

"WE HAVE FOUND IT HERE IN KOREA"

ELDRIDGE CLEAVER
Minister of Information of the Black Panther Party, U.S.A.

Eldridge Cleaver, who had led a delegation of the Black Panther Party, U.S.A., to the International Conference on the Tasks of Journalists of the Whole World in Their Fight against the Aggression of U.S. Imperialism held in Pyongyang recently, contributed the following article to our *Pyongyang Times*. (Title and sub-titles are ours.—Ed.)

The delegation from the Black Panther Party to the historic conference of journalists, composed of Deputy Minister of Defense Byron Booth and myself, have been here in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since September 11, 1969. From the bottom of our hearts, we wish to thank the heroic people of the DPRK for receiving us, making us feel so very welcome, and extending to us a dignified respect of a caliber which we have never experienced before outside of the homes of our mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers. For this we are deeply grateful to the Korean people, to your government and Workers' Party, under the strong and wise leadership of the incomparable Marshal Kim Il Sung.

Our Minds Have Been "Blown Away"

We had to take a very long airplane ride to get here. Such trips are, by their very nature, an ordeal. But we would have been smiling every inch of the way had we known that when we set our feet down on the soil of Korea, in Pyongyang, we would be inside of a new world. Our people have a phrase to describe one's state of mind inspired by an overwhelming event, and we think that this is the only phrase that can describe how we feel about Korea and its beautiful, heroic people: our minds have been blown away!

We did not know very much about your people and your country before coming here. Of course we knew the general things that the whole world knows, principally that your people had waged a victorious resistance to the invasion of your soil by the mercenary troops under the command of

Imagine how surprised and delighted we were to discover, that not only does Comrade Kim Il Sung practice what he preaches, but what a preaching and what a practice!

We are truly amazed by the achievements of the Korean people. And we are amazed by the Korean people themselves. Nowhere have we encountered such beautiful people, so vigorously mobilized, so efficiently organized, moving with the harmony of one man, one will, and one dedication.

Ordinarily I would be embarrassed to speak in such glowing terms about people, but in this situation I can hardly find the words with which to congratulate you, to praise you, and to express how much we love you.

You have shown us around your country and given us a quick course in your heroic history, shown us your struggle, your humiliation, and your triumph under the staunch leadership of Comrade Kim Il Sung. Your truly revolutionary socialist art has managed, as art should, to convey to us the deep truths of your experience in a condensed form, so that we feel that we have seen into the essence of your fighting people, even though we know that we could not possibly have learned, in such a brief period, all that there is to learn. But this little bit that we have learned is enough for us to say that we know you and we love you.

We have been most impressed with your struggle, with your children, with your socialist construction, and with your great Leader. The love that binds the Korean people together is of priceless beauty. The love you have for your Leader and your children is one and the same.

"Young Pioneers"



ELDRIDGE CLEAVER, MIN. OF INFO., B.P.P.

The U.S. imperialists and under the flag of the United Nations. And, of course, like all revolutionaries, we had read some of the writings of Comrade Kim Il Sung, with which we were greatly impressed. But we read a lot of writings by many different people, and we read everything with a grain of salt, because, particularly in our era of unprecedented hypocrisy and false posturing, you cannot believe everything you read. There are just too many people around who do not practice what they preach. So you can

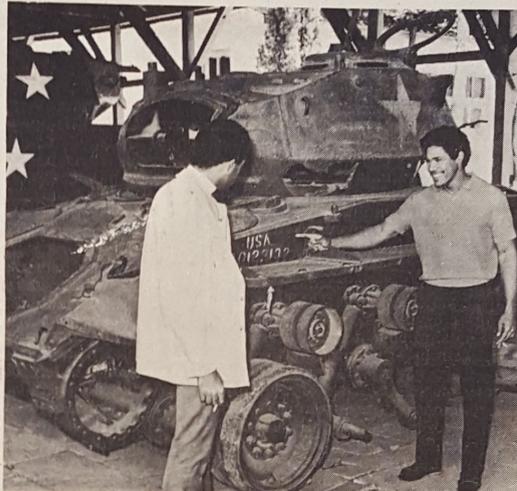
I must say a few words about your children, particularly the Young Pioneers. How wonderful and precious they are! How beautiful! Beyond the natural love which people have for their children, I think that there is a little something extra added in the love the Korean people have for their children. I get the impression that this is because for so many years you were unable to give them the kind of life and protection that you wanted to, that the suffering of the Korean children has been so great, that the slaughter, the

threw in the fire! Even to think about it, as I write this, brings tears to my eyes and a lump to my throat. So that whenever I see the Young Pioneers, my heart goes out to them especially, to each and every one of them, to all the Korean children.

On July 28, I became a father, our first child. The future of children in this world, under the threat of U.S. Fascism and Imperialism, is very important, very personally important to me, because I love all children.

"In Panmunjon"

In Panmunjon we saw and understood how your country is divided, and saw the hated U.S. imperialist M.P.s stationed there, who have the criminal audacity to pretend that they have a right to be there. It was kind of a shock



BYRON AND ELDRIDGE VIEW SYMBOLS OF U.S. DEFEAT DISPLAYED IN VICTORY MUSEUM.

bestly slaughter of your children first by the vicious Japanese imperialists and then, and most brutally, by the U.S. imperialist aggressors.

We visited Sinchon, and there we saw the execution chambers employed by the U.S. imperialists to mass murder Korean children

for us to see these Yankees there, because we know them so well. We participated in a small demonstration against them, and gave them a piece of our mind. There were two black M.P.s among them and we singled them out and questioned them, challenging them for being here supporting the



ELDRIDGE AND BYRON

and their mothers. We went inside these horror chambers and experienced a sinking heart to realize that the barbaric U.S. imperialist aggressors had herded the beautiful Korean children inside these death chambers by the hundreds, poured gas on them, and burned them alive. There was one of these death chambers in particular that I want to mention. It was all concrete, and was built, I think we were told, for an air raid shelter. It reminded me of the solitary confinement cells that I have myself been put inside in the prisons I have been in in the United States. From the inside, the death cells of Sinchon look exactly like the solitary confinement cells in the prisons of the United States. I remember how I felt each time I was thrown into one of these cells, how heavily it would weigh upon my heart and spirits, and how difficult it was to endure. So judging from my own feelings, I am horrified at how I know those children must have felt, being so young, frightened, and innocent as children are. How they must have begged for mercy from the merciless Yankees! How they scratched the walls, gasping for breath, and how they must have screamed when the savage imperialists poured in the gas and

very system that is murdering our black people in the U.S.A. One of these blacks said, when we asked him, that he is from the state of Georgia in the United States. Atlanta, Georgia. That is disgusting, because any black man from the state of Georgia has been subjected to extreme oppression at the hands of white racists. The present governor of Georgia is notorious for a well known incident. Some black children entered a restaurant that he owns and tried to order some food. This racist pig, Governor Lester Maddox of Georgia, set upon them with an ax handle in one hand and a pistol in the other hand and beat them unmercifully. So that when this black M.P. at Panmunjon said that he came from the state of Georgia, it seemed so absurd, and we told him so. We could see how weakwilled and confused he was. It was disgusting. We hate especially to see our black brothers function as mercenaries for the U.S. imperialists when they should be on our side and on the side of the Korean people in opposition to the U.S. imperialist aggressors. We understand the need and deep desire of the Korean people for the unification of their country and we know that soon Korea will be unified.

We welcome that day because that will mean more Young Pioneers, more socialist construction, and more of this beauty, and an end to the hateful life imposed upon your brothers and sisters by the U.S. imperialists who occupy your country. Our people have been under the very same boots of the U.S. fascist imperialists, for 400 years now, so nobody need tell us about how disagreeable it is!

"What Is Most Important"

I must speak now of what is most important. We came to Korea in search of something. We have been searching all over the world for it. The whole of our lives has been given to this search. And all of the oppressed people of the world are searching for this thing. We have found it here in Korea. Let me explain. We speak of internationalizing our struggle against imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism. In order to succeed in this, we must have an international analysis and an international strategy based on this analysis. This strategy must be implemented through international tactics. I think that Comrade Kim Il Sung has provided these. I see the earth as one big piece of land with one big body of water. I see one territory. And I see Comrade Kim Il Sung speaking to all the people in this territory and I see them listening to him and understanding him. What he is saying is so clear that even a child should understand it. He is telling us what is right before our eyes, what we are all prepared to see and understand, but which we could not see as clearly as he could because we did not have his perspective. Now that he has pointed it out to us, we can see it clearly too.

It would take a man like Comrade Kim Il Sung, with his long and deep experience of fighting against imperialism, including deep experience in guerrilla warfare. He has taken what he knows and applied it to the international situation. I think that the result is beautiful. I think it is what we've all been seeking, and waiting for and working for.

The Korean people, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the great Leader of the 40 million Korean people, Comrade Kim Il Sung, have heightened our consciousness to a level that makes us equal to the task of dealing with our number one enemy, the U.S. fascist imperialist aggressors.

So we are very glad to have come to your country, to have seen and learned all these things, to have known such beauty. The strength and revolutionary thrust of your entire society, your theatre, your industry, even your very trees and beautiful flowers, have made an indelible impression upon us. We would like to stay here in your glorious land forever. But, of course, we must return to our struggles, to our own people, to fulfill our duties and to take back with us and spread broadcast what we have learned here. If there is one single thing we have learned here, it is the wisdom and rewards of tenacity, of never giving up the struggle, of fighting harder and harder the more the vicious enemy presses us. This is what the Korean people did, and this is why they are triumphant. Our dream will be to someday make a return visit to a unified Korea, with Young Pioneers from the northern border to the tip of this country in the south.

We would like for the Korean people to know, that within the 30 million black people inside the United States, and among the other oppressed people there, there are ardent battalions of that army of liberation which the heroic guerrilla, Major Ernesto Che Guevara called forth. Che called for a continental wide army. We respond to Che's call, enlarging his army into a hemisphere wide army of liberation. And we go further, responding to the resounding trumpet call of Marshal Kim Il Sung, the great strategist and tactician of the international struggle against imperialism headed by U.S. imperialism. We will carry this sacred cause of our joint struggle through to the bitter sweet end, and win for our people the precious fruits of a great victory.

Eldridge Cleaver

Shades of Mao

The Posthumous Cult of the Great
Leader

Geremie Barme

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SHADES OF MAO

THE POSTHUMOUS CULT OF THE GREAT LEADER

GEREMIE R. BARMÉ



An East Gate Book



Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

LONDON AND NEW YORK



An East Gate Book

First published 1996 by M.E. Sharpe

Published 2015 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA.

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Barmé, Geremie.
Shades of Mao : the posthumous cult of the great leader /
Geremie R. Barmé.

P. cm.

“An East gate book.”

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-56324-678-3 (alk. paper).

ISBN 1-56324-679-1 (pbk. ; alk. paper).

1. Mao, Tse-tung, 1893–1976.

2. China—Politics and government—1976– I. Title.

DS778.M3B374 1995

951.05'092—dc20 95-25979

CIP

ISBN 13: 9781563246791 (pbk)

ISBN 13: 9781563246784 (hbk)

The Irresistible Fall and Rise of Mao Zedong

A Mao for All Seasons

Of the numerous news stories and popular rumors that abounded in China during the months leading up to Mao Zedong's centenary in December 1993, one of the most extraordinary tales issued from Sichuan. It was reported that workers in a local factory believed that Chairman Mao had established an industrial complex in the afterlife, which he was running according to the socialist principles he had espoused before his death. Despairing of the capitalist-style factory management and labor exploitation of the Reform era, and mindful that Mao had often claimed that he would go into the mountains and launch the revolution all over again if China "went revisionist,"¹ a number of workers committed suicide. They hoped to join the Chairman in the netherworld and continue to fight for the revolution under his shade.²

Although this story has not attained the status of a Chinese urban myth, it does reflect one facet of the revival of popular interest in Mao Zedong from the late 1980s: a deep dissatisfaction with the status quo and a yearning for the moral power and leadership of the long-dead Chairman.

* * *

This land so rich in beauty
Has made countless heroes bow in homage.

This essay is a much-expanded version of a paper presented at "Mao Craze, Mao Cult? A Symposium on Popular Culture in China Today," 23 April 1994, a workshop organized by the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, Harvard University. My thanks to the organizers of and participants in that workshop for their encouragement. A shorter version of this book appeared as an issue of *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology: A Journal of Translations* 28, no. 1 (Fall 1995).

But alas! Qin Shihuang and Han Wudi
 Were lacking in literary grace,
 And Tang Taizong and Song Taizu
 Had little poetry in their souls;
 And Genghis Khan,
 Proud Son of Heaven for a day,
 Knew only shooting eagles, bow outstretched.
 All are past and gone!
 For truly great men
 Look to this age alone.³

When Mao's poem "Snow," of which this is the last stanza, was first published in late 1945, a number of observers criticized the writer for indulging in "imperial fantasies." The last lines—"For truly great men/Look to this age alone"—the critics averred, did not refer to "the broad masses of the proletariat," as Communist Party commentators claimed, but to Mao and Mao alone.⁴

The Shanghai writer Li Jie, whose critique of Mao is quoted at length in the present volume, comments on these lines: "Here was the peasant boy listing all of the major father figures of Chinese history, leaving the last and most glorious position, however, for himself" (see "The Mao Phenomenon"; references in parentheses are to material contained in this book). The poem exudes the bravado that Mao's opponents have excoriated for decades; nonetheless, it reflects the kind of self-assertiveness and egomania that continue to beguile those for whom Mao Zedong represents the abiding genius or eidolon of China.

Even before Mao's demise on 9 September 1976, there were those who speculated that in death Mao would "become even more sacred" and be deified in ways only hinted at during his last years.⁵ But with the return of Deng Xiaoping to power in the late 1970s and after the protracted negation of Mao's legacy and the Cultural Revolution culminating in 1981, for nearly a decade it seemed that the Chairman had been safely relegated to the ranks of elder revolutionaries. Although Mao had played a pivotal role in the creation of the People's Republic and its first decades, in death he no longer exercised the charismatic power he had enjoyed in life.

From the late 1980s, however, Mainland China witnessed at first a fitful and then a nationwide revival of interest in Mao Zedong. Initially, the phenomenon was called a "search for Mao Zedong,"⁶ and according to one commentator it was the fifth of its kind.⁷ The official media, ever anxious to employ fashionable "buzzwords" for propagandistic purposes, soon dubbed it a "MaoCraze," the *Mao Zedong re* or simply *Maore*. In this book, the

compressed term “MaoCraze” will be used to translate the Chinese expression *Maore*, while Mao Cult indicates the revival of Mao in its myriad forms from the late 1980s as discussed in this introduction and the editorial notes.

This Mao Cult was largely nonofficial and spontaneous. It continued up to the time of the government-orchestrated centenary of Mao’s birth in 1993, and it would appear that popular enthusiasm for the Chairman waned in direct proportion to the authorities’ promotion of Mao as the founding father of the Party, army, and state. The new Mao Cult was markedly different from the “personality cult” (*geren chongbai* in Chinese or, in post-1976 officialese, *zaoshen yundong*) of the Cultural Revolution.⁸ Divested nearly entirely of its original class, ethical, and political dimensions, the new cult flourished throughout the country, prompting propagandists, commentators, and academics to analyze and declaim on the subject in the pages of the Mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwanese press.

This short volume attempts to digest and elucidate some of that massive body of material with selections taken primarily from Mainland sources. Unfortunately, due to the limited nature of public debate in the Mainland media, in particular because of official strictures on books related to Mao (see “Publish and Perish”), many writers were unable to comment freely on the cult. Within the considerable body of material that did appear, however, diverse views were expressed, often with a frankness that would have been astounding in the not-too-distant past. The following selection is little more than a meager sampling of those materials. Although I have attempted to reflect as broad a range of opinions as possible and touch on the diverse phenomena that constituted the Mao revival, given the vastness of the topic I cannot claim that this book is an exhaustive survey. I can only hope that the present volume may act as an introductory guide to those who wish to delve further into this disturbing yet fascinating realm of Chinese popular culture.

Pulping Mao

During the Cultural Revolution even wedding ceremonies had to be “revolutionized.” The newlyweds were invariably presented with copies of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* or *Quotations from Chairman Mao*.

One couple received sixty-five copies of the Little Red Book and thirty-seven sets of *Selected Works*. When the guests had all left the bride said to her husband:

“What ever are we going to do with this great pile of books? We can’t sell them or eat them, nor do we dare burn them. Not even our children or grandchildren will have any use for this many!”

that was sold there: reproductions of a U.S.\$100 bill printed on cloth on which the image of Mao had replaced that of Franklin. At the time, nearly a year before the New Year's paintings featuring Mao and money appeared, this simple tea towel-size cloth eloquently expressed the Chairman's reformist reincarnation (see Figure 18).

Not everyone in Shaoshan, however, was willing to cash in on the Mao Cult. Mao's aged cousin, Mao Zelian, was scornful of the mercenary revival of the flagging spirits of the Leader. "Chairman Mao had no love for private business, and he would despise those who now make money from his name . . .," he said. "Chairman Mao's idea was to make the country rich, while Deng's idea is to allow a few people to get rich. It's all gone wrong."¹⁸⁰

In early December 1993, a reporter for *Beijing Review*, the English-language propaganda weekly produced by the Foreign Languages Press, commented dourly on the threat, not of the Mao Cult, but of the depredations of the "M-Cult," or Money Cult, that had overwhelmed the nation, including Shaoshan.¹⁸¹

As the Mao Cult of the early 1990s faded and Shaoshan became just another quaint destination on the tourist map, one writer did formulate a means for keeping the spirit of Mao's politics alive in the context of China's turbulent economic upheaval. In August 1994 a journalist writing for the Hong Kong *Eastern Express* suggested a new form of "politico-tainment." It offered a spoof vision of what a "Maoland" theme park in Shaoshan would look like. Youthful park attendants, it was suggested, could dress as Red Guards and carry the *Little Red Book*, messy visitors could be struggled, and there would be a Cultural Revolution roller coaster that would hurtle passengers around as though they were experiencing a political purge. There could even be a "Haunted Politburo," featuring the ghosts of leaders airbrushed out of history.¹⁸² Even though "Maoland" waits to be built, real Maoist theme places already exist. One of these is Linying County in Henan, a revived socialist collective-cum-corporation that has become wealthy pursuing semi-Cultural Revolution policies.¹⁸³

Modern Mao Artifacts and Multi-Media Mao

The nature of nostalgia is that it relies on collective memories, fantasies and imagined pasts. Physical artifacts—originals or simulacra—are often the very things that elicit a nostalgic mood, a mood that can be tempered by any number of emotions, from the sublime to the ridiculous. In China objects embarrassingly derided as the by-products of a national psychosis just a few years ago were during the early 1990s recycled or remodeled for circulation to play a role in the new socialist market economy.

Flea markets and “antiques stores” in China’s major cities had been selling genuine Cultural Revolution Mao knick-knacks at generally affordable, although highly inflated Reform era, prices for years (see Figure 19). However, true lovers of kitsch/camp/trash have generally been disappointed by the lack of imagination displayed in the meager array of newly manufactured Mao artifacts. This probably is because by the early 1990s the economic reforms had still failed to produce a sufficient surfeit of goods, leisure, and laxity that would allow Mainland Chinese (unlike people in Hong Kong and Taiwan) to realize John Waters’ dictum on kitsch: “In order to acquire bad taste one must first have very, very good taste.”¹⁸⁴ Nonetheless, there are those of us who regard the new Cult as a deification of Mao as Chairman Camp,¹⁸⁵ and we await anxiously for items such as “Mao in a snowstorm” and crystal sarcophagus soup tureens to be produced. We hanker after exhibitions of the Chairman’s preserved viscera and crave the marketing of Mao shrouds in the tradition of the Turin hoax. To date, major tourist options have also been overlooked, such as the renting of Mao’s suite in Zhongnanhai to the new rich of China so that billionaire entrepreneurs can entertain peasant wenches in the Dragon Bed and play at being Chairman for a night. Surely there is also a market for Holy Revolutionary Relics.¹⁸⁶ Before the rich possibilities of this nascent market are realized, however, it would be best if we consider the more mundane, contemporary artifacts that became available from the late 1980s:

Mao badges or buttons, those ubiquitous symbols of that bygone age, were recycled by the ton, and new badge factories went on line to satisfy increased consumer demand.

The first Mao badges appeared in Yan’an in late 1948, made by university students using old toothpaste tubes.¹⁸⁷ The object of passionate devotion during the Cultural Revolution, the badges were often used as a means to establish revolutionary credentials and camaraderie. Many people built up large private collections, including the sycophantic Zhou Enlai, although he was also one of the first to criticize the excesses of Mao-mania when, in March 1969, he said: “More than 700 million copies of *Quotations* are in circulation, as well as 2.2 billion Chairman Mao badges. People are indulging in feudalism and a bourgeois style. What we want is frugality.”¹⁸⁸

Mao’s own criticism of the badges came in a discussion held with student leaders in April that year when he made his famous remark “Give me back my airplanes (*huan wo feiji*). It would be far more useful,” he continued, “to make airplanes to protect the nation out of the metal being expended in the production of Mao badges.”¹⁸⁹

The renewed interest in Mao badges in the 1990s was symptomatic of the Mao Cult, and the new rate of exchange had nothing to do with revolu-

tionary credentials and everything to do with commerce. Prior to the Mao revival, the Shaoshan Mao Badge Factory had been churning out a line of undistinguished and nonrevolutionary chotchky; then, in the early 1990s, it was retooled and converted back to badge production. And there was, for example, “Mao Badge City,” which I visited in Wuhan in May 1992. A few rooms in a ramshackle building near the chinoiserie-cement Huanghe Pavilion housed a collection of Cultural Revolution-period Mao trash carelessly arranged on the walls and in display cases for the diversion of tourists on their way to or from the pavilion. Fairy lights and badges arranged in heart shapes added to the attraction,¹⁹⁰ and hopeful shop assistants masquerading as museum guides attempted to hawk pieces of the tawdry collection.

A number of semicommercial Mao badge exhibitions were also held in 1992–93 in Beijing, Shaoshan (in the Mao clan temple), and cities such as Wuhan. One display of 10,000 badges was put on in Beijing in mid 1993, while major permanent collections of badges were established in Sichuan, Guangdong, and Xi’an. At last, after years of rejection, obsessive collectors finally had a chance to display their massive hoardings (some number in the tens of thousands) and “badge experts” like Zhou Jihou from Guizhou were able to publish books such as *The Ninth Wonder of the World: The Mystery of the Mao Badge*,¹⁹¹ which tells the history of the badges and discusses the new fad for them. A Mao Badge Research Society and a magazine titled *Research Papers on Collecting* [Mao badges] were also founded and, for a time, badges were a viable currency once more (see “CultRev Relics”).

The calendar boom that developed in China from the 1980s also served as a popular medium for a revival of Mao’s image. Whereas movie and song stars, foreign beauties and beaux, girls in a state of semiundress or striking poses with the accouterments of modernization (mobile phones, motorcycles, cars, and so on) generally featured in the annual rash of calendars, during the Mao boom from 1992 to 1994 the Chairman’s calligraphy or picture decorated many of the new calendars. A few even featured Mao badge collections with each month devoted to a different display of badges made variously from metal, porcelain, plastic, or bamboo (see Figures 20a, 20b). Then, in 1994, cellophane traditional-style New Year’s paintings (*nianhua*) appeared bearing images of Mao (see Figure 21), or Mao and his cohorts (Zhou, Liu, and Zhu) as they appear on the 100 *yuan* Chinese bank note, surrounded by time-honored symbols of longevity (pine trees and herons [Figure 22]) or good fortune (money, gold bullion, fat babies, fish, and the like [Figure 23]). These were the most gaudy mass-produced (dare we say “kitsch”?) items of the new cult.

At the ill-kempt temple stalls that choked the exit at the south end of the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall in Tiananmen visitors who had been herded

by the remains could also pick up such items as “Lucky cigarettes” (*Jili xiangyan*), the packet of which featured a picture of the Mao-as-Abe-Lincoln statue inside the hall. Also available were Mao cigarette lighters that noisily chimed “The East Is Red” (see Figure 24) or “Jingle Bells,” imitation ivory Mao Memorial Hall chopsticks, tacky shopping bags, cuff links, barometers, glow-in-the-dark busts, Mao lighters, diamond-studded Mao watches, pocket watches with Mao holograms and a plethora of Mao-inspired postage stamps (see Figure 25).

In Shaoshan, Mao brooches, tie clips, watches, badges, and pendants with spectral holograms of the leader’s head could be purchased (see Figures 26, 27), while in various parts of the country shoppers could pick up numerous other novelty items, such as Mao yo-yos containing a computer chip that enabled it to chortle the words of “The East Is Red,” and T-shirts with fawning slogans such as “I Love Chairman Mao” or “I Like to Study His Books Most” (see Figures 28, 29); or slightly more ironical statements such as “A spark can start a prairie fire” (*xingxing zhi huo keyi liao yuan*), or clever and pointed distortions of famous Mao quotes such as “I don’t fear hardship, I’m not scared of dying, nor am I afraid of you” (*yi bupa ku, er bupa si, ye bupa ni*),¹⁹² and even a type of shirt with a caricature of Mao held up by a worker-peasant-soldier trinity bearing the logo “assures safety and exorcises evil” (*baoran pixie*).¹⁹³

In late 1993 fashionable purveyors of wannabe po-mo (postmodern) culture in Beijing even produced a pastiche calender for 1994–95 featuring both Mao and Deng in cut-up collage¹⁹⁴ (see Figures 30a, 30b, 30c). Those with more traditional tastes in representations of the Great Leader, however, could obtain a series of Cultural Revolution–style Mao matchbox covers (*huochaihe*) at the Baihua Bookstore in Beijing, opposite the China Art Gallery between Wangfujing and Shatan’r, which specializes in art books¹⁹⁵ (see Figure 31).

Through books, comics, films, television and music the Older Generation of Revolutionary Leaders, as Mao and his coevals are known, have become part of the audiovisual repertoire of mass pop culture. In the early 1990s, a popular interlude at any major celebration held by a wealthy work unit in the capital or on television would be to welcome some of the actors who play the Older Revolutionaries to do a turn.¹⁹⁶ As I have written elsewhere, “Doing their patter in heavy local accents and done up in a modern version of opera masks (*lianpu*)—Mao with his brush-backed hair and mole, Lin bald and myopic, Zhou bushy-browed and face drawn—they act as comics or compères, talking heads who add a touch of class to an evening’s entertainment.”¹⁹⁷ At least these dead leaders have a status to live up to and the stature to appear in

stage productions. It is hard to imagine that 1990s Chinese politicians, the gray bureaucrats of Reform, will ever achieve such a reputation unless, of course, an ironical, popular penchant for retro “nonpersonality cults” springs up in the years to come.

Numerous teleseries and documentaries related to Mao’s life were produced in the lead-up to the centenary. Some of them included rare archival footage, as in the case of the hagiographic twelve-part TV documentary “Mao Zedong (1893–1993),” which screened in December 1993.¹⁹⁸ Then there were TV programs such as the Mao quiz show called “The Sun and Truth,” with its competing teams parroting Mao quotes and giving publication details, dates, place and so on.¹⁹⁹ Other programs, such as the successful 1990 multiepisode TV soap “Aspirations,” used Mao or rather Mao-period nostalgia to highlight the worldly cynicism of the Deng era. “Aspirations” contrasted the human closeness of the past (despite the attendant horrors of the Cultural Revolution period) with the heartless materialism of the present.²⁰⁰ The 1992 sitcom “The Editors” treated Maoist diction and style with playful irreverence,²⁰¹ and in the popular 1993 series “A Beijing Man in New York,” Mao appeared as the patron saint of struggling entrepreneurs. In episode 9, the protagonist Wang Qiming launches into an impassioned soliloquy before starting up his knitwear sweatshop. Imitating the tone and delivery of a Party secretary, he satirizes the Party and authoritarian rule while still affirming that for things to be run effectively you have to have a transparently bad person in control. It’s better to be up front about how bad you are, he argues, than to pretend to be good. Wang concludes his speech with an admonition to a roomful of imaginary workers to “abandon your illusions,” a reference to the title of a famous article Mao wrote criticizing the United States in 1949, and get to work.²⁰²

After a hiatus of three decades, Mao reappeared on both stage and screen in the early 1980s.²⁰³ The veteran PLA actor Gu Yue came to specialize in the mature Mao (see “In a Glass Darkly”), while Wang Ying of the Central Experimental Theater Company concentrated on playing the handsome young Mao.²⁰⁴ With the enormous popular success of such character actors, it soon seemed that everyone wanted a Mao of their own, and places as far flung as Inner Mongolia found Chairman look-alikes to perform at local benefits and shows.²⁰⁵

While official biopics have been common in China for years, starting in the early 1990s, Mao also featured one way or another in many non- or semiofficial films, such as Shi Jian and Chen Jue’s *Tiananmen* (1991),²⁰⁶ Wu Wenguang’s *My 1966* (1993), a droning documentary about ex-Red Guards, Chen Kaige’s epic *Farewell My Concubine* (1993), and Zhang Yuan’s *The Square* (1994). In Tian Zhuangzhuang’s *Blue Kite* (1993), one

of the most brooding historical films made in China, Mao did not play an on-screen role, but his presence is felt throughout the film. In 1995 Chen Kaige planned a new project titled *To Kill a King*, a film about the assassination attempt on Emperor Qin Shihuang, to whom Mao had compared himself (see “The Mao Phenomenon”). The screenplay of *To Kill a King* was the work of the ex-army writer Wang Peigong, the author of *WM*,²⁰⁷ the controversial 1985 play about the Cultural Revolution, and an activist jailed for his support of the 1989 student demonstrations who, like Bai Hua and so many others of his generation, was bedeviled by a fascination with Mao.²⁰⁸

Theater productions have featured Mao for many years, although in the centenary year attempts were made to depict the Leader as something of a tragic hero. In late 1993, for example, the PLA staged a work titled *The Sun Never Sets*. Set in January 1976, shortly after Zhou Enlai’s death, it shows Mao as a solitary figure, fearful of death, superstitious, and wary of the karmic punishment that awaits him. He receives news that a massive meteorite has fallen in the Northeast of China and sees it as an omen of his imminent demise. Despite these more human touches, Zhu Shimao, a noted actor and the producer of the play, averred that “Mao was a god,” and in the production the Chairman spouts quotations about hard work, thrifty living, and sacrificing personal interest in the service of the state even as death approaches. Some critics, not surprisingly, saw the play as a veiled criticism of the corrupt values rife in contemporary China.²⁰⁹

Although John Adams and Alice Goodman’s opera *Nixon in China* appeared in the West in 1987, the first traditional Chinese opera featuring Mao was not staged in Mainland China until 1994. *Mao Zedong in 1960*, a *pingju*-style opera created in Mudan, Heilongjiang Province, and featuring an aria-singing Chairman, premiered in Beijing in November 1994. The story reflects, to quote official propaganda, “how a Great Man dealt with everyday life while also confronted with the ever-changing complexities of international politics, the natural disasters faced by China, and the confusion experienced by both the Party and the People.”²¹⁰ To date, no overtly critical stage representation of Mao has appeared.²¹¹

At the same time as a second spate of state-sanctioned iconoclasm aimed at removing the remaining public statues of Mao Zedong saw the demolition of Mao monoliths at such symbolic sites as the entrance to Beijing University in 1988,²¹² artists such as Wang Guangyi, as we have noted above, began including reworked images of Mao in their paintings. The humorous use and abuse of Mao in Mainland works did, to an extent, reflect what Li Xianting (see “The Imprisoned Heart”) called a “Mao obsession.” As Li remarks, it was a fixation “that still haunted the popular psyche,” combining “both a nostalgia for the simpler, less corrupt, and more self-as-

sured period of Mao's rule with a desire to appropriate Mao Zedong, the paramount God of the past, in ventures satirizing life and politics in contemporary China." Practical political considerations, however, as well as the vagaries of the marketplace, meant that few of these works were openly iconoclastic, questioning, or even much more than comely pop trivia. All too often they displayed the tired tropes of po-mo, playing on the Chairman's image with all the resources that appropriation and pastiche could muster while rarely reflecting any of the true cultural complexity of the popular Mao Cult, or the residual social and cultural aftershocks of the original Cult.

Avant-garde Mao art, like so much of nonofficial Mainland culture after 1989 indulged itself more in consumer irony than in social critique (see Figure 32). As I have commented on such tendencies elsewhere: "When . . . irony itself is commodified and used 'to grease the wheels of commerce, not . . . to resist its insidious effects,'²¹³ the cultural significance of market-oriented dissent becomes deeply disturbing."²¹⁴ The most threatening thing about the Shanghai artist Yu Youhan's noted floral-patterned Maos, for example, is that they could be easily mass-produced as bedspreads or curtains.²¹⁵ And many other artists have used Mao as a decoration, cultural wallpaper, in their work, rather than as a subject for serious depiction. Such playfulness does indeed have a liberating dimension, and this is evident in the work of Beijing artists such as Liu Wei, himself a product of the Cultural Revolution, whose paintings present the indulgent yet equally unsettlingly distorted vision of Mao, not unlike the image you'd get if you looked at the Chairman through a fish tank.²¹⁶ Zhu Wei, another Beijing artist (and former PLA soldier) whose work was exhibited in Hong Kong in 1994,²¹⁷ used Mao, his writings, and his poetry in the winsome, bloated literati fantasies of his *Beijing Story* series²¹⁸ (see Figure 33). Numerous other painters have also had a brush with Mao, including Yan Peiming and Yu Hong²¹⁹ and their works safely adorn the walls of expat collectors in China and of connoisseurs in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and can be found on display in museums and art spaces throughout the world. The Mainland has yet to produce a group like St. Petersburg's "necrorealists," however—artists who have made much of the corpses and deaths of Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler.²²⁰ Liu Dahong, a Shanghai-based painter, has gone as far as any other Mainland artist to date in reworking Mao within the context of traditional subject matter to achieve a more layered and complex vision. This is particularly true of the four paintings *Mao for All Seasons* and in *The Honey-moon*, a colorful tableau showing the Great Leader lecturing a gathering of Party heroes in what can be construed as a satire on Mao's cultural policies.²²¹ Liu's later scroll painting *The Butterfly Longs for the Flower* shows

Mao as an aged emperor surrounded by his phantasmagoric court.²²² However, none of the Mainland artists mentioned here have matched the nuanced approach of the late 1980s *Chairmen Mao Series* by the New York-based painter Zhang Hongtu (Hong Tu Zhang)²²³ (see Figure 34). Zhang's work, playful and deeply earnest, was used in dress, jacket, and T-shirt designs by Vivienne Tam of East Wind Code in late 1994²²⁴ and enjoyed a commodified success in a way that was as provocative and even more commercial than his Mainland counterparts²²⁵ (see Figure 35).

From 1987, the Beijing rock-pop singer Cui Jian recycled the detritus of Maoist culture to help create his own bad-boy image and, at the time, his wonderfully baneful renditions of old Party favorites such as "Nanniwan" outraged the authorities.²²⁶ By the early 1990s, however, rearranged and revamped Party hymns were commonplace, and numerous wannabe rock stars invariably produced their own versions of songs such as "The East Is Red."²²⁷ Now that everyone was "playing" (*wan'r*) with Party tradition there was nothing particularly risqué about the music; repackaged revolutionary rock was just another part of the cultural landscape²²⁸ (see Figure 36a, 36b). Mao was also very popular among the stylishly naughty boys and girls of the Beijing rock demimonde, so much so that pro-Mao machismo was endemic to the scene.²²⁹ As happened so often during the Mao revival, the Chairman was manipulated by diverse groups with totally conflicting interests, even achieving a new popularity with the urban subculture while still maintaining his status as an authoritarian figure.

At roughly the same time (1990–91), the Party began to orchestrate a response to the latest invasion of Canto Pop from Hong Kong-Taiwan by commissioning karaoke-versions of pro-socialist patriotic favorites for use in bars and clubs throughout the country²³⁰ (see Figures 37, 38, 39). Many of the MTVs produced—on videotape as well as laser disk—were risible, and some contained young male students longing for the Chairman in what I can only describe as "homoeotica with Chinese characteristics."²³¹ This trend for revamped revolutionary songs, sparked to a great extent by the paucity of new popular Mainland music following the boom year of 1988,²³² led to the production and success of "The Red Sun" tape in late 1991 (see "Let the Red Sun Shine In" [Figure 40]),²³³ as well as of its numerous imitators²³⁴ (see Figures 41, 42, 43).

While Mao has been part of the designer-wallpaper of the China Club in Hong Kong for some years, he generally enjoyed a more exalted public status on the Mainland—that is, until the Beijing Hard Rock Café opened on 16 April 1994, when he was joined by members of the older generation of revolutionary rebels from the West. Linda Jaivin described the scene as follows:

England's Fab Four and China's Great One come together, right now, over me. On the ceiling dome of Beijing's new Hard Rock Café, the Beatles, Chuck Berry, and other venerable ancestors of rock pose like tourists in front of Beijing's Temple of Heaven and Tiananmen Gate. Mao gazes down from his perch on Tiananmen at posters of the Sex Pistols, Chinese bartenders mixing cocktails under a sign that reads 'Love All, Serve All,' Westerners scoffing burgers, and local DJs downing draught beers. It's hard to tell if he's still smiling.²³⁵

Mao More Than Ever

In fact, the new Mao Cult shared a number of features in common with the cult of Elvis, "the King," spirit guide of the Hard Rock chain. In *Dead Elvis: A Chronicle of a Cultural Obsession*, Greil Marcus described the Elvis cult in terms that strike a familiar chord as we contemplate the abiding popularity of Chairman Mao in China:

When he died, the event was a kind of explosion that went off silently, in minds and hearts; out of that explosion came many fragments, edging slowly into the light, taking shape, changing shape again and again as the years went on. No one, I think, could have predicted the ubiquity, the playfulness, the perversity, the terror, and the fun of this, of Elvis Presley's second life: a great, common conversation, sometimes, a conversation between specters and fans, made out of songs, art works, books, movies, dreams; sometimes more than anything cultural noise, the glossolalia of money, advertisements, tabloid headlines, bestsellers, urban legends, nightclub japes. In either form it was—is—a story that needed no authoritative voice, no narrator, a story that flourishes precisely because it is free of any such thing, a story that told itself.²³⁶

In some ways the popular and "ironic" rehearsals of Mao and Mao-era styles are typical of what, in 1994, the now defunct London journal *The Modern Review* termed the "art of revival."²³⁷ As critics writing for *TMR*, which specialized in "low brow culture for highbrows," state: ". . . although revivals don't offer convincing reconstructions of the past, preferring re-arrangements, the way one period re-arranges another certainly offers a telling impression of the revivalist age."²³⁸ This was certainly true of the new Mao Cult of the early 1990s. Economic reform and ideological decay had freed Mao from the carefully-cultivated persona fostered by Party propaganda.

Another aspect of the Mao Cult was that it capitalized on China's new teeny-bopper and youth culture market—that is, the buying power of the young. Many consumers of Mao products were adolescents or people in their early twenties who were unfamiliar with the Mao era. Unconcerned with the burdens of the past, they could indulge their curiosity and be playful in their approach to Mao memorabilia. Young people often regarded Mao not as a

unique Great Leader but as a homebred luminary who deserved a position in the galaxy of Hong Kong and Taiwan pop stars popular on the Mainland. Some of these fans, or “star-chasers” (*zhuixingzu*) as they were called in Chinese, indulged in necrolatry, lavished attention on Mao for a time, enjoyed the Cultural Revolution songs that had been revived from 1991, and read books related to him and his role in modern Chinese history. Mao was such a complex and overwhelming figure that his star shone bright while other Mainland icons lost what luster they still enjoyed. There was an unbridgeable gap between those who had lived through the Mao years and those who had not; the Cult provided a common ground and a hazy realm of consensus in a society in which the generation gap was increasingly making its impact felt. Young converts to the new Mao Cult also found in it a perfect way to express adolescent rebelliousness and romantic idealism. Here was a politically safe idol that could be used to annoy the authorities, upset parents, and irritate teachers. But after a while even this attraction palled; Mao was not really an up-to-date or hip figure, and his dress sense, and that hairstyle!

Not all adolescents were impressed by tales of Red Guard devotion to him. Rebuked for her infatuation with contemporary pop singers by an ex-Red Guard, one teenage girl chided: “You have your idol, I have mine. Why does there only have to be one sun in the sky? Like, you’re so lacking in imagination!”²³⁹ For the young, especially middle school students, fashions and styles were now being set by Hong Kong and Taiwan singers, crooners of Canto Pop. By 1993–94, the fans might have accepted Mao but they were still more involved with their own (mostly offshore) teen idols, referred to by the Mainland media with the generic expression the “Four Great Devarāja” (*sida tianwang*).²⁴⁰ At about this time Mainland propagandists attempted to “obliterate the star chasers” (*mie zhuixingzu*)²⁴¹ by limiting performances by non-Mainland singers and promoting local songs. These efforts, however, did little to undermine the popularity of the offshore stars and tended only to encourage Mainland singers to emulate more closely Hong Kong and Taiwan icons.²⁴²

Mao’s stellar fate was not only problematic among the young. In 1993, as part of the centenary activities, a satellite was launched with a payload consisting of a Mao medallion made of 18K gold and embedded with forty-four diamonds. The “8341” satellite, named after Mao’s guard corps, went missing only days after the launch. It was originally expected to be recovered a week after liftoff, but the reappearance of “8341” was now calculated to occur sometime in March/April 1996, more than two years late. The delay was expected only to add to the value of the cargo, and plans were soon afoot to auction the gold Mao medallion once it was recovered.²⁴³ (For the significance of the name “8341,” see “Mao, a Best-Seller.”)

More so than any of the other short-lived fads, cults and fashions China experienced from the late 1970s, the Mao Cult revealed to a fearful extent the paucity of the cultural resources of Mainland China. Reading the selections in this book, one could claim that the Cult was a manifestation of how an age-old living folk tradition had finally co-opted Mao Zedong, the ultimate icon of communism, and converted him into a native god. Similarly, one could cheerfully observe that the “ironic” inversions of Mao in pop art, music, and mass culture indicated a further rejection or devaluing of ideology. It could also be claimed that the revivalists have used Mao creatively, that they have not become slaves to the past but have proved they could “enslave the past and transform it into a vehicle for the expression of their own tastes.”²⁴⁴ To an extent, all of these views are valid. The Mao Cult came at the end of a decade of fads that represented the voracious consumption and rejection of both nativist and foreign cultural “quick fixes” to the dilemmas China faced as a nation that had lost both its value system and its sense of purpose (apart from a crude economic imperative).²⁴⁵ In this context, the Mao Cult reflects a state of anxiety and a real sense of cultural emptiness, or what Svetlana Boym termed a “totalitarian nostalgia.”²⁴⁶ After the heritage of communism has been worked through, variously commercialized, lampooned, and sanctified, what’s next?

This study of the waxing and waning of Chairman Mao’s posthumous cult was written at a time when Deng Xiaoping, the man who was neither Mao’s chosen successor nor close comrade-in-arms, was approaching his own apotheosis. While the corporeal Deng lingered at death’s door, his achievements were being commemorated with gold-plated badges, Deng quiz shows on TV, and the production of a CD-ROM which would provide easy, interactive hi-tech access to his published works.²⁴⁷ It may be too early to say whether Mao’s shoes were figuratively too big for Deng, but we do know that Deng was so impressed with the cloth shoes (*qiancengdi buxie*) especially handmade for Mao’s corpse that he ordered a pair of leather-soled shoes from the same cobbler for himself.²⁴⁸ On 5 April 1995 it was reported that a Beijing publisher of traditional-style books was offering Chinese speculators a limited clothbound edition of Deng works, and it is probably only a matter of time before the entire body of works is engraved on grains of rice or slivers of jade. For those with a taste for the gargantuan, on the other hand, there was already a calligraphic scroll of the diminutive man’s works measuring 4 kilometers (2.4 miles) in length.²⁴⁹

While irony was a major element of the Mao revival in the realm of nonofficial culture, the greatest irony was perhaps reserved for Deng Xiaoping himself. Intimately involved in attempts to limit the personality cult of

Mao from the 1950s, in particular from the time of the Eighth Party Congress in 1956 and the engineer of the demystification and ultimate subjugation of Mao for the sake of the Reformist agenda, in his last years Deng was increasingly perceived of as being an autocrat whose style of rule was not, in essence, very much different from that of Mao Zedong.²⁵⁰ Narrow and unfair though such an evaluation may be, Deng lived long enough to witness the decline of his own prestige and the mass-based popular rebirth of Mao Zedong. The man he had so assiduously worked to reinvent was given a new lease on life just as Deng was losing a grip on his own. Deng had been able to shunt aside and move beyond the festering abscess of the Cultural Revolution and deny the legacy of Maoist extremism without ever really finding an effective treatment for the ills of Chinese political life.²⁵¹ The opponents of the Reforms, fearful of the ideological laxity that thrived because of them, tried manipulating the Mao legacy in their own favor.²⁵² Supporters of Reform, however, responded by manufacturing a lame cult of the “Grand Architect of Reform” (*zong shejishi*)—the preferred sobriquet used for Deng following the Party’s Fourteenth Congress in October 1992, when it was announced that forthwith the Party was “to be armed with Deng Xiaoping’s theory on building socialism with Chinese characteristics.”²⁵³ Not surprisingly, this did not enjoy the mass appeal, or playful commercial possibilities, of the Mao revival.

Even on the cusp of Mao’s centenary year it was obvious that it was Deng’s Thought, not Mao’s, that was being hailed by the official media as the nation’s guiding light. In early 1993, a sycophantic tome on Deng was published by the Central Party School,²⁵⁴ and later in the year, the third volume of *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* appeared amid nationwide clamor just as the Mao celebrations were getting under way.²⁵⁵ Deng Thought was commended as representing and developing the kernel of the best of Mao.²⁵⁶ On one level the centenary was being used to mark the symbolic end of Mao’s official career in China. From the pronouncements made at the time (see “Sparing Mao a Thought” and “The Last Ten-Thousand Words”) it was evident that the authorities who were now basking in the radiance of Deng’s utilitarianism no longer felt that they were in Mao’s shade (see Figure 44).

Perhaps in the future in China the Mao revival itself can be revived. Mao, at least, will continue to be a figure whose varied legacy can be drawn on, reworked, modified, and exploited to suit the exigencies of the day. This is something Mao had perceived, albeit in narrow political terms, in the famous letter he wrote to Jiang Qing in July 1966 (see “Chairman Mao Graffiti”). In it Mao speculated on his posthumous fate:

I predict that if there is an anti-Communist right-wing coup in China they won't have a day of peace; it may even be very short-lived. That's because the Revolutionaries who represent the interests of over 90 percent of the people won't tolerate it. Then the Rightists may well use what I have said to keep in power for a time, but the Leftists will organize themselves around other things I have said and overthrow them.

Rightists and Leftists—not to mention activists on all points along the political spectrum—have been engaged in a tussle over the legacy of Mao ever since. In 1993, Party Central reportedly received some 3,500 letters a month opposing any commemoration of Mao, while others lobbied for a full re-evaluation of Mao and a thoroughgoing denunciation of his years of misrule at a future Party Congress.²⁵⁷

But so far had the pendulum swung in Mao's favor that some "revisionists," such as the leading Party historian Hu Sheng, attempted at the time of the centenary a further positive reassessment of Mao's record. In a lengthy defense of Mao published in the *People's Daily*, Hu argued that the devastation wrought by the Chairman's "experimentation" (*tansuo*)—a clinical code word for the murderous policies initiated from the 1950s²⁵⁸—seen in context was unavoidable as China struggled to break free of the Soviet economic model.²⁵⁹ Furthermore, Hu claimed, it was Mao's refusal to be at the beck and call of the Soviets that laid the basis for the success of the Reforms and helped China weather the storm of 1989 and survive the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc.²⁶⁰

Even without Hu's benediction, there were those who construed the 1990s popular "reversal of the verdict" on Mao as a kind of validation of their heinous acts, as well as the cowardice and complicity of which they had been guilty in the past. The Chairman's renewed credibility was a relief from the burden of history. As the Marquis de Custine had remarked about Russia more than 150 years ago: "Sovereigns and subjects become intoxicated together at the cup of tyranny. . . . Tyranny is the handiwork of nations, not the masterpiece of a single man."²⁶¹ The Party's pronouncements in the early 1980s on the Cultural Revolution and the purges that had preceded it had effectively banned public discussion of the past; there had been no opportunity for people to debate seriously the issues of historical responsibility or even to be apprised of the scale and extent of the depredations of Mao's rule. Thoughtful critics had been silenced long ago or were reduced to publishing in the overseas Chinese press. By the 1990s, people—past victims, their persecutors, as well as the innocent who had not experienced the grinding horror of the past—could participate in the new Mao Cult because its moral dimensions and ramifications were, for the most part, still unclear. For many middle-aged and young Chinese the Mao era was

surrounded by a beguiling aura, appearing in retrospect as a time of greater simplicity, purity, and idealism (see “A Star Reflects on the Sun”).

At the other end of the political spectrum commentators such as the dissidents Wei Jingsheng and Liu Xiaobo argued that the Maoist political legacy remained both vital and malignant (see “Who’s Responsible?” and “The Specter of Mao Zedong”). But such opinions, though perhaps widely held, have only found a forum in the overseas Chinese press. When surveying China’s political and intellectual life over the past two decades, including the baleful outcome of the 1989 Protest Movement from which extremists in both camps profited, as well as the continued repression of dissident opinion in China, we are reminded of Ryszard Kapuscinski’s observation on Iran: “A dictatorship . . . leaves behind itself an empty, sour field on which the tree of thought won’t grow quickly. It is not always the best people who emerge from hiding, from the corners and cracks of that farmed-out field, but often those who have proven themselves strongest. . . .”²⁶² It is to these figures in particular that the spirit of Mao has the greatest attraction.

In the vacuum created by officially enforced silence, a multiplicity of interpretations and uses of Mao have arisen, from the bizarre to the traditional. The entrepreneurial passion that possessed the nation led some people to interpret the abiding spirit of Mao Zedong and Mao Thought to be a talent for unprincipled manipulation and ruthless ambition. But the masses of dispossessed peasants and workers were also armed with Mao Thought in their own struggle against the new order. For them Mao represented hope. A popular saying held: “[The military strategist] Zhuge Liang was the embodiment of Chinese wisdom, the Monkey King Sun Wukong, the soul of courage, and Mao Zedong the spirit of rebellion.”²⁶³ The itinerant worker (*mangliu*) whose words end this volume expresses just such a view when he predicts that China’s future leaders will come not from an urban or military elite, or a new middle class, but from the ranks of the dissatisfied and restive rural populace, as has been the case in the past (see “Musical Chairmen”).

Contestation over the memory and legacy of Mao is sure to continue, and now, with the help of local compradors, the representatives of international capital also have been invited to the party.

In late 1993, the chichi Beijing eatery Maxim’s organized a Mao birthday buffet for two hundred. The printed invitations bore the slogan “Long live Chairman Mao!” and patrons were requested to wear Mao suits. The restaurant was decked out with pictures of the Chairman and Cultural Revolution wall posters for the occasion. While the food was standard haute cuisine, an excerpt from *The White-Haired Girl*, one of the showcase productions of the Cultural Revolution, was staged as the evening’s entertainment.²⁶⁴

Maxim's celebration of the event was very much in the spirit of the public, nonofficial use of Mao, of those who, to use the popular necrophagous expression, "eat Mao" (*chi Mao*). The event was also typical of the cynical collaboration between Dengist bureaucracy and Western investors who, when required to, readily slip into socialist drag.

While Mao was being "eaten" everywhere from Maxim's to the faddish Cultural Revolution revival restaurants around Beijing, more serious attempts to ingest his spirit were being made by young cultural conservatives. Among their number were the "new leftists" (*xin zuoyi* or *zuopai*)²⁶⁵ such as Wu Qin, who was one of the organizers of a major symposium on socialism in the international scene in Beijing in mid 1994.²⁶⁶ Educated in the United States, Wu was one of a younger group of thinkers armed with the ideological weapons of Western new leftism. It is younger scholars like these perhaps who were best suited to carry out an effective critique of the social, political, and economic chaos of Deng's China. Indeed, such intellectual activists may, in the long run, have something in common with late-Cultural Revolution critics of Maoist socialism such as the Li Yizhe group in Guangzhou.²⁶⁷ Although the figure of Mao is only one of their rallying points, many aspects of his Cult as revealed in the following pages are recognized as having a value in debates concerning China.²⁶⁸

The shade of Mao Zedong continues to cast a long shadow over Chinese life. Although the MaoCraze of the early 1990s has faded, replaced, for example, by such things as a passing fashion for late-Qing heroes like Zeng Guofan,²⁶⁹ some discussions of Mao and his legacy have continued in the public arena. Wang Shan's *China Through the Third Eye*, a controversial best-seller in China in the summer of 1994, took as its central theme a comparison between the Mao and the Deng eras, often expressing sympathy if not outright support for Maoist policies.²⁷⁰ One of the constant refrains of the book was that the Chinese have failed to understand and appreciate Mao fully!²⁷¹ Meanwhile, outside China the publication of Li Zhisui's magisterial memoir in late 1994 elicited a new wave of debate about the Chairman, and his place in the nation's history, among overseas Chinese, especially within the dissident diaspora,²⁷² and the Chinese version of the book was much sought after on the Mainland. Committed intellectuals continue to debate the heritage of Mao,²⁷³ and many are concerned that the Mao heritage, reformulated by an ideologically bankrupt Party in terms of a crude nationalism, may be a dangerous factor in China's future.²⁷⁴ To paraphrase William Bouwsma, however, Mao, much like water and electricity, is now a public utility.²⁷⁵

Long ago Mao's person achieved the status of national myth, and in his posthumous rebirth his history, as presented in the Chinese media, fits in neatly with what Bruce Chatwin called "the Hero Cycle" (a cycle that Elvis

also fulfills). Mao weathered numerous setbacks, trials, and tribulations, including the agonies of the failure of his own policies, and in death he has come out victorious. As Chatwin wrote in *Songlines*:

Every mythology has its version of the “Hero on his Road to Trials,” in which a young man, too, receives a “call.” He travels to a distant country where some giant or monster threatens to destroy the population. In a super-human battle, he overcomes the Power of Darkness, proves his manhood, and receives his reward: a wife, treasure, land, fame.

These he enjoys into late middle age when, once again, the clouds darken. Again, restlessness stirs him. Again he leaves: either like Beowulf to die in combat or, as the blind Tiresias prophesies for Odysseus, to set off for some mysterious destination, and vanish. . . .

Each section of the myth—like a link in a behavioural chain—will correspond to one of the classic Ages of Man. Each Age opens with some fresh barrier to be scaled or ordeal to be endured. The status of the Hero will rise in proportion as to how much of this assault course he completes—or is seen to complete.

The Hero Cycle, Chatwin remarks, “is a story of ‘fitness’ in the Darwinian sense: a blueprint for genetic ‘success’.”²⁷⁶ An appreciation of the Hero Cycle may also help us understand the reasons for the abiding charisma of Mao Zedong and the relevance of his persona and mythological status in China in the future.

Chinese cultural history, like that of many nations, is rich in examples of objects, symbols, and individuals who have been “lost and refound, over-valued, devalued, then revalued.”²⁷⁷ The battle for China’s past, over Mao’s reputation and the history of the Communist Party, will continue in both the public forum and among archivists and scholars in and outside China. One day Chinese readers will gain access to that unfolding past.²⁷⁸ In the meantime, Chairman Mao has entered the stream of Chinese history as man, icon, and myth, and there is little doubt that the Cult of the early 1990s is only the first of the revivals he will experience in what promises to be a long and successful posthumous career²⁷⁹ (see Figures 45a, 45b).

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Canberra–Sydney–Boston

Notes

1. See, for example, Mao’s comments at the 1959 Plenum in Stuart R. Schram, ed., *Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed*, p. 139.

2. This story was related to me by Sang Ye, who read a report of it in the Chinese press. Unable to locate the original source, I record it here for the reader’s information. In a similar vein, old workers retrenched in Shanghai in 1987 reportedly went to a restaurant, got drunk, and returned home, each cradling a portrait of Mao in their arms.

169. Guo Wenjian, "Jinri Shaoshan 'ganhai' mang," p. 24.
170. For a picture of Tang and her husband holding up the photograph in front of Mao's birthplace, see William Lindsay, *Marching with Mao*, opposite p. 96.
171. Going one step farther, Hong Kong entrepreneurs invited a chef whose Changsha teacher had once made a meal for the Chairman in 1964 to create a "Chairman Mao banquet" for the territory's gourmards. See Cheng Lai, "Mao zhuxi taocan." In Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, one restaurant called its "red cooked meat" dish (*hongshaorou*), "Runzhi Brain-Enrichment Food" (*Runzhi bunaoshan*) in honor of Mao, whose *zi* was "Runzhi." See Li Yong, "Zouguo yige lunhui zhan zai weiren shenhou."
172. The Shanghai artist Yu Youhan's floral reinterpretation of this photograph is used as the cover image of Jochen Noth et al., eds., *China Avant-Garde*, and is reproduced on p. 180 of the text.
173. Yu Xuejun, "Xiaoxiang xunji Mao Zedong," p. 4.
174. Guo Weijian, "Jinri Shaoshan 'ganhai' mang," p. 24; and Jan Wong, "Around Mao's Centennial."
175. The dimensions of the main slab, on which the poem Mao wrote upon returning to Shaoshan in 1959 was carved, reflected significant dates in Mao's life. It was 12.26 meters tall, a measurement that denoted Mao's birthday on 26 December; 9.9 meters wide, marking Mao's demise on 9 September; and 0.83 meters thick, indicating the age at which Mao died. See Yi Jun, "Furongguolide 'Mao Zedong re,'" p. 46. During the Cultural Revolution, the mathematics of Mao statues generally reflected a similarly esoteric code.
176. At the unveiling of this, Mao Xinyu had his happy encounter with Jiang Zemin.
177. Yi Jun, "Furongguolide 'Mao Zedong re,'" pp. 45–46.
178. For more details on how the Party refurbished the corporate image of Mao, see "Shishi qiushide xuanchuan Mao Zedong tongzhi," pp. 92–95.
179. For illustrations, see Lin Jianhui and Dai Chixian, "Shaoshan jixing," pp. 22–27. See also Schell, *Mandate of Heaven*, p. 283.
180. Uli Schmetzer, "Cashing in on Mao's Name in Hunan Shaoshan."
181. See Li Haibo, "A Journey Back to Mao's Birthplace," p. 22.
182. See "Fun in the Magic Kingdom of Mao."
183. See Lincoln Kaye, "Against the Grain."
184. Peter Ward, *Kitsch in Sync*, p. 6. Or, as Susan Sontag put it in her "Notes on Camp": "It is beautiful *because* it is awful." See Sontag, *Against Interpretation*, p. 293. For a layered argument on the significance of kitsch and camp in relation to modernism and how revolutionary kitsch can exploit the avant-garde, see Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*, pp. 225–64.
185. This is a term I have often used in describing the new Mao. See, for example, Linda Jaivin, "Mao's Bigger—and Better—Than Ever." Since Christopher Isherwood and Susan Sontag's meditations on camp, there has been a renewed interest in the subject in the 1990s. In the present context I would choose to use Philip Core's succinct definition of the term: "Camp is a lie that tells the truth." See Philip Core, *Camp*, p. 9. Another useful description of the term is that camp revels in "a taste for the bizarre, the extreme and the perverse for their own sake." See Laurence Marks, "Watching a Pile of Popcorn," p. 49. But, to paraphrase Waters, it is also a form of aesthetic indulgence in the most extreme examples of kitsch that indicates superior taste. A thorough study of revolutionary Chinese camp is simply screaming out to be done, and it is unfortunate that the topic is outside the purview of the present book. While I see Mao in the 1990s as something of a camp image, the future perhaps belongs to his widow. Jiang Qing may one day be a viable camp icon among, say, the gay sybarites of Shanghai and she could eventually find her rightful place amidst the likes of Butterfly Woo (Hu Die), Lily Lee (Li Lili), Ruan Lingyu, Zhou Xuan, and other 1930s stars and starlets.

186. As mentioned above, a glossy album of some of Mao's personal effects, mostly selected because they exhibited the frugality of their owner, was produced in 1993. This book contains pictures of such diverse objects as Mao's 1950s Zhongnanhai gate pass, items of clothing (Mao jackets, caps, overcoats, shoes, slippers, socks, scarf, pajamas, belt), bedding (pillows, quilts, bed), thermos flasks, teacups, sewing kit, TV, writing implements, telephone, a special humidifier made for handmade cigars, sleeping pills, water bottles, combs, glasses, Beijing opera records, a mah-jongg set, Ping-Pong table, rackets, and balls. See Zhongnanhai huace bianji weiyuanhui, ed., *Pingfan yu weida*.

187. Zhou Jihou, "Mao Zedong xiangzhang xingshuailu." in Li

188. "Zhou Enlai 1969 nian 3 yue zai quanguo jihua gongzuo huiyi jianghua," in Li Ping, *Wengezhongde Zhou Enlai*.

189. See Qijibu 519 Bingtuan, 519 zhanbao.

190. Opened in April 1992, "Mao Badge City" was also a major commercial dealer in badges. See Zhou Jihou, *Mao Zedong xiangzhang zhi mi—shijie dijiu da qiguan*, p. 268.

191. Ibid.

192. See Sang Ye, "Zai Beijingde yitian." This last slogan had been popularized by Mao during a movement enjoining the nation to learn from the PLA martyr Wang Jie in the 1960s. Regarding these T-shirts, see Barmé, "Culture at Large," p. 15.

193. See Liu Xuesong, "Mao Zedong shaoxiang ke 'baoran pixie' ma?," p. 96, and p. 97 for an illustration of the T-shirt.

194. Produced for the 1993 centenary, the calendar features Mao for the twelve months of 1994 and Deng for 1995. See "Huainian Mao Zedong ganji Deng Xiaoping 1994—1995," designed by Wang Wangwang, text written by Sun Jin.

195. It should be noted in the context of contemporary Mao artifacts that the present essay was written with the aid of a "Mao's Pad" mouse pad. Produced by China Books and Periodicals in San Francisco, the "Mao's Pad" is a red foam rubber pad festooned in black with a portrait of the young (Edgar Snow) Mao framed by seven Mao quotes. These include old favorites such as: "Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?" (from "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society"); "Don't wait until problems pile up and cause a lot of trouble before trying to solve them" (from "Contract on a Seasonal Basis"); and "You can't solve a problem? Well, get down and investigate the present facts and its past history!" (from "Oppose Book Worship"). My thanks to Naomi Jaivin for sponsoring my "Mao's Pad."

196. See, for example, Yin Zhao, "Weinisi yingzhan zuijia nü yanyuan Gong Li rongyao xiangei Shandong xiangqin."

197. See Barmé, "The Greying of Chinese Culture," ch. 13.

198. "Mao Zedong" was produced by China Central Television (CCTV) in cooperation with the CPC Central Documentary Research Office, the Political Department of the People's Armed Police, the China Film Archives, Zhongnanhai Xiyuan Publishing House, and Liaoning People's Publishing House. The Central News and Documentary Studio released another major documentary, "Zhongguo chulege Mao Zedong," at about the same time.

199. See Schell, *Mandate of Heaven*, p. 284.

200. See the TV series "Kewang"; and Zheng Wanlong and Li Xiaoming, *Kewang*; also, Jianying Zha, *China Pop*, pp. 25–55.

201. "Bianjibude gushi" was the work of Wang Shuo, Feng Xiaogang, et al. See Wang, Feng, et al., *Bianjibude gushi—youmo dianshi gushi*, 2 vols., esp. Feng's "Shei zhu chenfu" in *Bianjibude gushi (renjian xijuji)*, pp. 1–55.

202. See "Beijingren zai Niuyue," episode 17, and Mao Zedong, "Abandon

Illusions and Prepare to Fight" (Diudiao huanxiang, zhunbei douzheng), 14 August 1949, in Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong xuanji (yijuan ben)*, pp. 1372–79.

203. Mao was first represented on the stage in 1951. Yu Shizhi of the People's Theater Company in Beijing appeared that year as Mao in Li Bozhao's (Yang Shangkun's wife) opera *The Long March (Changzheng)*. See Xu Min, "Banyan Mao Zedongde diyi ren—fang Yu Shizhi," pp. 4–5.

204. For details of Gu Yue's career, see Guo Xiangxing, "Yingtan 'Mao Zedong' dengtanji—Gu Yue chudeng yingtan quwen," pp. 22–24. For Wang Ying see Yun Fei, "Cong 'Kaitian pidi' dao 'Qiushou qiye'—ji qingnian Mao Zedong banyanzhe Wang Ying," pp. 8–9. In her doctoral thesis, "Recasting the Middle Kingdom: A Leadership Myth in Reel Life—Mao Zedong in Propaganda Movies in Contemporary China 1981–1993," Angela Lee Barron plans to deal with the work of both actors at length. For a comment on varied responses on post-1989 Mao movies, see Paul G. Pickowicz, "Velvet Prisons and the Political Economy of Chinese Film-making," p. 220.

205. For details of Yin Hairong, the "Gu Yue of Inner Mongolia," see Huangye Xianzi, "Neimenggu chulege 'Mao Zedong,'" p. 33.

206. The eight-part documentary "Tiananmen" was directed by Shi Jian and Chen Jue and produced by The Structure, Wave, Youth, Cinema Experimental Group in Beijing in 1991. Made for CCTV, it was not broadcast on the Mainland.

207. For a partial translation of *WM*, see "Urbling Winter" in Barmé and Minford, *Seeds of Fire*, pp. 105–17. The Chinese title of *To Kill a King* was *Ci Qin*.

208. In Western popular cinema Mao has made a memorable, if fleeting appearance. There is Gregory Peck's Ping-Pong game with Mao in *The Chairman* (1969) and the anarcho-surreal appearance of Mao in the extraordinary French documentary "Peking Duck Soup" (see Leys, *Broken Images*, pp. 67–73). Mao also features in the Ping-Pong scene in *Forrest Gump* (1994).

209. See Cheng Jin, "Banren banshen, beiguan zimin—Mao Zedong wannian shenghuoju 'Buluode taiyang' zai Shenzhen shouyan," pp. 82–83.

210. Yi, "Xiandai pingju *Mao Zedong zai 1960 jinwan shangyan*."

211. In the 1980s, writers such as Bai Hua used historical plays to make oblique criticisms of Mao (see his "The Golden Lance of the King of Wu," for example), but nothing as direct as the Soviet playwright Mikhail Shatrov's still relatively mild 1988 play "Onwards . . . Onwards . . . Onwards" appeared. In Shatrov's play Stalin's ghost cries: "Leave me in peace," to which comes the reply: "If you only knew how little we want to have to talk about you. The problem is that whatever we turn to today, we find ourselves looking at you." See Hochschild, *The Unquiet Ghost*, p. 4, and Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, pp. 70–72. Similarly, the figure of Stalin haunts Tengiz Abuladze's 1980s film *Repentance*. See Denise J. Youngblood, "Repentance: Stalinist Terror and the Realism of Surrealism," pp. 139–54.

212. See Barmé, "Critics Now Chip Away at China's Concrete Eyesores," p. 54. Other Mao statues have remained, in particular the coffee-fudge Mao in Shenyang, and the Lincoln-Mao in the entrance hall of the Mausoleum in Tiananmen Square. In mid 1995, state workers, enraged by efforts to close down unprofitable factories in the heavy-industry city of Shenyang, reportedly tried to immolate the Mao statue with gasoline as a protest against the "capitalist" authorities. See Patrick E. Tyler, "With Deng's Influence Waning, Privatizing of China's State Industries Stalls." In regard to the relative immutability and extratemporality of such statues, see Mikhail Yampolsky, "The Shadow of Monuments: Notes on Iconoclasm and Time," pp. 93–112.

213. Toby Young, "The End of Irony?," p. 6.

214. Barmé, "Soft Porn, Packaged Dissent, and Nationalism," p. 273.

215. Orville Schell comments on Yu's *The Age of Mao Zedong Series* paintings by saying that they are "centered around silhouettes of Mao outlandishly filled in with chintz and paisley-like patterns as if Laura Ashley had designed a special line in Mao suits." See Schell, *Mandate of Heaven*, pp. 289–90. In conversation with another artist during a trip to New York, Yu Youhan was horrified by any suggestion that his Maos could be used in designing clothes.

216. See Valerie C. Doran, ed., *China's New Art, post-1989 (with a retrospective from 1979–1989)*, pp. 10–17, 76, and 82.

217. For Zhu Wei's work see *Zhu Wei: The Story of Beijing*. The cover of this handsome volume is made from red plastic in the style of Mao's *Quotations*. Plum Blossoms (International), the publisher of the book, also produced a New Year's card using a red pencil sketch of Mao as Santa Claus.

218. The Beijing-based critic Jia Fangzhou calls Zhu's work "the 'Red Rock 'n' Roll' of Chinese *gongbi*" painting. See *Zhu Wei*, p. 11. For Zhu's representations of Mao see pp. 51, 73, 85, 95, 101, and 111.

219. See Noth et al., eds., *China Avant-Garde*, pp. 169 and 175, respectively. In the early-1990s collage "Missing Bamboo," Wu Shanzhuan, creator of "Red Humor" (*Hongse youmo*) in the mid 1980s, replaced Mao's official portrait at a Party congress with the picture of a Panda bear. See Julia F. Andrews and Gao Minglu, *Fragmented Memory: The Chinese Avant-Garde in Exile*, pp. 34–5. While the artist Li Shan created "homo-neurotic" works using Mao's image, during 1992–94, Feng Mengbo, the Beijing "video game artist," used Mao and other Party icons in his faux computer-generated paintings. See "Feng Mengbo," in Li Xianting and Shan Fan, *Der Abschied von der Ideologie: Neue Kunst aus China*, pp. 25–27.

220. See Nancy Condee and Vladimir Padunov, "Pair-a-Dice Lost: The Socialist Gamble, Market Determinism, and Compulsory Postmodernism," p. 89.

221. See Don J. Cohn, ed., *Liu Da Hong, Paintings 1986–92*, pp. 150–59 and 136–39.

222. *Die lian hua* is in the Schoeni Collection, Hong Kong.

223. See Barmé and Jaivin, *New Ghosts, Old Dreams*, pp. xxv–xxvi, 76, 93, 133, 384, 404, and 409. Zhang Hongtu exhibited his Mao *œuvre*, "Material Mao," at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, October 13, 1995–January 14, 1996. See Lydia Yee, *Zhang Hongtu: Material Mao*. One of Zhang's images also was featured on the cover of a collection of contemporary Chinese fiction; see Howard Goldblatt, ed., *Chairman Mao Would Not Be Amused: Fiction from Today's China*.

224. Tam and Zhang joined forces as the result of an introduction from Danny Yung (Rong Nianzeng), director of Zuni Icosahedron, a Hong Kong avant-garde theater group. The T-shirts included Ow Mao (Mao with a bee on his nose), Holy Mao (Mao in a cleric's dog collar), Mao So Young (Mao in pigtails with a gingham dress and Peter Pan collar), Miss Mao (Mao with baby pink lipstick), Psycho Mao (Mao with novelty dark glasses), and Sado Mao (a bare-chested Mao). Tam also produced a T-shirt with Mao wearing an AIDS ribbon for the Macy's Passport Fashion Show, a charity benefit for AIDS sufferers in San Francisco in September 1995. Tam's designs were also used by Zuni in their production "2 or 3 Things . . . of No Significance, Hong Kong 1995," which played on a number of Maoist themes and the looming issue of 1997. See Danny Yung, "Zuni Performance Worsening Day by Day," and *Zuni Daily News*, 20–21 January 1995.

225. Tam released her line of Mao-wear at a spring fashion show in New York in late 1994. By early 1995, her Mao T-shirts and dresses were available in stores from Hong Kong to the United States. See "Quanshen fa 'Mao' "; Charlotte Bevan, "Making a Mint out of Mao"; *People*, May 1995; and Victoria Eng, "Vivienne Tam," pp. 52–

53. The Mao line was particularly controversial in Hong Kong, where some manufacturers with Mainland business connections refused to produce Tam's work. See Fionnuala McHugh, "How Cool Is Mao?," pp. 22, 24, and 26. Tam first used Mao's image and calligraphy in designs she produced in Hong Kong in the early 1980s. The Mainland designer Liang Yuming created a line of revolutionary drag in 1993. He staged a fashion show called "The Revolutionary Era—the Red Star Mao Zedong." All the pure woolen clothing worn by the forty women models was oversized, reminiscent of David Byrne in his "Stop Making Sense" days but without the flare. Looking like children playing at being grown-up soldiers and revolutionaries, the models strutted the stage in Liang's tent-like creations sporting massive army caps with five-pointed stars on them. The musical accompaniment to the show consisted of a rock version of "Singing Praises to the Motherland" and singing by the Choir of the Shanghai Orchestra. It was all part of the opening ceremony of the Sichuan local competitions for the Seventh National Athletics meet in 1993. The Sichuan-based writer Mou Qun praised the affair for being a "post-modern masterpiece." See Mou, "Dangxiade chaoyue yu yiye shengxian—jian ping Liang Mingyu 'Hongxing Mao Zedong xilie.'"

226. For details of Cui Jian's complex ideological stance, see Andrew F. Jones, *Like a Knife*, pp. 115–43, at p. 140.

227. See, for example, the cassette "The East Is Rocking" (*Dongfang yaogun*), a tape of rock-Party songs produced by Zhongguo kangyi yinxing chubanshe and released in 1993. The rock version of "The East Is Red" on this tape was recorded by the Beijing singer Qin Yong.

228. Mainland revolutionary music also featured in late 1980s and 1990s Hong Kong cinema, in particular the comic kung fu movies of Tsui Hark (Xu Ke).

229. In this context, see Matei Mihalca's comments on the folksinger Zhang Guangtian, "The Pied Piper of Peking," pp. 54–55.

230. See Xu Weicheng, "'Zhonghua dajia chang (kala OK) jinku' xu," pp. 286–87.

231. See Barmé, "The Greying of Chinese Culture."

232. See the comments by the Beijing-based music critic Jin Zhaojun, "Zai huishou huangran ru meng zai huishou wo xin yijiu—wo dui yindai 'Hong taiyang—Mao Zedong songge' de sikao," and Jin, "Zhi wei na gulaode cunzhuang, hai changzhe guoqude geyao—wo dui 'Hong taiyang—Mao Zedong songge xin jiezou lianchang' de zai sikao."

233. See also Fang Zhou, "Huannian hu? Zichao hu?—toushi dalu 'Hong taiyang' yinyuedai changxiao shehui xinli," pp. 73–74. There was a large body of material to choose from, dating back as far as the early 1950s. See Stuart Schram, "Party Leader or True Ruler?," p. 214, n. 26, where he refers to *Mao Zedong songge*, Beijing: Wanye shudian, 1951, and *Zhongguo chulege Mao Zedong*, Beijing: Renmin wuxue chubanshe, 1951.

234. Revolutionary songs were still being made into popular karaoke tapes in 1994. Pirated videotapes containing music from the 1993 documentary "Mao Zedong" led to litigation over copyright infringement. See Er Yi, "Daxing lishi jilupian 'Mao Zedong' luzao daoban."

235. Linda Jaivin, "Love All, Serve the People," p. 28.

236. From Greil Marcus, *Dead Elvis*, pp. xii-xiv. Another passage describes the career of the living Elvis as follows:

Birth in desperate rural poverty, a move to the city, a first record on a local label, unprecedented national and international fame, scandal, adulation; the transformation of a strange and threatening outsider into a respectable citizen who served his country

without complaint, years spent dutifully making formulaic movies and unexciting music, marriage, fatherhood, a quiet life behind the walls of his mansion; then a stunning return, loud and vibrant; and then a slow, seemingly irresistible decline: divorce, endless tours as lifeless as his old films, news replaced by rumors of terrible things, and finally early death [pp. viii-ix]. . . .

See also Jon Katz, "Why Elvis Matters," pp. 100–105; and Paul M. Sammon, *The King Is Dead*, for an anthology of stories inspired by dead Elvis that can be read in tandem with the present book. Wayne Koestenbaum concentrates on another major American symbol, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, in *Jackie Under My Skin*; Koestenbaum reveals how far the fetishization of an icon can be taken. See, in particular, "Jackie's Death," pp. 3–14. In the June 1995 promotional music video for "HIStory, Past, Present and Future, Book I," Michael Jackson used a huge statue of himself and mass parade scenes—consisting of the serried ranks of the Czech army—in a conscious emulation of the totalitarian style to affirm his iconic status. The booklet that accompanies the CD set features a testimonial by Jackie O. See also Stanley Crouch's comments on Jackson in regard to Hitler, Stalin, and Mao in "Hooked: Michael Jackson, Moby Dick of Pop," p. 20.

237. The editors of *TMR* also referred to comments made by Robert J. Thompson, an associate professor of television at Syracuse University, to *The New York Times* that are noteworthy in relation to the kitsch and ironic aspects of the Mao revival. Thompson proposed "four rules governing the revival of crass products of the past. First, they must strike the reviving generation as especially and patently crap. Second, they must have been appreciated the first time around, with no awareness of this feebleness, by middle to lowbrow consumers. They are thus in a position to be revived in subsequent years by a clever bunch of ironists, perhaps of a socio-economic class superior to that of the first consumers. Third, the successfully revived product will carry several 'markers' of the period which produced it." (Thompson's fourth rule is that revivals must always be spontaneous.) See "The Art of Revival" in *The Revival Handbook*, p. 8.

238. "Revive, Adapt, Improve . . .," *The Revival Handbook*, p. 12.

239. Tang Can, "Qingchun ouxiangde bianqian: Cong Mao Zedong dao 'Sida tianwang,'" p. 15.

240. The Four Devarāja were the Hong Kong singers: Aaron Kwok (Guo Fucheng); Leon Lai (Li Ming); Andy Lau (Liu Dehua); and Jackey Cheung (Zhang Xueyou). Other popular H.K.-Taiwan singers included Tong Ange, Wang Jie, Zhao Chuan, Tan Yonglin, Deng Lijun (d. May 1995), Liu Jialing, Kuang Meiyun, and Weng Qianyu. Mainland favorites were Cui Jian, Cai Guoqing, Xie Xiaodong, Mao Ning, Wei Wei, Mao Amin, Hang Tianqi, Cheng Lin, Na Ying, and Ai Jing.

241. For a typical reaction to Hong Kong-Taiwan performers who were generally spoken of as being commercial carpetbaggers, see Guo Tianyun, "Zhengshi zhuixingzu."

242. See Tang Can, "Qingchun ouxiangde bianqian," pp. 14–15; Zhou Yongsheng, "Dangdai qingshaonian yingxiong chongbai yiqing qingxiang tantao—jianlun 'zhuixing' xianxiang," pp. 10–15; and Xu Fei, "Yu sanbai xuesheng tong 'kan' gexing yu gemi," pp. 12–16. Equally, attempts made in the Mainland media to "talk up" Party-approved heroic models by depicting them as though they were H.K./Taiwan stars were risible and unconvincing. See Yu Tian, "'Chaoxingzu—baozhuangshu' de qishi," p. 21.

243. "Shizong weixing jiang 'za' xiang nali?"

244. "Revive, Adapt, Improve . . ." in *The Revival Handbook*, p. 12.

245. See Stuart R. Schram, "Mao Zedong a Hundred Years on," p. 136.

246. Svetlana Boym, *Common Places*, pp. 247 and 283ff.

247. "Speculation Rife as Deng Believed Dying."

248. Liu Yida et al., “‘Jinzhao pai’ qidai qiangjiu—Laizi Jingcheng laozihaode baogao zhi er.”

249. “Collectible Edition of Deng’s Writings Planned.”

250. See “The Specter of Mao Zedong” below.

251. See Leys, “Is There Life After Mao?” p. 167.

252. Their number reportedly included Song Renqiong, Deng Liqun, and Song Ping. In 1993, for example, they were said to have petitioned Party Central to launch a national campaign to encourage the study of Mao’s works. See Cai Yongmei, “Maorede shangpinhua,” p. 64.

253. Or, as the formula runs in Chinese: *yi Deng Xiaoping jianshe you Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyide lilun wuzhuang quandang.*

254. Zong Jun, *Zong shejishi.*

255. See Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan*, vol. 3. See also Bao Zunxin’s observations on the significance of this publication, “Huidao Mao Zedong, haishi chaoyue Mao Zedong—cong *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan* disan juan chuban tanqi,” pp. 16–18. Various study materials were produced in 1993 and 1995 to “consolidate the banner of Deng Xiaoping” further. See “Gonggu Jiang hexin, gaoju Deng Xiaoping qizhi.” And in 1995 Deng Thought was officially endorsed as the ideological font of Party wisdom.

256. See, for example, Xing Bensì, “Shehuizhuyiguanshangde zhongda tupo—du *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan* disan juan,” pp. 5–14.

257. See Luo Bing, “Jinian Mao mingshou zao feiyi,” p. 10. Deng set the stage for a possible future re-evaluation of Mao by the Party as early as December 1978 when he said in regard to the major issues of Party history and Mao that “it is impossible and unnecessary for [these questions] to be resolved to our complete satisfaction. We must consider the broader issues, we can afford to be sketchy; it is impossible to clear up every detail, and unnecessary.” See Deng, “Jiefang sixiang, shi shi qiu shi, tuanjie yizhi xiangqian kan,” *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan (1975–1982)*, pp. 137–38.

258. Some of the details of such “experimentation” appear in official histories such as Hu Sheng, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandangde qishi nian*, p. 486 et passim.

259. A far more balanced assessment of Mao’s significance in this context can be found in Schram, “Mao Zedong a Hundred Years on,” pp. 139–40.

260. See Hu Sheng, “Mao Zedong yisheng suozuode liangjian dashi,” and an expansion of his argument in Hu Sheng, “Dui ‘Mao Zedong yisheng suozuode liangjian dashi’ de jidian shuoming,” pp. 1–5. For a fiery critique of Hu Sheng’s argument by a leading veteran Party analyst and writer see Wang Ruoshui, “Mao Zedong wanniande daolu—ping Hu Sheng wei Mao Zedong kaituo zuize,” pp. 36–38.

261. Quoted in Hochschild, *The Unquiet Ghost*, p. 123.

262. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

263. *Zhongguo zhihuide huashen shi Zhuge Liang, yonggande huashen shi Sun Wukong, er fankang jingshende huashen ze shi Mao Zedong.*

264. Wong, “Around Mao’s Centennial.”

265. See Yang Ping, “Lüelun ‘xin zuoyi’ de chuxian”; and Xiao Gongqin, “Gaige zhuanxingqi Zhongguo zhishifenzide xintai yu leixing fenhua.”

266. Wu Qin was editor-in-chief of *Keji yu fazhan: Zhongguo fazhan (zhuankan)*, which began publication in early 1994. See Shao Yanfeng, “Shehuizhuyi shi guoqu geng shi weilai, shoudou xuezhe yantao ‘shehuizhuyi zai dangdai shijie.’”

267. See Anita Chan, Stanley Rosen, and Jonathan Unger, *On Socialist Democracy and the Chinese Legal System.*

268. See, for example, Barmé, “Soft Porn, Packaged Dissent, and Nationalism,” pp. 273–75.

269. From the early 1990s there was renewed interest among intellectuals and the

reading public in the late-Qing reforms (*xinzheng*). See Yang Ping, “Zeng Guofan xianxiangde qishi”; and Lu Jia, “Wan-Qing zhengzhire ranshao quan Zhongguo.”

270. See Wang Shan (alias Luoyiningge'er), *Disan zhi yanjing kan Zhongguo*, chs. 2–4.

271. This is the line taken by Liu Yazhou in *Guangchang: ouxiangde shentan* (see “The Mysterious Circle of Mao Zedong” below); and Wang Shan, *Disan zhi yanjing kan Zhongguo*, pp. 45, 46, 49–50, 53–54ff. Yang Ping quotes two such passages in an article that accompanied an excerpt from the book in *Beijing qingnian bao*: “History has only showered love on the Chinese in one respect: it has given them the unadulterated figures of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping”; and “Take advantage of this opportunity and never abandon Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaoping.” See Yang Ping, “Disan zhong yanguang—ping *Disan zhi yanjing kan Zhongguo*.”

272. Numerous articles on and reviews of Li's memoirs appeared in the non-Mainland Chinese press and particularly in Hong Kong journals such as *Kaifang zazhi*, *Zhengming*, *Jiushi niandai yuekan*, and *Mingbao yuekan* in 1994–95. The historical and academic value of Li's book is a highly contentious issue, as a number of Western academics have pointed out—see, for example, Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, “Mao Matters: A Review Essay”; also Frederick C. Teiwes, “Seeking the Historical Mao,” *The China Quarterly*, March 1996; and essays on Li's memoirs by Lucian Pye, Anne Thurston, Barmé, et al, in *The China Journal*, no. 35, January 1996. The Chinese authorities have been cautious about denouncing the book, although one major refutation of Li's portrayal of Zhou Enlai has been made by Zhou's doctor Zhang Puchang. See Zhang Fan, “Zhongnanhai taiyi shouci pengji Li Zhisui,” *Hualian shibao*, 26 May 1995. The China Study Group, coordinated by C.H. Hua and C.Y. Tung in New York, undertook a comparison of the Chinese and English texts of this book and noted numerous discrepancies between the two. See “*Mao Zedong siren yisheng huiyilu yishu neirong zhenshixingde yanjiu baogao zhaiyao*” (manuscript version, 1995); also Hua Junxiong and Dong Qingyuan, “*Guyanyu Mao Zedong siren yisheng huiyilu yishude gongkaixin*.” This study group also distributed “A Protest Against Random House's Fraudulent Memoirs of Mao's Physician, by Mao Zedong's Staff and Others” (in Chinese “Ruhua fangongde chou biao—women dui Li Zhisui jiqi ‘huiyilu’ de kanfa”) dated 22 July 1995, Beijing (manuscript version). This was a classic MaoSpeak-style denunciation of Li's book signed by 135 people including Wang Dongxing, Wang Hebin (another of Mao's doctors), and what amounts to a Who's Who of Party conservatives. For a more prosaic Mainland account of Mao's relations with his doctors, see Cao Wedong, *Hong bingli*.

273. See, for example, the conversation between Li Zehou and Liu Zaifu, “Mao Zedong beiju pingshuo,” serialized in *Mingbao yuekan* in Hong Kong from early 1995.

274. See Barmé, “To Screw Foreigners Is Patriotic.”

275. See William Bouwsma, *A Usable Past* (1990), quoted in Peter J. Fowler, *The Past in Contemporary Society Then, Now*, p. 136.

276. These quotations from Bruce Chatwin's *Songlines* appear in “The Starn Twins: Christ (Stretched),” pp. 58–59. See also Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, p. 307, on the “cosmocratic evolution” of Mao, involving an Odysseus-like early career and his conversion in Yan'an into a Socratic figure. It is interesting to note here that Mike Tyson, U.S. boxer and convicted rapist, remarked shortly after his release from jail in 1995 that he was so impressed by Mao's writings that he had an image of the Chairman tattooed on his arm. “I like Mao's persistence, his perseverance. . . . He had more guts than anybody in the world,” Tyson was quoted as saying in Las Vegas on the eve of his comeback. The boxer also claimed to be partial to Aristotle and Voltaire, and his arm also bears a tattoo of Arthur Ashe. From an AP story reported in

Register-Guard, Eugene, Oregon, July 28, 1995; also reported in the Chinese *Shijie ribao*, 28 July 1995. My thanks to Richard Kraus for this gem.

277. Camille Paglia, "Introduction," *The Revival Handbook*, p. 1, quoting from her essay "Junk Bonds and Corporate Raiders." Paglia's introduction is reprinted as "The Artistic Dynamics of 'Revival'" in her *Vamps & Tramps*, pp. 341–43.

278. In regard to this process in the case of the Soviet Union, see Stephen Wheatcroft, "Unleashing the Energy of History, Mentioning the Unmentionable and Reconstructing Soviet Historical Awareness: Moscow 1987," *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies* 1, no. 1 (1987), referred to in Unger, *Using the Past to Serve the Present*, p. 270, n. 31; and David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, pp. 30–35, 36–41, 60–69, and 398–411.

279. The cult of Napoleon, for example, has flourished for more than 150 years. See Pieter Geyl, *Napoleon For and Against*, trans. Olive Renier; and Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. 1, pp. 221–311. Nancy N. Chen, who has done work with Chinese mental patients, tells me that while the mentally ill in the West may suffer from Napoleonic delusions of grandeur, in China some patients believe themselves to be Mao Zedong. Similarly, Mao is reported to appear as a spirit guide in shamanistic rituals.



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ART, GLOBAL MAOISM AND THE CHINESE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Introduction: the art of contradiction

Jacopo Galimberti, Noemi de Haro García and Victoria H. F. Scott

Contradiction is present in the process of development of all things; it permeates the process of development of each thing from beginning to end.

Mao Zedong, 'On Contradiction', 1937¹

Art and images were and continue to be central channels for the transnational circulation and reception of Maoism. While there are several books about the significance of Mao Zedong and the Chinese Cultural Revolution, this collection, featuring seventeen chapters by established and emerging scholars from around the world, constitutes the first effort to explore the global influence of Maoism on art and images from 1945 to the present.² Though it is rarely acknowledged as such, the so-called Great Chinese Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–76) was one the most extraordinary political upheavals of the twentieth century. And similarly, no other post-war statesman has elicited more conflicted emotions than Mao.³ Indeed, despite being responsible, by some controversial accounts, for tens of millions of deaths, the man known as the Great Helmsman is still widely revered both inside and outside China.⁴

Even now, in the twenty-first century, regardless of the attempts to eradicate Maoism from Chinese state policy which began immediately following Mao's death in 1976, the official doctrine of the Chinese Communist Party remains Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Ironically, as the Chinese economy became increasingly privatised in the 1990s, it was accompanied by a 'Mao craze'. This posthumous veneration was initially spontaneous and working-class in spirit, but soon after it received endorsements from both the Chinese Communist Party, which was striving for legitimacy in the aftermath of Tiananmen Square, and entrepreneurs, anticipating profits from Mao-related paraphernalia.⁵ Even the design and production of Chinese money itself were affected. The fifth series of renminbi banknotes, introduced in 1999, featured a portrait of Mao on every denomination, replacing the leaders and workers who had previously graced the currency.

In the new century, the contested legacy of this powerful figure has only expanded. Marking the fifty-year anniversary of the Cultural Revolution, in both China and other countries, academic research produced pioneering studies of the Red Guards, the Shanghai People's Commune, the Little Red Book and seminal theoretical disputes (opposing, for instance, Mao to Deng Xiaoping).⁶ Some aspects of Maoism are being reassessed, partly because they speak to the present moment, such as Maoism's critique of colonialism and racism. As Liu Kang has pointed out, as a theory of global revolution in the 1960s, Maoism aspired to rewrite Western values and ideas through the integration of the universal principles of Marxism with the practice of the Chinese Revolution. In addition to that, it also aimed to create an alternative vision of modernity by transforming Marxism into a non-European, more inclusive worldview.⁷ If the 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of anti-colonial struggles, and 'an awakening sense of global possibility, of a different future', this should also be ascribed to Maoism.⁸ Thus it comes as no surprise that Fredric Jameson viewed Maoism, rightly or wrongly, as 'the richest of all the great new ideologies of the 1960s'.⁹

The phrase 'global Maoism' has been adopted by several scholars to describe the impact of Maoist movements on the 'global sixties'.¹⁰ In this anthology the concept of 'global Maoism' is used in an attempt to capture the eminently protean quality of this political phenomenon, especially when it crossed paths with, and was expressed through, the visual arts. Here the phrase 'global Maoism' helps to define and delineate the manifold reception and visualisation of Mao Zedong Thought. The word 'Maoism' has never had any traction in China, and Mao himself dismissed it, arguing that it hypostatized his ideas. He preferred instead to speak in terms of 'Mao Zedong Thought'. However, as the historian Ning Wang has noted, 'internationally, Mao's thought has always been called Maoism not only by the Marxists and left-wing people in the West, but also by all those who ... put it into effect in their revolutionary practices'.¹¹

The vernacular forms of Maoism have not simply represented a mechanic emanation of Mao Zedong Thought, but rather a locus which allowed for the emergence of something that was, each time, in every iteration, entirely new. Maoism contributed to the alteration of Mao Zedong Thought, which was always a plural construction responding to, and negotiating with, both local and global concerns. While an imaginary dimension was inherent in Maoism, just as in all types of Third-Worldism, the political cultures described in the pages that follow cannot be reduced to mere 'projections', as the intellectual historian Richard Wolin has claimed.¹² Focusing on West German universities, the historian Quinn Slobodian has documented the presence of Asian, Latin American and African students who provided European students with first-hand knowledge of Third World conflicts, and occasionally even led the

struggles themselves in the West.¹³ In the late 1960s, the idea of ‘Maoist China’ became a productive epistemological device to reimagine the world, to reinterpret its hierarchies and to act to change them.¹⁴

Maoism preceded the Cultural Revolution, and can be traced to the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, or even earlier as some of the chapters in this book show. It was, however, only with the Sino-Soviet split and China’s experiments with nuclear weapons that it gained real momentum. Mao’s sustained criticism of the peaceful coexistence between the two superpowers, as well as his advocacy of armed struggles in the Third World, broke what many regarded as the theoretical and geopolitical impasse of Marxism. Enver Hoxha’s Albania, for example, severed contacts with Moscow in the late 1950s, to become the sole Maoist-inspired government in Europe.

Nevertheless, until the spring of 1966 only a very small number of activists in the ‘First World’ identified with China. The political landscape changed dramatically, however, with the onset of the Cultural Revolution, when Mao’s call to a ‘mass line’ and interethnic solidarity was heard from the Andes to the Alps. The apparently youthful revolt, smashing the ‘four olds’ (old culture, ideas, customs and habits), championing working-class resistance to social discrimination and reinstating culture as the central protagonist of revolution, was saluted by hundreds of thousands of activists who held the reformism of the national communist parties in contempt. Finding affinities with their own concerns and ideals, Mao and the Red Guards seemed to provide a blueprint for a revolutionary culture and art in service of the people, while shifting the focus of the anti-imperialist struggle: from the industrialised metropolises to the vast territories of the Third World, and from the white factory workers of the Leninist tradition, to a more elusive revolutionary subject that was often – but not exclusively – identified with the peasant and the colonised.

Art and images were paramount in the dissemination and reception of Maoism’s revolutionary ambitions. Not only could they travel fast to distant places, but some visual conceits could also be easily adapted to specific contexts. In recent years there has been a scholarly reappraisal of the art produced in China between 1966 and 1976. No longer stigmatised, this type of visual propaganda has been widely examined, helping to shed new light on the semantics, aesthetics and memories associated with Maoist plays, posters, photographs, paintings and artefacts of all sorts.¹⁵ The chapters published here pursue this research and employ an expansive notion of art. The dynamics created by travelling objects (model works, Little Red Books, posters, badges, pamphlets, journals, etc.), people (intellectuals, party cadres, diplomats, activists, etc.) and ideas associated with Maoism had an enormous impact. In order to do justice to the entanglement of ‘high’ and ‘low’, global

and regional, that has marked Maoism, the authors engage with a vast array of artefacts, media and motifs as well as with the details of their material production and actual use.

It could be argued that a book about Maoism and the arts requires a clear definition of its topic, and should identify the chief traits of what is tempting to call a 'Maoist aesthetic'. However, any effort to delineate the 'standard Maoist position' on the arts is probably doomed to failure because of the long history, complex networks and diverse practices into which Maoism has crystallised. By the same token, searching for the putative 'essence' of a Maoist aesthetic in Mao's founding texts leads to an impasse. In fact, whether or not Mao Zedong Thought articulated an aesthetic combining 'romanticism and realism' remains an open question.¹⁶ Consider the following passage contained in the 1942 *Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art*, which represented Mao's most complete attempt to formulate an aesthetic programme:

What we demand is the unity of politics and art, the unity of content and form, the unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection of artistic form. Works of art which lack artistic quality have no force, however progressive they are politically. Therefore, we oppose both the tendency to produce works of art with a wrong political viewpoint and the tendency towards the 'poster and slogan style' which is correct in political viewpoint but lacking in artistic power. On questions of literature and art we must carry on a struggle on two fronts.¹⁷

Mao's criticism of the 'poster and slogan style' is ostensibly inconsistent with the vast majority of works produced during the Cultural Revolution.

The lecturer on modern Chinese history and literature Julia Lovell has observed that the Cultural Revolution did not attract significant interest among US students until 1968, when it began to resonate strongly with their own anti-establishment sentiment. She concludes that this identification is 'far more informative about the preoccupations of these distant observers of Chinese politics than about Chinese politics itself'.¹⁸ In his study of the anti-authoritarian Left in West Germany, the historian Timothy Scott Brown echoes Lovell's remarks. He maintains that the reception of images associated with Maoism 'served as a bridge between the global and the local', and was driven 'less by the meaning imputed to images or cultural products at their point of origin, than at the point of their reception'.¹⁹ Arguably Lovell's and Brown's remarks are also applicable to art.

Yet scholarly literature has had little to say regarding the role played by art in global Maoism. The wealth of studies and exhibitions about the art of the Cultural Revolution has not been accompanied by comparable analyses of European, African, Asian and American artists who were heavily influenced

and inspired by the events in China. Nor has the recent interest in exploring the worldwide influence of Chinese communism in the 1960s and 1970s been met by a commitment to analysing the visual components of its reception. The omission is surprising, as for several years this global phenomenon shaped the work and thought of major artists as diverse as John Cage and Jörg Immendorff, to name just two. For more than a decade, global Maoism permeated art production in a variety of ways that continue to be neglected by standard art-historical accounts of the post-war period.²⁰ Caught between a cult of personality and libertarian impulses, thousands of artists, architects, designers and film directors appropriated or emulated the political ideals of the Cultural Revolution, translating them into a wide variety of visual propositions. From the Californian campuses to the Peruvian *campesinos*, many attempted to integrate Mao's principles and the Cultural Revolution's material culture, iconography and slogans into their production and model of authorship, although in different, and at times highly incompatible, ways.

It is unlikely that the lack of scholarship on this topic is accidental. The widespread apprehension concerning the attribution of historical significance and intellectual sophistication to the Maoist phase of several American and European artists is directly related to the political implications of espousing Mao Zedong Thought in the West. On the one hand, the predominant narratives of art history are still embedded in the Cold War dualistic conceptual frameworks, setting capitalism against communism. Modern art and modernism were long ago constructed as the counterpoint to the propaganda of so-called totalitarian art, which brought durable discredit upon the latter.²¹ On the other hand, the current presence of Maoist guerrillas makes the topic politically sensitive in several countries, pushing scholars to see Maoist artistic production as secondary over issues of state security.²² Moreover, claiming the political primacy of the Chinese Cultural Revolution challenges the Eurocentrism of both the Left and the Right, which still, occasionally, thinks in terms of 'oriental despotism'. A further reason accounts for the scholarly reluctance to explore Maoist artists. The Red Guards' 'cultural' revolution represented a shocking rejoinder to the Western definition of 'culture' as it had emerged since the Enlightenment. Denouncing ancestral traditions and wisdom not as a shared heritage that had to be preserved, but rather as an obstacle to the exigencies of communism, in the West the Red Guards were decried as vandals, destroying culture rather than renewing it. The artists who aligned with their ethos were often perceived as forswearing an unwritten rule respected even by the most daring artistic provocations.

This book contends that the virulence of Maoism merits rigorous historical analyses. Looking to the current scholarship of historians and social scientists, the seventeen chapters exemplify a nuanced approach to the artistic production and the aesthetic discourses inspired by Mao and the Cultural

Revolution, examining the worldwide impact of Maoism on artistic practice from 1945 onwards. The studies investigate the obdurate emulations, creative misunderstanding and ingenious appropriations of the imagery, rhetoric and discourses that were developed by Mao, and by those who shaped the Cultural Revolution in China and around the world. Despite fruitful divergences, a core argument informs all the chapters: the chameleon-like appearances of global Maoism deserve a more prominent place in late twentieth century art history.

The chapters of the book could have been arranged in a number of ways; however, the narrative the volume proposes is approximately chronological, combining regions as diverse as Singapore, Madrid, Lima and Maputo. The choice constitutes a challenge to the standard geographies of art history, while aiming to facilitate comparisons and analogies, resonances and dissonances between contexts that are seldom associated. The first contributions provide overviews of the initial years of the People's Republic of China and its cultural outreach in South-East Asia. Stefan R. Landsberger's 'Realising the Chinese Dream: three visions of making China great again' charts the changing nature and transformation of Maoist propaganda and iconography from 1949 to 1979. Providing rare insight into the mechanics of the production and distribution of art and propaganda, Landsberger's contribution focuses on three examples, explaining and giving context to a variety of contradictions, which upset any homogeneous treatments of this surprising chapter of Chinese art history. Landsberger demonstrates how, rather than conforming to any kind of cultural directives, Maoist art and propaganda from this period often subverted rather than affirmed the Yan'an Talks. Similarly, Yan Geng's 'Realism, socialist realism and China's avant-garde: a historical perspective' outlines the *longue durée* of Chinese political art from the 1940s onwards. Tracing the shift in China from realism to socialist realism, and then to socially engaged avant-garde art, it argues that beneath such transformations was a redefinition of art and its epistemological relation to national identity and societal change. Interrogating paradigmatic shifts of political discourse and artistic praxis, Geng's chapter uncovers the roots of contemporary Chinese art and explains the complex relationships that exist between the cultural production of the revolution and the art of post-Maoist China.

Early examples of artists inspired by Mao are also investigated by Simon Soon's 'Engineering the human soul in 1950s Singapore and Indonesia', which discusses the development of leftist art discourses in Singapore and Indonesia by examining a selection of manifestos and texts alongside artworks. Close readings unearth oblique references to *Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art*, which enabled artists to open new ways beyond the autonomy of art in the shadow of the 1955 Afro-Asia Conference at Bandung. Unlike

Maoism in Indonesia, Maoism in India is still very much alive, and in several areas Maoist guerrilla fighters continue to combat the Indian state. Sanjukta Sunderason's chapter 'Framing margins: Mao and visuality in twentieth-century India' maps the traces of Mao and Maoism in India's long twentieth century. Drawing from the visual culture theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff's notion of visuality, Sunderason explores three key moments of Indian Maoism in relation to art: the iconography of resistance developed by the Communist Party of India in the 1940s, the Naxalites' 'statue-smashing' in Calcutta in the early 1970s and the afterlives of Maoism in Indian art from the mid-1970s to the present.

The early 1970s were a key period for Maoism in the US as well. Colette Gaiter's chapter, 'The *Black Panther* newspaper and revolutionary aesthetics', looks at the work of the American artist Emory Douglas, the Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party, which at the time was subscribing to a political tendency known as 'intercommunalism'. More expansive than other strands of leftist thought, intercommunalism sought to unite countries of the world in resistance to global capitalism and imperialism. A wave of 'Black Maoism' swept through black liberation movements at this time and came to visual life in Emory Douglas's work on the *Black Panther* newspaper.

The analysis then moves to the years of the Cultural Revolution, and to the two industrialised countries that were the first to see the emergence of a large Maoist movement: West Germany and France. Lauren Graber and Daniel Spaulding's joint contribution, 'The Red Flag: the art and politics of West German Maoism', maps artistic Maoism in West Germany from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, tying it to both the student movement and the extra-parliamentary opposition. Looking at a broad sample of artists, the authors demonstrate how the image of Mao and the politics for which it stood became contested terrain where the complex dialectic of Pop and revolution was played out in perhaps its most spectacular form.

France is the European country where Maoism has had, perhaps, the most lasting and pervasive impact on society, with a number of intellectuals – the most prominent of whom is the French philosopher Alain Badiou – continuing to eulogise Mao and the Cultural Revolution. This is especially significant because of the role many French intellectuals from this period had in the formulation and dissemination of postmodernism.

Three chapters capture the repercussions of the Chinese Cultural Revolution on French art. In 'A secondary contradiction: feminist aesthetics and "The Red Room for Vietnam"', Elodie Antoine explores the inability of Maoist artists in France to supersede the standard gender biases that were prevalent in the 1960s. While the artists connected to the Salon of Young Painting posed strong challenges to the bourgeois nature of art production, they could not escape the reproduction of masculine power structures

that was characteristic of both the East and the West at this time. Allison Myers's chapter 'Materialist translations of Maoism in the work of Supports/Surfaces' discusses the strange marriage of Greenbergian formalism with Maoist militancy that characterised the work of this French artists' collective. By looking at its journal, *Peinture: Cahiers Théoriques*, Myers demonstrates how the group used Mao's theory of contradictions to rejuvenate both the avant-garde and French painting via an expanded concept of materialism. One of the former members of Supports/Surfaces is the subject of Sarah Wilson's chapter, 'Mao, militancy and media: Daniel Dezeuze and China from scroll to (TV) screen'. Wilson looks beyond the standard formalist readings of Dezeuze's work and follows his trajectory into the 1980s, when he participated in an official exchange visit to China; she traces the episode right up to the present, with the installation Wilson proposed for the first Asian/fifth Guangzhou Triennale.

Almost every Western European country was home to several national variations of Maoism. Like their northern neighbours, southern European artists also appropriated the Cultural Revolution's political ideals and forms of authorship. Noemi de Haro García's chapter, 'La Familia Lavapiés: Maoism, art and dissidence in Spain', describes the short-lived group of militant artists known as La Familia Lavapiés in order to explore the implications of being an artist within a Maoist organisation during the last years of the dictatorship and the early years of the monarchy. The collective collaborated, but also argued, with political leaders, mass organisations, political parties (especially the Communist Party), workers, students, neighbours and, of course, other artists. Sympathetic to *acracia* (the suppression of any kind of authority, of domination, of power, of coercion) and Trotskyism, the members of La Familia Lavapiés saw art and Maoism as tools with which they unsuccessfully tried to challenge and transform the cultural and political milieu in which they carried out their activities.

In several countries Maoism was so strongly refracted through the prism of the local specificities that it occasionally became a pretext and even a joke. Could one at once be a Maoist and poke fun at Mao's cult? This is the central issue explored in Jacopo Galimberti's chapter 'Maoism, Dadaism and Mao-Dadaism in 1960s and 1970s Italy', which investigates aspects of Italian Maoism as they were played out in four publications: the hardline newspaper *Servire il Popolo*, the counter-cultural magazine *Re Nudo*, the intellectual periodical *Che Fare* and the fanzine *A/traverso*. By 1976, some Italian militants were advocating a new form of Maoism that conflated pop culture, autonomist Marxism, Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's philosophy and, last but not least, avant-garde art. They defined this trend as 'Mao-Dadaism'. In 'Another red in the Portuguese diaspora: Lourdes Castro and Manuel Zimbro's *Un autre livre rouge*', Ana Bigotte Vieira and André Silveira examine

Un autre livre rouge, an artists' book made by the Portuguese artists Lourdes Castro and Manuel Zimbro while they were living in Paris. The two-volume book alluded to Mao's Little Red Book and was entirely devoted to the contradictory meanings and psychological associations that red conveyed. The work was crafted mostly between 1973 and 1975 at a time of radical political change in Portugal. The Carnation Revolution and the PREC (*Período Revolucionário Em Curso*, Ongoing Revolutionary Period) informed *Un autre livre rouge*, which was, however, both less and more than a political book.

The significance of Maoism for global independence movements around the world is an important subject that merits further attention, particularly for countries in Africa, for example. In 'Avenida Mao Tse Tung (or how artists navigated the Mozambican Revolution)', Polly Savage examines Maoism in Mozambique. Drawing on interviews and archival records, the study focuses on the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (or FRELIMO). Between 1970 and 1977 FRELIMO negotiated an artistic and cultural agenda combining, not without difficulties, leftist internationalism and local traditions. The analysis of works produced by the graphic designer 'Mphumo' João Craveirinha Jr offers insightful perspectives on how these tensions materialised in images.

The social inequalities and dictatorial regimes of Latin America also fostered diverse and powerful Maoist movements. Two chapters explore Latin American Maoist artists. Ana Longoni's 'Maoist imaginaries in Latin American art' focuses on several case studies to analyse the impact of Maoism in Argentina, Colombia and Peru. In the case of the artist Juan Carlos Castagnino, who is often considered to be the official painter of the Argentinian Communist Party, she emphasises how his relationship with China informed both his politics and his practice. She also compares the Argentinian artist Diana Dowek and the Colombian Clemencia Lucena in relation to the theories developed by the Argentinian writer Ricardo Piglia, who was close to Maoist positions in the 1970s. The subsequent case studies that Longoni presents concern the Colombian art group Taller 4 Rojo, which developed a wide range of pedagogical projects, and the 'Black Folder' created by the Peruvian collective Taller NN, whose subversion of the image of Mao was considered to be unacceptable by Maoists and anti-Maoists alike in the violent context of Peru.

Peru – which was on the verge of becoming a Maoist state in 1990 – is also the focus of Anouk Guiné's chapter 'Iconography of a prison massacre: drawings by Peruvian Shining Path war survivors'. Her study is set against the background of the civil war between the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), also known as Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso), and the Peruvian state, a conflict that began in 1980 and lasted well into the 1990s. Relying also on interviews with detainees, Guiné engages with the depictions of the massacre

that were produced by Maoist convicts. She discusses issues of memory, resistance, resilience and popular imagery.

Returning the focus to the present moment, Estelle Bories's chapter 'Mao in a gondola: Chinese representation at the Venice Biennale (1993–2003)' investigates the re-emergence of Chinese contemporary art in the West, concentrating on the way in which artists and curators addressed the revolutionary past of China. It considers Cai Guoqiang's famous restaging of *Rent Collection Courtyard*, presented during the forty-eighth Biennale of Venice in 1999. The appearance of Chinese art at the Biennale occurred with much fanfare. While, on the one hand, this could be read as a point of departure and a new expression of Chinese modernity, on the other hand it could also be read as a repackaging of some standard Maoist positions on art.

The collection concludes with Victoria H. F. Scott's 'Reproducibility, propaganda and the Chinese origins of neoliberal aesthetics'. Postmodernism is usually framed as a Western movement, with theoretical and philosophical roots in Europe. Scott's chapter links artistic postmodernism to the influence of Maoism in the West, specifically through the dissemination and absorption of the content and form of Maoist propaganda. Taking into consideration the broad significance of Mao for art and culture in the West in the second half of the twentieth century, the chapter comes to terms with the material effects of a global propaganda movement which, combined with the remains of a personality cult, currently transcends the traditional political categories of the Left and the Right.

The Austrian art historian Ernst Gombrich's *The Story of Art*, which was published in 1950, is the world's bestselling book in the field of art history.²³ As James Elkins has pointed out, not only is the text ubiquitous, but it is very Eurocentric – unapologetically Eurocentric, one might argue. Elkins continues:

A worldwide set of practices identifiable as art history poses a fascinating challenge. No one can read everything, but a worldwide endeavour, especially one whose coherence is contested and problematic, requires worldwide reading. For me that obligation is one of the principal reasons this subject is so interesting: no matter how art history develops (or dissolves), and even aside from the pressing problems of the spread of Western practice, I think art history increasingly imposes an obligation to read widely and continuously, outside of any specialisation.²⁴

It is an obligation we have taken seriously.

In 1953, at the height of McCarthyism, Gombrich wrote a scathing review of Arnold Hauser's book *The Social History of Art*. Criticising Hauser's methodology, Gombrich argued that contradiction was an ontological trap that led to theoretical paralysis.²⁵ Without preaching any kind of methodological

orthodoxy, the chapters in this anthology demonstrate that the notion of contradiction is an insightful one for describing and understanding the impact of Maoism on the visual arts. Instead of eschewing the paradoxes that animate art history, the authors featured in the following pages expose them and reveal cultural contradictions for what they have always been: a powerful source of political, social and aesthetic transformation, for better or for worse.

Notes

- 1 Mao Zedong, 'On Contradiction' (August 1937), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 319.
- 2 This book uses pinyin, the official system devised by the People's Republic of China for the Romanisation of Chinese characters, rather than the Wade-Giles system which was developed in the nineteenth century. For example, in pinyin the spelling of 毛泽东 is Mao Zedong, while the Wade-Giles spelling is Mao Tse Tung. Pinyin, which is considered to be more representative of how Mandarin sounds, was adopted gradually in the post-war period, officially replacing the Wade-Giles system internationally in the 1980s. In this text exceptions are made for bibliographic sources, in which case whichever system was originally used is retained.
- 3 Alan Lawrence, *China under Communism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 66.
- 4 The Great Leap Forward (1958–61) and its ruthless implementation of the collectivisation of agriculture caused the fourth major famine under a socialist regime: some 15 to 45 million people starved to death in China between 1959 and 1961. On collectivisation and famine under socialism see Felix Wemheuer, 'Collectivization and Famine', in Stephen A. Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 407–423; there is no consensus regarding the number of people who died of hunger in China during the Great Leap Forward, as is pointed out in Kimberley Ens Manning and Felix Wemheuer, 'Introduction', in Kimberley Ens Manning and Felix Wemheuer (eds), *Eating Bitterness: New Perspectives on China's Great Leap Forward and Famine* (Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2011), 1 and 21–22. See also Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958–62* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011).
- 5 Timothy Cheek (ed.), *A Critical Introduction to Mao* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Geremie Barmé, *Shades of Mao: The Posthumous Cult of the Great Leader* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1996).
- 6 The bibliography is vast and includes: Andrew G. Walder, *China under Mao: A Revolution Derailed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Yiching Wu, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins: Chinese Socialism in Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Alexander C. Cook (ed.), *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Alessandro Russo, 'How Did the Cultural Revolution End?'

- The Last Dispute between Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, 1975', *Modern China*, 39:3 (2013), 239–279. Wang Hui, *The End of the Revolution: China and the Limits of Modernity* (London: Verso, 2009); Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).
- 7 Liu Kang, 'Maoism: Revolutionary Globalism for the Third World Revisited', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 52:1 (2015), 12–13.
 - 8 Christopher Leigh Connery, 'The World Sixties', in Rob Wilson and Christopher Leigh Connery (eds), *The Worlding Project: Doing Cultural Studies in the Era of Globalization* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2007), 78.
 - 9 Fredric Jameson, 'Periodizing the Sixties', in Sohnya Sayres et al. (eds), *The 60s Without Apology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press in cooperation with Social Text, 1984), 189.
 - 10 See, for example, the use of this notion in publications such as Connery, 'The World Sixties', 77–107; the special issue entitled 'Global Maoism and Cultural Revolution in the Global Context', ed. Wang Ning, *Comparative Literature Studies*, 52:1 (2015); Fabio Lanza, 'Making Sense of "China" during the Cold War: Global Maoism and Asian Studies', in Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney and Fabio Lanza (eds), *De-Centering Cold War History* (London, New York: Routledge, 2013), 147–166.
 - 11 Ning Wang, 'Introduction: Global Maoism and Cultural Revolutions in the Global Context', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 52:1 (2015), 2.
 - 12 Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
 - 13 Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).
 - 14 Quinn Slobodian, 'The Meanings of Western Maoism in the Global 1960s', in Chen Jian, Martin Klimke, Masha Kirasirova, Mary Nolan, Marilyn Young and Joanna Waley-Cohen (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of the Global 1960s: Between Protest and Nation-Building* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 75.
 - 15 Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013); Richard King (ed.), *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966–76* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010); Melissa Chiu and Shengtian Zheng (eds), *Art and China's Revolution* (New York: Asia Society; New Haven: in association with Yale University Press, 2008); Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Lincoln Cushing and Ann Tompkins, *Chinese Posters: Art from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2007); Francesca Dal Lago, 'Reshaping an Icon in Contemporary Chinese Art', *Art Journal*, 58:2 (1999), 46–59; Minna Valjakka, 'The Many Faces of Mao Zedong' (PhD dissertation, University of Helsinki, 2011); Minna Valjakka, 'Parodying Mao's Image: Caricaturing in Contemporary Chinese Art', *Asian and African Studies*, 15:1 (2011), 87–114; Gerhard Paul:

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 - 17 Mao Zedong, *Mao Tse-Tung on Literature and Art* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), 30.
 - 18 Julia Lovell, 'The Cultural Revolution and its Legacies in International Perspective', *China Quarterly*, 27 (September 2016), 639.
 - 19 Timothy Scott Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties: The Antiauthoritarian Revolt, 1962–1978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 211.
 - 20 For example, the background that provides the pathos and drama of Gerhard Richter's series *October 18, 1977* (1988) is partly the story of Western Maoism.
 - 21 Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen and Jacob Wamberg (eds), *Totalitarian Art and Modernity* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2010).
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 - 24 Elkins, 'Art History as a Global Discipline,' 22–23.
 - 25 Ernst Gombrich, 'Review of Arnold Hauser, "The Social History of Art"', *Art Bulletin*, 35:1 (1953), 79–84.