Reuters*, Aug 25, 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN2547356720080825> (accessed Sept 25, 2010).

<sup>43</sup> Howard French, “Beneath Olympic Glitter, a 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Mindset,” *The New York Times*, July 24, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/24/world/asia/24iht-letter.1.14753991.html> (accessed Sept 25, 2010).

<sup>44</sup> *The Games of the XXIX Olympiad: Beijing 2008 Complete Opening Ceremony*. DVD. NBC, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> *Time*, “Tanks, Fans and Flags: China at 60,” Oct 1, 2009, <http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1927172,00.html> (accessed Sept 25, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> *USA Today*, “China clears central Beijing for anniversary bash,” Sept 29, 2009, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2009-09-29-china-anniversary-party\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2009-09-29-china-anniversary-party_N.htm) (accessed Feb 16, 2011).

## Chapter Two

<sup>47</sup> Lloyd Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1969): 5.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>49</sup> Based at Austin, Texas, Global Language Monitor (GLM) is a media analytics company that documents, analyzes and tracks trends in language the world over, with a particular emphasis upon Global English. For details, visit <http://www.languagemonitor.com/>

<sup>50</sup> Jason Dean, “It’s Official: China is the Biggest News Story in the World,” *WSJ*, Dec 9, 2009, <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2009/12/09/its-official-china-is-the-biggest-news-story-in-the-world/> (accessed Sept 25, 2010).

<sup>51</sup> Christopher Bodeen, “Shanghai World Expo 2010 Kicks Off,” *The Huffington Post*, April 30, 2008, accessed Nov 22, 2010, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/30/world-expo-2010-kicks-off\\_n\\_558354.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/30/world-expo-2010-kicks-off_n_558354.html)

<sup>52</sup> Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” 9.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>59</sup> Richard Vatz, “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 6(3) (1973): 155.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>62</sup> Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” 2.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>64</sup> Vatz, “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation,” 154.



<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>66</sup> Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," 12.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> In the wake of WWII, the Allied Powers held the Paris Peace Conference to settle the conflict with Germany. China, then as one of the Allied members, also participated in the meeting and sought to reclaim national rights and independence from the Western countries. Yet the Allied Powers ignored Chinese interests and transferred Germany's rights and interest in China's Shandong province to Japan. This incident gave rise to the so-called May Fourth Movement and became an important turning point in Chinese modern history.

<sup>70</sup> *USA Today*, "China clears central Beijing for anniversary bash," Sept 29, 2009, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2009-09-29-china-anniversary-party\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2009-09-29-china-anniversary-party_N.htm) (accessed Nov 22, 2010).

<sup>71</sup> In the PRC's history, the Great Leap Forward was the CCP's economic and social movement, especially reflected in economic planning from 1958 to 1961, with a view to tap China's vast population to rapidly transform the country from an agrarian economy into a modern communist society through the process of accelerated industrialization and collectivization. Its consequences proved tragic, and wrought disastrous destruction to China's economic development.

<sup>72</sup> Liu Ruichang, "Bloomberg: China's Economic Scale has Overtaken Germany to the World's Third Largest," *Xinhua News Agency*, Jan 16, 2009, accessed Sept 20, 2011, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2009-01/16/content\\_10668415.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2009-01/16/content_10668415.htm)

<sup>73</sup> Joe McDonald, "China Exceeds Germany to be the Largest Export Country," *yeeyan*, Jan 10, 2010, <http://article.yeeyan.org/view/oldjackchn/72441> (accessed Sept 20, 2011).

<sup>74</sup> Ma Jiantang, "Chinese Statistic Chief: Comprehensively look at China's status in the world economy," *The People Daily*, March 17, 2011, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1027/14163121.html> (accessed Sept 23, 2011).

<sup>75</sup> Dong Qing, "GDP Statistics Show China Outsteps Japan as the Second Largest Economy," *Sina.com*, Feb 14, 2011, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2011-02-14/085921950289.shtml> (accessed Sept 20, 2011).

<sup>76</sup> *Global Times*, "Global media predict that China to overrun Japan to the second largest economy," *Sina.com*, Oct, 5, 2009, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2009-10-05/020118779291.shtml> (accessed Sept 20, 2011).

<sup>77</sup> *International Statistics Information Center*, "China's international status steadily rises, global influence continues to expand," *China Statistic Administration Bureau*, March 24, 2011, [http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjfx/ztfx/sywcj/t20110324\\_402713791.htm](http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjfx/ztfx/sywcj/t20110324_402713791.htm) (accessed Sept 23, 2011).

<sup>78</sup> Wang Hongjuan, "BCG report: Half of Chinese Families will step into the middle class," *China Economic Network*, Nov 8, 2010, [http://intl.ce.cn/specials/zxxx/201011/08/t20101108\\_21951535.shtml](http://intl.ce.cn/specials/zxxx/201011/08/t20101108_21951535.shtml) (accessed Sept 23, 2011).

<sup>79</sup> *The People Daily*, “China’s industries’ income gap widens to 15 times, ranking first in the world,” Feb 10, 2011, <http://news.qq.com/a/20110210/000265.htm> (accessed Sept 24, 2011).

<sup>80</sup> *The People Daily*, “Widening income gap increases the Chinese public’s ‘psychological syndrome of self-identification as the powerless, unfortunate, and vulnerable,” Nov 11, 2010, <http://news.qq.com/a/20101111/000130.htm> (accessed Sept 24, 2011).

<sup>81</sup> Ma Jiantang, “Chinese Statistic Chief.” *The People Daily*, March 17, 2011 [http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjfx/jdxf/t20110317\\_402711640.htm](http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjfx/jdxf/t20110317_402711640.htm) (accessed Sept 24, 2011).

<sup>82</sup> John Fairbank, *A New History* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 53.

<sup>83</sup> Xinhua News Agency, “Deng advocates ‘building socialism with Chinese characteristics,” July 21, 2009, <http://news.qq.com/a/20090721/000631.htm> (accessed Sept 25, 2011).

<sup>84</sup> The following is a representative yet far from exhaustive list of prominent publications regarding this topic: Michael Schaller, *The United States and China: Into the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); James Kyngge, *China Shakes the World: A Titan’s Rise and Troubled Future—and the Challenge for America* (New York: Mariner Books, 2007); David Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Minds* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008); Mark Leonard, *What Does China Think?* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008); Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Jan Willem Blankert, *China Rising: Will the West be Able to Cope?* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 2009); C. Bergsten, Charles Freeman, Nicholas Lardy and Derek Mitchell, *China’s Rise: Challenges and Opportunities* (Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009); Eva Paus, Penelope Prime and Jon Western, *Is China Changing the Rules of the Game?* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009); Stefan Halper, *The Beijing Consensus* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); *Soft Power in China*, eds, Jian Wang. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Richard McGregor, *The Party: The Secret World of China’s Communist Rulers* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2010); Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *China in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Arvind Subramanian, *Eclipse: Living in the Shadow of China’s Economic Dominance* (Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2011).

<sup>85</sup> A large number of communication and rhetorical scholars have produced fruitful studies on this topic. See Alex Mobley, “Sharing the Dream: The Opening Ceremonies of Beijing,” *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 32.4 (2008): 327-332. Anne-Marie Brady, “The Beijing Olympics as a Campaign of Mass Distraction,” *The China Quarterly* 197.March (2009): 1-24. GR Barme, “China’s Flat Earth:

History and 8 August 2008,” *The China Quarterly* 197.March (2009): 64-86. Sandra Collins, “The Fragility of Asian National Identity in the Olympic Games” (185-209); Jacques deLisle, “‘One World, Different Dreams’: The Contest to Define the Beijing Olympics” (17-66); Sonia Foss and Barbara Walkosz, “Definition, Equivocation, Accumulation, and Anticipation: American Media’s Ideological Reading of China’s Olympic Games” (346-371); Christopher Kennett and Miquel de Moragas, “From Athens to Beijing: The Closing Ceremony and Olympic Television Broadcast Narratives” (260-283); and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, “Dreams and Nightmares: History and U.S. Vision of the Beijing Games” (2163-184) in *Owning the Olympic: Narratives of the New China*, ed. Monroe Price and Daniel Dayan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

<sup>86</sup> Rhoads Murphy, “History and Geography: Introduction,” in *The Chinese: Adapting the Past, Building the Future*, ed. Robert Dernberger, Kenneth DeWoskin, Steven Goldstein, Rhoads Murphey and Martin Whyte (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1986), 5.

<sup>87</sup> Monica Wilson, “Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism,” *American Anthropologist* 56 (1954): 241.

<sup>88</sup> Barbara Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), 8.

<sup>89</sup> Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of remembrance: The dynamics of collective memory* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 67.

<sup>90</sup> John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 14.

### Chapter Three

<sup>91</sup> Chun-Chieh Huang, “Salient features of Chinese historical thinking,” *The Medieval History Journal* 7 (2004): 243.

<sup>92</sup> Lynn Struve, “A brief historical introduction,” *History and Memory* 16 (2004): 5.

<sup>93</sup> Huang, “Salient features of Chinese historical thinking,” 245.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>95</sup> Michael Schudson, *Watergate in American Memory: How We Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past* (New York, NY: BasicBooks: 1992), 55.

<sup>96</sup> William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* (1951), Act 1, sc. 3

<sup>97</sup> Barbara Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), 112.

<sup>98</sup> Chun-Chieh Huang, “The defining character of Chinese historical thinking,” *History and Theory* 46 (2007): 180.

<sup>99</sup> Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of remembrance: The dynamics of collective memory* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 57

<sup>100</sup> Huang, “The defining character of Chinese historical thinking,” 184.

<sup>101</sup> Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory, vol. 1: Past and Present in*

*Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 1994), vii.

<sup>102</sup> Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 203.

<sup>103</sup> Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 30.

<sup>104</sup> Douwe Draaisma, *Metaphors of Memory: A History of Ideas about Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5.

<sup>105</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. S. Rendall and E. Clamam. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 65.

<sup>106</sup> James McConkey, *The Anatomy of Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 7.

<sup>107</sup> Draaisma, *Metaphors of Memory*, 31.

<sup>108</sup> Anne Whitehead, *Memory* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 51.

<sup>109</sup> John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education and of the Conduct of the Understanding* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1996), 509.

<sup>110</sup> Whitehead, *Memory*, 62.

<sup>111</sup> Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 84.

<sup>112</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," In Daniel Breazale (ed.), *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 63.

<sup>113</sup> Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis*, 247.

<sup>114</sup> Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2007), 1.

<sup>115</sup> Frederic Bartlett, *Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 20.

<sup>116</sup> Among the current scholarship on memory studies, Edward Casey explores the distinctions between "social memory," "collective memory," and "public memory," and Barbie Zelizer calls for "the nuances between public memory, cultural memory, collective memory, and so forth should be more closely probed." However, most scholars do not particularly differentiate their terminological differences. For example, Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian Ott, in their 2010 edited book *Places of Public Memory*, while acknowledging Casey's efforts, nevertheless downplay those terms' conceptual differences and prefer the designator "public memory" to highlight "rhetoric's emphasis upon concepts of publicity." Michael Schudson simply equates collective memory with social memory. Therefore, I primarily and purposefully use "public remembering" here, for "public" possesses more of an agentic, autonomous sense of civic resistance, political activism, and social contest; meanwhile, I avoid using "national memory," as I feel it seems to be less widely used by communication scholars.

<sup>117</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1992), 53.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>119</sup> Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 6

<sup>120</sup> Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 2.

- <sup>121</sup> Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of remembrance*, 4.
- <sup>122</sup> John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 15.
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- <sup>124</sup> Barry Schwartz, "Memory as a Cultural System: Abraham Lincoln in World War II," *American Sociological Review* 61 (1996): 910.
- <sup>125</sup> James Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 8.
- <sup>126</sup> Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 3.
- <sup>127</sup> Barbie Zelizer, "Reading the past against the grain: The shape of memory studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12 (1995).
- <sup>128</sup> Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 177.
- <sup>129</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>130</sup> Anthony Giddens, *A contemporary critique of historical materialism, Volume I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 36.
- <sup>131</sup> Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 112.
- <sup>132</sup> Emile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1912), 10-11.
- <sup>133</sup> Ibid., 23.
- <sup>134</sup> Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 53.
- <sup>135</sup> Ibid., 169.
- <sup>136</sup> Ibid., 38.
- <sup>137</sup> Ibid., 182.
- <sup>138</sup> Schudson, *Watergate in American Memory*, 52.
- <sup>139</sup> Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 15.
- <sup>140</sup> Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 43.
- <sup>141</sup> Ibid., 13.
- <sup>142</sup> Schudson, *Watergate in American Memory*, 53.
- <sup>143</sup> Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 14.
- <sup>144</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>145</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>146</sup> Yannis Hamilakis and Jo Labanyi, "Time, Materiality, and the Works of Memory," *History and Memory* 20 (2008): 14.
- <sup>147</sup> Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering*, 8.
- <sup>148</sup> Ibid., 9.
- <sup>149</sup> Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 183.
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#### Chapter Four

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## Chapter Six

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- <sup>21</sup> *People Daily, Overseas Edition*, "To host a successful, memorable world expo," Jan 18, 2010, <http://expo.people.com.cn/GB/10791787.html> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
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- <sup>24</sup> Andrew Higgins, "World's fair in Shanghai provides China with another showcase opportunity," *Washington Post*, May 1, 2010, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/30/AR2010043001155\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/30/AR2010043001155_pf.html) (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
- <sup>25</sup> *New York Times*, "Expo 2010 Shanghai China," April 30, 2010, [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/e/expo\\_2010\\_shanghai\\_china/index.html?scp=1&sq=shanghai%20expo&st=cse](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/e/expo_2010_shanghai_china/index.html?scp=1&sq=shanghai%20expo&st=cse) (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
- <sup>26</sup> Moore, "Nothing will get in the way of the greatest show on earth."

- <sup>27</sup> *Telegraph*, “Shanghai World Expo 2010,” June 17, 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sponsored/travel/china-holidays/7835344/Shanghai-World-Expo-2010.html> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
- <sup>28</sup> William Callahan, *China: The Pessimist Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 68.
- <sup>29</sup> Kurtenbach, “Shanghai World Expo Showcases China's Soft Power.”
- <sup>30</sup> Jeffrey Wasserstrom, Professor of History at the University of California, Irvine, specifically coined this term to refer to Shanghai and other cities which “once had, subsequently lost, and are now striving to reclaim a position as one of the world’s leading cosmopolitan hubs—or, in Shanghai’s case, have successfully reclaimed that position, but seek to become ever more tightly enmeshed in international flows.” See Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *Global Shanghai, 1850-2010: A History in Fragments* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 133.
- <sup>31</sup> *Telegraph*, “Shanghai world expo 2010,” June 17, 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sponsored/travel/china-holidays/7835344/Shanghai-World-Expo-2010.html> (accessed No 22, 2010).
- <sup>32</sup> Austin Ramzy, “Shanghai’s back on top of the world.” *Time Magazine*, May 17, 2010, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1983788,00.html> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
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- <sup>35</sup> Minter, “China rules the world at expo 2010.”
- <sup>36</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, “You’ve come a long way, baby: Shanghai finds its big feat,” May 1, 2010, <http://www.smh.com.au/travel/travel-news/youve-come-a-long-way-baby-shanghai-finds-its-big-feat-20100430-tzbt.html> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
- <sup>37</sup> Ramzy, “Shanghai’s Back on Top of the World.”
- <sup>38</sup> Hannah Beech, “Shanghai: after Beijing games, back in the spotlight,” *Time*, Sept 17, 2008, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1841546,00.html> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
- <sup>39</sup> Kurtenbach, “Shanghai World Expo Showcases China's Soft Power.”
- <sup>40</sup> Zhenghua Wang, “China pavilion ‘watershed of Chinese architecture,’” *Chinadaily*, Aug 19, 2010, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010expo/2010-08/19/content\\_11174508.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010expo/2010-08/19/content_11174508.htm) (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
- <sup>41</sup> Dunzheng Liu, *Ancient Chinese Architecture History* (Beijing, Chinese Architecture Industry Publishing House, 1984), 4-5. Also on the China Pavilion’s structural characteristics, the Shanghai Expo official manual explains, “Dougong was widely used in the Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC-467 BC). The *dougong* style features wooden brackets fixed layer upon layer between the top of

a column and a crossbeam. This unique structural component of interlocking wooden brackets is one of the most important elements in traditional Chinese architecture.” (see [http://en.expo2010.cn/c/en\\_gj\\_tpl\\_85.htm](http://en.expo2010.cn/c/en_gj_tpl_85.htm))

<sup>42</sup> Mark Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>43</sup> Nancy Steinhardt, “Introduction to Chinese architecture,” in *Chinese Architecture*, ed. Nancy Steinhardt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 1.

<sup>44</sup> Liang Sicheng, *Structural Regulations in the Qing Dynasty* (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2006), 10.

<sup>45</sup> Qijun Wang, *China Built: A History of Ancient Chinese Architecture* (Beijing, Chinese Architecture Industry Publishing House, 2005), 5-6; Dunzhen Liu, *Ancient Chinese Architecture History* (Beijing, Chinese Architecture Industry Publishing House, 1984), 4-5; Gu Zhi, *Twenty Two Lectures on Traditional Chinese Cultural Essence* (Tianyuan, Shanxi: Shanxi Guji Publishing House, 2004), 221-222.

<sup>46</sup> *Expo 2010 Shanghai China*, “China Pavilion,” [http://en.expo2010.cn/c/en\\_gj\\_tpl\\_85.htm](http://en.expo2010.cn/c/en_gj_tpl_85.htm) (accessed Nov 22, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Wang Zhenghua, “China Pavilion 'Watershed of Chinese architecture,’” *China Daily*, Aug 19, 2010, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010expo/2010-08/19/content\\_11174508.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010expo/2010-08/19/content_11174508.htm) (accessed Nov 22, 2010).

<sup>48</sup> For architectural experts, those who supported He’s design mostly appreciate its classical embodiment and creative representation of traditional Chinese architectural and cultural heritage, as well as its imaginative, expansive design symbolizes a rising China as an ancient, emergent power in the world. However, such an overly exaggeration of a structural element was also decried by others as reductive distillation and essentialist distortion of the original concept. Wang Guixiang, Professor of Chinese architectural history, criticizes that Chinese culture and architecture did not equate picking a classical element and magnifying it out of structural, artistic, and aesthetic proportions. Rather, in his view, the current structure’s overblown, muscular, and pompous hauteur grossly betrayed traditional Chinese architecture’s finesse, elegance, reserve, harmony, and accommodation. See Huang Chong and Tong Dawei, “Interview with prof. wang guixiang: Chinese architecture still hasn’t found its own place,” *China Youth Daily*, Sept 3, 2009, [http://zqb.cyol.com/content/2009-09/03/content\\_2835091.htm](http://zqb.cyol.com/content/2009-09/03/content_2835091.htm) (accessed Nov 22, 2010)

<sup>49</sup> *Shanghai Expo Magazine*, “Face to face with the chief architect of the China pavilion,” Feb 20, 2008, [http://www.expo2010.cn/expo/expo\\_english/documents/em/node2326/userobject1ai49145.html](http://www.expo2010.cn/expo/expo_english/documents/em/node2326/userobject1ai49145.html) (accessed Nov 22, 2010).

<sup>50</sup> By the exhibition zone layout, the medium-sized Asian and Oceanian countries’ pavilions are built to the west zone adjacent to the China Pavilion, while major Western countries’ pavilions are relegated to a promiscuous cohabitation with African and Caribbean countries’ pavilions further to the west corner.



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- <sup>52</sup> Ma Feng, "The Ancient Chinese Architecture and Humanistic Cultivation," *Journal of University of Science and Technology Beijing (Social Science Edition)* 15 (1999): 83
- <sup>53</sup> Tania Branigan, "Shanghai 2010 Expo is set to be the world's most expensive party," *Guardian*, April 21, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/apr/21/shanghai-2010-expo-party> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
- <sup>54</sup> Hong Jiang, *The History of Classical Chinese Paintings* (Shanghai, Fudan University Press, 2006), 130.
- <sup>55</sup> James Cahill, *A History of Chinese Painting* (Taipei, Hsiung-Shih Art Book, 1984), 32; Shiran Du and Qiupeng Jin, ed., *The History of Chinese Science and Technology: General History* (Beijing, Science Publishing House, 2003), 500.
- <sup>56</sup> Jacques Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*, (Cambridge, UK: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1996), 297.
- <sup>57</sup> Joseph Needham, *A History of Chinese Science and Technology: Introduction* (Shanghai, China: Science Publishing House and Shanghai Ancient Chinese Books Publishing House, 1990), 138.
- <sup>58</sup> Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 103.
- <sup>59</sup> *Xinhua News Agency*, "Centennial aspiration, eight-year preparation; Shanghai world expo grand open on April 30," [http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2010-04/29/content\\_1596136.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2010-04/29/content_1596136.htm) (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
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- <sup>61</sup> John Boudreau, "Shanghai party: What you'll find at 2010 World Expo," *San Jose Mercury News*, June 20, 2010, [http://www.mercurynews.com/ci\\_15311826?source=most\\_email&nclick\\_check=1](http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_15311826?source=most_email&nclick_check=1) (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
- <sup>62</sup> Fred Bernstein, "Shanghai Surprise," *Architect Magazine*, July 8, 2010, <http://www.architectmagazine.com/international-projects/shanghai-surprise.aspx> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
- <sup>63</sup> Higgins, "World's fair in Shanghai provides China with another showcase opportunity."
- <sup>64</sup> Jeffrey Wasserstrom, "Shanghai's Expo: What Everyone Needs to Know," *The Huffington Post*, April 24, 2010, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeffrey-wasserstrom/shanghais-expo-what-every\\_b\\_550569.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeffrey-wasserstrom/shanghais-expo-what-every_b_550569.html) (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
- <sup>65</sup> Mark MacKinnon, "Expo 2010 confirms how China has moved to world's centre stage," *The Globe and Mail*, May 1, 2010, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/subscribe.jsp?art=1553364> (accessed Nov 22, 2010)
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April 30, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/29/AR2010042904328.html> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).

<sup>67</sup> Juliet Eilperin, "China leading the world in clean energy investment," *Washington Post*, Sept 30, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/29/AR2010092906595.html> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).

<sup>68</sup> Elaine Kurtenbach, "Shanghai world expo drew 72 million," *AP*, Nov 1, 2010, [http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?subjectid=13&articleid=20101101\\_13\\_A6\\_CUTLIN14238](http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?subjectid=13&articleid=20101101_13_A6_CUTLIN14238) (accessed Nov 22, 2010).

<sup>69</sup> *Fox News*, "Shanghai World Expo showcases China's soft power," April 25, 2010, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/04/25/shanghai-world-expo-showcases-chinas-soft-power/> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).

<sup>70</sup> Wasserstrom, *Global Shanghai, 1850-2010*, 138.

<sup>71</sup> See Wang Guixiang, "Chinese architecture hasn't found its true direction," *Archina.com*, Sept 11, 2009, <http://people.archina.com/opinion/1/167.html> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).

<sup>72</sup> Barry Schwartz, "Memory as a Cultural System: Abraham Lincoln in World War II," *American Sociological Review* 61 (1996): 910.

<sup>73</sup> Yu Jianrong, "China's social unrests and governance crisis," *chinathinktank.cn*, Dec 14, 2007, <http://www.chinathinktank.cn/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=7469&ArticlePage=1> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).

<sup>74</sup> Wong Xiaozhu, "The number of social unrests has risen to over 90,000," *qq.com*, Feb 27, 2010, <http://news.qq.com/a/20100227/001082.htm> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).

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<sup>80</sup> Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1977).

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>83</sup> Michael Bruner, "Strategies of Remembrance in Pre-Unification West Germany," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86 (2000): 103.

<sup>84</sup> Bruner, "Strategies of Remembrance in Pre-Unification West Germany," 102.

<sup>85</sup> Moore, "Nothing will get in the way of the greatest show on Earth."

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- <sup>87</sup> Branigan, "Shanghai 2010 Expo is set to be the world's most expensive party."
- <sup>88</sup> Browne, "Reading, Rhetoric, and the Texture of Public Memory," 243.
- <sup>89</sup> In light of China's growing international influence yet unfavorable global media perception, the Chinese government rolled out an ambitious, well-funded "Grand Publicity Strategy" in 2009, as a systematic attempt to consolidate, streamline, and expand its publicity resources and improve China's voice and image around the world. See *Zaobao.com*, "China designs 'grand external publicity' strategy; 45 billion to enhance soft power," April 27, 2009, <http://www.zaobao.com/wencui/2009/04/others090427a.shtml> (accessed Nov 22, 2010).
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- <sup>91</sup> The Shanghai CCP Secretary Yu Zhengsheng said so during the summary meeting for the successful experiences of the Shanghai World Expo. See <http://news.163.com/10/1229/21/6P3NQK3N00014AEE.html>
- <sup>92</sup> J. Zhang, "Decision on Praising the Exemplary Units and Individuals in Holding the 2010 Shanghai World Expo," *Xinhua News Agency*, Dec 27, 2010, <http://news.sohu.com/20101227/n278539519> (accessed May 10, 2011).
- <sup>93</sup> Andrews Hoskins, "Ghost in the Machine: Television and Wars' Past(s)," in *Communicating War: Memory, Media and Military*, ed. Sarah Maltby and Richard Keeble (Suffolk, UK: Abramis, 2007), 18.
- <sup>94</sup> Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of remembrance: The dynamics of collective memory* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 67.
- <sup>95</sup> Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 3.
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- <sup>97</sup> Tong Zhang and Barry Schwartz, "Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: A Study in Collective Memory," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 11 (1997): 207.
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- <sup>99</sup> John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 253.
- <sup>100</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and*

*Military Conflict from 1500-2000* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 566.

## Chapter Seven

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Richard Vatz, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 6(3) (1973): 154.

<sup>104</sup> See the following representative yet far from exhaustive list of prominent publications: Michael Schaller, *The United States and China: Into the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); James Kynge, *China Shakes the World: A Titan's Rise and Troubled Future—and the Challenge for America* (New York: Mariner Books, 2007); *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Minds* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008); Mark Leonard, *What Does China Think?* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008); David Lampton, Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Jan Willem Blankert, *China Rising: Will the West be Able to Cope?* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 2009); C. Bergsten, Charles Freeman, Nicholas Lardy and Derek Mitchell, *China's Rise: Challenges and Opportunities* (Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009); Eva Paus, Penelope Prime and Jon Western, *Is China Changing the Rules of the Game?* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009); Stefan Halper, *The Beijing Consensus* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); *Soft Power in China*, eds, Jian Wang. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Richard McGregor, *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2010); Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *China in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Arvind Subramanian, *Eclipse: Living in the Shadow of China's Economic Dominance* (Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2011).

<sup>105</sup> Ian Buruma, "Year of the 'China model'," *The Guardian*, Jan 9, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/jan/09/yearofthechinamodel> (accessed Sept 25, 2010).

<sup>106</sup> Jamie Metzl, "Beijing 2008: American's Sputnik Moment," *The Huffington Post*, Sept 9, 2008, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jamie-metzl/beijing-2008-americas-spu\\_b\\_124807.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jamie-metzl/beijing-2008-americas-spu_b_124807.html) (accessed Sept 25, 2010).

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<sup>108</sup> Kent Ewing, "Awe (but no Laughter) in Beijing," *Asia Times*, Aug 12, 2008, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/JH12Ad01.html> (accessed Sept 25, 2010).

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- <sup>110</sup> Vatz, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation," 157.
- <sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.
- <sup>112</sup> Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, translated by John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), pp. 116-117.
- <sup>113</sup> Murray Edelman, *Politics as Symbolic Action* (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1971), 33.
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- <sup>115</sup> Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 12.
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- <sup>118</sup> Barbie Zelizer, "Reading the past against the grain: The shape of memory studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12 (1995): 228.
- <sup>119</sup> Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," 13.
- <sup>120</sup> Xing Lu and Herbert Simons, "Transitional Rhetoric of Communist Party Leaders in the Post-Mao Reform Period: Dilemmas and Strategies," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92.3 (2006), 280.
- <sup>121</sup> Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp & Lori Lanzilotti, "Public Memory and Private Grief: The Construction of Shrine at the Sites of Public Tragedy," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84, no. 2 (1998): 152.
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- <sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.
- <sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.
- <sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>128</sup> Celeste Condit and John Lucaites, *Crafting equality: America's Anglo-African word* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), xii.
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- <sup>143</sup> Kennedy, *Comparative rhetoric*, 146.
- <sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>145</sup> Robert Oliver, *Communication and Culture in Ancient India and China* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 138.
- <sup>146</sup> Deutsche Welle, "Chinese Internet is under unprecedentedly tightest surveillance," April 12, 2011, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,14982602,00.html>
- <sup>147</sup> Tania Branigan, "Ai Weiwei: 'Younger people can be more hurt. I have my own beliefs,'" *The Guardian*, Dec 17, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2011/dec/18/ai-weiwei-faces-2011-interview>
- <sup>148</sup> British prestigious contemporary art magazine *Art Review* picked Ai as the artworld's most powerful figure in 2011, for the fact that "his work and his words have become catalysts for international political debates that affect every nation on the planet: freedom of expression, nationalism, economic power, the Internet, the rights of the human being." (See <http://www.artreview100.com/people/751/>). *Time* magazine also selected Ai as the 2011's 3<sup>rd</sup> 100 most influential people in the world, as "He has drawn the world's attention to the vibrancy of contemporary Chinese culture," and "continues to represent the promise of China." (See [http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2066367\\_2066369\\_2066464,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2066367_2066369_2066464,00.html)).
- <sup>149</sup> John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 14.
- <sup>150</sup> Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, 9.

<sup>151</sup> Among the extensive inconsistencies between the CCP's politico-ideological program and the PRC's sociopolitical realities, two cases are probably most ironic and self-evident: first, in early 2010, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao pronounced that the CCP government would endeavor to allow the people to live a happier, more decent life, a seemingly populist slogan but factually overdue promise after the CCP's 60-year tortuous rule. Second, in order to attract foreign entrepreneurs and investors, many local governments nowadays often side with foreign management to prevent the employees from forming union or asking for pay raise, and, in not rare cases, even send security forces to stop the latter going on strike.

<sup>152</sup> Even the Chinese public are less positive—still less consensual—about the PRC's emerging global power status. According to a recent nationwide, urban poll conducted by the media monitor agency affiliated with the official-sponsored *Global Times* newspaper, only 14.1% believe that China has become a world power; 51.3% think that China has not yet reached such a status; 33.4% hold that China has not measured up to that level at all. See Congcong Duan and Lai Wei, "Poll Shows Chinese Self-confidence as World Power Rises Slightly," *Huangqiu*, Dec 31, 2011, <http://world.huanqiu.com/roll/2011-12/2316609.html>. Meanwhile, the newspaper's web version also undertook an online survey on the same topic, in which 87.6% disagree that China has become a superpower. See Liang Li, "Survey Shows 90 Percent Disagree China has Become a Superpower," *Huangqiu*, Jan 1, 2012, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/sd/2012-01-01/082823734580.shtml>.

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APPENDIX A

THE PRC'S PRESIDENT HU JINTAO'S KEYNOTE SPEECH  
AT THE 2009 BEIJING MILITARY PARADE  
OCT 1, 2009

## APPENDIX A

Fellow countrymen, comrades and friends,

Today, we hold a grand celebration to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. At this cheerful and solemn moment, people from all over the country's ethnic groups are extremely proud of our great nation's development and progress and are confident of the Chinese nation's bright prospect on the road to revival.

On behalf of the CPC Central Committee, the National People's Congress, the State Council, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the Central Military Commission, I hereby pay tribute to all the revolutionary pioneers of older generations and martyrs who made great contributions to realizing national independence and liberation of the people, the country's prosperity and strength and happy life of the people. I send warm congratulations to people from all ethnic groups in the country and patriotic compatriots from home and abroad, and express heartfelt thanks to the friends from other countries who care about and support China's development.

Sixty years ago on this day, the Chinese people achieved great victory of the Chinese revolution after more than one hundred years of blooded struggle. It was here that Chairman Mao Zedong solemnly declared to the world the founding of the People's Republic of China. At that moment, the Chinese people stood up and the Chinese nation with over 5,000 years of civilization began a new page of development and progress in history.

In the past sixty years, with the three generations of Party leadership with Comrade Mao Zedong, Comrade Deng Xiaoping and Comrade Jiang Zemin as a core, and with the leadership of the Central Committee formed after the 16<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the CPC, with hard work and wisdom of all ethnic groups of the country, the Chinese people have joined hands to overcome the great hardship and made great contributions that have been recognized by the world, and proved our perseverance and endurance. Today, a socialist China is standing firm in the east as marching towards modernization, embracing the world and future.

The sixty year's of development of New China has proved that only socialism can save China, only reform and opening up can develop China, develop socialism and develop Marxism. The Chinese people are confident and are capable of building our own country and make due contributions to the world.

We will unswervingly follow our path on socialism with Chinese characteristics and comprehensively implement the ruling party's basic theory, basic line, basic program and basic experience. We will maintain our policies of emancipating our thoughts, of reform and opening-up, pushing forward scientific development and promote social harmony. We will push forward the process of comprehensively building a moderately well-off society, turning new pages in the endeavor of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and opening new chapters in making the people's life better.

We will stick to the policy of “peaceful reunification” and “one country, two systems” to help Hong Kong and Macao remain prosperous and stable, to seek peaceful development of cross-strait relations, and to work for the complete reunification of the motherland, which is the common aspiration of the Chinese nation.

We will unswervingly maintain an independent foreign policy of peace. We will follow a path of peaceful development. We will seek a strategy of win-win cooperation based on the five cardinal Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. We will develop friendly relations and cooperation with all nations. We join hands with the people from all over the world in pushing forward the lofty cause of making the world more peaceful and progressive and building a harmonious world of long-lasting peace and prosperity.

The Chinese People’s Liberation Army and People’s Armed Police Force should uphold their glorious traditions, build up their own strength and fulfill their missions practically so as to make new contributions to safeguarding national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, as well as world peace.

History has shown us that the road ahead may not always be as smooth as what we expect. But the Chinese people who are united and are masters of the destiny will overcome all difficulties and obstacles and will continue to create great historic undertakings.

Look forward to the future, we envision bright prospect for Chinese’s development. The whole Party, the army and people of all ethnic groups will unite more closely, holding up the great banner of building a socialism with Chinese characteristics, and advance with the times and with enterprising spirit. Let’s continue to build up socialist modern nation with prosperity, democracy and harmony, move forward to realize the great goal of rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and make new great contributions to the well being of humanity with our diligent work and unremitting efforts.

Long live the great People’s Republic of Chinese!

Long live the great Communist Party of Chinese!

Long live the great Chinese people!

Source: *China Youth Daily*, 12 Oct 2009,  
[http://corner.youth.cn/popular/200910/t20091012\\_1046812.htm](http://corner.youth.cn/popular/200910/t20091012_1046812.htm) (accessed 30 Dec 2011).