



The Barbarian Press: The Inoculation of the Chinese against Western Media

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Rhetorical studies, especially those outside of the traditional canon of rhetorical theory, can benefit from the work done by empirical researchers who study psychology and persuasion. A cross-pollination of disciplines opens many new lines of inquiry. For example, one way of unraveling and explaining the exigencies of a rhetorical moment is by deploying explanatory devices. For those who study political science, analysis of threat construction is used to understand how repressive regimes justify themselves. A scapegoat is constructed in order to create a threat.¹¹ Inoculation is related to this construction. In order to inoculate a public against an outside group, the group must be rhetorically presented as a threat. Threat construction is a modality of inoculation. This is the pernicious logic of scapegoating. Inoculation, a concept born in the study of

¹¹ J. Kelly Moreno, "Scapegoating in Group Psychotherapy," *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy* 57, no. 1 (2007): 94.

persuasion, has much to offer rhetorical critics because it explains certain rhetorical maneuvers. It is a means of figuring out how we have arrived at a particular moment.

The problem with inoculation studies to date is that they have been done almost exclusively on American soil. In order to explore a more universal understanding of the inoculation theory, further scholarly work needs to be pursued on non-Western cultures. An opportunity exists today in China where Communism is fading and nationalism is taking its place.¹² The Chinese people are now experiencing an opening of their country unseen since before the Chinese civil war; however a rising tide of criticism is raging against western media influences.¹³ Confucianism, post revolution Chinese identity and recent re-education programs have created a form of inoculation against outside influence such as the Western media. This paper seeks to provide a nuanced explanation for why a growing number of Chinese people chose to believe their own media over those of the West, even though they know that the Chinese media remains a solidifying voice of the governing party where truth is secondary to the party line. The threat posed by Western media has become ingrained over generations of inoculation treatments that have provided the Chinese people with an alternative narrative to use as an explanation for the Western interpretation of events. In effect, the inoculation process prepared the population against perceived humiliations leveled by Western journalists. Over time, these anti-Western beliefs became hegemonic¹⁴ in a

¹² Suisheng Zhao, "A State-led Nationalism: The Patriotic Education Campaign in Post-Tiananmen China," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31, no. 3 (1998): 287.

¹³ Peter Ford, "Chinese vent anti-Western fury online," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 17, 2008, paragraph 1, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0417/p01s01-woap.html> (accessed November 28, 2009).

¹⁴ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International, 1971), 13.

classical sense that created an inoculation against any negative Western news about China.

The essay begins with a literary review of inoculation theory and a brief overview of the anti-Western media sentiment. Although the Chinese generally hold a favorable view towards the United States, there remains suspicion over the West's motives toward China¹⁵ that stems largely from historical and cultural experiences that have recently been exasperated by the Communist Party's Patriotic Education Campaign. Ultimately, this essay seeks to provide an explanation for why Western media messages that seek to plant seeds of democracy will fail in China if they do not take into account inoculation treatments some versions have been realized for centuries.

Inoculation Theory

Inoculation theory is based on a biological analogy. Just as weakened doses of a threatening disease injected into a body can stimulate the immune system, inoculation theory works by exposing receivers to mild, belief-threatening messages in order to build resistance to counterattitudinal attacks.¹⁶ Early studies went as far as to assume

¹⁵ Committee of 100 with assistance from Zogby International and Horizon Research Consultancy Group 2008, "Hope and Fear: Full Report of C-100's Survey on American and Chinese Attitudes Towards Each Other," press release, www.chinadoingbusiness.com/pdfs/HopeandFear.pdf - (accessed November 28, 2009).

¹⁶ William J. McGuire, "Resistance to persuasion conferred by active and passive prior refutation of the same and alternative counterarguments," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 63 (1961): 326.

that subjects suffered from a “motivational deficit” to defend their attitudes when they are not threatened.¹⁷

Inoculation, according to Eagly and Chaiken, is “the grandparent theory of resistance to attitude change,” and is partially understood as using a threat to motivate certain behaviors out of defense that form a counter argument or action. The threat consists of a forewarned impending challenge to existing attitudes. It operates as a warning trigger toward impending potentially influential challenges to preconceived beliefs. This trigger stirs the individual to strengthen her existing attitudes in order to prepare for an internal process of resistance. Inoculation treatments affect the attitude networks in two possible ways. They either render the network more accessible to short-term memory or they modify associative networks by planting additional nodes that strengthen perceived salience of existing nodes.¹⁸

Michael Pfau and his colleagues suggest the core element of the inoculation theory, threat and counterargument, are intrinsic components in the process of resistance, much like McGuire had initially posited in the early 1960s.¹⁹ Involvement functions as a prerequisite to threat and thus dictates the boundary conditions to the theory;²⁰ however, it does not fully explain the inoculation’s impact. There appears to be

¹⁷ William J. McGuire, "Inducing resistance to persuasion: Some contemporary approaches," in *Advances in experimental social psychology*, ed. Leonard Berkowitz, vol. 1 (New York: Academic P, 1964), 200.

¹⁸ Alice Hendrickson Eagly and Shelly Chaiken, *Psychology of Attitudes* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College, 1993), 561.

¹⁹ This can be witnessed in such germinal work as William J. McGuire and D. Papageorgis, "The relative efficacy of various types of prior belief-defense in producing immunity against persuasion," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 62 (1961): 327-337; William J. McGuire, "Resistance to persuasion conferred by active and passive prior refutation of the same and alternative counterarguments," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 63 (1961): 326-332; William J. McGuire, "Inducing resistance to persuasion: Some contemporary approaches," in *Advances in experimental social psychology*, ed. Leonard Berkowitz, vol. 1 (New York: Academic P, 1964), 191-229.

²⁰ Michael Pfau et al., "Inoculation, Mental Processing, and Time: The Short- and Long-Term Influence of Associative Networks in the Process of Resistance to Counterattitudinal Influences,"

a direct path to resistance related to some as of yet unidentified and untested elements in the inoculation process that accounts for resistance.²¹ As far back as 1967, Insko theorized that inoculation may simply be a part of a larger underdeveloped and understudied picture.²² Little remains known about the distinctive roles that identical treatment messages may play in the internal process of resistance.

Schematic activation occurs when whole structures of information are activated by outside stimulation. People use the activated concepts without realizing it.²³ Attentive exposure can alter political knowledge by increasing the accessibility of information, cuing, and strengthening existing concepts.²⁴ Threat provides a “catalyst to resistance”²⁵ by alerting the receiver that an existing belief is threatened, and thus motivates a person to engage in an activity to strengthen her attitude. Early studies conceptualized this as an instinctual reaction to when vulnerable attitudinal positions were under attack.²⁶ Furthermore, there must be a sufficient threat in order to stimulate the resistance. When someone does not feel as if they are attacked, they will not experience a need to resist.²⁷

Conference Paper -- International Communication Association; Annual Meeting San Diego, CA (2003): 2.

²¹ Michael Pfau et al., "The role and impact of affect in the process of resistance to persuasion," *Human Communication Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2001): 243.

²² Chester A. Insko, *Theories of attitude change* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1967), 319.

²³ E. Tory Higgins, J. A. Bargh, and W. Lombardi, "Nature of priming effects on categorization," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition* 11 (1985): 50-69.

²⁴ Joseph N. Cappella and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Spiral of Cynicism: The Press and the Public Good* (New York: Oxford UP), 60.

²⁵ Joshua A. Compton and Michael W. Pfau, "Inoculation theory of resistance to influence at maturity: Recent progress in theory development and application suggestions for future research," in *Communication Yearbook* 29, ed. Pamela J. Kalbfleisch (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005), 101.

²⁶ William J. McGuire and D. Papageorgis, "The relative efficacy of various types of prior belief-defense in producing immunity against persuasion," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 62 (1961): 332.

²⁷ Michael Pfau et al., "Enriching the Inoculation Construct: The Role of Critical Components in the Process of Resistance," *Human Communication Research* 24, no. 2 (December 1997): 190.

Brehm's theory of psychological reactance assumes that people believe they have certain behavior freedoms and are motivated to protect these freedoms if they believe these freedoms are threatened.²⁸ "This arousal would presumably be directed against any further loss of freedom and it would also be directed toward the reestablishment of whatever freedom had already been lost or threatened."²⁹ Newer inoculation research, mostly conducted by Michael Pfau and his colleagues since the late 1970s, improves on this theory by revealing a number of incidental effects beyond simple counterattitudinal attacks when threatened. Inoculation treatment messages enhance perceived issue involvement,³⁰ attitude accessibility,³¹ vested interests,³² and intention to talk to others about target issues.³³ Furthermore, Pfau and associates' field and laboratory studies have consistently and effectively conferred resistance to subsequent

²⁸ Sharon S. Brehm and Jack W. Brehm, *Psychological Reactance: A Theory of Freedom and Control* (San Diego, CA: Academic P, 1981), 328.

²⁹ Jack W. Brehm, *A theory of psychological reactance* (New York: Academic P, 1966), 2.

³⁰ Pfau, Michael, J. A. Compton, K. A. Parker, E. M. Wittenberg, C. An, and M. Ferguson. "The traditional explanation for resistance based on the core elements of threat and counterarguing and an alternative rationale based on attitude accessibility: Do these mechanisms trigger distinct or overlapping processes of resistance?" *Human Communication Research* 30 (2004): 329-60. Also, Michael Pfau, B. Ivanov, M. M. Haigh, J. Sims, and E. Gilchrist. "Inoculation and mental processing: The instrumental role of associative networks in the process of resistance to counterattitudinal influence." *Communication Monographs* 72 (2005): 414-41.

³¹ Pfau et al., 2004, 2003

³² Joshua A. Compton, and Michael Pfau. "Inoculation against pro-plagiarism justifications: Rational and affective strategies." *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 36 (2008): 98-119.

³³ Joshua A. Compton, and Michael Pfau. "Use of inoculation to foster resistance to credit card marketing targeting college students." *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 32 (2004): 343-64. Also, Lin, Wei-Kuo, and Michael Pfau. "Can inoculation work against the Spiral of Silence? A study of public opinion on the future of Taiwan." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 19 (2007): 155-72, and Josh Compton and Michael Pfau. "Spreading Inoculation: Inoculation, Resistance to Influence, and Word-of-Mouth Communication." *Communication Theory* 19, no. 1 (February 2009): 9-28.

persuasive attempts in a variety of settings including politics,³⁴ marketing,³⁵ public relations,³⁶ and health.³⁷

The revival of the inoculation model in the late 1970s by Pfau and his colleagues was developed during a time of increased political attack advertising. The model was a promising alternative after existing legal options, voluntary restraint and participant interests proved to be inadequate responses to the growing use of these advertisements.³⁸ Inoculation would spread a "blanket of protection" over the receiver,³⁹ thus promoting a resistance to the message of attack advertising.⁴⁰ Involvement and attitudinal confidence are key in the attitude's strength,⁴¹ thus party affiliated voters are less susceptible to political persuasion and are more likely to be inclined toward selective perception of the issues and arguments that their parties hold.⁴² Inoculation against attack advertisements can then be effective because

³⁴ Michael Pfau and M. Burgoon, "Inoculation in political campaign communication," *Human Communication Research* 15 (1988): 91-111. Also, Pfau, Michael, and Henry C. Kenski. *Attack politics strategy and defense*. New York: Praeger, 1990., and Michael Pfau and Henry C. Kenski, "Efficacy of inoculation strategies in promoting resistance to political attack message," *Communication Monographs* 57 (1990): 25-43.

³⁵ Compton and Pfau, (2004), and B. Ivanov, M. Pfau, and K. A. Parker, *The potential of inoculation in promoting resistance to the effectiveness of multiple competitive attacks on the country of origin concept*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of American Marketing Association Winter Marketing Education Conference, San Diego, CA (February 2007).

³⁶ Michael Pfau, M. M. Haigh, J. Sims, and S. Wigley. "The influence of corporate front-group stealth campaigns." *Communication Research* 34 (2007): 73-99. Also, Hua-Hsin Wan and Michael Pfau, "The relative effectiveness of inoculation, bolstering, and combined approaches in crisis communication," *Journal of Public Relations Research* 16, no. 3 (2004): 301-328.

³⁷ L. C. Godbold and Michael Pfau, "Conferring resistance to peer pressure among adolescents," *Communication Research* 27 (2000): 411-437. Also, Michael Pfau, S. Van Bockern, and J. G. Kang, "Use of inoculation to promote resistance to smoking initiation among adolescents," *Communication Monographs* 59 (1992): 213-230.

³⁸ Pfau and Kenski, "Efficiency of inoculation strategies in promoting resistance to political attack message": 25.

³⁹ Wei-Kuo Lin, "Inoculation to Resist Attacks," *Asian Journal of Communication* 15, no. 1 (March 2005): 86.

⁴⁰ M. D. Miller and M. Burgoon, "The relationship between violations of expectations and the introduction of resistance persuasion," *Human Communication Research* 5 (1979): 311.

⁴¹ Lin, "Inoculation to Resist Attacks," 90.

⁴² S. H. Chaffee and S. Y. Choe, "Theme of decision and media use during the Ford-Carter campaign," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 44 (1980): 68.

receivers are threatened by the threat component of the refutational pretreatments. The receiver is exposed to the content of the advertisement that is potentially against her given attitude. At the same time, the pretreatment provides direct refutation of the content in a supportive manner, triggering the motivation to bolster arguments supporting the receiver's attitude and conferring resistance.⁴³ In the same way, perceived mistakes in Western media concerning events in China confers resistance from Chinese Internet bloggers by strengthening their attitude that the Western media is biased against their country.

The Counter Argument

The findings of two inoculation studies are of particular interest to this essay. Lin and Pfau (2007) were among the first to take the inoculation theory beyond Western borders with their study on using the theory against the spiral of silence.⁴⁴ Their results suggested that inoculation produces a sizable influence on elevating attitudinal confidence as a receiver encountered political attack messages in Taiwan. They found a positive relationship between the concepts of attitudinal confidence, willingness to speak out, and overt resistance to existing attitudes. Rather than changing the minds of the receivers, the inoculation construct posits that the receivers will become more resistant to counter-attitudinal persuasions. Receivers who perceive themselves on the losing side will become more resistant to persuasive attempts from the winning side faction.⁴⁵ Lin and Pfau claim the application of inoculation might benefit a democracy

⁴³ Lin, "Inoculation to Resist Attacks," 88.

⁴⁴ Lin's "Inoculation to Resist Attacks" was the first in 2005.

⁴⁵ Wei-Kuo Lin and Michael Pfau, "Can inoculation work," 166.

because it enhances a citizen's capability to resist forced attitudes by a dominant opinion in a spiral of silence.⁴⁶ Yet, what Lin and Pfau fail to show is how inoculation treatments can work against democratic messages if those same forced messages have already become part of the culture and identity of the people in question.

Although an anti-Western sentiment has been growing in China since the early 1990s,⁴⁷ prominent incidents such as the 1999 NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade,⁴⁸ the 2008 demonstration during the Olympic torch relay,⁴⁹ and alleged Western media bias,⁵⁰ especially in relation to the March 2008 Tibet riots,⁵¹ seem to be fanning the flames. China's official news agency, Xinhua, claims that the sentiment comes from a new generation born after the opening of the country in 1978, and fed on Hollywood movies, pop music and material abundance.⁵² One article claimed that the Western media trends have "stoked a repulsion to the West" and in turn aroused a patriotic passion in a generation saturated with enough information that they have an opportunity to make their own judgments.⁵³ James Kelly, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 2001 to 2005, claims that most Chinese can circumvent the restrictions the government has placed on the internal press and the

⁴⁶ Ibid, 155-156.

⁴⁷ Mark Cloven, writer, "Anti-western sentiment flourishes in China," in *PM*, ABC (Australia), April 24, 2008, <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2008/s2227038.htm> (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁴⁸ Peter Hays Gries, "Tears of rage: Chinese Reaction to the Belgrade Embassy Bombing," *The China Journal* 46 (July 2001): 25-43. Also, "NATO's diplomatic blunder," *BBC News*, May 8, 1999, section goes here, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/338712.stm> (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁴⁹ *China Daily* (Xinhua), "Protests against 'Tibet independence' erupt in cities," April 19, 2008, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-04/19/content_6629376.htm (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁵⁰ *China Daily*, "Looking past Western media bias against China," February 28, 2008, http://www.china.org.cn/international/opinion/2008-02/28/content_11021569.htm (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁵¹ Michael Bristow, "China criticizes Western media," *BBC News*, March 25, 2008, section goes here, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7312376.stm> (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁵² Xinhua, "Chinese youth feel attached to country, aware of social issues," *People's Daily Online (English)*, May 25, 2008, paragraphs 3-5, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6664559.html> (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁵³ Ibid, p 29-31.

Internet, but they do not feel a need to do so: "So they're taking the news they got from the source that they see which gives them a very one-sided portrayal."⁵⁴

The U.S. claimed the 1999 NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade that killed three Chinese nationals was the result of outdated maps, but few Chinese accepted the explanation.⁵⁵ China's United Nation ambassador, Qin Huasan, released a statement claiming "NATO's barbarian act is a gross violation of the U.N. charter and international law and laws governing international relations."⁵⁶ As Chinese government officials reserved the right to take further action in their response to the bombing,⁵⁷ Chinese students in Europe and America demonstrated against NATO fascism,⁵⁸ and thousands marched in Beijing where protesters threw rocks and gas bombs at NATO embassies.⁵⁹ U.S. media blamed the demonstrations on the Chinese government for inflaming the protests. Occurring a month before the tenth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests, China failed to tell its citizens that the U.S. attack was an accident and that President Clinton had apologized to Beijing.⁶⁰

Compton and Pfau (2009) argue that the effects of inoculation may extend beyond those directly exposed to others via word-of mouth communication along social networks. These effects on attitude accessibility, involvement and threat are conducive

⁵⁴ "Anti-western sentiment flourishes in China," p 13.

⁵⁵ Peter Hays Gries, "Tears of Rage," 25-43.

⁵⁶ Brent Sadler, Alessio Vinci, and Jamie McIntyre, "Chinese demand U.N. meeting after Belgrade embassy attacked," *CNN*, May 7, 1999, p 5, <http://www.cnn.org/WORLD/europe/9905/07/kosovo.05/index.html> (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁵⁷ "NATO's diplomatic blunder," p 6.

⁵⁸ Gries, "Tears of Rage" p. 26.

⁵⁹ John Raedler et al., "Families grieve victims of Chinese embassy bombing as NATO air campaign continues," *CNN*, May 10, 1999, p 4, <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9905/10/kosovo.01/> (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁶⁰ *San Francisco Chronicle*, "A Belgrade Bombing Explodes in Beijing," May 11, 1999, A-20 sec., <http://sfgate.info/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/1999/05/11/ED46624.DTL&hw=diplomats&sn=313&sc=309> (accessed November 10, 2009).

to continuing the inoculation content to others.⁶¹ This pass-along effect, or “social diffusion,”⁶² is powerful because of its ability to sustain a message as it passes from person to person.⁶³ These messages can motivate such behaviors as participating in civic forums,⁶⁴ protests and demonstrations. Thus, the inoculation treatments move beyond direct recipients to motivate indirect participants in a message campaign.⁶⁵

Prior to the 2008 Summer Olympic Games being held in Beijing, the international leg of the Olympic torch relay was subject to demonstrations in at least twelve locations⁶⁶ mainly over China’s human rights record and Tibetan independence. In London, thirty-seven arrests were made when protestors clashed with police as the torch made its way through the city. “A tiny number of Tibet independence elements sought to disrupt the relay of the Olympic Games sacred flame through London,” one Chinese official was quoted in the London Times, “We strongly condemn this vile behavior.”⁶⁷ Few Chinese were aware of the demonstrators in London because state media, both television and newspapers, avoided mentioning the incident. CCTV only showed brief shots of the start of the run and then cut away from the relay for lengthy periods to in studio hosts and guests. Newspapers hailed the relay and made only the briefest mention to the protestors.⁶⁸

⁶¹ Compton and Pfau. "Spreading Inoculation," 9-28.

⁶² R. Hornik and I. Yanovitzky, "Using theory to design evaluations of communication campaigns: The case of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign," *Communication Theory* 13 (2003): 209.

⁶³ J. Goldenberg, B. Libai, and E. Muller, "Talk of the networks: A complex system look at the underlying process of word-of-mouth," *Marketing Letters* 12 (2001): 212.

⁶⁴ J. M. McLeod, D. A. Scheufele, and P. Moy, "Community, communication, and participation: The role of mass media and interpersonal discussion in local political participation," *Political Communication* 16 (1999): 335.

⁶⁵ Compton and Pfau. "Spreading Inoculation," 10.

⁶⁶ Cities included London, Paris, Athens, Istanbul, Buenos Aires, Bangkok, Canberra, Nagano, and Seoul.

⁶⁷ Jane Macartney, "China condemns 'vile' London torch protests," *Times Online*, April 7, 2008, p 3, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article3697978.ece> (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁶⁸ Macartney, "China condemns," p 6-7.

The next day, the Paris relay was cut short and the torch transported by bus after protestors disrupted the procession. A planned ceremony to greet the torch outside the French capital's city hall was abandoned shortly before the relay was cut short because members of the Green Party hung a giant Tibetan flag from the building where over 500 protestors had gathered.⁶⁹ Chinese government officials condemned the protests. Wang Hui, media head for the Beijing Olympic Committee, released a statement claiming only a "few separatists" were involved in the protests, and the relay would continue as planned: "The smooth progress of the torch relay cannot be stopped and will definitely be a big success."⁷⁰ Chinese ambassador to London Fu Ying claimed many young Chinese people who had romantic views about the West were disappointed at the Western media's attempts to demonize China over the protests:⁷¹

In China, what's hot at this moment on the Internet, which has 200 million users there, is not only the attempts to snatch the torch but also some moving images of Jin Jing, a slim young girl, a Paralympics athlete in a wheelchair, helped by a blind athlete. She held the torch close to her chest as violent "protesters" tried repeatedly to grab it from her during the Paris relays.⁷²

Ying's comments are at best an attempt to control the message and deflect the attention away from the issues and toward the violence of the protestors. What the Chinese people picked up on was even though the protests were aimed at specific issues, both

⁶⁹ Peter Walker and David Batty, "Olympic torch relay cut short amid Paris protests," *The Guardian*, April 7, 2008, p 8, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/apr/07/france.olympicgames2008> (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p 13-14.

⁷¹ Fu Ying, "Chinese ambassador Fu Ying: Western media has 'demonized' China," *Telegraph* (London), April 13, 2008, p 21, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3557186/Chinese-ambassador-Fu-Ying-Western-media-has-demonised-China.html> (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁷² *Ibid*, p 16.

Western media sources such as the BBC⁷³ and Chinese media sources, such as CCTV⁷⁴ referred to the protestors as being anti-China. China Daily claimed, "All the recent protests against the 2008 Olympic torch relay are not against Chinese government, as some protestors repeated. They are against all of the ordinary Chinese people living everywhere in the world."⁷⁵ The attempt is to reach out not only to Chinese living in the homeland, but all who identify themselves as Chinese.

Confucianism

Confucianism is known as mingchiao, or "religion of names."⁷⁶ A name is a title that gives a person a definite status in society and defines her relationship with others. In traditional Chinese society, the family is the most important group to an individual. Typical Chinese family functions include shared finances, maintenance of household economies, religion, education and recreation,⁷⁷ but it also encompasses the Chinese traditional view of government. Of the five cardinal human relationships, four are occupied with the family: king and subject, father and son, husband and wife and brother to brother.⁷⁸ Confucius's basic political theory was that most problems in society are created when people forget their place in life or when rulers forget their

⁷³ "China vows to keep torch on track," *BBC News*, April 8, 2008, section goes here, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7335871.stm> (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁷⁴ "Beijing Olympic flame's overall journey-light the passion, share the dream." *CCTV (English)*, August 8, 2008. (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁷⁵ Uncle T Cabin, "Muse of 2008 Olympic torch relay," *China Daily*, June 5, 2008, p 3, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-05/06/content_6665429.htm (accessed November 28, 2009).

⁷⁶ Lok Chua Chen, "Two Chinese Versions of the American Dream: The Golden Mountain in Lin Yutang and Maxine Hong Kingston," *Melus* 8, no. 4, *The Ethnic American Dream* (Winter 1981): 62.

⁷⁷ Kwang-kuo Hwang, "Face and Favor: The Chinese Power Game," *The American Journal of Sociology* 92, no. 4 (January 1987): 949.

⁷⁸ Yutang Lin, *My Country and My People* (New York: Foreign Language Teaching and Research P, 2000), 175.

virtues. People at every position of life should live up to the proper responsibility of their offices. This begins with the ruler:

Duke Ching of Ch'I asked Master K'ung about government. Master K'ung replied saying, Let the prince be a prince, the minister a minister, the father a father and a son a son. The Duke said, How true! For indeed when the prince is not a prince, the minister not a minister, the father not a father, the son not a son, one may have a dish of millet in front of one and yet not know if one will live to eat it.⁷⁹

Equality does not exist. Rules must be obeyed out of respect for the ruler who is mandated by heaven, just as a child needs to respect a father. In exchange, a ruler must act as a good father toward those who are ruled: "If you lead along a straight way, who will dare go by a crooked one?"⁸⁰ The ruled must obey the government for it is the only instrument that promotes social stability:

Chi K'ang-tzu asked Master K'ung about government, saying, Suppose I were to slay those who have not the Way in order to help on those who have the Way, what would you think of it? Master K'ung replied saying, You are there to rule, not to slay. If you desire what is good, the people will at once be good. The essence of the gentleman is that of wind; the essence of small people is that of grass. And when a wind passes over the grass, it cannot choose but blend.⁸¹

Government should operate impartially and with virtue. Leaders should be people of integrity because the nation looks to the leaders as role models. Yet, China has a long history of enforcing "right thinking" with the sword that stems from the Legalists of the Ch'in dynasty to Mao Zedong. Indeed, China has experienced more than 25 centuries of social cohesion contingent upon relationships of domination and submission between

⁷⁹ Confucius. "Analects 12.11" *Analects of Confucius*, trans. Arthur Waley (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 166.

⁸⁰ Analects 12.17.

⁸¹ Analects 12.19

leaders and their subjects.⁸² This could be why Mao used traditional Confucian beliefs to justify his form of government. It also sets up an inoculation that tacitly affirms acceptance of government as the head of the greater family. The Chinese conception of government is personal. It nearly takes the place of religion by giving person a sense of social survival and family continuity, thus satisfying the craving for immortality, and through ancestral worship makes the sense of immortality vivid. It breeds a sense of family honor.⁸³ To meddle with someone else's government would be similar to prying into someone else's personal life. When the Western media reports on a story that puts the Chinese government in a bad light, Confucian logic would lead adherents to claim that the Western media was meddling in a place where it was not right to interfere. Religion and cultural identity become resources mobilized by the government in order to create a particular constellation of social forces that positions the government as part of the metaphoric family while positioning outsiders as meddlers with no sense of civility or propriety.

The notion that a leader may rule by moral force is widespread in many religions, but it is central to the Confucian ideal of government. Confucianism is the social philosophy behind the family system, a doctrine that creates the Chinese social order. A word for "society" does not exist as an idea of traditional Chinese thought. In Confucian social and political philosophy, there is only the direct transition from family (chia) to the state (kuo) as successive stages of human organization. The nearest equivalent to a word for "society" would be kuochia, or family state. Chinese people religiously do not talk about politics, they do not cast votes and they do not hold

⁸² George Q. Xu, "The Role of Rhetorical Topoi in Constructing the Social Fabric of Contemporary China," in *Civic Discourse, Civil Society, and Chinese Communities*, ed. Randy Kluver and John H. Powers (Grand Rapids: Ablex, 1999), 41.

⁸³ Yutang Lin, *My Country and My People*, 173.

debates. Until recently, the Chinese people did not participate in team sports. That is not to say they do not play games, but these games are more characteristic of the Chinese individual such as table tennis or mahjong.⁸⁴

The tradition of being at the center of existence is an important aspect to the Chinese identity. A sense of continuity is common among the Chinese based on a deep-rooted sense of belonging to a unified civilization that boasts several thousands years of uninterrupted history.⁸⁵ Nation, state, sovereignty, citizenship and race as well as cultural and ethnic identity were all new concepts China officials and intellectuals had to adapt to as the country opened up to the Western world over the past 150 years.⁸⁶ Being physically separated from the homeland, the center of Chinese culture, does not preclude the continuity of a Chinese identity. Two main sentiments identify most of those who see themselves as Chinese today, whether they live in China or not. Zhongguoren carries a connotation of modern patriotism or nationalism—a feeling of connectedness with the fate of China as a nation. A sense of fulfillment of being the bearer of a cultural heritage handed down or hundreds of generations and a sense of being separated from non-Chinese contributes to zhongguoren.⁸⁷

Zhonghua minzu, loosely translated into English as “the Chinese race” or Chinese people,” only emerged about a hundred years ago. Minzu comes from the word min for people and zu for clan, and was first used by intellectuals in the early Republic of China era where it was associated with nationalistic writings that warned the Chinese people

⁸⁴ Ibid, 169-170.

⁸⁵ David Yen-ho Wu, "The Construction of Chinese and Non-Chinese Identities," *Daedalus, The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese* published by The MIT Press on behalf of American Academy of Arts & Science 120, no. 2 (1991): 160. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20025378> (accessed November 19, 2009).

⁸⁶ Ibid, 159.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 160.

of the danger annihilation under Western invasion.⁸⁸ The Chinese have viewed themselves as the center of civilization since ancient times, a center surrounded by barbarians—the Yi in the east, the Di in the west, the Rong in the north, and the Man in the south.⁸⁹ Under this logic, it is not a far reach to assume that the Western media represents the barbarian press to the Chinese people, a media from the outside set on the destruction of the Chinese way of life if not the destruction of the country itself and the center of civilization with it.

The Chinese Inoculation Process

China is developing a lively commercialized press that openly reports on a wide range of formally taboo topics, talk shows that expose corruption at the local levels, journalists who risk monetary and financial hardships to expose wrongdoings, and Internet news sites that spread the latest scandal nationwide—if not internationally—within hours.⁹⁰ Un-official and quasi-official outlets for liberal political ideas multiplied rapidly throughout the country not only on the Internet and the smaller newspapers, but also in magazines and books, the result of collaborations between independent editors and state publishing. Provocative books such as translations of Foucault's work as well as domestically written government criticism pieces can be found in government owned books stores such as Central Bookstore in Guangzhou and Shanghai.⁹¹ In 2003, the Communist Party's Breeze Magazine published an article by a senior

⁸⁸ Jinchun Han and Yifu Li, "Hanwen 'minzu' yi ci de chuxian jiqi chuqi shiyong qingkuang (The emergence of the term 'minzu' in Han (Chinese) language and usage," trans. Hoyu Chen (for the author), *Minzu yanjiu* 2 (1984): 36-43.

⁸⁹ Wu, "The Construction of Chinese and Non-Chinese Identities," 161.

⁹⁰ Benjamin L. Liebman, "Watchdog of Demagogue? The Media in the Chinese Legal System," *Columbia Law Review* 105 (205): 12.

⁹¹ Elisabeth Rosenthal, "China Trying to Crack Down on Vocal Liberal Intellectuals," *New York Times*, May 8, 2000, p. 7,

retired official that insisted that China's Communist leaders must learn from the Capitalist West by embracing democracy and the rule of law. Authorities still punish those who dare to undermine the Party's power, but ideas that would once land a person in jail were becoming more common and acceptable.⁹²

After a brief time of relative media openness, 2008 became a difficult year for Chinese reporters to find their boundaries on what they could and could not report. The frustration began in March with the ban on riot coverage in Tibet followed quickly with the temporary lifting of press restrictions concerning the coverage of the Sichuan earthquake in May. Independent reporting on sensitive issues was censored in order to guarantee a "harmonious" Beijing Olympics.⁹³ By December, authorities arrested a number of reporters in order to prevent them from investigating corruption. One veteran legal reporter was quoted saying, "The year 2008 might have seemed like a carnival for the mainland media, but it was also a year of shame for journalists, with authorities arresting a striking number of reporters and trying to prevent them from carrying out investigations. It was a cynical end to 2008 and suggested a very bad outlook for 2009."⁹⁴ The New York Times claimed once again that the new regulations illustrated the government's resolve "to tame, if not totally control, the unwieldy beast that is the Internet, which has rapidly become a means for Chinese to bypass

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9405E3DE1338F93BA35756C0A9669C8B63>
(accessed November 17, 2009).

⁹² Elisabeth Rosenthal, "Chinese Freer to Speak and Read, but not to Act," *New York Times*, February 12, 2009, p. 16.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E05EED91F3BF931A25751C0A9659C8B63&fta=y>
(accessed November 17, 2009).

⁹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Regulations of the People's Republic of China Concerning Reporting Activities of Permanent Offices of Foreign Media Organizations and Foreign Journalists." Foreign Correspondents' Club of China. <http://www.fccchina.org/reporters-guide/chinas-reporting-rules/>
(accessed October 10, 2009).

⁹⁴ Vivian Wu, "Paying off the press," *South China Morning Post* (Guangzhou, China), January 16, 2009.

the state-controlled media to obtain and transmit information.”⁹⁵ The Internet is also proving to be a convenient way in which Chinese from all over the world are communicating with those still in the homeland. Internet sites are devoted to both the interpretation of news from China into English and personal narratives commenting in the daily events in the homeland and abroad.⁹⁶

Two important aspects of the current situation should be addressed. First of all, the arresting of Chinese reporters is done outside of the view of the media consumer. The consumer is not able to see additional information the reporter would have published. Additionally, since the Chinese press has been relatively free, especially in the southern regions of the country that is influenced by Hong Kong and the commercialized Guangdong region, the gatekeeping maneuver of removing information from the media is not recognized. Secondly, the persecution of reporters is a throwback to the time of Chairman Mao Zedong when times of relatively free reporting and ideas alternated with fierce ramification, all of which was done outside the view of the news consumer.

In a speech that would become a cornerstone in Chinese press theory, Chairman Mao told the editorial staff of the Shansi-Suiyuan Daily “Questions concerning policy should as a rule be given publicity in the Party papers or periodicals” for when masses are of one heart, everything becomes easy.⁹⁷ Mao explained that a basic principle of Marxist-Leninism was to enable the masses to know and fight for their own interests.

⁹⁵ Elisabeth Rosenthal, "China Lists Controls to Restrict the Use of E-Mail and Web," *New York Times*, January 23, 2009, p. 6, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D02E5D8123CF934A15752C0A9669C8B63> (accessed November 17, 2009).

⁹⁶ Two examples are the EastSouthWestNorth blog, <http://www.zonaeuropa.com/weblog.htm> and Danwei, <http://www.danwei.org/>.

⁹⁷ Mao Zedong, "A Talk to the Editorial Staff of the Shansi-Suiyuan Daily: April 2, 1948," in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, 1-7, in Maoist Documentation Project, http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4_36.htm (accessed September 27, 2009).

The role and power of the newspaper was to tell the masses what those interests would be. “You comrades are newspapermen,” Mao proclaimed, “Your job is to educate the masses, to enable the masses to know their own interest, their own tasks and the Party’s general and specific policies.”⁹⁸ Mao argued that if the Party insisted on leading the masses to do anything contrary to the will of the people, the Party would certainly fail. It was the responsibility of the media, print media specifically at this point in time, to ensure this did not happen. “To run a newspaper well, to make it interesting and absorbing, to give correct publicity in the newspapers to the Party’s general and specific policies and to the strengthen the Party’s ties with the masses through the newspapers—this is an important question of principle in our Party’s work which should not be taken lightly.”⁹⁹

For over twenty-five years beginning in 1950, the salience of Chinese nationalism was shrouded by a blanket of social ideology—Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Idealism—and promoted by Mao’s social campaigns.¹⁰⁰ The Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was responsible for the overall management of the mass media. This created a basis for misunderstandings within the international community during the Cold War. Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm wrote in their germinal work *Four Theories of the Press* that the people of the Western world are apt to think people hold different ideas and values, and encourage the arts of compromise and majority rule. The Communists, however, are apt to think that men should not hold different viewpoints, compromise is a sign of weakness, and there is one right position to be found in Marxism interpretation and to be defended,

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Zhao, “A State-Led Nationalism,” 288.

propagated and enforced.¹⁰¹ The Chinese media became an instrument not of reporting the news, but as an instrument to interpret doctrine.¹⁰²

Mao told the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art in 1943 that he believed that public criticism was a dangerous attack on the Party, and instead insisted that the media and intellectuals concentrate on the more positive aspects of the Communist Party. Mao's "Talks on Art and Literature" limited the permissible subject matter under new Party guidelines and became the basis for later policies regarding artistic and political expression.¹⁰³ Mao effectively began to strong-arm and control the media from his headquarters in Yanan. Newspapers would only produce works that would serve and uphold the Party's authority and the doctrine of Marxist-Leninist Mao Zedong thought. Mao would continue to use mobilizing campaigns to accomplish specific goals and to institute thought reform and avoid political entrenchment. Such measures were necessary, in Mao's estimation, to maintain the people's revolutionary fervor.¹⁰⁴

Individuals and organizations labeled "counter-revolutionary" underwent especially brutal methods of thought reform. The Party moved to purge these counter-revolutionaries, a goal that, under Mao's authority, led to nearly 800,000 deaths. With a sense of security that the masses were finally flowing in one direction, Mao decided to wade into freedom of expression. On May 2, 1956, Mao told Party leaders to "let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend," allowing for the free expression of artistic and political ideas and outlining a policy of "long-term co-

¹⁰¹ Fredrick S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do* (New York: University of Illinois P, 1963), 106.

¹⁰² Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press*, 111.

¹⁰³ Gregor Benton and Allen Hunter, eds., *Wild Lily, Prairie Fire: China's Road to Democracy, Yan'an to Tian'anmen, 1942-1989* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1995), 11.

¹⁰⁴ John B. Starr, *Continuing the Revolution: The Political Thoughts of Mao* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1979), 208-209.

existence and mutual supervision" with China's United Front, a collection of democratic parties that had, to that point represented only the barest semblance to opposition.¹⁰⁵ It was not long before a renewed distrust of the intellectuals forced a return to political norms.

Mao instituted an "anti-rightist campaign" later that year that labeled anti-revolutionists propagandists all those who had used the Hundred Flowers experiment as a platform for Party criticism. The worst offenders in academia were imprisoned or "sent down" for years of reform labor. The official explanation for the Hundred Flowers and its abrupt termination was that it had been a ruse to ensnare counter-revolutionary elements remaining after the purges instituted earlier in the decade.

Those who ran the media needed to accept their role as those who created the right image of their government:

If the masses like to read the newspapers, then it proves the leadership is led well; if the masses don't like to read them, doesn't it show that the leadership is not all that wise? There's correct leadership and incorrect leadership. Correct leadership does things according to the circumstances, conforms to reality; the masses welcome it. Incorrect leadership does not do things according to the circumstances and is divorced from reality. It makes the editors feel they have no freedom, and the masses don't like to read the newspapers thus edited. This kind of leadership is unquestionably dogmatic. We need to oppose dogmatisms.¹⁰⁶

In effect, Mao gave all Chinese media the absolute and complete freedom to agree with his government in every way. Anything else was considered treasonous to the wishes of the people. By 1976, press freedoms by Western standards were completely wiped

¹⁰⁵ Roderick MacFarquhar, "Introduction," in *Secret speeches of Chairman Mao from the hundred flowers to the great leap forward* (Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies/Harvard University, Distributed by Harvard UP, 1989), 6.

¹⁰⁶ Mao Zedong, "Summary of a Talk with the Representatives of Press and Publishing Circles," in *The Secret Speeches of Chairman Mao: From the Hundred Flowers to the Great Leap Forward*, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar, Timothy Cheek, and Eugene Wu (The Council on East Asian Studies/Harvard University, 1989), 255.

out. When an earthquake hit Tangshan in northern China in 1976 (when Mao was still in power), there was a complete news blackout. The death toll of 250,000 people was a state secret—and revealing that secret would have been punishable by death.¹⁰⁷

Creating a historical perspective

After the recent unrest in Tibet, the Chinese government began attacking the Western media organizations with claims of bias. The criticism appears to be part of a wider campaign by the Chinese government to make sure its version of events is the dominant one and the truism that history is based upon. State and Party-controlled media reported that: "We're afraid it looks as if [the Western media] is not just ignorant, it is also prejudiced. That's why it deliberately ignores the truth and misleads the public."¹⁰⁸ In effect, the Chinese officials attempted to create an alternative version of events in order to change how history would evaluate the situation.

History is a prime raw material to construct ethnicity.¹⁰⁹ It is a collective memory of the past that binds people together, thus becoming an essential ingredient to nation building. All nation-states have placed great emphasis on teaching national history with the aim to consolidate the bond between the individual and the homeland.¹¹⁰ China's "Patriotic Education Campaign" began in 1991 as a nationwide mobilization effort. A central theme was that the entire nation was to study China's humiliating modern history and how much the country changed since the Communist reforms. New

¹⁰⁷ Mike Revzin, "Re: A request from a PhD students," e-mail message to author, October 01, 2009.

¹⁰⁸ Michael Bristow, "China criticizes Western media," p 2-7.

¹⁰⁹ Jack David Eller, *From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict: An Anthropological Perspective on International Ethnic Conflict* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan P, 1999), 10.

¹¹⁰ Elie Podeh, "History and Memory in the Israeli Education System: The Portrayal of the Arab-Israeli Conflict in History Textbooks (1948-2000)," *History and Memory* 12, no. 1 (2000): 65.

textbooks were written and required that replaced Mao's "victor narrative" (the people won national independence) with a new "victimization narrative" which blamed the West for China's long suffering.¹¹¹

The process actually began twenty years earlier, shortly after Chairman Mao died. Chairman Deng Xiaoping launched a campaign to reassess the Maoist ideology that had been the rule of the land for a quarter of a century. His original intention was to eradicate all ideological and psychological obstacles toward an economic reform for the country, but people began losing their faith in the government. The unexpected result was to be known as the "three belief crisis" (sanxin weiji): a loss of faith in socialism, Marxism, and trust in the party.¹¹² The government found itself unable to enlist mass support for its vision of the future, and many started calling for Western style democratic reform.

The sanxin weiji evolved into a pro-democracy movement of intellectuals and young people that eventually led to the large-scale Tiananmen demonstrations of 1989.¹¹³ From this viewpoint, the Tiananmen student protests can be seen as a bankruptcy of a shattered official ideology. The next two years were some of the most politically repressive times in Chinese history since the Mao uprising as the government forcefully reasserted political control and open dissent was silenced. Rejecting the conservatives' efforts to restore Maoist ideology, reformist leaders turned to nationalism to bind the country back together. Chinese propaganda emphasized the Party's role as the paramount patriotic force and guardian of national pride in order to

¹¹¹ Zheng Wang, "National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historic Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China," *International Studies Quarterly* 52 (2008): 784.

¹¹² Jie Chen, "The impact of reform on the party and ideology in China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 4, no. 9 (Summer 1995): 22.

¹¹³ Suischeng Zhao, "A State-Led Nationalism, 288.

bolster the faith in the troubled system during the turbulent transformation. Sanctions against China by Western nations provided the opportunity to make criticism of the Party line an unpatriotic act.¹¹⁴ Chinese nationalism proved to be a stronger glue to bind the nation together than socialism.¹¹⁵

As the pillars of Marxist and Mao ideology crumbled, patriotic education unfolded as a youth education campaign. The State Education Commission issued its "Program for China's Education Reform and Development," replacing Mao's victor history with a history of concurring humiliation. The long history of China and its traditional culture held a prominent place in the educational reform with the special emphasis on the nation's developmental process and its historic struggles against foreign aggression and oppression.¹¹⁶ The country's historic shame and humiliation started in 1842 when British troops defeated the Chinese in the Opium War. During the following century, mostly Western foreign powers carved out pieces of the country to create "spheres of influence" and, according to the new textbooks, to sell opium to the Chinese masses and frequently invading China to punish its people for some act of disobedience.¹¹⁷ During what is now known as the "long century of humiliation," China's effort to purge itself of foreign invaders resulted in the Boxer Rebellion and the slaughter of foreign missionaries and their converts.¹¹⁸ Since then, anti-foreign imperialism remains a central theme to the Chinese national discourse.¹¹⁹ This history is not only reinforced in school textbooks, but also in new museums and historical sites newly renovated to preserve the country's heritage.

¹¹⁴ Zhao, "A State-Led Nationalism," 290.

¹¹⁵ Joseph S. Nye, *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History*, 7th ed. (Boston: Longman, 2008), 61.

¹¹⁶ Zhao, "A State-Led Nationalism," 296.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 290.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 296.

The power of nationalism comes from locating the source of individual identity within a people, which is seen as the bearer of sovereignty, the center object of loyalty, and the basis for collective solidarity.¹²⁰ National, as well as ethnic and religious, identities are built on historic myths that define who are members of the group, what it means to be a member, and typically who is either an enemy or not in the group.¹²¹ Furthermore, Vamik Volkan in his book *Bloodlines*, explains that identities are also formed by “chosen traumas” and “chosen glories.” The traumas are experiences that “symbolize the group’s deepest threats and fears through feelings of hopelessness and victimization.”¹²²

This humiliation is an important concept to the Chinese, for it primes the rhetorical concept of “saving face” (*mianzi*), a signifier of increasing importance in the study of Asian rhetoric.¹²³ *Mianzi* is defined as the recognition by others of an individual’s social position.¹²⁴ Within a social network, having *mianzi* enhances one’s relative position and the many different privileges that further the quality of life. Self-image and esteem is injured resulting in emotional uneasiness when one loses *mianzi*. Saving face rather than losing it becomes a primary objective in Chinese society. Maintaining face requires one to act in certain ways, becoming a power game frequently played. Face work is a method of manipulating resources to one’s benefit. Thus, doing face work is an important way of showing off one’s power.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Leah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (New York: Harvard UP, 2007), 3.

¹²¹ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 383.

¹²² Vamik D. Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (New York: Westview P, 1999), 48.

¹²³ A literature review for the concept of *mianzi* can be found in Peter J. Buckley, Jeremy Clegg, and Hui Tan, “Cultural awareness in knowledge transfer to China--The Role of *guanxi* and *mianzi*,” *Journal of World Business* 41 (2006): 275-288.

¹²⁴ Martin Lockett, “Culture and the Problems of Chinese Management,” *Organizational Studies* 9, no. 4 (1988): 476.

¹²⁵ Hwang, “Face and Favor,” 962.

The end of the Cultural Revolution marked a major departure not only from life-or-death struggle rhetoric but also from the more militant tone of a victor.¹²⁶ The grounding metaphors for social organization have undergone radical change in China since the end of the Cold War and the death of Mao. In an interview with ABC (Australia) U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly claimed that in many ways the legitimacy of the current Chinese leaders is currently based on two things: the economic improvements and a new sense of nationalism that has shifted into a form of victimization, "a sense that they have been kicked around for 150 years and they're mad as hell and they're not going to take it anymore."¹²⁷

Conclusion

Inoculation theory has been empirically defined as a concept in persuasion and psychology. An exploration of the presentation of Western media in China reveals that inoculation also has rhetorical dimensions. The aim of this study is to explore the rhetorical dimensions of inoculation theory as they pertain to the situated context of an anti-West propaganda campaign. Threat construction and inoculation are conceptually useful to the rhetorical critic. A clear illustration of how inoculation and threat construction emerges with the case study of the Chinese interpretation of messages from the Western media.

Through the use of inoculation theory, a reality is created that conflicts with Western forms of thought. The Communist Party has inoculated itself against outsiders

¹²⁶ Xu, "The Role of Rhetorical Topoi," 41.

¹²⁷ Mark Cloven, writer, "Anti-western sentiment flourishes in China," in *PM*, ABC (Australia), April 24, 2008, <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2008/s2227038.htm> (accessed November 28, 2009).

by rhetorically positioning the Party as the paramount patriotic force and guardian of national pride. The Chinese people believe they have certain freedoms and are motivated to protect these freedoms if they believe they are threatened. These threats may come from an over zealous yet ill informed Western press in the form of bias that deliberately ignores the truth and misleads the public. The Western media represents the barbarian press, a tool of the imperialists set on the destruction of the Chinese way of life. The Chinese deserve to be mad at the way they have been humiliated over the past 150 years and it is time for the country to gain face with the rest of the world. An attack on the country of China by the media is tantamount to attack on the Chinese culture and race. Compromise is a sign of weakness. These messages can motivate such behaviors as participating in civic forums, protests and demonstrations.

The heuristic value of this study is two fold. First, inoculation theory has much to offer rhetorical studies. The line of inquiry of this essay attempted to fold in concepts from empirical fields such as psychology and persuasion. This cross-pollination of disciplines of rhetoric, psychology and persuasion opens many new lines of inquiry. Threat construction and inoculation explain the Chinese resistance to the Western framing of media events. And second, there are new ways to understand and unpack the efficacy of inoculation as a rhetorical maneuver. Western media messages that seek to plant seeds of democracy will fail in China when they do not take into account inoculation treatments. These pro-democracy messages become only part of a conceptual grid that has already cast America into the role of the imperialist.

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