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THIRD WORLD COSMOPOLITANISM IN WHITE SPACETIME: INTERSECTIONALITY

AND MOBILITY IN SINO-AFRICAN ENCOUNTERS

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controversial, I will argue that it is no less so than accepting a PhD scholarship from an American top tier University – given the fundamental contributions that institutions like the University of Chicago have made to technologies and policies of American Imperialism – and of course I say all this in the spirit of 'intellectual freedom of expression', one of the University's own ethical imperatives. Here, I would also like to thank the French Institute in Johannesburg and The Nicholson Institute in Chicago, equally controversial sponsors of ideas, colloquiums, and research as conduits of Soft Power, but whom did not interfere with, nor obstructed any of my inquiries.

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the educational encounter between Africa and China through an ethnographic analysis of African students' engagement with Chinese Universities in Beijing, China. I focus on the relationship between 'English', 'whiteness', and 'cosmopolitanism' as a semiotic nexus mediating the interactions between African and Chinese actors: what I term 'White Spacetime'. In doing so I depict how this relationship – between what appear to be familiar colonial tropes – becomes reconstituted in novel, but ultimately limiting ways in Sino-African encounters. As such, the dissertation affords an opportunity to re-approach the analytics of postcolonial translation from a context expected to have cathartically invoked "the Third World [starting over] a new history of man" (Fanon 1965: 238). The arguments I make throughout the course of the dissertation's chapters address two primary concerns. The first is an analysis of how current Sino-African encounters contest or re-contextualize, perpetuate or fetishize the persistence of Anglocentrism, cosmopolitanism, and whiteness as historically imbricated manifestations of western domination (Pennycook 2007, Blommaert 2012, Mbembe & Nuttall 2007, Rofel 2007, Appadurai 2011, Gilroy 1993, Hage 2000, LaDousa 2014, Nakassis 2016). The second is a demonstration of the ways in which an ethnographic study of 'encounters' can restage the stakes of postcolonial translation by revealing the interactional emergence of its ideological concerns with power, historical stratification, and their relationship to discourse that have plagued various genealogies of postcolonial, deconstructionist, and critical race theorists (Lorde 2007, Crenshaw 1991, Butler 1999, Robinson 1983, Mbembe 2001, Fanon 1965 & 2008 [1952], Said 2003, Derrida 1976, Foucault 2002, hooks 1981, Spivak 1976, Bhabha 1994). Addressing both concerns, this dissertation grounds its methodological approach in the study of interactions – considered as dialectically contingent on, and constitutive of, the historical and material conditions of their contextualization. Framing my discussion within Fanonian and Peircean genealogies of postcolonial theory and pragmatist semiotics, this dissertation thus undertakes a critical semiotics of postcolonial translation.

Keywords: China-Africa Encounters, Postcolonial Translation, White Spacetime, Intersectional Mobility

List Of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

CI – Confucius Institutes

CFL – Chinese as Foreign Language

EFL – English as Foreign Language

FOCAC – Forum on China Africa Cooperation

GRE – Graduate Record Examination

Han Ban (汉办) – Office of Chinese Language Council International Council (国家汉语国际推

广领导小组办公室)

RP – Received Pronunciation

HSK – Standard Test of Chinese Proficiency or *Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi* (汉语水平考

试)

Introduction:

Dialectical Interactions in Sino-African Beijing – Toward A Critical Semiotics of Encounter

On a spring evening in 2015, two informants visited my apartment in Beijing's Haidian district. Winston Wang and Watson Liu were two graduate students at Da Hua[1] University, one of the most prestigious academic institutions in China. They had received their English names from an American English teacher with a penchant for Victorian appellations, and insisted I use these to address them in preparation for prospective enrollments in American Universities – both had recently completed their GRE exams. Following an injury I sustained during fieldwork, I was unable to leave my room for three weeks. Given my immobility, as well as the fact that we had become good friends over the academic year, the two agreed to meet me at home, not far from their University, by way of checking in on my recovery. Winston and Watson both aspired to go to American Ivy-League graduate schools and at the time I was helping them with their application packages in exchange for an interview and focus group participation – a 'mutually beneficial' but ultimately unequivalent exchange for reasons that will become clear. As we slurped from cups of spicy instant noodles and chatted about graduate school abroad, I asked Winston what his plans were if he didn't get into a US university that year. "I will use my English skills to teach Chinese in a Confucius Institute in Egypt", he explained, "then I can apply for the next application round while improving my English". Here, Winston was referencing one of the requirements for teaching in a CI (Confucius Institute): the ability to teach Chinese using English as the medium of instruction. By way

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[1] All names of meeting places, universities, as well as informants – including student-formed institutions and organizations – have been given pseudonyms in this dissertation. This was done to not only protect informants and the author from the consequences of contemporary American and Chinese censorship and surveillance practices but also to mitigate potential conflicts within and between the communities represented in this work.

of friendly provocation, I sarcastically joked about the irony of Confucius Institutes – the Chinese equivalent of European Goethe or Alliance Francais Institutes – having to rely on the English language to contest Anglo-Imperialism while funding the aspirations of Chinese graduate students aiming to go to Oxbridge and the Ivy Leagues. Quoting Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, Winston retorted: "What does it matter if the cat is black or white?" (不管白猫、黑猫); his pragmatic hedge indexing the fact that Chinese Confucius Institutes – as Chinese Government-funded institutions – have been explicit not only in denouncing but also in articulating a competitive stance against Anglo-American soft power and the cultural hegemony of English (Gil 2017). Continuing our playful exchange, which nonetheless masked more serious undertones, I joked with an air of mock-sanctimony that using CIs to get into Harvard (one of his chosen schools) was a betrayal of "third world solidarity" (第三世界大团结); and that the relationship between English and Chinese was "not simply one of black cats and white cats". Winston laughed at this burlesque, then quickly added: "True, but English is the only cat at the moment. I can't *go very far* with only Chinese?"

As Winston was planning his departure, another student was struggling to stay in Beijing. One afternoon during a soccer match, also in Haidian district, I encountered Edlulayo Zuma, a male South African graduate student studying at Da Jing University. He recently had to defer his graduation so he could renew his Chinese study visa in order to stay in the country and teach English while exploring ways to avoid going back to Johannesburg, our mutual hometown in South Africa. Edlulayo – or Ed for short – walked onto the Da Hua University soccer pitch in the blazing afternoon sun. There was a large gathering of black African students and myself waiting for a game between our team, Azania United, and the "notorious" Nigeria B to begin – according to other members of Azania United they "always play[ed] dirty". To be sure, this was, unsurprisingly, also something I often heard other teams say about us – "the Azanians are too violent … they don't score any goals, but won't let anyone else have the ball". As though attempting to gain fortitude from the pervasive smell of melting plastic – the source of which was hard to discern between the constant smoggy haze around us and the artificial turf we were playing on – Ed

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walked to the middle of the plastic pitch where we were warming up, placed his hands on his hips, closed his eyes, and inhaled deeply, puffing out his chest. After a slow exhalation, he opened his eyes and addressed us: "Comrades, we cannot lose to these Nigerians. We will never live it down". As our manager, Ed cut a curious appearance: He was short, thin, and looked like the youngest among us even though he was in his late thirties – reminiscent of a male tenor-leader of an *Isicathamiya* (the 'c' pronounced as a dental click) men's choir in South Africa (Erlmann 1995). What made him stand out however was the fact that he almost always wore an over-sized off-white t-shirt with the image of South African Black consciousness thinker, Steve Biko on the front – the words, "I Write What I Like[2]" emblazoned next to it, fading against the yellowing cotton. Around his neck – in what turned out to be a deliberate juxtaposition – he wore a massive chain with a giant locket containing the image Mao Zedong. Clasping the locket, perhaps rhetorically invoking the speaker within it, he stated: "When they attack, defend like crazy, but be patient, they are big and get tired quickly. Then we give them hell…like real guerilla fighters".

Black Cats, White Cats, and Third World Cosmopolitan Spacetime

Referencing both nostalgias for, and historical compromises of, third world anti-imperialism is a common feature of contemporary interactions among and between African and Chinese subjects in Beijing. This referencing or citation, I will show, occurs in ways that are explicitly direct and implicitly indirect in their citation or dialectical negation. In this sense, dialectical negation, as developed by many critical postcolonial theorists (Fanon 1965, Bhabha 1994, Mbembe 1991) but which has also emerged as a timely concern in the recent work of pragmatist semioticians (Nakassis 2012 & 2016a, Wirtz 2014, Inoue 2006) constitutes an indirect citation. The citation and indirect indexing, then, of what can be understood as 'third world' solidarity history – even when young Africans and Chinese have no direct connection to that past – is an important counterpoint to the simultaneous contemporary English language-mediated

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[2] This the title of a collection of Biko's writings, most of which were penned under the pseudonym, Frank Talk, until Biko's arrest and murder in 1977 (Bernstein 1978).

cosmopolitan aspirations of both African and Chinese actors. There is a tension that emerges at the juxtaposition of third world solidarity and cosmopolitan aspiration, one – as I will show – that certainly informs what will come to be among the most pivotal interactions of the 21st century: that between China and Africa.

As a feature of Chinese and African interactions, both with one another and the historical moment they understood themselves to be emplaced, this tension emerged as an interplay between a historicizing present and a recruitable past – a synthesis I term 'third world cosmopolitan' spacetime. Third world cosmopolitanism, however, turned out to be a commitment that – while persistently invoked – constantly seemed to fail: a recurring theme in the chapters that follow. Both historically-informed invocations of anti-imperialism, as well as aspirations to unmarked cosmopolitan modernity – it turned out – came to compromise Chinese and African voicing subjects.

While attending to the ways in which the contours of third world cosmopolitan spacetime became visible in the invocations of my informants – playing itself out in the interactions among African students and with their Chinese interlocutors – I came to realize that another, more elusive, perhaps even transcendent, spatiotemporal condition short-circuited the promise of genuinely 'post-colonial', 'post-socialist', and even 'post-structurally' open-ended possibilities of contemporary Sino-African encounters. This condition, emerging as an ideological gravity – dialectically both imbricating and generated through Sino-African encounters – I conceptualize here as white spacetime. Throughout this dissertation, whiteness and white spacetime are conceptualized in intersectional terms, as an imbricated, stratifying horizon of aspiration that cuts across lines of language, gender, sexuality, and mobility, something both chimeric as well as present that perspectivally informs a wide range of contemporary interactions, even when there are no white, European, or colonial bodies present.

I must caveat that my invocation of history throughout will not be informed by a *kwellen kritic*, since I am in no position – by training – to engage the Rankean historian's question of "how it actually happened" – *Wie es eigentlich gewesen* (Ranke 2011). However, the fact of contemporary Sino-African actors' often simultaneous recourse to, or negation of, history as both inaccessible and present in

motivating the contemporaneity of 'third world' cosmopolitan spacetime, I argue, becomes a way to symptomatically reveal and immanently critique white spacetime – as long as the ethnographer maintains an attentiveness to human interactions as both spatiotemporally dialectical and pragmatically efficacious.

History – thus conceptualized as both interactionally contingent and dialectically motivated – is not simply a matter of idiographic versus nomothetic propositions, but a way of accounting for history's emergence (in the more dialectical materialist sense) as a pragmatic resource through which subjects establish the semiotic grounds for their simultaneously contemporary and historical interactions (Marx 1972).

In this regard, anticipated historical empiricist critiques of my arguments' failure to conform to a Rankean mode of inquiry are certainly not invalid. In fact, asking what history pragmatically does, from a dialectically-interactionist, ethnographic 'present' – is precisely antithetical to a Rankean approach. This is because there is a fundamental difference between the method of historical empiricism, on the one hand, and accounting for history *as dynamic social resource*, on the other. I am attempting the latter in that I understand history, not as 'structural' in the vulgar sense, but certainly far from deconstructively open-ended; where history imbricates and is imbricated by, the interactional here-and-now. Thus, I propose a pragmatics of postcolonial translation that understands historical articulations in Sino-African encounters as both dialectical and interactional, where history is both constructed and relied upon to inform the contemporary lives of African and Chinese subjects. Following the Frankfurt School companion, Walter Benjamin (2007a & 2007c), we can understand Winston and Ed's respective 'third world' voicings and betrayals in the opening vignettes as both recruiting and re-constituting the histories of their originals:

不管白猫、黑猫，会捉老鼠就是好猫 (We do not care whether the cat is Black or White as long as it can catch mice)

– Deng Xiaoping (1962)

"We do not care whether the cat is Black or White as long as it can catch mice".

– Nelson Mandela (1990)

28 Years separate these quotes. The respective moments of utterance and citation by these two social reformers are commonly celebrated as turning points in the history of the liberal West's victories over communist authoritarian threats to a democratic, free world. For their speakers – Deng Xiaoping and Nelson Mandela – the moments of these mirror voicings were very much typified by a political pragmatism that informed both leaders' betrayals of socialist revolutions in their respective countries as well as the liberation movements that both had devoted their lives to. On the one hand, China's embrace of Nixon and the US in the 1970's was instrumental in the 'fall' of the Soviet Union and the denouement of the Cold War (Segal 1992). On the other, South Africa's release of Nelson Mandela followed political sanctions that were imposed by the West when the South African Defense Force and its Apartheid government were no longer useful in disrupting Pan-Africanist, and other socialist movements on the continent (Onslow et al 2009). The process of Mandela's release from prison in 1990 – after the fall of the Berlin Wall – and leading up to his eventual presidency, was leveraged in the Western English media as a validation of America and the liberal West's quasi-moral authority to guide the world into an almost 'post-national', 'globalized', 'millennial', epoch (Evans 2016). China and other Asian nations would supply expropriated labor; manufactured goods; and docile, hard-working students to NATO countries in support of a horizon of aspiration and consumption that promised unconstrained and unmarked cosmopolitan mobility for all that dared to undertake considerable labor of the imagination (Appadurai 1996). Following Arjun Appadurai, the fall of the Berlin Wall set in motion the awakening of a global *imaginaire* – a "constructed landscape of collective aspirations" (ibid: 31). It has subsequently been pointed out, however, that 'Africa' as an elusive space-time with no clear geographical referent became the nightmarish underbelly of this *imaginaire* (Mbembe 2001). I suggest in this dissertation that – at present – the relationship between this utopian *imaginaire* and its dystopian underbelly is very much still

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relevant, but has been rendered significantly more elusive with the rise of a neoliberal China – both its rising aspirationally liberal and ambitiously nationalist 'middle-classes' contributing significant labor to the transformation and maintenance of this global *imaginaire*. I will show, however, that Chinese encounters with Africans reveal contradictions in the construction of such an *imaginaire*: that such landscapes of collective aspiration not only fail subjects who are disproportionately stratified in the hills and valleys of 'modernity', but that the very act of aspiration towards this 'unmarked' landscape generates the ideological gravity that stratifies them. Additionally, I will show that the 'unmarkedness' of this *imaginaire* masks its racio-linguistic and intersectional contours: a white spacetime with English subtitles that ideologically and discursively stratifies all non-heteronormative, non-White subjects in ultimately unequal ways, even within a non-Western encounter. In this regard, the ideological and discursive imbrications of the Sino-African encounter emerge as an extended frame of mediation for what Frantz Fanon once called the ordering of the colonial world:

> The colonist's sector is a sector built to last, all stone and steel. It's a sector of lights and paved roads, where the trash cans constantly overflow with strange and wonderful garbage, undreamed-of leftovers. The colonist's feet can never be glimpsed, except perhaps in the sea, but then you can never get close enough. They are protected by solid shoes in a sector where the streets are clean and smooth, without a pothole, without a stone. The colonist's sector is a sated, sluggish sector, its belly is permanently full of good things. The colonist's sector is a white folks' sector, a sector of foreigners. The colonized's sector, or at least the "native" quarters, the shanty town, the Medina, the reservation, is a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people. You are born anywhere, anyhow. You die anywhere, from anything. It's a world with no space, people are piled one on top of the other, the shacks squeezed tightly together. The colonized's sector is a famished sector, hungry for bread, meat, shoes, coal, and light. The colonized's sector is a sector that crouches and cowers, a sector on its knees, a sector that is prostrate. It's a sector of niggers, a sector of towelheads. (Fanon 1965: 4 - 5)

Fanon masterfully juxtaposes the worlds of the colonized not as a binary opposition, but a mutually-constitutive proposition, whereby the world of the colonizer orders itself precisely by recruiting the alienated semiotic labor of the colonized – hence his metaphorical use of Apartheid South Africa as archetype. Whiteness and civilization become elided as the diffuse and unattainable upper-bound of a colonial order precisely by foregrounding blackness and primordial dysfunction as the identifiable lower-bound that troubles a smooth, 'unmarked', aspirational horizon – after all, Fanon asks, don't we all want to live in the world of the white colonizer? It is perhaps in this way that the post-colonial, post-socialist promise of mass-mobility and equal opportunity cosmopolitan dreams in the 1990s would supply the mass affective engine for maintaining a chain of civilization that continues to persistently reinforce whiteness and English as signs that transcend their fellow tokens of language and racial types.

Just as elite Chinese students' embrace of English cosmopolitanism and American education comes to betray Africans students' commitments to Chinese education and a Chinese world order, so too Mandela's endorsement of the cat that can catch mice retrospectively constitutes the ultimate tragedy of Deng's abandonment of third world solidarity in its historical repetition. The moments of utterance point to each other across time, a pointing that constitutes a contingency in both directions. As Mandela's 'betrayal' of Anti-Apartheid Pan-Africanists and Socialists – like communist leader, Chris Hani and Pan Africanist educator, Walter Sobukwe – points to Deng's betrayal of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, so too Winston and Ed's invocations recruit a history to their respective interactions, thus performatively reconstituting a trans-historical spacetime – emergent in the here-and-now of Beijing – that simultaneously provides both a prior and emergent ground for Chinese and African 'third world cosmopolitans'. This simultaneous dependence on, and construction of, history by contemporary interlocutors, I will argue, mirrors the dynamics of dependency and construction that racially and linguistically stratify the movements and cosmopolitan aspirations of contemporary Chinese and African actors. While this dissertation is firmly contextualized within the ethnographic encounters among and between Chinese and Africans in Beijing; it is very much preoccupied with another question, one that

complicates the mere description of 'third world cosmopolitanism' as a 'unique' social formation emerging in a 'novel' encounter, where I ask: What trans-historical forces obstruct the emergence of 'third world cosmopolitan' spacetime?

English and White Spacetime

This dissertation undertakes an ethnographic analysis of a racialized politics of language and trans-national mobility, situated within an encounter between African University students and their Chinese educational interlocutors in Beijing, China. In particular, the study focuses on the relationship between 'English', 'whiteness', and 'cosmopolitanism' as simultaneously ideologically imbricated and discursively pragmatic formations mediating the interactions between African and Chinese actors. Here, I endeavor to depict how this relationship – between what appear to be familiar colonial tropes – becomes reconstituted in novel but ultimately limiting ways in Sino-African encounters in Beijing. As such, what follows affords an opportunity to re-approach the analytics of postcolonial translation from a context expected to have cathartically invoked "the Third World [starting over] a new history of man" (Fanon 1965: 238). The arguments I make throughout the course of the following chapters address two primary concerns. The first is an analysis of how current Sino-African encounters contest or re-contextualize, perpetuate or fetishize the persistence of Anglocentrism, cosmopolitanism, and whiteness as historically imbricated manifestations of western domination (Pennycook 2007, Blommaert 2012, Mbembe & Nuttall 2007, Rofel 2007, Appadurai 2011, Gilroy 1993, Hage 2000, LaDousa 2014, Nakassis 2016). The second is a demonstration of the ways in which an ethnographic study of 'encounters' can restage the stakes of postcolonial translation by revealing the interactional emergence of its ideological concerns with power, historical stratification, and their relationship to discourse that have plagued various genealogies of postcolonial, deconstructionist, and critical race theorists (Lorde 2007, Crenshaw 1991, Butler 1999, Robinson 1983, Mbembe 2001, Fanon 1965 & 2008 [1952], Said 2003, Derrida 1976, Foucault 2002,

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hooks 1981, Spivak 1976, Bhabha 1994). Addressing both concerns, this dissertation grounds its methodological approach in the study of interactions – considered as dialectically contingent on, and constitutive of, the historical and material conditions of their contextualization.

In this regard, I attempt what can be called a *critical semiotics*, and by my use of this term, I do not mean to suggest that semiotics – as an extremely broad domain of inquiry – is *un*-critical, quite the contrary. Instead, I aim to suggest an explicit confluence between what has broadly been called 'critical theory', on the one hand, and American pragmatist semiotics, on the other. Specifically, I am engaging with methodological approaches in these vast genealogies that reveal a dialectical sensibility between structure and emergence, historical discourse and the interactional present; and the pragmatics of a certain type of 'agency' – unmarked cosmopolitan mobility – that in its very commitments, both compromises and stratifies the aspirational agent. An important dimension of my engagement is revealing how 'ascending relations of power' become visible in the interactional here-and-now, and not merely as presumed-upon historical micro-interactions (Foucault 1980: 92-108 & 1982: 777-795). At the same time, I also challenge the proposition that asymmetries of power are purely achieved through an interactional maintenance – for this position takes the inherent arbitrariness of subjectivity (and ultimately power) for granted (Lempert 2012 & 2016). By contrast, a critical semiotics reveals not only the construction of social structures like history and racism through interactions. It fundamentally reveals some of the contextual contingencies through which such compromising and stratifying structures are not only depended upon by some of the very people who are marginalized through them, but are also given their efficacy in the moments that subjects believe themselves to be contesting or 'talking back' to formations like 'colonialism', 'capitalism', or 'white supremacy'. In claiming an unmarked, cosmopolitan 'self', both the female, queer, black educational migrant from Nigeria; and the Chinese, male, Harvard business school aspirant (with a perfect elite American English accent) – come to reinforce a white, hetero-normative spacetime through the proposition of 'unmarkedness', one that ultimately stratifies both of them in certainly unequal ways. In Beijing, such unequally stratified interactions can be studied since their subjects often attend the very same classes and are ranked in relation to contrapuntal aspirations.

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For this reason, I will argue that current Sino-African exchanges challenge and restage the stakes of postcolonial theory's most prominent theoretical metaphor – translation. While translation is not a central analytic in this dissertation, I do invoke it at certain moments in the following chapters. Like many postcolonial theorists (Spivak 1993, Bhabha 1994), I use translation as an analogical shorthand for getting at the interested and unequal contingencies of post-socialist and postcolonial encounters that imbricate a double temporal consciousness – in my case, third world anti-imperialist trans-nationalism and 'unmarked' cosmopolitan globalism. Because of the unequal situatedness of postcolonial subjects in relation to the historical and material afterlife of colonialism, translation – in this metaphorical sense – is not only a capacity that arises out of having to inhabit double-, or indeed multiple kinds of, consciousness. It arises from the constant burden of the colonized to have to reconcile temporalities of history, language, and subjectivity to their still colonial audience. Monolingualism, as a feature of the imagined audience of translation, (as in Benedict Anderson's [1983] literary public) places the burden of a disjunctive, lived counterpoint on the multilingual, usually colonized, translator. It is, ironically, however, the monolingual, usually colonial, voyeur who then judges the translator's work, work that becomes simultaneously exploited and negated to present the smooth surfaces of an increasingly monolingual world. Hence, the metaphor of translation does not fetishize language once we understand language as the mediator of our arguments for translation, and that indeed no form of representation unfolds without mediation – the admission that any theorization depends on fetishes to talk about fetishes, was already explicit Karl Marx's (1972) own insistence on immanent critique. Instead, the metaphor of translation – in postcolonial theory – draws attention not only to the double burden of translating and translational personhood on the part of the colonized but also the double burden of time-travel – or living in counterpoint – that is a feature of a persistent historical precarity that has only recently become palpable to liberal, mostly white, middle-to-upper-class intellectuals in the academic Anglosphere.

In Sino-African interactions, I understand the emergence of this double temporal consciousness as a perspectival and unequal counterpoint. One that lies between, on the one hand, a third world historical consciousness – imbricating mutually-invested, anti-colonial histories of African and Chinese

subjects; and on the other, an aspirationally cosmopolitan, future-oriented space-time – embracing the erasure of difference and the unconstrained promise of 'trans-global modern' subjectivity.

The ethnography that follows will show that the experience and recruitment of these spacetimes in the interactions of African students and their Chinese interlocutors is far from discreet – leading in many ways to a volatile concatenation of the two – third world cosmopolitanism. To be sure, many linguistic anthropologists would regard 'Third world' and 'cosmopolitan' as discreet participant frameworks (Agha 2007, Goebel 2016: 251-277). I argue, however, that it is equally informative to study the ways in which certain kinds of marginal subjects – non-white, second language English speakers – undertake multiple- and trans-temporal participant roles that complicate their participation in the singular, sequential interactional spacetimes that might be (initially) most visible in a face-to-face encounter. This is especially the case in situations where different sets of interlocutors become stratified in relation to mediums of participation and their imbricated, trans-national framing: like that of Chinese and African subjects mediating their encounters through English and in relation to divergent and unequal space-times of racialized historical colonialism as well as 'unmarked' cosmopolitan futurity. What pragmatist sociologist and early critical race theorist W.E.B Du Bois (1994: 1-9) once termed 'double consciousness' can certainly be understood as reflective of the ways in which marginal subjects – within the broad social context of white monopoly capitalism and colonialism – have a greater interactional burden than less-marginal members of a society. Du Bois' argument not only persists within the contemporary 'global' moment, but becomes equally visible in 'smaller-scale' interactions in 'out of the way' places – both in terms of the limited range of participant roles that black subjects are able to adopt (no matter where they go), as well as the degree to which they must always adopt more than one of these limited roles in every interaction.

In studying the historical and historicizing tensions that imbricate Chinese and African interactions, particularly in the context of an ongoing decolonization, critical theoretical approaches have provided a rich analytical resource for understanding the ways in which subalterns have to adopt an array of – often simultaneously – 'same' or 'different' positions in relation to their pasts, presents, and futures

when confronted with their respective – often overlapping – discriminations. In this regard, I aim to reveal the enduring relevance and nuance of some of these theories in unpacking the contradictory conditions that often generate the intersectionalities between inequalities of language, race, gender, sexuality, class, and mobility. Here, I hope to demonstrate how a persistent, trans-national regime of intersectional discrimination – as an *inter-subjectively motivated,* and *dialectically interactional* process – must both recruit signs like 'whiteness' and 'cosmopolitan' mobility as well as instantiate them as horizons of stratification for broader 'racial', or 'mobility' types. In this regard, I will propose that whiteness is not merely a racial token, but rather an intersectional type that is elided by more neutral commensurators like 'cosmopolitan', 'gender', 'sexuality', and 'race' that are rendered arbitrary in service of calls for both liberal multiculturalism as well as white supremacist free speech: a kind of commensuration I will elsewhere (in Chapter 6) refer to as a 'liberal-supremacist complex' building on my arguments in Chapter 4. This commensuration – I argue – is sustained by various culture industries not only in China but also the postcolonial contexts that African students in Beijing *arrive from* (Africa), as well as the centers many of their Chinese interlocutors aspire to *go to* (Europe or America). The work that typifications like 'race' and 'mobility' do in relation to their tokens – 'whiteness' and 'cosmopolitanism' – is thus a major concern throughout.

What I present is an ethnographic study of language and education reception in the context of African and Chinese mass mobilities. Building on seven years of ethnographic and historical engagement with African students' investment in Chinese education, and their Chinese peers' own cosmopolitan aspirations toward the Global North's educational Anglosphere, my dissertation demonstrates the strengths of long-term classical ethnographic participant observation. Through this patient, long-term observation – following the movements of informants between Africa, China and the US – a relationship between experiences of African University students travelling to China and the simultaneous cosmopolitan aspirations of their Chinese peers and teachers became visible in ways that would have been impossible when following the imperatives of conventional proposal-based, object- or single site-centered ethnography. Through supplementing this approach with archival work conducted on four continents, I

was also able to explore how this ethnographic counterpoint of mobility entails both a 'third-world' history of global class consciousness and decolonization down to the present; as well as a post-socialist, postcolonial embrace of 'cosmopolitan desire' informing contemporary 'youth' aspirations in urban China and the African diaspora (Chakrabarty 2005, Snow 1989, Rofel 2007, Okihiro 2016, Liu 2015). The arguments that follow emerge out of this dialectic of encounter, and its historical-material conditions.

My intuition at the outset of the research was that Sino-African encounters presented an opportunity to re-contextualize 'translation' outside of its usual 'West-and-its-others' ethnographic space-time – given the contrapuntal mobilities and historicities converging through these African and Chinese educational endeavors. This certainly proved to be the case but in simultaneously contradictory and constraining ways. In mapping these contradictions and constraints, the dissertation will provide a detailed analysis of the productive tensions emerging between them: The persistence of English as discursive unit of ideological commensuration in Sino-South encounters since the Bandung Asia-Africa conference in 1954; The prominence of whiteness and English language-ness as a kind of "ideological gravity" animating African and Chinese cosmopolitan aspirations; The crises of personhood and value generated by the participation in a Chinese social setting where signs of English and whiteness become the only available forms of cultural capital to actors who have been historical others to these discourses; And the (an)aesthetic translations that African and Chinese educational migrants must undertake in their affective commitments to mass mobility – a state emerging in response to physically-, racially- and linguistically constrained encounters with a 'globalism' that promises precisely the opposite. Drawing on analyses of informants' interactions – with each other and their environment – as well as the citation, circulation, and invocation of media discourse as key components of these interactions, this dissertation draws methodologically on anthropological theories of metapragmatics and aesthetics; language and mediation; as well as mobility and cosmopolitan aspiration.

Through African educational migrants' pursuit of a utopic – cosmopolitan or 'Third World' – alternatives to 'Western' education, and their encounters with Chinese educational subjects committed to an a standard of excellence situated in American Ivy League institutions, the compromised conditions

under which a 'novel' non-western cosmopolitan personhood must emerge become apparent in Sino-African Beijing. In my account of the lives of my informants – most of whom lived (at least for some period of time) in Beijing's University district, Haidian – I will demonstrate the ethnographic texture of this compromise. In doing so, I try to reveal the interactional dynamics that sustain this dilemma of motivating who one should be or must be under conditions that are unequally constrained for different non-white subjects, with stratified accessibility to the means for motivating un-marked subjectivity. In doing so, I have attempted to reflect that the total unfinalizability of personhood (Bakhtin 2004 & 1984) – taken as a semiotic dictum in some contemporary anthropology of interactions (Lempert 2012 & 2016) – should be more carefully qualified in overly-general denunciations or definitions of structuralism.

In this sense, while persons' capacities for voicing and inhabiting personhood may – hypothetically – be infinite, I argue that our discussions must account for the ways in which the possibilities of inhabiting a personhood or a language are unequally distributed among individuals who are very differently stratified vis-à-vis the languages or personhoods they may appear to adopt arbitrarily. White American hetero-normative male anthropologists, for instance, face significantly fewer obstacles compared to everyone else in their capacities to both voice others and inhabit their territories. In the same way that claiming an equality between all anthropologists will inevitably reinforce the differences that already exist between them, so too claiming the same unfinalizability of personhood or capacities for voicing among all informants engenders significant representational violence. These are the wider stakes at issue in what I will argue. It is in this way that seeking to 'rescue' agency (person, non-human or otherwise) from structure generates rampant inequalities while proclaiming an unassailable politics in much contemporary American Anthropology.

Several aspects of my fieldwork and graduate educations amplified my analysis and observation of these inequalities: My movement between the universities and social contexts where I primarily conducted my fieldwork in Beijing; visits to some of my African informants' homes and universities in Southern Africa; as well as my constant return to the US where many of my Chinese informants and students were accepted in American institutions – sometimes facilitated through mine and others' editing

labor and mentorship. After my fieldwork, and during the writing-up phase of my dissertation – while living in Chicago and providing educational labor in my graduate school at my university in the poverty-stricken and racially-segregated South-side of the city – I was able to observe many of the same contradictions that emerged during my fieldwork. Such observations and conclusions do not arise due to a lack of commitment to regionalism, but rather are symptomatic of an ethnographically-particular global discontent – where the sites of the ethnographer's anthropological education should become radically alter. In my case – as a South African – the University of Chicago's anthropology department represented as much of a hostile zone of radical alterity as Beijing, many cities in Africa or any non-Western fieldwork site could ever be.

Thus, a final ethnographic provocation emerging out of this dissertation is to reveal that 'the field site' may become neither hyper-local nor disconnected from what the third world anthropologist sees upon their return to the anthropological metropole. Instead, moving between spaces is necessitated by their not-quite-native subjectivity in both their field site and Anthroland – usually following several years of movement between four continents (necessitated by visa and financial constraints). This experience engenders both peculiar and productive global discontent for the third world ethnographer within the American academy. This discontent necessitates an attentiveness to an overarching set of concerns that precisely should contest the fetishization of the local as a compromised pre-occupation in a discipline that should be at the forefront of decolonization.

Is English Really Neither Here Nor There?

At the time, there were around ten thousand African students in Beijing pursuing Chinese higher education, many of them hedging their bets between China as the future superpower, and China as a detour to the fulfillment of a deferred cosmopolitan aspiration. This moment, for many, perhaps begins with the conclusion of the first FOCAC meeting between China and various African nations in 2010, as well as a series of other key agreements following this event (Li et al 2012). In these agreements, China guaranteed African governments educational access and development in exchange for natural resources.

For many African students, China's invitation – as an educational destination – initially promised the liberating possibility of a decolonized education, one that promised broader access to international learning than European and American academic metropoles up until the present – these continue to remain virtually inaccessible except to a small minority of predominantly elite, educated cosmopolitans. As many African students arrived in Beijing, however, they came to discover that many of their Chinese classmates – like Winston – were not only able to place their faith in these very Euro-American institutions, they were, in fact, able to attend universities in England, New York, and California in vast numbers. At this realization, many continue to wonder as one frustrated informant did: "Why do I have to *come here*, while the Chinese can *go there*?"

For African and Chinese students in China, 'Coming here', 'going there', and 'going far' are possibilities that a capacity with English either facilitates or forecloses. However, what makes English – ideologically and discursively – more than 'a language', challenging its proposition as merely an arbitrary token of a general type? What allows this language to transcend the arbitrariness of *a* lingua franca? What makes it *the* means to affect destination, arrival, and horizon of aspiration? Why can some travel further than others? Why, even when English fails some, all must still commit to it?

To be sure, no language exists in a vacuum and every language has a materiality that is never innocent of its destructive political potential in its cultural context – sticks and stones can break your bones and words can certainly kill you – particularly in the juridical sense. The case with English, I will argue, is different. The space-time it encompasses – at this point in history – is considerable, given not only the technological means that have allowed for its amplified mediation – including nuclear imperialism, the internet, Anglo-medicalization as well as American information technology and software monopolies. English has also existed in Africa and China – since the end of World War II – as *the language* in relation to which all languages are measured and standardized. As such, English is a volatile vehicle for its Chinese and African occupants, indexing a curious contradiction between imperialist nightmares and liberal dreams. In the American academy – among my American graduate school peers, professors, and students at the University of Chicago – English is of course *just a language*. Even second-

and third language-speaking international students – struggling frantically to keep up with the popular culture references and shibboleths of their American peers – must maintain the performative pretense of English's 'arbitrariness', lest they are admonished: "Subaltern, please shut up!" In the context of an open-ended interaction, we must ask: Firstly, what allows English to be *just a language* – for the American graduate student jokingly telling his international classmate to "shut the fuck up, subaltern"? Secondly, what allows English to simultaneously be *the language* – for the aspirational 'third world' student in Africa and China who can imagine no cosmopolitan future without a good GRE score?

These questions arise because most African students attend classes in English in contemporary Beijing, with many also teaching English to their Ivy League-aspiring Chinese classmates after hours. Within this skewed political economy of language, African subjects find themselves having to undertake double translational labor. They must help Chinese students to translate their Chinese dreams into Ivy League aspirations, on the one hand, and must simultaneously find a way to translate future African subjects of Chinese education into an aspirational horizon that is as yet unintelligible. Upon witnessing these dynamics, two related questions emerged during the early phases of my research: Firstly, why is the ideal African subject of a Chinese education such an elusive enigma? Secondly, why must African students help their Chinese peers to become ideal subjects of English, cosmopolitan education when African students themselves are still marginalized by that very 'global' English educational-complex? Later, I came to realize that there was, in fact, no enigmatic ideal subject of Sino-African education, nor did African students have any choice but to help their Chinese classmates. This was because the promise of an 'equal' encounter in the absence of white colonial bodies was always compromised by ideological and pragmatic conditions that stratified Chinese and African subjects in relation to an imbricated semiotic horizon of whiteness, English, and cosmopolitan mobility.

This tension between semiotic arbitrariness and semiotic stratification suggests that interactions are less open-ended for some than others, as Erving Goffman (1983) once noted. And that perhaps, as I will argue, this is the reason why – despite the 'porosity and enmeshment of interactions' (Lempert 2016) – the only imaginable future for the decolonizing subject, is still a white one (Fanon 1965 & 2008

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[1952]). Interactions, I will demonstrate, neither allow for the unfinalizability of personhood (Agha 2007) to be equally inhabited by all subjects of an interaction nor are the imbricated processes of enregisterment and intersectional stratification of race, gender, sexuality and class (Silverstein 2003b, Agha 2003, Crenshaw1991) arbitrary propositions. In doing so, I aim to show that power is not simply a function of who has it. Demonstrating such interactional dynamics, given the complexities of spatiotemporal and historical imbrications suggested above, is methodologically complex. On the one hand, it necessitates a revised approach to ethnographies of language and interaction where history does not simply emerge in the interactional here-and-now. On the other, such an approach must situate interactional insights within a dialectical materialist argument that situates contemporary Sino-African encounters within a trans-national history of Third World solidarity, as opposed to 'Non-Alignment' history of nation states. The stakes of such a historical distinction are important since the former aspired to a socialist, inter-national contingency, while the latter ultimately subsumed autonomy and sovereignty under the rubric of *the nation-state* – which ultimately failed to commensurate 'equity' among nation states that were never equal.

Problems with 'More Complexity'

"How can we not know that in the names Machel and Neto, Sankara and Nujoma, there is already, by the historic force of ideological proclivity, the name Lumumba inscribed in the very utterance of those other names?", asks Grant Farred in his recent essay, *Not the Moment After, but the Moment Of* (2009: 583). Here, Farred explicitly draws on Fanon's (1964) commentary on the dialectical nature of both history and anti-imperialist revolution: "For no one knows the name of the next Lumumba. There is in Africa a certain tendency represented by certain men. It is this tendency, dangerous for imperialism, which is at issue" (ibid: 191). In his meditation on a socialist internationalist history that articulates Patrice Lemumba's Congolese revolution to 'the long ten days' of Lenin and Trotsky's October revolution, Farred points to the ways in which historical and material conditions constitute and are constituted by the still-revolutionary present: "[T]he power of the revolution, as much as or more than

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anything, occupied the twentieth century and ours, if only to a less obvious degree, even if the socialist experiment did not survive for one hundred years" (Farred 2009: 582). There is an obvious reference to the wordplay of several historians (Hobsbawm 1962, 1975, & 1987; Braudel 1972, Arrighi 1994), where 'long' or 'short' as adjectives satirically challenge their ontological-time-indexing nouns. In doing so, Farred follows a number of influential dialectical materialists in attempting to disrupt linear, event-based histories that would otherwise ontologize time as isolated from social historical experience. Farred, like many critical theorists writing in this tradition, draws attention to the asymmetrical scale of history-making and its constant, far-from-depoliticized, precarious maintenance in the historicizing present.

Writing in alignment with Farred's overall argument, I propose that dialectical interactionism adds an additional perspective to the traditional critical theoretical approach: that the observation of a historicizing present is contingent on an interactional here-and-now – contrapuntally discursive, speech-based, and mass-mediated – while simultaneously recruiting history into emergent, inter-subjective ideological constructions like those animating African-Chinese interactions in contemporary Beijing. In sum, there are certain objects of critique that the traditional resources of critical theory – the physical archive in its most literal understanding – find hard to refute beyond presenting alternatives and generating debates. Such objects of critique are themselves usually formed through similar archival modalities – Weberian, Rankean, etc – often presenting themselves as 'more complex' accounts of ideological phenomena. One such relativizing genealogy is modernization theory, which – in the China-Africa studies at least – still looms large despite its ultimately flat-footed recruitment of Weberian theories of culture that was once-upon-a-time leveraged as a rhetorical alternative to the spread of global communism. Its masterwork – a meta-narrative of modernity theory's 'take off' developmentalism – is Walt Whitman Rostow's (1960) canonical, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. The afterlives of this book's equal opportunity economic history – where colonialism is an event isolated in historical space-time, and hermetically sealed-off from an economically pragmatic, developmentalist present – are as much a feature in key texts of China-Africa studies – like those of

Deborah Brautigam (2009) and Howard French (2014) – as they are in contemporary treatments of English's 'arbitrary' presence in East Asia, on the part of a number of 'Global English' scholars.

In his *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows* (2007), Alastair Pennycook articulates what has become a somewhat canonic position on the globalization of English:

[English] cannot be usefully understood in modernist states-centric models of imperialism or world Englishes, or in terms of traditional, segregationist models of language. Thus, while drawing on the useful pluralization strategy of world Englishes, I prefer to locate these Englishes within a more complex vision of globalization. (Pennycook 2007: 5)

The "more complex" vision Pennycook proposes is seemingly bored with narratives of colonialism that would suggest a continuity of capitalist-imperialism since the rise of industrial colonial empires through to Cold War-era geopolitics. Instead, he aims to "understand the role of English both critically – in terms of new forms of power, control and destruction – and in its complexity – in terms of new forms of resistance, change, appropriation and identity" (ibid). In following this imperative, he proposes that "*we*[3] need to move beyond arguments about homogeneity or heterogeneity, or imperialism and nation states, and instead focus on trans-local and transcultural flows" (ibid: 5 – 6).

This dissertation challenges two assumptions that are latent not only in Pennycook's position above, but also in a wide variety of scholarship on the trans-national appropriations of, and engagements with English, as both language of command and register of globalization (Blommaert 2010, Jacquemet 2005). The first is the assumption of a scholarly *we* that is equally situated so as to give up on passé projects of decolonization so *we* can focus on what is "more complex" in the circulation of English. The second is the assumption that "new forms of power, control and destruction" as well as "new forms of

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[3] This is my emphasis.

resistance, change, appropriation, and identity" are somehow antithetical to, and can fall somehow beyond the rubric of, theories of decolonization.

In the first instance, non-Western (and often non-White) scholars are included – by default – within the ambit of this scholarly *'we'* unless their disalignments with it are made explicit. If they choose to reject interpellation into this *we*, however, they are branded as neither rational nor rigorous enough to be taken seriously. Here, the double translational burden of their work – particularly in disciplines like anthropology and sociolinguistics – is almost never recognized. Such outsider critics always find themselves trying to account for 'the local' in a situated disciplinary poetics that is everything but that while having to account for the far-from-decolonized 'global' they almost certainly encounter. In writing and speaking, they must continue to make themselves palatable to default, Euro-American publishers, peers, and professors – a conformity to often-fragile sensibilities, which protects the very discursive framework that excludes and stratifies them. In the second instance, decolonization – following an almost Rostowian[4] logic – becomes relegated to a 'past event' within a historical epistemology that would treat space and time as linear, flat, ultimately arbitrary semiotic formations that obstruct a common sense 'present' where 'real change' can be enacted. From this understanding of history (for the privileged analyst of 'global English') linguistic 'globalization' – captured by concepts like 'superdiversity' (Vertovec 2007) and 'linguistic superdiversity' (Arnaut et al 2016) – can be represented in endless, ultimately equally tenable modes. From this relativistic treatment of English's still historicizing present, Anglo-imperialism is dismissed in what is naively imagined to be a "provincialisation" of colonial legacies so as to invoke 'more complex' engagements – as if decolonization were a 'simple' analytical matter. And yet, the only thing this intellectual provincialization achieves is the marginalization of colonial and postcolonial language critiques. The analytically neutral proposition that English has become unmoored from its colonial and imperial history and can, therefore, be studied without the burden of angry yellow, brown, red, and black people (whom 'thankfully have been replaced by well-adjusted, Ivy

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[4] Here, I am referring again to Walt Whitman Rostow's (1960) canonical, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*.

League-educated minorities [yellow, brown, red, and black people]') generates a substantial blind spot – that fundamentally unequal capacities for historical representation as well as access to exegetic and empirical means become fundamentally elided in the rarefied intellectual circles that espouse our 'superdiversity'.

In the globalization of English, an important – and in some ways staged – debate precedes Pennycook's: that between Chinua Achebe (1965) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986). Achebe's "The African Writer and the English Language" (1965) was published first as a highly influential essay that was very optimistic about the possibilities of tooling a colonial language to creative expression on the part of decolonizing writers, so as to produce works of art in the English language that could still be quintessentially African. Achebe was not alone in his optimism. Both African nationalism and African socialism were on the ascent on the African continent. There was a wave of decolonization sweeping the continent and several potential allies in the non-Western world were emerging to young African states. Dynamic leaders like Kwame Nkrumah and Ahmed Sekou Toure emerged as prominent voices advocating a Pan-Africanism that aimed to demonstrate that the dialogue between socialist and democratic reform – on the African continent at least – did not have to be a dysfunctional one. In the hubris of decolonization the 'Third World'– in an optimistic coming-of-age that was announced in Bandung in 1955 – seemed set not only to provincialize Europe but to set an example for it. This hubris was short-lived, after a string of coups, civil wars, and economic expropriations in Africa and Latin America – orchestrated by western governments, corporate investments, and other means of ultimately neo-colonial domination led by the US – and following Deng Xiaoping's eventual economic compromises with the Nixon's government, dreams of Third World Solidarity and Pan Africanism seemed to give way to nightmares in which African Futures lived-on only in rusted infrastructures that evoked optimistic but naïve pasts. The context from which Ngugi would later challenge Achebe, was one in which English was no longer an appropriable register through which to facilitate an unburdened, third world cosmopolitanism among diverse intellectuals from Asia, perhaps Latin America, and ultimately Europe as a space that could be engaged on an equal footing. In the post-1976 space-time of NATO ascendancy,

Ngugi argued that English (and other languages of colonization) compromised the African writing subject:

> How did we as African writers come to be so feeble towards the claims of our languages on us and so aggressive in our claims on other languages, particularly the languages of colonization? In my view, language was the most important vehicle through which that power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation. (Ngugi 1994 [1986] : 286)

For Ngugi, and for some linguistic anthropologists, there is nothing arbitrary in the capacity of languages to stratify, liberate or inveigle their speakers, nor are languages equally situated to do so (Alim et al 2016). Context matters, and in this regard the contexts in which Ngugi and Achebe in posited their respective dystopian and utopian arguments differed fundamentally. As thinkers, their views represent a dialectic that emerges constantly for African and Chinese subjects in contemporary Chinese universities. For this reason, I state that this debate is 'staged' given the ways in which these two thinkers have been type-cast as standing on opposite sides of a debate about language and decolonization despite the fact that their arguments in these canonic documents are separated by more than 20 years. By having provided some historical context that accounts for the analytical gap between the two authors' pieces, I hope to suggest that a dialectic emerges between them that draws attention to the third and perhaps most encompassing assumption informing Pennycook's argument: the scale of the global as an analytic of commensuration.

I argue that both Ngugi and Achebe challenge this kind of scaling, reminding us that decolonization continues to obstruct the outlook of globalization as an all-commensurating horizon of postmodern personhood – that decolonization as a dialectical present perhaps still mediates similarly dialectical 'global' futures (Mazzarella 2004). Even if Achebe and Ngugi seem to be making very different arguments about the possibilities of languages of command being recruited to projects of

decolonization. In this regard, decolonization and its present troubles the possibilities of jumping scale to the global – while for Pennycook a "more complex" globalization of English retrospectively troubles jumping scale to colonial determinism. I will show that these arguments are far from equivalent but stated in this way, they reveal that arguments for globalization or decolonization – and indeed arguments of any kind – depend on *motivating* or translating scale. Here, I engage to some degree with linguistic anthropologists Michael Lempert and Summerson Carr's recent arguments for a 'pragmatics of scale', whereby 'scaling' – as a specific type of semiotic mediation – is a social practice that can be studied across an array of contexts where subjects must make the scale of something – always spatial and temporal terms – intelligible to someone, in some way. Some forms of scaling, as I will show throughout, do not emerge in an open-ended sense, but rather in dialectical interactions where the play of structure and moment-to-moment maintenance elides neither 'structuralist' nor 'dialectical' concerns in the way Lempert dismisses during the course of his own chapter contained within the same edited volume.

English Dreams in Haidian

In a popular text on the history of English in China, *China's English: A History of English in Chinese Education* (2004), Bob Adamson also aligns with the "more complex" narrative of Pennycook's (2007) global English. Adamson's opening vignette situates himself as a naïve English teacher taking a stroll with one of his Chinese informants, Mr. Liu. The latter points to a building where – during the cultural revolution – Little Red Guards beat an English teacher to death because of his occupation. Somewhat dramatically, Adamson notes: "This was my first intimation of the historically controversial, even deadly, status of English in China" (Adamson 2004: 1). Adamson treats English throughout his book as an arbitrary language associated with a linear sequence of historical events and actual people who both represent and speak it – as opposed to those who have no choice but to do so. A criticism arises here. Adamson locates the daily imperialism which English represents for many Chinese (and certainly many African subjects) within a historical timeline that makes colonialism a blip in a long chain of equal, trans-historical imperialisms. Citing Heidi Ross (1993) he states:

The perceived threat posed by the English language to political, economic and social systems in China is one reason why, ever since the teaching of English began there, it has vacillated between high and low status, as indeed have all foreign languages since the Tang dynasty. (Adamson 2004: 1-2)

However, Adamson's choice of opening vignette raises an important question: If English is arbitrary, why does English become more dangerous for some than for others? If English's historical imperialism is specific to a people, the English, and their colonial projects; and if it supposedly ended after the recent period of decolonization after the second world war, then we must ask: How does English's contemporary use, among and between non-Western subjects, persistently allow for stratifications that augment those that already exist in terms of race and trans-national mobility?

Here, Adamson is certainly not the only proponent of a popular narrative – equally prevalent among many young Chinese intellectuals – where English becomes the language of radical, anti-establishment liberals in China, and where its appropriation generates seemingly liberating possibilities for the cosmopolitan non-West. However, such possibilities of appropriation – where hegemony can be converted into the cultural capital of liberation – also rest on the assumption of linguistic arbitrariness, where the liberatory potential of cosmopolitan English, as cultural capital, is imagined to almost fetishistically erase its compromised history of colonial stratification as a language of command.

One recent popular Chinese film directly engages this tension. In director Peter Chan's (陈可辛) *American Dreams in China* (2013) – *Zhongguo Hehuo Ren* (中国合伙人) – three young men, graduating from an elite Chinese university, become successful global entrepreneurs through establishing an English language education company within post-Deng Xiaoping China. Within this narrative, a post-Mao China 'opens-up' – *Kaifeng* (开放) – affording talented young Chinese graduates opportunities to achieve corporate success. The three fictional characters achieve dreams of success against all odds through

establishing a highly profitable language education company in a context of escalating demand for English education among armies of students aiming to attend their school so as to gain entrance into US colleges abroad. The story is widely recognized as a semi-biographical account of Yu Minhong (俞敏洪) or 'Michael' Yu, CEO of New Oriental Group (新东方), which was – as of August 2015 – the largest private comprehensive education company in China (IRL 22). The film mirrors Yu's early education at Peking University and later establishment of New Oriental – both located on the same city block in contemporary Haidian – but glosses over the importance of this district in leveraging the company's eventual economic success. Haidian district was not only the nexus of English education demand in the opening-up era – with graduates from prestigious universities like Tsinghua and Peking University now almost routinely expected to go abroad and further their careers (academic, governmental, corporate) through English. It also was and continues to be, an excellent provider of cheap, skilled labor for companies like New Oriental and a rising number of its competitors. Here, many international students – like African students in China – have come to be recruited by smaller education companies and underground schools that currently try to undercut New Oriental and other more established brands.

In this regard, English language education becomes very lucrative in Beijing, given the ways in which all paths to professional success, for most university-educated Chinese, become increasingly mediated through their English literacy. Even if English is required as an auxiliary skill in many professions in contemporary China, it becomes a way of screening potential job candidates in many high-profile positions, whether these are in government or private sector career paths. Here, the prominence of English as a professional expectation becomes ironically explicit in the context of Chinese second language education. Given the recent endorsement of China's increasingly central position in the global economy – particularly in the western media and academic Anglosphere – there has been an escalated interest in Chinese second language education. This has not been missed by many Chinese second language educators, many of whom have started their own companies to capitalize on the demand for Chinese language skills on the part of increasing numbers of non-Chinese coming to cities like Beijing for

a Chinese education. However, to have a lucrative career as a Chinese language teacher – many of whom were my informants – requires the capacity to teach in English. Even for my Chinese language teacher informants (who are contracted by the Han Ban and CIs), the capacity to teach in English – regardless of what country they might be assigned to – was a primary concern in all of their job interviews. Thus, Chinese becomes discursively and ideologically mediated to non-Chinese via English, in ways that English never requires a singular language of mediation in any context of its second language pedagogy.

Standards of Commensuration

While formal standardization of Chinese as 'national language' began prior to China's Maoist revolutions (Kaske 2008), the intensification of this process so as to eventuate the simultaneous process of developing mass literacy among Chinese – through the implementation of simplified characters (Ji 2004: 57) – as well as facilitating an infrastructure for Chinese foreign language education among non-Chinese only became a wide-spread and nationally implemented mass-language policy during the Maoist era (ibid). Managing the scale of such a project necessitated the simultaneous calibration and centralization of educational infrastructures that could cope with disseminating a 'standard' Chinese both within and beyond China. Here, historian Tom Mullaney (2017) points to the ways in which the calibration of Chinese with western, alphabet-based writing and media systems simultaneously eventuated a prototype for predictive text as well as the wide-spread use of the Romanized Chinese phonetic system of *pinyin* (拼音). Thus, the means to facilitate the deployment of a 5000 character-based writing system through a typewriter, also became a means through which to teach Chinese phonetically to foreigners and non-'character literate' Chinese and ethnic minority subjects.

Accordingly, my engagement with language in this dissertation attempts to direct attention to the means, rather than the ends, of translation. In this regard, the means I observed over a period of seven years became apparent once I began to situate the frustrations of Beijing's African students in relation to the 'cosmopolitan' aspirations of their Chinese peers, educators, and interlocutors – a task facilitated

through rigorous commitment to over 100 informants and an attentiveness to their constantly-changing, but persistently limiting context of interaction. It was out of these observations that both the specific accounts in the dissertation arise as well as my use of the term, 'subaltern' which may at times – depending on one's disciplinary politics and grasp of critical race theory – seem idiosyncratic compared to its more conventional invocation.

<center>*Subalterns and Translation's Others*</center>

My use of the term 'subaltern' in what follows is precisely not an invocation of a cover-all term. I am not expanding the capaciousness of the term to account for all subjects of discrimination for all time. Instead, drawing on Gayatri Spivak's (1988) original invocation of this concept (often misappropriated and misunderstood), my voicing tries to account for its chimeric dimension: the simultaneity of subalternity's both perspectival emergence and structural stratification. How do rarified Chinese and African educational elites appropriate English, whiteness, and cosmopolitan mobility in their interactions with one another and yet come to compromise themselves by virtue of never being able to live up to the ideal subject of these appropriations? 'Subaltern', in this regard, is a relational concept.

One is not a subaltern because everyone is potentially a subaltern, nor because certain subjects are intrinsic subalterns of colonial and decolonizing projects. Instead, I argue that subjects become subalterns precisely by virtue of the stratifying terms of commensuration they invoke vis-à-vis one another – terms of commensuration, which by virtue of being less easy to appropriate for some than others, ultimately reveal the limits of a subject's aspirations and their situatedness within an inescapable ideological order of stratification. This is also why I am concerned throughout with the dynamics of interaction in intersectional (gender, race, class), inter-linguistic, and trans-national encounters. Such encounters, under conditions where Anglocentric whiteness may seem absent, I feel, precisely explicate the contradictory formation of subaltern-hood, revealing how 'whiteness' – despite its 'absent' embodiments – persistently comes to manifest in perspectival, yet always stratifying ways. This is the case for both those seeking refuge *through* unmarked whiteness, as well as for those seeking refuge *from* hegemonic whiteness. It is

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in this way, I will show, that African and Chinese actors who attempt to *motivate* a novel cosmopolitan mobility, have little choice but to appropriate signs that compromise this *motivation* – where would-be translators, using the master units of commensuration, become the others of their own translation.

In studying the historical and historicizing tensions that imbricate Chinese and African interactions, particularly in the context of an ongoing decolonization, critical theoretical approaches have provided a rich analytical resource for understanding the ways in which subalterns have to adopt an array of – often simultaneously – 'same' or 'different' positions in relation to their pasts, presents, and futures when confronted with their respective – often overlapping – discriminations. What follows aims to show the enduring relevance and nuance of some of these theories in unpacking the contradictory conditions that often generate the intersectionalities between inequalities of language, race, gender, sexuality, class, and mobility. Here, I hope to demonstrate how translation as an inter-subjective, interactional, and *motivated* process, is apparent in the ways signs like 'whiteness' and 'cosmopolitan' mobility are commensurated into tokens of broader 'racial', or 'mobility' types. This commensuration is certainly attempted by various culture industries not only in China but also the postcolonial contexts African students in Beijing *arrive from* (Africa), as well as the centers many of their Chinese interlocutors aspire to *go to* (Europe or America). The work that typifications like 'race' and 'mobility' do in relation to their tokens – 'whiteness' and 'cosmopolitanism' – is important. In the example of race, a liberal educational discourse – particularly in the west – would insist on the 'color' differences between white, black, brown, beige, and various other bodies as being arbitrary. In doing so additional colors are often thrown in for rhetorical effect: 'blue', 'green' etc. Thus, racism – following this pedagogical narrative – is 'irrational' and therefore unthinkable. The force of this argument stems from *motivating* the 'equality' or equivalence between tokens of race via the broader type of race. This generates a familiar logic where: because races are arbitrarily equivalent, race as a measure of alterity does not (or should not) exist; and because race is not real, racism cannot (or must not) exist. In an imagined trans-national, cosmopolitan space-time – one that not only liberal whites in the West, but also elite, or aspirationally elite, Chinese and African subjects

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in Beijing align themselves to – this view of 'race' often diagrams a kind of 'liberal non-racialism' ideology:

```
                    ??(RACE)??
        ┌──────┬──────┼──────┬──────┐
      White   Yellow   Red   Brown  Black
```
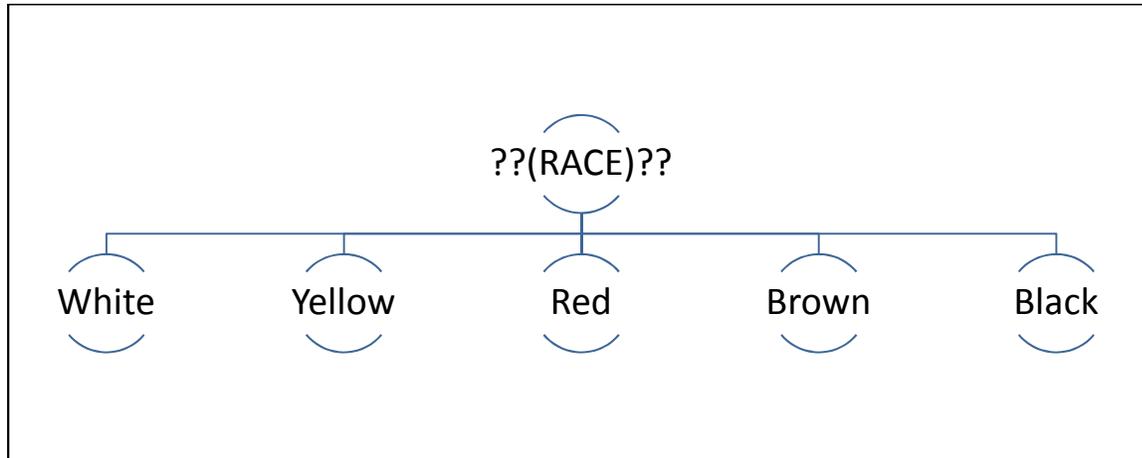
What this diagram suggests is a common sense within which white, particularly male, bodies predominate as protagonists in advertising billboards in China, Africa, and other non-Western countries, but become rationalized as arbitrary, because it could always have been some*body* else. Yet, what this allows is for a white body to become the 'unmarked', default inhabitant of an aspirational cosmopolitan, trans-global social landscape. In this kind of 'rational' ideological climate – underpinned by a 'universal' liberal non-racial common sense – voicing dissent always comes with the simultaneous risks of transgression and incomprehensibility, since speaking about something that isn't real might, in fact, make one 'irrational'. For many African and Chinese subjects in Beijing, this liberal non-racial common sense also allows a different experience of stratification to be – temporarily – elided:
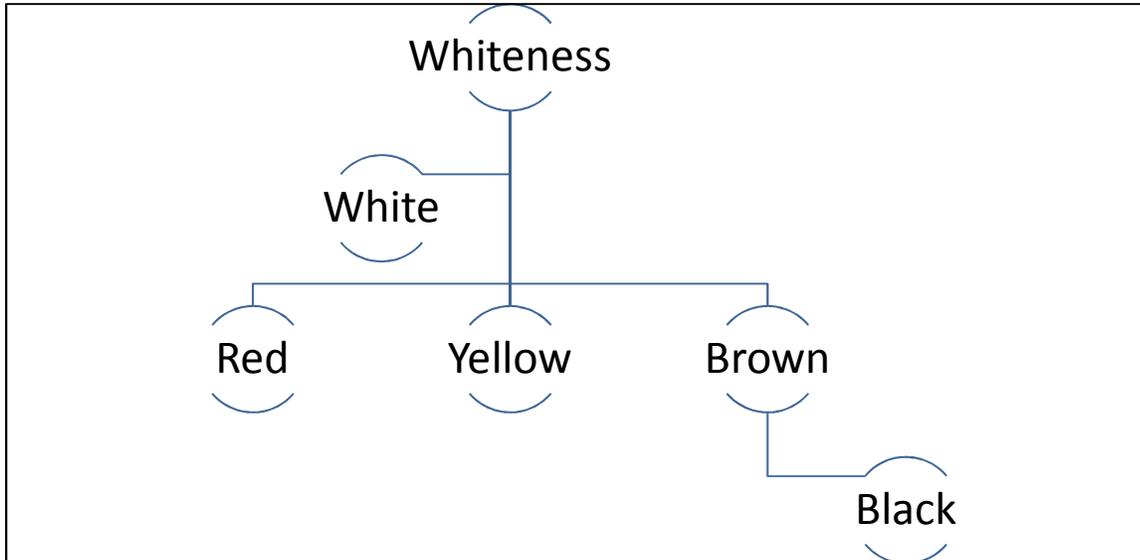
These two diagrams contrast the liberal ideal of 'racial arbitrariness' with the felt reality of 'white gravity'. It is perhaps an understatement to suggest that the kind of rationality that is *motivated* in the first diagram has its limits compared to the felt experiences suggested in the second. The disjuncture between the two is apparent in the current outrage over racial discrimination – at present – boiling-over on at least three continents at the time of writing: Riots against a racist American president, protests against white monopoly capital in South Africa, as well as claims of China's increasingly racist treatment of its ethnic minority or black others. However, one of the ways in which this tension between racial arbitrariness and liberalism manifests across these different contexts – albeit in different ways – forms an important component of the arguments made in this dissertation: If all these tokens of race have a genuine 'sameness' (as the first step of the formula goes), then why is the broader type – race – not obviated, given that 'race' is the unit of commensuration through which its own iconicity and alterity is 'translated'? Thus, if race is arbitrary, why does it exist?

As philosopher and semiotician, Charles Sanders Peirce (1955) once suggested, the answer may lie in the ways that *motivating* iconicity, always entails *motivating* its alterities. That is, rather than asking what 'translation' *is*, or debating its '(im)possibility', the following chapters explore both what 'translation' *does* for whom, and in what ways – revealing the interactional texture of *motivation* as well

as what its arbitrariness conceals. To be sure, engaging this question necessitates an account of both whom, and in what ways, intersectional stratification marginalizes and excludes. Thus, what follows, proposes an ethnographic attentiveness to the ordering of translation's others in precisely the moments where commensurations of iconicity – like 'equality', 'neutrality', 'equity' or 'equivalence' – are being *motivated*. Such orderings, I will suggest, recontextualize the tension between the historically-imbricated encounters, and the recruitment of 'history' in their making.

What follows, then, is an ethnographic study of language and education reception in the context of African and Chinese mass mobilities. It concerns a relationship between experiences of African University students traveling to China and the simultaneous cosmopolitan aspirations of their Chinese peers and teachers. I will also show how this counterpoint of mobility unfolds amid social and political climates – in China and Africa – that entail both a 'third-world' history of global class consciousness and decolonization down to the present; as well as a post-socialist, postcolonial embrace of 'cosmopolitan desire' informing contemporary 'youth' aspirations in urban China and the African diaspora (Chakrabarty 2005, Snow 1989, Rofel 2007, Okihiro 2016, Liu 2015). The arguments that follow emerge out of this dynamic context. My intuition at the outset of the research was that Sino-African encounters presented an opportunity to re-contextualize 'translation' outside of its usual 'West-and-its-others' ethnographic space-time – given the contrapuntal mobilities and historicities converging through these African and Chinese educational endeavors. This certainly proved to be the case but in simultaneously contradictory and constraining ways.

In mapping these contradictions and constraints, I will provide a detailed analysis of the productive tensions emerging between them: The persistence of English as the unit of commensuration in Sino-South encounters since the Bandung Asia-Africa conference in 1955; The prominence of whiteness and English language-ness as a kind of "ideological gravity" animating African and Chinese cosmopolitan aspirations; The crises of personhood and value generated by the participation in a Chinese social setting where signs of English and whiteness become the only available forms of cultural capital to actors who have been historical others to these discourses; And the (an)aesthetic translations that African

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and Chinese educational migrants must undertake in their affective commitments to mass mobility – a state emerging in response to physically-, racially- and linguistically constrained encounters with a 'globalism' that promises precisely the opposite. Drawing on analyses of informants' interactions – with each other and their environment – as well as the citation, circulation, and invocation of media discourse as key components of these interactions, this dissertation draws methodologically on anthropological theories of metapragmatics and aesthetics; language and mediation; as well as mobility and cosmopolitan aspiration.

Space-Time(s) of My Research

In many ways the scholarly biases in contemporary anthropology – a far-from-decolonized discipline – mirror the political dynamics of marginalization observed among African and Chinese informants in Beijing: assumptions of equality that ultimately stratify, and assumptions of historical linearity that convert colonialism into events that become obstacles to new personhood that are ultimately deferred in all too familiar ways. The ethnographic texture of these dynamics, as presented here, emerged out of a number of ethnographic engagements and methodological phases during the last seven years, in both the development and implementation of this project. My preliminary research in archives in the UK, South Africa, China, and the US was important in contextualizing contemporary encounters in Beijing, which became my primary research site. At various phases in my research, I was either conducting field- and archival work in Southern Africa and the UK – for short periods during summers and in transit between China and the US. The bulk of my research was conducted as a student in Beijing. In this capacity, I took classes, attended social gatherings, and lived in the same conditions and neighborhoods as most of my informants during my time in China – sometimes on- and sometimes off-campus as was the case for many African and Chinese students. This work was supplemented by archival and historical work that I undertook at a few research centers in Beijing during my fieldwork.

Beijing was not a randomly selected field site. It is an important educational metropole both from the perspective of Chinese and African learners, although for different reasons. For African students, the

process of arriving in Beijing is heavily mediated through Confucius Institutes (CIs), which have a strong presence on the African continent through their support within African educational systems – from primary through to the tertiary educational level. In this regard, CIs not only provide Chinese language education but often play an important brokering role in facilitating students' passage into Chinese universities both through scholarships and the establishment of inter-university networks between Chinese and African institutions. The Chinese government ministry that oversees CIs throughout the world – the Han Ban (国家汉语国际推广领导小组办公室) – are also located in Beijing. For Chinese students from all over China, Beijing becomes an educational center by virtue of the fact that the city has the highest concentration of top-tier Chinese institutions. Even within Beijing, governmental and educational administration are spatially concentrated, with government districts located within the city's inner two rings, and an entire educational district known as Haidian (海淀) located in the Northwest of the city, mostly within its fourth ring.

For these reasons, Haidian is the nexus of both Chinese and African educational cosmopolitanism in China, and the place where I lived and sourced the majority of my informants during my research in the Chinese capital. While being enrolled as a Chinese philosophy student at one university, I was able to align myself to what the majority of my African and Chinese classmates and informants spent their days doing – participating in reading groups, engaging in sporting activities, hanging out, as well as sitting in on classes across more than seventeen major campuses and research institutes in Haidian and beyond. Given the close proximity of campuses, students from all over Africa were able to form considerably large communities of common interest groups. These were fairly diverse, ranging from Pan-Africanist to national, linguistic, and tribal alignments. A variety of social and political activities facilitated much of the interaction among these – sometimes overlapping, sometimes discreet – communities of African students. Given the concentrated region within which my informants were living and learning, as well as their concerns with anonymity, I have provided pseudonyms to informants and their affiliated universities, but have kept the national origin of students consistent. The pseudonyms were usually created with the

informant or were chosen to mirror – in the case of Marx Moji and Mao Mapfumo – actual given middle names that indexed 3rd world socialist histories and kinship alignments. Given the sheer volume of subjects that had socialist middle names or nicknames, there is no risk of revealing their identities as they appear here. In some cases, there were place names, organizations, and actual dates of interviews and focus groups may put an informant at risk – since I would be a rather conspicuous foreigner on CCTV footage in coffee shops and other locations. I changed these accordingly. Furthermore, making a connection between a person or organization mentioned in the dissertation and actual informants and institutions will be unlikely, given the number of informants I spoke to, formally and informally, over a period of seven years (more than 100), and the number of student-driven initiatives afoot in Beijing.

While all the universities in Haidian are Chinese language universities, the dominant language among African students, as well as the primary language used between Africans and their Chinese peers and teachers, was certainly English. This was also recognized by the Chinese institutions, all of whom offered classes in English while requiring students to pass a Chinese proficiency test by the end of their studies. Most African students only took English classes and their compulsory Chinese lessons, with a few exceptions – such students were either talented Chinese language learners or long-term visitors in China. This situation and the escalating numbers of international students in Chinese universities have created a greater demand for English language classes, that places many Chinese-educated faculty at a disadvantage, teaching their field, an obstacle that also negatively impacts African and other international students who complain about receiving a "third world education". There is a historical twist to this wide-spread complaint, given how Haidian district has played host to African and other international students since the days of 'Third World Solidarity' (第三世界大团结) as initiated in Maoist China. This followed the Maoist centralization of Chinese education, focusing their educational development initiatives – and their subsequent regulation – in Haidian district. Thus, one strand of historical engagement that features particularly prominently throughout the dissertation is the often-neglected historical era of 'third-world' solidarity from the end of WWII up until Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai's deaths in 1976. Chapters 1 and 2,

in particular, will reveal how important an engagement with this era is in contextualizing contemporary Sino-African encounters, as well as the ways in which the citation of this history – on the part of contemporary Chinese and Africans – generates key provocations for discussions of postcolonial translation. Given these historical imbrications, Haidian is also important from the perspective of both Chinese and English language education in China.

During my research, I came to be recruited to various spheres of social interaction that generated many of the key questions that informed my research. As an Afrikaner South African, I have learned to perform – when necessary – a species of cosmopolitan 'English' subjecthood, which varies depending on my audience but is nonetheless facilitated by an expectation that I can carry off this performance in an American or European setting. In Beijing, and within this diverse milieu of Chinese, African, and South African students, I found myself enlisted in a wider range of roles depending on my interactions with various Chinese and African actors in Beijing. For most Chinese students, I passed as a 'generic white' (American) graduate student at an elite US university. For other Africans, I was a white South African of a certain kind: a recognizable category to Africans from the continent. And for South African students, I was a random Afrikaner coming to Beijing. This latter category, in particular, puzzled elite, black South African students, many stereotyping Afrikaners as fairly prosaic, barely literate, country bumpkins compared to themselves as part of an emerging cosmopolitan class in South Africa, often associated with politically elite kinship networks in South Africa. To most of them, an Afrikaner – especially one interested in the lives of African students – seemed somewhat out-of-place and worthy of initial suspicion. In overcoming this obstacle, I was fortunate that I had already known a handful of Zimbabwean informants from South Africa, before coming to China. These students had come to China via Confucius Institutes in their home country. Following my later university enrollment, as part of my fieldwork, I attended classes and shared meals with these students, since – initially – the black South African community in Beijing were difficult to forge relationships with. Through my Zimbabwean informants and classmates' more obvious openness to Pan-African conversations, I came to know increasing numbers of African and Chinese students while taking classes in a few different universities in

Haidian district where the random auditing of classes across campuses is a fairly common activity among students. Through these more encompassing interactions, I came to observe a political economy of cosmopolitan aspiration where African students were coming to Chinese Universities and teaching English as means of survival, while Chinese students were frantically acquiring English skills to try and study in educational destinations in the US and Britain. It was this observation that prompted me to consider the relationship between language, race, and mobility in a far from equal relationship between Chinese and African interlocutors – both operating in an interactional space-time that continues to valorize a global aesthetics of Anglo-centric, cosmopolitan whiteness.

Intersectional Concerns

In exploring African and Chinese students' unequal relationships to whiteness and English, I came to observe a further dimension of stratification. This presented itself in gendered and sexualized inequalities that emerged in their interactions with one another, as well as within their respective student communities. Furthermore, these intersectional asymmetries appeared to be mediated by a horizon of aspiration in the form of an untroubled cosmopolitan desire, yet which elided a historical continuity of immobility down to the present. This *semiotics of intersectionality* is unpacked in chapters 3 and 4, where I firstly (in Chapter 3) discuss the ways in which popular Western corporate/self-improvement and liberal feminist text artifacts mediate intersectional stratifications among two respective groups of Chinese and African women. In doing so, I explore the contradiction through which liberation from patriarchy is promised precisely by a discourse of privilege that perpetuates the very obstacles to that liberation – the far from de-racialized, and un-gendered, efficacious cosmopolitan self as the subject of this liberation. Following this (in Chapter 4), I will discuss another manifestation of this intersectional contradiction, where non-White subjects deploy an English-language register of political correctness to enregister (Silverstein 2003b and Agha 2003) racial, sexual, and linguistic stratifications among one another. Importantly, both of these chapters explore a neglected dimension of intersectionality as discussed by

black feminist thinkers like Audre Lorde (2007) and Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) – the emergence of intersectionality's stratifying force in the interactional space-time of a face-to-face encounter.

In this regard, chapters 3 and 4 afford an opportunity to explore key interventions that linguistic anthropologists have made to the study of intersectionality, having provided important analytical tools for revealing the ways in which racism and sexism generate alienating exclusions for those who are ideologically marginalized within even the most 'liberal' societies. One such tool is the identification of enregisterment (Silverstein 2003b and Agha 2003) as a way of viewing ideological stratification through tracking linguistic interactions between actors participating within a given social matrix. Here, linguistic evidence should not be understood as standing apart from the totality of material and semiotic textures of social life in the ways superficial readings of structuralism have suggested. Rather through attention to enregisterment, the dynamics of race and gender discrimination are revealed to be inseparable from the ideological regulation and maintenance enabled through language, and vice versa.

To be sure, a similar relationship between language and the politics of sexual, gendered, and racial difference has been posited by a number of thinkers in a postcolonial and Queer theory genealogy that have drawn on Foucaultian ideas, notably from texts like *Discipline and Punish* (1995) and *History of Sexuality* (volumes I & III) (1990a & 1990c). In the work of Judith Butler (1997), Gayatri Spivak (2010), Homi Bhabha (1994), and Edward Said (2003) the dynamics between language and power; discourse and the body; the subaltern and her capacity to speak; also reveal this relationship. However, the 'micro interactions' that enable power – in a Foucaultian analysis – are less revealed, than assumed given its method and object of analysis: the analyst's (situated, yet mostly concealed) evaluation of text artifacts. Thus, rather than emerging out of dynamic interactions, where the analyst is reflexively situated, the emergent relations of power are simply the diffuse result of discourse. In, frequent, uncritical mobilizations of Foucaultian thought, this generates a propensity toward discursive determinism. Of course, for many contemporary scholars concerned with anthropologies of non- or post-human interactions, this might not be a problem. However, this both precludes the actual experience of power and asymmetry, as well as infers that we already know what humans are, to begin with. Furthermore, this

veiled bias posits the postmodern, liberal analyst as a subject that can sanctimoniously hold modernism accountable for producing constructs, while simultaneously enjoying the privilege of those very constructs. The arbitrariness of the production of power is pointed out while being perpetuated by its – often ironically self-aware – consumption[5].

From my own experiences as a South African graduate student in the American academy, this dynamic becomes starkly apparent when subaltern superstars from the Global South return to their Western educational metropoles to teach 'French' theory to American freshmen – this while putting down rebellions among students calling for decolonization in their fiefdoms back home. If this comes across as a veiled gripe against a few current scholars, the attempt is not to be 'veiled' at all, but a polite gesture intended towards transformation, rather than outright naming and shaming. If the pervasive belief is that citation, of a fairly limited and limiting archive, should function purely to build consensus with privileged intellectual echelons in Europe and the Anglosphere, then I don't want my work to have any part of it. Thus, making intellectual pedagogues accountable – for their abuse of knowledge, and their positions as gatekeepers of it – is, in fact, a pro-active rather than combative stance. Young scholars that play politics have no right to sanctimoniously make a case *for* the decolonization of knowledge if they are not willing to make a case *against* the kind of toxic consensus-building that keeps compromising their ideological allies beyond the academic sphere. If you, the researcher, compromise where your interests are most vulnerable, you cannot be 'friendly' with the oppressed – many of whom you study – without recognizing yourself as a traitor in their midst. For the student of ideology knows that in order to make arguments immanently, one must begin with criticizing the theater of evaluation within which we are trying to remake the world.

Organization of the Chapters

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[5] Notably, this arbitrariness is not only at issue in the proposition of a non-racialized or gendered body (as if this were 'thinkable'), as presented in the work of a number of contemporary thinkers making use of the Foucaultian body as analytic (Agamben 1998, Farquhar & Zhang 2012, Farquhar & Lock 2007, Farquhar 2002).

Having laid out the implications of the arguments and engagements that will make up the body of the dissertation, I will briefly sketch a roadmap of the content chapters, which are arranged into three parts.

Part I reveals a dialectical tension between history and encounter, where the interaction of Chinese and African interlocutors appears to presume novelty, yet their encounter – as with all encounters – necessitates the recruitment of a historical space-time which underpins it – part of what Erving Goffman (1983) once called an 'interaction order'. In chapter one, I suggest that such a historical dialectic can, in fact, be seen to emerge in Chinese and African interactions in contemporary Beijing, even when such encounters are initially presumed to be 'novel' and 'neutral'. I call this interactional contingency on history-making 'aspirational history', given the ways in which 'third world' histories must often be *motivated* in order to forge future cosmopolitans. Chapter 2 engages the forms of stratification and conditions of value that imbricate language and education reception among contemporary African students visiting Beijing. In it, I will reveal some of the constraints that African students experience in their pursuit of an unmarked cosmopolitanism in contemporary Beijing. In support, I will provide a detailed analysis of important contours of these constraints: the persistence of English as the unit of commensuration in Sino-South encounters where signs of English and whiteness become the only available forms of cultural capital for actors who have been historical others to this semiotic field. In showing how language is not disarticulable from its surrounding *indexicalities* (Silverstein 1976) and material historical conditions (Marx 1972) – like the signs of race and cosmopolitan mobility – I hope to draw attention to the limits of cosmopolitan aspiration, when its units of commensuration, like 'neutral' English, become compromised by the ideological vectors of whiteness and stratified mobility. Drawing on the ideas of Russian formalist thinker, Mikhail Bakhtin, I will propose an analytic through which to interpret an articulated relationship between English and its indexically-associated signs of race and mobility. I term this the Anglosign. Doing so, I suggest, draws attention to the regime of evaluation or arbitration within which Sino-African postcolonial 'translation' unfolds.

Analyzing the gendered and sexual relationships between, and among, men and women in Chinese and African student communities, the chapters in Part II will reveal the ways in which 'performativity', the discursive silencing of subalterns, the micro-political contradictions of identity politics, and compromised units of translation – what Lorde (2007) refers to as "the master's tools" – persist as marginalizing concerns in contemporary Beijing. What is crucial is how this becomes possible regardless of the relative absence of white, male bodies in Sino-African interactions. Making use of analytical and methodological approaches in black, Marxist feminism and linguistic anthropology these chapters will reveal, respectively, how this stratification can be understood as simultaneously 'intersectional' (Crenshaw 1991) and 'enregistered' (Agha 2005). As such, China-Africa encounters reflect not only a productive confluence of these critical and semiotic analytics; but also an important recontextualization of their respective arguments beyond the bounded national-linguistic settings within which these processes are conventionally identified.

In Part III, I aim to emphasize the ways in which the *motivation* of 'sameness' and 'difference' may also suggest an affective dimension of the Sino-African encounter. In chapter 5, my concern will be with translation as the alienating calibration of the affective fields of sensual social life – the *motivation* of (an)aesthetic orders of social stratification (Buck-Morss 1992). Here Sino-African aspirational mobilities represent one such affective field. I will suggest how the tension between fashioning unprecedented futures through aspirational history-making remains unresolved at the level of sensual, inter-social, and non-conscious domains of encounter. Making use of Fanon's (1965) framing of affectivity, I propose a sensual ideology of translation, the utilization of spatiotemporal capacity that makes explicit the *in-translation* of subject legibility as opposed to its actual achievement (Morris 2002). As opposed to the 'culture', 'habitus', or 'milieu' within which inter-subjective, durable formations of practice are grounded and given meaning, my aim is to account for the sensual building blocks that are extracted for the construction of compromised futurities. Here, I will suggest that such sensual building blocks emerge in Chinese and African students' dreams – both in the form of metaphorical dreams that emerge as fantasies of electronically-mediated efficacious mobility, as well as literal dreams of

educational divine intervention under precarious conditions. Both dreams, I suggest, represent historical and material indexicalities that both enclose and are enclosed by the sensorium.

Finally, as an encounter emerging within the so-called 'non-West', this dissertation asks: within what regime of evaluation or arbitration does a Sino-African 'translation' unfold? What are the mechanisms through which the cultural capital of English persists as not only the common denominator of all other global languages but *the* standard measure of cultural value regulating Chinese and African interactions? How is the arbitrariness of 'English' or 'whiteness' tenable, when both signs not only become primary mediators between people who have been constituted as their historical others (as non-white, non-English-speakers), but also in a context where their hegemonic influence is assumed to be absent – as black or Chinese subjects of a Chinese education?

Part I – Chronotopes

Chapter 1:

Aspirational Histories - The Making and Re-making of Third World Cosmopolitan

The attempt at constructing a history to legitimate a present is a move well known to anthropologists and historians familiar with inventing tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Thinkers like Jacques Derrida (1988) and Gayatri Spivak (1976) have also suggested that the reiteration of a presumed original discourse object, necessarily transforms both its present and constructed-as-contingent past. This is also something which Walter Benjamin (2007c) pointed out in his famous "The Task of the Translator"- that *the copy* of a semiotic object in the historical here-and-now, both constitutes *its original* as a prior iteration by virtue of its present copy. For Benjamin, however, copy makes the original because something about the original appears repeatable – this becomes achievable by virtue of the 'translatability' of that original.

To be sure, the social contextualization of these ideas are apparent in most societies (mass-mediated or otherwise) when we see 'history' or 'historical selves' being invoked to legitimate or condemn a present. In post-socialist China, for instance, a continuous 5000-year language tradition is invoked to legitimate state projects of Mandarin standardization that only began in the 20th century as a response to language standardization on the part of Western Nation states (Pan 2015). In contemporary South Africa, the legacy of Apartheid-era state violence is a discourse constantly being invoked by mass-student and -worker movements to condemn the continued neoliberalization of the post-Apartheid state's education and mining sectors (Naiker 2016). However, In the case of educational encounters between

Chinese and Africans, what histories can be relied upon to legitimate a present, and what historical subjectivities animate contemporary cosmopolitan aspirations of Chinese and African actors? Are the historical contradictions proposed by Benjamin obviated by a 'novel' interaction, leaving its actors unconstrained by historical baggage? Does the manifestation of a contradiction at first glance belie a less-contradictory counterpoint of 'micro' processes occurring at a smaller, face-to-face interactional scale? This chapter, focusing on the 'novel' encounter of African students and their Chinese interlocutors in Beijing, argues that these contradictions are neither obviated, nor merely accumulative, but part of a historical and material dialectic of translation that informs even the most mundane encounters on this Sino-African ethnoscape (Appadurai 1996).

The move to *motivate* a relationship to the present, or even future, making use of history as leverage has been discussed at various scales including the nation-state, and as either internal to societies or emerging in relation to an encounter with the West. These dynamics have been demonstrated in the curation of 'national' heritage commodities within a 'global' heritage market (Comaroff 2009); or the complex interplay of myth and colonial history emerging in the present, out of a historical encounter then subsequently narrated in the Anthropological Anglosphere (Sahlins 1981). It is also an issue which has haunted debates around the metaphor of translation in the practice of ethnography, not only because of the gap between the present of ethnographic fieldwork and the ethnographic present of its writing (Clifford and Marcus 1986 and Geertz 1973, Latour 2005, Viveiros de Castro 2004, Asad 1986, Urban 1996); but also because so many narrations and meta-narrations by informants themselves have come to involve the invocation of a historically-dialectical present in their own lives (Mazzarella 2013 & 2017). Rarely, however, do anthropologists pay attention to historical reflexivity – when informants explicitly invoke their own historical narration – as analyzable practices in the context of an encounter. This is perhaps because the 'novelty' of an ethnographic encounter is most often the presumption behind the research itself – a problem at the heart of both historical criticisms of anthropology as well as anthropological criticisms of history (Cohn 1987, Taussig 1989, Mintz & Wolf 1989). In my work 'novelty of encounter' is a trope that animates much current research on Sino-African encounters, and yet the invocation of

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history as a translation of the present has been one of the most prominent features of my fieldwork over the last three years, both among African students as well as their Chinese interlocutors in Beijing.

The discussion that follows serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it explores the relationship to history forged between African students and Chinese interlocutors in contemporary Beijing – where the trope of 'third world solidarity' is often invoked by African students in order to forge relationships with older Chinese brokers (employers or teachers). At the same time, these relationships are depended upon to facilitate explicitly voiced 'cosmopolitan' futures. Here, the 'third world solidarity' emerges in interactions both in English and Chinese – *disanshijie datuanjie* (第三世界大团结). This brokering of cosmopolitan aspiration through forging a relationship to a socialist history of third world alignment, I will argue, is mediated through a process I term aspirational history. Secondly, this chapter reveals how a presumed historical contradiction, the *motivation* of a history of 'third world solidarity' to attain contemporary 'cosmopolitan' desire, may be better contextualized through a closer attention to a historical moment that is key to understanding China and Africa's contemporary relationship to 'third world solidarity' – the meeting of Zhou Enlai and Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana in 1964.

Making Third World Cosmopolitan

I met Marx and Mao in 2012 on a late Summer afternoon outside Renmin University's East-gate in Beijing. We shook hands and took an elevator to our interview venue – a quiet coffee shop on the top floor of a building. As we waited for our coffees, looking out over Haidian district, bustling under a post-2008 Olympics, post-APEC "blue sky day", Marx commented in an offhanded manner: "We truly are cosmopolitans now". As he said this to Mao and me, he compared our urban surroundings to his experiences as an undergraduate student at the Livingston University Confucius Institute in South Africa where we first met, stating later in the conversation: "Look how far we've come". At the time Marx Moji was a Zimbabwean MA student studying at Da Hua University in Beijing. Mao Mapfumo, his compatriot and an undergraduate student at the same university, nodded approvingly and concurred with Marx's

assessment of a 'cosmopolitan' present and its aspirational spatiotemporal distance from a less elevated chronotope: "Yes, Coming here [to China from Zimbabwe] is a gateway to heaven". It is important that Beijing is the gateway rather than the point of arrival since what 'heaven' should look like is less certain than the trajectory that will get one there.

Marx and I reunited again two years later when I returned to continue my formal fieldwork in the Fall of 2014. On my return, I learned that Prof. Li (力) – Marx's teacher as well as Chinese language and literature professor at Da Hua University in Beijing – was holding a banquet for a group of his students to which we were both invited. The attendees included a number of Africans who were on Chinese government scholarships at the university. At a certain point during the conversation, Marx offered an account of his grandfather's travels to China and the Soviet Union as a diplomat. He explained that his grandfather, Mr. Moji, had fond memories of his time in Beijing and as a result, many of the boys in their clan received middle names that were suggestive of their grandfather's political alignments. Prior to this meeting, Marx had told me that he desperately needed this Professor's recommendation if he wanted to maintain his scholarship at Da Hua and stay in China. His story provoked a sympathetic response from the professor, which was revealed when Marx toasted the professor in a brief speech during which he thanked the Professor for his guidance and pedagogy. At the conclusion of his speech, Marx – raising a glass of liquor (or *baijiu* 白酒) – proclaimed "*disanshijie datuanjie*" (第三世界大团结) or 'third-world solidarity'. At this, the Professor smiled heartily and responded back to Marx in deliberate English: "Third World Solidarity!" Marx, who was sitting close by, then leaned across and touched the rim of his glass below that of his professor to conclude the ritual. This was punctuated with a gentle 'clink'. As I came to learn later, the professor did write the letter of recommendation and Marx's scholarship was maintained.

In many scenarios like this, Marx Moji and other African and Chinese actors have cultivated the capacity to provoke (or at least attempt cultivate) receptions of selves that transcend the immediacy of an interactional encounter – in Marx's case a history he hoped his professor would be familiar with. In the

work of sociologist Erving Goffman (1959 & 1983), this scenario is certainly one shared in social encounters generally. Goffman suggests that 'novel' encounters are in fact rendered possible by the fact that "each participant enters a social situation carrying an already established biography of prior dealings with the other participants – or at least with participants *of their kind*; and enters also with a vast array of cultural assumptions presumed to be shared" (1983: 4). However, what shared cultural worlds or prior dealings inform Sino-African encounters? Also, what are the common semiotic registers and languages through which they are mediated? These questions become precisely acute when African youth movements in Africa and beyond look to the Sino-African encounter – as Frantz Fanon once did – as means to usher in "a new history of man" (Fanon 1965: 238).

Such questions would presume the presence of shared language(s) and an ideological context or scheme of ordering within which Chinese and Africans can become socially stratified – for instance along dimensions of race. In Beijing, 'English' and 'whiteness' – as I have suggested and will demonstrate throughout the dissertation – play an important role in animating alignments to or from 'cosmopolitanism' and 'third world solidarity' for both Chinese and African actors. What follows in subsequent chapters addresses the imbrication of English, whiteness, and cosmopolitan aspiration in mediating and stratifying contemporary Sino-African encounters. Here, however, I will analyze a contradictory tension between aspirational history as a means to bypass racial-, linguistic-, and class asymmetries; and its ultimate reinforcement of these very inequalities. Following this, I will suggest how the historical dialectic between 'cosmopolitanism' and 'third world solidarity' also addresses this contradictory tension.

It is clear from Marx's 'third world' interpellation of Prof. Li, as well as his provocation of 'cosmopolitan' solidarity with myself and Mao Mapfumo, that there is more than one representation of self at work in Marx and indeed many others' interactional strategies. For Goffman (1959) these, sometimes contradictory but always multiple representations are necessitated by, and even come to simultaneously diagram, a relationship between representational processes of anchoring – or 'footing' – and the ideological socio-spatiotemporal conditions – or 'interactional order' – within which these

representations unfold (Goffman 1959 & 1989). Marx's attempt to exploit a kind of social footing by presuming upon, but ultimately revealing, a shared interactional order of 'third world solidarity' to his interlocutor can be understood as an extension of Goffman's original, although more context-bound, discussion: That, in daily interactions, all of us can only find our footing on what we hedge to be 'intelligible' ground which – we hope – is likely to be shared by our interlocutors; and that the success or failure of such attempts at representation are both the mechanisms through which 'ordering' takes place – that which does the *ordering* – as well as sites that reveal the order already assumed in the interaction – a default *interactional order*. In Marx's case, the invocations of and alignments to – either overlapping or divergent – interactional orders of 'third world solidarity' or 'cosmopolitanism' were a constant feature of his engagements with others in Beijing. This was the case whether his interlocutors were Chinese, African, other people of color, or 'whites' in general. Of course, not all of these were explicit, stand-alone, verbal invocations like those discussed in the examples above. Gestures, clothing, media, and technological engagements of various kinds facilitated deferments and alignments to/with others in various social settings certainly abounded. However, while it is certainly possible for Marx and other Africans in Beijing to adopt potentially multiple representations of self through these semiotic materials – verbal or otherwise – it is important that he was neither able to rely on just one account of personhood, nor was he able to move beyond a limited number of representations.

While Goffman points out that these limitations – more than one, but not too many – are a feature of social interaction generally, he is quick to point out that this is not equally so for all actors. For some (particularly black, African subjects), both the representational range, as well as the capacities to commit to a 'default' identity, are severely more limited than others in the space-time of an 'international' interactional order:

> What is desirable order from the perspective of some can be sensed as exclusion and repression
> from the point of view of others. It does not raise questions about the neutrality of the term order
> to learn of tribal councils in West Africa that orderly speaking reflects (among other things)

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adherence to a rule of rank…Questions do arise when we consider the fact that there are

categories of persons – in our society very broad ones – whose members constantly pay a very

considerable price for their interactional existence. (Goffman 1983: 5-6)

Thus, order (as ordering) is neither arbitrary nor equally distributed. Instead, this process emerges

hierarchically, in such a way that inequalities come to persist and are often experienced as a targeted

reinforcement of difference. This is even, or perhaps especially, the case in 'liberal' capitalist societies

(those investigated by Goffman), where the *motivation* of a relativistic multiculturalism as symmetrical

equality – commonly in some iteration of 'equal opportunity' – appears to widen social stratification and

reinforce difference. For many informants like Marx Moji and Professor Li, the representations that

constitute and are informed by this ordering are certainly interpretable by actors as alignments to, or

transgressions of transcendent, inter-social, ethical and value formations. However, in the context of an

encounter between African and Chinese actors, what might such formations look like beyond the mere

invocation of 'cosmopolitanism' or 'third world solidarity'? What are the 'cultural' features of the

ideological context within which both are brought together? What are the semiotic materials through

which to build a 'novel' or 'default' interactional order that maintains or reconciles a dialectical tension

between 'cosmopolitanism' and 'third world solidarity'?

Guanxi is the New Ubuntu

A few days following Prof. Li's Banquet, I sat down and shared tea with him as we often did during my

fieldwork. During the five years that constituted my preliminary, intensive, and follow-up fieldwork, he

became a valuable informant and friend. On many occasions over the years, he facilitated relations

between myself and a number of notable contacts who, like him, were cadre educators or officials of

various ranks working at Chinese universities and government institutions. The position he occupied at

his university was certainly pedagogical, however, given his social ties, he was notable as a broker

between educational, political, and private sector interactional spheres. In a Chinese context, he would

easily be legible as an organization's '*guanxi*' (关系) artist. Beyond just being 'someone who networks well' – for without social relations nothing is possible in China or indeed anywhere – a *guanxi* artist is someone who is particularly skilled at recognizing, building, and maintaining these relationships. The emphasis on an aptitude for recognition and reception, rather than performance and production, is an important nuance.

In anthropologies of *guanxi* (Yang 1994, Bian 1994, Kipness 1997, Bell 2000) this concept has often been typified through two of its most recognizable manifestations. In the first instance, it manifests as various forms of gift exchange (including money), patrimony networks, as well as both functional and dysfunctional modes of corruption. This tack has been followed, although in more superficial terms, in a number of MBA-style courses and guidebooks providing a variety of perspectives on 'how to do networking in China' (IRL 3, 13). By focusing on token essentialisms of *guanxi*, however, anthropologists of China have pointed out how such approaches run the risk of reducing this activity to a purely instrumental social practice, lacking specificity in its 'Chinese' context. Here *guanxi*'s more 'ethical' or 'practice'-based dimensions have been emphasized by scholars like Andrew Kipnis' (1997). In Kipnis' work, in particular, *guanxi* cannot be separated from another Chinese inter-social category of 'local' meaning: *renqing* (人情). Here, he suggests that *renqing* relationally emerges as a kind of embodied-compassionate disposition that *guanxi* sustains and is sustained by.

For Kipnis, *guanxi* can certainly be understood as emerging in a hyper-local context and standing in a certain equilibrium with *renqing*. Following Judith Farquhar (2002), it can also be argued that *guanxi* does so in ways that are simultaneously particular to and reiterated through embodied practices both constituting and constitutive of an inter-social space-time: that of an anthropologically delineable community, society, or polity (Munn 1986, Bourdieu 1977). In what I will now describe, the interactions between Prof. Li, Marx Moji, myself, and many other Chinese and African interlocutors in Beijing, problematizes the opposition this work posits between the 'cultural', 'emergent' everyday and the historically-situated political, in particular, the contextualization of 'culture concepts' like *guanxi* in

supposedly post-socialist Beijing. Here, I align my work with critical theoretical analyses that have

attended to the ways 'China' continues to make itself through making its others, in relation to external and

internal forces that are necessarily ideological and political, but do not provincialize the 'cultural' (Yang

2015, Rofel 2007, Liu 2015, Liu 2004, Vukovich 2012).

Indeed, by all the accounts of Prof. Li's peers, he was a superb *guanxi* artist: "So much so", one

co-worker emphasized, "that he is able to send his children to [an Ivy League University] in America".

He was able to do this by having had an illustrious career as a government bureaucrat and academic

administrator, through which he secured a *hukou* (户口) or 'living permit' for himself and his family in

Beijing. He had reason to be proud of his achievements, as he often emphasized adopting a quasi-

American accent: "not bad for a migrant from rural Shandong". He was also eager to share his insights on

guanxi with a captive, English-speaking audience, and was able to master – perhaps as part of this skill set

– a genre of self-exoticism which I had seen him perform on a number of occasions with visiting scholars

from the US. It was striking that – in many of these interactions with his US visitors – professor Lee had

to juggle two performances. On the one hand, he had to play-up China's rising, 'cosmopolitan' educational

status as "becoming just like in the US", versus 'socialist' political or administrative protocol that was

intelligible "only in Chinese culture". There was a delicate balance between what Marx Moji might call

'cosmopolitanism' – an unconstrained trans-national efficacy – and the need to make an argument for his

own indispensability by framing his expert knowledge of 'socialist' protocol, including *guanxi* etiquette.

Beyond these observations, Prof. Li – whom I often assisted in editing correspondence with these visiting

scholars – was always welcoming and generous in providing his insights on *guanxi* and 'socialist' matters.

"It's not just giving people money or things, that's the lowest *guanxi*", he emphasized during one

interview. "You have to know who you are and what you have when you are making *guanxi*". Here, he

emphasized the performance of 'who you are', but often was quick to add that it was equally important to

calculate 'who others are to you' in the interaction: "Why would I spend my time on *guanxi* with others?"

he asked rhetorically, "I need to *want to* spend time on them". He then, to my surprise, proceeded to

recruit me into an example: "Take you, for instance, you have a good attitude, but as someone from Africa, you are not as useful to me as an American graduate student or Professor. [However], you are easier to build a relationship with, and if there is mutual benefit, that is a good thing for both of us". Here he emphasized the importance of attitude in calculating whether to commit to a *guanxi* relationship, however – and recruiting me once again to the interaction – added that both *recognition* and *the capacity to reciprocate* constituted key clauses: "You and I both have to understand and meet our mutual obligations to each other…otherwise we sabotage one another". Feeling anxious about my interpolation into a relationship that isn't usually brokered through meta-speak, I recruited another actor into the frame by asking whether – following the incident at the banquet – he and Marx Moji had *guanxi*? "No, we don't", he responded emphatically, and then added, "I don't mean to sound like a bad person, but he can't offer me anything since he is only a student". Nonetheless, Prof. Li did write many recommendations over the years for his student and also aligned himself – at least performatively – with Marx's recruitment to 'third world solidarity'. What this suggests is that neither obligation nor reflexive knowledge about the fact that one may, in fact, be in a *guanxi* relationship, are necessary and sufficient conditions to *motivate* that something like it emerges in an interaction.

This certainly proved to be the case in Marx Moji's interpretation of the exchange at the banquet. When I asked him about the matter, he added a cultural translation of his own. He regarded him and Prof. Li's relationship quite differently, interpreting *guanxi* to be a fundamentally interchangeable concept with that of another inter-social category drawn from his own and my social world: *Ubuntu* (or something like it). "Look", Marx insisted, "It's the same as *Ubuntu*," he told me emphatically over dinner one night, assuming a mutual intelligibility of the term regardless of the fact that I was from South Africa – suggestive of the Trans-Southern African legibility of *ubuntu*. I responded with a well-known quip (among contemporary Southern African students): "I thought Ubuntu was dead?" In post-apartheid and 'postcolonial' settings this is often used to suggest an alienation from the ties of kinship and basic human compassion typified by an increasing commitment to self-interest, such conditions understood as eradicating the underlying ethical space-time of *ubuntu* through which "one is a person through others"

(Makgoba 1999: 153). Guffawing at my performed postcolonial disillusionment, he paused for quite some time and later said: "maybe *ubuntu* is dead for us, but *guanxi* is alive for them ". For Marx, it was enough that Prof. Li wrote him the letter, following his particular performance of 'third world solidarity', to confirm the surface iconicity between *guanxi* and *ubuntu*. Here, anthropologist Summerson Carr (2011) has productively described the perspectival ways in which the motivation of iconicity, in Peircean terms, is ultimately perspectival, where the relationship between signs can be as 'similar' or different as interactants need them to be:

> Iconic signs differ from their indexical brethren, which gain their meaning in a contiguous relation to their object (as in the case of smoke and fire) and also from symbols, which have an arbitrary (that is, conventional) relationship with that which they represent. However, the highly contingent and conventional nature of icons— as signs of semblance—was not lost on Peirce, who argued that since anything may resemble anything else, iconic signs are necessarily "motivated." In other words, icons are the product of the analogic practices of language users as they selectively establish relationships of likeness (Peirce 1955). Icons, then, gain their meaning not because they naturally resemble some unmediated thing in the world but instead because a community of speakers collectively designates that one kind of thing is like and therefore can come to stand for another. (Carr 2011: 26)

Neither *guanxi* nor *ubuntu* are terms that represented an inalienable cultural romance for Prof. Li and Marx respectively. Here, both interactants further emphasized how these terms are not immune to historical forces and re-appropriation, and certainly do not unfold in an ideological (indexical) vacuum.

By means of demystifying *guanxi* Prof. Li often gave his own version of a '*guanxi*-is-dead' sentiment: "You know", he once stated after an unsuccessful meeting with another Chinese colleague "*guanxi* has really changed. When I was young, giving a person a ride in a truck or feeding them some dumplings was enough [to secure loyalty for life]. Now [this is] not the case. It's the same with President

Xi, buying friends gets one no loyalty". Having established a 'safe space' for *guanxi* meta-speak, Prof. Li often came to talk to me often about *guanxi* matters, following which he would usually request favors in the form of editing correspondence or providing friends with English lessons or paper editing. Looking over his shoulder and lowering his voice, on another occasion he stated: "You know, under Mao, *guanxi* was a lot more real…look, I'm not saying [the cultural revolution] was a good time, but *guanxi* meant more because it was all [we] had". On more than one occasion, when Prof. Li was hosting American business scholars, he would emphasize "the importance of networking and *guanxi* in the global economy", at which point he would attempt to introduce me as a '*guanxi* expert' to rhetorically bolster his point through my co-presence – perhaps as some kind of English-speaking token-white – after which I would usually be left hanging while he took his visitors out to lunch. Marx Moji, similarly voiced disillusionment with *ubuntu* but clearly had faith in a version of *guanxi* that was built on 'third world solidarity'. Of course, both *Ubuntu* and *guanxi* have seen their fair share of appropriation and 'cosmopolitanization' if we consider the corporatization of *guanxi* as an MBA-fetish (as suggested earlier) or the assimilation of *ubuntu* into popular culture via the open-source software by the same name, albeit with a capital 'U'.

There are historical transformations in Marx Moji and Prof. Li's accounts that destabilize and at times lend force to *motivations* of similarity between *guanxi* and *ubuntu* – prior histories of Sino-African encounter that simultaneously trouble and animate attempts at making a 'novel' interactional space-time. But what kinds of history might be a resource in generating an interactional order? If, as Goffman suggests, the making of an interactional order depends on 'prior' histories between actors, then to understand the making of that interactional order, we must take the forms of historical narration undertaken by our informants very seriously. In this case, there is a history and its contemporary contextualization that reveals African and Chinese 'cosmopolitanism's contemporary foundation in a past 'third world solidarity'. Before it can be addressed, however, I would like to spend a moment on what 'cosmopolitanism' might mean for Marx Moji and other African students.

My fieldwork revealed that many African students who come to Beijing consider themselves to be in a position of privilege in the city, an impression that is reinforced by their teachers, professors and other Chinese students to whom the names of Beijing Universities carry considerable national prestige throughout China. Embracing this 'local' cachet – experienced in interactions with aspiring Chinese interlocutors – students like Marx and Mao committed to maintaining a specifically efficacious persona, capable of, as they put it, "translating worlds", "being someone back home" or even "colonizing China" one day. Achieving this efficacy and "making it in Beijing" required a similar cultivation and maintenance of novel and situated means of forging representations – in ways similar to those demonstrated by Marx Moji and Professor Li before. Doing so, once again relied on establishing a Goffmanian interactional order (1983). Motivating a 'cosmopolitan' footing similarly entails the cultivation of aspirational histories: the cultivation of *guanxi* or something like it, and the mastery of registers of performance, like knowing when to use 'third world solidarity'. However, 'cosmopolitan' space-time differs from that of 'third world solidarity' in that an as-yet-unclear future subject of China-Africa relations appears to be the contradictory goal of aspirational historicity. So, how is the future value of an encounter – and its resulting 'cosmopolitan' subjectivity – motivated in the absence of a past precedent?

This is the question faced by many African students when faced with the conundrum of trying to motivate their 'potential' value – as university students of elite Chinese institutions – to Chinese, western or even African employers and brokers from their own countries. Despite their considerable numbers compared to other international students, African students in elite Chinese universities appear as an idiosyncratic presence, difficult to reconcile with the status of their institutions – both among their Chinese peers and potential Chinese employers. This was apparent in interviews with Chinese students and recent graduates who certainly noticed that they had black peers at their universities, but could hardly consider these students as representing a competitive current academic or future professional presence. As one male Chinese economics student stated, "I have many black classmates, but they are all exchange

students, so it's difficult to make friends with them…since they are [eventually] going to go back to their own countries". Cecil Zhang, a recently-graduated Chinese student from Da Hua University – who was applying to a US graduate school while running a temporary online electronics store – also stated: "I don't really notice them [African students] much… but how could they ever be allowed [by the government] to compete with Chinese students for jobs?". Of course, this does not obviate the notable presence of white and other co-present expats in Beijing – an aspirational outcome that has certainly not gone unnoticed among many African students. When I suggested to Cecil that white expats appeared to be doing work that Chinese subjects could just as easily do, he answered that "educated foreigners have expertise [that are needed] for China's development".

Once African students return to their home countries the problem of legibility is equally acute. In South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria, for instance, Chinese universities are often just not recognized by recruiters or employers or are often considered – within African Universities – to be a 'hand-me-down' education compared to the elite institutions of Euro-American academia. One South African professor affiliated with a Confucius Institute commented in an interview: "Can the Chinese universities even compete with the critical standard here? If not, how can they compete with [European or American] universities overseas?". This perception is also prominent among many African students in Beijing where many consider their education in China to be a necessary detour for getting into American or European Universities. For those that want to motivate the value of a Chinese education, they must voice a historical past that includes them as a counter to their contemporary precarity. It is when faced with such prospects that for many the term 'cosmopolitan' – almost always stated in English – becomes a kind of synchronic refuge, a temporally-vacuous value category that becomes a precarious placeholder for uncertain futures mediating perspectival pasts.

Despite an acute, reflexive awareness of these asymmetries – many Africans speak of their presence in the Chinese capital as evidence of their desire for, and achievement of an unconstrained mobility, something which, as Lisa Rofel (2007) has compellingly suggested, is not out of alignment with Chinese migrant experiences in urban China. In both African and Chinese cases, this way of "being

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cosmopolitan" can vary greatly. They can range from claiming the marketization (and perhaps commodification) of *guanxi*, in the case of Prof. Li, to aligning with others who might be perceived as being similarly constrained between perspectival pasts and precarious futures – like Marx Moji's instrumental invocation of 'third world' solidarity to sustain residence in China. However, invoking 'cosmopolitan' also occurs in contexts where an audience and its potential response is carefully calculated, be it as performing a recognizable sign of long-standing mutual socialist 'elitedom' – when addressing an influential American interlocutor – or when performing in an 'international' or 'global' citizenship meant to elide the uncertain, perpetual motion of various trajectories of classed 'migrancy' in China.

Here, a term like 'cosmopolitan' has a particular gloss among my informants, which reveals the temporal, spatial and social contingencies that the fashioning of an aspirational history both hinges on and is meant to facilitate. When Marx designates both Mao and me as 'cosmopolitans', his naming does not suggest that we of the 'periphery' now occupy a position of privilege within the 'metropole' – a common alignment that persists among educated 'commonwealth' Africans in Britain and the US. Instead, destinations and points of origin, for Africans in Beijing – and to some extent Chinese migrants too – are subordinate to the capacity to have an efficacy in the world typified by a sense of unconstrained mobility: a capacity to control footing and interactional order in the representations of self, by being able to curate the person-determining histories emergent in an encounter. In this sense, it might suggest that we of the periphery 'have always been modern' and that this new game, of 'making it in the metropole' is a familiar one that we have always already been playing. Keeping Walter Benjamin's earlier provocation in mind – that there is no originary moment without its copy – it may be useful to interpret the alignment to a 'new', Sino-African 'cosmopolitan' as simultaneously constituting its prior, 'colonial' other.

However, in approaching what 'cosmopolitan *is*, it may be useful to ask: what does 'cosmopolitan' *do*? What contextual and ideological factors both enable and push against its *motivation*? Here, I would like to suggest that it is a sense of efficacious mobility that stratifies the category of migrant, refugee, and mobile elite. The capacity, then, to reflect an appropriate category of personhood

that appears to be the inhabitant of such an efficacious body is key to maintaining this quality of mobility. For Marx Moji and many of my informants, the means of achieving it appears to be language, since it is through both speaking and those activities directed to it that the 'cosmopolitan' becomes legible as what anthropologist Summerson Carr (2011) might call an 'icon of personhood'. Drawing on Charles Sanders Peirce's notion of iconicity, she emphasizes the way in which positing utopic and dystopic notions of personhood in institutional projects also necessitate iconization. Here, iconic signs must necessarily be *motivated* since, as Carr suggests, they "gain their meaning not because they naturally resemble some mediated thing in the world but instead, because a community of speakers collectively, designates that one kind of thing is *like* and therefore can come to stand for another" (ibid: 26). I would like to extend the argument by suggesting that it is not merely designation that facilitates or disrupts iconization, but historical and material (Marx 1972) or socio-spatiotemporal (Silverstein & Urban 1996) conditions – the 'indexical' or 'ideological' interplay between actors and contexts – that *motivate* iconicity as a dialectic of inter-social reception and production. Thus, 'designation', in line with my use of *motivation* throughout this dissertation, must be understood as a simultaneously inter-social and asymmetrical process – one that is not limited to the causal behavior of rational actors. Instead, this designation emerges out of a continuous, dialectical relationship between actors and the dynamic space-time of their context.

Re-Making Third World Cosmopolitan

The tone of the relationship between the Chinese nation-state and its African interlocutors in the past differs in important ways from contemporary inter-government exchanges. A more explicit Third world solidarity once animated relationships based on alignment to or disalignment from an anti-colonial proletarianization of the non-Western world. This was indeed the case not only in obscure intellectual circles, among progressive thinkers in Asia and Africa, but formed a constant theme in wide-spread propaganda campaigns in what came to be called the 'third world'. One famous propaganda image I encountered belonged to Mao Mapfumo and was posted on the wall next to his bunk bed in his residence at Da Hua University. I found out, through the course of my fieldwork, that it had in fact been given to

him by his older roommate, Marx Moji. The characters on the image read 革命友谊深如海 (*geming youyi shen ru hai*) or 'Revolutionary Friendship is as Deep as the Ocean' (pictured below). Designed by well-known propaganda artist, Guo Hongwo, this is an iconic image of 'third world solidarity' genre. It depicts a variety of African travelers – men and women – who have presumably come to China, posing with Chinese workers in front of modern farm equipment, presumably produced in China. A black African man, wearing (at the time) Western formal attire, is kneeling to take a photograph. There is a black African woman on his right, presumably providing instructions to those being photographed to get into the frame. I asked why he put it next to his bed and he joked: "To remind me of the good old days". It is worth noting that Mao Mapfumo was 19 years old at the time of the interview.

Thus, to talk about a nostalgia, in the case of Mao and Marx's sharing of images like these would be misleading, since neither of them will have been able to 'remember' the 'third world solidarities' that played an important role in generating their socialist middle names – Mao and Marx's parents wanted their children's names to reflect an alignment to Zimbabwe's 'socialist struggle for independence. In understanding this kind of 'nostalgia' projected onto shared objects like Mao's poster, György Lukács' (2010) framing of the term *Sehnsucht* becomes useful: "Longing", he states, "is always sentimental - but is there such a thing as sentimental form?" (ibid: 123). Of course, for Lukács, what he meant by 'longing' was *sehnsucht* – a suggesting unattainable desire that appears precede, but is not necessarily knowable by the experiencing subject. In this way, the term has a temporal texture that augments its English translation. Here, longing in the sense of *sehnsucht* should perhaps be understood as something like a transcendental category of desire. It may not necessarily entail a past or a present. Although, since 'the past' becomes available to inhabitants of a 'present' committed to the conventions of a linear social temporality, this longing or *sehnsucht* becomes available in the emotional domain of 'sentiment' – where sentiment is the projection of longing onto a 'lost' personal past. Here, sentiment so often manifests around discourses of memory-loss or the melancholia of non-permanence.

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In many popular or propagandistic Western historicizations of the contemporary Sino-African encounter (in China and Africa) contradictory evocations of *sehnsucht* abound, manifesting in paradoxical narrations of the relationship between past and present abound. One prominent contemporary historical narrative in the Western media Anglosphere emphasizes imaginaries of Tang Dynasty explorations, where 'Chinese' Admiral Zheng He and his merchant fleet 'encounter' Africans and set the historical tone for a long, deep friendship based on mutual benefit and friendship. Here, the reciprocation of African gifts of gold and giraffes to Chinese emperors serves as confirmation of enduring peaceful ties build on the shared abundance of natural and economic wealth (Alden 2007; IRL 23; Li & Farah et al. 2013; April & Shelton et al. 2014; Ziso 2018; Power, Mohan, &Tan-Mullins et al. 2012; Batchelor & Zhang 2017). This history has been emphasized either ironically, or in alignment with 'alternative modernities' and modernization theory arguments which seek to disrupt canonical histories of Imperial China's relationship to the 'modern' West (Rostow 1960, Brautigam 2009). However, these evocations often – perhaps conveniently – interrupt another narration: Of a deep friendship built on mutual struggle of the third world's in their fight against the forces of Western imperialism; of the Announcement of Three Worlds at Bandung in 1955; of Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai's historical visits to Africa to broker the emergence of a 'new history' for the world's colonized, 'semi'-colonized, and decolonizing; of China's own gifts of weapons and education in exchange for continued 'third world solidarity' (Okihiro 2016, Chakrabarty 2005, Lee 2010, Barnouin & Yu 2006). It is obvious that the Western media Anglosphere, at present, elides a Maoist Chinese history in voicing the contemporary foundations of Sino-African relations – an elision that has not gone unnoticed. The historical legacies of Three Worlds Theory as a proletarianization of the colonized and semi-colonized world and significant 'third world solidarity' support for China's seat on the UN Security Council following the decades of decolonization have swiftly been forgotten. They emerge however in expressions of *sehnsucht*, as a disconnected nostalgia, not only in the ironic voicings of 'Maoist' cosplay in current wedding photography, but also in the African and Chinese subjects' use of 'past' artifacts to act as a placeholder for a precarious present and uncertain future.

Aspirational history-making in Sino-African encounters reflects a similar dialectical tension to that proposed in Lukács' framing of *sehnsucht*, whereby the brokering of a kind of cosmopolitanism through the invocation of a mediated, yet inaccessible, history of 'third world solidarity' makes the 'third world cosmopolitan' a similarly transcendental category of desire. However, if it is transcendent how does the analyst know that it is there? In asking whether sentiment has a form, Lukács provides a response, warning against presupposing pasts as anything other than perspectival – not 'unreal' or un-material – simply perspectival, since the kinds of dialectical realities he is suggesting, like the dialogical realities once proposed by Bakhtin (1981), are both plural and material in the forms they take. "Form", he continues "means getting the better of sentimentality; in form there is no more longing and no more loneliness; to achieve form [rather than attaining the object of longing] is to achieve the greatest possible fulfillment" (Lukács 2010: 123). Thus, form – for Lukács – is in fact not the fulfillment of *sehnsucht*, for this would risk the erasure of the longing subject (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002). Instead, form reveals *sehnsucht*'s locatedness in the emerging present rather than being anchored in a mystified, unfathomable past. Following Lukacs, formations like *sehnsucht* both *motivate* and are motivated by anxieties of present inaccessibility, blockage, alienation, and perhaps even semiotic oblivion. Since we cannot know *sehnsucht*'s content – given its unattainability – its forms must be treated symptomatically. In doing so, we must ask what its present manifestations elide, perhaps through poetic symmetries and slips of the tongue in fashioning aspirational histories of 'third world cosmopolitanism'. One way I propose these can be analyzed is through attention to what linguistic anthropologists have termed deictics or 'shifters' in the historical interactions of Chinese and African interlocutors.

Most commonly, deictics appear in the form of pronouns like 'I' and 'you' in English, where 'I' am 'I' to me, but 'you' are 'I' to you in the same interaction. They are often referred to as shifters because the inhabitant of 'I' or 'you' can shift due to the contextual nature of the interaction. Thus, deictics can only be known in a context – 'I' and 'you' can only know each others' coordinates in space and time vis-à-vis each other and our mutually entailed and entailing space-time of interaction. In establishing the interactional order of encounters, Michael Silverstein (1976) has demonstrated the ways in which not only

pronouns, but other language formations that function deictically, can be analyzed as the mediating dynamics through which alignment, dis-alignment, or asymmetry in any given interaction are generated. The fact that deictics cannot synchronically signify the objects, subjects, or relations they refer to – but instead necessitate material, socio-spatiotemporal contextualization within an ideologically-stratified interactional order – draws attention to a phenomenon linguistic anthropologists have termed indexicality (Silverstein 1976 & 2003b). Marx Moji's role-recruitment of myself, Mao Mapfumo, and Prof. Li before depend completely on the role indexicality plays in reframing and re-ordering the relations among signs like 'third world solidarity', 'cosmopolitanism', 'guanxi', and 'ubuntu' in constituting an interactional order. The invocation of these signs – toward the *motivation* of aspirational history – orients actors in relation to each other during the interaction. Like other deictics, they refer to a 'history' preceding the interaction, but which is only made in and through that interaction. Thus, history and its contingent future are recruited, but simultaneously re-made and un-made, through its invocation. This mirrors the simultaneous *motivation* of 'iconicity' and 'alterity' as a condition of possibility for 'translation' as posited in the introduction. Thus, matters of coming to alignment or dis-alignment through any kind of semiotic process – as in the case of aspirational history-making in Beijing – can all be understood as fundamentally contingent on indexicality, whether through 'linguistic' or other kinds of signs. Here, it is important that the analytical purchase of indexicality does not undermine historical arguments. In fact, in critical histories that have theorized the role of ideology in history and history-making – as a historical-material materialist semiotics – there is a fundamental compatibility with linguistic anthropological notions of indexicality (Fanon 1965, Said 2003, Mao 1990, Benjamin 2007b). In an analysis of the following interaction, I wish to draw attention to this compatibility by retrospectively analyzing a key historical interaction that contributed to the 'original' *motivation* of third world solidarity – the meeting between Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1964.

An elaborate textual record of their interaction is contained in a document published by the Chinese central government (by its Foreign Language Press) in that same year. It includes official transcripts of interviews, speeches, and itineraries of Chinese premier Zhou Enlai and his interlocutors

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during his visit to thirteen Asian and African countries. The document – titled "Afro-Asian Solidarity Against Imperialism" – also contains a list of countries visited: "The United Arab Republic"[6], Morocco, Tunisia, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, "The Sudan" (Sudan), Ethiopia, Somalia, "Burma" (Myanmar), Pakistan, and "Ceylon" (Sri Lanka). The meeting between Premier Zhou and President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana is of particular interest because of the wider significance of their interaction, both before and after, as key intellectuals engaging the development of non-Western, anti-colonial and -imperialist struggle in the third world during decades of decolonization that unfolded between the end of World War II and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

In January 1964 Zhou Enlai undertook a historic visit Ghana as part of a diplomatic tour to various Asian and African states. Given the ways in which every speech in every country visited emphasized Asia-Africa solidarity (including joint-communiqués that followed these meetings) the overt purpose of the tour was to reinforce commitments made at the Bandung conference nine years before. Nkrumah was a powerful ally and avid supporter of 'third world solidarity' at the time, as well as a dominant voice in promoting global Pan-Africanism as a leading participant in the 1944 (5th) Pan-African Congress along with intellectual and activist W.E.B. Du Bois, Jomo Kenyata (who later became a Kenyan nationalist and its first president), and George Padmore (renowned Trinidadian Pan-Africanist) (Hadjor 2009). He was also the first sub-Saharan African president to host Zhou on his tour.

The public dialogue, consisting of two pairs of speeches – which were delivered in English – book-ended a five-day visit between the two leaders beginning on January 13th, 1964. Treating the respective speeches of Nkrumah and Zhou as a relationship between the first and second adjacency pair-parts I will track moments of alignment and dis-alignment that suggest asymmetries emerging in their shared inter-social space-time. Their interaction through these speeches – while not emerging in a spontaneous conversation and separated in time – nonetheless diagrams a number of key insights relevant

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[6] This was a political union between Egypt and Syria between 1958 and 1961, and then only Egypt until 1971 (Palmer 1966, Podeh 1999)

to Sino-African encounters then and now. The 'staged' nature of their exchange is analytically productive, given that the constraints of protocol in this diplomatic visit their own iconic roles as embodiments of mass-political alignments and dis-alignments of the time. Zhou and Nkrumah – as ambassadors of 'third world solidarity' – become historically-situated actors in accordance with an imagined expectation of the social formations of multiple scales (national, continental, and international) they come stand in relation to (for or against) both in the interaction and beyond it. Thus, as much as we can speak of the volitional 'making' of history, Zhou and Nkrumah's diagramming of it is simultaneously facilitated and limited by their available terms of engagement; genre and other expectations burdening their participation in the event; as well as constraints and amplifiers of reception – language, audience, and ideological context. In treating the following text artifact deictically, I hope to conclude with the scripting of another, historical 'third-world cosmopolitan'.

On January 13th, 1964, Zhou Enlai's speech opened with thanks to the 'friendly' Republic of Ghana, emphasizing his 'happiness' at being able to meet "our old friend" President Nkrumah "a prominent statesman of Africa" – a relationship between their past and present acquaintance:

> We are most happy to come…to the friendly Republic of Ghana…and to meet President
> Nkrumah, an old friend of ours and a prominent statesman of Africa and to meet the Ghanaian
> people who have waged protracted struggles. (Zhou 1964: 135)

Here, Zhou and Nkrumah's intimacy is an 'old' old one, while Nkrumah in the present is recognized as 'a prominent statesman of Africa' – as he does throughout his speech. Here, Zhou is emphasizing a shared prior intimacy that either bears fruit in the present or must be maintained for mutual 'solidarity' to deliver a conclusive victory against 'imperialism [and]…new and old forms of colonialism'. Knowing that his audience included Ghanaian political allies and potential opponents, as well as the Western media, he stated:

…

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The Ghanaian people are an industrious and courageous people. They waged a protracted struggle

for independence and freedom and finally won their independence in 1957. Ghana was the first

country on the African continent south of the Sahara to win independence. (Zhou 1964: 135)

No doubt, the Ghanaian people knew their own history and perhaps did not need to be informed

by the Chinese premier. However, it was important, at the time, for Zhou to reflect alignment with

Nkrumah's presidency in an attempt to bolster Ghana's political stability on and beyond the African

continent. Fractures were beginning to show in the Ghanaian government and these threatened socialist

movements in Sub-Saharan Africa generally, given Nkrumah's centrality in both third world- and Pan-

Africanist alignments. In many ways, we can understand Zhou's pandering to a general public in light of

various economic and political developments that had begun to undermine Nkrumah's leadership. The

accumulative effects of these would result in a dramatic coup two years after this meeting. For a Zhou, to

reflect knowledge of, and support for a Ghanaian revolution can in many ways be understood as an

attempt to help Nkrumah maintain face not only as a respected African statesman but as a respected

socialist leader and Pan-Africanist beyond Ghana. It is equally important that China's aspirations to the

UN Security Council membership, given Nkrumah's stature, could be advocated and realized more

through the Ghanaian president's support. This was due to the prestige he not only enjoyed among Pan-

Africanists but also socialists in the west. He had been awarded the Lenin Peace Prize in Moscow in 1963

and was equally well-respected among Civil Rights groups in the US. In sum, Nkrumah's was a far from

dysfunctional image through which to promote the combined concerns of a united third world, something

which made Nkrumah indispensable to Zhou and other third world leaders, whether many Ghanaians

liked it or not:

The Chinese people **have always** followed with joy every success scored by the Ghanaian people

along the way to their independent development. We **heartily wish** the Republic of Ghana new

and greater victories **in the days to come** under the leadership of President Nkrumah. (Zhou

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1964: 136)

This is another example of a general poetics of temporal shifting from past to present to future that emerges as a constant theme throughout Zhou and Nkrumah's interaction: "The Chinese people **have always**…" – past – "heartily **wish**..." – present – "new and greater victories **in the days to come**" – future. Zhou's invocation of an aspirational temporal trajectory – making use of spatiotemporal deictics to diagram it – mirrors the earlier examples of Mao Mapfumo, Marx Moji and Professor's Lee's attempts to curate a past in order to *motivate* an uncertain future in a precarious present. Here, a key shifter, 'the imperialist', facilitates this shared aspirational history, for 'solidarities' as alignments are also imbrications of others. Zhou continues:

> Imperialists are not willing to see the independent development of Ghana and the other African countries. They are not reconciled to their own failure, and are striving to maintain their colonial rule in Africa and make colonial gains. They miss no chance and try by every possible means to carry out sabotage and subversion in the new emerging African independent countries, even making attempts to take the life of the people's leaders of African countries. (Zhou 1964: 136)

Using the terms 'imperialists', or 'imperialism', Zhou unifies past, present, and future in his interaction with Nkrumah. Rather than using only the term 'colonizer', Zhou and other third world leaders at the time favored the use of either 'imperialism', or the formulation 'colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism' – past, present, and future. From a deictic standpoint, 'colonialism' entailed a pre-independence history and a clearly delineable set of accountable actors or 'nations' who have now – in the decolonizing present – given up their sovereign right over a previously-colonized territory. From a 'third world solidarity' perspective, 'colonial' or 'colonizer' (by themselves) were inadequate for depicting the persistence of unequal development to the benefit of former colonial powers during the Cold War. For Nkrumah, Zhou, and others it was important to emphasize the ways in which sovereignty in the

third world was unable to contest alternative means of economic and political domination by its former colonizers, emerging as 'neocolonialism'. With the added marginalization experienced at the hands of the US and USSR, there appeared to be a transformed and transforming set of actors and contexts that appeared to engender persistent asymmetries for former-colonized and far from decolonized nations. Here the intervention of 'Three world theory' and its uptake in what came to be called the 'third world' necessitated more spatiotemporally-capacious categories like 'imperialism' and 'imperialists' to capture a more chimeric set of ideological conditions and Janus-faced 'villains'. In many ways, three worlds theory responded to a need for the articulation of a shared 'third world' history that emphasized a dialectic of anti-capitalist and -colonialist internationalism that necessitated historically-continuous revolution. We see the clear mirroring of Zhou's poetics in Nkrumah's response at the same event:

> Premier Chou En-lai…I am happy to **welcome** you…and your party to our country, and I do so on my own behalf and on behalf of the people of Ghana…I still retain the most **vivid recollections** of my extremely interesting and enjoyable visit to your great country **in 1961**. Here in Ghana, we admire the great strides made by the People's Republic of China, since the revolution, under the dynamic leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, poet, philosopher, soldier, and statesman. You yourself, Premier Chou En-lai, have been a foremost stalwart…You have come as a distinguished representative of a dynamic and energetic people – nearly 650 million people – who have been welded together into a strong nation, united and progressive. Surely, this example should inspire us in Africa, and leave no doubt in our minds that **a continental union government of Africa is not only possible but a reality**. We are unalterably convinced that only a continental government of Africa can put an end to Africa's want and misery. A united Africa will be a strong link in the chain of Afro-Asian anti-imperialist solidarity…Please take note that our struggle against **colonialism and imperialism** is part of the struggle for world peace. For there can be no lasting peace until **imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism** are wiped out completely from the face of the earth. (Nkrumah 1964: 151-153)

As with Zhou's speech, the past can be connected to the present and future of revolution through the invocation of imperialism as its other. Nkrumah also explicates the contingent relationship between imperialism, colonialism, and neocolonialism in alignment with Zhou. While drawing on prior colonial pasts as the condition of possibility for their interaction as representatives of third world solidarity, Zhou and Nkrumah are both careful to emphasize unity in the face of a present, imperialist threat. This unity, however, is very much future-oriented and hyper-connected, necessitating vast geographical inclusions – Pan African, African-Asian, and later African-Asian-Latin American.

It is in this way that *motivating* 'third world' iconicity, as with all the examples before, can be understood as a mode of aspirational historicity. Entailing the contradictions of translation (framed at the beginning of the dissertation) aspirational history for Zhou and Nkrumah – as for Mao, Marx, and Professor Lee before – requires the calibration of indexicality: a volatile process that, as history would have it, inevitably fails in producing total semantic alignments. To be sure, it is this inevitable 'translational' failure that many theories of deconstruction have rested on (Derrida 1976, Spivak 1976). However, as Goffman suggests, alignments or disalignments ('third world' or otherwise) do not merely rest on a juxtaposition between virtual and actual, design and product, matrix and target of translation, but rather are built upon the very commitment to translation that necessitates a past, future, and present regardless of its precarity in the context of an interaction. Nkrumah and Zhou's motivation of 'third world' iconicity becomes a matter of commitment to its distillation rather than their arrival at a prototype of its ideological design. Their utopic vision of 'third world solidarity' – certainly emerging out of their own cosmopolitan aspirations – was reconcilable, at the time, with a 'cosmopolitan' connectivity unfettered by conflicts and color lines. Thus, the re-reading of their historical interaction offered here – posited from the perspective of Sino-African encounters in the present – suggests that the tension between 'third world solidarity' history and 'cosmopolitan' aspiration is a complex historical dialectic that deserves serious consideration.

For Chinese and African subjects who have to inhabit the precarious position – of having to perpetually *motivate* an aspirational history that constantly appears on the other side of a receding horizon – every narration of historically contingent identity necessarily transforms the very original upon which claims of 'a deep past', 'cultural authenticity' and 'aesthetic standard' rest. Such actors, however, are also invoking histories directed towards mediating futures that are precisely contingent upon such perspectival pasts. In a sense, they are alchemists of aspirations. Aspirational history as presented here suggests an added possibility, where the invocation of the past not only constitutes the present of its utterance, but also a desired futurity. However, for some, such aspirational time-travel – as the preceding encounters have demonstrated – has its limits.

Chapter 2:

The Anglosign - Made in Others' Wor(l)ds

"What is that?", asked Eniola Eco – a classmate and Nigerian international relations student at DaHua (大华) University in Beijing. We were looking across a crowded intersection in the city's academic district, Haidian, after coming out of class for an off-campus lunch. While standing in line at a *daoxiaomian* (刀削面) or 'cut noodle' shop right around the corner from the University, I followed Eniola's somewhat alarmed gaze across a busy intersection. Unable to track the trigger of his dropped-jaw, I asked what was wrong. "The bus!" he answered, gesticulating wildly: "where have you ever seen one of those?" I understood at that moment that he was pointing towards an American-style yellow school bus, which – if I hadn't just come from Chicago – would have seemed rather out of place in Beijing. I suggested that we walk across the road and take a closer look. As we did so, an enormous "ABCD English School" sign – emblazoned on the side of the vehicle – came into view. "That's ridiculous", he exclaimed in a posh British public school accent, gesturing emphatically with both hands open at the rainbow-colored papyrus font subtitling the photo of an Aryan-looking child spread across the side of the vehicle. "I used to work for those guys", he continued, "before they told me they were going bankrupt and let me go without paying me two months' wages". He then concluded – in an ironic tone suggesting only the lowest of expectations – "I guess I know where the money went."

Eniola, like many African students in Beijing, teaches English – sometimes illegally – in order to support a newly acquired, 'cosmopolitan' lifestyle in China. The exploitation he described and the political economy of language at play is far from unique among increasing numbers of African students in the Chinese capital. In the first instance, teaching English to supplement studying Chinese in China has become a paradoxical feature of Sino-South educational globalization. In the second, having the capacity to speak English is often the only form of social currency that black African students in China have, as it

becomes the means to both attain income – teaching in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) market –
as well as build friendships with 'cosmopolitan' Chinese teachers, students, and other foreigners. Here,
English is prevalent even in Chinese university settings, where increasing numbers of classes are being
taught to African students who have been a more common presence on Chinese campuses since the first
ministerial conference of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 (King 2013,
Bodomo 2012). Even Francophone and Lusophone interviewees claimed that their English improved far
more dramatically than their Chinese after becoming University students in Beijing. According to another
informant – a French-speaking Malagasy economics major named Rousseau Bakoly – committing more
to English than Chinese reaps benefits because "knowing English and some Chinese offers more
opportunities for friendship than being really good at Chinese". According to him, having good English
and some Chinese had the benefit of improving one's romantic prospects, as "many foreign girls only
speak English [other than their native tongues], and many Chinese girls want to practice their English".

In this chapter, I will explore the persistence of English as the unit of commensuration in Sino-
South encounters where signs of English and whiteness become the available forms of social currency[7] to
actors who have been historical others to this racial-linguistic world. In doing so, I hope to draw attention
to the limits of postcolonial translation (Spivak 1993, Bhabha 1994 & 1995, Bassnett and Trivedi et al
1999) when its units of commensuration, like 'neutral' English, become compromised by the ideological
vectors of whiteness and cosmopolitan desire. It is this articulated relationship between English and its
associated signs of race and mobility that I will discuss as the Anglosign. Making use of Mikhail
Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope, I hope to suggest the ways in which 'English languageness',
'whiteness', and 'cosmopolitan desire' – as a contrapuntal space-time, that is simultaneously distinct and
mutually convergent – come to entail an ideological landscape that forms the context in relation to which
Chinese and African students must motivate their mutual intelligibility. This spatiotemporal ideological

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[7] Here, I am specifically not in an engagement with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural capital', which requires
consideration beyond the rubric of this chapter. I will suggest, however, that the work of Ghasan Hage (1997) and
Ajantha Subramanian (2015) provide a useful reference point for anthropologists interested in considerations of
Bourdieu's cultural capital in contexts of ethnic or racial stratification.

landscape and the context within which it unfolds, I argue, gives rise to the Anglosign as a stratifying dimension of social interaction among Chinese and African students in Beijing. Revealing the contours of the Anglosign, I suggest, draws attention to the regime of evaluation or arbitration within which Sino-African interactions unfold – suggesting the enduring relevance of Frantz Fanon's (1965) insights concerning the interminable project of decolonization.

Symptoms

In addition to allowing Rousseau, Eniola and many like them to overcome social isolation and access short-term economic opportunities in China, many African students suggested that mastery of English enabled academic access, allowing my informants to take "better courses" from "international scholars" at their Beijing Universities. Many complained, however, that the Chinese language classes offered at their universities – at many top-tier institutions in Beijing – were inadequate because of large student numbers and a lack of conversation practice in mass classes (often over 30 students). After sitting in on a few classes with Rousseau, and watching a somewhat harassed-looking female Chinese teacher trying to motivate over 70 African and other foreign students to repeat phrases from a conversation book, I came to understand his apprehension. His teacher, Liu Laoshi, shared apprehensions of her own. She too felt that the mass-education she was providing for the foreign students was ineffective. In an interview, she stated that the "classroom environment [provided] no opportunity for feedback…you can't surpass the affective threshold". In using the terms 'feedback' and 'affective threshold' Liu Laoshi demonstrated a background in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This is unsurprising since many Chinese teachers who specialize in Chinese Foreign Language education (CFL) also teach English as a Second Language given the ways in which EFL has been the primary model for CFL training. English grammar and other language terms also make-up the default reflexive register for teaching Chinese language points to foreign students of Chinese, which means that every student learning Chinese and every teacher teaching it must work through English as a default pedagogical language. Liu Laoshi would later take a teaching position at a private language education company teaching Chinese to smaller groups of mostly

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white, foreign expat students in the east of Beijing, describing her move as "[having] been promoted". In retrospect, there was certainly a stark contrast between her new four-person conversation classes, and the lecture hall of her former university job – the intimate, well-equipped 'first-world' classroom at the top of a corporate building versus the cold, dusty 'third-world' dungeon where she was getting a chorus of students to yell out a cacophony of Chinese tones augmented by the concrete and plastic surfaces of the overcrowded, neon-lit space. As I came to discover, however, it was not only the Chinese classes at Rousseau and Eniola's universities that presented obstacles to a 'first-world' educational imaginary.

Over three years of ethnographic research as a student, mentor, and colleague among African students and Chinese educational personnel, I came to understand that 'better courses' by 'international scholars' – at institutions like DaHua (大华) University – presented their own contradictions. At this elite University in Beijing's Haidian district[8] I sat in on an international relations class (offered in English). The class consisted of around 30 students, the majority of whom were Chinese students, with around a third of the class being made up of foreigners, most of whom were from South Korea and African countries. Eniola was attending this class and attempted to ask the instructor a number of questions about the PowerPoint presentation off of which the professor was reading his lecture. After two questions, the instructor – a Chinese male in his late forties – gave Eniola a non-plussed look. And then responded by indulgently replaying the PowerPoint slides that might somehow prompt revelation, much to the exasperated sighs of the rest of the class. After this happened a second time, however, the professor promised to send Eniola and the rest of the class the lecture notes. Eniola stopped asking questions at this point, but approached the professor at the end of the lecture, worried about whether he understood the class, much of which appeared to be explained in Chinese as a supplement to the reading of the English PowerPoint. The teacher, who appeared in a hurry, tried to put Eniola at ease by saying in both English and Chinese "Don't worry, *meiguanxi* (没关系)", before heading back to his office. In many instances like this, Chinese professors who are not comfortable with English are put in a position where they have

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[8] This was a part of the city where I conducted the majority of my participant-observer and interview-based fieldwork from 2013 to 2015 and attended many classes with students at different universities.

to augment their credentials as 'international' scholars to maintain academic positions that are extremely precarious – driven by a demand for 'international' education, which they must supply. To be sure, many instructors are able to conduct research and read in English, but are uncomfortable fielding questions and verbally engaging students that speak a variety of different 'Englishes' with accents and registers that are difficult to contextualize. I noted that this was a problem even for Chinese lecturers who had attained academic English fluency in British and American settings, where anything that deviated from an acquired 'standard' became unintelligible.

Nonetheless – in these interactions – students, teachers, and professors come to rely on English as lending legitimacy to the 'international' education that their universities offer, as well as their and their students' future cosmopolitan aspirations. Here, the delicate work of promoting an international education rests not only on the mobilization of English as a unit of commensuration but also on the signs of cosmopolitan aspiration that accrue around English in Sino-African encounters like this. This necessitates an interplay between explicit processes of entextualization and contextualization, where the contextualization of English – *what is done with it* – simultaneously supersedes and super-charges its entextualization – *what is said with it* (Silverstein 2014). For Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), this simultaneity rests on a curious semiotic phenomenon: The meanings that accrue around signs – always understood to be inter-subjective and dialogical – appear to simultaneously recruit and constitute past meanings, 'taking on flesh' that appears to be both emergent, in the here-and-now, and familiar in the sense of drawing on a shared past. Bakhtin's theory of language further posits that because of this propensity, textual objects, like novels, are just one kind of linguistic artifact that in themselves form a very small part of a semiotic landscape that is contingent on the reception and production practices of a public totality of language speakers. Language, for Bakhtin, becomes a political site of social production and revolution because of its imbricated semiotic co-texts and contexts – or co(n)texts (1981). In a similar way, I suggest that English's relationship to its co(n)texts imbricates ideological forces that appear to both liberate and constrain Chinese and African interlocutors in their contemporary encounters. The co(n)texts of English, in this case, may include cosmopolitanism, international education, as well as imagined white bodies that

constitute English's ideal inhabitants. These signs, I suggest, hang together in such a way that their ideological relationships both constitute and are constituted in, the interactional here-and-now of Sino-African encounters. But what makes such signs 'hang together' in this way?

Bakhtin suggests that the possibility of such constitutive and constituting relations between signs to emerge – understood as a socially ubiquitous phenomenon – is contingent on an inter-subjective capacity to construct and depend on semiotic nexuses of spatiotemporal relations in our meaningful engagements with the material universe. In other words, constitutive and constituting meanings of signs are contingent on a simultaneous semiotic construction of *spacetime* – a kind of ideological gravity for signs to have reinforcing meanings to subjects that depend on them. He calls the manifestation of this spatiotemporal capacity a chronotope. What I call the Anglosign extends this principle, recognizing that chronotopes are not political vacuums and that the capacity to produce and depend on them can favor some, and compromise others. The Anglosign, as a kind of chronotope, recruits chronotopic capacities in the service of generating nexuses of alienation and dependency that entail, and are entailed by, the ideological interplay of English, cosmopolitan mobility, and white spacetime.

Through this interplay, written and spoken forms of English, as well as non-verbal communicative acts (such as flipping through a PowerPoint), can be mobilized in a given context to evoke an 'international standard' as opposed to the, at times farcical, attempt at mass education purely in Chinese. This is a fraught endeavor that many aspirational cosmopolitan Chinese and African actors remain committed to, regardless of constant failure. Rousseau, Eniola, and their teachers – for better or worse – are in this endeavor together. They are precariously dependent on and are constrained by, their commitment to the Anglosign. How do we understand the seeming contradiction of coming to depend on English and its signs of social currency as a supplement to Chinese soft power in the form of scholarships and aid that initially bring African students to China?

The durability of what I call global Anglosigns and their associated, necessarily racialized, 'cosmopolitanism' explicate a number of the contradictions inherent in recent criticisms of Chinese soft power as they emanate from academic and media contexts in the Western Anglosphere (Sahlins 2015).

Among African students attending elite Chinese Universities, 'third world cosmopolitanism' – indexing a collective historical 'third world solidarity' struggle – is meant to encompass a broader encounter and aspiration towards – but perhaps also ultimately an incapacity to attain – an alternative, non-Anglogglobal Common of the kind that a number of African anti-colonial and postcolonial thinkers have called for (Fanon 1965 and 2008 [1952], Biko 1978, Mbembe 2001, Baldwin 1963). At present, the escalating educational migrancy from Africa to China is unprecedented not because of the encounter of African students with the Chinese education system –this has a far older history (Hevi 1963, Snow 1989). This escalation appears to have generated an unease – arising predominantly in the West – generated by a counterpoint between China's augmented prominence in global and soft power economies and a rapidly emerging, Chinese-educated African elite public. Disassociating themselves – often dismissively – from their 'trader' counterparts in Southern China, I have observed how many of my African informants attempt to perform or *motivate* their position as members of a China-based, globally oriented pan-African elite public sphere.

As a starting point, however, I will suggest that the particular kind of 'pan-Africanism' one encounters in China arises due to vast numbers of African students not only attending classes together but being roomed together in their university dorms, often finding themselves in African university communities numbering in the thousands on some campuses. As a result of being segregated from Chinese and often also from other western students (a common placement policy on Chinese campuses), African students form inter-campus networks facilitated by the close proximity between universities in cities like Beijing. This process is facilitated through convenient Chinese social media networking interfaces like WeChat, or *weixin* (微信) which I will briefly discuss below. As such, a climate of expansive – even at times volatile – Afrocentrism, -culturalism, or -nationalism often subsumes any interest in Chinese language and educational immersion. Although many students seeking an immersive experience do exist, they often find that the endeavor is a lonely one, requiring a commitment to compartmentalizing their social and solitary identities. In expressing this social dimension, many

informants feel intense pressure to exude an English-inflected cosmopolitanism to their Chinese and non-Anglophone African peers, while using Chinese or other African languages among themselves, to internally put-down or generate complex plays of one-upmanship. Linguistic hierarchies enter into a polyphonic relationship with other semiotic vectors, like media genres, political and entertainment icons, nationalism, gender hierarchy, personal histories, and various forms of racism. What regulates, arbitrates, or renders these vectors as *translatable* is an inter-relationship between discourses of race, language, and mobility – what I have named the Anglosign – that emerge as a spacetime[9] of commensuration where a diffuse notion of aspirational mobility becomes the end goal of not only African, but also Chinese educational labor in China. Thus, Chinese and African student life and outlook, especially in contexts like Beijing, become impossible to disentangle in moments of interaction where multiple horizons of 'cosmopolitanism' appear to converge at once.

In analyzing the linguistic and racial dimensions of this aspiration and its related spatiotemporal anchoring, I will now make use of the analytical work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) and Frantz Fanon (1965) to account for the ways in which, on the one hand, Anglosigns are not racially- or ideologically-neutral spacetimes mediating the China-Africa educational encounters, and on the other, how their spatiotemporal formation manifests simultaneously as a condition of both transitory emancipation and terminal constraint for its subjects. I chose to make explicit the relationship between these two thinkers because of the ways in which they are both concerned with the articulation of space-time, history, and personhood; and because of the ways in which divergent aspects of their respective insights are complementary in engaging questions of 21st century postcolonial mobility under far-from-decolonized conditions.

Chronotope and Postcolonial Translation

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[9] I am aware of, but not in engagement with Nancy Munn's (1986) brilliant considerations of inter-subjective space-time in her classic *Fame of Gawa* ethnography. I am using spacetime here in the ways Asif Agha and others have deployed Bakhtin's ideas in the context of linguistic and semiotic anthropology. I have, however, engaged Munn's work in another publication (2012) where inter-subjective space-time in the context media embodiment is at issue.

As suggested above, Mikhail Bakhtin provides an analytical frame for understanding the ways in which semiotic relations and their continuously transforming material conditions of utterance nonetheless can sustain the durability of certain sign relations. This analytical perspective promises an insight into the seemingly contradictory condition of persistent historical asymmetries becoming relentlessly re-iterated irrespective of what often appears to be transforming contexts of legibility. For thinkers like Homi Bhabha (1995), Gayatri Spivak (1993), and Jacques Derrida (1976) this concern has emerged as a question of translation, and in their work, it has been addressed through mostly literary and historical analyses. Bakhtin's approach, elaborated on by linguistic anthropologists like Michael Silverstein (1976) and Asif Agha (2007), suggests ways to delineate – rather than to reflect by historical contrast – the moment-to-moment, and dialogical nature of discourse. My approach here embraces a semiotic sensibility that reveals the ways in which discourse may be seen to give rise to structures like Fanon's (1965) 'Europe', Said's (2003) 'orientalism', or even Gramsci's (1975) 'hegemony'.

Frantz Fanon's work, like that of Bakhtin's, locates itself in an emergent temporality where past and future ripple out from a present that contains all their potentials. Through this, the durability of colonial asymmetries and their postcolonial incarnations become explicated, suggesting the possibility of their reiteration beyond the grave. In many ways, Fanon reflects many of the spatiotemporal nuances suggested by Bakhtin, while more explicitly politicizing the historical-material implications of signs and their material, spatiotemporal conditions. My approach to depicting the contours of the Anglosign is informed by both thinkers and their genealogies in circumscribing a constraining semio-political economy of race, mobility, and language experienced by many Sino-Afropolitans.

Anglocentric icons of value – like the currency of English education in China and the media textures of luxury brands that emanate from the West, both wrapped in white bodies and inscribed with English subtitles – appear, to many Chinese- and African cosmopolitans, to be both the signs through which to achieve some degree of financial and social mobility, as well as conditions constraining the value of African subjectivity in a Chinese social landscape. The latter, since the shift from Maoist

socialism to an increasingly Han-centric ethnonationalism, is rapidly adopting an escalating horizon of expectation, aspiration, and desire (Rofel 2007, Osburg 2013, Farquhar and Zhang 2012, Chu 2010, Farrer 2002, Wu 1998).

David Borenstein's (2015) short documentary on 'foreigner-renting' in China, which recently appeared in the online New York Times is instructive (IRL 4). It reflected how the renting of foreign bodies plays a key role in adding value to property prices in the increasingly prevalent context of 'ghost cities' – unoccupied housing complexes emerging rapidly on the fringes of major Chinese metropoles. Here, local property moguls have begun recruiting foreigners of various nationalities, who through their presence are meant to make a property/building seem "more desirable" (ibid). What was telling in the documentary – and was also corroborated by a Zimbabwean informant, Tendai, who was "on call" for one of these foreigner-recruiting companies – is how black bodies, while still suggestive of foreignness, nonetheless signify a "less expensive" foreignness compared to their white counterparts. Signs of whiteness and English-languageness are fundamentally intertwined, given the way in which it is English that constitutes the minimum requirement to become an appropriately 'foreign' rented foreigner, and yet it is signs of whiteness or non-whiteness that hierarchizes remuneration and desire.

Another, and perhaps more easily documented example is that of African students pursuing English teaching jobs in China. In these scenarios – as several informants noted – many are overlooked in favor of whiter applicants regardless of their lack of English speaking ability. These are often white foreigners who, like themselves, do not speak English as their first language, but come from countries like Russia, Spain, and Germany. In one ethnographic experiment, I posed as an Afrikaner with a heavy Afrikaans accent – incapable of speaking in grammatically-correct English sentences – and applied for the same job as another black South African informant – Comerade A – who had a posh Model C accent[10]. We applied with the same qualifications (university students in China with South African passports). At three out of

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[10] In an analysis of the cultural capital of certain English accents in a South African educational context, Kerryn Dixon (2011) defines the Model C accent as follows: "Speaking with a 'White' [South African] English accent is seen to be ideal – and the students who speak fluent English without the intonations of African languages are often referred to as having a 'Model C accent'" (2011: 81).

three English schools we applied to consecutively, I was offered an interview, while he was turned down. When the same informant was eventually hired at another institution, I submitted another mock-application with only my photo and was offered three times his salary.

In this example, English ability in tandem with our 'foreignness' placed both Comrade A and myself way beyond Chinese returnees looking to teach English in Beijing. When I asked a Chinese recruiter about this, he explained that such measures became necessary because of the ways in which English teachers must reflect a *guojihua* (国际化) quality, which translates to 'internationalized' or 'international standard'. According to him and other Chinese informants – all personnel in the Chinese education industry – this exclusion was necessary in order to appeal to Chinese consumers of English education in a highly competitive market. In relation to the categories of whiteness and nation – irrespective of language ability – Comrade A and myself became very differently stratified in Beijing's Anglo-cosmopolitan class complex. While my apparent whiteness got me far ahead of Comrade A in Beijing's English job market, my passport placed me at a markedly lower rank compared to the Americans or other white, English-speaking commonwealth subjects teaching English in China. Depending on the interlocutor and their level of popular historical engagement, this little green document usually indexed me between two extremes: either as a kind of less-than-convenient third world white, or – in rare moments – as a trans-global right-wing racist (when there was some degree of familiarity with apartheid history). Thus, on Beijing's English job market, the relationship between my passport and appearance made me more *guojihua* than Comrade A, and yet, almost but not quite *guojihua* compared to potential European or American colleagues.

In all of these scenarios, English and whiteness appear to provide the gravity for a constellation of meanings and activities that regulate hierarchies in relation to a horizon of expectation that appears simultaneously all-commensurating and unattainable for anyone within its purview. Few will ever be white or English enough to completely live up to its standard but subjects are very obviously stratified in relation to it – manifesting the tension between the fantasy of (liberal) cosmopolitan non-racialism, and

the felt reality of 'white gravity'. To be sure, certain archetypes of Anglo-Aryanism – an army of white

male journalists or well-spoken aristocrats in the West for instance – do enjoy the unassailable privilege

of fully inhabiting this category. Many other whites, however, while certainly enjoying this privilege, do

so with a certain degree of precarity – for there is certainly some anxiety around falling short of

expectations, animated by the knowledge that no one will ever defend 'white trash' from ridicule, or

forgive the sin of being 'a waste of a white skin'. However, while this white horizon continues to

fundamentally transcend most of its subjects, its emergent indexes must take flesh in some form or

another in order to perform its self-perpetuated regulating role. A spatiotemporal context and relevant

bodies must be recruited to constitute it. If one were to accept the premise that it must do so, we should

ask what form or forms would or could such an inter-social spacetime take? Fanon articulates a political

economy of language and race that addresses this concern.

Whiteness and Fanon's 'European'

In Fanon's (1965 and 2008 [1952]) work, the term 'European' – as adjective, or noun – might

appear to the initial reader as an overly-capacious, and somewhat broad coverall for an incapacity to name

the actant of racism under colonial and postcolonial conditions. My interpretation is that – in his argument

– it is perhaps capacious enough, in that it draws attention not so much to the artifacts and subjects of

oppression or oppressing, as it does the total theater of meaning within which the efficacy of these

oppressive relations become activated. 'European' understood in this sense, becomes a broad-ranging

historical material formation that impinges on the legibility of – and the asymmetry inherent in – the signs

emanating between racism and colonialism's unequally situated subjects. For example, asymmetries –

between Comrade A and myself, between South Africans and Chinese returnees, or between myself and

the Americans – do not arise because of what we are or are not. Rather, the asymmetry stems from a

limited and limiting context of translation within which our capacities for becoming intelligible to

ourselves and others are fundamentally constrained. In the case of Fanon, this context emerges as the

historical material condition of 'Europeanness' which arises as a dense semiotic zone where the

relationship between words, things, personhood, bodies, meaning, and value become reconstituted, and where the unit for commensurating its re-ordering is not shared equally by those situated in a colonial encounter with obvious asymmetries. Frantz Fanon elaborates in *Wretched of the Earth* (1965): "Yes, the European spirit is built on strange foundations…[a] permanent dialogue with itself, an increasingly obnoxious narcissism inevitably paved the way for a virtual delirium where intellectual thought turns into agony since the reality of man as a living, working, self-made being is replaced by words, an assemblage of words and the tensions generated by their meanings" (ibid: 237).

Here, Fanon diagrams the articulation between zones of language and race by suggesting a kind of semio-political economy between the signs 'European' and 'words'. He does this by observing the way in which 'words', in the colonial-capital matrix, come to take on what Marx (1972) once referred to as the fetish character of the commodity which in turn is exploited by the 'European' – masquerading here as the condition of capitalism – for the purposes of its self-perpetuation and endless accumulation. Finally, this exploitation occurs through alienating the now-proletarianized colonial oppressed from their social labor of self-making (Marx 1972, Fanon 1965). The key insight here is the centrality of the unit of commensuration – the currency of 'words' – and the material and historical conditions that give them value – the 'European' context of translation. These provide the subaltern in the argument no room for meaning or maneuver since the very conditions of meaning are already compromised.

From the perspective of many African learners, Chinese cosmopolitanism's horizon of expectation emerges increasingly in English subtitles and with "white characteristics," mirroring in many ways the relations of language and race that Fanon suggests. Such perceptions are undeniably experienced in a complex counterpoint with the more contradictory daily realities of student life in Beijing. Initially, African students arrive in the Chinese metropolis, encountering an environment that requires a facility with Chinese that vastly transcends their one or two years of text-book training at Confucius Institutes in their home countries. Daily challenges include, among other 'alterities', the often-trying negotiation of infrastructure, bureaucracy, and social media, all of which are in Chinese. Confronted with this disjunctive landscape of signification with no graspable gloss, the only legible categories at hand are the

occasional 'English' signs, which protrude like luminous stepping stones, however precarious, on a seemingly fathomless sea of (initially) illegible characters, interactions, and objects.

Such tokens of the 'Anglosign' – as just suggested – encompass a vast education industry in China. One thinks here of educational corporations like 'New Oriental' (or 新东方) and increasingly prevalent lookalikes, indexing a privileged world of English language abilities and American universities as the aspirational end-outcome of Chinese educational labor. This domain of consumption, furthermore, seems evidenced by the relentless emergence of all manner of large malls (online and on every block) which foreground the images of entrepreneurs and celebrities like NBA basketball star, Yao Ming (姚明) – in his recent role as the subject of English learning – and famous education venture capitalist, Kai-Fu Lee (李开复) – one of a number of figures who have increasingly come to embody American educational aspiration in China. However, these individuals and the aspirations they iconically come to represent, are quickly juxtaposed with, or even subsumed by, other 'cosmopolitan' male images, perhaps those of Steve Jobs, George Clooney or other white male bodies which proliferate in shopping malls all over Beijing. Some of these images have associations with commodities that have an obvious bodily, connective, luxurious or temporal association – Apple products, Omega watches, or Calvin Klein underwear for instance. Such potential associations index an end-point of aspiration with very 'white' characteristics, most likely with 'English' subtitles. Having passed through the labyrinthine hall of mirrors that is China's – and indeed much of the world's – mass and social media assemblages, their convergence comes to stand, for African and Chinese subjects, as the iconic distillation of a situated horizon of expectation and personhood.

Given their increasingly prevalent commensurating role in China-Africa exchanges, will Anglosigns eventually emerge as the only conduits for manifesting Frantz Fanon's hope for "the Third World [starting over] a new history of man" (Fanon 1965: 238)? Expressed close to the time of his death, only six years after the 1955 Bandung Asia-Africa conference and Mao Ze Dong's invocation of Three-World-Theory, Fanon exhibited, in this hope, a guarded optimism for the potential displacement of

'European' master signs in regulating a singular world history. In some ways the invocation of 'third world solidarity' (第三世界大团结) in Fanon's historical moment reflect many of the features of a concept that Achille Mbembe has recently re-framed, that of *the Common* (Hardt and Negri 2009) – as a shared, fundamentally egalitarian, inter-social, and genuinely 'public' space-time (Munn 1986, IRL 8). For Fanon, the foundations of such a utopia required "[a history] which takes account of not only the occasional prodigious theses maintained by Europe, but also its crimes, the most heinous of which have been committed at the very heart of man" (Fanon 1965: 238). Is it perhaps the deferment of such a catharsis that reinforces the durability of Anglosigns as decolonization's compromised units of commensuration, formations that perhaps continue to undermine the emergence of such a Common? How did Anglosigns – as more than a nomenclature indexing a language of command – come to be situated as the fulcrum of aspiration for both Chinese and African cosmopolitans?

Ideological Space-time

How Anglosigns come to predominate in current Chinese-African student encounters can be interpreted, not necessarily through the centrality of English per se, nor through the artifacts of cultural capital that index the Anglosphere's particular flavor of 'Europe', but rather by the ways in which any meaningful interaction between Chinese and African cosmopolitans must be regulated and made legible in relation to them. In doing so, I will show how such associations emerge, and how African students engage, or perhaps participate in, their formation through a linguistically- and technologically-mediated practice of spatiotemporal evocation. Here, Anglosigns appear to generate obstacles to African students' self-making labor, while also and paradoxically becoming prostheses that must be depended upon to "translate China" or make themselves legible within it. In this regard, Anglosigns are invoked as devices for maintaining a kind of spatiotemporal grip on encounters that would otherwise marginalize aspirational cosmopolitan subjects. Following Bakhtin's chronotope (1981), the intersection of language, forms of media, and everyday life become a sensory and temporally evocative nexus of emergent, inter-social

meaning-making. It is this nexus that, in his words, 'gives flesh to time' (1981). Here, the chronotope links the flow of time and the activation of space – as represented in his example of the diegetic world of the novel – to the social world that is simultaneously in and beyond it.

As a concrete evocation of time-space relationships in and beyond discourse objects, the chronotope acts as a semiotic nexus that disrupts the easy dualism between material universes and art worlds. It can be monadic or plural assuming the shared, concrete nature of discourse and the already-inter-discursive nature of the material world. By making explicit in the interactional relationship between the extra-textual social world and forms of media – through a phenomenon he calls heteroglossia – Bakhtin complicates the notion of creative agency in the making of any text. He does this by drawing attention to the contingency of a sign's reception, thus undermining the assumption of autonomous creative subjects as well as the associated cascade of fractal dualisms accompanying it. Bakhtin further reminds us of the ways in which semiotic activity in the 'imaginary' sphere is always anchored to meaning-making movements and positions that are afoot and under construction in the material universe and vice versa. While he analyzes the chronotope as a literature-specific phenomenon, where genres of the novel play a particular role in framing how the chronotope functions in relation to the world beyond it, his argument is contingent on chronotopic potentials generated dialogically beyond the novel. Linguistic anthropologists like Asif Agha (2007) and Patrick Eisenlohr (2006) have demonstrated this in their ethnographic re-framing of Bakhtin's ideas.

The chronotope – as I am using it – can also be understood as a practice-generated, sensual space-time that experientially emerges, both individually and collectively, out of spatiotemporal disjunctures that manifest as a response to forms of socially oppressive trauma. The Anglosign, as evocative of such a potential is simultaneously generative of semiotic anchor points in the lives of Africans finding themselves in a context like Beijing, where their only social capital is their capacity with English. In this sense, Anglosigns are inter-social, imbricating language, race, and cosmopolitan mobility. They emerge under precisely the kinds of conditions where mobile subjects attempt to cope with the spatiotemporal disjuncture between novel interactions and embodied memories of space-time (Munn 1987). Emerging

out of the communicative encounters, media interactions, and conditions of mobility experienced by African educational migrants in and with China, the Anglosign may be seen to serve as a way to render a kind of cohering intelligibility to otherwise disjunctive aspirational precarities. However, as a coping mechanism through which cosmopolitan iconicity is *motivated*, commitments to the Anglosign may be seen as simultaneously engendering potentially alienating alterities in its construction.

One afternoon, I found myself in a mall with Lerato Thulo, a South African accountancy major at Beijing's Daji (大鸡) University. She was one of my Chinese language classmates. We were having a coffee and interview at the 'Sculpting In Time' coffee bar in Haidian's EC mall. It is the kind of space that a variety of cosmopolitan migrants and students in Beijing flock to, where their buying power can supplant the 'problematic worlds' that their accents or appearances might otherwise index. Far from being 'non-places' (Augé 1995), the malls that proliferate in many Chinese centers become places where countless migrants – foreign and local – can 'blend in' by buying-in (with cash or mere aspiration). They are thus precisely meaningful for their de-stigmatizing potential, given that malls themselves become engines for commensurating otherwise classed-lives – often by passport or *hukou*[11] (户口). No one cares where you are coming from or where you live if you are buying things. From a bourgeois liberal perspective, a mall can seem like a site of heterotopic semiotic oblivion, but for many subjects stratified by persistent class and ethnicity discrimination in urban China, certainly imbricated by ideological conditions of capitalism and colonialism, a mall may offer a potential refuge, emerging as anything but a 'non-place'. While waiting for a cappuccino, Lerato was following a WeChat feed on her iPhone where someone had posted an article which condemned China's human rights record in light of a recent execution of a South African expatriate found guilty of drug trafficking. WeChat – or *Weixin* (微信) – is the primary Chinese social media application in lieu of WhatsApp's inaccessibility in China, and is partly owned – 34% as of 2014 – by Naspers, a South African firm (IRL 9).

This particular group chat belonged to the Azanian Students in China (ASIC) group. As we both

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[11] This is an intra-national residential permit for Chinese citizens, which limits their residence to a particular city or district (Young 2013).

read the discussion thread, we realized – all of a sudden – that a particular student's message had been blocked a few minutes after it was posted. This sparked a meta-debate about censorship among the students, some seeing this as a "violation of free speech", others regarding it as "an appropriate measure", which "perhaps should be implemented back home [in South Africa]." This last comment was referencing a discussion a few days prior, about the problematic role the South African media played in African and race politics in general. As we read the comments and laughed at some of the more animated flourishes, Lerato blurted out, responding perhaps to the calls for free speech on the group chat: "why do [the Chinese] have to take shit from America anyway? They make everything, but they have some white guy wearing CK underpants meant for Chinese customers" (IRL 4). She was referring here to Justin Bieber's partially-nude image in one of Calvin Klein's 2014 advertising campaigns, which we had made fun of earlier for taking up almost 40 square meters of a shop window in the mall.

Here, the interaction between two South Africans engaging the media contexts of familiar debates in our home country combined with the familiar, all-commensurating texture of the trans-global mall and its universally cosmopolitan coffee shop, evokes another space-time that momentarily displaces that of Beijing. Through our communication-in-context, otherwise 'neutral' signs become reconstituted through their recruitment in the interaction. The dulcet tones of "Blue in Green" from Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* album, the familiar flavors of coffee and cheesecake, the mutual legibility of the tones of our respective South African accents, even the image of Justin Bieber all coalesce to allow us, for a moment, to forget the ten grammar points and forty new characters we had to learn for the following day's quiz, or possibly even the inevitable hassle of yet another visa-renewal at the 'Entry and Exit Bureau' the following week. No tokens of the Anglosign have an essential character that allows them to be *motivated* as such. They come to work in this way through an interaction, and through their received and reconstituted arrangements during the unfolding of inter-social space-time. It is this process of contextualization that allows the experience of a concatenation of total sensory worlds all to be relied upon to temporarily anesthetize – through sensory distraction – the experience of Beijing. The associations together – generating an inter-social chronotope between Lerato and myself – transforming 'Sculpting In Time' cafe

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into a kind of synesthetic time machine which through our occasional meetings transformed the otherwise mundane coffee shop into a space-time of recuperation we both came to depend on.

But what manner of dependency does this distraction and anesthesia engender exactly? The intelligibility of the signs in question and their personal associations, accumulated through our respective spatiotemporal trajectories up until that moment, relies precisely upon their ubiquity – their postcolonial heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981). Our very register of mutual interaction is a default first language – the ever-present commonality among postcolonial multilinguals without mother tongues. This spatiotemporal displacement and reconstruction, as a form of anesthesia, makes explicit the Anglosign's entailed compromise. In reducing intensity, it potentially paralyzes awareness. It is here, where the Anglosign emerges, where the nexus of our respective, potentially very different receptions of 'common' yet plural spatiotemporal experiences down to the present converge to evoke mine and Lerato's partially-shared Anglosign-based space-time or chronotope. It is a pluralistic index of our contrapuntal colonial and postcolonial alignments emergent in our interaction and shared experience. For this reason, the mall and all the potentially chronotopic props it contains can never be a non-space to an African student in Beijing (Augé 1995), even if it is a space of temporary forgetting. However, emerging from this anesthetic dimension of the Anglosign, as I will now show, can be somewhat jarring.

Chronotopic Failure

As we were leaving the mall, Lerato and I saw more than 20 young Chinese men and women wearing suits and carrying brochures for Wall Street English, an English education company with branches all over Beijing. The brochures were offering GRE and TOEFL preparation in addition to regular English classes. Lerato looked at one of the leaflets being distributed and addressed a young female sales representative in relatively fluent Chinese: "Do you think that, just because I can speak English, I will be able to go to the US [to study]?" (因为我说英文非常流利，所以你觉得我能去美国吗), followed by a rhetorical interrogative: "huh?". Whether, due to her pronunciation, additional

phonemes, somewhat accusatory approach, or possibly even a mixture of confusion and embarrassment on the part of her interlocutor, the Chinese sales representative stared at the South African awkwardly and didn't say anything. At that point Lerato, looking somewhat incensed since reading the pamphlet, turned to me and dismissively stated: "See, even if you speak Chinese to them, they don't want to understand". The exchange was concluded with an exasperated click of the tongue[12] on the part of Lerato – "*Xh!*" (k‖ʰ) – accompanied by a 'waving-off' gesture.

In a subsequent interview, it emerged that Lerato's frustration stemmed – on the one hand – from what she saw as a misguided commitment to Western education on the part of her Chinese interlocutors: "English isn't enough to get you into Oxford, otherwise, why am I here?" On the other, it stemmed from what she perceived as being negated as a "low-quality [black] foreigner" when, from her perspective, she had already mastered a skill – in this case, English – which "[all Chinese] see as a golden ticket", but which hasn't helped her at all. For Lerato, and many other African students in China, it is quite obvious that, while they are embracing the possibility of an 'alternative' Sino-African globalization, their Chinese peers seem to be moving in a different direction by chasing the branded emblems of Harvard, Yale, or Stanford emblazoned on every institution that promises a shortcut to 'global' educational excellence. In leaving an Anglocentric world, particularly in the case of Anglophone African students, they come to encounter one that embraces not only the language but the cultural capital of a world within which blackness and Africanness continue to be liabilities (Mbembe 2001). It is here the commitment to a shared alignment with the Anglosign paradoxically fails to ease discomfort, yet continues to render paralysis.

English as Life Raft

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[12] Tongue, an emphasis, at the end of sentences expressing annoyance is a borrowing from Southern African languages that use 'clicks'. They are also a widely used inter-linguistic phenomenon, even being used by many white English and Afrikaans speakers to express extreme annoyance.

Towards the latter part of my fieldwork, I received a message that would suggest the existential limits of the Anglosign. Via an anonymous China-Africa student network, I received the following email from a contact traveling around Eastern China:

> I thought I would share a little news with you. Currently, I am writing to you from Hangzhou, where I have just arrived by speed train following a 'crisis call' from another African student there. He is a gay Senegalese who is unable to go home to renew his visa because he [fears imprisonment] on the basis of his sexuality. The Chinese LGBTQ community has arranged short-term solutions for him but can do very little following recent amendments to Chinese immigration law. Because of these sudden changes in policy, it is virtually impossible for Africans from any country to renew their visas without going back to their home countries. They are forbidden from renewing anywhere else. As a result, he faces Chinese prison if he overstays his visa, and because of his citizenship, he can go to very few other places in the world for longer than two weeks. He is now awaiting a French consular official's evaluation of his case to see if he qualifies for refugee status in France... we will know his fate in a few days.

Soon after receiving this, I was introduced to Damien, the subject of this exchange, and we secretly met a few months later near the West Lake in Hangzhou. After a long discussion where he described the ways in which China and a Chinese education were the conditions of possibility for the exploration of his sexuality, and following an elaboration on some of the details in the correspondence, he finally told me what he was doing in Hangzhou. "You have to understand", he explained in a heavy Francophone accent, "English saved my life" (Damien 2015). Teaching English as a Foreign Language (or EFL) illegally, it turned out, had kept him afloat for almost a year, but the period for renewing his Chinese visa had arrived and, at the time of writing, a new set of visa laws for Africans were instituted barring those in mainland China from renewing their visas anywhere other than in their home countries. For Damien to return home would mean arrest upon arrival because of the fact that his parents, who were

government officials, had already reported him to the authorities there. English teaching had indeed saved his life, but only temporarily. The space-time of the Anglosign he was clinging to was a lifeboat with a hole in it, and it was sinking fast. When, after a few months, the date arrived for his French refugee visa interview, I contacted him to ask how things had gone. He did not qualify for refugee status and was distraught. Soon afterward he was unreachable and up until now, I have still heard nothing from him. Whatever the outcome, his commitment to the Anglosign – having 'saved his life' by fleetingly keeping him temporarily afloat – could not sustain him.

From the broader perspective of China's educational investments, Lerato's paradox and Damien's dilemma seem to mirror a number of recent debates on Chinese soft power. On the one hand, Sino-African dialogue continues to escalate on political, economic, and educational fronts, evidenced by current FOCAC and BRICS initiatives, and accompanied by a considerable escalation in Chinese-sponsored educational endeavors in both Africa and China (Brautigam 2009, Bodomo 2012, Chan 2013, Alden 2007, Li et al 2012, King 2013). On the other, all of these initiatives – despite being overwhelmingly China-driven – continue to be made legible and evaluated within an interconnected landscape of predominantly English language-based media, aesthetic, political, ethical, and economic discourse and its associated signs of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986, Errington 2008, Cohn 1996, 1975, Ngugi 1994). Despite a sustained Anglo/Western-hegemony in social, political, and educational settings worldwide, there has been much nervous hand-wringing over Chinese influence in the media and disciplinary theaters of the Anglosphere, at times followed by 'corrective actions', notably in the US academy (Sahlins 2013, Crovitz 2014) and more recently in Sweden (IRL 5, 6, and 7). What these controversies clearly demonstrated was the limited media landscapes, associated languages, and aesthetic values within which debates over 'global' educational initiatives are able to unfold. The predominantly monolingual media and political theaters of the West within which "lessons were taught [to Beijing]" and "academic freedoms protected [from China's inveigling influence]" emerge as a clear indication of the ways in which, not only English but its associated sensory and media worlds at times foreclose rather than merely 'frame' the context of educational and political interaction (IRL 5 and 6).

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For these reasons, media representations of the Chinese educational-political matrix have been less than transparent and far from even-handed, precisely due to the ways in which 'China', as an oppositional term to 'the West', becomes monolithically fetishized in the Western media lens. However, as shown in Lerato's example before, it is increasingly apparent for those standing outside of this media theater, that such readings elide the less easily-demarcated friction between a Western media-based horizon of value that *motivates* an iconic equivalence between all participants in a 'neutral' value system, and the asymmetrical alterities this continues to generate especially for those trying to cultivate an alternative.

Thus, for African students like Lerato, the expectation that the West is appearing less capable of setting the terms of everyone's representation in the wake of an increasingly legible theater of interactions (between China and Africa for instance), gives way to a frustration at a persistent hegemony of a Western sphere of aspiration. This further engenders perhaps an emergent sense that the implied pluralization of this asymmetry – through an imminent multilingualism – is not so much 'arriving too slowly' as not really happening at all. However, many of their Chinese counterparts – cramming for TOEFLs and GREs – are following the same initial intuition as Damien. Here, the presence of Anglosigns represents something more akin to a life raft, than a stepping stone, or at least something to help one survive a swim to shore (which itself is yet to emerge on the horizon). If it is manifestations of power we are after, it is surely in this situated rather than arbitrary theater of postcolonial translation – the absent presence of Anglo-whiteness in Chinese projections of soft power – where it might be excavated with perhaps fewer overtones of yellow peril. For African students in Beijing, what appears to be at stake is an intelligibility that transcends marginality by any available means. This has many parallels with Steve Biko's call for the appropriation of Black consciousness as a conduit for achieving a 'full expression of self' (1978).

As an education activist and icon of anti-imperialist struggle, Biko's legacy – through its citation in and beyond contemporary student struggles back on the continent – animates endeavors of many Africans studying in China. This is clear in the ways he is often quoted in student social media groups to index solidarity or even misalignment with student struggles that are not far from the everyday

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consciousness of many, particularly Southern African, students living in Beijing. Rather than being a flat-footed racial essentialist, and quickly written-off as such by many superficial readings of his work in Western academe, it is worth noting that Biko never made any claims about the intrinsic differences between white or black 'races' in promoting an educational decolonization. Instead, he encouraged young Africans to appropriate the alien, 'racialized' categories of difference within which colonized subjects found themselves to be emplaced. His utopic vision of a non-racial nation state following revolution is consistent with an argument that underlined the situated and discourse-driven nature of the very categories of race and racism. For Biko, racism – like the Anglosign – emerged out of inter-subjectively *motivated* signs of difference and sameness (or alterity and iconicity), where sameness and difference were far from arbitrary possibilities. Racism required a spacetime to perpetuate its stratifying force where the chronotopic capacities of signs were exploited within a racist ideology to continually reinforce the meanings of blackness in relation to whiteness, and not in relation to the 'arbitrary' signifier of race. For this reason, Biko encouraged young Africans – constrained by conditions of apartheid and its colonial precursors – to appropriate, rather than provincialize racialized signs that were doing racist work. His was a move that assumed the immanent categories of a hegemonic context (blackness and whiteness as opposed to 'race') and sought to overturn them from within, or at least reveal the internal contradictions of their appropriation. This is a strategy that itself emerged from the limited possibilities of expression with which previously colonized subjects had to make do. For African students in Beijing, their cosmopolitan dreams must unfold in the absence of previous success stories of Africans who 'made it' in China or through Chinese education. At the same time, their Chinese interlocutors are themselves in pursuit of a horizon of aspiration located in an elusive, but certainly English-speaking, Metropole. For Chinese and African subjects imbricated in this economy of desire, such contradictions indicate the limits of cosmopolitan commensuration in provincializing the perpetual present of a – still – far from decolonized world. The chronotopic propensities of the Anglosign disrupt projects of decolonization in precisely the ways Fanon once suggested, where without an idea of what 'having-been-translated' might

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look like, a 'being-in-translation' must unfold within the limited confines of other worlds, in others'

words.

Part II – Intersectionalities

Chapter 3:

Intersectional (Im)Mobility – 'Remarkable Selves' in White Spacetime

In other words, I'd be giving in to a myth of sameness, which I think can destroy us.

– Audre Lorde

Along Da Jie Road in Haidian District, there is a group of fifteen or so Chinese women of age-ranges between about 16 to 35. They are lined up, offering document counterfeiting services while simultaneously providing a baby daycare service for other migrant families who are working in mostly service industry jobs and are unable to take care of their children at work. From early in the morning until the early evening they walk up and down the road with a baby in-hand, advertising counterfeiting services to passers-by. As dusk arrives in a cloud of urban mist, a complex mixture of smoke from roast lamb kebabs (*yangrouchuar* or 羊肉串儿) as well as smog from the afternoon traffic combining with a white polluted fog that has drifted into the city from the South of Beijing. At this moment, when the sun is either engulfed by these layers of human substance or given a beautifully muted orange hue, the women with others' infants return to their makeshift residences/workshops to complete the orders they received that day, or to prepare for a second occupation. As they do so, many distribute 'name cards' advertising services for romantic or erotic companionship ambiguously either on behalf of themselves or others. All of them are Chinese migrants from a rural village in Dong Bei (东北 or 'Northeastern') province. They are all without *Hu Kou* (户口) – living permits that allow Beijing Chinese to own property or live 'legally' within the Chinese capital – which is more often the rule than the exception for the city's swelling population of migrants (Jacka 2015, Carillo Garcia 2004). As a result, many non-Beijing working-class residents find themselves increasingly vulnerable to exploitation from employers, property owners, and

low-tier Beijing government officials. If one of the women in question were to be arrested for engaging in the illegal activities mentioned above – counterfeiting and prostitution – they would either be jailed or sent home to their provinces, having lost – through fines or bribes – any profit they'd gained in the city. The babies they carry for others are an arrest-prevention 'insurance' measure, given that police officers in Beijing are reluctant to arrest anyone carrying the infant of another, given the complexity involved in finding the child's mother. The Haidian police are fully aware of this and the women know that the police are aware of their activities. This uneasy tension between their precarious position as well as their reliance on it appears to be the cumulative result of the simultaneously unenforced yet exploitable illegality of practices like prostitution and non-*Hu Kou* labor migrancy. As a result of these precarities – not only of employment status but also living conditions and constrained mobility – the erotic services offered by some of the counterfeiters may be the only opportunity to have a place to sleep for the night, whether arranged by a customer, pimp or 'provider-lover'. Such 'opportunities' make explicit not only the fundamental differences in access to capacities for mobility compared to elite, aspirationally cosmopolitan Chinese subjects; they also reveal how rural Chinese women must inhabit urban space, and often sustain their own mobility in a zone of liminal, yet functional, illegality compared to the large numbers of rural men who undertake contract labor in large Chinese urban centers.

Trotsky Tsvangirai, a Zimbabwean student at Da Hua University, became such a 'provider lover' to one urban migrant. He came to know Meimei (美美) through decoding one of the name cards she regularly dropped on the street in front of his university. Through the use of his Plecko Chinese language application on his iPhone, more than through his Chinese lessons at university, he translated the services offered on her name card and called the number. Following the exchange, much of which (by his own admission) he was unable to follow, they met one evening in the back of a massage parlor "behind a secret door that looked like a cupboard" as he explained in one interview. After a number of visits as a regular customer – and following Trotsky's improved Chinese language abilities – Meimei came to spend evenings in his dorm room and received dining hall lunches with a counterfeit student card in exchange

for sex. This relationship resembles what Mark Hunter (2010) has referred to as 'provider love' differentiating such relationships – the African context – from prostitution as the impersonal exchange of an erotic commodity. I came to know a lot about their relationship and was even introduced to Meimei because of the fact that Trotsky and I often played music together in his dorm room – we were both guitarists and fans of Zimbabwean Chimurenga music (Trotsky was something of a Zimbabwean hipster).

Meimei and his relationship can be understood as a meeting of two migrancies – hers from rural Sichuan (四川) and his from Zimbabwe – where both of them regard Beijing as a space of cosmopolitan, urban opportunity despite the possible threat of terminal 'stuckedness' – through imprisonment or deportation – that might result from the discovery of their interaction. However, the difference between them is that the futurity of Meimei's migrancy is simultaneously certain and chronic, in the sense that working-class sex workers like Meimei – with no educational background or *HuKou* – face considerable intersectional obstacles compared to elite, aspirational Chinese attempting to get into American Ivy-league universities. Here, increasingly constraining economic conditions in rural China bring larger numbers of *HouKou*-less, thus exploitable, migrants into Beijing (Gaetano 2004, Yang 2008). Trotsky's future position, by contrast, is both uncertain and temporary, since – as suggested in Chapter 1 – the result of his mobility generates the expectation to be transformed. If he were caught with Meimei, however, his possibilities of travel – not only to and within China – would become severely constrained.

Eventually, Meimei's and Trotsky's arrangement came to an end when the group of ladies with babies began to disappear from in front of university entrances in Haidian district. She just didn't come to his dorm one day. At the time of writing, the group outside of Trotsky's university had diminished from around thirty occupying a particular stretch of sidewalk every day to around one or two walking around verbally advertising their counterfeit services once or twice a week.

Intersectionalities

Contemporary arguments concerning ideological stratification of gender and sexuality have largely focused on the 'intersectional' domains of language (Spivak 2010, Butler 1999, Gal 1995), mobility (Parrenas 2001, Morokvasic 2014, Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004, Sassen 2003), and race (Crenshaw 1991, hooks 1981, Lorde 2007). Moving among these domains, however, it is often difficult to ethnographically identify an overlap between semiotic and linguistic practices; race, class, sexuality, and gender hierarchies; as well as the intersection between these identity and value distinctions as integrated social phenomena within a political economy of mobility. This remains an obstacle to critically theorizing intersectionality, even though a persistently implicit relationship between all these vectors of stratification remains intelligible. Perhaps this is an 'epistemic' problem (Foucault [1966] 2002), but how is the episteme sustained both in the micro-interactional present, and contingent upon historical micro-interactions (Foucault 1980 & 1982, Crenshaw 1991)? This analytical contradiction re-manifests when the analyst considers the effects of intersectional stratification as not only palpable in English-speaking, elite disciplinary theaters interested in marginal people; but that they are, in fact, experienced by the very marginal people who are being talked about. In what follows I will show how the aspiration toward archetypes of aspirationally cosmopolitan personhood among two groups of elite women – one Chinese and the other black African – generates further compromised conditions for these already marginal, intersectionally-vulnerable subjects.

Making use of linguistic anthropological framings of spatiotemporally-contingent personhood – via the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981 & 1993 with Holquist, M.) – and through analyses of micro-interactional poetics in a few different contexts and modes of interaction within these groups, I will demonstrate some of the textures of intersectional stratification among non-Whites in a non-Western encounter. Additionally, I will explicate a relationship between mobility and intersectionality in such interactions, arguing that critical engagement with intersectionality – in precisely such a settings – allows for analytical opportunities to map the contours of white spacetime as a horizon of stratification that persists and mutates within the 'equal opportunity' logics of globalization.

In the Summer of 2014, Palesa Ntsoaki and I arrived at her residence after one of her classes at Pingguo University (苹果大学). Palesa is a black female MBA student from Botswana who shares an on-campus apartment with two other women – also MBA graduate students in her program. One is from Sweden, the other from Indonesia. International students residences are usually separate from Chinese residences in Chinese Universities. Before we sat down for our interview in her cramped, but cozy apartment, Palesa offered to brew a pot of Rooibos tea – a friendly gesture to a South African, since this Southern African beverage is rarely drunk unless one is among those from one's own part of the world. When Palesa served two steaming cups of tea, I returned to the topic of a conversation we were having on the way to her apartment and asked about her next step in getting a job in Beijing. She sighed, took a sip from her mug of tea, and said in a prim English accent – one acquired from her parents' insistence and primary schooling in a private girls high school in South Africa – "Be the best purple cow I can be".

The purple cow in question was drawn from, Seth Godin's – an American marketing guru's – best-selling book: *Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable* (2009). This text has become a prominent discourse object among one group of aspirational African elites in Beijing. For many in this community, it mediates attempts to generate students' own icons of achievable cosmopolitan futurity via Beijing. This is attempted in the absence of present role models of African excellence that stand as ideal and attainable futures facilitated through a commitment to Chinese education. The Purple Cow is also the inspiration for the appropriated nickname that this small group of African students has come to use for themselves, and forms a part of a tension this chapter explores: that for the majority of the female members of this in-group, the very race-less, genderless cosmopolitanism the Purple Cow epitomizes, comes to compromise, stratify, and ultimately reinforce precisely the asymmetries that these students aim to provincialize through their commitment to an all-commensurating 'cosmopolitan' horizon of aspiration.

As the African women in this chapter attempt to embrace the Purple Cow in pursuit of their educational goals in Beijing, many of their Chinese student peers are attempting similar (neo)liberal

projects through their own literary genealogies. *Caihong Qiao* (彩虹桥) or 'Rainbow Bridge' is one small Chinese feminist organization in Beijing co-run by Vivian Xu, one of many of the organization's Ivy League-educated founders. Rainbow Bridge forms part of an increasing network of similar LGBTQ organizations in China, currently organizing annual intensive courses (or camps) in feminist theory. Many of them do this with a view to recruiting elite Chinese students with pro-feminist politics into American institutions like Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. For many of them, and for this group, in particular, Sheryl Sandberg's (2013) *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* has become an important discourse object – in English and Chinese – around which to promote an elite public sphere of feminist Chinese who embrace the 'equal opportunity' promise of free-market capitalism as a means to personal empowerment and gender emancipation.

In analyzing the Purple Cow and Rainbow Bridge communities in Beijing – mediated through these two discourse objects – I will explore a contradiction at play in the formation of Chinese and African cosmopolitan spheres and their relationship to the Anglosign. Drawing on critical feminist concerns with intersectionality (Lorde 2007, Butler 1999, Crenshaw 1991), on the one hand, and linguistic anthropological explorations of enregisterment (Agha 2003, 2005, Silverstein 1976, 2003b), on the other, this chapter will contextualize how Chinese and African commitments to the 'equal opportunity' projects of *Purple Cow* and *Lean In* ultimately come to re-make a familiar, stratified hierarchy with white patriarchy at its apex. To this end, I have found Asif Agha's discussions of enregiserment (2003) and mass-mediated chronotopes (2007) extremely valuable in understanding Chinese and African intersectionalities in Beijing.

Here, I hope to show how the constrained *motivation* of mass icons of 'personhood' reveals intersectional orders emerging in the absence of ideal 'Sino-Afropolitan' cosmopolitan precedents. This contributes an important extension to both discussions of gendered enregisterment as well as theories around race-gender-sexuality intersectionalities, given the fact that the majority of these prior analyses have been staged in the context of bounded societies, nations, or language communities that have shared a

long-term proximity. In a Sino-African encounter, the more spatiotemporally complex, dialectical dimensions of register formation and intersectional stratification can be observed in an interaction that is less obviously over-determined by overt structuring processes like the nation-state and language standardization policies. To be sure, my analysis will suggest that elements of these structures are still far from absent, however, in less expected modes of ordering.

The intersectional ordering that I will identify is contingent on an overarching spatiotemporal contextualization of meanings and associated values that engender their own dependencies – where signs of language, mobility, and race generate the space-time for the re-iteration of 'common sense' gender asymmetries (Gramsci 1975). I will show how the relationship between English and its associated, racialized signs of cosmopolitanism – as a kind of virtual gravity for Sino-African interactions – provides often constraining rather than liberating possibilities for Purple Cow and Rainbow Bridge projects. In support of my ethnographic discussion, I will additionally provide an example of interactional analysis where I identify a 'canonic poetics' as a dimension of group interaction that reveals implicit participatory hierarchies.

How to Become Remarkable

In 2014 I had attended a number of Purple Cow events with Palesa in Beijing. These were arranged for, and by a number of Purple Cow members who wanted to host 'seminars' specifically meant to feature and discuss the implications of Seth Godin's book for African students in China. As a student about to graduate in China, Palesa was looking for a job in Beijing, where she had been living for 9 years as the daughter of a diplomat. At the time, this process was proving difficult, something, I naively thought, seemed surprising given her political buy-in. Her parents had considerable government connections and she had acquired complete Chinese colloquial and technical fluency through pursuing her Bachelors and then Masters studies at top Beijing-based institutions, this being a remarkable and difficult achievement among African students in China. The majority of African students in Beijing don't see any reason for a

commitment to fluency in Chinese since most of them graduate after taking their main subjects in English – meeting the base-line language requirement for graduation from a Chinese university.

Some, like Palesa, have also had to build relationships with Chinese patrons who have sustained their residence or endorsed their continued studies in Beijing. Such 'elite' students have all benefitted from Chinese and African government support, as well as political and economic relationships that are often reinforced through kinship ties. For example, a considerable number of Zimbabwean students whose parents have close ties with the ruling ZANU-PF party, both attend and have scholarships to the same University where President Robert Mugabe's wife attained her degree in Chinese studies.

Large numbers of elite African students in China (many in Beijing) represent an important outcome of Chinese soft power and Sino-African educational and governmental cooperation. As such, many new arrivals have become persons of interest to an earlier wave of African elites who have situated themselves as Sino-African brokers trying to motivate and market the value of both a Chinese-educated African subject, as well as a climate of South to East exchange where Sino-African relations cut-out Western middlemen. Miriam Bakgatla is one of these first-wave brokers. She styles herself as an entrepreneur, talent scout, and Sino-African expert, and is one of the few long-term members of Beijing's Sino-African community – a position acquired through both political (as someone who worked for the government of an African country) as well as business acumen. Through her organization, Azanian Achievers China (AAC), she generates opportunities and organizes projects – like the Purple Cow initiative – that attempt to promote China-Africa relationships and brokers opportunities for African students as well as Chinese business and government personnel. Through this process, she has become a formidable gatekeeper to her young African male and female apprentices – As a guardian of their interests through events and workshops meant to "promote and mobilize African talent in China". At one event, she opened our discussion with a quote from Seth Godin's text:

> If a product's future is unlikely to be remarkable – if you can't imagine a future in which people are once again fascinated by your product – it's time to realize that the game has   changed.

Instead of investing in a dying product, take profits and reinvest them in building something new. (Godin 2009: 27)

Suggesting that African students in China are like this product and, in particular, should "embrace [their] inner Purple Cow", Miriam emphasized a mode of conduct where her apprentices should carry themselves as "self-made", and create narratives of professional excellence, where one has achieved "success through one's own endeavors". In one-to-one interactions with many Purple Cow members, Miriam also often emphasized that remarkability was measured according to an "international standard" where "the game has changed". How the game has changed, however, was less important than Miriam's overall message: "In marketing your Purple Cow… every second and every contact counts". Later on, when I was able to interview Miriam, she explained further: "We have to make the most of our opportunities as African students in China by finding a way of profiting from our very unique, but not yet marketable brand… the Chinese underestimate us because we are blacks, but we don't see them as colonizing us since we are here to take their country one little piece at a time". Voiced in a dialectic of African black consciousness (Biko 2002: 48-53) and neoliberal 'common sense', this was a position she and other Purple Cows maintained as a matter of course.

Seth Godin's Purple Cow book becomes a conduit for this self-expression, framing an ideal subjecthood that attains personal or financial realization by understanding a universal set of laws governing human interactions, in essence, a 'how to' guide for making oneself marketable to others, where the reception of others is more or less taken-for-granted. Given this "co(n)textual" a priori, Seth Godin's text emphasizes an approach to making what is unique about 'your brand' desirable to others – in essence a recipe for self-fashioning an all-commensurating person-as-commodity (Silverstein and Urban 1996: 1 - 20). This particular aspect certainly resonates with several subjects who, like Miriam, are trying to tailor philosophies like the Purple Cow not only to the context of Africans aspirations in China but to cosmopolitan translations in a variety of subaltern space-times (Comaroff 1993 and 2009). Miriam's particular angle, however, equates the Chinese-educated African subject of excellence with the Purple

Cow as a product that is "truly remarkable". Of course, *motivating* an iconicity between the African educational migrant in China, and the efficacious neoliberal subject necessitates an erasure of the possibility that her product's future " is unlikely to be remarkable". It also requires a constant vigilance about the fact that the future of her product depends on others' imaginative labor and conditions of felicity (Appadurai 1996 and 2016, Austin 1975): "if you can't imagine a future in which people are once again fascinated by your product, it's time to realize that the game has changed" (Godin 2009: 27).

In arguing for the remarkability of her apprentices' expertise, Miriam often demonstrated her knowledge of dominant China-Africa narrations of history, by equating the Purple Cow with historical giraffes brought as gifts from Africa to China during the Early Ming Dynasty. This serves as a popular historical reference – in the Chinese context – of Admiral Zheng He's (郑和) gift to the emperor after returning from his expedition of Africa during the early 15th Century (1405-1433) (Dreyer 2007, Yamashita 2006). When I later asked why she compared the Purple Cow to the giraffe in a follow-up interview she answered: "Because everybody only remembers the fucking giraffes and none of the other gifts…giraffes are remarkable".

It is worth noting that Miriam's Purple Cow is an un-actualized potential in the sense that it is *motivated* to emerge through the strategies laid out by both Seth Godin's Purple Cow and their inter-social alignments and disalignments to its reception. As Palesa suggested before she aims to *become* the best Purple Cow she *can be*, suggesting the ultimate unattainability of its realization – one form of cosmopolitanism sets the horizon for its 'third world'[13] analog. This relationship between two cosmopolitanisms is further complicated by African and Chinese students in Beijing's electronic and social propinquity with via social media landscapes in multiple international space-times, generating a pluralistic, but stratified, cosmopolitan diasporic chronotope. Following WeChat[14], Twitter and WhatsApp[15] feeds on

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[13] See discussion of Third World Cosmopolitanism in chapter one.
[14] This is a Chinese social networking platform like WhatsApp or Facebook that plays a key role in mediating city and social life in China.
[15] Access to these Western social media platforms (Twitter and WhatsApp) is made possible by installing a VPN to bypass the Chinese firewall.

their newly acquired smartphones – commonly during a stopover in Hong Kong – African students and Chinese students try to calibrate these chronotopes.

From the African student perspective, it is also clear that recent mass-mediated narratives like #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, 'decolonizing the University' (IRL 16 and 12), and 'Africa Rising' (Mahajan 2009) heavily inform Miriam's appeal to an empowered, postcolonial, yet very Anglophone, elite, 'Afropolitan' ethnoscape (Mbembe and Nuttall 2008, Appadurai 1996). As suggested in the previous chapter, this has as much to do with English as a former language of command to Africans, as it does with the English's perceived role in brokering an 'international' cosmopolitanism for their Chinese post-socialist interlocutors. However, this counterpoint appears to unfold in the spacetime of a register – and its entangled hierarchies of race and mobility – that constitutes a supposedly 'neutral' ideal subject – the Purple Cow. This desire for a 'neutral' means of leveraging more desirable futures out of constrained contemporaneity is by no means specific to the African students in Beijing.

Motivating Lean In

Vivian Xu met me in her apartment close to the Lama Temple in central Beijing. She is an American Chinese had worked in China for a number of years, moving between the US and China since her undergraduate days where she studied at one of the most prominent Ivy League colleges in the United States. At the time of our interview, Vivian was a graduate student at another prestigious American university but was running an English language editing business in Beijing (alongside her Rainbow Bridge activities). This was because she needed to sustain her income while deciding on a project for her Ph.D. dissertation. In addition to establishing a lucrative side-profession assisting Chinese students' undergraduate applications to prestigious US universities, Vivian was an LGBTQ activist. Working for Rainbow Bridge was one way of bringing together entrepreneurship and liberal activism. The workshops or 'boot camps' her organization arranged, brought US academics from top-tier institutions into expensive Beijing hotel conference rooms, where young Chinese women (mostly high-school students and undergraduates) pay a considerable fee to participate in seminars that teach a combination of western

feminism and US college application strategies. All of this was taught in an environment where English language immersion and the possibility of a reference letter from a white American professor was part of the workshop's 'package deal'.

My role at Rainbow Bridge and other organizations like this was to work as teaching assistant, editor, and facilitator; but mostly as a token-white face providing 'international flavor' (or color) to educational activities that fundamentally did not require either my presence or expertise beyond the horizon of cosmopolitan aspiration my 'whiteness' indexed. This was apparent to both Vivian and the other facilitators working for Rainbow Bridge. Vivian assured me that I was useful not because they believed in my competence, but rather because they believed in others' belief in it. Mirroring Slavoj Zizek's (1989) argument for the persistence of ideology despite actors' reflexive awareness of the ways in which they are stratified by it, she later stated in an interview that "the parents paying for the workshop want to see authentic [white] foreigners". In this capacity, I helped Vivian to organize seminars, grade written work, as well as provide mentorship on how to approach US college and university applications. During a boot camp held by Rainbow Bridge in the Summer of 2016, I was able to observe classes taught by Vivian and an American Ivy League Professor (another authentic white foreigner) invited to participate in some of Rainbow Bridge's workshops.

During one of Vivian's classes, titled "How to approach your college admissions essay", another narrative of marketable remarkability emerged. Drawing on a book titled, *50 Successful Harvard Application Essays: What Worked for Them Can Help You Get into the College of Your Choice*, Vivian emphasized the need to "make your application stand-out", that a US institution [like Harvard] "does not value the typical profile of a nerdy, modest, female, Asian student". She underlined the fact that applications essays "need to make their authors look remarkable...even if you don't really feel you are". Vivian's presentation immediately provoked a discussion, during which one college student, Ally, put her hand up and asked Vivian if saying she was a lesbian from China was likely to make her application stand out in Harvard medical school's application pool? Ally was also the leader of a *Lean In* reading group at her elite university in Beijing and a strong advocate for Chinese women seeking elite education abroad,

particularly in the US. To this end, Ally's parents had invested a considerable fortune in providing her with an 'international' education and long-term immersive classes in English, which she spoke with a perfect (possibly Californian) American accent, even though she had never left China. Her occasional interjections in class, punctuating discussions on feminist revolution or heteronormativity with phrases like "totally awesome!" or "that shit cray" respectively conjured a sense of having-already-arrived in a place she was always meant to be. Ally, like the other workshop participants, were completely enamored with Vivian's "professional" presentation, many consciously copying Vivian's semi-formal attire following her introductory seminar, saying, "I want to look as professional as her".

Responding to Ally's question, Vivian hesitated for a moment, then looked down to her right where I was pretending to prepare the next powerpoint slide for the presentation, and continued: "Yes, saying that you are a lesbian and how that has given you diverse and unique experiences may definitely benefit your college application". For the remainder of the seminar, Vivian emphasized the need for remarkability, citing the archetype of the cowboy as a social value icon in American society where you have to be the "hero of your own narrative". When I later asked Ally what she thought of the seminar and what prompted her question to Vivian, she cited Sheryl Sandberg, saying that "she [Sandberg] shows how women can pursue their rights in China". I asked if anyone [in class] could really be anything like Sheryl Sandberg? I was drawing on feminist, bell hooks' (IRL 19) critique of the author of *Lean In* (2013), which had been taught by their Ivy-league professor that morning. Ally responded without hesitation: "Yes, Sheryl expects all women to be more remarkable". Indeed, *Lean In* does emphasize that the achievement of remarkability depends on courageous actions of individual women contesting society as members of an oppressed class:

> We hold ourselves back in ways both big and small, by lacking self-confidence, by not raising our
> hands, and by pulling back when we should be leaning in. (Sandberg 2013: 8)

These descriptions raise important questions regarding both Vivian and Miriam's charges: Is Sheryl Sanders the Cowboy of Ally's narrative, just like the Purple Cow becomes the placeholder for Palesa's cosmopolitan future? To what degree are Miriam and Vivian able serve as actualized manifestations of, and conduits for, these respective projects of Purple Cow and Lean In? Drawing on a western philosophical genealogy of thought concerning the relationship between personhood and property, Ilana Gershon (2017) theorizes contemporary logics of mobility and the cultivation of subjecthood as having a contingent relationship within neoliberal logics. She reveals how 'branding a self' as competitively remarkable – in the ways similarly voiced by Vivian and Miriam – has become integral to this process. What the specific examples of Miriam and Vivian – and elite Sino-African interactions, more generally reveal, is that such neoliberal logics are underpinned by far from neutral cultural currencies like liberalism, English, whiteness, and heteronormative patriarchy as intersectional vectors that inform ideologies of value that underpin the commensurations of neoliberalism. As Cedric Robinson (1983) powerfully revealed in his political economy masterpiece, capitalism precisely operates through the recruitment of categories of value – like race – that appear to transcend or precede capitalism itself.

Canonic Poetics

While Vivian's 'success' served as an aspirational beacon for many of Rainbow Bridge's participants, her own relationship to the aspirational horizon she represented for others was more complex. Although Vivian had received considerable amount of grant money in the US, for her research project in Beijing, she had always been involved in entrepreneurial activities, given that she had largely been cut-off from her parents who did not entirely approve of the fact that she was a lesbian, and that she, therefore, was always in a position where she needed to acquire independent financial means. After she had received grant money and had left for the field, her white, male American project advisor discovered that she was running what he called "a side business in the field". He reported her to the grant awarding organization, who revoked her funding, this after humiliating her among faculty members and her peers at her own university. As a result, Vivian had to intensify her entrepreneurial activities to compensate for the loss, and

thus the labor needed to *motivate* the efficacious elite, Anglo-Chinese, cosmopolitan personhood she had worked so hard to cultivate, and yet which always situated her, and many like her, as in-between cosmopolitan chronotopes. In one, she was the Ivy-League educated educational professional in 'truly cosmopolitan' Beijing, in the other, 'third world' chronotope, she was the precarious, cheating Chinese graduate student who is perpetually 'almost-but-not-quite Harvard', despite being a first-generation American citizen.

The way in which Vivian becomes systemically marginalized in one context, while valorized as an aspirational icon in another, can very much be understood in terms of discussion of raced, gendered, and queer intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991, Butler 1999, Lorde 2007). Here, Kimberley Crenshaw in particular empirically demonstrates not only the ways in which women of color find themselves doubly stratified in terms of race and gender in American 'multi-cultural' contexts but also the ways in which an equal-opportunity assumption of identity politics can ultimately come to compound the racial and gender asymmetries they elide. Vivian's case also stretches the case for Crenshaw's argument given both that she becomes the receiver of almost-unmarked privilege in one national context while becoming precariously marked in another. This reveals both intersectionality's analytical purchase beyond singular, bounded, 'national' polities and also the ways in which 'whiteness' emerges as a problem beyond the bodies that may normally be understood to inhabit it. The fact of Vivian's queer identity as a marginalizing factor in her own life, despite promoting the value of its 'remarkability' to Ally, underscores the performative, yet far from arbitrarily relative, dimensions of intersectionality.

In providing a dialectical frame for conceptualizing the ways in which intersectionalities emerge performatively, Judith Butler (1999) defines performativity as "[where] one who waits for the law, sits before the door of the law, attributes a certain force to the law for which one waits". Performativity thus becomes "[the] anticipation of an authoritative disclosure of meaning" as "the means by which that authority is attributed and installed" (Butler 1999: xiv). It is thus through this dialectical temporality that "anticipation conjures its object" (ibid). Here, performativity's range is limited by the degree to which subjects like Vivian can gain their footing (Goffman 1981) in different ideological contexts of interaction.

The fact that this horizon of aspiration – which she promotes to Ally and others – is one that marginalizes Vivian, certainly does not make her a charlatan. It indicates the limited range of aspirational potentials available to her and those she mentors, whose only choice is to operate in a performative mode until alternative ideological gaps arise. While Crenshaw provides a historical and case-based account of how the fact of intersectionality is visible through its effects, and while Butler provides a compelling argument for its dialectical emergence performatively, this stratification – as I suggested – can also be studied in real-time interactions.

As Judith Butler shows, observing language performativity requires both attentiveness to language as fundamental to the emergence of intersectional stratification as well as an understanding of language as both mediating and inextricable from that context. Here, linguistic anthropologists' concern with a phenomenon called enregisterment opens up analytical terrain for revealing intersectionality's interactional manifestations (Gal 1995) as well as performativity's dialectical manifestation in mass-mediated ethnographic contexts (Nakassis 2012). In his work, Asif Agha (2003 & 2005) reveals enregisterment as a process emerging between actors encountering one another within an interactional space-time or chronotope (2007). He does this through a rigorous synthesis of Bakhtinian and Goffmanian views on language and co(n)textual phenomena as providing the semiotic means and categories for social stratification. In his discussion of *voicing* (Bakhtin 1981 & 1984) and *footing* (Goffman 1979) as analytics informing enregisterment, Agha proposes an attentiveness to the figures of personhood and stereotypes these dual processes animate. In Agha's work these appear to be dynamically-socially-motivated archetypes appearing to simultaneously emerge out of – and yet are motivated to presuppose – the space-time of semiotic interaction. As a starting point, Agha defines registers as "contrastive patterns of register use [that] index distinct speaking personae in events of performance" (38). Furthermore, "the social existence of registers depends on the semiotic activities of language users, particularly those characterized… as matters of alignment" (ibid).

In the following analysis of an interaction between several members of a Southern African community of students in Beijing, I try to capture a complex play of alignment and disalignment that

animates multiple intersectional tensions through the ways in which different voices in a conversation become stratified. The following interactional text is drawn from an organized focus group among members of Purple Cow that I arranged and participated in during my fieldwork in 2014. The interaction took place at the corporate headquarters of an elite Southern African students organization in China called the Azanian Achievers Group in the affluent district of San Li Tun (三里屯) in Eastern Beijing. The participants were: CK, a black male Botswana government official doing an MBA in China; JP, a white, male English-speaking South African aspiring entrepreneur, also doing an MBA in China; Trotsky Tsvangirai, the Zimbabwean student from the opening vignette; as well as Miriam and Palesa. Here, both Miriam and Palesa are the most elite Purple Cow members participating in the interaction.

The transcription method[16] I use here is informed by Bakhtin's metaphor of 'voicing' to depict the ways in which language's diachronic emergence always presupposes a dialogical, inter-subjective ideological space-time. For Bakhtin, the primary metaphors of language were aural, tactile, and emergent between moving parts, much like the experience of listening to contrapuntal voices converging in real-time – not as linear, stratified melodies, or vertical, synchronic harmonies that essentialize meanings to the sum of their parts. Drawing inspiration from Bakhtin's understanding of language as a musical metaphor (as opposed to the inverse) my analysis aims to give a sense of contrapuntal alignment and disalignment voiced between different actors participating in an interaction. In doing so, I will focus on moments in the course of this contrapuntal voicing, where a *canonic* poetics overturns and reveals implicitly enregistered interactional orders (Goffman 1983) from those that were explicitly presumed upon among the participants at the outset of the encounter.

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[16] The advantage of this technique, drawing on the use of 'pair-part' notation in more conventional sociolinguistic analyses, is that it attempts to represent the overlapping of multiple voices in their temporal sequence. In doing so, I take inspiration from an ethnomusicological transcription technique, called 'pulse notation', developed by ethnomusicologist Andrew Tracey (1970). I have also included other – 'non-speech' – events – as marked by **[ ]** – that unfold during the interaction. My goal in using this graphic mode of representation is capture moments during an interaction when actors 'voice' – through vocalization, focus, or gesture – ideological alignment or disalignment with a 'main' speaker, but through this process subordinate themselves.

In making use of a western musical metaphor, *the canon*, I identify moments where actors repeat or anticipate words or phrases uttered by a conversational protagonist (as a means of emphasizing alignment and dis-alignment) during dynamic encounters. By way of this metaphor, I am trying to capture the staggered aural effect – mirroring those of choral 'canons' – as a way of emphasizing an affective alignment to a 'head voice' by taking on a subordinate, rather than protagonistic role – for instance, the example of the 'backing singer' or 'DooWop girl' in American popular music. Such moments, I suggest, distill or reveal implicit interactional orders (Goffman 1983) that may contradict those that are explicitly assumed. In the case of the following interaction, Miriam and Palesa are recognized as leaders of Azanian Achievers. However, through the complex interaction that follows, the stability of this hierarchy is rendered somewhat more precarious.

Once everyone had arrived for the session, and the door to the boardroom we were occupying was closed, I opened with the general question as to how everyone had initially found adapting the life in China. CK spoke first emphasizing how jarring the transition from Gaborone (in Botswana) to Beijing was:

1 CK: Now it's good I'm enjoying it,
2 but at first the language barrier was
3 there.
4   **[JP then enters the interaction once CK pauses]**
5   JP: Ja, but it's a bit of a challenge
6   this language thing, eh? When I
7   got here, my initial thought was
8   that, you know, there'd be more
9   people that understand English or
10   Basic English, but none of that eh.

Here, CK leads, explicitly contextualizing his initial arrival in China in terms of a language barrier. His delivery is relaxed at this point in the interaction. JP, the only white person in the focus group, quickly interjects trying to build rapport with the other Azanian Achievers and me by using 'Ja' and 'eh' as South African English shibboleths to signal potential alignments with South Africans in the room generally, but

with myself in particular. He, like CK, keeps his delivery relaxed, maintaining or perhaps emphasizing a South African accent, using 'Ja' to index agreement with what had just been said, and 'eh' seeking confirmation of his participation. Both CK and JP indicate obstacles and disappointments with their experiences of the absence of English in China.

Speaking to JP, before the focus group, he appeared to embrace the discourse of post-Apartheid reconstruction and reconciliation: "It's a whole new world, eh, we can all sit around the same table and just talk about China". JP was referring to other black people sharing the same corporate setting overlooking one of the wealthiest parts of Beijing, imagining an equal post-racial interaction unburdened by less-privileged interlocutors who still constitute an economic, mostly black, majority in his home country. In his conciliatory hubris, JP further sought to indigenize himself by recruiting me to his aid, drawing attention to the fact that, like me, he too was "A real dutchman like Jannie…we are from the same tribe" – deliberately using both the diminutive form of my Afrikaans name, *Jannie*, and the derogatory ethnic slur, *dutchman*, as both a self-deprecating strategy and a way to suggest both that he was on equal footing with his other African interlocutors, and that he had 'pale native' solidarity with me.

Picking up on (what he perceived to be) the 'elite' make-up of the group, JP often invoked the rhetorical phrase "we all want the same thing, right?" both prior to this meeting and in later interactions with Azanian Achievers whom he hoped were his peers. Through this, he appeared to suggest that they are equals in the interaction, in so far as they were all English-speaking, educated "global leaders". The reception of JP's position within the group, however, was another matter altogether. CK's responded to JP's 'language gap' observation, attempting to expound on his own analysis:

1 CK: Yeah, because a lot of people…
2   JP:**[starts talking over CK]** 3
                                                             until you get in a
4 CK:**[directs himself at
5 Trotsky]** People in other
6 cities say "in Beijing
7   JP: cab, you're like oh shit.
8   **[stops talking]**

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9	Trotsky:**[immediately leans-in**
10	**To listen, nodding visibly and**
11	**intently at CK]**

In this exchange, CK begins by addressing himself to JP, who then cuts him off and starts addressing the group as a whole. CK, however, reasserts himself by speaking to Trotsky, who is seated next to him. Meanwhile, JP's imposition has not gone unnoticed and an alignment with CK begins to form where everyone in the group turns to direct themselves toward CK. This is picked-up on by JP, who tails-off and stops talking. It is more-or-less at this moment that CK begins to slow down and enunciate, almost in a burlesque, using a 'posh' British accent. The group 'uptake' of the switch from a Tswana- to 'posh' English accent – with its measured phrasing – is marked in what follows:

1	JP:[…Looks offended and
2	keeps quiet]
3 CK: **and Shanghai …you'll be**	
4 ok", but when you get here	
5 no…'cause	
6	Trotsky: **you'll be ok…**
7 CK: **from the airport**	
8 it's like the first	
9 person you see	
10	Miriam: **doesn't speak**
11	Palesa: **doesn't speak**
12 CK: **and it's difficult.**	
13	Miriam: **English**
14	Palesa: **English!**

Facilitated by CK's change of rhythm and emphasis, the black members of group intensify their alignment by anticipating what he will say next, and endorsing him through a chorus-like voicing of the phrases 'you'll be ok' and 'doesn't speak English'. The result of this interaction is that JP is effectively excluded from the participation framework from this point onwards. CK as the oldest black male in the

group quickly establishes his seniority through the assistance of Trotsky (the youngest person in the focus group at 25). Meanwhile, Miriam and Palesa participate in the conversation having been demoted to attentive praise singers of CK's performance.

Not only should the above interaction be taken as an exemplar of a discourse pattern that pervaded the interactional gender dynamics of elite Anglophone African students in Beijing, it was also an interactional dynamic Miriam and other black women in this community were acutely aware of. Miriam and I discussed the problems of patriarchy fairly regularly – as an almost mundane topic of discussion among younger African female students as well as older women (like Miriam) with a certain English educational status and background. On one occasion I asked how she dealt with it as a leader in this community. She explained that her status as a black woman in China already placed her on the back foot outside of the African community, and that dealing with "strong" African men who ultimately needed her network to survive, was comparatively easier to manage "because it's familiar". When I asked about other younger black women and the obstacles of patriarchy, she noted that they would have to find their own way like she did: "It's not easy, but if you can make yourself indispensable, and make it so that others need to depend on you, then you're in with a chance". I ventured: "Make yourself the best Purple Cow you can be"? "That's it", Miriam noted with a sagely nod, but then realizing that I was perhaps not being entirely sincere, added with emphasis on the 'I': "*I*'m not joking".

Among men in the community, there was a similar degree of awareness but significantly different responses to it. While some felt that it was a pervasive social problem that needed to be addressed and that there should be greater gender equality among Africans, I note in the following chapter, there was also an outright hostility against young women who were critical of patriarchy. One unusual response emerged in one interview of a former Azanian Achiever – Zakes Mbuli – who seethed at his exclusion from this group, holding Miriam accountable for being ostracized: "That woman is a sangoma [trans. 'witch' or 'witch doctor']. She pretends like she wants to help you to your face and then sends a Tokoloshe [trans. 'witch's familiar' or 'demon pet'] to get you later…she likes to keep everyone close and under control but doesn't like it if you talk too much. I just had enough of the mind games and

decided to make my own *guanxi*". Here, Zakes who still had many friends in Azanian Achievers felt that

he had not only been excluded but had to become part of an out-group and no longer could have access

Miriam's network or resources. Marking her as a sangoma – an initiated woman or man constituting a

supernatural threat through the wielding of occult power – Zakes suggested that Miriam was able to

capriciously enact unseen retribution against her victims and blessings upon her acolytes. In exiting the

patronage network Zakes imagined himself, then, to be immune to the inter-subjective witchcraft she

might otherwise be able to enact upon him through mutually-contingent and dependent social relations, or

guanxi. Thus, from Zakes' perspective, Miriam transcended the usual bonds of patriarchy that governed

mere mortals, something Miriam did not seem as convinced of, though, I might have been admittedly

more naïve than Zakes about Miriam's powers.

The tension between the 'equal opportunity' aspiration Miriam and Palesa endorsed before, and

gender hierarchy in the conversation above emerges not simply because the actors' internalized ideologies

of white heteronormative patriarchy ultimately obviate actors' motivation of an equal opportunity

cosmopolitanism mediated through the 'neutral' register of English. I suggest that closer attention must be

paid to the social space-time of 'unmarked' aspiration that subjects like Vivian and Miriam attempt to

partially inhabit and are constantly thwarted by. Doing so necessitates attending to the intersectional

horizons that 'unmarked' English enregisters through their interactions. Here, I suggest reading the

limitations of the dream of the Purple Cow from within a raciolinguistic *space* and *time* (Fanon 2008) that

that reveals the failure of its *motivation*.

Decolonizing the Chronotope

Asif Agha, drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope, discusses such mass-

mediated inter-social space-times (Agha 2007, Bakhtin 1981). Here, Agha reconfigures the chronotope as

a formation "of place-time-and-personhood to which social interactants orient when they engage each

other through discursive signs of any kind" (2007: 320). In aligning themselves respectively to the text-

worlds and reading publics of Lean In and Purple Cow, Vivian and Miriam's students forge and participate

in chronotopes that are dialectically both of their own makings, and yet must also transcend them as part of an aspirational space-time that is yet to be achieved. For Agha, "[time] is a semiotic isolate", thus impossible to unmoor from its dynamic contextualization in articulated assemblages of context and personhood – like the interactions in which the Purple Cow and Sheryl Sandberg – as different, but none-the-less mass-mediated archetypes – presuppose an articulated cosmopolitan contemporaneity and associated personhood. This kind of space-time, however, must be mediated. As Agha suggests, time "is textually diagrammed and ideologically grasped in relation to, and through the activities of, locatable selves", in this case, Miriam and Vivian's presence as those who index, but do not fully inhabit the space-times of the text objects they mediate (ibid). Thus, in the motivation of any icon, and recognition of any sign, *a receiver and a space-time of reception are entailed, even if both appear to be absent*. Here, three points – a legible sign, a spatiotemporal context of reception, and a point of reception (a subject) – form a mutually contingent triangle of reception. Describing the chronotope as being "peopled by social types", Agha aligns himself with Bakhtin's view that media reception – print or otherwise – constitutes a socially-contingent subject formation like that of personhood. Of course, such social types can be chimeric in their construction. In Purple Cow and Rainbow Bridge communities, implicit social types – like the white, English-speaking, American cosmopolitan – can become obscured by the explicit *motivation* of multicultural non-racial subject inhabiting the 'neutral' register of English as the global language. Such plural, but far from equal, possibilities can be understood in relation to Bakhtin's insistence on the *unfinalizability* of persons and personhood. This perspective is grounded in the assumption of an indeterminacy of identity as constituted inter-socially rather than autonomously and individually out of voices that can never be located or rooted fully in only one body (Bakhtin and Holquist 1993). This is articulately framed in Bakhtin's elaboration what he calls the 'act of understanding':

> In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be located outside the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture. For one cannot even really see one's own exterior and comprehend it as a whole, and no mirrors or

photographs can help; our real exterior can be seen and understood only by other people, because they are located outside us in space, and because they are others. (Bakhtin 2004: 7)

Thus, chronotopes and the persons they diagram into being, and vice versa, form mutually-dependent dialogically-emergent formations. This is the case because a dialogical outlook points to reception as the emergent site of a sign's meaning, value, and material efficacy. This suggests a fundamentally distributed account of meaning-making, complicating easy readings of flat-footed identity politics, on the one hand, and supposedly radical anti-identity and anti-political claims, on the other. Instead, emerging asymmetries arise multi-directionally – simultaneously bottom-up, top-down, and perhaps even sideways – but are far from an absent representation.

This insight was not lost on Frantz Fanon (2008 [1952]), another thinker who pointed to a similar relationship between space-time and personhood, However, for him, the political stakes of these intersectional asymmetries mattered profoundly. In his *Black Skins, White Masks* (ibid) Fanon explicitly notes the role of spatiotemporal contextualization in providing the weight that grounds signifiers and allows for a distillation of their resulting essentialisms. In his critique of Octave Mannoni's (1950) *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, Fanon provokes the analyst – of dreams or political economy – to attend to the material conditions within which the signs of memory and alienation unfold. Decrying Mannoni's misinterpretation of the traumatic dreams of Malagasies, Fanon writes:

We must put the dream *in its time*, and this time is the period during which 80,000 natives were killed, i.e. one inhabitant out of fifty; and *in its place*, and the place is an island with a population of 4 million among whom no real relationship can be established, where clashes break out on all sides, where lies and demagoguery are the sole masters. In some circumstances, we must recall, the *socius* is more important than the individual. (Fanon 2008 [1952]: 84 – 85 author's original emphasis)

Fanon's spatiotemporalized 'socius' emerges as a trans-historical chronotope that persistently materializes the colonial consciousness in the decolonizing present. It is not the repetition of history, but the reiteration of it in a dynamic dialectical history that continues to animate the inter-social space-time of the still colonized postcolonial subject. The implication here is that chronotopes are both not equal and emerge relationally vis-à-vis other chronotopes. To be sure, Lean In and Purple Cow may, on one level, imbricate very different reading publics or chronotopes, and here every reader co-constitutes their fractal Lean In or Purple Cow chronotope within it. On another level, Purple Cow and Lean In also diagram a cosmopolitan, English-speaking horizon of aspiration to Miriam and Vivian's social projects. The seemingly equivalent, and relative, potentialities of all of these chronotopes, however, are quickly unsettled when it emerges that African and Chinese subjects are less easily able to inhabit such space-times of personhood compared to the white English subjects these chronotopes implicitly presuppose. This becomes particularly apparent when the seeming persistence of a colonial chronotope, burdens postcolonial subjects in ways that white subjects do not appear to experience beyond narcissistic guilt or denial. Here, Miriam and Palesa's compromised relationship with the Purple Cow, and to a certain extent in the limits of Ally's projection of Sheryl Sandberg onto Vivian stand as important challenges to the arbitrariness of chronotopic construction. This is given the ways their attempts at legibility this must unfold within the 'unmarked' (perhaps white), still-Anglocentric space-time in which the Purple Cow and Sheryl Sandberg are mere tokens. This space-time thus suggests a contradiction between constraint and liberation, but from and in relation to what? In what follows, I will conclude with a trans-historical contextualization the hierarchies of mobility that complicate the emergence of post-intersectional personhood. In doing so, I will propose that the compromised commitment to Purple Cow imbricates a dialectical history of race and gender relations that are very much part of a legacy of apartheid- and colonial political economy of labor migrancy in the interactional re-iteration of a 'third world'.

Intersectional (Im)Mobilities

In viewing the deferment of Vivian and Miriam's *motivated* aspirational horizons, it might appear that the gender-emancipatory possibilities of a cosmopolitan space-time are being short-circuited by a patriarchal backlash – by male members of Purple Cow, or white male professors in liberal American Universities. Instead, I propose that the history being drawn from, and the ideological context that sustains the elusive aspiration towards the Purple Cow are suggestive of another intersectional tension, one that concerns the postcolonial politics of (im)mobility.

Julie Chu (2010) has evocatively captured a contemporary tension between mobility and immobility as equally traumatic conditions in the lives of Fouzhounese subjects in China, among whom she identifies a complex, inter-generational mobile imaginary. Not only do contemporary Fouzhounese migrants value mobility as a capacity that stratifies different mobile or immobile subjects, the same anxieties also animate and sustain relationships between the living and the dead. Crucial in mediating these various kinds of mobility are two forms of currency that appear fairly prominently among her informants. The first is paper money that looks suspiciously like American dollars, the second is debt converted into a form of Maussean gift, where the capacity to pay off debt after having been in debt becomes a mode of sustaining inter-social ties – what was referred to in chapter one as *renqing* (人情). Both of these forms of currency ultimately come to commensurate the same 'compulsion' toward mobility and index 'America' – as a perspectival destination where subjects have always arrived even if they've never left Fuzhou. Perhaps this dialectical contradiction emerges precisely in relation to the ideological backdrop that imbricates late capitalist mobilities, manifesting in the infrastructural projects Chu's subjects are witnessing in Fuzhou.

There is a difference between the mobility 'desire' described in the Lean In and Purple Cow discussions above and the 'compulsion' to mobility that emerges in Chu's discussion. Here, I do not feel this difference arises purely out of the (so-called) 'subjective nature' ethnographic observation and various ethnographers' emplacements. Instead, I suggest that the difference reveals an important distinction between educational migrancy and other forms of migrancy – Chinese traders in Africa or African traders in China, for instance. In my work, as has also been explored in Lisa Rofel's (2007) work, desire is

animated by the imagined capacity to transform into a more 'ideal' or 'cosmopolitan' subject. If one

travels for education, there is a guaranteed transformation that those both abroad and at home come to

count on. In other, less 'desire'-driven, forms of migrancy, one must travel in the hope of a transformation

(of social or economic status) that is far from guaranteed. For the one, mobility is a desirable and

transformative capacity, and for the other, a compulsion to move, as one's only option. Neither subject,

however, is necessarily more precarious than the other, and in both cases, failure to maintain mobility may

result in (a perhaps terminal) stasis. Describing similar precarities in the context of white racist uptake of

non-white immigrant mobility in contemporary Australia, Ghassan Hage uses the term 'stuckedness' to get

at this failure (2009).

For Hage, 'stuckedness' emerges precisely out of a sense of existential mobility as a basic human

pursuit shared by his respective Australian informants: white racists and perceived-to-be non-white

immigrants:

Existential mobility is this type of imagined/felt movement … This differs from the physical

movement of tourists, for instance, whose physical mobility (travel) is part of their accumulation

of existential mobility. In a sense, we can say that people migrate because they are looking for a

space that constitutes a suitable launching pad for their social and existential self. They are looking

for a space and a life where they feel they are going somewhere as opposed to nowhere, or at least,

a space where the quality of their 'going-ness' is better than what it is in the space they are leaving

behind. (Hage 2009: 2)

As non-white elites with a lot to lose, we can also see something like Hage's existential mobility at

play in *motivating* actors like Miriam and Vivian's respective cosmopolitan projects, however in their case

it is the very pursuit of existential mobility that comes to generate the intersectional stratifications that

sustain their very own conditions of stuckedness. Additionally, we can understand icons of personhood –

like Sheryl Sandberg, Cowboys, or Purple Cow that orient the 'remarkable selves' under construction

above – as generating omissions that (perhaps fetishistically) occlude the possibilities of inverted,

dystopian chronotopes of stuckedness interrupting the smooth textures of the cosmopolitan lives being pursued above, regardless of their compromises. Such dystopian archetypes might be spatiotemporally proximate, but negated – for instance, the contemporary migrant women, like Meimei, whom Vivian and Ally certainly do not want to be. They can also be historically remote, and yet painfully present – the conditions of industrial colonialism and apartheid that exploited the limited choices of Miriam and Palesa's mothers and grandmothers up until a few decades ago.

Historical (Im)Mobilities, Colonial Modernities

Once again, my invocation of history does not suggest a deterministic relationship between past and present. Instead, what is at play is reiteration rather than recursion of the dynamics of a colonial-capitalist past in the context of contemporary, Sino-African Beijing. The demand for labor in industrializing African urban centers in this region during the 19th and early 20th centuries was predominantly fueled by mining booms in gold, copper, and diamonds, leading to the development of cities like Johannesburg, which due to its size and continued prosperity became a quintessential African metropole. In the work of sociologists and historians, Christopher Ballantine (2000), Charles van Onselen (1982), and Laura Longmore (1966) a number of important features about labor migrancy and its social transformations around Johannesburg become apparent. It created a disconnect between men coming to labor in urban areas and women who were expected to manage rural homesteads that were increasingly being expropriated by white farmers and the colonial state. In both cases, African men and women were transformed from land-owning-collectives – mediated through complex 'cattle bridewealth' and kinship-based hierarchical systems – to bare labor. African subjects were either – mostly in the case of women – struggling to maintain household and kinship relations on shrinking land where neither cattle nor grazing was sufficient to do so; or – in the case of men – were selling their mining and industrial labor in urban centers, unable to afford to participate in the kinship-property system. Instead, many men became inscribed in what van Onselen (1982) calls the prison-mine-complex where African men finding themselves in colonial-commercial centers like Johannesburg, were either interpolated into the industrial

labor system – which was dangerous and exploitative, but ultimately more economically viable than eking-out and existence on a shrinking homestead or a white farm – or forced to find alternatives at the margins of a predominantly male, urban world. The alternatives were certainly criminal given the ways in which the black African males' movements and capacities to live near, but not in urban areas were severely curtailed by a set of laws that simultaneously forced and curtailed their movement. These were called pass-laws and were a kind of domestic passport offered to African migrant laborers allowing them to travel to find work. At the at the same time pass-laws allowed very limited movement for black males, and later females, whereby curfews were placed on black subjects working within urban areas. A property could not be owned, and only certain kinds residences adjacent to urban areas could be maintained. These adjacent areas were called 'locations' and their existence along with the other pass-law constraints aided the 'compartmentalization' (Fanon 2008 [1952]) of white and black chronotopes within the same urban areas.

The worlds that opened-up in the obvious cracks within this overtly constraining system took on a variety of forms. In van Onselen's (1982) work, such constraints were the condition of possibility for the emergence of an elaborate criminal class and urban culture in Johannesburg, while for Ballantine, the resulting condition of labor migrancy resulted in a highly gendered music and media landscape that, in its gritty glamorization of urban life, set the tone for cosmopolitan aspirations of not only black South Africans, but black migrant labor coming from Zimbabwe and Botswana to work in or around the goldfields of the Witwatersrand and who came to see Johannesburg as a regional nexus point for these aspirations – a stepping-stone metropolis. For Longmore (1966), Hunter (2010), and to some extent Ballantine (2000), this gritty, cosmopolitan urban domain emerged as an appealing 'possibility' to many African women, many of whom were no longer content with trying to maintain homesteads – where often they were at the mercy of fairly repressive in-laws. Add to this the rapidly deteriorating conditions on the homestead as a result of land expropriation and the power vacuums left by a mass male exodus, and one can understand the fairly strong motivations to leave for cities like Johannesburg. Upon coming to the city, many found niches – legally or illegally – taking up domestic labor in white residences, opening taverns that would serve beer and food as well as provide entertainment for laboring black men,

or engage in various forms of compensated male companionship ranging from 'romantic-' or 'provider-love' (Hunter 2010) to prostitution (Longmore 1966, Ballantine 2000). Ballantine, in particular, emphasizes the ways in which black labor migrancy – while providing new theaters for female labor – ultimately exacerbated or engendered less-equal relationships between black men and women in Southern Africa. In all these discussions, male roles were reduced to activities motivating the circulation of colonial-commodity forms – through mining-, industrial- and even musical labor. Female roles, by contrast, had to further conform to the fulfillment male desire, be it as maintainers of the homesteads and family affairs, or, as the providers of companion labor in the urban centers as sexually-commoditized subjects.

"We're Still Getting Fucked"

The resonance between this historical description of colonial labor migrancy in Southern Africa, with my opening vignette concerning the female migrants in Beijing, is a deliberate juxtaposition. In the 21st century Beijing, Palesa, and other female Purple Cows find themselves very much under pressure to conform to similar limiting possibilities between sexual objectification, and the expectation to "return home and take care of the homestead" – preferably with a comfortable job and a pension. While the next chapter will go into detail as to how such expectations are contested with equally limiting results, I will suggest that many female Purple Cows who quietly embrace the 'equal opportunity' logic of the Purple Cow do not, in fact, express this through 'sexual freedom', which is treated skeptically. As Lindiwe, another black South African informant, put it in an interview: "Freedom from what? We're still the ones *getting fucked*". Here, Lindiwe was drawing attention to both the persistence of patriarchal power dynamics as reflected in the focus-group discussion above, as well as limited numbers of female African students compared to their male counterparts in Beijing. This situation leaves female Purple Cow members both outnumbered and vulnerable to power dynamics that are largely out of their control even if their leaders are women (as seen in an earlier interaction). Instead, many commit to the Purple Cow in two ways. They either – in the case of Palesa – resist relationships in Beijing in the service of having a

successful career 'back home', or – in the case of Miriam – represent themselves as male or non-gendered cosmopolitan subjects, choosing to have relationships with men mostly outside of an African peer community.

Compared, to Miriam and Palesa, Vivian and Ally experience vastly different kinds of limits. Indeed most of the participants in Rainbow Bridge's Bootcamp found the concept of intersectionality troubling to fathom, claiming that "all women in China experience equal discrimination", a perspective once voiced by Ally, and which drew unanimous approval from the other class participants, much to the confusion of their visiting professor who was trying to teach them bell hooks' (2013) critique of Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In* – the two opening texts of the boot camp. Indeed, the relatively privileged position of many of the workshop participants may have precluded any kind of critical engagement with black and ethnic minority women in China. However, the cracks of Beijing's migrant underworld require little excavation to uncover intersectional strata, not unlike those of the industrial-prison complex evocatively described by the Africanist historians above.

Chapter 4:

Who Can Be a Racist? - *Motivating* 'Politically Correct' Personhood in Non-White Encounters

It is probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather a recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role…It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves.

– Robert Ezra Park

In 2016, a Chinese detergent commercial went viral in and beyond China. The American news network, CNN, was one of the first to pick-up on the story. Their online US edition concisely depicted the commercial with an abbreviated vignette: "A black man and a Chinese woman are flirting, as he leans in for a kiss she thrusts a detergent capsule in his mouth and bundles him into a laundry machine. She sits atop the washing machine as the man screams inside until, to her apparent delight, out pops a Chinese man dressed in a clean, white t-shirt" (IRL 20). The commercial was for Chinese detergent brand *Qiaobi* (俏比) and was released near the conclusion of my fieldwork on Chinese and African student interactions in Beijing. At the time, I did not realize that its circulation and subsequent discussion would become a key impetus for the concerns discussed in this dissertation.

Almost immediately after the ad hit, I noted how my fellow African informants and compatriots in China, as well as many Chinese classmates and colleagues, followed and shared the ad on Chinese social media platforms like *Weibo* and *WeChat*. They, along with many others, were in agreement that the reason for the *Qiaobi* commercial's controversy and related virality lay in its apparent 'racist' content. However – and for reasons that will become clear – not all of my informants believed that the Chinese ad producers were racist. The authors of the CNN article, James Griffith and Shen Lu, described the content

of the commercial as "staggeringly racist," but also noted that: "The ad isn't even original…It seemingly rips-off a similar, [another] also offensive, Italian advert, in which a slim Italian man is washed with 'color' detergent and emerges as a muscular black man with the slogan 'color is better'" (ibid).

Indeed, *Qiaobi* was citing an Italian commercial for another detergent, *Coloreria Italiana*, which had aired ten years before (in 2006) – complete with the same soundtrack – although, at the time, with far less Western media outrage over its content. The outraged virality over the *Qiaobi* ad appeared to retrospectively infect *Coloreria Italiana* in almost a parody Walter Benjamin's (2007a & 2007c) famous argument that 'copies' of aesthetic objects constitute their 'originality'. Italians and Chinese were not only equally racist, Chinese racism was an 'inauthentic' copy of its Italian original. For instance, in the days following the airing of the *Qiaobi* commercial, UK-based online newspaper, *Daily Mail*, ran the headline: *You thought the Chinese advert was racist…wait until you see the Italian ad that inspired it*, along with its own terse vignette: "The advertisement starts with a wife loading up the laundry before her skinny white husband walks in wearing only socks and his underwear. She beckons him over with a smile before shoving him into the washing machine. Trapping the man inside she sits on top of the device until the cycle is complete. At the end of the wash, her husband has been completely transformed. A large burly black man is unveiled and rises up to flex his muscles, the [white] woman looking mighty impressed" (IRL 21).

Contemporary media representations of black subjects in China certainly do not celebrate the comradeship of a non-aligned and third world solidary past. However, the prevalence of references to blackness, like those in the *Qiaobi* commercial above, continue to generate an important question among African and Chinese students in China: "Can Chinese be racist?" While most of my African and Chinese interlocutors answered in the affirmative during numerous debates in Chinese and African social media circles, a few had critical reservations concerning the capacity to return insult: "Can Africans be racist back?" For this minority of Chinese and African students, 'racism' had a more ideological, meta-semiotic function. For them, and indeed many thinkers of critical race theory, racism generates an unassailable inequality and a unidirectional communicability: 'How could you ever racially insult a real flesh-and-

blood white man, other than calling him a racist?', noted various Chinese and African informants. "As for Chinese, you can always laugh at them, even when they think they are white", noted others (Africans and Chinese). For these informants 'racism' produces an impossibility of insulting the inhabitant of 'whiteness', which stands as the only genuine position from which racism matters. One informant, Daniel Masuka, who first introduced himself by telling me that I would only remember his English name, rhetorically asked: "If we can all be racist to each other, then why would racism matter?". For such informants – some former victims of African Xenophobia in countries like South Africa – genocide and other forms of violence based on recognition of alterity, were certainly violent and terrifying, but they were not *the same as* racism, which belonged to a very different ideological order of experience.

In fact for some, racism was either inevitable or in the case of Daniel, "acceptable" compared to the trauma of Xenophobia. His reference point, as a Zimbabwean, was the memory of his time as a student in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the ongoing experiences of his working-class compatriots who were still there. This was by no means a valorization of racism, far from it, but a testament to an enduring, trans-national ideological condition that is so compromised, that even in recognizing its contours, there is no way out of its stratifying grip. In this reading of racism, whiteness stood as a condition of value that non-white Beijing informants found themselves marked in relation to, even when no white bodies were physically present. This was because 'unmarked' whiteness, as I will argue, was still the privileged category of cosmopolitan mobility and the assumed point of articulation for 'standard' English or its received pronunciation (RP) – what I will reveal to be the *motivating* factors of mobility and educational desire.

A key insight that reveals the contours of this seemingly contradictory process – whereby unmarked cosmopolitan horizons, mediated through 'unmarked' English, ultimately constitutes whiteness' stratifying propensities – can be drawn from the work of pragmatist philosopher and semiotician, Charles Sanders Peirce (1955), where he suggests that relations of iconicity or 'sameness' are always *motivated* (Carr 2011). My contention here, building on my invocation of this term in Chapter 1, is that racism depends on inter-social and inter-subjective semiotic labor operationalized through a

motivating tension between whiteness and its unmarked mediations. Here, 'race' becomes stratified intersectionally and in relation to dimensions of language and capacities for mobility. We can observe this, more generally, where both explicit racism, in the form of racial essentialism; and liberal racism, as a relativistic denial of race, require and necessitate consensus and co(n)texts for racism to do their ideological work. How *a race* as a token becomes 'iconic' of a horizon of excellence or dysfunction, or how *race* as a type becomes obviated by making it arbitrary, both depend on *motivations* of iconicity and alterity. Such *motivations* are mediated through practices like alignment, reception, and consensus around how *a race* is 'like' or 'unlike' another; or how *race* stands as an arbitrary category rendering races as equal tokens of the same deferred type. It is this simultaneous dependency on consensus (explicit or implicit) and context that I am trying to evoke in understanding the pragmatics of race, its contingency on whiteness, and how racism emerges among non-white subjects in a non-Western context.

While Peirce himself does not use the term *motivation*, linguistic anthropologists and other pragmatists have taken up his identification of iconic and indexical semiotic processes as suggestive of fundamentally non-agentive dimensions of social mediation (Silverstein 1976, Carr 2011, Wirtz 2014). In this regard, linguistic and other semiotic practices make meaning by receiving meaning, which in turn re-make meaning and so forth. This being the case, iconic or iconizing processes – making things stand as 'different' or 'same'; and indexical processes, where meaning only emerges co(n)textually – in 'context' and in relation to other signs or 'co-texts' – are fundamentally inter-social and inter-subjective (Silverstein & Urban 1996). Thus, *motivation* in this sense does not imply causal volitionality or a commitment to rational, individual intent. Here, the use of italics throughout is meant to distinguish my use from the term's more conventional, volition- or agent-entailing, use in English – as in: 'Timmy isn't motivated to do his homework today'. Instead, *motivation* – in a more inter-subjective sense – concerns what might otherwise be termed, ideological processes: How is it that Timmy's sense of self, depends on his doing homework? Why would a reader assume that Timmy inhabits a particular race, gender, and potential sexuality? *Motivation* thus presupposes a more interactional, reception-based conception of meaning-making as emerging through encounters, yet always located within the historical and material

conditions that dialectically constitutes, and is constituted by, their motivational space-time. In this way 'I' and 'you' are perspectival signs – or deictics (Silverstein 1976) – that occur to their users to be simultaneously preceding the interaction yet in a dynamic relationship with their context of utterance, where their translation can never be felt as 'arbitrary' in the ways Ferdinand de Saussure once suggested (de Saussure 2011). In another critique of arbitrariness, Frantz Fanon's reveals another dimension of this *motivational* sensibility, where translation manifests itself in the violence of decolonization. In *Wretched of the Earth* (1965), he writes:

> Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock, nor of a friendly understanding. Decolonization, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say that it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which gave it historical form and content. (Fanon 1965: 36)

Decolonization, an always as-yet-incomplete project, is a translational process – given the ways in which the meaningful relations in one spatiotemporal context must be 'incompletely' reconfigured in another – but it is also a *motivational* one, in the sense that movement between colonization and decolonization is troubled by an ideological context that does not allow for a seamless shift in relations and re-appropriations of power. For thinkers of decolonization, there is an obstruction to this simple *motivation* of supposedly arbitrary signs. As English is not merely a language among other languages – something Ngugi wa Thiongo (1994) continues to tirelessly demonstrate – so too, whiteness is not just a race among races. The re-iteration of these signs, their co(n)textualization, and the way they stratify as much as commensurate their co-signs reveals both the *motivated* nature of translation, as well as the inescapability of translation as both social fact and stratifying reality. This is a reality within which 'red', 'brown', 'black', and 'yellow' people have come to inhabit or appropriate positions subordinate, or

adjacent to 'whites' and where English becomes necessary social currency for all global migrants even though their capacity to enunciate its phonemes or inhabit its default white subjectivity is fundamentally unequal. These positions, for Fanon, are not arbitrary, because whiteness and other signs of the (post)colonial present are not. Aligning with Fanon, I will suggest that it is 'whiteness' and 'English' (*fig.* 1), rather than liberal ideologies of 'race' and 'language' (*fig.* 2), that become the ordering principles in relation to their co(n)texts.

Race and Language stratifications in White Spacetime

(*fig.* 1)

Liberal Ideologies of Race and Language

```
        ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
        │              ??(RACE)??              │
        │                                     │
        │  White   Yellow   Red   Brown  Black │
        └─────────────────────────────────────┘
```

```
        ┌───────────────────────────────────────────┐
        │               ??(Language)??               │
        │                                           │
        │  English  Chinese  K'iche'  Hindi  Swahili │
        └───────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
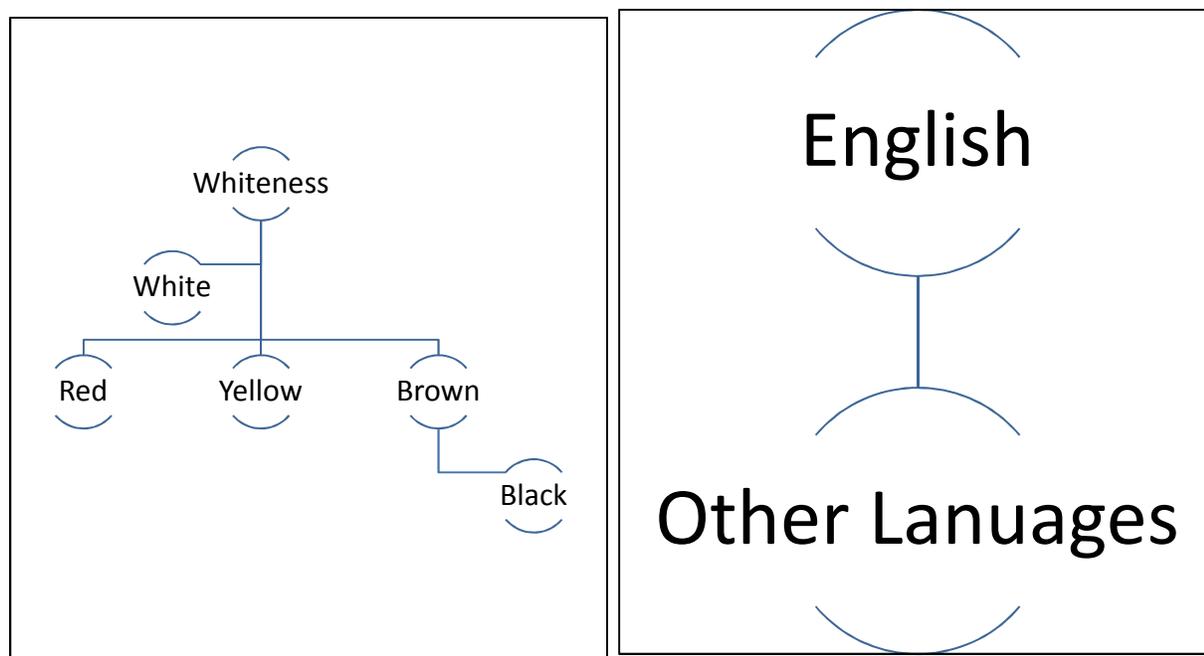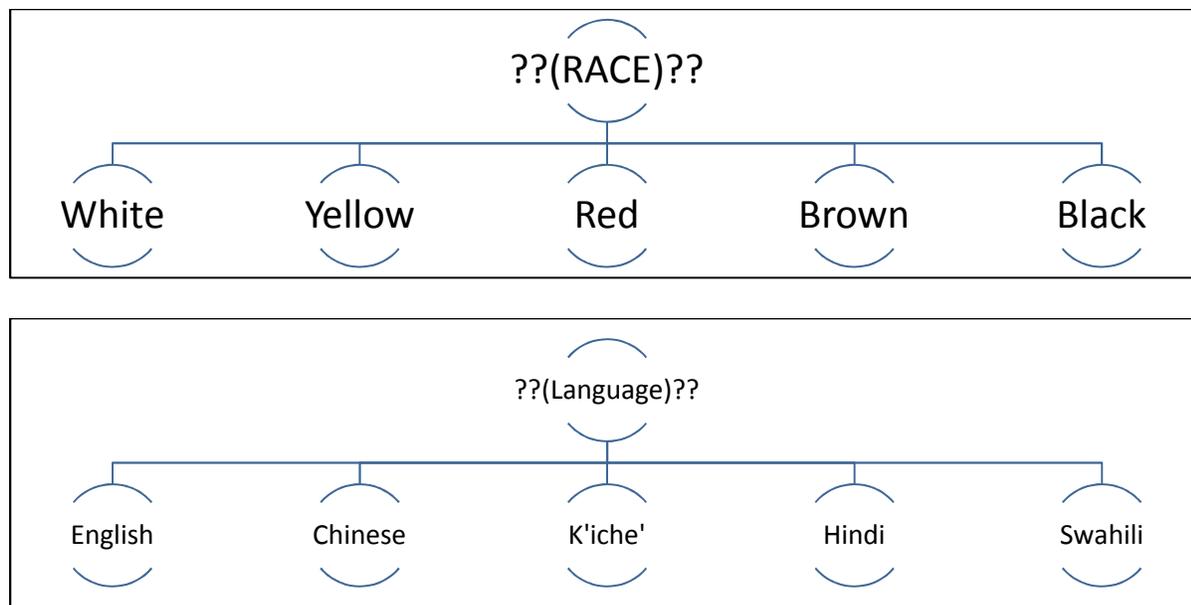
(fig. 2)

In this regard Fanon's insights, on the relationship between race, language, and capacities for mobility among subjects of decolonization, stand in an important historical dialogue with thinkers of postcolonial translation like Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Edward Said (2003) – a genealogy that has influenced a rich lineage of scholars particularly in fields like English and literature studies, as well as history. In their introduction to the edited collection, *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (1999), Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi note that translation "does not occur in a vacuum, but in a continuum…an ongoing process of intellectual transfer," that it is "not an innocent, transparent activity…it rarely, if ever, involves a relationship of equality between texts, authors or systems" (ibid: 2). The authors' main object of critique, however – and the primary concern of much early literary and historical engagements with the analytic of translation – was whether or not translation emerged as a process that detracted from, or diminished, the 'original' historical, literary or social text being translated. This mirrors a persistent, but currently more depoliticized, anthropological debate around representation as translational practice in anthropology – one which perhaps is most iconically represented by (but certainly not limited to) the methodological tension that emerged between the translational approach

explicated in the work of Clifford Geertz (1973 & 1977) and the critiques of James Clifford and George

Marcus in their edited collection, *Writing Culture* (1986). All of these debates are important, ongoing

critiques, but only insofar as one is pre-occupied with the question: 'What is being translated into what?'.

My engagement with translation is not a semantic one.

Fanonian Translation

Instead, following Frantz Fanon's imperative, explicated at length in the first chapter of his *Black*

Skin, White Masks (2008 [1952]), and emerging as a concern throughout his entire intellectual project –

that fixation on the question of what is being translated, comes at the cost of considering the more

pragmatic condition of possibility for translation of any kind: the units (linguistic and other signs) and

space-times (material and historical contexts) of commensuration: "To speak means being able to use a

certain syntax and possessing the morphology of such and such a language, but it means above all

assuming a culture and bearing the weight of a civilization" (ibid: 1 - 2). Here, Fanon was fundamentally

concerned with a French colonial context in which not only blacks were stratified in relation to whites,

through their capacity for 'good French', but blacks were similarly stratified among one another: the

Antilleans' 'good French' vis-à-vis their Senegalese subordinates, the elite cosmopolitan bilingual

Martinican vis-à-vis the sedentary peasant who has only mastered creole. For Fanon, the colonial world

produces limited means for motivating subjectivity, value, and conditions of being – commensurations of

value under the sign of capital, commensurations of meaning under the signs of a standardized language

of command and its co(n)texts. Given these limited means, colonial and decolonizing subjects ultimately

come to rely on the very signs of commensuration that compromise them. The fractal stratifications that

emerge as many of Fanon's subjects motivate or translate alternatives to their own oppression, do not

arise because colonial subjects believe in their capacities to overthrow whiteness and French as signs of

commensuration. This is clear in Fanon's identification of the unthinkability of black creoles displacing

French whites – the subject of Michel-Rolph Truillot's masterful, but severely under-celebrated work

(1995 & 2003). Instead, the stratifications Fanon observes emerge precisely because of his subjects'

motivation of French and whiteness as units of commensuration in the absence of unthinkable alternatives – a condition that, in turn, dialectically reinforces the very stratifications his subjects are trying to escape from. In Fanon's argument, the target of translation – the unthinkable future subjectivity of decolonization – is both obscured by, and becomes transformed into its means – French and whiteness.

A recent example of a similar stratification emerges in the work of anthropologist, Norma Mendoza-Denton (2008), where the ideological recruitment of the racialized cultural capital of English and Spanish respectively become markers of extreme differentiation between two groups of female street gangs within a relatively ethnically homogenous Latina community in Northern California. She depicts how a north-south hemispheric localism emerges between two rival gangs, the *Norteñas* and *Sureñas*, and that this hemispheric localism is distilled through an interlinked process of linguistic and racial hyper-differentiation. This book is a fundamentally important ethnographic contribution and its intervention is very much directed towards informing a public debate around the recognition of racial and linguistic differentiation as social facts within minority communities within the US. Beyond fundamental regional and political differences, my argument differs from hers in another important sense. Rather than interpreting 'language' and 'race' as categories of differentiation, I treat 'whiteness' and 'English' as categories of alignment and disalignment, in relation to which subjects become stratified. Thus, while I am generally concerned with the overall relationship between racialization and raciolinguistics, I am – as suggested above – specifically preoccupied raciolinguistic horizons of whiteness as an ideological gravity that enregisters racialization. In line with linguistic anthropologists, Jonathan Rosa (2016a, 2016b, & 2016c) and Mary Bucholtz (2010, 2016) I am interested in the relationships between whiteness, English, and their others; where 'markedness' and 'unmarkedness', of either English or whiteness, constitutes a constantly negotiated ethnographic tension, between or among subjects, that both inhabit, and perceive themselves to be inhabiting, this very tension.

In doing so I also want to break with the idea that proposed critiques of 'whiteness' are somehow less analytically sophisticated than those concerning 'race' – a blatantly false, and fundamentally paralyzing position that ultimately makes the person articulating the argument into a 'racist' pariah. It also

generates a theoretical disposition that enshrines relativistic inquiry – around 'race' and 'language' – at the cost of recognizing the historically and ideologically situated conditions of possibility for posing anthropological questions, which are neither equal between ethnographer and informant, nor among anthropologists themselves. I think this matter imbricates something wider than the discipline of anthropology and concerns a climate of consent for exploring certain genealogies of thought.

It is worth momentarily exploring resistance against, and in some cases, hostility towards attempts at sustaining a postcolonial critique within an elite Euro-American academic sphere. Beyond my own experiences in trying to argue for postcolonial theory, I emphasize that such a hostility *does* exist, considering the decline of intellectual spaces engaging postcolonial thought, despite the seemingly unproblematic escalation of academic defenses of empire and historical imperialism in recent times. Bruce Gilley's (2017) recent article in *Third World Quarterly* – titled, "The Case for Colonialism" – serves as a symptomatic example. After undergoing a double-blind peer review in a journal that has in the past been sympathetic to authors engaging postcolonial thought, the article was published, and to the horror of many of these authors, Gilley noted that it was "high time" the British empire received its due as an agent of development (Gilley 2017). Among those offended were several members of the journal's own editorial board who threatened to resign unless the article was retracted. This set in motion debates around free speech and censorship over an article many felt should not have seen the light of day unless there was a climate of consent that was unconcerned with its proposition. It is this climate of consent – and the complicity of a default liberal intellectualism – that continues to enable white supremacy under the auspices of open debate.

Opposing this, what I have argued – and continue to argue – seeks recourse to the intellectual legacy of black consciousness thinker, Steve Biko, who noted that intellectual propositions which propose a continuity of white imperialism decades after so-called 'decolonization' ultimately threaten a liberal intellectual sphere that constantly recruits itself as an ally, while benefitting from racial stratifications that it criticizes.

Biko's (1978) revealing critique of white liberal participation in black liberation movements contains a crucial insight – that liberal arguments for black liberation are always based on the assumption that categories of race are arbitrary, racism is illogical, and therefore all 'races' are equal. Biko observed that this obscured the fact that races were already unequal because of whites, and that liberals were simultaneously complicit in, and the beneficiaries of, systematic structures of racial oppression that they could criticize at their leisure. For Biko (1978), the 'default white' liberal subject (which included many people of color) was the apex predator of a pervasive *liberal-white supremacy complex* – discussed in greater detail in my conclusion.

Here, I will suggest that the dynamics of stratification Biko once identified have neither disappeared nor can they be hermetically sealed within the Apartheid matrix. As I will show, the historical material conditions that informed the world within which Biko was embedded, continue to be at play in the cosmopolitan aspirations of African and Chinese students in Beijing. Here, the target of translation is no less obscured: For African students, what indeed is the end goal of educational transformations mediated through contemporary experiments in Chinese soft power? And, in turn, what icons of 'success' inform Chinese experiments in cosmopolitanism as they encounter or pass-by their African peers? Following Fanon, I believe that this question, and my account of its theater of interaction, foregrounds whiteness' gravity over a diffuse, equal opportunity replicability of 'power'.

In what now follows, I would like to contextualize my opening question – Who Can Be a Racist? – within the interactionally-*motivating* and *motivated* encounters of Chinese and Africans in Beijing. In this theater of interaction, the performance, adoption, and rejection of various manifestations of 'Politically Correct' Personhood – indexed and iconized through mass-mediated persons like Trevor Noah and Oprah Winfrey – becomes the mode through which Chinese and African subjects (to differing degrees) raciolinguistically stratify one-another.

Enregistering PC

One summer night in 2014 my informant, Adam – a black, Zimbabwean political science student – and I went to a costume party in San Li Tun (三里屯). This is a neighborhood in Beijing with several bars, shops, and restaurants often frequented by large groups of foreigners, as well as many Chinese shoppers and partygoers. This is also, more recently, a place where many young African students have started going to 'make contacts' or enjoy romantic liaisons. When we arrived, a Chinese girl at the party called Lili approached Adam excitedly and introduced him to her partner. Lili was Adam's ex-girlfriend who had come to the event with her current white American boyfriend. During the introductions, she said jokingly, "wow, I guess you don't need a costume". "How's that?", Adam replied. "You know, since you can say you're here as an Ebola patient", she said laughing at what in the past may have been a shared form of rough banter between them. Adam's smile dropped and was replaced by an uncomfortable frown. After a moment of hesitation, Adam turned to address himself to Lili's boyfriend, whose jaw-dropped face expressed liberal horror, and said in a sotto, patient voice: "You really must explain to her why that is offensive". Adam and I left the party after a while and went for dinner, during which Adam vented about what happened. I asked him what he would have said to Lili if her boyfriend had not been there? "Well, I guess I wouldn't have been that offended," he said, "I probably would have made a joke about SARS or Chinese people not being able to tell the difference between kitchens and toilets".

In Beijing, many interactions between Chinese and African interlocutors like Lili and Adam are mediated through a complex intersectional relationship between whiteness, English, and cosmopolitan aspiration. Drawing on the relationship between intersectionality and enregisterment discussed in the previous chapter, I will demonstrate how considerations of racially 'unmarked' political correctness (or PC) become mediated through 'ideal' language registers, like American or 'Model C' English, which ultimately engenders a highly 'marked' stratification along intersectional lines.

'Mafan' for Whom?

Adam's interaction with Lili reveals a number of factors that play a complementary role in framing the racial and gendered vectors of their encounter. His example also diagrams a fairly common genre of flirtatious interaction between many African male students in Beijing and certain female Chinese counterparts. Sexual relationships between them are fairly common, but these are somewhat short-term either because the African students, like many other foreign male and Chinese students, are in Beijing only for the duration of their studies. Unlike their Chinese counterparts, they are open to – and able to have – relationships with white, Chinese, and other African female students. Another, and equally important, reason for the short-term nature of these liaisons, is that their Chinese and white female student counterparts rarely conceive of African male subjects as 'marriageable', but rather as conduits for sexual experimentation (Rofel 2007).

This context of interaction very much animates Adam and Lili's exchange. Lili would later confide that she and Adam had previously had a relationship before things became "*mafan*" (麻烦) – 'troubled', 'messy', 'complicated', or 'inconvenient'. We became acquainted after this event when she became aware that I was both a South African student in Beijing as well as a graduate student in the US. Here, she was keen on attending University in the US and wanted to know whether I, as a fellow "third world subject", would help to edit her application materials. This is something I did as an acknowledgment of her clear, but possibly ironic invocation of 'third world solidarity' (第三世界大团结). However, admittedly, I was keen to find out about her relationship to, and awkward interaction with Adam at the party. After learning that I was a South African she became keen to talk about "Africa things", given her own regional focus as an international relations major. This, however, was only on the occasions we met to talk about her applications, and where she liked to speak about Africans' "closeness to nature":

Lili: [Africans] are so innocent, like forest animals.

Me: Is that a good thing, don't animals get hunted?

Lili: No, don't think I'm a racist. It's a good thing because they are everything

                         [Chinese] have lost. Chinese are now just robots with giant brains.

In conversations with myself and other Africans, like this one, she would contrast "African natural"

essence with "robotic Chinese Society" while simultaneously being quite reflexive about what constitutes

politically correct non-racist language to a hypothetical western listener with the caveat "No, don't think

I'm a racist". However, when, on a few occasions, we met in a group with her boyfriend, Tim's American

English teacher friends, she would not discuss "African things" and would emphasize that I was a graduate

student in the US. The present non-presence, as well as non-present presence of her white American

boyfriend – in both Adam and my interactions with Lili – is important here. Even when Tim is not there,

Lili's deviations from politically correct register can still be seen to constitute a normative center that Tim

has come to embody, since it appears to be his presence/non-presence that emerges as the regulating

principle that makes the deviation legible in the first place. But what was this normative center that

allowed him to be there even when he was not?

When, on a few occasions, we met in a group with her boyfriend's American English teacher

friends, she would not discuss "African things" and would emphasize that I was a graduate student in the

US. The present non-presence, as well as non-present presence of her white American boyfriend – in both

Adam and my interactions with Lili – is important here, given the way deviations from a normative center

can still be seen to constitute that very normativity as the regulating principle that makes the deviation

legible in the first place (Schmidt 1996, Bakhtin 1981). Again, what ideological gravity imbricating their

interactional space-time allowed Tim to haunt encounters without being physically present?

It seemed that over time, since her '*faux par*' at the costume party, Lili came to adopt a register of

political correctness whenever her boyfriend was around, which was almost completely abandoned in his

absence. This abandonment, in its transgression, further re-affirming Tim's absent-presence. Likewise,

references to Africa, Africans, and African relations – her university specialization – were only cursorily

referenced around her boyfriend, while his absence activated revelry in all manner of 'African' oddities and

inquiries – with qualifications like "I'm not racist or anything but…" again suggesting a persistent awareness of PC even when – or perhaps especially when it was being transgressed. Whether this was due her reluctance to let her boyfriend know about the fact that she had had a relationship with a black African, or her attempt to live up to the cultural expectations of western liberal political correctness' essentialism paranoias, is not clear. In both cases, however, the effect still constitutes an encompassing whiteness, English, and cosmopolitanism, as an imbricated horizon of aspiration of which Adam could never be a part of. Adam's role in her life was that of a concealable conduit. After hours of English lessons, academic paper editing, and the delineation of cultural references to the world of the Anglosphere and its others, Adam became a stepping stone to co-presence it. However, it appeared that now, the 'stepping stones' had to be elided as a matter of self-preservation, but self-preservation from what?

To Lili's parents and grandparents, America, English, and whiteness are appropriate civilizational aspirations while they – simultaneously – try to exchange her details (picture, age, and credentials) with those of potential Chinese male suitors among kinship, friendship, and professional networks in her hometown. An African from Africa (particularly a black person or *heiren* [黑人]), within these aspirational hierarchies, simply does not compute. Adam, who has been in China for almost six years, is aware of this situation and these parameters, which by this time have the effect of eliciting more cynicism than outrage in our conversations and interviews. It is also his awareness of the order of things that allows him not only to recruit her boyfriend to the role of "placing her in the world of her choosing", as he would later remark but also to demonstrate to his former 'lover-apprentice' how he understood the Anglosphere's regime of political correctness and its limitations better than she did. In doing so, he imagines that he has made her white American boyfriend the custodian of her further civilization, as he put it "she's now his problem…I'm handing over the reigns".

Here, the veil of white political correctness quickly allows the machinery of civilization to do its work. This machinery – mastered initially by Adam, given his own historical colonial emplacements, and then later transmitted to Lili – not only delineates what can be said but also the language in which it

becomes potent. Adam and Lili could always have continued their exchanges in Chinese, the linguistic conditions under which the two of them first met in their university classes. This is due to Adam's Chinese abilities, which – like Palesa's – are considerable compared to many of his fellow African peers. English, however, gradually became their mode of exchange due to Adam's initial role as Lili's English tutor, augmented by his own facility with the language as an English private school-educated Zimbabwean. But this was also driven by Lili's own desire to rapidly improve her English. Here, her motivation stemmed from her parents' own considerable expectations that she attend a foreign university and subsequent investment of millions of *Renminbi* (人民币) – RMB or Chinese Yuan – towards her attendance of additional English classes at private institutes like *Xindongfang* (新东方) (or New Oriental as this Chinese educational corporation is known in its English translation). Such investments – in the case of Lili's parents and grandparents – for families from small Chinese towns in provinces like *Dongbei* (东北) in Northeastern China, must be contextualized in terms of the ways in which English ability and its associated 'cosmopolitan' world might allow for a leapfrogging or at least temporary displacement of brutal regional Chinese classism that a small town *Dongbei* accent might otherwise engender (Rofel 2007). From the perspective of many multi-lingual, postcolonial subjects like Lili and Adam, English and its associated 'rational', political correctness – usually in 'un-accented' and 'civil' tones – appears to explicitly disavow institutional racism and classism of any kind (Hill 2009). Compared to the discussion of White political correctness as a mode of institutionalized othering, as it has been discussed in the US and other western academic and media theaters (ibid, James 2015, IRL 15, Jackson 2010), the Sino-African reception and deployment of 'PC' draws attention to the resilience of White Anglocentrism's regulatory emergence, even in a context where it is supposed to be explicitly absent. Here, PC seemingly even provides a gender- and class 'neutral' refuge from patriarchal bullying and regional classism for African and Chinese women in their respective contexts. However, as reflected by Lili and Adam's catch-22, this landscape of political correctness – and the racial-linguistic complex it elides – implicitly generates very limited possibilities of expression for those who are simultaneously its subalterns. And who themselves

have no real stake in the deployment of the asymmetries that white 'PC-ness' (in its often sanctimonious invocations) supposedly protects them from.

Race and Enregisterment

The way in which 'PC-ness' becomes linguistically mediated between Lili and Adam, thus racially stratifying them in terms of the presence/non-presence of Tim, can be understood as an extended example of enregisterment as introduced in the previous chapter. Here, Asif Agha's general definition must be considered and then extended:

> Language users often employ labels like 'polite language,' 'informal speech,' 'upper-class speech,' 'women's speech,' 'literary usage,' 'scientific term,' 'religious language,' 'slang,' and others, to describe differences among speech forms. Metalinguistic labels of this kind link speech repertoires to enactable pragmatic effects, including images of the person speaking (woman, upper-class person), the relationship of speaker to interlocutor (formality, politeness), the conduct of social practices (religious, literary, or scientific activity). They hint at the existence of cultural models of speech – a metapragmatic classification of discourse types – linking speech repertoires to typifications of actor, relationship and conduct. This is the space of register variation conceived in intuitive terms. (Agha 2007b: 145)

Most examples of enregisterment diagram various forms of social stratification along lines of gender, class, as well as other modes of hierarchy. In their work, Susan Frekko (2009) and Kathryn Woolard (2014), have provided canonical examples of enregisterment's manifestation among Catalan speakers in Catalonia. Rarely, however, do studies of enregisterment engage the question of racial stratification in contexts of encounter that transcend conventionally-defined speech communities in an engagement with the West or western modernity. Additionally, race – in a non-Western setting, among non-whites, mediated through English – is an unusual case for enregisterment. The fact of its emergence in

such a context, however, has important implications for theories of race and gender intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991; hooks 1981 & 1992) which have been made primarily in western contexts or interactions more overtly framed within the rubric of 'the West and its others'. Enregisterment – in this way – becomes a way of expanding the range of intersectional critique into the discourse of third world histories and the contemporary encounters they mediate and are mediated through. Unlike gendered and classed terms, like those presented by Agha above, racialized non-Western, non-white encounters do not imbricate conventionalized modes of address between variously raced people in English speaking societies where white subjectivity mediates racism. Everyday gendered and classed terms of address can be conventionalized through (non-the-less contradictory) arguments that posit the simultaneous 'reality' of differences, while at the same time suggesting that they are 'cancelled-out' by the equal opportunity promise of long-term social reform where 'things are always getting better' for women and the working class.

Race, on the other hand, begins with its non-recognition, given the ways in which English-speaking, 'liberal' societies tend to treat non-racialism as their politically-correct default (Erkens & Kane-Berman 2000, Mills 2017) – where race is problematically argued to be logically arbitrary, and therefore ontologically non-existent. Thus, the experience of racism for those who have it (non-whites), becomes an absurdity or illogical tragedy to those that don't have a race (whites). For this reason, conversations where different societies and language communities can be enregistered according to different gender norms, cannot be broached in terms of the enregisterment of different societies' racialization norms. This is why non-whites, in making use of the English language, could never invoke the hierarchies of white racism toward whites, anywhere.

This raises a second enregisterment concern – its emergence among non-whites, in a non-Western encounter. Why do global, multi-lingual non-Whites play (or feel that they are expected to) by the rules of English PC? If Lili racially insults Adam, he can – within limits – return the insult with equal and possibly more devastating effect. Neither of them, however, could ever really turn the racism tables on Tim, who occupies an unassailable higher ground on the aspirational landscape of the white, cosmopolitan

Anglosphere. Their best chance of offense, although landing with little effect as long as Tim plays by the same PC rules, is to name him a racist. Here, I propose that Adam and Lili's encounter – and indeed other Sino-African interactions in Beijing – certainly fall beyond the conventional sites of enregisterment, but in ways that suggest a more flexible conception of the 'boundedness' of speech communities. Analyzing interrelated, but not parallel, racialized and gendered stratifications beyond nation-state or monolingual speech community, necessitates an approach that both situates their intersectional *motivation* through the encounter, while simultaneously attending to its contextualizing historical and material conditions. Here, Frantz Fanon and other postcolonial thinkers' trans-national and trans-historical analyses of intersectional stratification become an important theoretical resource.

As suggested so far, the *motivation* of difference (or sameness) – in this case, the contradictions manifested in the related racial and gender stratification of a non-western encounter – imbricates an inter-subjective space-time or chronotope within which this ordering can unfold: an intersectional order. In contextualizing interactions like those of Adam and Lili, Frantz Fanon (2008) – in his *Black Skins, White Masks* – drew attention to two chronotopes of stratification: 'The Woman of Color and the White Man', and 'The Man of Color and the White Woman'.

These two figures are key psychoanalytic protagonists in Fanon's analysis of the colonial encounter and its postcolonial reiteration. As ambiguous formations that problematize simplistic colonial binaries, they become ideal examples to depict latent postcolonial asymmetries even where these seem to be occluded by the appearance of the 'progressive' multi-racial couple. Adam, Tim, and Lili's interactions take this latency a step further in providing a contradictory insight concerning the relationship between the raced signs of 'whiteness' and 'non-whiteness' in the Sino-African encounter. In the first instance, we can understand Adam as becoming 'white' both by playing a 'civilizing' role in Lili's life at the beginning of her educational life in Beijing, as well as retrospectively through her later co-presence with Tim. Ironically, this co-presence also 'blackens' Adam by virtue of him initially being rejected, and later voicing jealousy at the position occupied by Tim at the party. Lili, on the other hand, appears to become Fanon's 'Woman of Color' at different points during her move from the relationship with Adam to one with Tim. Paradoxically,

her co-presence with Tim also retrospectively 'whitens' her in relation to Adam through her negation of their prior relationship, and simultaneously re-makes Adam into Fanon's dialectical 'Black Man' to the 'White Woman'. From this perspective, it may even be possible to construe Adam's act of revenge at the party as a way to recapture his now retrospectively lost 'whiteness' by underlining Lili's incapacity to live up to it.

These interactionally-emergent potentials reveal a key contradiction. Adam and Lili, by virtue of Tim's presence, seem to oscillate in their capacity to occupy racialized positions vis-à-vis each other. This occurs through their transforming temporal trajectories and social alignments as Lili ascends an ideological updraft while Adam plunges down into the turbulence left in its wake. Tim's position of 'whiteness', by contrast, seems firmly entrenched. Their fluid versus his entrenched relations are strangely at odds with the 'marked' versus 'unmarked' positions they respectively occupy in American or British 'Commonwealth' racial imaginaries (Frankenberg 2001, Gilroy 1992, Hage 2000). Whiteness, masked as political correctness, emerges again as unassailable, leaving its others in a precarious and perspectival position: Lili, like Fanon's Mayotte, aspires to drink the milk that will make her and her children whiter (Fanon 2008 [1952]: 29). Perhaps in China, as the *Qiaobi* commercial above suggests, Chinese men might become white enough one day, but that destiny still appears to be very much deferred for educated, aspirationally cosmopolitan black subjects like Adam, for he – unlike Fanon's recruitment of the fictional character Jean Veneuse – *does* know his race and has a pragmatic understanding how whites (and aspiring Chinese) understand him (ibid: 46).

There, are – however – varying shades of whiteness that might play a role in stratifications beyond Lili and Adam's encounter. In what now follows, I will reveal how a similarly complex enregisterment around 'English' and 'whiteness' can occur fractally among Beijing's South African community of students. Here, 'whiteness' still emerges as the apex of stratification, but with social and historical co(n)texts particular to one community of students – where the South African historical relationship to a linguistic register termed 'Model C' English facilitates a more general intersectional stratification in relation to PC English, re-iterating the relationship between signs of Whiteness and English PC depicted in

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Lili and Adam's encounter. I would like to qualify that Model C enregisterment - while being specific to the context of South Africa and South African students - does have its analogs among other African students in Beijing. Due to my close familiarity with the particular context of Model C, being a product of the educational horizon it imbricates, I will focus on explicating the relationship between Model C and the wider context of English's raciolinguistic stratification in Sino-African encounters. In future analyses, by myself or others, I am certain that analogs of this enregistered stratification of whiteness, at different scales and within different communities, can be excavated.

<p style="text-align:center">Enregistering Model C and PC</p>

For Lerato (in Chapter 2), and many other South African students in Beijing, their relationship to English is has been mediated by an opposition between 'black vernacular' Englishes and elite 'Model C' English. In her analysis of the cultural capital of certain English accents in a South African educational context, Kerryn Dixon (2011) provides a fairly standard definition of the Model C accent as follows: "Speaking with a 'White' [South African] English accent is seen to be ideal – and the students who speak fluent English without the intonations of African languages are often referred to as having a 'Model C accent'" (2011: 81). Animating the notion of Model C is an 'unmarked', hierarchical, 'standard' version of English, which comes to 'mark' black African bodies who speak with it. In the context of certain encounters, it is difficult to separate Model C from the figure of the 'coconut' – "someone who is dark on the outside but white on the inside" – as an icon of personhood (Carr 2011) that is the inhabitant of the Model C accent. This co-presence is key since a white can't have a "Model C" accent, even if they had acquired it in the same place. In the past, it has often been used as an insult to distinguish between elite, compromised 'blackness' with its co-presence to, and 'reliance' on, whiteness; and 'authentic blackness' marked by a "vernacular accent". In recent times, however, 'coconut' has been positively appropriated by many black elite South African media commentators and academics like Eusebius McKaiser (IRL 11) and Panashe Chigumadzi (IRL 10). In motivating this choice Chigumadzi states:

I've chosen to appropriate the term and self-identify as a coconut because I believe it offers an opportunity for refusal. It's an act of problematizing myself – and others – within the landscape of South Africa as part of the black middle class that is supposed to be the buffer against more "radical elements". Instead of becoming the trusted mediators between black and white, we are now turning to conceptions of blackness and mobilizing anger at the very concept of the rainbow nation. The fantasy of a color-blind, post-racial South Africa has been projected onto us coconuts, but our lived experiences are far from free of racism. (ibid)

McKaiser, reflecting a similar political alignment, but with a close attention to the language-based dimensions of the lived experience of being a 'coconut' in post-apartheid South Africa, writes the following in an article titled *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being* (2013):

Hi. My name is Eusebius. And I am fluent in the grammar of whiteness. I am such a clever black that as a scrawny little boy – hey wena, no one is born with an mkhaba! I really was scrawny once – I quickly learnt the grammar of whiteness. I remember practising "bru" in a sentence, followed by other gems such as "sarmie", "dos" and "oke". If you don't know these words, I pity you. You are doomed. Kiss upward mobility goodbye, baba. The grammar of whiteness is key to doing well in corporate South Africa. You must sound like the chief executive's son, not the chief executive's maid's son. You catch my coconut drift? I am multilingual like that – Afrikaans, English, a wee bit of Xhosa (on a good day), and a whole whack of whiteness. That is why I, how do they put it, "fit in everywhere". (IRL 11)

White grammar, as McKaiser terms it, is the condition of possibility – among elite blacks – of 'fitting in anywhere'. In part, the article was widely understood and cited – even on Anglophone African social media in Beijing – as an attempt at provincializing whiteness. McKaiser textually attempts to do this not only through his use of Zulu expressions like *mkhaba* – contextually denoting the acquisition of a 'beer

belly' or 'bloated stomach' – as a moment of self-deprecation directed toward mostly black, specifically Xhosa-speaking readers familiar with the term. He also does so through his disparaging contextualizations of white South African English terms like *bru* ('buddy'), *oke* ('dude'), *sarmie* ('sandwich'), and *dos* (to take a nap). McKaiser simultaneously does this through linguistic inclusion – of a black-aligned audience – and exclusion of a white audience ignorant of '*mkhaba*'. However, McKaiser also points to the limits of this provincialization in that the white South African English terms require no translation for their black interlocutors, while the inverse is not the case when it comes to a term like *mkhaba*.

For elites like Chigumadzi and McKaiser, Model C has an additional function within the communities that would otherwise undermine a so-called coconut's lack of black 'authenticity' and capacity to speak. Within communities and interactions where a white space-time is assumed to be absent, and where McKaiser and Chigumadzi's arguments are cited – like that of the elite Southern African student community in Beijing – the emergence of Model C can often become a gendered talisman against such discrimination by virtue of its association with an inter-social chronotope (Bakhtin 1981 Agha 2007) of 'de-racialized', 'rational' political correctness. In contestation of encounters where black 'authenticity' is brought into conflict with an adherence to 'white normativity' – often under the guise of a 'modernity versus tradition' dispute – such a chronotope of rational political correctness can quickly become activated through the invocation of a Model C register. In what now follows, I will show how one such encounter plays-out when decontextualized from a 'typically South African' theater of media reception.

The social life of a meme

Given many African students' access to a black social media sphere in Beijing, popular memes that emerge in the South African media context – which certainly do not end at the nation state's borders – are quickly circulated among African students from a number of Anglophone African countries and even beyond. One such popular meme was *Ziright iGirls* (IRL 11). As with most social media memes, Ziright iGirls began its life prior to its mass-circulation, but through that circulation came to transform its meanings. It is commonly pronounced and spelled *'ziright iighels*' by a number of Xhosa speakers,

although, the spelling 'ziRight iGals' has also become a popular alternative following wide circulation of a South African house music track by the same name (performed by Euphonik and Bekzin Terris, featuring Khaya Dlanga). One informant and South African black social media expert, Z, explained its prior contextualization as a term usually used when "young, or older, [Xhosa] men will go enquire if the women still have enough alcohol to drink by asking *ziright iighels* which means 'are the girls alright?'".

As a meme, however, Ziright iGirls began going viral when fast food chain Nando's picked up on the expression as it was being used on South African social media and referenced it in an advertising campaign under the slogan *Zisela ntoni igirls?* or "what would the girls like?". This sparked a mass appropriation of both expressions in situations outside of the Xhosa-specific contextualization within a matrilineal kinship and gendered language world. As a result, its appropriation often came to be denounced as patriarchal, patronizing, and sexist among many (including many South Africans) who were unaware of its Xhosa-specific contextualization. This, however, did not hinder its popularity and further circulation among a Pan African community – like that in Beijing – attuned to the South African 'Twittersphere'. The absurdity of this circulation came to a head during a casual soccer game in Beijing between two groups of African students.

Azania United is a group of soccer players from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana, Madagascar, and other Southern African countries. During my fieldwork, I was a regular member of the team, and played on defense, most likely because of my poor footwork, although – according to one of the senior players – my selection was based on an ethnic stereotype: "I like the aggression of you rugby-playing Boers". On one particular occasion, we were playing against a combined team of predominantly Francophone Africans (including two Koreans and one Fijian to make up their numbers). One or two of our opponents were classmates who had regular interaction with the Southern Africans and thus there was a good deal of friendly banter between the two teams, despite a fierce competition within Beijing's African University Student league. A group of Azania United's female supporters – mostly from South Africa – were standing behind our goalposts. Early in the game, one of our opponents broke through the middle and scored a spectacular goal in the top left-hand corner of Azania United's goal posts (this may or

may not have been partly my fault). The goal scorer, however, rushed towards the group of girls in celebration yelling "*Ziright iGirls?*" in a heavy French accent. The addressees of this inquiry were at first dumbstruck, but confusion quickly gave way to hilarity as the addressor's intent became apparent. Following the laughter, the latter sheepishly rejoined his team for a more collective celebration. Not all invocations of *Ziright iGirls*, however, are met with the same hilarity.

During an argument on the social media forum, Azanian Students In China (ASIC) *Ziright iGirls* reared its head once more. One black female member – Comrade Y – was making a politically charged argument about the #RhodesMustFall protests taking place in South Africa – "We must oppose violent means of protest at all cost…It plays into the hands of our oppressors", which was endorsed by two other female students on the forum. At that moment, another black male participant – Comrade X – entered the fray stating "*Ziright iGirls?*". The female members immediately turned on him in English, accusing him of being "patronizing" as well as "sexist". Seeing this exchange, I privately contacted Comrade X – who was one of my teammates – and asked whether he thought he was guilty of the charges laid against him? His response – stated in a heavy Zulu accent – was that "This Oprah [Winfrey], PC thing is a problem. Take away the Model C shine and the story is very different". Here, Comrade X, not only draws a link between "PC" – as a very general, English discursive *type* – and Model C – as a specific *token* of phonolexical speech. He also suggests that these discursive formations – as sign sets – work together in blocking him from getting his meaning across. Thus, by way of unifying these sign sets, he invokes the figure of Oprah Winfrey as a distilled archetype – or icon of personhood – transferrable across the potentially divergent chronotopes that PC and Model C might otherwise index. In doing so, Comrade X generates a third spacetime (with Oprah Winfrey as a mediator) within which PC and Model C operate very much like Weberian elective affinities – in that they reinforce and constitute Oprah Winfrey as the ideal type of 'modern' 'cosmopolitan' black femininity.

Here, and in other instances that will follow, we see Oprah Winfrey emerge as an unwanted (or perhaps dystopian) icon under which a particular brand of metadiscursive encoding (Urban 1996) is perceived as regulating appropriate PC behavior in the register of Model C, which has now become

unmoored from its South African context. In this sense, Comrade X is modeling one of Slavoj Zizek's (1989) observations concerning the nature of ideology: that it operates less because we believe it than because we believe others do. Comrade X judges himself as being critical of the relationship between PC and Model C in regulating the signs of value available to Africans in the world. However, he is also fully aware that knowing this and recognizing its conduits – in this case, Oprah Winfrey – does nothing to change the ideological gravity of the world within which Africans stake out a legibility even among one another. In light of this observation, the question emerges: does Oprah Winfrey have any challengers?

Oprah Girls and Trevor Noah Boys: Black Chronotopes in White Space-Time

After Adam and Lili's fall-out (discussed at the beginning of the chapter), we chatted over a small pile of Portuguese egg tarts that can be bought for a bargain at any Chinese KFC. The topic of discussion predictably centered around racism in China, after which Adam – washing down a final egg tart with a gulp of Pepsi Cola – concluded in mock-melodrama: "ah, you know, sometimes, you want to explain to [Chinese] people why things are racist, but then, *you look into their eyes and you realize…there's no hope*" (ibid). The last phrase was a direct quote from South African comedian Trevor Noah's portrayal of an encounter with a white American Californian girl who had asked Noah if he "had ever had AIDS" (IRL 14).

It is frustration at the inescapable inevitability of 'race' that perhaps prompts Adam to invoke Trevor Noah's figure at the KFC that night. Voicing Trevor Noah as an icon of personhood appears to momentarily provide an escape from the space-time of dead-end inevitabilities masked by the language of 'rational', 'non-gendered', 'non-racialized' egalitarianism. Here, mirroring Noah indexes a streetwise worldliness that can quickly transform both universalizing political correctness and Beijing's more predictable street racisms into the kind of farce that the sassy anti-politically correct, stoic male Afropolitan can always rise above. However, as will become apparent, committing explicitly to Trevor Noah as a mass-mediated icon of personhood, and implicitly to what Noah is not, engenders its own limitations.

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"*These fucking Oprah girls*, they come to Beijing, only hang out among themselves, then they get all pissed off when their boyfriends want to date other girls. Then, when they get ditched, they go and sleep with their ex-boyfriend's best friends. It's lame, bro". South African student, 'Ed' Zuma – introduced in the introduction – said this to me when commenting on African girls in Beijing's student community and their incapacity to move – romantically speaking – beyond relationships with African men. The 'Oprah girls' comment was provoked by an ex-girlfriend "bombing" him with messages on WeChat accusing him – in English rather than Zulu which they both speak – of "male insecurity", "internalizing his problems", and "not sharing his feelings". As we sat in his shabby dorm room eating *pap* – a South African maize porridge, which he had prepared in a Chinese rice cooker – while he continued to engage with his ex's WeChat messages, his roommate walked in, took a glance at Edlulayo's exasperated texting, and commented in a strong francophone accent: "How is Oprah Winfrey?".

The person referred to as 'Oprah Winfrey' in this conversation is in fact one of the members of AAC, who herself began to feel socially alienated and made a choice to withdraw from community gatherings – soccer matches, parties, and cultural days organized among African students in Beijing – to focus her energies on projects like Purple Cow and Miriam Bakgatla's organization. She was at the time about to graduate and return to her country to take up a government job. Hers is a prominent pattern among talented black female students in Beijing, who – unless they are willing to gender themselves androgynously in the way Miriam has – find the environment a fairly hostile one and usually end up returning to their home countries to try and take up government or private sector posts with little possibility of travel, and seldom recognizing their China-Africa expertise. While in Beijing, once they commit to styling themselves "professionally" – i.e. with Model C English accents and formal "business language" – male students like Edlulayo quickly begin to refer to them as 'Oprah Winfrey Girls': "They constantly want to go Doctor Phil on you…*how's that working out for you*?" (voiced in a mock American accent). To be sure, this is not the Oprah Winfrey of black, everyday female empowerment as has been both invoked and critiqued in the media context of the US (Epstein and Steinberg 1995, Wallace 1992). Rather, it emerges in its Anglophone African guise as a negative figure of personhood which stands for a

naïve commitment to western-centric, 'white' political correctness, which for many of my informants is at best, idealistic, and more commonly, out of kilter with the jaded expectations of many aspirational black postcolonial subjects (Fieldnotes 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015). This perception certainly has much to do with Oprah Winfrey's bad press in South Africa, following the media scandals around her leadership academy in Soweto (IRL 16 and 17). But is also part of a more complex denigration of the Oprah brand on the part of a number of prominent African media personalities – notably, by Trevor Noah. In what follows, I aim to analyze the process by which 'Oprah Winfrey' becomes a negative icon of personhood via her recruitment into an oppositional role to 'Trevor Noah's' icon of personhood.

Media historian, Jim Pines (1992) and subsequently others (Leonard and Guerrero 2013, Torres 1998) have noted how – not unlike the US – black experience in Britain was initially constituted from the perspective of a white media context of reception. The picture Pines describes is one in which "the stridently liberal position vis-à-vis white responses to black presence in Britain" becomes increasingly assumed in media representations of racial relations (Pines 1992: 10). As Pines unsurprisingly notes, this white liberal position "had precious little impact on overall institutional thinking and practice" within the mass-mediated default of 'white' Britain, in spite of its diversity (ibid). This observation in the British mass-media context, mirrors the arguments of a genealogy of critical race theorists like Paul Gilroy (1993), Anthony Kwame Appiah (1992), Charles Mills (1998), Frantz Fanon (2008 [1952]), and notably Steve Biko (2002), where the latter has been quite explicit in denouncing this liberal white position prior to his death in 1977:

> A game at which the liberals have become masters is that of deliberate evasiveness. The question often comes up 'what can you do?'. If you ask him to do something like stopping to use segregated facilities or dropping out of varsity to work at menial jobs like all blacks or defying and denouncing all provisions that make him privileged, you always get the answer – 'but that's unrealistic!' While this may be true, it only serves to illustrate the fact that no matter what a white man does, the colour of his skin – his passport to privilege – will always put him miles ahead of

the black men. Thus in the ultimate analysis, no white person can escape being part of the

oppressor camp. (Biko 2002: 22)

Making clear that implicit white liberalism always entails an explicit compromise, Biko mirror's

Fanon (2008 [1952]), and subsequently Achille Mbembe's (2001) critiques, in reflecting how there is no

'outside' to the black-white dynamic that stages and re-stages the colonial-apartheid complex. It is through

the vortex-like force of this regulating chronotope, that – these thinkers have suggested – black Africans

are 'blackened' even among one another. Oprah Winfrey, for comedians like Trevor Noah, embodies this

compromise, not through the color of her skin, but through the color of her language and the space-time of

utopian, politically correct privilege it activates. This interplay of language and race, however, arises in a

curious relationship to the gender asymmetries it diagrams, and through it, Oprah Winfrey becomes a

disdained archetype, among African students in Beijing. By contrast, the performed figure of Trevor Noah

– for African male students – emerges as a more relatable alternative to the icons of personhood

represented by the world of the Purple Cow and its not-yet-emerged Purple Giraffe. However, even this

commitment – I will now show – has slim hopes of escaping the orbit of the Anglosign.

Everybody's Getting a Beating

Noah's world, or at least the version of it that emerges among Beijing's Sino-Afropolitans, is filled

with materials that students in Beijing can make use of to dynamically figurate internal divisions and

asymmetries. As suggested earlier, male Sino-Afropolitans quote Trevor Noah far more frequently than

their female peers, with men usually voicing themselves as the 'Noah-ing' subject in the moment of

citation. As such, Noah represents an archetype or icon of personhood that men can far more easily slip

into than their female peers (Fieldnotes 2013, 2014, 2015). Furthermore, many of these citations are both

directed at as well as *about* other female African students, or they become resources to depict and

conceptualize relationships with Chinese and white, foreign students. Here, many of my male Sino-

Afropolitan informants used Trevor Noah's own depictions of his 'equal opportunity' sexual exploits to

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depict their own African, Chinese, and other "cosmopolitan romances" (ibid). Whether these were 'fictitious', or otherwise 'genuine' depictions of omnivorous conquests, the citation of Trevor Noah's English sound bites seem directed toward suggesting a desired 'efficacy' – in mobile or racial terms – which their 'success' in achieving it appears to entail. In what now follows I aim to analyze the citation of one of Trevor Noah's well-circulated comedy routines, and how its invocation diagrams the contours of a key dimension of the Sino-Afropolitan ethnoscape and its limited contextualization within the Anglosign.

The footballers of Azania United, including myself, stood in a tiny patch of shade next to Lei Feng University's (雷锋大) soccer pitch, gingerly warming up as the searing sun refracted off Beijing's hazy, polluted summer air. The team – made up mostly of students from SADC countries – were preparing to face their next opponents in the Beijing inter-African league. As each player for Azania United was given their kit, they donned their yellow shirt and blue pants, rolled-on their white socks, and strapped on their boots. As if magically protected by their Nike and Adidas talismans, the tough-talk soon began in spite of the weather and air quality that promised a harrowing 90 minutes. As I did my best to muster enough energy just to participate in the heat-exhausted banter, I overheard this exchange:

Comrade B: "Eish, we are going to give those Senegalese boys a spanking"
Comrade C: "No, no, bra… we spank the monkey, we are going to beat them"

Hearing this, I continued: "And because this is the Oprah show, EVERYBODY GETS A BEATING". At this, the entire group sitting under the tree laughed loudly at what was a direct quote from a Trevor Noah comedy skit taken from his 2009 show *Daywalker* (IRL 1). They laughed and I could complete the punch line only because all of us have intimate knowledge of Noah's comedy routines and social commentary due to his popularity among young Africans throughout the world, and more recently in the US as host of the Daily Show. His prominence is apparent among Sino-Afropolitans, precisely because his observations, recontextualized in a concentrated African student community in Beijing, captures the absurd – hilarious

or often with serious undertones – ways in which already complex miscommunications between Africans become even further distorted when resituated more globally. Noah's routines are constantly shared by Beijing-based African community members who verbally cite, or electronically cut-and-paste his YouTube links, if they have access to a virus-protected network (or VPN) to get around the Chinese firewall, or are even downloaded, copied, and circulated via flash- or portable hard-drives that are exchanged when students gather at social events. It was a common practice, for instance, to bring a media object or shareable data to a sport, music, or drinking event organized among the students. Collective screenings of such materials, some hosted by myself, were also common and reciprocally expected. Trevor Noah features prominently at these events, either explicitly – in the case of viewing of one of his routines – or implicitly, where many one-liners from his endlessly circulated skits become ventriloquized as social currency with which to banter about other media materials being shared, or – more commonly – to depict the relationships between fellow Sino-Afropolitans and their everyday interactions with Chinese as well as other foreign interlocutors in Beijing's increasingly hybrid student community. Such videos are media artifacts that play a key role in imagining 'cosmopolitan' identities that are simultaneously "Afrocentric" and "Global", "grass-roots" and "cosmopolitan" (Fieldnotes 2013, 2014). It is important to note, however, that the 'Global' and the 'Afrocentric' only seem to become translatable in measured Model-C English, which sets the tone for the relationships between languages, racialized identities, and classes of mobility emergent in Noah's humor. Furthermore, the ideal signifying subject of this imagining, like Model-C English and its associated hierarchies, is far from neutral.

In the exchange between Comrade B, Comrade C, and myself – Noah is discussing Oprah Winfrey's Soweto-based leadership academy, which was established in 2007. The school at the time came under heavy criticism in the South African and international media when reports surfaced, outlining the extreme abuse and implementation of corporal punishment endured by the female students attending Winfrey's "50-million-dollar" institution (IRL 1). Noah noted that the disjuncture between "state-of-the-art facilities" and very 'not state-of-the-art' teachers was the result of the fact that Oprah "was not dealing with Brad Pitt" when she was interviewing her school's prospective teachers (ibid). Through an improvised

dialogue between Oprah Winfrey and the schools imagined Principal, Noah diagrams the dynamics of a hypothetical interview between the two, by mimicking Oprah's accent in contrast with an impersonation of a Soweto-style stereotyping of township English. He exaggerates the latter in particular, most likely because of the predominantly South African *Daywalker* audience.

Oprah: You're not going to spank them are you?

Principal: No, nevah, nevah, no, we can nevah spank a child.

[Noah then mimes Winfrey's departure on an Airplane while cheerfully waving 'bye bye']

Principal: [Speaking township slang and English] *Oprah is right*. No, us, spanking a child? Nevah. We BEAT them. Ja, we BEAT children. Don't spank a child heh, eh…spanking is for playing, you can spank a monkey, spankey, spankey…spankey, spankey, monkey, spankey, spankey, ja…You can spank a monkey, you don't spank a child. We BEAT.

Here, Noah contextualizes the expectations of a globally Western liberal education within the setting of a township school with a very different discipline-abuse outlook. The reception of 'spanking' is very different on the parts of Oprah and the school Principal not in terms of what spanking is or whether it is necessary or not, for they both seem to settle on the idea that 'you must never spank a child'. Their contextualization, however, makes explicit that their reasons for agreement arise from very different assumptions regarding spanking's inappropriateness. In creating such scenarios, Noah generates a potential to re-stage 'progressive' globalism within a context that talks back by juxtaposing Oprah's chronotope with that of the township. For Africans who are abroad – men in particular – Trevor Noah becomes a resource for coping with their own contextual challenges by spatiotemporally opening up the possibility of translating a difficult encounter in their own imagined Trevor's terms. In the same comedy routine, he goes a step further by drawing attention to the way in which this contextualization and re-contextualization is a far from even process. He does this by reflecting how, even when Oprah's liberal educational outlook is

resisted by the School Principal's alternative interpretation, that this resistance nonetheless takes place

with and in relation to a theater of evaluation that valorizes the horizon of expectation represented by

Oprah's world. In the sequence following the Principal's earlier monologue on the distinction between

beating and spanking, Noah transports us to a classroom an imagined encounter between a student and

teacher in Oprah's school:

Teacher:	Mavis, did you do your homework?
Mavis:	No, Ma'am.
Teacher:	Then you are going to get a BEATING…

At this moment Noah switches from a township accent to an impersonation of Oprah Winfrey, which

suggests that in some way Mavis' teacher has transformed into (or perhaps become possessed by) the ghost

of Oprah:

Teacher:	…but because it's Oprah's school, EVERYBODY'S GETTING ONE. YOU'RE GETTING A BEATING, YOU'RE GETTING A BEATING, YOU'RE GETTING A BEATING…EVERYBODY'S GETTING A BEATING…LOOK UNDER YOUR SEAT, YOU'RE GETTING A BEATING.

By transforming the time-space from that of a Soweto classroom, to a more sinister iteration of

Oprah's Chicago West Loop studio – facilitated through his shift in accent – Noah indicates that even the

beatings take place within the logics of Oprah's world, imbricating both its horizon of expectation as well

as the exclusions facilitated by her brand. Noah himself is only able to momentarily subvert this hierarchy,

by himself adopting his default, meta-commentary accent, which is always in well-delivered, model-C

English. The invocation of English as a rationalizing register places him – if somewhat precariously – as a

translator between Oprah's world and the Soweto school. Here, he is only able to get away with this move

because of his self-identification with the category *coloured*[17]. Noah, however, emerges as a coloured-but-not-quite through his routines, because even *coloureds* – whom he frequently parodies –come across as a stereotype which he would struggle to 'authentically' identify with. As the child of a relationship between a Xhosa woman and Swiss-German man, Noah always situates himself in his comedy as both 'born a crime' – given the illegality of interracial relations under the conditions of apartheid during his formative years – and 'day walker' – drawing on the popular culture figure of a black, half-human, half-vampire character in a major Hollywood franchise *Blade*. This serves to deictically situate him in a familiar, constantly deferred 'not-quite' hybrid, and thus an unassailable position from which to deliver his particular brand of comedy. But it is from this position, tellingly, that he is able to rely on a 'neutral' English accent for delivering reflexive punch lines and meta-commentary to the multi-voice, multi-racial, polyglot scenarios and interactions he depicts. It is also this 'neutral' meta-voice utters "madness!" in every skit where the concatenation of speech genres and their worlds climax in a kind of semiotic excess – for it is within the politically correct space-time of the Anglosign that madness' comedic possibilities can reflexively emerge in rational, commonsensical Model C English.

For different African subjects in Beijing, 'being Oprah' and 'being Trevor Noah', are not only gendered archetypes. They also respectively become foils for mediating the tension between two chronotopes: one the one hand, an 'unmarked', PC – thus 'white' – spacetime; and on the other, a reflexive, sassy, 'third world' cosmopolitan spacetime. Oprah was not a subject position any African female subject would want to inhabit, given its derisive invocation by many of their male peers. Trevor Noah, on the other hand, appeared – at times – to be an available, third world cosmopolitan type – one that allowed for a dignified disalignment from the ironically racializing propensity of English's PC spacetime. I say 'at times' because Trevor Noah's position as third world cosmopolitan hero is both highly perspectival and situationally precarious. This is not only given the highly gendered and sexist exclusions

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[17] This is a term, initially used to define 'mixed-raced' descendants of Dutch Colonialists, slaves, and Khoisan people of what was called the 'Cape region' of South Africa during the Dutch occupation. It also later became used under British colonial conditions, and within the apartheid state to classify any communities or individuals that could neither fit into White, nor Black categories as defined within the rubric of the Apartheid-Colonial matrix (Saul and Bond 2014).

this alignment perpetuates, where only male African subjects could aspire to be Trevor. It is also because Trevor Noah's own sassy-ness is completely contingent on the adoption of a highly rarified English register as the simultaneously rational and rationalizing meta-voice of anti-PC anti-imperialism, symbolized by the caricatured archetype of Oprah Winfrey in this particular comedy routine.

Following my discussion above, I would argue that neither Trevor Noah nor Oprah could be racists even if they were to hold 'racist' views and engage in racial essentialism, because – as generations of critical race theorists have argued – racism is not an equal-opportunity proposition. This does not mean, however, that the gendered and raced invocations of Oprah or Noah – as archetypes – do not enregister racism and racist effects. Similarly, *Qiaobi* and Lili's 'racism', at the outset of the chapter, is not simply commensurate with the racisms of white supremacists in Britain, Europe, or other white settler societies – that is, until Chinese become 'white' enough to be colonial agents. Instead, I have suggested that racist encounters – viewed through the lens of a Fanonian translation – are not only about what is said between interlocutors, nor purely about who those interlocutors are, but – equally importantly – what spacetimes they are both able to recruit, and excluded from recruiting, to their interactions. In Sino-African encounters, the question of what racism can be, and who can be racist remains constrained by its still Anglo-centric medium of translation and English's associated 'PC' theater of evaluation. For this reason 'who can be racist?' remains – at least for now – imbricated in a dialectical interaction that both recruits and constitutes white spacetime as its ideological gravity.

Part III – (An)Aesthetics

Chapter 5:

(An)aesthetics of Translation - Affectivity, Dreaming, and The Mana of Mass Mobility

Why have the terms 'Soft Power' and 'propaganda' in the context of China's relationship to Africa captivated western analysts, when English and its default Euro-American sensory world seem so anchored in the contemporary lives of the African and Chines subjects being observed? Perhaps, as I suggest in this chapter, it has less to do with the perceived threat of a rising, unknown superpower, than it does with the volatility and susceptibility of the sensorium as the mediator of the rational, the semiotic, and the political. Perhaps, in these precarious times, there is a return of Cold War-era fears that the affective and ideological subject may be exploited through coercion located at the point of articulation between the proposition of revolution or consumption and compulsion to act on it. There is a historical moment that emerges as a counterpoint to this proposition.

Mao Zedong's *Little Red Book* and its deployment during China's cultural revolution (1966 – 1976) provides an apt example of the relationship between proposition and compulsion proposed thus far, and a concluding note to the theoretical underpinnings of (an)aesthetic translation as the third dimension of Sino-African encounters under discussion in this dissertation. In the foreword to the second edition of the book, Lin Biao – a leading Chinese Communist Party (CCP) official considered to be the primary instigator of the *Little Red Book* concept as well as its subsequent promotion – states:

> Once Mao Zedong's thought is grasped by the masses, it will become both a source of inspiration and a spiritual atom bomb of infinite power. (Biao 1966: 14-15)

The propositional content of the book and an awareness of the social effects it compels is evident in the potential of the already existing spiritual atom bomb Biao is about to deploy, with the *Little Red Book* providing both a language and point of emanation for what subsequently became an intractable social force. Thus, it collapses together what language philosopher John Austin might refer to as the *illocutionary* – reflexive, intentional – and *perlocutionary* – unintentional consequences – functions of language. As an ideological expression of affectivity, *The Little Red Book* and its historical context occupies the volatile intersection of illocutionary intent – exemplified by Lin Biao's declaration of the document's efficacy as well as its textual content which the Red Guard would eventually draw on as a reflexive justification for their purges – and perlocutionary force – evident in media depictions of their aftermath through the use of terms like "effervescent", "hysterical", and "mania" in capturing the "irrational" "wave" of violence that "swept up" the nation at the time. There is an underlying, and far from forgotten, logic that Language is a racialized, gendered, sexualized, and classed technology that can compromise the sensorium.

At present, the relationship between 'unmarked', English-mediated contemporary Sino-African educational encounters, and the signs of post-socialist, postcolonial pasts has been an explicit theme in the preceding chapters. I have revealed how negating, indexing, and recruiting a trans-colonial spacetime – a third world cosmopolitanism – is an important dimension of Sino-African interactions in contemporary Beijing. I have also shown how this dimension of interaction is achieved through a contradictory commitment to English and its associated white cosmopolitan space-time, one that ultimately compromises and stratifies Chinese and African subjects along intersectional lines.

In this chapter, I explore an important dimension of contemporary Sino-African encounters: the techno-linguistic and affective dimensions of social life that constitute the sensory and aesthetic underpinnings of their interactions. I am particularly concerned here with the recruitment and emergence of affective and techno-linguistic modes of mediation among informants that challenge a number of prominent anthropological theories of network-based interactions (Latour 2005 & 1987, Callon 1986) and technological mediations of the social (Galloway and Thacker 2007). In this regard, I have found Frantz

Fanon's (1965) framing of the concept, *affectivity*, and Susan Buck-Morse's (1992) use of the analytic, *(an)aesthetics*, key resources for making the arguments that follow. In the second half of this chapter, I show how anthropologist, William Mazzarella's (2017) re-formulation of an older anthropological analytic, *mana*, and its relation to what he terms *the mimetic archive* has implications for a theorization of *affectivity* and *(an)aesthetics* as dimensions of social action – situated interactionally – that trouble a number of current anthropological tensions: between structure and agency; semiotics and affect; the emergent and the dialectical.

Part I: On a Beijing Street

John Rousseau is a Francophone Madagascan student studying at Aiguo University in Beijing. In the Summer of 2013, John and I were waiting to board the 355 bus to get to Renmin University's East Gate in the city's university district. Negotiating this urban landscape as newly arrived students with little Chinese, John and I were trying to decipher a bus stop with hundreds of destinations laid out on a green, black, and white grid marked only with arrows and hundreds of Chinese characters (*fig.* 1).

(*fig.* 1)

As I clumsily tried to read these characters with my still limited Chinese, John pulled out his iPhone, activated an App called Plecko, and used the device's recognition software to instantly translate the relevant characters on the grid. The App accesses a smartphone's camera, recognizing and instantly translating Chinese characters, allowing the user to visually capture and store the translated item in a flashcard for later review. In this way, the entire city of Beijing can be converted into a digital archive for language review later. As I will suggest in this chapter the 'technological' and the 'linguistic' – as imbricated modes of mediation – are in a constitutive, rather than deterministic, embrace.

The process of incrementally compiling this digital archive, allowed us to read the names of all the bus stops we had come to know aurally within our first few months in the city. However, at the time of writing, we were as yet unable to instantly recognize them visually. We quickly scanned all the bus stop names into Plecko so we would know which direction to catch the bus from, as well as at which stop to get off once we had caught the right bus. We were relieved to be standing at the right stop and were fortunate to catch one of the 355 busses as it was arriving. It was getting dark and we were late for a dinner appointment with some other African and Chinese friends, having just returned from a sports meeting at a different University an hour before. Along with a massive, impatient crowd, we eventually pushed on board the bus as the rain began to pour and remained squashed-up against the window as we watched rush-hour traffic visibly escalate on the other side of the bus's window. As digging elbows pushed us right up against the breath-fogged window, John turned to me saying, "Wow, that girl driving the Mercedes Benz out there is really cute. I'm going to get her number". I thought he was joking until he once again pulled out his iPhone, this time opening his WeChat or *weixin* (微信) App, and started searching the application's local network function for connections that might have the girl's photo. She accepted his request as John, grinning sheepishly, showed me on his phone. Her name was Mingming (明明). The conversation that followed was mediated by a combination of her broken English, his Plecko-assisted Chinese, and WeChat's English translation function which came in handy when Mingming texted in Chinese characters that were beyond John and my – at the time – somewhat rudimentary language

abilities. Eventually, she wanted to know where he was chatting with her from, so she could see her

interlocutor, since he did not have a WeChat profile picture of himself, opting instead for a cartoon

character as his icon – Doraemon the time-travelling robotic cat – a character from the an animation series

by the same name. As we pulled level with her car, he waved frantically to her from the bus window, to

get her attention. She turned and must have been curious about the visibly keen black man waving at her,

and gingerly waved back. He showed her his WeChat screen on his iPhone and she nodded. What

appeared to be initial mutual interest quickly petered-out after this, and her car disappeared behind several

lanes of traffic ahead of the bus. John tried to contact her on many occasions after that but never heard

back from Mingming again.

In this vignette, the techno-social ensemble of Plecko, WeChat, and the iPhone appear to generate

possibilities of mobility and encounter among Chinese and African actors in Beijing's urban landscape. It

also, at first glance, appears to call forth, on the one hand, the liberal narrative of the emancipatory

possibilities of information technology and social media (Mackenzie 2010); and on the other, a validation

of recent theories of technological and object agency as still 'in vogue' anthropological concerns

(Helmreich 2007). These narratives and theories of technological agency both presume a kind of prior or

virtual, radically egalitarian zone of techno-social interaction, be it a potential, radically democratic mass-

mediated public (Galloway & Thacker 2007); or a synchronic vacuum of constantly becoming,

symmetrically-colliding actors and actants (Latour 2005). Framed within these popular, perhaps 'post-

human', anthropological genealogies, John – in what now follows – becomes a foil for two prominent

narratives.

Revolutionary Actants and Cyber Guerillas

In the first narrative, John emerges as a subject whose legibility, history, and ideological

landscape becomes non-differentiable from the emergent potentials of his technological assemblage. By

way of clarifying his position on actor-network theory (ANT or AT), Bruno Latour is a prominent

anthropological voice for the revolutionary actant:

[The] actor-network theory (hence AT) has very little to do with the study of social networks. These studies no matter how interesting concerns themselves with the social relations of individual human actors - their frequency, distribution, homogeneity, proximity. (Latour 1996: 369)

Actants, though they are post-human, apparently need to be understood against the backdrop of the individual human subject as primary social unit. Latour also proposes this as though the social sciences have never considered moving beyond the singular, rational, human actor. Thinkers like Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber – all of whom have considerably influenced generations of social inquisitors in sociology, anthropology, and economics – would likely disagree with Latour on this point, given that all three thinkers and their intellectual genealogies have in fact contested the 'individual human actor' as the primary unit for studying the social. Latour continues:

[AT] was devised as a reaction to the often too global concepts like those of institutions, organizations, states, and nations, adding to them more realistic and smaller set of associations. Although AT shares this distrust for such vague all-encompassing sociological terms it aims at describing also the very nature of societies. But to do so it does not limit itself to human individual actors but extend the word actor -or actant- to non-human, non-individual entities. Whereas social network adds information on the relations of humans in a social and natural world which is left untouched by the analysis, AT aims at accounting for the very essence of societies and natures. (Latour 1996: 369)

Besides, problematically assuming 'the human' as a stable proposition, Latour's inclusion of the 'non-human' is not only another false novelty but a negation of cyborg-interventions that have argued the

same position for decades (Gray et al 1995, Harraway 1991 [1984]). Perhaps Latour's omission arises from being the product of Cold War-era mass educational censorship and capitalist privilege that would have purged dialectical materialism from his purview as the failed language of failed revolutions. Latour's negation here is an unfortunately pervasive point of view – one that converts a Marxist genealogy all the way to the brilliant Donna Haraway (1991 [1984]) into a 'structuralist', 'human-centric' straw man. Following Hylton White's (2013) outstanding recent critique of Latour's 'materiality', we should ask: Is indicating the dialectical relationship between subject formation and its historical material conditions not precisely the point of this vast, though often superficially interpreted, body of Marxist critique? Was Marx's proposition regarding the expropriation of species being and its alienation through the commodity fetish not precisely an indictment against the first theorist of the 'rational individual actor' – Adam Smith? Here, Smith (2000 [1776]) believed that interactions between humans – conceptualized as exceptional due to their capacity to truck, barter, and trade – depended on rational calculations where the actor 'most likely to appeal to [the desires of] another' was 'most likely to prevail in [human relations]' that were typified by their contingency on exchange. This 'natural' capacity of human beings – that set them apart from other animals as a proto *homo economicus* – could ultimately be exploited in a large-scale division of labor where private vice could be converted into public virtue as long as monopolies were somehow regulated – lest this dynamic commensurates authoritarian greed into extractive profit. Marx, by contrast, posited a contingency on material conditions in his explication of species being – conceptualized as a dialectical interplay between nature and culture, subject and material history, mediated through labor.

Beyond Latour's omissions, he would have us find the 'essence of societies' while taking formations like institutions and nations completely for granted as stable, purely human, passé concerns, whose epistemological maintenance has little material consequence or impact. One must ask: If institutions are in fact included as actants, are all actants equal or are some more equal than others? More pertinently, if John and Mingming are equal actants in relation to their phones and the surrounding traffic assemblage, could we even see, let alone account for, racism and racial ideology as supplying ideological

gravity to Latour's colliding of actants? Are there hills and valleys in his grid, and if so what forces allow them to both be felt and to stratify actants? Latour, however, appears untroubled by such concerns:

[AT] does not wish to add social networks to social theory but to rebuild social theory out of networks. It is as much an ontology or a metaphysics, as a sociology. Social networks will, of course, be included in the description but they will have no privilege nor prominence. (Latour 1996: 369-370)

Perhaps actors like John and Mingming would love to have a fluidity of existence where epistemology has no bearing on their passage through the world, but such an experience of fluid subjectivity is reserved for an unmarked few. Being 'just an actant' appears like a wondrous oblivion to the marked subject in a marked body, but as such, it is a view of the social that ultimately stratifies in its materialized epistemology despite the proposition of its objective ontology. It is in this way that sensual, inter-subjective phenomenologies problematize even the most logical metaphysics.

In the second narrative, John – like a 21st-century cyber-guerilla – can be seen to be contesting the cabalistic forces of governmentality and neoliberalism by appropriating the intrinsically democratic, mass-mediated weapons of emancipatory self-fashioning. This trope emerges particularly strongly in Alexander Galloway and Eugene Thacker's important book, *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (2007). Masquerading as a kind of intellectual anarchism, Thacker and Galloway ultimately enshrine the privilege of making an argument that can "avoid the limits of academic writing in favor of a more experimental, speculative approach" (ibid: vii).

Not unlike Latour, Galloway and Thacker regard the network itself as an arbitrary commensurator despite the asymmetrical human labor that goes into its construction:

The nonhuman quality of networks is precisely what makes them so difficult to grasp. They are, we suggest, a medium of contemporary power, and yet no single subject or group absolutely controls a network. Human subjects constitute and construct networks, but always in a highly distributed and unequal fashion. Human subjects thrive on network interaction (kin groups, clans, the social), yet the moments when the network logic takes over — in the mob or the swarm, in contagion or infection—are the moments that are the most disorienting, the most threatening to the integrity of the human ego. (ibid: 5)

Here, there is a troubling slippage from the exploitative asymmetries of human labor to the exploitable symmetry of an unruly non-human network. The signs 'non-humanity' and 'disorientation' do considerable work here to convert the network into something impersonal and out-of-control, thus ultimately an egalitarian exploit. This shames the vulgar humanist or materialist: You must be an egoistic, anthropocentric narcissist to suggest that networks are somehow interested. How dare you, subaltern? Pull yourself up by your network-made bootstraps and claim what's yours – go forth and make your own gravity. Now that the network is out of control, don't we all have equal access?

In both Latour's, as well as Thacker and Galloway's narratives, translation – as a means to inter-subjectively *motivate* semiotically- and materially-mediated transformation – emerges as either inherently arbitrary, or inherently egalitarian. John's techno-social ensemble either explicates a flat, synchronic grid – symmetrical translation without mediation; or an agential appropriation of an equal opportunity techno-linguistic assemblage – the hijacking of the means of translation as a radically democratic *exploit*, in the words of Thacker and Galloway (2007). However, both narratives elide three key dimensions of translation: the languages or units of commensuration its metaphor entails; the ideological space-time or gravity of translation; and the sensory-semiotic capacities that make such a translation intelligible. In the first, the relationship between English and Chinese as 'world languages' in John and Mingming's interaction is far from equal. In the second, English's entailed, white, cosmopolitan subjectivity (established in preceding chapters) can be understood as an ideological scripting of racial asymmetries

even in the absence of white bodies. In the third, the seemingly all-commensurating possibilities of John and Mingming's shared techno-linguistic ensemble – iPhone, Plecko, WeChat, and English – appear to engender a contradiction between the promise of egalitarian connectivity while reinforcing the very impossibility of this promise – a consequence of the ways in which technological and social engagements do not unfold in ideological or indexical vacuums.

Rather than aligning with a politics of liberal agentive possibility, or committing to the hyper- or non-localism of a kind of nihilistic agential becoming, I am proposing a translational attentiveness to the relationship between techno-social ensembles and their ideological-sensorial contextualizations. Here, I have found the work of Susan Buck-Morss particularly productive. Buck-Morss points to 'numbing' or anesthesia as historically-situated, techno-social strategies to diminish shock as a response to industrial modernity. In doing so, she argues for an etymological re-suturing of discourses of Aesthetics and Anaesthetics (1992). Here, she points to a broader contextualization of aesthetics as imbricating a kind of calibration of the sensorium. As she suggests: "the experience of intoxication is not limited to drug-induced, biochemical transformations" and that 'narcotics' in can be "made out of reality itself" (ibid: 22).

In John's vignette before, we see an analog to Buck-Morss' argument. Western industrial modernity's sensory numbing of 20th-century urban inhabitants finds its counterpoint in John and others' commitment to the techno-linguistic ensembles of 21st-century social media within the ideological landscape of white, English, cosmopolitan cultural capital. Like Buck-Morss's (an)aesthetic dependencies, John and others' techno-linguistic investment facilitates an analogous protective shielding from the disappointments of cosmopolitan mobility, while simultaneously committing them to its very means of dissemination – an English-iPhone-Mobility ensemble.

In this regard, many students like John arrive in Beijing after grueling personal and academic trials only to find many of their Chinese peers aspiring to enter American and European universities. At present, there is a massive and expanding education industry in centers like Beijing where Chinese aspirational cosmopolitans are learning English as well as taking courses on how to pass European and

American standardized exams for university entrance (*fig.* 4 and 5). Within this language market, many

Anglophone African students – almost upon arrival – find themselves in illegal, hence exploitative

English teaching positions to supplement their somewhat meager stipends. To buy the desirable iPhone,

and to acquire the desirable Plecko APP, a student will almost certainly teach English, given the absence

of alternatives (a theme I explored in Chapter 2). Even Francophone African students, like John, will

quickly recognize this opportunity, committing themselves more diligently to studying English than

Chinese.

Language, Affectivity, and (An)Aesthetic Technologies

Thus, it isn't purely the iPhone and its Apps that anesthetize the panic of a buss-schedule comprising only

indecipherable hieroglyphs. It is also the necessarily imbricated ideological space-time of Anglo-

cosmopolitanism, within which, you are safe as long as you commit to that world. Here, I asked John, if

he was ever worried about getting arrested for teaching English illegally? "Look", he said, "as long as you

speak English, no one is going to hurt you". Here, it is more the belief, than the reality of John's claim

that is important. For many, English indeed appears to provide a literal, protective shielding from

discrimination and persecution. But, again, this belief comes with significant compromise.

(*fig.* 2)

(*fig.* 3)

In *Wretched of the Earth* (1965), Frantz Fanon explores a similar politicization of the sensorium in his discussion of *affectivity*: "In the colonial world", he writes, "the colonized's *affectivity* is kept on edge like a running sore flinching from a caustic agent. And the psyche retracts, is obliterated, and finds an outlet through muscular spasms that have caused many an expert to classify the colonized as hysterical. This overexcited *affectivity*[18], spied on by the invisible guardians who constantly communicate with the core of the personality, takes an erotic delight in the muscular deflation of the crisis" (ibid: 19).

In depicting how the colonial state governs the (re)production of violence through its governed and colonized bodies, Fanon uses this psycho-physical concept as a way of understanding an exploitable capacity for affective interpolation. Here, I hope to suggest that affectivity becomes a way of understanding how phenomena like governance (Xi 2014), hegemony (Gramsci 1975), and essentially the colonization of consciousness (Comaroff 1991) are all attained through managing affect by recruiting a capacity for its calibration – through forms of anesthesia or stimulation. For Fanon (1965), affectivity is manifested through forms of repression – in the Freudian sense – where the colonized subject is constantly dreaming of taking the place of the colonist. This 'envy' persists through an ideological

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[18] My emphasis.

'compartmentalization' within, and subsequent to, the colonial order – from outright subjugation and constantly deferred dreams of racial inclusion. This situation creates perpetually 'penned-in' colonial and postcolonial subjects who, accordingly, have what Fanon evocatively refers to as "muscular dreams, dreams of action, dreams of aggressive vitality" (ibid: 15). For him, these dreams are not of "becoming a colonist, but of replacing him", not only of escaping the colonized hell immediately, but desiring "a paradise within arm's reach guarded by ferocious watchdogs" (ibid: 16). On the surface, the colonized subject learns not to overstep the limits of this compartmentalization, yet at a deeper level, the colonized subject secretly harbors the dreams of a vital efficacy, engendering self-recognition as animalcules or monsters: "He patiently waits for the colonist to let his guard down and then jumps on him" (ibid). For Fanon, this figurative 'patient waiting' is embodied in muscular tension, spasm, and so-called 'hysteria' of the colonial bodies. In this way, colonial bodies keep on accumulating 'aggressiveness', while accumulating tension through a compelled stasis given the ideological and thus 'physical' limits of the continually colonized condition.

This reinforced intensity in bodies – through a capacity or susceptibility – for further forceful actions on the part of the colonized can be understood through Fanon's evocative somatic metaphor as being "kept on edge like a running sore flinching from a caustic agent" (ibid: 19). Here, affectivity is more than 'being emotional', since it imbricates a susceptibility to potential physical forces that transcend emotion as a rational reduction of complex affective states. Through his examples, he shows how – in needing to"[find] an outlet" – this affective capacity can be "drained of energy" through forms of crisis, the ecstasy of dance, spirit possession, fratricidal struggles, or inter-tribal conflicts (ibid). In its self-destructive manifestations, "the supercharged libido and the stifled aggressiveness spew out volcanically" (ibid: 20). Thus, for Fanon, managing these 'outlets' becomes key to maintaining the equilibrium of a social world: "On the way there [to the dance]…their nerves 'on edge'. On the way back, the village returns to serenity, peace and stillness" (ibid).

In contemporary Sino-African encounters, *affectivity* perhaps no longer manifests through a barely suppressed rage, but this manifestation – in Fanon's context – is merely one symptom of *affectivity*

as an exploitable capacity. Perhaps adaptation to transformed modalities of colonial capitalism, in the post-colonial era, necessitate a reconsideration of how *affectivity* must be (an)aesthetically, in and beyond the 'third world'. Here, I suggest that it is a partial, (an)aesthetic management of this capacity that motivates Chinese and African informants' persistent commitments to cosmopolitan desire despite encountering considerable obstacles within a landscape of exclusionary 'global' cosmopolitan aspiration. I say that it is a *partial management* for two reasons, firstly because affectivity – as an inter-social, beyond conscious capacity – thwarts the agential imperatives of rational freedom or capacity to choose; and secondly, because the (an)aesthetic conditions within which contemporary Chinese and African subjects find themselves to be emplaced, complicate the outright manifestation of barely controllable rage in the ways that Fanon described decades ago. This speaks to the ways in which the world has perhaps not decolonized, but rather, that the sensory and semiotic conditions of subjecthood within that world have become compromised.

Thus, *affectivity* – as a sensory semiotic capacity – can be understood as a volatile nexus of inter-social forces that acts on subjects' not-necessarily-rational, not-necessarily-conscious propensities for reception and action, a space-time emerging between the volatile sensorium and the ideological materialities within which it becomes imbricated. Providing the example of dance, Fanon, locates the capacity to calibrate *affectivity* as the political site of both resistance and control: "[T]he colonized's affectivity can be seen when it is drained of energy by the ecstasy of dance…The dance circle is a permissive circle. It protects and empowers" (ibid: 19 -20). Affectivity is thus a capacity, exploitable either on the part of the colonizer, which renders the colonized more tractable, or on the part of the colonized - as a means of resistance through (an)aesthetic calibration similar to that proposed by Buck-Morss. Here, it is important, that this calibration dialectically draws on the ideological and material conditions at the experiencing subject's disposal – the articulation or anesthesia of histories of capitalist modernity and colonial stratification.

In Fanon's case, it is the dialectical space-time of the colonial encounter that supplies the ideological gravity or indexicality for grounding *affectivity*'s exploitation, mirroring the ways in which

the traumas of modernity require the cultivation of (an)aesthetic technologies (Buck-Morss 1992). It is in this way that the very means of emancipation for the postcolonial subject entails either an unlimited unfolding of endlessly limited compromises – perhaps fractally – or the violence of a discourse-ending tabula rasa. Perhaps there should be a re-evaluation of the nexus between the sensorium and the semiotic in postcolonial studies' engagement with the analytic of translation. When the meaning of 'language' is less over-determined and the relationship between signs more dialectically considered, perhaps more attention can be given to the pragmatics of postcolonial translation as opposed to semantic fetishism over how to define it. The analyst might then begin to begin to consider language *as* (an)aesthetic technology – where affectivity mediates English, as English mediates affectivity.

Techno-linguistic Alienation and the Racist Phone

Briefly before getting to know John, and prior to my preliminary fieldwork in Beijing, I met and befriended, Yang Kemei (羊可美) a Chinese student who was an alumnus of Aiguo university. Like many Chinese students from elite institutions in Beijing, she had completed a Masters degree and was later accepted into an American graduate program at a top-tier university where we met as two graduate students at the conference. Here, I was fortunate enough to interact with her both in the US and China. In an interview, she described an interaction where, while drinking with other graduate students in the US, Kemei and some of her colleagues were playing with Siri on her newly-purchased iPhone. The other students were laughing at the fact that Siri couldn't understand Kemei's accented English, but was able – with little difficulty – to decipher their mostly Midwestern accents. A few years later, Kemei was in Beijing and I arranged to go out for dinner with her and another of my informants, Marx Moji. During the cab ride home, Marx – who himself had at that time just purchased an iPhone – pulled the device out of his white dinner jacket and attempted to activate his Siri function in what may or may not have been a demonstration of suave cosmopolitanism, saying "excuse me while I make a quick business call". As soon as he said "Call Tawanda!", it was clear that Siri was struggling to recognize his Ndebele-Sotho

accent. After two attempts, Marx stated, "Hai, this phone is racist". Kemei, who was watching with interest, and had by then picked-up a kind of American accent, instantly chimed in: "That's why you should buy Chinese". As she said this, she held up her recently-purchased Xiaomi phone.

Marx's smooth performance of efficacious cosmopolitanism is interrupted by a relationship between his use of English and the very object meant to mediate his performance. Indeed it is not just that Siri and the phone are racist, but that the relationship between English, its mediating technologies, and the ideological context of white spacetime that imbricates it, alienate Marx's attempt to fully participate without constraint. Kemei's own history of interaction with this techno-linguistic interface allows her to recognize Marx's frustration and help him save face. Kemei not only recognizes her privileged mobility compared to Marx's, but because of her own disillusionment with the cosmopolitan dreams of English mobility, knows the alienation that white spacetime promises for the third world cosmopolitan – even for a subject, like her, who feels as though they have done everything to master what others in China and Africa have dreamed of. What sustains cosmopolitan dreaming despite its techno-linguistic failures? How must *affectivity* be managed to (an)aesthetize the dystopian blockages of existential mobility (Hage 2009)? Kemei and Marx's interaction reveals a counterpoint of techno-linguistic alienation that was also mirrored in the account of another female Chinese student.

At around the same time I came to know John, I met and befriended Lu Dan (鲁旦), a Chinese student also studying at Aiguo university. She had just completed a Masters degree in sociology and was hoping to be accepted into an American graduate program. To this end, I had agreed to help with the application process and gained insight into an important dimension of Sino-cosmopolitan aspirations – one that also contextualized the experiences of many African students in China. For Lu Dan and many Chinese student informants, the American scholarship and university application cycle sets in motion a frantic period of TOEFL and GRE exams, research proposal writing, as well as an obligation to approach foreign and local professors for application endorsements and reference letters. What appears to be an intense scramble during this stressful time, usually follows decades of trans-generational labor,

considerable investment in language classes, and the cultivation of a horizon of expectation that posits the white, cosmopolitan Anglosphere as a destination of excellence and standard of achievement – what we might understand here as indexicality that gives weight to *affectivity*.

Lu Dan and other graduate colleagues would often make plans to 'study together' during vacations where they would travel together not only abroad, but also within China, making use of relatively cheap travel infrastructure available in and from centers like Beijing. Having gone along on one of these excursions, I came to learn that Lu Dan, like John, would travel light, but never without her iPhone and charger. With this, she not only used WeChat to stay connected both locally and abroad, but also made use of the App to change and purchase flight tickets, pay cab fare, and settle restaurant bills. This is, generally, an indispensable component of mobility in China. Other than WeChat, Lu Dan and many of her friends also made use of Facebook, as an 'uncensored' space, using VPNs to get around the Chinese firewall. Since my fieldwork, however, this is becoming increasingly difficult.

After she relocated to the US following acceptance at a top-tier American university, both Lu Dan's WeChat use and Facebook presence changed drastically. When I later asked her about this, she answered: "The US became the end of dreaming". In explaining this simultaneously cryptic and dystopian admission, Lu Dan reflected that the years of Anglo-cosmopolitan education she had undergone in China had not prepared her for what she encountered in the US. In arriving at her university for an 'equal opportunity' education, she was placed in an "English Improvement" classroom with 15 of her 30 classmates also coming from Aiguo university. Referring to the arrangement as 'the concentration camp', Lu Dan angrily exclaimed that this did not help her 'integrate', but rather, as she put it: "taught me to be a foreigner". This situation degenerated further when – as a teaching assistant for one of her white male professors – she was assigned to grade only multiple-choice exams, while her fellow white American teaching assistants graded the essays. He justified his assignment by explaining that it was "…because [she was] a non-native speaker". Here, the professor most likely believed that he was doing Lu Dan a favor. Doing so, however, as she later confided – made her feel as though she was drowning in the same consoling mantra she had heard over and over again in her concentration camp class: "We are here to help

you". For Lu Dan and other educational cosmopolitans, the comfort this message entails comes across as disingenuous at best, since it places students at a further disadvantage compared to their American peers in an educational context that already posits an alienating inequality precisely in its propagation of equal opportunity outcomes. It is in this way that Anglo-cosmopolitan aspiration invests subjects like John and Lu Dan, valorizing second best as good enough because it is at least not losing.

In John, Marx, Lu Dan, and Kemei's accounts we see the interplay of an ensemble of media and linguistic technologies – specifically those related to the capacities of the iPhone and the English language. We also see that this interplay generates a kind of tension between the anesthetizing space-time of translation – the possibilities of mobility and liberation that technologies represent – and their potential failure.

The Trials of Tesla Tendai

Tesla Tendai is a Zimbabwean-born, South African electrical engineering masters student at Danwei University in Beijing. When I met him one polluted Winter afternoon, he had just bought a few old, refurbished iPhone 4's from an old contact in Zhongguancun (中关村) – an elderly Chinese gentleman practically buried in a pile of just-out-of-date electronics at one of the thousands of two-by-three meter stalls in the famous enormous electronics mall complex in Haidian district. Tesla had been in Beijing for six years and was about to graduate, after which, he would possess a top degree from one of the top universities in China as well as the ability to work in both Chinese and English. Once the graduation ceremony was over, however, he would have to return to South Africa, where he was hoping to re-sell the phones he has just bought "for some extra pocket money". This would "keep [him] going" while he waited to be accepted into a Chinese Ph.D. program – which will allow him to maintain a visa "while [waiting] for something better". As it turned out, he maintained his visa, but as a student who deferred graduation to keep selling cellular Phones in Africa while working as an English teacher in Beijing, where he continues (at the time of writing) to acquire the references he needs to continue his

studies after graduation in China. In this regard, he has little choice but to keep studying since he can neither work in China, given recently-instituted visa regulations for citizens from African countries, nor is he able to work in South Africa and Zimbabwe, given the lack of professional legibility of a Chinese degree. After leaving the electronics mall, we sat down at one of Zhongguancun's hundreds of Korean bakeries and enjoyed the (somewhat overpriced) comfort of a coffee after what appeared to be an arduous negotiation over the price of the iPhones, which – as far as I could gather – had not gone in his favor. I offered to defer the interview we were supposed to have, but Tesla laughed somewhat ironically and said that at least an interview would give him the opportunity to vent his complaints. We often discussed how China had invested millions in scholarships and education in Africa, bringing thousands of students to China to get degrees in the Chinese University system. On this occasion, I asked about what he thought the expectations were of such investments, and in what ways he felt his training was benefitting him? His response was telling: "I was hoping you'd be able to tell me that". Responding to my confusion, he continued: "They have been investing in us for a long time and there's all kinds of talk about how we represent the future of the China-Africa friendship, but where are these opportunities that are supposedly available to us now that we've been in China for the last four, eight, ten years? What do they want us to become?"

Tesla's provocations suggest that what is at issue is the relationship between 'who to be' and the conditions of possibility that both constrain and inform its emergence. This is because *who to be* – for many of my informants – also largely depends on *to whom* they even become a '*who*'. This is suggested by Tesla's question: 'what do *they* want *us* to become?'. It appears as though we arrive once more at the impasse faced by all of the subjects discussed in the preceding paragraphs: How does one acquire a unconstrained legibility, when the signs of aspirational efficacy that may achieve it, and their constitutive ideological gravity appear to generate endless possibilities of constraint?

'They' and 'us', in Tesla's final question, are multivalent. At first glance, it might explicitly be seen to imply 'Chinese' investment and 'African' educational labor. However, for many African students this is unclear given the fact that, very often, Chinese investment is supplemented or administered by an

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African country's own funding initiatives (King 2013). The 'they' in this sense is never entirely clear, but then again, neither is 'investment'. This is because 'investment' goes beyond scholarship money and gifts (Mauss 1967). It imbricates an expectation: 'to become' someone or something. Here, Tesla's second iteration of 'they' more strongly solidifies this, by recruiting an audience of this expectation: 'What do *they* want us to become?' Who is the audience of that expectation? – questions of translation as *motivation* to be sure.

Whether as a being in translation or be*ing* in translation, I argue that the educational migrant always inhabits these positions simultaneously, since they must transform, their movements must transform them, and they must remain mobile to transform in the right ways to their imagined arbiters. Being in translation opposes a flattened network of actants, since it locates itself in a necessarily stratified space-time of sensory experience. A being in translation, in doing so, becomes legible to itself and explicates its historical-material condition, coming to recognize the asymmetries – always under construction – between regimes of value, conditions of perception, and positions of knowing within which possibilities of being become legible. However, the attempt at translating this legibility of being is a project that does not necessarily allow for the desired catharsis of escape from the limiting conditions of ideological gravity and its Anglosigns. Like anesthesia elides pain without necessarily 'healing' the injured body, so certain forms of emancipation can only temporarily negate the legibility of constraint to the addicted prisoner of aspiration. Permanence of relief remains deferred while the condition is chronic – here, a seemingly impermanent solution becomes permanent only through addiction.

Part II: Affectivity and the Mana of Mass Mobility

What sensory-semiotic dialectics of inter-subjective social life lie behind the techno-linguistic dependencies depicted so far, and how are they constituted through Sino-African interactions in Beijing? The following account of one of my closest informants provides a compelling case for exploring these questions. Tracing the (an)aesthetic dimensions of interactions generally, but in this account in particular, necessarily requires some speculative moves that are none-the-less derived from empirical investigation.

Sigmund Freud too was far from naïve about this contradiction, something he rather candidly explores in his *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1920). Speaking to a presumably captive audience of medical students, Freud notes the presumed-upon material and sensual ground for an education that foregrounds empirical observation of a certain kind:

> First of all, we encounter the difficulties inherent in the teaching and exposition of psychoanalysis…the medical teacher preponderantly plays the role of a guide and instructor who accompanies you through a museum in which you contract an immediate relationship to the exhibits, and in which you believe yourself to have been convinced through your own observation of the existence of the new things you see…Unfortunately, everything is different in psychoanalysis. In psychoanalysis nothing occurs but the interchange of words between the patient and the physician…Words were originally magic, and the word retains much of its old magical power even today. With words one man can make another blessed, or drive him to despair; by words the teacher transfers his knowledge to the pupil; by words the speaker sweeps his audience with him and determines its judgments and decisions. Words call forth effects and are the universal means of influencing human beings. Therefore let us not underestimate the use of words in psychotherapy, and let us be satisfied if we may be auditors of the words which are exchanged between the analyst and his patient. (Freud 1920: 2-3)

Empiricism, of any kind, must ultimately be mediated through reflexive, situated, 'magical' language. This is no more the case for Freud than it is for a number of contemporary anthropologists invested in an 'un-mediated' poetics of encounter (Stewart 2007). This is why I argue that it is necessary to pay attention to affective and non-conscious domains of language as not only in individual encounters between African and Chinese subjects, but also those mediated by institutions and social networks in and beyond China. Doing so reveals the volatile, emergent zone of encounter that not only appears to simultaneously necessitate subject positions and their subsumption but also the ways in which encounters

engender an interplay between 'becoming' (Deleuze 1994 [1968]) and the historical and material conditions that act as dialectical counterweights underpinning a process like translation. This will allow an understanding of both the negotiation of a potentially disjunctive and historically-contingent present, as well as the affective intensities that accrue around African and Chinese subjects' aspirational mobility as they pursue a Chinese or perhaps even a Sino-African Dream.

Through close attention to the aesthetic practices and calibrations involved in this pursuit I am arguing for a not-necessarily-conscious, not-necessarily agentive *motivation* behind large-scale social commitments and *motivations*, like those propelling large numbers of educational migrants in an aspirational cosmopolitan circuit where China has become an added node, rather than its alternative. In what now follows, I will reflect another manifestation of *affectivity* through a close analysis of the traveling experiences of Marx Moji, a key informant introduced in Chapter 1. Through his insights, I came to understand not only an affective dimension of the historical subconscious of aspirational history that I introduced in that chapter, but a way of contextualizing many Chinese and African actors' commitments to languages and associated cosmopolitan mobilities that many knew to be intersectionally compromised.

Marx's Dreams within the Chinese Dream

"I dream of angels teaching me Chinese every night…they have always looked after me…that is why my Chinese has improved and will keep getting better": This was said to me by Marx Moji on the eve of the conclusion of my fieldwork. It had been five years since we met for the first time and he was by this time a seasoned graduate student at Da Hua University. On this particular occasion, we were discussing the fact that his Chinese advisor had rejected the most recent draft of his dissertation as being unintelligible in Chinese. However, Marx was unconcerned by this as they had given him another year to revise it, which for him meant another year of getting his export/import business going, as well as saving up money from his illegal English teaching. I asked him if these were motivating factors rather than the angels, but he insisted that the angels had helped him get to Beijing before he knew he would be engaged

in more "entrepreneurial pursuits". This prompted a tale of his initial efforts to come to Beijing, which was also confirmed by another Zimbabwean childhood friend who endorsed Marx's account.

Apparently, Marx had been a top student at a Confucius Institute in Zimbabwe and as a result, earned a strong endorsement from his Chinese teacher to apply for a China Government Scholarship at a Chinese University. Doing so required that he take a Chinese proficiency exam called the HSK (*Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi* or 汉语水平考试). However, the only venue where he could take the test was in Botswana – a neighboring country. Traveling for five days – his first trip beyond the borders of Zimbabwe – he attended the exam, but in doing so both ran out of food and money, as well as having misplaced his travel documents. For reasons that were left ambiguous, this resulted in him being jailed for a month at the Botswana border, where he waited for a friend to come to his aid with a new travel document. During this time, angels visited him – "like they always have" – and prepared him for a journey that he had to undertake. Apparently, the angels had previously visited him while he was in high school and helped him to understand the language of the elves in J.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. While in jail, Marx had visions of a mystical script, through which the angels communicated to him "in their universal language" that they were, in fact, Nephilim – the original children of God in the Judeo-Christian tradition – and would guide his journey. A few months later, having achieved a high test score, Marx was on his way to China.

Upon arriving in China, however, Marx was struck by the disjuncture between what he had been told about the Chinese Dream or *Zhongguo meng* (中国梦) in his Confucius Institute classroom, and what he encountered in Beijing's urban landscape. The inequalities, among Chinese, were far from what he imagined and the currency for escaping them did not appear to be Chinese but "English and white capitalism". While from a Chinese central government soft power policy perspective, Africans arriving in Beijing and speaking perfect, standardized Mandarin or *Putonghua* (普通话) might seem an ideal tool for promoting a cohesive 'Chinese' identity to less-linguistically-tractable internal migrants; this scenario plays out very differently for students like Marx Moji. Coming to Beijing, the expectation of 'third world

solidarity' that might render legibility to an African student in Beijing is notably absent. In the beginning, African students either find themselves to be the objects of wonder and spectacle to newly arrived rural migrants trying to sustain a precarious existence in Beijing's nooks and crannies, or they are regarded as a kind of low-quality foreigner among the majority of aspirational student elites they attend classes with. Here, as shown in the preceding chapters, there are notable exceptions to this dynamic, but these are not initially apparent to the newly arrived African student. What African students quickly realize, however, is that the aspirations of their elite peers produce certain, although limited, opportunities.

Given the Chinese elite investment in learning English and cosmopolitan aspiration, as shown before, African students quickly become recruited to this aspirational labor although in a considerably subordinate position compared to white teachers. After some time in China, Marx and some friends – having no choice but to accept this compromise – quickly began to appropriate the same capacities for mass mobility as their Chinese peers. Rather than jetting-off to Europe for vacation or American Ivy League schools, African students took trips to other Chinese centers, their home countries in Africa, or often even to smaller, more isolated Chinese rural areas following a reverse path to the rural migrants they often encountered in Beijing. The obsession with remaining mobile – even within China – seems not only to be motivated by access to cheap and safe capacities for mass mobility. It is also driven by a shared Sino-African cosmopolitan desire – revealed in the previous chapters – mediated through the appropriation and inhabitation of signs that may evoke or facilitate a kind of deferred yet transcendent efficacy.

Here we must contextualize a dream within a dream, or, as Fanon once noted, locate the dream in *its time* and *its place*. Fanon was referring to the historical unconscious of colonialism, re-constituted by a disjunctive present of decolonization. In this light, it is worth noting that Marx's dreams of the angels are a consistent feature of his life trajectory, accompanying the study of English in a decolonizing Zimbabwe during the 1980s as well as the later study of Chinese, which led him to Beijing. It is also important that the Nephilim do not address him in his mother tongue – Sotho – but in a medium of universal, perfect addressivity – mirroring Umberto Eco's (1995) evocative discussion of the history of Adamic language

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ideology. In coping with these disjunctures, the race-less Nephilim and their universal code provide Marx with a resource that appears capable of transcending the compromises of the Anglosign and the ideological gravity of whiteness depicted in the preceding chapters. Marx's Nephilim, perhaps as an analog to Tolkien's elves, suggests a tension between transcendent otherworldliness and universal immanence that cannot but underline a shattering disappointment in 'the world of men' as well as the need to anesthetize against it. But here, it is not merely the Nephilim or their language that provide a means to cope, but their centrality in motivating and facilitating Marx's travel as one of a constantly deferred destiny, much like Frodo's journey – the protagonist of *Lord of the Rings* – where the character eventually has experienced so much trauma that he must leave the 'world of men' to go and live with the elves. For Marx, an ideal type of a race-less, semiotically commensurable world of limitless efficacious mobility can be reconciled with conditions of compromise, discrimination, and constraint with the help of the Nephilim and the promise of destiny, however deferred. It is perhaps the same reconciliation that underpins his exploitation of the signs of English and cosmopolitan mobility as capacities of a postcolonial embouchure, since inherent in deploying these signs, is the potential for creating an (an)aesthetic effect in the way that Buck-Morss suggests.

(An)Aesthetics

Throughout this chapter aesthetics has been used so much to delineate a notion of 'the beautiful' or a universal that transcends the volatile sensorium in the Kantian sense – since this risks a contradiction Terry Eagleton (1990) once described by pointing out that "[t]he very language which elevates art [–aesthetics –] offers perpetually to undermine it" (ibid: 3). Instead, I suggest a process that rests on a relationship between the sensory and the semiotic as mediated by an '(an)aesthetic translation'(Buck-Morss 1992), which deserves more elaboration here. In a discussion of Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (2007), and mirroring Sigmund Freud's argument in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) Buck-Morss argues that 'aesthetics' and 'anesthetics' share an etymological root in ancient Greek, but that the relationship between the two terms became fractured by an

enlightenment trajectory of thought. Through juxtaposing these discourses, then, she attempts to return aesthetics to the domain of embodied sensory experience. Thus, the move her discussion makes is not only to take 'aesthetics' as a discourse out of a body-mind dualism by materializing it in the body. It also reflects the ways in which aesthetics become contested political zones through a potential recruitment and/or exploitation of human anesthetic capacities under conditions of mass mobility – a feature of capitalist modernity in the ways Arjun Appadurai (1996) once suggested.

Here, Buck-Morss' argument for (an)aesthetics should be interpreted within a dialectical materialist genealogy. Through the material metaphor of anesthetics, Buck-Morss explains that aesthetic spaces such as shopping emporiums, perfume parlors, and gourmet restaurants, in the early 20th century, provided various kinds of phantasmagoria, through which a total escape or at least overpowering of the senses was facilitated. These created "a total environment, a privatized fantasy world that functioned as a *protective shield for the senses and sensibilities of this new ruling class*" (ibid: 22). She goes on to argue that these total sensory environments served to anesthetize the impact of the sudden sensory onslaught of the industrial revolution with its multiple disjunctures. Her argument rests on the dialectical relationship between an approach to western industrial modernity that is meant to overwhelm the senses, so as to numb 20th century urban inhabitants to the disjunctures facing them, and in that numbing creating an even greater need for the overwhelming of the senses, each iteration, leaving the sensorium number than before. In what now follows, I contend that the sensorium is not a passive receiver of this onslaught, but can be both deployed and exploited in its own active transformation.

Appropriations of English's capacity to evoke an (an)aesthetics of 'unmarked' cosmopolitan mobility serves to protect the African student in China from not only the traumatic disjuncture of facing the urban landscape of Beijing without being able to speak a word of Chinese, but also from the terrifying constant threat of bodily stasis, a condition akin to death, for the 'cosmopolitan' modern. This can be seen as facilitating such a sensory subversion - where slipping into the semiotic skin of an Anglocentric world, where cosmopolitan whiteness reigns, is predicated on a particular form of negation akin to anesthesia. Importantly, however, this practice is not merely predicated on 'numbing' as such, since this would be a

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reduction of its broader ideological resonance. Another way of understanding (an)aesthetic translation might be as an appropriation of the sensorium as an extension of what Karl Marx (1972) has called 'species being'.

Marx (2007 [1884]), drawing in Feuerbach's notion of 'species-consciousness' delineates this as the capacity of humans to conceive of themselves as humans through the capacity to transform the material universe. Labor as the capacity to transform that material universe – which for Marx includes the social world, language, and the senses – is central to the formations of a self. In stating famously that "the forming of the five senses is a labor of the entire history of the world down to the present", he points to the centrality of the sensorium as a zone for mediating or alienating personhood, an understanding that has informed the ideological centrality of the sensorium for subsequent generations of Marxists. According to Marx:

> [Persons] appropriate [their] total essence in a total manner…Each of their human relations to the world – seeing, hearing smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, being aware, sensing, wanting, acting, loving – in short, all the organs of [one's] individual being, like those organs which are directly social in their form, are in their objective orientation or in their orientation to the object, the appropriation of that object, the appropriation of the human world; the orientation to the object is the manifestation of the human world; it is human *efficaciousness* and human *suffering*, for suffering, apprehended humanly, is an enjoyment of self in man. (ibid: 106)

Since we are "affirmed in the objective world not only in the act of thinking, but with all [our] senses", the capacity to appropriate the means for translating the senses is central to affirming species being (ibid: 108). If we regard the sensorium as the means for the production of personhood, then the attempt to wrest control over the translational labor it already performs – in the mediating of a self in relation to the world – is a claim to the means of production of personhood.

In one sense, we can understand Marx Moji's appropriation of English and cosmopolitan mobility as moments when he, to a more or less conscious extent, exercised a kind of volition over this (an)aesthetic translation. However, can we call the limited ideological landscape within which this 'choice' unfolds entirely conducive to volitionality? At first glance, it would appear that this '(an)aesthetic translation' engenders an ambiguity that must be solved. Instead, I suggest that this ambiguity points to a productive tension at the heart of what allows this – seemingly volatile – process to unfold. This is a tension that lies between *affectivity* as capacity, and something that appears to simultaneously acts on, while being constituted through, this capacity. William Mazzarella's recent re-framing of an earlier anthropological analytic, 'mana', provides a productive starting point for excavating *affectivity*'s *motivations*.

'Cosmopolitan' Mana

In understanding the (an)aesthetic appropriation of cosmopolitan mobility, I will now try to delineate, what 'cosmopolitanism', and the appropriation of its indexicalities – English and whiteness – might mean for a student like Marx Moji. In the first instance, Marx Moji's iteration of 'cosmopolitan' does not suggest that 'we of the periphery now occupy a position of privilege within the metropole' – a well-worn gloss among a number of postcolonials in other times and places. Instead, for many of my Beijing informants, destinations and points of origin appear to be subordinate to the capacity to have an efficacy in the world typified by a sense of unconstrained mobility. But, what does the performance of its features – 'posh' English and unconstrained mobility – cathect, and for whom? Answering this question in a Benjaminian mode, perhaps the audience is an ideal self, where the aura of the signs of English language-ness and efficacious mobility were invoked as vehicles to suggest that what they might have meant before, in fact never was. In this sense, it might suggest a proclamation that 'we of the periphery have always been modern' and that this new game, of 'making it in the metropole' is a familiar one that we have always already been playing. From such a perspective, the aura of an authoritative past attaches itself to an emergent sign in the present. As such, performing cosmopolitanism dynamically-figurates a

past that imbues the present moment of utterance with historical force. For Benjamin, it is the re-iteration of a supposedly 'originary moment' that sustains the aura – since there is no originary moment without the copy – it emerges as a force that arises in the present and appears to be oriented into the past. In a sense, what informants like Marx do with this force, is to re-direct that orientation (Benjamin 2007, Hansen 2012).

So, what is this affective compulsion towards mobility that simultaneously invests and marginalizes African aspirant cosmopolitans through its unit of commensuration – English – and its ideological gravity – whiteness? How do we also understand the affective forces that both propel cosmopolitan efficacy and undermines its aspirational arbitrariness? One frame through which to understand this complex, compelling force is *mana* – a persistent yet troubled term in the histories of social theory and anthropology. In his *The Mana of Mass Society* (2017), William Mazzarella argues for a revision of the mana analytic in light of its potentially productive dialogue with critical theoretical perspectives once propounded by thinkers of the Frankfurt School. Here, Mazzarella shows how the analytical possibilities of mana (as first proposed by Mauss and Durkheim) – when reconceptualized dialectically – produce insights in understanding the challenges to representation and reception of individual and inters-social legibilities of personhood in trans-global encounters that appear to be increasingly mass-mediated.

In revealing *mana*'s contours, Mazzarella (2017) deploys a multifaceted conceptual toolbox, one of these is the concept, 'mimetic archive', and another – related to Weber's (2002 [1905]) notion of 'elective affinity' – is 'constitutive resonance'. Drawing strongly on Durkheimian and Maussian conceptual language, Mazzarella's *mana* emerges in relation to key terms like efficacy or potency, which are not arbitrary manifestations of 'force', but rather are suggestive of the locatedness of *mana* at the intersection of reception and production. *Mana* thus has a curious volatility. In its tractable manifestations, often assumed at the point of production, the efficacy of *mana* depends on "an exquisite understanding of the potentials for creating erotic resonances and bonds between people, images, and things that dwell in the form of potentially constitutive resonances in any social world" (Mazzarella 2017: 25). Explaining

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constitutive resonance's relation to *mana*'s efficacy, Mazzarella recruits Max Weber's (2002) borrowed notion of elective affinity "to capture not pre-established equivalences or direct cause-effect relations but rather contingent yet germinal sympathies that, in an emergent way, allow both parties to the resonant relationship to *become themselves via each other* in a way that only retroactively creates the impression of a pre-existing 'pattern of culture'" (Mazzarella 2017: 26). Relating constitutive resonance to its historical moment Mazzarella suggests that it "touches closely on what anthropologists during the mana moment identified, often prejudicially, as a tendency among primitive peoples to think in terms of concrete and sensuous *participation* rather than in terms of abstract and conceptual *representation*" (ibid). The Interzone between representation and reception of *mana* emerges as much in this depiction of its emergent potential – constitutive resonance – as it does in Mazzarella's evocation of its virtual – the mimetic archive as:

> [T]he residue, embedded not only in the explicitly articulated forms commonly recognized as cultural discourses, but also in our built environment and our material forms, in the concrete history of our senses, and in the habits of our shared embodiment. This residue, our mimetic archive, is preserved on two levels. On one level, it appears as incipient potential. On another level, it takes the form of all the explicitly elaborated discursive and symbolic forms through which the potentials of our mimetic archive have earlier been actualized, each actualization then proliferating and returning new potentials to the archive. Some of the archive is, of course, textual or signifies in other more or less overt ways. But by far the largest part of the archive exists virtually yet immanently in the non-signifying yet palpably sensuous dimensions of collective life. (ibid: 41-42)

However, I would like to extend Mazzarella's argument beyond the 'production' site of affective intensities by suggesting that *mana*'s performative oscillation between illocutionary intentions and perlocutionary effects rests precisely on a tension at the Interzone of reception and production – the chronotope of an encounter. Here, Frantz Fanon proposes *affectivity* as a potential site for locating the

efficacy of this subtle, illusive, trans-conscious and inter-social substance. In what will follow, I will propose that his discussion of affectivity – as an affective capacity transcending the dualisms occasioned by the signs of 'consciousness', 'rationality', and 'agency' – emerges as a potential locus of both mana production and its receptivity. In what follows, I will respond to what might be understood as a challenge to Fanon's affectivity through the example of an expanded social terrain where we might see a broader contextualization of its manifestations.

Credivity and the Challenge of Propaganda

Anthropologies and histories of both religion and the occult, as well as a wide variety of theories of propaganda and mass society have engaged questions at the intersection of structure and agency (Bourdieu 1977, Simmel 1972, Elias 1978, Berger and Luckmann 1966, Giddens 1976, Needham 1984, Evans-Pritchard 1937, Hebdige 1979). The common concern for so many of these thinkers is the observation of dynamic forces that mediate the relationship between these two very general dynamics. These may emerge as transcendent forces like 'culture' or 'ideology' that seem to script the limited possibilities of action, meaning, or subjectivity. They may even appear to operate at an inter-social, 'beneath conscious' level encompassing 'individual', 'rational' action through the argument that any assumption of radical 'agency' within such hegemonic conditions is merely a manifestation of false consciousness. And some might argue that even if we were to unmask such forces and claim our reflexive, agential resistance to them, they nonetheless continue to operate because we believe that others are susceptible (Zizek 1989).

In Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's (2006) "The Bernheim Effect", we encounter the term 'credivity' as a way of undoing the dualism between more or less conscious modes of suggestibility. The argument he uses to demonstrate the 'Interzone' where this dualism converges is what he calls the riddle or paradox of suggestion:

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How can you induce someone to become passive (suggestible) if this passivity requires

[someone's] prior acceptance? (ibid: 47)

The way credivity solves this problem can be seen in his examples of hypnosis and placebo. In both examples, the "prior acceptance" of the suggestee can be understood as a potential capacity that emerges within a context that limits or compels a particular response. This capacity and its relationship to context is the suggestee's credivity. It is the 'prior acceptance' entailed in Borch-Jacobsen's account that provides a kind of pre-existent volition that initially appears to challenge affectivity's exploitation.

In James Siegel's (2005) work, I suggest, we find an apt counter-demonstration of *affectivity* at work in his engagement with Levi-Strauss' (1963) original discussion of shamanic practice and magic. In Siegel's argument, compared to Borch-Jacobsen's discussion, the dualism between passive suggestibility and active acceptance are restaged through inter-social phenomena like witchcraft and shamanism, whereby "the 'truth of sorcery' presumably lies in the transformation between inchoate feelings and the delimitation of these in such a way that they are tellable" (Siegel 2005: 29). Sorcery's affectivity or 'truth' – in Siegel's terms – is thus dependent on mediating the relationship between practical and propositional forms of knowledge, sensuality, and reflexivity. Importantly, it is an articulation of ideas through communal action:

Without sorcerers there would not only be no one to blame, there would be no way to bring into consciousness whatever it is that unconsciously presses for expression. (ibid: 30)

Thus, as for Freud, language – for Siegel – plays an important role in calibrating the relationship between the chaos of the potentially overwhelming sensual encounter, and the anesthetizing coherence generated by rendering intelligibility to it.

Here, through the (an)aesthetic calibration of a subject's affectivity, a techno-linguistic ensemble emerges out of the relationship between a subject's dependency on media technologies, on the one hand,

and their ideological and linguistic contextualization, on the other. This techno-linguistic ensemble can be seen to protectively encase these subjects, allowing them to negotiate the disjunctive temporal terrain of a landscape emerging within a far-from-decolonized moment. At the same time, these examples ethnographically reveal the spectacular deferment of Fanon's last coming first, as well as pose a challenge to an in-vogue anthropological discourse that stands as the theoretical equivalent of bootstrapping without having considered gravity. Reinforcing the limits of this techno-linguistic dependency, and its hierarchy, I would like to conclude with the experience of one African student who became a literal embodiment of its compromises.

Thus, affectivity in these terms needn't only manifest in violent, extroverted rupture, but may also – as I've suggested in the preceding discussion – become indexed through its (an)aesthetic symptoms: Affectivity – as an exploitable and manipulable capacity – and the mimetic archive – as a non-conscious virtual potential that sources its content often from the limited historical and material conditions of its subjects – appear to undermine any kind of rational volition that may be entailed in (an)aesthetic translation as well as privileging the experience of individual subjects. Perhaps the sensory semiotic contours of the chimera so many have generally described as late capitalism can be more particularly interpreted through the lens of affectivity's transformation from revolutionary potential into chronotopic synesthesia – once other material dimensions of the struggle seem fully compromised, perhaps all that is left is the final material-semiotic spacetime of the sensorium, or perhaps it is already compromised and we are merely witnessing the aftershocks.

Chapter 6:

(An)Aesthetic (Dis)Entanglements – Invisible Orders and Liberal-Supremacies Beyond Beijing

In the preceding chapters, I have offered an account of the ways in which whiteness, English, and cosmopolitan mobility together form a dialectical spacetime of mediation that can be understood as simultaneously re-constituted (interactionally) and recruited (historically) through African and Chinese encounters in contemporary Beijing. Throughout, I framed this simultaneous recruiting and reconstituting process as an extension of translation – however, conceptualized more in a dialectical and interactionist sense. In doing so, I drew attention to the historical material condition of decolonization that animates an emergent, but far de-politicized non-Western encounter. I further suggested that this approach has important implications for the study of interactions – in both anthropology as wells a variety of disciplines concerned with contact, encounter, and the stratification of social diversity along multiple intersectional vectors.

In reconsidering postcolonial translation in this critical semiotic sense, I suggested that there are three dimensions to understanding translation or mediation as both pragmatic and dialectical, given the persistent necessity of such processes in all social interactions regardless of the debated analytical possibility, impossibility, or radical nature of translation as it is currently contested in anthropology. I suggested that there is firstly, a chronotopic dimension to interactions, in the sense that they require the recruitment and construction of space-time(s) – like aspirational histories of 'third world cosmopolitanism' or 'the Anglosign' – through which units of commensuration and social value – like English, whiteness, or 'unmarked' cosmopolitan mobility – become co(n)textualized. Secondly, I suggested that such interactions – including but not limited to dialogical speech acts – are intersectionally emplaced (Crenshaw 1991), complicating the possibilities of 'taking any line' (Goffman 1959) of

interaction by any subject at any time. This is due to the ways in which relationships between race, gender, and sexuality – in relation to registers of language and 'unmarked' cosmopolitan aspiration – have a propensity to stratify subjects in relation to an emergent ideological gravity of whiteness, even if their presumed national and inter-social chronotopes were very different. Finally, I showed how interactions among subjects – who are variously stratified by aspirationally cosmopolitan horizons and the personhoods these imbricate – have an (an)aesthetic propensity. Here, I reflected that the affective and mimetic capacities of non-white sensoriums – and their techno-linguistic dependencies – become recruited to sustaining a persistent stratification through whiteness – whether by embracing a liberal non-racial cosmopolitanism, or a re-constituted 'third world' *imaginaire* – as a means to escape the gravity of white spacetime.

The universities and wider settings within which I was able to work during the course of my fieldwork certainly amplified the tensions between third world cosmopolitanism and white spacetime that both promised young Africans and their Chinese interlocutors access to unmarked, cosmopolitan social mobility while simultaneously deferring it. The fact that the means for making and acquiring the ideal future subject of 'Third-World cosmopolitanism' was a promise that was continuously being elided prompted the observation of (An)Aesthesia as a way to mitigate the disjunctive ways in which a cosmopolitan future was constantly being brought closer while keeping it at bay. In this way, the interactional spacetime of whiteness was very much distilled by the University and trans-national educational matrix within which African and Chinese students found themselves – transforming on- and off-campus interactions as a theater for aspiration and privilege that must be imported from an 'enlightened' (perhaps en-whitened) elsewhere. For many educational migrants, adolescence must perhaps be endlessly augmented, and adulthood deferred, just to cope with the 'youthful' experiences of 'exclusion and in-betweenness' that 21st century conditions of mobility and personhood impose on non-Western subjects – a concern that has emerged in the work of anthropologist, Constantine Nakassis (2017).

In his work, Nakassis suggests that the southern Indian university campus's interactional spacetime suspends the ideological gravity of stratification acting on his 'youthful' Tamil-speaking subjects "allowing for a moment to pause and play on those hierarchies by figuratively reanimating and deforming them" (Nakassis 2017: 228). On campuses in Beijing, such moments of suspension are certainly present, but rather than pointing to a kind of radical, post-structural agency within conditions of neoliberal compromise, the 'transformation' of experiences of liminality and hierarchy through such moments of suspension have an equal propensity to also reinforce liminality and hierarchy. 'Transformation' in the interactional here-and-now can go in more than one direction. (An)Aesthetically, it can "[open-up] spaces for youth sociality, aesthetics, value, and subjectivity" as much as it can compromise such an 'opening-up' (ibid). Precisely through *motivating* a commitment to the possibility of opened-up conditions of youth sociality, aesthetics, value, and subjectivity, powerful conditions for (An)Aesthetic alienations of personhood become not only equally possible but intersectionally likely.

I have emphasized throughout that the mediation of inter-subjectively- and mass-mediated icons of personhood – in dialectical interactions – are central to sustaining a pragmatics of postcolonial translation: 'the third world cosmopolitan', 'the unmarked cosmopolitan', 'the purple cow', 'Sheryl Sandberg', 'Oprah Winfrey', and 'Trevor Noah'. These 'archetypes' come into inter-subjective existence through interactions, and yet are also experienced as both prior to, and impinging upon, African and Chinese encounters. It is this interplay between present and past, interior and exterior, as well as emergent and transcendent that I have tried to emphasize by framing these encounters as 'dialectical interactions'. Inhabiting this dialectical tension, my informants both attempted to overturn complex stratifications within which they found themselves, as well as to recruit them in their favor – thus ultimately compromising themselves through both transforming (or updating) and reinforcing the very conditions of stratification they were attempting to escape. Thus, the recruitment of such archetypes and mass-mediated icons of personhood certainly allowed for a partial suspension from precarious inter-subjective – raced, gendered, and globally stratified – tensions. However the emancipatory propensities of this recruitment and suspension – once committed to on the part of the cosmopolitan aspirant – can also be interpreted as

acting (An)Aesthetically, eliding the inaccessibility of cosmopolitan 'realities' through the fetishization of cosmopolitan 'potentials'.

Translation's Mobile Entanglements

The attempt to convert the precarities of mobility into aspirational possibilities, entails the recruitment of a universal, perhaps 'cosmopolitan', register – in this case not only English but also its elided raciolinguistic entailments – to enact a postcolonial translation. Suggesting a similar set of dynamics, Homi Bhabha writes that "culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. [T]he transnational dimension of cultural transformation" – which I interpret as a salient, although not totalizing dimension of mobility – "turns the specifying or localizing process of cultural translation into a complex process of signification" (Bhabha 1995: 48). For him and many others (Gilroy 1995, Spivak 1993, Nuttall and Mbembe 2008, Butler 1995) this 'transnational' condition disrupts the capacity to "[reference] the natural(ized), unifying discourse of 'nation,' 'peoples,' 'folk' tradition" (Bhabha 1995: 49). In mobility, there is a transformation in concrete and signifying conditions that disrupt the signs of identity or personhood in their 'national' or 'local' expressions – a theme that becomes salient in trans-national encounters. This disruption, for Bhabha, problematizes identity formation by short-circuiting the reading of such signs by changing the 'national' or 'local' context from which they derive their legibility. Since the meanings of signs are contingent on the spatial, temporal, and material totality of their context of utterance – or simply their indexical factors (Silverstein 1976) – conditions of mobility necessarily impinge on signs of personhood. To be sure, such disruptions open gaps in taken-for-granted worlds that are unsettled by transnational interactions and their emergent communities of reception and reproduction – Where African educational migrants in Beijing and cosmopolitan Chinese graduate students in America all encounter and appropriate various cultural signs, producing perhaps productive ambiguities, curiosities, and forms of mimesis. Or is the Sino-African encounter – an object of analysis to the Western media and academic Anglosphere – merely a potential staging ground for Eurocentric multicultural fantasies, or when they fail, racist dystopias?

This dissertation – building on 8 years of preliminary research, fieldwork, follow-up, and analysis – did not seek to argue against novelty or contestation. Rather, it attempted to capture the ideological conditions that both obstruct and perpetuate this fantasy of equal opportunity multiculturalism as an outlook undergirding Western intellectual expectations of Chinese and African contemporary encounters. If Sino-African encounters could be genuinely equitable, egalitarian mobility would be a condition of possibility for such encounters, but what kind of mobility is in question?: Is mobility an experience, or is it a physical state, objectively delineable, irrespective of the one experiencing it? In this *experience* of mobility, where and how does this experience become legible? In posing such questions, temporality and sequence become key considerations. In the movement or reproduction of language, race, and cosmopolitanism, what exactly does this mobility entail?

Homi Bhabha clearly situates the state of mobility as being in translation, while on the other side of the same epistemic coin, Jacques Derrida and Gayatri Spivak have suggested that it is the state of translation that is a mobile one. There is something happening at the confluence of mobility and translation that appears to generate the solipsism at issue for these thinkers. It is also out of this solipsism (or perhaps dialectic) – of history, meaning, and material conditions – that translation as the primary analytic of postcolonial theory has emerged – and while I do not explicitly enter into a semantic exegesis, it is 'translation' in its postcolonial mode that has haunted my engagement throughout this dissertation.

This necessitates a polemic of sorts, in which I have drawn on, and recontextualized a very particular genealogy of postcolonial theory – in some ways at odds with what I have experienced as its canonical, mostly American, reduction in the US university classroom. In fetishizing the moment of translation and its discursive consequences, Bhabha, Spivak, and Derrida – in a 'poststructural' or 'deconstructionist' mode of postcolonial inquiry – have largely been recruited into the proposition of intellectual equal opportunism within privileged American higher educational settings. I mean no disrespect to these ancestors of postcolonial theory since it is on the foundations of their work that my own critique is constructed. Instead, I am criticizing and frustrated with the way in which their work has both been co-opted, and (perhaps unintentionally) lends itself – through its deconstructive moves – to a

still pervasive, extractive logic that underpins many intellectual interventions that sustain social science and humanistic inquiries that simultaneously aim to be both objective and relativist without questioning the condition of possibility for this very proposition. While colonization certainly transforms the colonizer too, I feel their discursive approach to postcolonial translation makes power an ultimately arbitrary proposition, where those who don't have it critique it and ultimately reconstitute its persistent salience. It was Erving Goffman – a contemporary of Foucault – who also concluded that hierarchies of power or 'interactional orders' ultimately required interactional labor to sustain them. However, Goffman also pointed out that subjects were not equal in their capacity to participate in the maintenance or contestation of hierarchy – there was an ordering of the interaction that emerged as though imposed on it, that made the same marginal subjects perpetually bear the burden of marginality in any interaction, and that this occurred regardless of the unfinalizability of personhood that exists as a default proposition in liberal societies. At another scale, thinkers like Frantz Fanon, Achille Mbembe, and Mao Zedong have revealed the same kinds of dynamics of stratification in the context of decolonization. In his lectures on surveillance at the University of Tunis, Fanon noted the raciolinguistic contingencies of reception (as production) that make the encounters of the colonized with the ideological spacetime of the colonizer a far from open-ended one (Browne 2015). In this regard, he preceded both Said (2003 [1977]) and Foucault (1980 & 1982) in noting both how subject formation unfolds through 'ascending relations of power' as well as how this formation is contingent on mediated modes of reception, like surveillance

All of these thinkers point to the dialectical emergence of an ideological gravity where despite the constant propositions of decolonization, modernity, sovereignty, and equal opportunism marginal subjects of history are stratified so as to bear the seemingly perpetual burdens of 'blackness', 'refugeeness', or 'Chineseness' as liabilities. Regardless of the volatility of semiotic forms – due to the open-ended play of difference and repetition – or the arbitrariness of signs of alterity, there appears to remain a durability in the ideological gravity of stratification – pragmatically rather than semantically. Thus, there is no 'failure' or 'impossibility' of translation as a pragmatic proposition, and indeed, there is no interaction, without some attempt at translation. Even if translation fails every time, the interlocutor remains committed to it,

thus sustaining translation as a durable social process even if it remains incomplete, hierarchical, and ultimately compromised.

Communicating this has been difficult in my time as a graduate student, lecturer, and preceptor in the US. Here, I can cite my own experiences of teaching postcolonial theory and attempting to make use of it in my research within the evaluatory regime of the American academy. Here, I was constantly informed not only of how 'out-of-date' this genealogy was, but also of its lack of theoretical rigor and ethnographic nuance. 'More complex' readings of my own postcolonial interlocutors were constantly encouraged, where colonialism suddenly became 'not the real concern' of Spivak, who could now 'could easily be updated with Povinelli, Brown, and Butler'. Fanon was suddenly 'not really advocating violence' as a challenge to white liberalism in the shadow of decolonization, and those who would dare to read Fanon in the 'wrong way' were suddenly not 'exegetic' enough – an accusation recently directed toward South African students voicing Fanon to protest white monopoly capital. Latour, Agamben, Foucault, and *Writing Culture* became almost dogmatically prescribed (or perhaps proscribed) as a theoretical panacea to the 'hysterical radicalism' that would dare to challenge the 'unmarked' 'objectivity' of liberal intellectualism. Masquerading as open-ended and 'open-minded' deconstruction, so many of these accusations against 'radical hysteria', some of them even of 'racism', continue to conceal the ideological gravity within which 'updated' translations of postcolonialism unfold.

This both implicit and explicit concealment evidences the existence of vast institutions and regimes of arbitration, not to mention economic systems that are sustained by commitments to translatability and commensuration. For example, journalistic and academic institutions of the Anglosphere that are committed to a situated objectivity – and yet speak for all others – are still squarely situated within what Adorno once called the culture industry, yet on a fundamentally more global scale masquerading as intellectual excellence. There are clearly a set of institutional practices that authenticate both legibility and value to Sino-African interactions within a subjective, far from arbitrary, regime of

arbitration. There is a lot at stake in translating the 'cultural' and 'economic' value of a China-Africa interaction, and there are certainly those who are the authenticators of such translations. For such meta-translators, like the anthropologist, not only exercises authority over a translation, but also mastery of the original, the ur-text, and thus authorize an appropriate relationship to history. It is precisely for this reason, that anthropologists' situatedness in relation to both their field of study and research subjects should not be elided. 'Who are the anthropologists in the field?', is a question many anthropologists these days engage with great relish, eager to perform the genre of narcissistic navel-gazing even while reflexively deriding it. Few, however, need to ask: who are they *to* their field?

As an Afrikaner anthropologist, I felt more 'at home' in my field site Beijing than I ever did as a graduate student in America – arguably one of the most alienating spaces for any non-Western anthropologist. I found refuge among my informants in China and elsewhere, learning a language that I still struggle to speak. However, I will maintain that proclaiming 'friendships' between myself and my informants within the chronotope of an ethnography is wholly inappropriate, even though such claims have increasingly become commonplace in the English anthropological literature. This representational politics becomes all the more apparent as increasing numbers of non-American and non-White anthropologists must internalize an appropriate affective disposition to their research subjects so as to perform an acceptable 'Anthroman' (Jackson 2005). The performance of an appropriate sentiment must be mastered to put an imagined (and thus omnipresent) Euro-American arbiter at ease. We must make our friendships with our informants accessible to our evaluators by mastering a representation of our subjects that we imagine will affective trigger our teachers' evaluations of us. In my fieldwork, there were and continue to be, genuine friendships – meaningful ones – but I have tried, as far as possible, not to make these available to the parasitically voyeuristic imagination of the default monolingual, white, English-speaking public of American anthropology's reading Anglosphere. Proclaiming friendship in the rhetorical service of assuring the reader that one had 'genuine rapport with the natives' is disingenuous at best, but it also dismisses possibilities of insight that can only be gained through other kinds of – 'misanthropic', or (mis)anthropological, social intensities – violence for instance.

During my fieldwork, one personal experience demonstrated the productive insights to be gained from violent, but nonetheless socially-intensive, interactions. As a member of a Southern African student soccer team – Azania United – which participated in the competitive inter-Africa league in Beijing, I was assaulted by an opposition player from another African country who was humiliated by his teammates and Azania United's manager for giving the ball away to "the only white on the field". Incensed by this, the freshman from Nong Da (Agricultural University in Beijing) broke my leg and dislocated my knee in an off-the-ball incident that left me incapacitated for a month. As I was recovering from my injuries in Beijing, my teammates and informants – both Chinese and African – often jokingly told me that I could "walk them off". Towards the end of my fieldwork, I saw the student who had attacked me in a university canteen several months later, he looked at me limping, and also jokingly said: "when are you going to come and try to steal the ball from me again?". We were not friends and we were not equals. In this regard, violent recognitions can render very different kinds of anthropological insights between increasingly atypical not-quite-native-informers and not-quite-native-ethnographers, making persistent American ethnographic platitudes, like "my friends, the informants", seem somewhat out of touch with reality and worthy of suspicion by the other social sciences.

In retrospect 'violent recognition' as a constant experience in and beyond the field, was likely a strong motivator for my depiction of Fanon's 'violence of decolonization' as translational, where "decolonization…sets out to change the order of the world" and "cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock, nor of a friendly understanding" (Fanon 1965: 36). Here, I understood decolonization as not only 'an always as-yet-incomplete project', but also, one that is also *motivated* in the pragmatist sense. By this emphasis on *motivation,* I suggest that communicative incompleteness does not mean that translation is either open-ended or arbitrary – for open-endedness and arbitrariness are ultimately visible only from a truly privileged perspective. As I will demonstrate, movement between colonization and decolonization is very much contingent on an ideological context that does not allow for a seamless shift in relations and re-appropriations of power, and here I will emphasize that the same is true for disciplinary debates in anthropology and other social sciences – particularly in the privileged

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domain of the American academic Anglosphere where consensus and passive-aggressive gatekeeping constrain debates in their insistence on a non-confrontational analytical equal-opportunism. This is not an assertion, but an experienced, daily reality for any third world, or intersectionally-marginalized subject participating in 'collegial' interactions within America's knowledge industry. If our debates are to be relevant, and if we are genuinely committed to decolonizing anthropology – which, I would argue, no amount of privileged relativism can ever accomplish – we may want to consider Fanon's imperative more seriously:

> The Third World has no intention of organizing a vast hunger crusade against Europe.
> What it does expect from those who have kept it in slavery for centuries is to help rehabilitate man, ensure his triumph everywhere, once and for all. But it is obvious we are not so naïve as to think this will be achieved with the cooperation and goodwill of the European governments. This colossal task, which consists of reintroducing man into the world, man in his totality, will be achieved with the crucial help of the European masses who would do well to confess that they have often rallied behind the position of our common masters on colonial issues. In order to do this, the European masses must first of all decide to wake up, put on their thinking caps and stop playing the irresponsible game of Sleeping Beauty. (Fanon 1965: 63)

Given that the apex of white imperialism – following Said (2003) – has perhaps shifted from Europe to the elite of America, where privilege is validated by its most prestigious institutions of knowledge – like the University of Chicago and Harvard University, for instance, the semiotic value of 'Europe' and 'the European' in Fanon's words must be understood as a 'shifter' (Silverstein 1976). This shifter, however, forms an important component in enabling the maintenance of a more trans-historical, trans-national, yet implicit white gravity that re-iterates the stratification of its still-constantly-thwarted others. In this regard, I understand that the American academy as the driver of a global knowledge industry (followed by an increasing number of trans-national franchises), does not operate in an

ideological vacuum. I also acknowledge that many of its personnel believe themselves to be fighting the

good fight. Here, I hope to have demonstrated the degree to which this remains a compromised belief, as

long as an elite – mostly liberal – American intellectual class remains oblivious to their complicity in

stratifying subjectivity far beyond its own imagined, utopian horizons. I argue that this mostly happens

because many of my elite colleagues and teachers both underestimate, and are invested in arguments

against, the structuring and ideological impacts of mass- and linguistically-mediated cosmopolitan

horizons of personhood in a certainly culturally diverse, but far-from-disconnected Anthropocene. I also

believe this blind spot arises from the dismissal and denigration of postcolonial critiques of Anglo-centric

mass-media and English monolingualism as simplistic and somehow 'less complex' because of ironic or

unusual recruitments of hegemony to subvert or re-contextualize other hegemonies. This is neither

'complex' nor 'novel', but merely underlines the compromised conditions within which so many

anthropologists are attempting to rescue efficacious agency in the lives of informants who would very

often dismiss this very proposition. In this concluding interactional analysis, I hope to not only

demonstrate some of the limits of rescuing agency and the situated theater of personhood that informs it. I

hope to additionally reveal how the very proposition of liberal subject-hood – emerging in the following

interaction through contestations around the term 'freedom' – generates the otherwise 'invisible'

ideological order within which interactional participants are stratified.

Mutual Benefits, Invisible Orders

As China's contemporary engagement with Africa continues to engender a tension between

'mutually beneficial' and hierarchical relations, a number of western journalists have begun to critique

China as modern-day colonizer, re-staging Africa as the eternally colonized. This recruits Africans as a

popular and recent addition to their list of China's subalterns – equating China's relationship with ethnic

minorities seeking various forms of sovereignty, to Africans' historical and political history with

Europeans. Given a topical interest in these 'colonial' Sino-African encounters, increasing numbers of

western journalists have become a prominent presence in a number of ethnographic settings in China and Africa. Through their hyper-legibility, they play a key role in re-contextualizing the interactional frameworks that imbricate both African and Chinese actors and their ethnographic voyeurs. But, what does this re-contextualization do?

This final, hopefully revealing, account of an interaction in Beijing, was mediated by a famous American journalist, who through her attempt at 'equal' participation in a Sino-African encounter, inadvertently generates its very ideological gravity – or 'interactional order' (Goffman 1983). I have suggested in preceding chapters, and following Goffman (ibid), that interactional orders can be understood as a dialectical, interactionally-immanent, ideological stratifications which appear as transcendent to the participants in that interaction. I also theorized such interactions as mediated through linguistic 'enregisterment'. In the interaction that follows, the stratification that unfolds is significantly informed by a set of historical and material conditions assumed to be absent in Sino-African engagements – the absent presence of a re-contextualized white spacetime.

In 2015, near the end of a stint of fieldwork in Beijing, I attended a talk by a former chief economist of the World Bank, Justin Lin. The talk was hosted at the Beijing branch of an elite American university – one of several Ivy-League outposts in the Chinese capital. In attendance were numerous high profile personnel from state-related financial institutions. Liu Xiaoming, a high-ranking economist who was in charge the Africa division of one of China's top three foreign development banks, was one of these. Attendees also included a number of journalists like Anne West, a well-known white American documentary film-maker, and writer who had been active for a number of years as feminist- and ethnic minority activist in China. At the end of Lin's talk, there was a Q and A, with many of the questions coming from younger Chinese men who asked questions along the lines of: 'how does one make the most of a Western education, as a Chinese man?' Other questions, all of which were posed in English despite the fact that more than 90% of the attendees were Chinese, focused on the future of China's role in a world where not only Chinese labor, but Chinese capital became central to more countries' development

strategies, and the global economy as a whole. Justin Lin emphasized that China was positioned to see different kinds of investment potential compared to past European American investments, "especially in places like Africa".

At this, Lin Xiaoming somewhat over-keenly leaped out of his seat and moderated his own question to Lin: "I am the chief economist for the Africa division of China's DaQian Bank and we have been struggling with this question for a long time. How is China going to develop Africa when we have seen many failures of development in the past? There are so many obstacles, the most pressing being epidemics, corruption, and civil war". Justin Lin looked genuinely confused by the question, perhaps due to Xiaoming's self-introduction and the contradiction of his question with China's already considerable investments in Africa: Why would an Africa investor for the Chinese government be so opposed to investment in Africa? After a considered pause, Justin Lin responded: "I think your opinion is exaggerated, surely Africa is a big place with many different strengths in different regions?" Anne West - whom I had met on an earlier occasion through my partner who was also active in Chinese LGBTQ circles - was sitting next to me at the talk, and commented in a whispered aside: "are you kidding me?" Feeling incensed by Xiaoming's question, I had the same phrase in mind at the time, but as I would come to learn later, our exasperation stemmed from very different alignments and assumptions about the ideological context within which Sino-African interactions were emplaced. At the end of the talk, as attendees broke into groups with wine glasses in hand, Anne immediately gravitated toward Liu Xiaoming and I followed.

"I really enjoyed your question", Anne said to Xiaoming, who gleefully nodded and said, "thank you so much, Anne, I am a really big fan of your work". Anne then introduced me to Xiaoming as 'an expert on China-Africa relations from the University of Chicago' and then almost immediately stepped back from the interaction, watching. Xiaoming smiled, shook my hand, and told me the name of his Ivy League university where he had studied for an MBA degree in finance. I then asked Xiaoming how often he traveled to Africa for his work and that it must be exhausting? He responded that it wasn't all that

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necessary in his position, but that he had once gone to Tanzania for two weeks. He was proud of the fact that his organization was fortunate in that they were able to work with reliable "forecasting data", making use of both Chinese and American "think tanks" to get the information they need to make "informed policy decisions". As we spoke, and as Anne watched, I increasingly began to feel as though I were being drawn into an American fraternity chronotope of sorts, as his register shifted from 'professional' to American college 'colloquial'. As he commented on the Chicago Bulls' poor basketball performances in recent years and whether I had been following their season, I began to realize that Xiaoming was entering into this register shift because he thought that I was an American. Confirming this, he then asked - probably noting my inability to engage in basketball banter - "Where in the states are you from?" When I answered, "I'm not from the states", thus confirming his suspicions, and followed up with "I'm from South Africa", Xiaoming's expression and register instantly changed. The interaction stopped dead in its tracks as he said "oh" and looked at Anne, as though looking for further instructions. On cue, she quickly suggested that we should "continue this fascinating conversation" over dinner the following week. Xiaoming eagerly agreed and we exchanged WeChat accounts to arrange the event, which did actually come about a week later.

Anne texted myself and my partner a few days before the dinner with Xiaoming, saying that she was bringing one of her ethnic minority informants to the meeting. She then suggested that I "bring one of [my] African friends [to challenge] his assumptions". What Anne meant by Xiaoming's assumptions was 'patriarchal Han Chinese ethnocentrism', a theme she had often contextualized in her own work with ethnic minorities, and particularly ethnic minority women, in China, and which – in interactions with (particularly male) Chinese government officials – she rarely hesitated to call-out. The fact of the presence of another – this time African – subaltern would both serve as an opportunity to (perhaps intersectionally) extend her argument beyond China, as well as provide a provocative ethnographic encounter through which to demonstrate it. It is worth noting that, without Anne's mediation, a meeting with Xiaoming would have been an unachievable feat for me – as the non-American, non-journalist,

South African anthropologist. Given my status, interactions with people like Xiaoming are mostly out-of-the-question. When the high-profile Chinese government official and the renowned American journalist discuss their subalterns – ethnic minorities and Africans – it is anthropologists and 'their colorful friends' that become the parasite of the journalistic encounter.

In preparation for our meeting, I chose to invite my informant John Rousseau – an ambitious finance student from Madagascar studying at one of Beijing's top Universities. Through my fieldwork, I came to know John as both a confident conversational provocateur, as well as someone who had obsessively acquired knowledge of Chinese development banks' investment strategies – the topic of his honors thesis. Thus, of all my informants, he was the one most likely to benefit professionally and academically from meeting Xiaoming. Anne and Xiaoming left it to the rest of us to make the arrangements and my partner (fittingly) chose an ethnic minority restaurant in Haidian district for the setting of the conversation. On the appointed day, Rousseau arrived early, wearing a pink Polo shirt and a gold-colored watch, which I had never seen him wear before – possibly to impress Xiaoming. Not long after, Xiaoming arrived wearing a black suit and tie despite the heavily-polluted, 35 degrees (Celsius) weather – to impress Anne. The rest of us – including Anne, my partner, and Anne's informant – were wearing less 'high stakes', casual attire.

From the moment we took our seats inside the air-conditioned restaurant, it was apparent that Xiaoming was uncomfortable, arising perhaps from a perception that he was very obviously being set-up as the over-dressed Beijing government official being made to encounter an array of exotic others in an ethnic minority setting. By contrast, Anne was clearly enjoying herself, enthusiastically commenting on the diversity of ethnic minority dishes in China, before asking John all about his home country and praising his educational cosmopolitanism. John, who seemed either oblivious to the tension at the table, or determined to ignore it, addressed Xiaoming and said that he admired his institution's development strategy in Africa. This broke the ice somewhat and allowed to Xiaoming to emphasize the party line – "mutual benefit should always be win-win, so China is also grateful to Africa". Here, Xiaoming

emphasized the 'r' in 'grateful', as well as nasalizing the first 'A' in 'Africa' to suggest an American accent, thus emphasizing his education abroad, something he again indexed later in the interaction when telling John that he had "studied the same major, but in the US". After Xiaoming dropped the party line, Anne was quick to interject: "But can Africans move as freely in China as Chinese can in Africa, or Tibet for that matter?". This three-way dynamic set the tone for an exchange that took-up almost an hour: Rousseau attempting to network with Xiaoming, who would voice a party-line platitude, which would be scathingly set-upon by Anne, who would recruit Xiaoming to the role of privileged, Han Chinese, ethnonationalist patriarch and colonizer of trans-global subalterns.

My partner; Anne's informant; and myself watched as Xiaoming would listen thoughtfully to Anne, and then pretend that he did not entirely understand what she was driving at – turning his attention time-and-again to Rousseau, someone he normally would not have given the time of day, but whom in this encounter represented an escape from an unexpectedly hostile interaction. Another escape tactic presented itself when – as one dish after another arrived in our restaurant booth – Xiaoming somewhat over-enthusiastically entered into a mode of connoisseurship, praising "the skill of these people". As a distraction tactic, it backfired when Anne stated: "Well, enjoy it while it lasts", hinting at her own journalistic criticism of the Chinese central government's heavy-handed regulation of ethnic minorities in China. John, who had by now become aware of and/or fed up with, the interactional dynamic, turned to Anne and said: "You know, everybody wants freedom, but maybe everybody doesn't want *your* freedom" (John's emphasis). At this, Anne looked visibly flabbergasted, and perhaps even a little betrayed. John stared at her firmly, standing his ground. It was the first time in the interaction that Xiaoming smiled, and – spotting his gap – suggested that despite a "wonderful evening of important conversations" we should all probably "get some much-needed rest". In this way, both the evening and our interactions with Xiaoming came to an awkward end.

In a brief interaction one afternoon, following the dinner, Anne voiced her disapproval of John's views which to her seemed naïve and uncritical of China's real relationship to its subalterns, suggesting

that Africans were "backing the wrong horse". We were standing in her kitchen brewing a pot of tea when she said this. I asked her what horse she thought they should be backing instead. Looking at me over her glasses, she replied: "whoever guarantees their freedom". "Are you thinking of America?", I asked. Avoiding the question, she emphasized again: "whoever guarantees their freedom". Irritated, I replied: "It's funny how those guarantees never seem to work out for blacks and indigenous people in your own country". Anne happily conceded this point, but having now proposed both my alignment with John's argument and her historical alignment with white settler colonialism – inter-subjectively *motivating* a likeness to the dynamics she criticized in Han Chinese ethnonationalism – I was not invited back for tea. Regardless of what horse I might have been backing, it was clear that I not backing hers.

Freedom, for Anne, certainly represented the capacity to move without constraint, and in China, she certainly observed a blatant stratification of constraint. Some people are able to move more freely than others both economically and in physical space. In addition, China has a bureaucratic system in place that entrenches these capacities for mobility along ethnic and class lines. However, while holding China accountable for entrenching inequality within a largely invisible global order of value that necessitates inequality, Anne fails to recognize that her capacity for mobility depends precisely on the relative immobility of others – that, in fact, the liberal horizon of egalitarian freedom her criticism of John presupposes, necessarily requires an outsourcing of the dirty work of stratification on the part of subalterns still willing to throw each other under the bus for the privilege of second place.

Final Coda

Returning to America: Re-Encountering Poor Whites and America's Liberal-White Supremacy Complex

In conclusion, I want to take a step back from the preceding interactional tensions between third world cosmopolitanism and white spacetime as they played out within Sino-African encounters in Beijing and resituate them in the *space* and *time* of writing. I want to reminisce somewhat more freely and re-contextualize their revelations of still-compromised ideological conditions of personhood in the early 21st century by introducing a final provocation that emerged upon my return to the US, and during the writing of my dissertation. Here, I point to a wider stratification of intersectionality and mobility that I believe animates both this dissertation research and the wider context of my work.

In November 2016, following my return from fieldwork, the campus of the University of Chicago, my home institution, was vandalized with neo-Nazi or other white supremacist artifacts. Many people were outraged and upset by the racist paraphernalia littering billboards and buildings, igniting horror among liberal, elite American students and onlookers, and painful familiarity for others. For some, these signs were reiterations of nightmares that were thought to belong to another time. For others, the clumsy wielding of their signifying potential represented further evidence of the laughable ignorance of 'open' white supremacy in America. As for myself, I was neither traumatized, nor laughing. The initial impact of American white supremacist gesturing emerged as a dangerous combination of absurdity and trauma, generating a climate of fear for friends, colleagues, and loved ones alike. I was compelled to take these events very seriously, because – for me – they were uncannily familiar.

I have known white supremacy intimately for my entire life since I was a child growing up in Apartheid South Africa; all the way into post-Apartheid adulthood when the language changed, but the inequalities remained; all the way to the US to pursue a graduate degree at the University of Chicago. What I initially encountered in America was the fresh face of an analogous racial-, gender-, queer-,

religious- and class prejudice. When I began my studies in the Fall of 2010, during the early Obama years, the blatancy of inequality was rationalized and perpetuated through an ingenious veneer of 'unmarked' (yet default white) liberalism. I recall at the time that it manifested as a self-satisfied narcissism that would shame those who spoke of race or racism, and would school us for thinking that postcolonialism was anything but dead, out-of-date, and 'obviously structuralist'. Rather than a frothing assertion of ethnocentric 'pride' (the kind I knew far better), whiteness manifested in an 'unmarked' horizon of endless possibilities, basking in liberalism's total victory over oppressions of all kinds. Any complaints to the contrary were dismissed as a misrecognition of 'more complex' realities. As suggested above, this position was not only perpetuated by white teachers and colleagues in the American Academy, but by elite former subalterns, who had joined their ranks in the previous decades.

However, in the months following Donald Trump's presidency, it became apparent that both impeccably political, liberal elitism and frothing, white supremacist rage ultimately masked the same deep insecurity: a dependency on whiteness as either fetishized or unmarked. Being a 'waste of a white skin' is a fear that drives many poor white Americans who imagine themselves to have no other currency; while pretending that race, and therefore whiteness does not exist has become a pervasive liberal elite strategy for coping with various strata of privilege, even among elite non-Whites. This is not a new argument, nor one situated in the liberal intellectual enclaves of the Euro-American academic Anglosphere. Many movements and intellectuals, including the most recent critiques by Black Lives Matter in the US, and #FeesMustFall in South Africa, have already suggested that this increasingly explicit anxiety among both liberal and racist whites constitutes only a symptom, rather than the engine, of both pervasive and persistent investments in whiteness.

From the perspective of a Third-World outsider, this is just a quintessentially American expression of the *liberal-white supremacist complex* once revealed by Steve Biko (2002 [1978]).

At present, it appears that both American 'liberals' and 'racists' are locked in a frantic battle of self-discovery. On one side, wildly brandishing heirlooms of mostly-imagined ancestors they've never encountered or bothered to fully understand; and on the other, (safety-)pinning an identity – based on guilt, but framed in sanctimony – onto people paternalistically being recruited to be retrospective victims in the making of white saviors. But we must ask: Who is to blame for the 'loss' of identity experienced by whites in America, even though countless non-whites, in non-Western places, are (often literally) drowning in white hegemony? How did so many working-class white bodies remain 'unmarked' up until the early hours of November 8th, 2016?

Cowardice is an analytically important vector from which to conceptualize a great deal of white supremacist activity in a post-Trump world, not only because so many white supremacists lack the courage to openly address the people they often threaten outside of their communities, often opting for clandestine acts, like vandalism or anonymous cyber-terrorism, intimidation, and harassment. Cowardice is indeed more manifest in the obvious lack of impetus to address inequalities among white supremacists themselves – since this is supposedly what their 'struggle' (or 'Kampf') is about. White supremacists in America and Africa alike have always failed to erase structural inequalities in their own self-designated interest groups. In this regard, poor whites fundamentally trouble 'master race' arguments, whether these are made in America or have been enacted in Apartheid South Africa. One Neo-Nazi slogan that stood during a number of post-Trump vandalism campaigns was: "No Degeneracy, No Tolerance, Hail Victory".

This slogan was suggestive of the ways in which a certain kind of 'tolerance' was precisely at issue in the post-Trump world since it is tolerance – of the 'equal opportunity' variety – that has the tendency to oppress. The equal capacity to contest one's conditions of being has been a keystone in the liberal rhetoric of tolerance in America, a stance that has marginalized its working class, people of 'color', women, non-Christians, and queer communities in unequal, but related ways. With the exportation of American-style values of liberal freedom underpinning the expansion of neoliberal

globalization in a post-Cold War world, this contradictory pattern has also emerged elsewhere: from the respective class-shaming liberal environmentalism and Han-centric ethnonationalism that has characterized the simultaneous rise of these opposing elements within the Chinese middle- and upper-classes; to the failure of liberal African governments to erase inequalities within a global economic system that ultimately still favors the widening of planetary social inequality and the maintenance of Africa as its dysfunctional space of exception. This is because of the ways in which 'tolerance' – manifesting as equal treatment of unequal people – has always reinforced, rather than alleviated, inequality regardless of where it has applied. Once again, this point has been made over and over again, within America, and by many of its greatest thinkers – most of them Black intellectuals (Du Bois 1994 [1903], Lorde 2007, Robinson 1983, hooks 1992). Finally, it is also 'tolerance' that has allowed America's home-grown racism to ferment into the ways we see it manifested now.

The US, followed by other influential governments like those of BRICS nations, continues to 'tolerate' elite profit over general education – a pattern that many liberal political leaders have perpetuated through their own 'rational' economic divestment from educational equity and social welfare. In this regard, it is ironic that – in the aftermath of November 8th, 2016 – the US's liberal elites are somehow shocked that marked white entitlement is threatening 'unmarked' white privilege. In response, many of the American white, educated elite began wearing safety pins that were supposed to symbolize 'safety' to those marginalized by white supremacists. The arguments made in the preceding chapters suggest that however well-intentioned such actions might be, they merely enshrine the unassailability of whiteness through positing the white savior as the only figure that can vanquish the white supremacist. This is a problematic analog to another liberal delusion: that white genocide is the dystopian solution to racism. Not only is this an astoundingly arrogant and racist assumption – that only whites are powerful (or capable) enough to end the problem of whiteness through their own suicide. It also fundamentally underestimates whiteness as a horizon of aspiration that can – as I have demonstrated – operate highly

efficiently without a Caucasian in sight. Whiteness, in the ways I have demonstrated, does not need 'white' bodies.

Herein, perhaps, lies the misunderstood precarity of the world's poor whites – the subconscious realization that whiteness doesn't need them, and is perfectly willing to leave them behind. There is, in English and its white spacetime, no available category for white failure other than 'white trash', and this is a far from sympathetic category of personhood. The usual PC rules do not apply, because white, liberal elitism enshrines the rules around whiteness' 'unmarked' unassailability. If one has ever tried racially insulting a white person, one will quickly come to the realization that the only attack that has any effect is an accusation: 'racist'. Bottom-feeding white supremacists who will attempt to get poor whites to buy into hate, know this at some level. They have used, and will continue to use, this knowledge to recruit people who feel like white 'deplorables' having been branded as such by white elite liberals. In doing so, their victims feel vulnerable, as though a cabal of big white men are the only ones who can preserve a whiteness imagined to be under threat. Such patriarchs of global white supremacy, however, have a fatal flaw: they commit to whiteness not because whiteness is threatened, but because they don't feel white enough. It should be obvious to even the most casual observer that chasing 'supremacist' whiteness is neither transgressive nor empowering since it ultimately undermines the unassailable privileges of 'unmarked' whiteness in the first place. Such flawed commitments to 'supremacist' whiteness, however, have a propensity to anesthetize a far more pervasive ordering of the white Liberal-Supremacy complex.

Appendix

1. Four speeches given by Zhou Enlai and Kwame Nkrumah between January 13th and 15th, 1964 as documented and transcribed in their official communiqué, titled: *Afro-Asian Solidarity Against Imperialism – A Collection of Documents, Speeches and Press Interviews from the visits of Chinese Leaders to Thirteen African and Asian Countries* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1964). I have transcribed all four documents below, maintaining the formatting of the original documents, as well as indicating the page numbers in the original document in italics:

<div align="center">

Premier Chou En-lai's Speech

at the State Banquet Given by

President Kwame Nkrumah

(January 13, 1964)

</div>

Your Excellency, Respected President Kwame Nkrumah,

Dear Friends,

  We are most happy to come, first of all, to the friendly Republic of Ghana on our first visit to this part of Africa South of the Sahara, and to meet President Nkrumah, an old friend of ours and a prominent statesman of Africa, and to meet the Ghanaian people who have waged protracted struggles. Upon our arrival in Ghana we were hospitably received by the Ghanaian Government, and

thousands upon thousands of citizens of Accra and Tema
greeted us with friendly cheers. At this cordial and
friendly banquet, allow me, in the name of Vice-Premier
Chen Yi and of myself, to express our hearty thanks to

Your Exellency the President and to the Ghanaian
Government and people. I would also like to convey
to you the Chinese people's fraternal greetings and to ex-
press their respect for the Ghanaian people.

The Ghanaian people are an industrious and cou-
rageous people. They waged a protracted struggle for
independence and freedom and finally won their inde-
pendence in 1957. Ghana was the first country on the
African continent south of the Sahara to win independ-

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ence after World War II. The independence of Ghana
has greatly encouraged the other struggling
peoples.

Since its independence, Ghana has achieved many suc-
cesses in the safeguarding of its national independence
and the development of its national economy under the
leadership of President Nkrumah. The Republic of
Ghana, in pursuance of a foreign policy of peace and
neutrality, is playing a positive role in international af-
fairs. It supports the other African peoples in their

struggles for independence and freedom and has made important contributions to the cause of African liberation. The Chinese people have always followed with joy every success scored by the Ghanaian people along the road of their independent development. We heartily wish the Republic of Ghana new and greater victories in the days to come under the leadership of President Nkrumah.

  The imperialists are not willing to see the independent development of Ghana and the other African countries. They are not reconciled to their own failure, and are striving to maintain their colonial rule in Africa and make colonial gains. They miss no chance and try by every possible means to carry out sabotage and subversion in the new emerging African independent countries, even making attempts to take the life of the people's leaders of African countries. The latest attempt made by the enemy of the Ghanaian people on President Nkrumah's life is a new crime committed by the imperialists and reactionaries, who are frantically hostile to the national independence movement in Africa. The Chinese Government and people are deeply indignant at this despicable and shameless act of the imperialists and

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reactionaries and experienced great joy over President Nkrumah's safe escape. Chairman Mao Tse-tung's message, which I personally handed to His Excellency the President the other day, gives full expression to the feelings of the Chinese people. We believe that the people of Ghana and the other African countries, heightening their vigilance and strengthening their unity, will certainly be able to crush completely all plots and intrigues of the imperialists, the old and new colonialists and the reactionaries, and will march forward victoriously along the road of independent development.

Dear friends! During our present tour, journeying from North Africa to West Africa, we have personally witnessed the rapid and irresistible advance of the national liberation movement in Africa. The shackles imposed on the African peoples by the imperialists over the past centuries are being smashed one after another. The African peoples are increasingly dealing heavy blows at imperialism and colonialism. The national liberation movement in Africa has become an important force in the contemporary struggle of the people of the world against imperialism, and has made outstanding contributions to the cause of safeguarding world peace. The castle where we are now joyously assembled was a center where a few centuries, the Western colonial-

ists plundered and traded in Negroes. Chairman Mao Tse-tung says, "The evil system of colonialism and imperialism grew up with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, it will surely come to its end with the thorough emancipation of the black people." The Chinese people rejoice from the bottom of their hearts at each and every progress in the national liberation movement in Africa. The purpose of our coming to

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Africa this time is to extend our warm congratulations on the great victories of the national liberation movement in Africa and to express fraternal sympathy with and support for the African peoples who are fighting heroically for independence and freedom.

To safeguard and consolidate their national independence, develop their national economies and defend world peace, it is necessary for the African countries and the Afro-Asian countries to strengthen their unity and wage unremitting struggles for those ends. The Chinese Government and people have never spared their efforts for the promotion of Afro-Asian solidarity. China has done its utmost to support whatever is conducive to Afro-Asian solidarity. The Chinese Government has consis-

tently stood for the development of friendly relations among Asian and African countries and the settlement of questions left over by history among them in accordance with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the ten principles of the Bandung Conference. We have concluded treaties of friendship, or of friendship and mutual non-aggression, with many Asian and African countries and settled boundary questions with a good number of our neighbours. Although the Sino-Indian boundary has not yet been settled, China will not waver in its stand for a peaceful settlement of this question through negotiations. The Ghanaian Government, together with other friendly Asian and African countries, took part in the Colombo Conference and worked for the promotion of Sino-Indian reconciliation.

  I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to thank President Nkrumah and the Ghanaian Government for their efforts to uphold Afro-Asian solidarity, and I be-

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lieve that such efforts will eventually yield positive results.

  Dear friends! A profound friendship has been formed between the Chinese and Ghanaian peoples through their prolonged common struggles against imperialism and

colonialism. President Nkrumah's visit to China in

1961 has left an endearing memory with the Chinese

people. During his visit to China, our two countries

concluded a treaty of friendship, an agreement on eco-

nomic and technical co-operation, an agreement on trade

and payment and an agreement on cultural co-operation,

thus ushering in a new phase in the relations of friend-

ship and co-operation between China and Ghana. Since

then, satisfactory progress in all fields has been made

in the co-operation between our two countries. China

fully respects the policy of peace and neutrality pursued

by Ghana, and supports the Ghanaian Government and

people in their efforts to safeguard national independence

and develop their national economy. The Ghanaian

Government has always stood for the restoration of

China's legitimate rights in the United Nations, sup-

ported the Chinese Government and people in their

struggle to defend their sovereignty and territorial in-

tegrity, and condemned the imperialist plot to create

"two Chinas".

On behalf of the Chinese Government

and people, I would like to express once again our hearty

thanks to the Ghanaian Government and people for their

valuable support to China.

I believe that the present visit by Vice-Premier Chen

Yi and myself to your country will further strengthen

the relations of friendship and co-operation between

China and Ghana, and thereby help promote Afro-Asian

solidarity and world peace.

Now I propose a toast:

To the prosperity of the Republic of Ghana;

To the close friendship between the peoples of China and Ghana;

To Afro-Asian solidarity and world peace;

To the health of His Excellency President Nkrumah;

To the health of all the Ghanaian friends present; and

To the health of the diplomatic envoys!

Your Excellency, Respected President Kwame Nkrumah,

Dear Friends,

Our pleasant visit to the friendly Republic of Ghana is drawing to a close. On the eve of parting, allow me, in the name of Vice-Premier Chen Yi and of myself, to express once again our sincere thanks to His Excellency the President and the Ghanaian Government for the cordial reception accorded us.

During our visit, we were most warmly welcomed by the Ghanaian people everywhere we went, whether in the city or in the countryside. We will not forget the Ghanaian brothers and sisters who extended to us their hands of friendship and greeted us with warm cheers. We will take back to China the Ghanaian people's profound feelings towards the Chinese people.

During the past few days, we made a tour of your beautiful capital, Accra, visited the newly built Tema harbor and its industrial centres, and met people of various circles in Ghana. We have seen with our own eyes that tremendous changes have taken place on your soil since the independence of Ghana. Under the leader-

ship of President Nkrumah, important progress has been made in your economic and cultural undertakings. We

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heartily wish the Ghanaian people continuing success in the days to come.

We are glad to see that the Government and people of Ghana have made positive contributions in the promotion of the African people's cause of unity against imperialism. The First All-African People's Conference and the First Conference of Independent African States of 1958 were held in Accra. Since then the national liberation movement in Africa has surged ahead with colossal force, achieving great victories one after another. Although we have stayed in Ghana only five days, we have been deeply impressed by the enthusiasm, courage and vigour of the Ghanaian people. This demonstrates how very different a people becomes when awakened and independent. I am sure that the same high spirits can be found in the peoples of other new emerging African countries south of the Sahara. The Asian people, who have likewise been subjected to prolonged sufferings, fully appreciate the feelings of their African brothers and sisters. Imperialism and old and new colonialism

will never succeed in their attempts to drag the awaken-
ed African peoples back to the dark ages of the past.

To win full independence, we Asian and African coun-
tries must first of all rely on the efforts of our own peo-
ple. The time for the winning of independence differs
with each country, the resistance it meets differs, so do
the specific conditions prevailing in each country. It is
necessary for the people of various countries to proceed
from their own specific conditions and rely on their own
efforts to open up a path of advance. The newly inde-
pendent African countries will certainly be able grad-
ually to eliminate poverty and backwardness and to
achieve more and more new successes in developing their

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national economy, culture and language, so long as they
closely rely on the strength of the people, hold aloft the
banner of independence and freedom, bring into full play
the spirit of self-reliance and tap their rich natural re-
sources. At the same time, as pointed out in the resolu-
tion of the Summit Conference of African States, it is
necessary for the African countries to promote unity and
solidarity, intensify their co-operation, support each
other, and develop together. In this way they will aug-

ment the moral and material strength of the African peoples, which will in turn facilitate the struggle against all forms of old and new colonialism. Africa belongs to the African people, and no force on earth can prevent the African people from taking their destiny in their own hands.

The Western colonialists have brutally enslaved and traded in Negroes, thereby causing the death of millions upon millions of African people and inflicting unprecedented calamities on the African people. However, the African people have courageously and staunchly survived, developed themselves and through their own struggles in this great epoch of ours, become independent one after another. The African peoples who have stood up have an inexhaustible resource of strength. They will certainly be able to create a bright future of their own and contribute to the great cause of advancing human history.

In its relations with the African countries, China has consistently and unswervingly taken the following stand in accordance with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the ten principles of the Bandung Conference: (1) It supports the African peoples in their struggle to fight imperialism and old and new colonialism and to

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win and safeguard national independence; (2) It supports the pursuance of a policy of peace, neutrality and non-alignment by the governments of African countries; (3) It supports the desire of the African peoples to achieve unity and solidarity, in the manner of their own choice; (4) It supports the African countries in their efforts to settle their disputes through peaceful consultation; (5) It holds that the sovereignty of African countries should be respected by all other countries and that aggression and interference from any quarter should be opposed.

Imperialism is the enemy of the people of the world and the enemy of world peace. In order to defend world peace and promote the cause of human progress, the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America should unite, to wage a resolute struggle against the imperialist policies of aggression and war.

The U.S. imperialists' recent bloody suppression of the just struggle of the Panamanian people against U.S. aggression and in defence of their national sovereignty has aroused the courageous resistance of the Panamanian people and the indignant protests of people all over the world. The 650 million Chinese people firmly stand on the side of the Panamanian people, fully support their

just and patriotic struggle and strongly condemn the U.S. imperialists' monstrous crime of the massacre of the Panamanian people. The Panama Canal belongs to the U.A.R. people. However ferocious and truculent the U.S. imperialists may be, the Panamanian people will assured-

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ly win final victory by uniting and persevering in struggle.

Dear friends: during our visit, we have held cordial and amicable talks with President Nkrumah and other leaders of the Ghanaian Government and had an exchange of views on the development of the relations of friendship and co-operation between China and Ghana and on international questions. We have reached a common point of view and a joint communiqué is going to be issued. This marks a new and significant development in the relations of friendship and co-operation between China and Ghana. The Chinese people will forever advance shoulder to shoulder with the Ghanaian people in the common struggle against imperialism and old and new colonialism and in defence of national independence and world peace.

Now I propose a toast:

To the prosperity of the republic of Ghana;

To the friendship between the Chinese and Ghanaian peoples;

To new victories for the national liberation movement in Africa;

To Afro-Asian solidarity and world peace;

To the health of His Excellency President Nkrumah;

To the health of all the Ghanaian friends present; and

To the health of all the diplomatic envoys!

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Speech by

President Kwame Nkrumah of the Republic of

Ghana at the State Banquet in Honour of

Premier Chou En-lai

(January 13, 1964)

Premier Chou En-lai, Vice-Premier Chen Yi, Our Friends from China, Your Excellencies:

I am happy to welcome you, premier Chou En-lai, and your party to our country, and I do so on my own behalf and on behalf of the people of Ghana. I am glad that it has been possible for you to accept our invitation to visit us.

I still retain the most vivid recollections of my extremely interesting and enjoyable visit to your great country in 1961. Although your visit will be brief, you can be assured that during your stay here you will enjoy our traditional Ghanaian hospitality and experience the warm friendship which all Ghanaians have for all Chinese people.

Here in Ghana, we admire the great strides made by the People's Republic of China, since the revolution, under the dynamic leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, poet, philosopher, soldier, and statesman. You yourself, Premier Chou En-lai, have been a foremost stalwart

nationalist and freedom fighter in the struggle for the improvement of living conditions of your people. During your visit, you will see something of the efforts we are making to reconstruct Ghana after years of colonial rule and despoliation. And here, I would like to express the sincere gratitude of the government and people of Ghana for the assistance which we received from the Government of the People's Republic of China in helping us in our industrial and agricultural development.

  We believe that in countries impoverished by colonial exploitation, the surest road to the welfare and happiness of all the people lies in socialism. We believe that the condition of the welfare of each should be the condition for the welfare and development of all.

Premier Chou En-lai, we are particularly happy to see you in our midst at a time when our nation is on the verge of taking a decisive step forward in its determination to build and sustain a socialist society.

  This, your first visit to Africa, is an occasion of great significance. You have come as a distinguished representative of a dynamic and energetic people – nearly

650 million people – who have been welded together into a strong nation, united and progressive. Surely, this example should inspire us in Africa, and leave no doubt in our minds that a continental union government of Africa is not only possible but a reality. We are unalterably convinced that only a continental government of Africa can put an end to Africa's want and misery.

A united Africa will be a strong link in the chain of Afro-Asian anti-imperialist solidarity. We shall speak with one voice and fight together to make the world safe for mankind.

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Premier Chou En-lai, in this connection, I must express our feelings of regret and disappointment in that your great country remains outside the United Nations Organization. The Government of Ghana shall continue to support the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Chinese people in the United Nations.

Please take note that our struggle against colonialism and imperialism is part of the struggle for world peace. For there can be no lastingpeace until imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism are wiped out completely from the face of the earth. And we too take note that

in this struggle, China can make a great contribution to-
wards that peace which alone can sustain our civilization.
It is owing to our unshakeable belief in the necessity for
world peace that we adhere so steadfastly to the Five
Principles of Coexistence established in Bandung, name-
ly, respect for each other's territorial integrity and sover-
eignty, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's
internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and coexist-
ence.

  If only the imperialists and neo-colonialists would ac-
cept and abide by these principles, I am sure that world
peace would be established and preserved for all time.
We would then really live in a world without war.
Esteemed Premier Chou En-lai, let me once again ex-
tend to you and your party a very warm welcome to
Ghana. I hope you will find your stay enjoyable and pleasant.
And now Your Excellencies, dear friends, I ask you to
rise with me and drink a toast – a toast to the leaders
and people of China, to Chairman Mao Tse-tung and also

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to you Premier Chou En-lai for the part you played in
your country's revolution.

  Long live Sino-Ghana friendship!

Long live African unity!

Long live peace and friendship among nations!

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President Kwame Nkrumah's Speech

At the Farewell Banquet Given by

Premier Chou En-lai

(January 15, 1964)

Premier Chou En-lai, Dear Friends,

  I want to say how glad we have been to welcome you
and members of your party to Ghana. Although your
visit has been short we hope that you have enjoyed your
stay, and that you will return for a longer visit soon, a
visit that I hope will take place in the bosom of a united
Africa.

  It was a great pleasure for us to have had you among
us.

  Your visit has given us the opportunity to exchange
views on many important matters of mutual interest.
I am sure that our talks will be of benefit not only to
Ghana and China and to the furtherance of Afro-Asian
solidarity, but that they will also contribute greatly to
international progress and world peace.

  As an emerging and developing country, we recognize
how vital it is for us to take advantage of the experience
and assistance which can come to us from friends and
well-wishers.

  I have already referred, with admiration, to the man-

ner in which, under the dynamic leadership of Chairman

Mao Tse-tung, yourself, Marshal Chen Yi and other

leaders of the Chinese revolution, in spite of great odds,

you have been able to establish a great nation. My

friends, in the world of today there can never be two

Chinas.

The example of China's determination, organization,

discipline and unity cannot be lost on Africa at this time.

Indeed, it inspires us in Africa to take concrete steps

within the territories and states of Africa towards the

political unification of our continent.

We have learned with interest the methods by which

the people of China have mobilized their resources for t

he reconstruction of their country and the improvement

of their living conditions.

We are particularly impressed by the ways and means

used by China to accumulate funds, such as increasing

state revenue through the development of production;

the all-out practice of thrift and economy that exists, and

the way she has succeeded in keeping low the produc-

tion and distribution costs of commodities.

We note too, that China's investment funds come chief-

ly from state enterprises which are owned and managed by the state of the people and that a part of the total income earned by these enterprises is handed over to the government by the workers as profits and taxes. The peasants also, after deducting from their gross income enough for their personal living expenses and reserves for expansion, contribute a portion of their earnings to the government.

I am sure that we can learn much from China to help us in our plans for the development of Ghana. In this respect, we have been learning not only from the West, but also from the East.

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We hope that you will carry back with you happy memories of your stay in Ghana. Please convey to Chairman Mao Tse-tung and other leaders of your great country, and to the people of China, our fraternal and affectionate greetings.

And now, may I ask you to rise with me and drink a toast to Premier Chou En-lai, and his party, and to the success and happiness of the government and people of China.

Long live Sino-Ghana friendship!

Long live peace, friendship and understanding through-

out the world!

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