

MLQ

Modern
Language
Quarterly

Volume 69

Number 1

March 2008

China in the Twentieth Century

Special Issue Editor

Wang Ning

A JOURNAL OF LITERARY HISTORY

Cosmopolitanism and Its Discontents: The Dialectic between the Global and the Local in Lao She's Fiction

Alexa Alice Joubin

Mélange, hotchpotch, . . . is the great possibility that mass migration gives the world, and I have tried to embrace it. . . . I was already a mongrel self, history's bastard. — Salman Rushdie

I would like to take Rushdie's staunch affirmation of cosmopolitanism as a point of departure to examine the global-local dialectic of otherness in modern Chinese literary imaginations, with particular reference to a "history's bastard" created by one of China's most important humorists and satirists, Lao She (pseudonym of Shu Qingchun, 1899–1966). This article first examines the theoretical basis of cosmopolitanism and the implications of cultural hybridization—a mode of "modernization" that was much contested in early-twentieth-century China and is a cause no less contested in the twenty-first century. The notion of cosmopolitanism has been used to refer to a number of cross-cultural identities, including that of a migrant (Salman Rushdie), a refugee (Jean-Jacques Rousseau), a flaneur, a globe-trotter in a late capitalist society,¹ a member of the elite class who can shape and consume global cultural capital, a person celebrating the perceived superi-

¹ Jeremy Waldron, "Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative," in *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, ed. Will Kymlicka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 95.

I am indebted to Marshall Brown, Wilt Idema, Leo Ou-fan Lee, David Palumbo-Liu, and Wang Ning for their insightful comments on different versions of this article.

ority of cosmopolitanism over the “putative provincial,”² and any combination of these modes. Some of these theoretical engagements with cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism bear out the issues raised by Lao She’s fiction, written in the context of the nascent global economy in Chinese urban centers, and thereby provide a lens through which to reexamine May Fourth (1910–1930s) essentialism, a subject once believed to be satisfactorily understood.³ In turn, Lao She’s exposé fiction and its rejection of categorical thinking call for a reassessment of the tropes of cosmopolitanism. Both cosmopolitan theories and Lao She’s fiction are responses to the tendency to champion cultural hybridization as the answer to similar challenges in different times, such as the homogenizing forces of globalization in the twenty-first century, imperialism (late Qing China, 1850s–1910), and modernization (Republican China, 1911–49).

Starting from this premise, this article analyzes the discourse of cosmopolitanism in Lao She’s 1934 short story “Self-Sacrifice” (“Xi-sheng”) with reference to other Chinese study-abroad students (*liuxue-sheng*), characters portrayed as rootless cosmopolitans.⁴ These works frequently demonstrate an equivocal stance toward both the view that

² Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton, 2006), xiii.

³ The May Fourth Movement, which started as a student demonstration against the Treaty of Versailles in Beijing on May 4, 1919, marked the beginning of decades of “modernization” in China. Since the 1990s several scholarly initiatives have resituated the Chinese discourses of modernity within more complex dynamics between the self and the other. These projects are historically and critically alert to the absolute categories of “tradition,” “modernity,” “China,” and “the West” as they were formulated by late Qing and May Fourth thinkers as well as by the first-generation scholars of Chinese modernity. For an example of first-generation May Fourth studies that take all claims of May Fourth proponents seriously see Chow Tse-tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960). For works that are more acutely aware of the historicity of these claims and approach the subject with a balanced flexibility for how seriously to take claims see Milena Dolezelová-Velingerová and Oldrich Král, eds., *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China’s May Fourth Project* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Ellen Widmer and David Der-wei Wang, eds., *From May Fourth to June Fourth: Fiction and Film in Twentieth-Century China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

⁴ “Self-Sacrifice” was published in *Literature (Wenxue)* on April 1, 1934. It was reprinted in a collection of Lao She’s short stories titled *Ocean of Cherry Blossoms (Yinghai ji)* (Shanghai: Renjian Shuwu, 1935).

“every civilized person belonged to a community among communities” (Appiah, xiv) and the opposing position, which disavows local allegiances.

Even by the measure of the May Fourth generation, Lao She created an unusual number of characters who problematize the status of the foreign, the disparate cultural logics of the traditionalists’ nationalist sentiments, and the reformists’ cosmopolitan alternative. The modernization project was felt in nearly all areas of social life, including the literary scene, in early-twentieth-century China. The traumatic history of cross-cultural encounters has been inscribed into the Chinese discourses of modernity, or into what C. T. Hsia has identified as modern Chinese writers’ obsession with China.⁵ Central to this obsession, however, is a proliferation of visions of China’s others and their cross-cultural possibilities. Lao She, skeptical of the validity of either nationalism or cosmopolitanism, was self-conscious about his positionality, his ambiguous cultural localities, and his perceived roles as a cultural go-between and native informant while teaching in London, Singapore, Jinan, and Qingdao; traveling in Europe; visiting New York; and living in his native Beijing on his return. What distinguishes Lao She from his contemporaries is not only his “comic talents,” which have been astutely analyzed by David Der-wei Wang, but also his refusal to subscribe to a polarized formulation of cultural and moral values, of East and West.⁶

Cosmopolitanism and Its Discontents

Though [a cosmopolitan] may live in San Francisco and be of Irish ancestry, he does not take his identity to be compromised when he . . . eats Chinese, wears clothes made in Korea, listens to arias by Verdi sung by a Maori princess on Japanese equipment, . . . and practices Buddhist meditation techniques. —Jeremy Waldron

The possibilities of living between cultures as outlined by this epigraph are among the issues that Lao She’s “Self-Sacrifice” explores. In his cri-

⁵ “Every important modern Chinese writer is obsessed with China and spares no pains to depict its squalor and corruption” (C. T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 2nd ed. [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971], 536).

⁶ David Der-wei Wang, “Melancholy Laughter: Farce and Melodrama in Lao She’s Fiction,” in *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-Century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 111–56.

tique of communitarianism, Jeremy Waldron, a New Zealand-born, Oxford-educated, and U.S.-based scholar who writes extensively on political philosophy, challenges the Herderian need-based moral theory and the right-based politics of identities (102). “The cosmopolitan may live all his life in one city and maintain the same citizenship throughout,” Waldron observes, but he “refuses to think of himself as *defined* by his location or his ancestry or his citizenship or his language” (95). Waldron champions this resistance as a means to transcend the idea of cultural purity. Defending rooted cosmopolitanism as an ethical commitment, Kwame Anthony Appiah, another well-traveled theorist (Ghana-born, Cambridge-educated, U.S.-based), offers a similar picture of a cosmopolitan but emphasizes multiple identities and global roots:

In the final message my father left for me . . . , he wrote, “remember you are [a] citizen of the world.” But . . . he never saw a conflict between local partialities and a universal morality—between being part of the place you were [born in] and a part of a broader human community. Raised by this father and an English mother, who was both deeply connected to our family in England and fully rooted in Ghana, . . . I always had a sense of family and tribe that was multiple and overlapping. (xviii)

Waldron questions the communitarian assumption that the world can be divided neatly into “particular distinct cultures,” as well as the presupposition that everyone needs one and only one of these “cultural memberships” to live an integral and meaningful life. He argues that there is no such thing, in the postmodern world, as a “single” and “coherent” culture to which the individual can subscribe (105). Appiah, on the other hand, sees dialogue among different communities as a desirable path to philosophical cosmopolitanism, which fulfills “our obligations to others (or theirs to us)” beyond kinship and national ties (obligations we “owe strangers by virtue of our shared humanity”). Appiah believes that this cosmopolitanism promotes recognition and respect of “legitimate” difference (xv, xxi). Along a similar line, Waldron speaks of our “debt to global community” (102) and offers cultural hodgepodge as a cosmopolitan alternative to the communitarian mode.⁷ However, both models raise as many questions as they

⁷ See Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 165.

answer. Critics have questioned the link between cultural relativism and Appiah's cosmopolitan principle of "legitimate," and by extension tolerable, difference. Waldron's cosmopolitan model seems to rely on consumerism. To counter ethnic sectarianism, he extols a cosmopolitan self associated with the possession of cultural goods from different locations. While cultural fragments can well be integrated into one's personal life, material consumption does not stand in for subscription to the modes of thinking and ways of life that these goods represent.

These terms would sound familiar in the context of May Fourth debates about the most effective dose of imported Western values and the most desirable way to mingle local and global cultures in order to modernize and save the Chinese state. One prevalent critical position emphasized local contexts and insisted on the significance of the nation, while another defended the transnational in a postnational cultural space. Both propositions in the name of "China" are intrinsically divisive. The discourse of modernity was complicated because the tendency to emphasize transnational contexts as sources of cultural renewal coexisted with a recursion to the nation—a crystallized "Chinese" tradition—as the ultimate defense against the Western modernity forcing itself on China. Approaches to negotiating the intercultural space ranged from a complete denial of Western cultures to an unconditional acceptance of their values.

Between the second half of the nineteenth century and the 1930s, a discourse of deficit emerged in tandem with one of modernity from the Chinese "foreign affairs" (*yangwu*) and self-strengthening (*zhiqiang*) campaigns.⁸ The discourse of deficit gave rise to urban exoticism, which fueled further consequences of the dichotomized view of cultural difference. Western watches, clocks, and suits and other Western goods circulating in such port cities as Shanghai and Tianjin contributed to a culture of curiosity and helped define a form of proto-cosmopolitanism. Thus time and again Western cultural member-

⁸ The term *yangwu* referred to both diplomatic maneuvers and an attempt to institutionalize the translation and adoption of Western knowledge, especially technological and scientific knowledge. The phrases *zhiqiang* and *weixin*, which became current through the proponents of the *yangwu* movement, referred to the large-scale adoption of Western weaponry, machinery, and military technologies between the 1860s and the 1890s. This was the first industrialization project in China.

ship—and by extension “modernization”—was mistakenly configured as the mere possession of exotic commodities (as part of what Heinrich Fruehauf has theorized and Lao She satirized as “urban exoticism”) or the superficial adoption of Westernized customs (as a defining characteristic of the “imitation foreign devil,” a stock character in Lu Xun, Lao She, and other May Fourth writers).⁹

The 1920s, the decade before Lao She penned “Self-Sacrifice,” witnessed polemic debates about the relative values of Chinese and Western cultures.¹⁰ The mid-nineteenth-century Opium Wars, and the ensuing diplomatic setbacks and Western invasions, gave rise to self-doubt and skepticism in the Chinese monarchy. Contradictory images of the global and the local permeated the discourses on race and cultural identities. Hu Shi, an influential U.S.-educated reformer and philosopher, called for China’s “overall Westernization,” taking advances in the material culture as signs of cultural renewal.¹¹ In a 1926 essay he attacked the prevalent categorical thinking about the superiority of Eastern (“spiritual”) culture over Western (“materialistic”) civilizations.¹² Hu reversed the hierarchy by exalting the progressiveness and

⁹ Heinrich Fruehauf, “Urban Exoticism in Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature,” in Widmer and Wang, 133–64. European missionaries since Mateo Ricci have encouraged local “admiration” of Western gadgets and curiosities. See Gu Changsheng, *Missionaries and Modern China (Chuanjiaoshi yu jindai Zhongguo)* (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1995), 2–3.

¹⁰ An influential polemical essay was Chen Duxiu, “Fundamental Differences between Eastern and Western Peoples’ Modes of Thinking,” *Youth Magazine* (“Dong xi minzu genben sixiang zhi chayi,” *Qingnian zazhi*), December 1915, rpt. in *Debates about East-West Cultural Issues around the May Fourth Period (Wusi qianhou dongxi wenhua lunzhan wenxuan)*, ed. Chen Song (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehuai Kexue Yuan, 1985), 12–15.

¹¹ In 1935 Hu Shi discussed the controversy surrounding his radical proposal in “Total Globalization and Overall Westernization” (“Chongfen shijehua yu quanpan xihua”), rpt. in *Collected Works of Hu Shi (Hu Shi wencun)*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Taipei: Yuan-dong Tushu, 1971), 541–44.

¹² Interestingly, Hu was as invested in categorical thinking as his opponents. He enthusiastically embraced Western culture, labeling Western civilizations materialistic (i.e., possessed of substance) and the Chinese culture spiritual. Reaffirming the validity of the Eastern-Western categorization, he nevertheless opposed the implications of a “spiritual civilization” and a “materialistic culture” (“Our Attitude toward Modern Western Civilizations,” *Modern Inquiry* [“Women duiyu xiyang jindai wenming de taidu,” *Jindai pinglun*], July 10, 1926, rpt. in Chen Song, 646–59).

“scientific spirit” of materialistic cultures, arguing that Westerners’ “divine discontent,” unlike China’s ailing ideology of “self-contentment” and glorification of the “spiritual” dimension, propelled the development of a desirable “modern” world, with automobiles, electricity, democracy, gender equality, and many other advances (657). Like many of his contemporaries who traveled to America and Europe, Hu developed a fixation on the material differences between China and *urban* centers in the West. In fact, Hu Shi’s and Lao She’s interest in and critique of material culture can be traced back to travel writings of the late nineteenth century. One of China’s leading thinkers, Liang Qichao (1873–1929), traveled extensively and authored political treatises as well as works of science fiction that concentrated on the import of Western material culture.¹³

The enthusiasm for Western clothes started much earlier than Lao She’s generation. As early as 1859 “many ladies in Guangzhou wore European-style shoes [and] Manchester-style kerchieves. . . . Their European fetish was remarkable.”¹⁴ The early-twentieth-century fascination with the exotic was tied to the “urban Western enclaves in China” (Fruehauf, 134) and to the ideas with which Chinese intellectuals returned from abroad.¹⁵ The self-proclaimed cultural go-betweens in Lao She’s fiction provide a stark contrast to projects that seek to exalt an idealized cosmopolitan self. On the one hand, polemic essays by Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu essentialized the characteristics of the discursive entities “China,” “the West,” and particularly “traditional” China. On the other, perceptions of Western civilizations were dominated by a fixation on their material dimension. Lao She’s fiction both critiques his contem-

¹³ Liang Qichao, “Impressions of Travels in Europe,” *Morning Post Supplement* (“Ou you xin ying lu,” *Chenbao fukan*), March 6–August 17, 1920.

¹⁴ Augustus F. Lindley, *Personal Experiences of the Taiping Rebellion* (*Taiping tian-qin qin li ji*), trans. Wang Yuanhua, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1985), 1:7; originally published as *Ti-Ping Tien-Kwoh: The History of the Ti-Ping Revolution* (London: Day and So, 1866). Quoted in Zhou Ning, “Images of the West in Late Qing China,” *Book House* (“Tianxia bian yi di: Wan Qing Zhongguo de xifang xing-xiang,” *Shuwu*) 6 (2004): 15.

¹⁵ In fact, the exotic in literature can be traced back to the Eastern Jin (AD 317–420) genre of chronicles about the strange (*zhiguai*) (Fruehauf, 133). Tributary goods (notably during the Tang and Qing dynasties) also contributed to the culture of curiosity.

poraries' self-orientalizing (which constructs a China always already antithetical to the non-Chinese) and imagines the consequences of a materialist occidentalist worldview (marked by its utilitarianism).¹⁶ These tensions play out in farcical ways in Lao She's comical plots and exaggerated characters parading as clowns.

The Discourse of Deficit and Urban Exoticism

What is the American spirit? . . . A bathtub in every home, . . . living room thickly carpeted. [In Dr. Mao's quarters,] the interior window sill was filled with foreign-bound books. The wall was decorated with a Harvard pennant and a few photos of America. Of all the things in that room, the one most tinged with Chinese flavor was Dr. Mao himself, though he probably would not want to admit this. —Lao She, "Dr. Mao"

Dr. Wen found the [Harvard] pennant and displayed it on his wall. Below the flag are two photos of him in America. . . . His ideal living room must have a spacious and soft sofa to sit on, a lush and thick rug to step on, a phonograph for the ears, and movie star posters for the eyes. —Lao She, *Dr. Wen*

The parallels between these passages are striking: each describes a certain fellow with an American doctorate and a fixation on symbols of American education (Harvard) and American bourgeoisie (bathtub, carpet, sofa).¹⁷ As China was transitioning from imperial rule to the early republic, the United States was undergoing its own modernization process fueled by urbanization. For many reasons, America held

¹⁶ By invoking the two loaded critical terms *orientalism* and *occidentalism*, I do not intend to revisit the worn question of the political implications of East-West contact or to enter the debate about the nature of Chinese occidentalism. Instead, these categories are used for lack of better terms.

¹⁷ Lao She, "Dr. Mao," trans. George Kao, in *Chinese Wit and Humor*, ed. George Kao (New York: Coward-McCann, 1946), 318; "Self-Sacrifice," in *Complete Collection of Lao She's Novels* ("Xisheng," in *Lao She xiaoshuo quanji*), ed. Shu Ji and Shu Yi (Wuhan: Changjiang Wenyi Chubanshe, 2004), 10:189–91; "Dr. Wen" ("Wen boshi"), in *Complete Collection*, 5:33–35. Kao's translation, which I have revised, does not include the story's last episode (pp. 201–7 in the Chinese). Hereafter I refer to the translation as "Dr. Mao" and to the Chinese version as "Self-Sacrifice" (which comes closer to the original title, "Xisheng"). Translations of *Dr. Wen* are mine unless otherwise noted. The novel was first serialized as *The Chosen One* (*Xuanmin*) between October 1936 and July 1937 in the humorist literary magazine the *Analects* (*Lunyu*), founded by Lin Yutang, who was known for his advocacy of humorist literature. *Dr. Wen* first appeared under this title in November 1940.

a special place in the Chinese imaginaries of modernity and the West. As Weili Ye points out, “America of the early twentieth century offered the Chinese students a particular version of modernity, which . . . left its mark on the students’ adaptation to modern ways [with] the unique American imprint on the students’ experiences.”¹⁸

A recurrent theme in Lao She’s fiction is the contestation of flexible cultural membership. “Dr. Mao” and *Dr. Wen*, both written in the 1930s, contain similar caricatures and condemnations of materialist worldviews. Like Dr. Mao and Dr. Wen, Shanghai urbanites could pursue a supposedly cosmopolitan life associated with consumerism: wearing clothes made in America, listening to European opera on Japanese equipment, and enjoying Western-style meals, while observing the attendant etiquette, with their Chinese families and friends. However, Lao She questioned the possibility of living between cultures and explored the implications of cultural hodgepodge. Less optimistic than Rushdie about cosmopolitanism, he critiqued the attempt to modernize China solely by importing Western technologies.¹⁹ Though he himself was a practicing Christian with considerable international experience, Lao She was skeptical of intellectuals who posed as native informants abroad and as superior cultural go-betweens at home. Therefore he created a series of “study-abroad student” characters who either live in the West or have returned to China but struggle to come to terms with their knowledge of the West and the new realities of China. Lao She lampooned the inflated Chinese scholars returned from America and Europe.

“Self-Sacrifice” relates the downfall of one such character, who insists on being addressed by his new title, Dr. Mao. The plot revolves around Dr. Mao’s idiosyncrasies and his mini-lectures on the “American spirit,” delivered to Lao Mei and the narrator, who are his colleagues at the university. Dr. Mao boasts once too often of his American experience, that

¹⁸ Weili Ye, *Seeking Modernity in China’s Name: Chinese Students in the United States, 1900–1927* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 7. See also Peng Luo, “Young Westerners in the Writings of Chinese Scholars,” trans. Christopher Buckley, in *Images of Westerners in Chinese and Japanese Literature*, ed. Hua Meng and Sukehiro Hirakawa (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 85–93.

¹⁹ See also Rushdie’s defense of *The Satanic Verses*: “In Good Faith,” in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981–1991* (New York: Viking, 1991), 292–94, 404.

is, the “quintessentially American” creature comforts and materialism that his purported Harvard education allowed him to take note of. In a comically staged confrontation, Dr. Mao urges his fellow countrymen to get a bathtub, the symbol of cultural advancement.²⁰ For him, returning to China is both a reluctant and a victorious move. Having studied abroad, he considers himself a member of the elite class. At the same time, he despises his fellow countrymen. It is “too much of a sacrifice” (325). “Self-sacrifice” and “if it were in America” are phrases that litter his utterances. The many discrepancies between Dr. Mao’s visions of “the West” and his ethnic identity—and between his “cosmopolitan” outfit and Chinese realities—ultimately silence him by rendering him unintelligible. His self-indulgence and narcissism exacerbate the problem, as does Lao Mei’s and the narrator’s steadfast attachment to the “quintessential” Chinese ways of life.²¹ The narrator comments that Dr. Mao is “something half-baked or not altogether ripe; neither a Shanghai playboy nor an offspring of overseas Chinese in America; neither a Chinese nor a foreigner” (“Dr. Mao,” 313). The narrator is tempted to propose that Dr. Mao would do well to change his family name to More, Maugham, Maurice, or any other Anglo-European surname. As Lu Xun, one of the most radical thinkers of the time, aptly remarked, while urban residents “have changed into Western suits, deep down they are every inch their ancients.”²² Standing in opposition to Dr. Mao are the “bona fide locals,” who initiate a recursion to cultural essentialism and refuse to accommodate non-Chinese elements.

The interactions between Dr. Mao and other characters highlight the tensions between new cultural identities and the cultural membership acquired at birth. The American cultural membership is rendered visible and palpable. Dr. Mao measures a city’s civility, or its primitive-

²⁰ Among the creature comforts available to them if they were in the United States, Dr. Mao enumerates “a bathtub in every home, driving your own car, movie houses everywhere you go, . . . room temperature always above seventy in the winter, . . . living room thickly carpeted” (“Dr. Mao,” 316).

²¹ The narrator observes that Dr. Mao “was never bothered by the fact that others wondered what he was saying” and that he “ignored the fact that language was invented as a means of communication” (“Dr. Mao,” 314).

²² *Complete Works of Lu Xun (Lu Xun quanji)*, vol. 5 (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1981), 57.

ness, for that matter, by its proximity to the perceived features of American urban life. Not only does he display his share of American culture by wearing a formal suit all day during all seasons and by decorating his living quarters with American symbols, but he also quotes and follows the opinions of his “foreign friends.” Chinese theater is “barbarous,” Chinese food “not hygienic,” and the bathhouse “dangerous” (312, 317). As the narrative unfolds, readers are shown the other side of the debate about cultural identities. The Chinese identity is vehemently defended by Lao Mei’s and the narrator’s choices of food. Thus cultural identities are reduced to tangible units by both sides. Dr. Mao rhetorically recreates China’s ills, culturally and materialistically, by contrasting them with the many wonders of the West. While his emulation of America exposes the distance to be negotiated between the two cultures, it also presents a dilemma for his version of material cosmopolitanism and for the narrator’s defense of the values of Chinese ways of life.

When Dr. Mao makes his first entrance, the narrator notes that his peculiar appearance commands recognition. His Western suit immediately becomes the locus of attention:

There was something funny about this man. He was in the “full armor” of a foreign suit [Western suit, *yangfu*], with everything where it ought to be. For instance, a handkerchief was carefully stuck in the outside breast pocket, a tiepin in the tie, a length of watch chain dangling across the lower portion of his vest, the correct shine on the tip of his shoes. . . . He wasn’t *wearing* foreign clothes; he looked more like he had committed himself, under oath, to foreign clothes—the handkerchief must be there, the tiepin goes there, they were all a kind of duty, one of those religious commandments followed on faith. He did not give people the feeling that he was wearing Western clothes; he reminded people more of the filial son in mourning, wearing the painful and enforced raiment of hemp that custom decreed. (310–11).

Even as the suit is choking him, Dr. Mao insists on wearing it, since it signifies his new cultural membership.²³ “Self-Sacrifice” ridicules a

²³ Toward the end of the story the narrator observes that even after Dr. Mao has been deserted by his wife and has failed to win her back, he continues to wear the suit, “following the rules, even though it is uncomfortable at the neck. Indeed the neck belongs to him, but the Western suit belongs to ‘culture!’” (“Self-Sacrifice,” 207).

range of behaviors related to the collector's fetish.²⁴ The narrator frequently plays the role of a critic, reporting on Dr. Mao's infatuation with all things "American." In one passage he notes the artificiality of Dr. Mao's vision of cosmopolitanism: "This man's ideals were entirely centered around the creation of a man-made, American style, a neat and cozy little home. . . . It would seem that, outside of his own self and his bit of American spirit, the universe and all it holds did not exist for him. . . . The scope of our conversation was limited to money, foreign clothes, women, marriage, American movies" (319).

Dr. Mao's deferral to Western cultural authority is not a nostalgic maneuver, nor is he interested in or capable of living a truly cosmopolitan life. Rather, his charade of cosmopolitanism establishes the authority and perceived Western authenticity with which to denounce the Chinese. Lao Mei and the narrator, both defenders of Chinese values, naturally have preferences and ways of life at odds with Dr. Mao's: going to public bathhouses, attending traditional Chinese opera, and dining at Chinese restaurants. The narrator's view on ethnicity and nationhood only widens the gap: "Was [Dr. Mao] not born in China? Before he went to America, had he not spent at least twenty-odd years in China? Why then was he so ignorant, so unfeeling about China?" (319).

Dr. Mao's vision of an ideal American life happens to be that of a family in the middle class—a class too small in China to be a prominent force in shaping social institutions and fashions. But in fact he fails to recognize the stratification of either culture. Oblivious to class differences, Dr. Mao points out that "Americans are rich. . . . Take Harvard, for instance: when boys and girls go [out] together, the money they spend on ice cream alone would be more than the Chinese can afford" (316). The narrator eventually recognizes that "in [Dr. Mao's] eyes and mind, government, art, and anything you could mention were all glamorized adjuncts to married life and the middle-class civilization" (319). Lao Mei, Dr. Mao, and the narrator clearly do not belong to the Chinese elite. The bathtub, an item not available in most Chinese

²⁴ See Rey Chow, "Fateful Attachments: On Collecting, Fidelity, and Lao She," in *Things*, ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 362–80. "Attachment" ("Lian"), another of Lao She's short stories, focuses more keenly on collecting as a fetish.

homes, therefore becomes the center of Dr. Mao's attention, as he demonstrates in an animated manner:

"In America there's a bathtub in every home; in American hotels there is a bath to every room. You want to take a bath, all you need to do is to turn on the water—*hwa!* Hot or cold, mix them any way you like; if you want to change the water, *hwa*—you just let out the dirty water and turn on some fresh water, *hwa*—just like that." He poured forth this information all in one breath; his every *hwa* was liquid and frothy, as if he were using his mouth to demonstrate the American hot-and-cold water faucet. (313)

This vision of middle-class life produces the convoluted image of a household with Western conveniences (bathtub and sofa) and a Western domestic structure (nuclear family) but a traditional Chinese assignment of gender roles. The comedy arises from these caricatures. After getting married, Dr. Mao cannot afford a box-spring bed, a bathtub, a sofa, or any of the other items on his list. In the end economic and social mobility, not cultural membership, predetermines one's lifestyle. His wife eventually runs away, which first shames him and then drives him into a mental hospital.²⁵ The conclusion of "Self-Sacrifice" and its melancholic overtones can be traced to what Wang calls "melancholy laughter" in Lao She's other comic works (111–56). Dr. Mao's Chaplinesque naïveté prevents even the story's tragic ending from turning him into a tragic hero struggling between two cultural affiliations.

Lao She confirms that the problem he dramatizes is a pressing one in reality and that "every last character and event [in 'Self-Sacrifice'] is true to real people." He defends "Self-Sacrifice" against the charge that his "fable" is unrealistic by arguing that it is a bad story only in the sense that it is fragmented. It "wobbles all over the place" because it is based on real events.²⁶ What he refers to as real-life experiences are intimately connected to his own firsthand observation of overseas Chinese and Anglo-European societies. Among his peers, Lao She was quite unusual for the amount of time (over a decade) he spent out-

²⁵ Lao She, "Self-Sacrifice" ("Xisheng"), in *Complete Collection*, 10:207.

²⁶ Lao She, "How I Wrote My Stories," trans. William A. Lyell, in *Blades of Grass: The Stories of Lao She*, ed. Howard Goldblatt, trans. William A. Lyell and Sarah Weiming Chen (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 263–64.

side China: England (1924–29), western Europe (June–August 1929), Singapore (1929–30), the United States (1946–49), and Japan (1965). Yet he was not a cosmopolitan in Rushdie's sense. While Lao She was known for transforming Beijing dialect into a respected literary language and was first and foremost a Beijing writer, he wrote a number of his representative works in London, Singapore, and New York. Contrary to his claims, he is more than a practitioner of the social realism pioneered by Lu Xun. Lao She not only exposes social ills but also crafts flamboyant farcical plots and caricatures of the discourses of deficit. As such, "Self-Sacrifice" is both reportage and parody. Wang's remark on Lao She's transgression of the real in other works is applicable to "Self-Sacrifice": Lao She is both a "compassionate humanist" and "cynical joker," because his "hilarious narratives contain a poignant inquiry into the absurdities of life in modern China" (113).

In this light, "Self-Sacrifice" can be seen as a treatise on cosmopolitan possibilities. Dr. Mao and the narrator represent the self-contradictory arguments advanced by both the conservatives and the reformists. Dr. Mao wishes that his Western qualifications and experience set him above his countrymen, and he mechanically applies the American standards in his vision of a cosmopolitan life without being aware that class difference is as significant as cultural difference. The narrator and Lao Mei are not characterized sympathetically, either. Their categorical insistence on Chinese ways of life is confronted by Dr. Mao's global imaginary. This is evident in a scene in which they all dine together. It is more accurate to say that the narrator and Lao Mei challenge Dr. Mao to dine in a Chinese restaurant rather than invite him to dinner ("Dr. Mao," 317–18). Further, the narrator's recursion to ethnic sectarianism and his rejection of individualism serve as contrasts to Dr. Mao's radicalism.²⁷

At stake in the story is no straightforward deconstruction of patriotism, jingoism, or occidentalist utilitarianism. Dr. Mao and his coun-

²⁷ The narrator finds Dr. Mao "a man without [cultural] roots" ("Dr. Mao," 313–14). He also believes that Dr. Mao "couldn't quite bring himself to go to a 'Chinese' bathhouse with us, no matter how clean it was" (313). Later, when inviting Dr. Mao to dinner, the narrator thinks to himself: "I wanted to see, after all, whether he could stand any 'Chinese-style' entertainment [and social gathering], or whether he was just stuffy" (317).

terparts, Lao Mei and the narrator, struggle to define their cultural identities in each other's presence. While Dr. Mao and the narrator seek different ways of "modern" life, they are bound by the same discourse of deficit. The discursive entities of "the West" and "China" are reduced to manageable and tangible units with their attendant materialistic presences. They also represent conflated cultural identities. Thus everything American must be antithetical to anything Chinese.

Dr. Mao and "Study-Abroad" Literature

Despite his antics and idiosyncrasies, Dr. Mao is not an isolated literary phenomenon. He is a self-indulgent loner, and a rather different one from the better-known loners in modern Chinese literature, notably Lu Xun's tragic Wei Lianyi and Ah Q. However, Dr. Mao has some symptoms in common with Lu Xun's narcissistic Kong Yiji and Ah Q. "Self-Sacrifice" paints a picture of failed cosmopolitanism and exposes the irony of consumerism as the foundation of cultural globalism. Further, Dr. Mao and these other characters provide the defining elements of what might be called study-abroad literature (*liuxuesheng wenxue*). A sub-genre of travel literature, study-abroad literature emerged in China in the late nineteenth century and flourished during the 1930s in works by writers, from the famous to the less well known, who shared the experience of having studied abroad. Like nineteenth-century American writers who used European travel and travel writing to "construct and claim identities variously defined by gender, class, race and nationality," Chinese writers dramatize their travel experience in documentary mode (Liang Qichao) and fictional mode (Lao She) as a way to negotiate intercultural space and distance in a time of transition.²⁸

²⁸ William W. Stowe, *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), x–xi. Since these works have not been systematically studied in the context of Chinese cosmopolitan discourse, they may not be familiar to readers of *MLQ*. A number of mainland Chinese scholars have noted in passing Lao She's characters who appear in modern Western clothes but stubbornly hold on to a feudal mentality, including Lao Zhang's utilitarian "multiculturalism." See Feng Jianfei, "The Foundation of a Civilization, the Spine of a Race: An Analysis of Confucianism in Lao She's Works," *Academic Forum of Nandu* ("Wenhua de genji, minzu de jiliang: Lao She zuopin rujia jingshen fenxi," *Nandu xuebao*) 23, no. 3 (2003): 66–69; Jin Fengjie and Zhang Bo, "The Ills of Urban Civi-

While Dr. Mao may seem a minor character in Lao She's oeuvre (which features such memorable characters as Ma Senior and Ma Junior in *The Two Mas* [*Er Ma*]), he is not a singular case. Other examples include such members of the new urban middle class as Lan Xiaoshan in *Old Zhang's Philosophy* (*Lao Zhang de zhexue*), Ouyang Tianfeng in *Zhao Ziyue* (*Zhao Ziyue*), Young Scorpion (Xiao Xie) and his father in *Cat Country* (*Mao chengji*),²⁹ and Zhang Tianzhen in *Divorce* (*Lihun*).³⁰ Many of these characters develop an insistence on wearing Western suits and putting on Western airs. A notable example is Lao She's Dr. Wen, who closely parallels Dr. Mao. Two years after completing "Self-Sacrifice," Lao She wrote a longer and more elaborate story with a very similar trajectory. When originally published in serial form in 1936–37, the novella was titled *The Chosen One* (*Xuanmin*) to reflect its central character's self-aggrandizing, but when reprinted in 1940, it was retitled *Dr. Wen* (*Wen boshi*). The novella was probably retitled to reflect the Chinese obsession with the value of doctorate degrees. While Dr. Mao and Dr. Wen as comic characters have been neglected by Lao She criticism, the short story and the novella rank among the earliest systematic efforts to treat the emerging social class of study-abroad students. Caricatured in antithetical terms, the two main characters are Wen Zhiqiang—frequently addressed by other characters simply as Dr. Wen—and Tang Xiaocheng, known as Old Master Tang (Tang laoye) to those of lower social status and as Mr. Tang to his associates.

Like Dr. Mao, Dr. Wen sets out on his return from America to China to find a rich wife (to serve him as a career stepping-stone) and a post as a government official. While Dr. Mao settles for a teaching position at a university, receiving what he considers meager pay for a "Harvard PhD," Dr. Wen settles for nothing less than his ideal and

lizations: Images of Urban Residents in Lao She's Works," *Journal of Tonghua Teachers' College* ("Chengshi wenming xia de bingtai renxing—shi xi Lao She bi xia de shimin xingxiang," *Tonghua shifan xueyuan xuebao*) 26, no. 3 (2005): 108–10; and Xie Zhaoxin, *A Study of the Psychology of Lao She's Novels* (*Lao She xiaoshuo yishu xinli yanjiu*) (Beijing: Beijing Shiyue Wenyi Chubanshe, 1994).

²⁹ *Cat Country: A Satirical Novel of China in the 1930's by Lao She*, trans. William A. Lyell (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1970).

³⁰ In *Divorce* Lao She writes "as if he wanted to answer the question, what would happen if an intellectual like Ma Wei had, after all, gone back [from London] to stay in China?" (Wang, 127).

therefore is unemployed for a long time (*Dr. Wen*, 4–5, 11). In the end, Dr. Wen fares better than Dr. Mao, finding a rich wife through Tang’s matchmaking and landing a job as an agent on a government council charged with identifying and arresting dissidents and radicals (chaps. 9, 14, 16). A major difference between *Dr. Wen* and “Self-Sacrifice” is that several characters in the novella acknowledge and crave Dr. Wen’s “gold-plated” American doctorate. Though they have no idea what it entails, they all see a doctorate—especially a foreign one—as a necessary “qualification” (*zige*) in a modern society. Yang Lilin, who becomes Dr. Wen’s wife, does not fall in love with him. Instead, she desires a husband with a foreign doctorate (102). Nor does Mr. Tang respect Dr. Wen when they first meet. In fact, he despises him, because Dr. Wen has no official title on his business card. However, Tang reasons that “a doctorate in the modern society is equivalent to the coveted title of the First Ranked [*zhuangyuan*] on the imperial exam” and is therefore a prestigious and unique qualification (41).³¹

Despite their different fates, Dr. Wen and Dr. Mao are both cast as clowns obsessed with displaying their materialist “cosmopolitanism.” For example, when Dr. Wen ends up in Jinan after a lengthy job search, he seeks solace in the palpable symbols of the “American spirit”: “Dr. Wen settled down in the room. He found the purple-and-white [Harvard] pennant in his box and displayed it on his wall. . . . Below the flag were two photos of him in America. He looked at the wall and felt more comfortable and settled. He then went to have a Western-style meal, took a bath, and slept very well” (33). On waking, he puts on his Western suit, bought in America. Since he has developed a religious attachment to such attire, it comes as no surprise that Dr. Wen later spends a fortune on a custom-made suit despite his tight budget (46). Indeed, Dr. Wen seizes every opportunity to display his different lifestyle. He invites Mr. Tang to dinner in a Western-style restaurant, where their different preferences and table manners become visible: “Dr. Wen spared no effort to demonstrate a dignified air and the impressive style of a Western gentleman: He spoke softly . . . and made no noise when eating soup. He put down the fork and knife gently. Whether thirsty or

³¹ I follow the translation of the title of *zhuangyuan* in Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*, rev. and enl. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2000), 529.

not, he intentionally took sips of water from the glass.” This elaborate demonstration has a purpose. Dr. Wen frequently “looks at Mr. Tang” and others in the restaurant to see “whether everybody has noticed him, a champion of Western table manners” (67). Pidgin English and the Western suit are his identity markers.

Similar characters abound in Lao She’s narratives and in modern Japanese and Chinese literature. They include the “imitation foreign devil” (Mr. Qian’s eldest son, known as *jia yangguizi*) in Lu Xun’s “True Story of Ah Q” (“Ah Q zhengzhuan”), Zhang Jimin (Jimmy) and Han Xueyu in Qian Zhongshu’s *Fortress Besieged* (*Weicheng*),³² Okada in Tanizaki Junichiro’s *Aguri*, and Ota Toyotaro in Mori Ogai’s “Dancing Girl” (“Maihime”). The “imitation foreign devil” proudly distances himself from the locals by cutting his queue and using a Western-style walking stick. He greets Ah Q and other characters in pidgin English. Similarly, Zhang Jimin (who studied in America and now works for Citibank in Shanghai) prefers to be addressed by his American name, Jimmy. His Western-style apartment and his superstitious family are a study in contrasts.³³ He speaks pidgin English to Fang Hongjian, the protagonist of *Fortress Besieged*, who has studied in Europe.³⁴ Han Xueyu,

³² Qian Zhongshu [Ch’ien Chung-shu], *Fortress Besieged* (*Weicheng*) (Hong Kong: Wenjiao Chubanshe, 1989), 35–40, 183–86.

³³ “Mrs. Chang [Zhang] enjoys the latest gadgets of Western science and yet she still holds to such beliefs, sitting in the living room heated by hot water pipes to recite Buddhist chants. Apparently, ‘Western learning for practical application; Chinese learning as a base [*Xixue wei ti, Zhongxue wei yong*]’ is not so hard to implement after all” (Ch’ien Chung-shu, *Fortress Besieged*, trans. Jeanne Kelly and Nathan K. Mao [Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 2003], 89–91).

³⁴ “Mr. Chang . . . liked to sprinkle his Chinese with meaningless English expressions. It wasn’t that he had new ideas, which were difficult to express in Chinese and required the use of English. The English words inlaid in his speech could not thus be compared with the gold teeth inlaid in one’s mouth, since gold teeth are not only decorative but functional as well. A better comparison would be with the bits of meat stuck between the teeth—they show that one has had a good meal but are otherwise useless. He imitated the American accent down to the slightest inflection, though maybe the nasal sound was a little overdone, sounding more like a Chinese with a cold and a stuffy nose, rather than an American speaking” (Ch’ien, 87). “Since both his father and his father-in-law hoped he would become a Ph.D., how could [Fang Hongjian], a son and a son-in-law, dare disappoint them? Buying a degree to deceive them was like purchasing an official rank in Manchu times, or like the merchants of a British colony contributing a few ten-thousand-pound notes to the royal exchequer in exchange for a knighthood, he reasoned. Every dutiful son and worthy son-in-law should seek to please his elders by bringing glory to the family” (29, with my revision).

a faculty member at a small university in China's heartland during the Japanese invasion, is found to have purchased a counterfeit doctorate. In the eyes of other characters, however, the ethnicity and light complexion of his "American" wife dispel any doubt about the authenticity of his "American" diploma.³⁵ These characters go down different paths in their quests for Western authenticity, but they all share Dr. Mao and Dr. Wen's materialist worldview.

Worthy of special mention are the intertwined awe of and resistance to foreign commodities. One play from this period features characters who shed light on Lao She's Dr. Mao. Xiong Foxi (1900–1965), founding president of the Shanghai Theatre Academy, known for his influential "peasants' theatre," wrote *The Foreign Graduate* (*Yangzhuangyuan*) in New York in 1926.³⁶ This three-act satire is set in inland China in the mid-1920s. It is intended to warn unsophisticated villagers to beware of "foreign graduates"—those who will seek to amaze and trick them with foreign curiosities. Apart from its didacticism, however, the play also manifests the dialectic of difference. Dressed as a foreigner in a Western suit, the son of a couple that runs a bean-curd café returns to his village, claiming that he has resided overseas for thirteen years, has acquired foreign educational qualifications, and has even taken a foreign wife. He insists that others address him as "Master Graduate" or "Doctor." He is soon called on by simpletons to defend the village against bandits, who fear no one but "foreign devils." The Doctor's foreign training is expected to "frighten off" the bandits. He assures the villagers that he can indeed defend them, since he has a gun, presented to him by the president of the United States, that fires electric needles capable of shaking mountains. It turns out to be a fountain pen, a curiosity that the villagers do not recognize. Persuaded by Mr. Millionaire (Baiwan Ye) that they should offer gifts to the Doctor, now their savior, one villager presents his "foreign dog," an excellent complement to the foreign Doctor. But like the Doctor, the dog is foreign only insofar as it

³⁵ "Hung-chien said with a smile, 'I'm interested in Han Hsüeh-yü's [Han Xueyu's] academic credentials. I just have a feeling that if his wife's nationality is fake, then his academic credentials are open to question, too'" (Ch'ien, 413).

³⁶ For *The Foreign Graduate* see Xiong Foxi, *Plays by Foxi* (*Foxi xiju*) (Beiping: Gucheng Shushe, 1927). For a comprehensive study of this school of drama see William Huizhu Sun, "The Peasants' Theatre Experiment in Ding Xian County, 1932–1937" (PhD diss., New York University, 1990).

has spent time overseas and acquired foreign habits. When the bandit leader recognizes the fountain pen for what it is and exposes the Doctor's lies, the villagers strip him of his Western suit. What is remarkable is not the play's structure, which resembles that of a fable, but the characters' investment in the value of foreign commodities and entities (the fountain pen, the "American" graduate). Dr. Mao and Dr. Wen put their foreign diplomas to use in similar, though at times subtler, ways. The same fear of and reverence for the foreign that Dr. Mao's antics inspire are present in Lao Mei's reaction to Dr. Mao's display of foreign customs and in Mr. Tang's initial rejection of and subsequent acceptance of Dr. Wen's touted superiority.

These examples suggest a typology of East Asian study-abroad characters who attempt to negotiate intercultural distance in materialist terms. Understandably, given the number of writers studying and traveling abroad at that time, some of these narratives bear autobiographical traces. Toyotaro's experience in Berlin in Ogai's "Dancing Girl" has long been regarded, not unproblematically, as a narrative based on the author's experience of studying medicine in that city.³⁷ Characters in Qian's *Fortress Besieged* are torn between their new but problematic Western cultural affiliation and the exigencies, complicated by a heavy dosage of nationalism, of wartime China. Lao She's *Two Mas* and "Little Po's Birthday" ("Xiao Po de shengri") closely parallel his London and Singaporean sojourns. Many characters in these works take pleasure in displaying the materialist presence of "the West," but their deep-seated Chinese mentality (e.g., their yearning for all the traditional symbols of social status granted when one achieves success on the civil service exam: wife, wealth, an official post) prevents them from becoming fully modern cosmopolitans.

The problem with these cultural go-betweens is not their betrayal of their ethnicity but their inability either to contextualize foreign commodities (as evidenced by, for example, Dr. Mao's odd furnishing of his living quarters) or to internalize the mode of thinking of another culture. Against the backdrop of China's initiation into the global community, Lao She portrays Dr. Mao and his "Chinese" counterparts as lost souls.

³⁷ See Tomiko Yoda, "First-Person Narration and Citizen-Subject: The Modernity of Ogai's 'The Dancing Girl,'" *Journal of Asian Studies* 65 (2006): 277–306.

Conclusion

Dramatizing the dialectic between the global and the local, Lao She seems to ask whether we can refuse to be defined by the local, either by birth or by acculturation. His imagining of the cross-cultural dilemma can be viewed as “double-voiced” in the same sense as African American literature, produced by the confluence of Anglo-European and African traditions.³⁸ Lao She situates his characters at the crossroads of traditions, and his writing is shaped by both British (Dickens) and premodern Chinese exposé fiction. His characters are shaped by the discourse of deficit and the opposing force of jingoism. Dr. Mao, for instance, denaturalizes cultural identity markers. This act, set in contrast to the ideological parallels found in other characters’ behaviors, makes cosmopolitanism a site that promotes reflections of the given and the taken-for-granted.

Clearly, Lao She is interested in the question of cultural bastardy. His “Self-Sacrifice” and *Dr. Wen* raise such difficult questions as, What rites of passage do study-abroad students undergo? What becomes of Chinese students who have studied abroad when they return to China? Twenty-first-century readers of Lao She need no reminder that travel literature and study-abroad literature have flourished since the 1970s in China and Taiwan, providing interesting and diverse answers to these questions. Ironically, post-1990 “autobiographical” study-abroad literature and Chinese readers’ enthusiasm for it invariably focused on twisted American dreams not unlike those cherished by Dr. Mao and Dr. Wen. Prominent examples include Cao Guilin’s *Peking in New York*, Zhou Li’s controversial but wildly popular *Chinese Woman in Manhattan*, Liu Weihua and Zhang Xinwu’s *Harvard Girl Liu Yiting*, and Lin Dayou’s flamboyant and narcissistic *MIT Boy Lin Dayou*.³⁹ These nar-

³⁸ See Henry Louis Gates Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), xxv.

³⁹ Cao Guilin, *Peking in New York* (*Beijing ren zai Niuyue*) (Beijing: Zhongguo Wenlian Chubangongsi, 1991); Zhou Li, *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan* (*Manhadun de Zhongguo nüren*) (Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe, 1992); Liu Weihua and Zhang Xinwu, *Harvard Girl Liu Yiting* (*Hafo nü hai Liu Yiting*) (Beijing: Zuojia Chubanshe, 2000); Lin Dayou (Dah-Yoh Lim), *MIT Boy Lin Dayou—a Step-by-Step Study-Abroad Bible by the GRE Champion* (*MIT Nanhai Lin Dayou—GRE 2400 manfen bangshou liuxue baodian*) (Taipei: Jingdian Chuanxun, 2001). For an in-depth analysis of Zhou’s pronounced ethnic sectarianism (in the name of cosmopolitanism) and the reception of *A Chinese*

ratives rely on the rhetorics of flexible cultural membership but fail to recognize the irony of their authors' ethnocentric and materialistic views of the foreign cultures with which they come into contact.⁴⁰ Despite their fictional nature, these books have a wide readership, and many have become, ironically, "nonfiction" best sellers, read and emulated as success stories of Chinese study-abroad students in America. While Lao She consciously deviated from the reportage model typically employed by study-abroad and travel literatures, these post-1990 narratives stubbornly insist on their verisimilitude even when they are divorced from reality. As such, they have given fictional realism a new meaning. Dr. Mao's distant footsteps can be heard in these recent additions to the genre of study-abroad literature. Lao She's questions were topical for early-twentieth-century readers, but they are urgently relevant to twenty-first-century readers witnessing the emergence of a new form of globalization.

Alexa Alice Joubin is assistant professor of comparative literature and coordinator of the Chinese Program at Pennsylvania State University. Her publications in German, English, and Chinese examine Shakespeare, visual culture, and alterity in modern Chinese film and literature. Her works have appeared in *Shakespeare Bulletin*, the *Shakespearean International Yearbook*, *Asian Theatre Journal*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, *China Review International*, and other journals and collections.

Woman in Manhattan in China see Xiaomei Chen, postscript to *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-discourse in Post-Mao China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 157–67.

⁴⁰ See Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

Editor

Marshall Brown

Assistant Editor

Ivan Kidoguchi

Editorial Board

Kathleen A. Blake

Herbert Blau

Yomi Braester

Jane K. Brown

Jessica Burstein

Douglas Collins

Nicholas Halmi

Gary Handwerk

Monika Kaup

Raimonda Modiano

Brian M. Reed

Henry Staten

Cynthia Steele

Sabine Wilke

Advisory Board

Charles Altieri, *University of California, Berkeley*

Jonathan Arac, *University of Pittsburgh*

Srinivas Aravamudan, *Duke University*

Nancy Armstrong, *Brown University*

Terry Castle, *Stanford University*

Wai Chee Dimock, *Yale University*

Margaret Ferguson, *University of California, Davis*

Barbara Fuchs, *University of Pennsylvania*

Henry Louis Gates Jr., *Harvard University*

Paul Giles, *University of Oxford*

Bruce Holsinger, *University of Virginia*

Linda Hutcheon, *University of Toronto*

Julia Reinhard Lupton, *University of California, Irvine*

Christie McDonald, *Harvard University*

Jerome McGann, *University of Virginia*

Virgil Nemoianu, *Catholic University of America*

David Perkins, *Harvard University*

Marjorie Perloff, *Stanford University*

David Quint, *Yale University*

David Simpson, *University of California, Davis*

Doris Sommer, *Harvard University*

Garrett Stewart, *University of Iowa*

Brook Thomas, *University of California, Irvine*

John Treat, *Yale University*