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Résumés

中国公共知识界诞生于五四时期，深受毛泽东时代反智主义之害，重兴于八十年代中期，在九十年代商业化大潮中面临着价值重建与自身定位的危机。本文试图通过分析2005年“超级女声”比赛期间在中国大众媒体上展开的两场争议以探讨中国公共知识界的现状。其中，一部分知识分子试图从审美趣味和民主理念方面启蒙大众，但其精英地位受到质疑；另一部分知识分子肯定大众文化的地位和作用，并且鼓励公共参与热情。作者认为，面临21世纪民主化、市场化、职业化与全球化的挑战，当代中国知识分子应当反思自身的定位，扮演立法者与阐释者的双重角色。

Since its emergence in the May Fourth Era, the Chinese intellectual sphere barely survived the Maoist regime, thrived in the mid-1980s, and experienced enlargement and pluralisation in the 1990s. This essay intends to re-examine the current Chinese intellectual sphere by an analysis of two controversies about the 2005 Super Girl Voice Contest. The key issues in public commentaries and debates focused on the evaluation of commercial popular culture and democratic progress in China. These controversies illustrate how the masses demonstrate a power base that could transfer easily to the political sphere, and that there has been resistance to this massive power using the idea of intellectualism. The author suggests that Chinese intellectuals shall play both roles of legislators and interpreters to meet challenges of democratization, marketization,

professionalism and globalization in the 21st century.

Texte intégral

The Chinese Intellectual Sphere: Its Problems and Challenges

- 1 The notion *public sphere*, in a Habermasian sense, refers to “a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed”. All citizens have access to this space to deal with matters of general interests by expressing and publicizing their opinions freely.¹ In the public sphere, intellectuals play a crucial role. The intellectual engagement in public affairs is the *intellectual sphere*, defined by Gu and Goldman as “a symbolic realm of knowledge, values and meanings - or, in a word, discourses”.² In the Chinese context, the intellectual-initiated May Fourth Movement as “enlightenment and the quest for modernity” against the Western intrusion marked the emergence of intellectual sphere.³
- 2 The Chinese equivalence of “intellectual” is *zhishi fenzi*, 知识分子, a term that requires our scrutiny before further discussion.⁴ It historically denoted the ‘scholar-gentry’ (*shi*, 士), who generally originated from the landlord or peasantry class. When they passed the Imperial Examination based on the Confucian canon, they gained access to the State’s bureaucracy and thereafter became ‘civil servants’ (*shi*, 仕). The Chinese intellectuals had located themselves in both the imperial court (*miaotang*, 庙堂) and far away from the Capital, i.e. *jianghu* (江湖).⁵ It was not until the early twentieth century that the modern generation of Chinese intellectuals emerged due to two major reasons. First, the scholar-gentry lost their political prestige when the Imperial Examination system was suspended by the Qing Dynasty in year 1905, six years before the 1911 revolution that ended the last imperial regime in China. Secondly, Western intrusion and colonization aroused collective intellectual concerns that prioritized “a national salvation” and “the salvation of mankind”.⁶ They turned to the “cultural-intellectualistic approach”, which implied a fundamental belief among Chinese intellectuals that cultural change was the foundation for all other necessary changes.⁷
- 3 Leaders of the Chinese Communist Party followed this approach that incorporated culture to serve revolutionary ends.⁸ Mao Zedong persisted in the bottom-up “popularization of literature and arts” as the cultural policy of CCP initiated by his predecessors Chen Duxiu and Qu Qiubai.⁹ During Mao’s totalist¹⁰ regime, the Chinese intellectual sphere barely survived Party-state co-optation and suppression through consecutive ideological movements (*sixiang yundong*, 思想运动).¹¹ Mao established his absolute power and ideological doctrines for Chinese literati during the Rectification Movement.¹² By redefining “knowledge,” he declared the ignorance of the “intellectuals” and therefore instructed the intellectuals to “go to the people” (*dao qunzhong zhong qu*, 到群众中去) in order to be remoulded and assimilated by the masses.¹³ In his political life, Mao adhered to this “remoulding of intellectuals” policy that subordinated the Chinese intellectuals to the party-state.¹⁴ In 1943,

the edited version of Talks was published by *Jiefang Ribao* 解放日报 [Liberation Daily] and later announced by CCP as the route of literary creation. Thereafter, Mao's literary thoughts eliminated the last lingering flow of May Fourth legacy and determined the course of cultural policy of the People's Republic of China.¹⁵ This policy went to an extreme and shattered Chinese intellectual sphere during the turbulent era of the Mao-incited Cultural Revolution when intellectuals were brutally abused and humiliated as the "reactionary class".¹⁶

- 4 The tremendous changes in Deng's reform era contributed to the resurgence of a Chinese intellectual sphere. The mid-1980s witnessed the *Xin qimeng yundong* 新启蒙运动 [New Enlightenment movement] and *Wenhua Re* 文化热 [Culture Fever]. The former, as Xu Jilin considered, was "an extremely complex intellectual project" that demonstrated "a unity of cultural stance yet a disparity of intellectual endeavours". The participants in this movement shared the concern that cultural modernization would influence China's possible political reform while seeking theoretical supports from various sources.¹⁷ And the latter, as Jing Wang interpreted, manifested "the intellectuals' 'methodological fever' on the nation's cultural agenda, the massive propagation of the formula for a market economy, and the reiteration of the imperative that the Party discuss political reform".¹⁸
- 5 In the 1990s, significant changes took place in intellectual-state relations. The state granted greater tolerance to intellectual spaces as long as they did not directly challenge the regime and the power elite. More intellectual freelancers appeared in the growing market economy, while the vast majority of Chinese intellectuals remained in the state-run research institutes and universities. Such enlargement and pluralisation of intellectual public space have led to larger intellectual autonomy from political interference, which was comparable to their East-European counterparts. Chinese intellectual sphere was filled with a variety of ideas of vigorous debates.¹⁹ During this period, Chinese intellectuals experienced disagreement and disconnection. The most significant development in the late 1990s was the public stand-off between groups that have come to be characterized as "the liberals" (*ziyouzhuyi*, 自由主义) and "the New Left" (*xinzuopai*, 新左派).²⁰ By the end of the 1990s, the Chinese intellectual sphere had been completely transformed. The origins of this change can be identified in currents of thought that first appeared in the 1980s. A unified intellectual sphere in which people can engage in profitable dialogue no longer exists.²¹
- 6 He Baogang raised four challenges of Chinese intellectuals in the new century. The first challenge came from the paradoxical identification of intellectuals in mass democracy. On the one hand, the Chinese idea of intellectuals that aims at educating ordinary people is not compatible with the populist idea of democracy that favours egalitarianism. On the other hand, the traditional role of Chinese intellectuals as state legislators is contradictory with the intellectual autonomy. Secondly, the multiple channels of plural society as a result of market economy have decreased the weight of one intellectual voice and have weakened intellectuals' influence. Thirdly, academic professionalism, which further divides intellectual labour in specialized research fields, has increased the importance of specific experts yet has undermined the position of critical intellectuals. Fourthly, the globalization of Chinese scholars has brought up the issue of social criticism in cross-cultural backgrounds. Overseas Chinese

scholars may lose their critical edge since their intellectual audiences are not necessarily Chinese and they cannot participate in local affairs.²²

- 7 My analysis of the mediated controversies focuses on Chinese intellectual sphere in the 21st century when taking its problems and challenges as a point of departure. I intend to re-examine this public space in contemporary China by reviewing two mediated controversies during the 2005 Super Girl Voice contest. This review of intellectual discourses²³ addresses six questions: 1) Who were the agents involved? 2) What discourses were drawn upon? 3) How were they articulated together? 4) Where did this articulation take place? 5) What particular direction did this discursive event give to the articulation of the political order of discourse? 6) What wider social and cultural processes have shaped and have been shaped by the way this discursive event articulates genres, discourses and ethos²⁴

The 2005 Super Girl Voice Singing Contest: A Media and Social event

- 8 First aired in year 2004 as an imitation of *American Idol*, the *Chaoji Nüsheng* 超级女声 [The Super Girl Voice] Singing Contest (hereafter referred as SGV Contest) was produced by the Hunan satellite television station (Hunan TV) with sponsorship of the Mengniu Group.²⁵ Female-exclusive, this contest invited any aspiring female singer to ‘sing along as loud as she wants’²⁶ without any limitation, e.g. age, appearance or singing skills.²⁷ Every applicant has had her audition in front of a panel of professional judges in the preliminary rounds filmed in four cities around China.²⁸ The shortlisted contestants entered the regional elimination contests that were broadcasted live to television viewers. The viewers voted for their favourite singer via telephone calls or mobile phone text messages. The finalists selected from the regional rounds went to HNTV in Changsha for the national finals, where television viewers determined the winners by phone-in or text message votes. The top finalists won contracts for professional singers from Shanghai Tianyu Company.²⁹ The 16 year-old second runner-up Zhang Hanyun became a household name overnight after her song “Sweet and sour is me” aired with a television advertisement for Mengniu yogurt.³⁰
- 9 The second season of the SGV Contest in 2005 made some new attempts to mediate professional aesthetics and the masses’ tastes by its deliberately designed elimination mechanism. It continued regional auditions in five cities, which attracted more than 150,000 contestants in total. In a sequential series of regional contests, the entrants were eliminated by a procedure comprised of the panel’s decision and votes by the viewers via phone calls or mobile phone text messages. A “panel of the masses” of thirty-one members would vote between the contestant favoured by the panel and the one with the most votes among the rest of contestants.³¹ In the national finals, the television viewers selected the top finalists via text messages and phone calls.³² The SGV fad was unprecedented in terms of its commercial gain and public involvement. The last episode of the national final on the night of August 26th, 2005, drew over 280 million viewers at one point. The champion Li Yuchun won 3,528,308 votes; the first runner-up Zhou Bichang won 3,270,840 votes; and the second

runner-up Zhang Liangying 1,353,906. Li Yuchun made the cover story of *Time Magazine Asia* special issue as one of “Asia's Heroes” and “a national icon,” for she “represents unabashed individuality.” *Times Asia* drew an analogy between SGV contest and its prototype *American Idol*: “like *American Idol*, but unlike China itself, Super Girl's Voice is run democratically”.³³ Richard Spencer, a correspondent for *The Daily Telegraph* saw the 2005 SGV contest as an arena where individualism, “a way of looking at life that many Chinese insist is western and alien to their culture,” was much exercised. Li was described as “a good symbol of the Chinese society”.³⁴

¹⁰ As the national finals were broadcast from mid-July to the end of August, media coverage shifted from news features and personal profiles to commentaries and intellectual discussion. These controversial discourses were articulated in two venues. The first venue of publication was liberal newspapers such as *Nanfang Dushi Bao* 南方都市报 [Southern Metropolitan Daily], *Nanfang Zhoumo* 南方周末 [Southern Weekend], *Nanfang Renwu Zhoukan* 南方人物周刊 [Southern People Weekly], *Xinjing Bao* 新京报 [Beijing News], *Beijing Qingnian Bao* 北京青年报 [Beijing Youth Daily], etc.³⁵ On the contrary, this event was intentionally ignored by Party organs such as *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, *Jiefang Ribao* 解放日报, and their provincial counterparts.³⁶ The second venue was the internet-based forums for Chinese liberalist intellectuals, i.e. *Shiji Zhongguo* 世纪中国 and *Wenhua yanjiu wang* 文化研究网.³⁷

¹¹ These public commentaries shared the common ground that SGV contest was a commercial breakthrough, massive cultural movement, and a media event of great social impact. The key issue of its controversy lay in the cultural orientation to which this event would lead.³⁸ This was where opinions diverged. The first controversy focused on the aesthetic taste of the SGV Contest. Should it be celebrated for its “reaction to the elite culture” or condemned for its “vulgar characteristics”? The second controversy concerned the authenticity of “Chaonü Democracy”. The SGV Contest succeeded in its open access and voting mechanism, which encourages mass participation. Should they be read as indicators of the emergence of Chinese civil society and democratic progress?

Criticising Vulgar Popular Culture vs. Endorsing Cultural Pluralism

¹² Scholarly criticism of the SGV Contest mainly targeted its profit-making nature and vulgarity. Zhang Hong, head of the Philosophy Department at Tongji University, stressed on the dichotomy between art and mass culture. He associated the SGV Contest with some other massive activities in contemporary China.³⁹ Zhu Dake, cultural critic and professor at Shanghai University, described this contest as ‘anti-intellectualist’ that shows the taste of the masses.⁴⁰ The climax came during a symposium against “vulgarization in entertainment-oriented programs” convened by the Committee of Presenters of Radio and Television of the Chinese Radio and Television Association. In this symposium, Shi Tongyu, researcher at the Academy of Social Sciences of China, made a statement that ‘the television rating is the root of all evil’. He used the SGV Contest as an example of profit-driven “vulgar television programmes”. Cui Yongyuan, a famous television talk show host at CCTV, supported Shi's

criticism against the viewership domination. However, they overlooked the similar case of *Mengxiang Zhongguo* 梦想中国 [Dream China] held by CCTV 2 at the same period. Their intention to criticise the profit-oriented strategy of public television was interpreted by *Jinghua Shibao* 京华时报 [The Beijing Times] as an elitist attack on popular culture, with the SGV Contest as the major target.⁴¹

13 The criticism of Shi and Cui evoked counteraction and met a firm rebuttal. On the internet-based *Tianya* Forum, a boycott against CCTV was initiated. Freelance columnist and influential blogger Lian Yue published his commentaries on *Nanfang Dushibao* on July 22, arguing for cultural pluralism instead of cultural monopoly.⁴² In a more sarcastic essay on his blog, Lian depicted Cui Yongyuan as the spokesperson of the CCTV interest group, which represented the 'high brow' while the Hunan TV promoted vulgar popular culture. Lian's remarks were quoted in an in-depth report about the SGV Contest in *Nanfang Zhoumo*, which presented this phenomenon as one of the crucial social events in contemporary China and Hunan TV as a challenger to the CCTV monopoly.⁴³

14 What lay beyond the criticism of vulgarity was the deep concern that commercial ends would lead to the downfall of culture, as expressed by Shi Tongyu in his article published on *Xin Jing Bao* on August 22, 2005.⁴⁴ This criticism manifested the "collective academic unconsciousness of Chinese scholars" that was prevailed in the 1980s. As commercial popular culture flourished and the enlightenment mission failed, Chinese intellectuals turned to the Frankfurt School for theoretical remedy.⁴⁵ Shi proposed an approach articulating positions of Frankfurt School and the Birmingham School within television studies in China, but he also admitted a preference for the Frankfurt school due to the "gate-keeper complex" of intellectuals.⁴⁶ Shi and Cui's dilemma reflected the conflict between State legislator and intellectual autonomy. Their suggestion of separating public and commercial television to prevent abuse of public resources was just; however, they were still "underdogs" subject to state-control rather than "watchdogs" that speak for the public interests.⁴⁷ In an interview with *Nanfang Renwu Zhoukan* in September 2005, Cui Yongyuan elaborated on his opposition against the vulgarization of Chinese television without touching the core of this problem, which was, and still is the state-controlled marketization of Chinese mass media.⁴⁸ During his online discussion with Chinese netizens at *Renmin Wang* 人民网 [People Net] on August 4, 2006, Shi Tongyu responded to a question about his impartial criticism at SGV Contest while leaving *Mengxiang Zhongguo* alone: firstly, considering that CCTV as a national channel represents the national image, he avoided "radical criticism" of its misconducts; secondly, as a scholar of the China Academy of Social Science, he would naturally show a preference for CCTV.⁴⁹

15 The dispute about the vulgarity of popular culture was concluded with an open discussion among three Chinese scholars reported by *Xin Jing Bao* on August 20.⁵⁰ Zhu Dake abandoned his opposition against the SGV Contest as he saw the "passion of the Chinese masses in public involvement." Li Yinhe, sociologist at the Academy of Social Sciences of China and renowned feminist scholar, shared this view and saw this contest as the rise of mass culture against the monopoly of elite culture. She maintained that sheer entertainment should be encouraged and separated from education and instruction. Yu Guoming,

vice-dean of the Faculty of Media and Communication at Renmin University, maintained that the SGV Contest was a critical phenomenon in the socio-cultural domain that deserved much attention, for it indicates the de-monopolization of the elite culture with the emergence of popular culture. He attached high importance to the egalitarian elimination of SGV Contest that “ignores family background, experiences and professional qualifications, and instead focused on the candidates’ personal charisma”.⁵¹ Furthermore, the SGV Contest succeeded in mobilizing the audiences through the voting mechanism and their reaction to the elimination panel. Yu demonstrated strong despise to the cultural monopoly in the Mao Era:

I think that the Chinese society still lacks the process of secularization. What we had in the past was a so-called ‘highbrow’ society. The utopian ideals that we had pursued in the Cultural Revolution aimed at the sanctification of every person. Everyone was to be homogenized with one single value system and one cultural condition. This is not ‘harmony with difference’ that defines the harmonious society. The compulsory homogenization would be the greatest abuse of humanity, human nature and human values. Rather than the vulgarization, such abuse that runs counter to humanity and morality shall be condemned!

我觉得中国社会还缺少世俗化的过程。过去我们是一个所谓很高雅的社会，文化大革命当中我们纯粹追求最高理想，每个人都要做圣人，这样的东西实际上是要把所有的人都塑造成一种类型，一种价值取向，一种文化状态的人，这不是和谐社会应该追求的所谓和而不同的社会。如果硬要不同的社会状态趋同，这实际上是对人性、人的本能、人的价值的最大侮蔑，这是最不人性的，最不道德的，最反动的，这是比那种庸俗化更值得谴责的事情！

- ¹⁶ That being stated, the “elite culture” that the three scholars referred to in this discussion was the hegemonic culture that served political ends in the totalist regime. In the 1980s’ New Enlightenment Movement, the notion of ‘elite culture’ denoted the intellectual quest to reinstate the social values to serve China’s pursuit of modernity.⁵² The diversified cultural practices in the 1990s challenged this elite-mass cultural dichotomy and required new epistemological approaches.⁵³ The majority of Chinese intellectuals, as Dai Jinhua observed, feared the manipulation of the masses yet failed to engage in the emergent popular culture. Therefore, they were rendered speechless by their own paradoxical position.⁵⁴ This discussion showed an intellectual endorsement of cultural pluralism, which marked a different position in their attitude towards popular culture.

Embracing Chinese Civil Society vs. Demystifying the Chao Nü Democracy

- ¹⁷ In an article published by *Nanfang dushibao* on July 31, 2005, Wang Zhengxu associated the Super Girl Voice contest with the concept of civil society in a Habermasian sense. He began this article with the supposition that the highly popular Super Girl Voice singing contest indicates that “the entertainment circle may be the place where the democratic awareness of Chinese people grows most rapidly”. He attributed the development of Chinese

civil society to spectacular sports and entertainment events since they offered a terrain of public engagement and democratic exercises.⁵⁵ On August 22, an article in *Jiangnan Shibao* commented the Super Girl Voice Contest as a cultural phenomenon that might become a “cultural mine” worthwhile of further investigation.⁵⁶ The author Zhu Zhida recognized the growth of civil society within the rise of mass culture. He concluded this article with reference to social entropy⁵⁷ in China:⁵⁸

The political designers shall learn their lessons from this [phenomenon]. We have already understood the constant enthusiasm in public engagement of Chinese people from the “bean election”⁵⁹ during the Yan’an period. Should the people fail to express such enthusiasm; the social entropy would increase, which would compromise the construction of a harmonious society.

政治设计家们应该从中获得某种启示。从延安时期的“黄豆选举”中我们早已领悟到，中国民众从来就不缺乏参与社会活动的热情。而假如这样的热情不能获得健康的宣泄，就必然会增加整个社会的“熵值”，不利于和谐社会的建设。

- 18 On August 26, an article titled “Citizen Awareness in the SGV Selection” was published in *Zhongguo qingnian bao*.⁶⁰ The author Yang Liangqing argued that the selection process encouraged a democratic citizenry. Yang found the organization of the fan groups surprisingly outstanding since their supportive actions were well disciplined and open for public supervision. In order to show the maximum support for their idols during the live contest, fans groups switched their positions under the stage during commercial breaks. The fans of SGV contestant Zhang Liangying organized their functions simultaneously on the fan group public forum facilitated by the Baidu server. Judging from these facts, the fan groups were considered as prototypes for interest groups with high autonomy.⁶¹

- 19 On the night of the last episode of the national final of SGV Contest (August 26), An Ti⁶² made a statement that this contest was a substitute for Chinese democratic practices on his blog:⁶³

The “super girl” reminds me of “superman”. Men must have a national PK⁶⁴ mechanism that selects the best one in front of us. So what will that be? That is by no means the “Super Boy Voice” Contest held by Hunan Television. Rather, it should be the direct presidential and parliamentary election in China. Since the “super girl” drives so many people crazy, how crazy would the “superman” – presidential and parliamentary election-be?

超女让我想起超男。男人也必须有一种全国的竞争决选PK机制，选出最出色的人站在我们面前。那么这是什么？当然不是湖南卫视曾经的“超级男声”，它当然应该是中国的总统直选和议员选举。超女能让这么多人疯狂，那超男——总统和议员大选呢？那会疯狂到什么地步？

- 20 Despite these bold remarks, An Ti admitted that his association between the SGV Contest and democracy was rather far-fetched in the same article. Wang Xiaoyu, a cultural critic at Tongji University in Shanghai, also held that it would be an ‘over-interpretation’ to see SGV Contest as a democratic role model in his article published in *Dongfang Morning Post*. He described the selection procedure as “hypnosis for democracy” since the so-called panel of the masses” lacked impartiality. Wang concluded that the SGV spectacle could be explained with the democracy supposition but it should not be much celebrated.⁶⁵ Teng Wei, professor at South China Normal University, saw little value in the

so-called liberty and democracy in this contest and warned the “entertainmentization” of democracy and politics.⁶⁶ A more elaborate criticism of the notion of *Chao Nü* democracy was launched by Xu Jilin, a prolific scholar on Chinese intellectual history at Eastern China Normal University. Xu tried to “demystify the *Chao Nü* democracy” in his article published on August 29 by *Nanfang Dushi Bao*:⁶⁷

What I want to say is that the ‘Chao Nü democracy’ with its core of voting is not a kind of good democracy but rather a form of populist democracy that is innately self-subversive and self-denying. Behind this (contest) hides an invisible hand that produces hallucinations of people’s supremacy by the means of voting via text messages, which are intended to realize the conspiratorial will to power and commercial desires of its sponsors.

我要说的是，以投票为核心的“超女民主”，不是一种好的民主，而是一种具有内在颠覆、自我否定的民粹式民主。其背后隐藏着一只看不见的手，通过短信投票的方式，制造一种民意至上的虚幻感，以此实现主办方隐秘的权力意志和商业欲望。

- 21 Xu argued that voting by itself does not equate to democracy, of which the essential factors should be transparent procedures, equal rights, liberal discussions, respect for the others, and impartial rules that surpass any individual will. The SGV Contest lacked any of these factors since the selection was manipulated by its producers who arbitrarily changed the rules. The voting was mainly via mobile phone and voters were charged for every message they sent. Thus, the voting right was exclusive to those with a phone and sufficient money. In all, Xu feared that the populist democracy shown in the SGV Contest might easily be manipulated and monopolized, a fear that ran through Xu’s research on Chinese intellectual history. In one of his essays, Xu stressed on two prerequisites of “direct democracy”: legislative and constitutional governance as the prerequisite of on the top level, and autonomous communities of voluntary citizens on the bottom level. He warned that the Rousseauian “public opinion” would lead to populist tragedies similar to those in the French Revolution, Russian Revolution and Chinese Cultural Revolution.⁶⁸ Xu’s idea represented the democracy model of Chinese intellectuals which, as Metzger maintained, was a combination of “a Rousseauistic concept of democracy as control of the government by a rational, morally enlightened citizenry expressing the ‘general will’”, and “the Confucian tradition’s epistemologically optimistic, top-down, utopian, *gemeinschaft* approach to politics”.⁶⁹

- 22 An Ti posted an open letter to Xu Jilin on his blog, in which he questioned Xu’s model of top-down democracy and attacked the “cultural elites” represented by Xu. In his argument, those who did not support the SGV Contest were against the people and exclusive from the “us” group:⁷⁰

We Chinese people are miserable. As soon as we have a “Super Girl” contest that simulates democracy, a professor would step out and judge. But when we are suppressed and deprived of our rights, these professors in universities against populist democracy all fake death without any opinion. Professor Xu gives us his kind reminder against the future misfortunes, but he just couldn’t care less about our current miseries. 我们中国人民很可怜的，才有了一个模拟民主的超女，就有教授来说三道四。可当我们受到压迫的时候，当我们的利益被剥夺的时候，这些反对民粹民主的学院教授们全部装死，没有任何发言。许教授善良地提醒我们不要迎来未来的不幸，但是他根本不在乎我们当下的不幸。

23 This exclusive identification of “them” and “us”, however, closed the door for further discussion. As Richard Hoggart observed, most groups gain some strength from their exclusiveness to form a sense of people outside who are not “Us” in the times of social disparity.⁷¹ The logical fallacy in An Ti’s argument was in its presupposition of the populist-elitist dichotomy, which was indeed contradictory to the egalitarianism essence of mass democracy.

24 To mediate this dispute, Cui Weiping, professor at the Beijing Film Academy, tried to redefine democracy in the way of Hu Shi that “democracy is a way of life” in her article published by *Xin Jing Bao* on August 31.⁷² She maintained that democracy is rather an ideal yet to be realized both by intellectuals and by ordinary people. In conclusion, she suggested that the stereotype presenting democracy as an elite activity that is beyond the reach of common people should be modified. The democratic development in China may proceed as the Chinese proverb declares: “more grows in the garden than the gardener sows”.⁷³ And the Chinese intellectuals, including Xu Jilin, should be credited for their efforts in the past decades to sow the seeds of democratic awareness in the hearts of Chinese people, among which An Ti stood out as an example.

Conclusion with two metaphors: Legislators and Interpreters

25 To conclude, the two mediated controversies discussed in this essay illustrate well how the masses demonstrate a power base that could transfer easily to the political sphere, and that there is resistance in the political sphere to accept that demonstration of power using the idea of intellectualism. This conclusion brings us back to the questions that initiated this essay: What roles do Chinese intellectuals play in China today? How do they cope with the problems and challenges in the new century?

26 Chinese intellectuals are playing both roles of legislators and interpreters as Zygmunt Bauman described. The “legislator” role, as the typically modern strategy, consists in “making authoritative statements which arbitrate in controversies of opinions and which select those opinions which, having been selected, become correct and binding”. The “interpreter” role as the typically post-modern strategy consists of “translating statements, made within one communally based tradition, so that they can be understood within the system of knowledge based on another tradition”. The latter approach is aimed at facilitating communication between autonomous participants. As the modernist view of world as one of an essentially orderly totality is questioned and post-modernist pluralism highly valued, the legislator role was challenged and partially substituted by the interpreter role.⁷⁴ In the first controversy, Shi Tongyu’s severe criticism against the vulgarity of commercial popular entertainment manifested Chinese intellectuals’ contempt about the aesthetic incapability of the masses. Opposite to this elitist position, the open support for SGV Contest of Li Yinhe, Zhu Dake and Yu Guoming showed intellectual awareness of cultural pluralism as a remedy of totalist rule. In the second controversy, the somehow insufficiently articulated views about *Chao Nü* democracy demonstrated the intellectualist endeavour to introduce democratic ideas to Chinese audiences and interpret this concept in a context where

political sphere is not yet well developed. As the 2010 Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo pointed out, when the other arenas of speech are closed, entertainment events are appropriated as the only outlet for public opinion.⁷⁵ In a more optimistic tone, overseas Chinese scholar Xu Ben attached much importance to this discussion since it proved that discussions of social events and entertainment events are mutually beneficial.⁷⁶

27 China is in great need of reform when suffering wealth disparities and social injustice albeit it achieved miraculous growth in economic power in the recent decades. However, ignorant imaginaries of democracy can only be “a negative reaction to totalitarianism than as a positive response to democracy” as Zhang Longxi observed in the prodemocracy movements in China. It is in this sense that he stressed on the indispensability of intellectual rigor and reflexive mobility to understand democracy and its self-deconstruction.⁷⁷ Kellner’s point is very true that in any national setting intellectual sphere contributes to democratic progress with its “sustained attempts to develop alternative media and a participatory citizenry”.⁷⁸ Since its emergence, the Chinese intellectual sphere has been the frontier where the Western idea of democracy was introduced, advocated, debated, practiced, and disseminated in the Chinese reality. At present, it is facing not only the challenges of democratization, marketization, professionalism, and globalization as He Baogang summarized, but also a call for self-reflection when drastic expansion of higher education and wide application of telecommunication technologies facilitate access to information and knowledge.⁷⁹ To meet these challenges, I suggest that *Zhishifenzi*, the Chinese term for “intellectual” literally meaning “knowledge molecule”, should not be used as a normative concept that draws a boundary between the few and the majority. Rather, it should be defined in a Baumanian sense as “a rallying call” and “a widely opened invitation to join in a certain kind of practice of a global-societal import”.⁸⁰ Chinese intellectual sphere, thus, should be re-visited in the light of the Saidian public intellectual, who is “an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for a public”.⁸¹

Notes

1 The concept of public sphere came into shape in the eighteenth century when people realized the difference between opinion and public opinion. In the liberal model of the public sphere, society, as a private domain, was clearly differentiated from public power; private persons gather in the domain between the two spheres to form a public. The press functions as the medium in which public discussion took place. The public sphere in mass welfare-states experiences a structural transformation as “refeudalization”. Large scale organizations form alliances with the state and with one another while deploying the means of “publicity” to achieve mass consensus. Thus, the political public sphere gradually loses its critical functions. See Jürgen Habermas, « The Public Sphere » in Steven Seidman (Ed.), *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader*, Boston, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 1989, pp.231-236.

2 Gu and Goldman further divide the intellectual sphere into four parts: “scientific space, in which natural and social scientists form knowledge; policy space, in which intellectuals produce policy advice; political/ideological space, in which intellectuals either defend or subvert the legitimacy of the existing regime; and cultural space, in which intellectuals concern themselves with transcendent questions, such as the meaning of human life, the nature of history, the ultimate principles that govern human society and the values of traditions and cultures. See Edward Gu and Merle Goldman, « Introduction: The transformation of the relationship between Chinese intellectuals and the state » in Edward Gu and Merle Goldman (Eds.), *Chinese Intellectuals between*

State and Market, London and New York, Routledge Curzon, 2004, p6.

3 See Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1986, pp.5-6.

4 Wang Bin maintains that the un-examined use of the term of 'intellectual' in the Chinese context is rather problematic since the ideal personality of Western and Chinese intellectuals are contradictory. See Wang Bin 王宾, « Zhongxi zhishifenzi "lixiang renge" duibi yanjiu » 中西知识分子“理想人格”对比研究 [A comparative study on the 'ideal personality' of Chinese and Western intellectuals] in *Houxiandai zai dangdai zhongguo de mingyun: zhutixing de kunhuo* 后现代在当代中国的命运：主体性的困惑 [The destiny of post-modernity in contemporary China: the troubled subjectivity], Wang Bin, Guangzhou, Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1999, pp. 151-174.

5 These two terms come from a famous line from *Yueyang Louji* 岳阳楼记 [Essay about the Yueyang Tower] by Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹. This line “位庙堂之高则忧其民，居江湖之远则忧其君” literally means “When situated in the high posts of the imperial court, they worry about the people; when located in the corners far away the Capital, they worry about the Emperor”.

6 See Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1986, pp.5-6.

7 By studying three leading figures during this era, i.e., Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Hu Shih, and Lu Hsun, Lin Yü-sheng identifies the origins of totalistic anti-traditionalism in the May Fourth Era as the intrusion of Western civilization and the cultural-intellectualistic approach. Lin further illustrates this concept: the cultural-intellectualistic approach was simplistic, but by virtue of its simplicity it provided an ideological basis for Chinese intellectuals to map out their future paths in the midst of China's unprecedented socio-political and cultural crisis. It was a common presupposition that moulded the outlooks of various members of the first two generations—one of the few defining traits that gave them their characteristic identity – but the specific positions of divergent groups among the Chinese intelligentsia were, of course, by no means solely a consequence of this approach. Lin raises these questions in his conclusion: if many leading figures of the May Fourth intelligentsia were dominated by their conception of the unity of political and cultural orders and by a traditionally derived, intellectualistic-holistic mode of thinking, several pertinent questions arise. Are the same traditional forces still at work in contemporary China? Was Mao Tse-tung influenced by the cultural intellectualistic approach? Was Mao's simultaneous call for transforming the nature of the Chinese man and for placing “politics in command” a reflection of a traditional pattern of thought that takes for granted close integration of the cultural-moral and socio-political orders? Was his recurring iconoclastic urge related to the totalistic iconoclasm of the May Fourth era? See Lin Yü-sheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Anti-traditionalism in the May Fourth Era*, Madison, Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979. pp. 156-158.

8 Mao's idea of “revolutionary popular culture” is clearly stated in his seminal essay “On New Democracy”: “Revolutionary culture is a powerful revolutionary weapon for the broad masses of the people. It prepares the ground ideologically before the revolution comes and is an important, indeed essential, fighting front in the general revolutionary front during the revolution. People engaged in revolutionary work are the commanders at various levels on this cultural front. “Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement”; one can thus see how important the cultural movement is for the practical revolutionary movement. Both the cultural and practical movements must be of the masses. Therefore all progressive cultural workers in the anti-Japanese war must have their own cultural battalions, that is, the broad masses. A cultural worker or a cultural ideology detached from the popular masses is a “shadow” commander without an army, whose firepower cannot bring the enemy down. To attain this objective, written Chinese must be reformed, given the requisite conditions, and our spoken language brought closer to that of the people, for the people, it must be stressed, are the inexhaustible source of our revolutionary culture.” See Mao Zedong, « On New Democracy », Timothy Cheek trans., Timothy Cheek, *Mao Zedong and China's Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents*, Boston, Bedford/St. Martin's, c2002, p 93.

9 That literature should be subordinated to revolution as propaganda was not Mao's original thought in his cultural theory; rather, as Pickowicz describes it, “Mao said very

little that had not been said already by Qu". Liu Kang also notes that Qu inaugurated a decisive shift in Chinese Marxism from Shanghai to the rural areas, Jiangxi at first. However, Mao's recuperation of Qu Qiubai's thoughts and unaccomplished tasks in his regime was a much more severe one of spectacular success. For Mao, literature is more than a gramophone—it should be “cogs and wheels of the revolutionary machine”. See Paul G. Pickowicz, *Marxist literary thought in China: the influence of Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai*, Berkeley, University of California Press, c1981. See also Liu Kang, *Aesthetics and Marxism: Chinese Aesthetic Marxists and their Western Contemporaries*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2000.

10 I adopt Tsou Tang's term of “totalism” in the sense that a political regime takes total control of the state and the society. This political totalism is intertwined with social revolution in the beginning of twentieth century China. See Tsou Tang, ‘Political Totalism, Authoritarianism, and Hegemony: A Proposed Theoretical Scheme for the Study of the Transformation of the Traditional Sociopolitical Order into a Communist System in China,’ presented at the Northern Illinois University, October 27, 1982. See also Tsou Tang 邹谠, « Zhongguo ershi shiji zhengzhi yu xifang zhengzhixue » 中国二十世纪政治与西方政治学 [Twentieth century Chinese politics and western political studies], *Ersshi shiji zhongguo zhengzhi – cong hongguan lishi yu weiguan xingdong jiaodu kan* 二十世纪中国政治——从宏观历史与微观行动角度看 [Twentieth Century Chinese Politics: From the Perspective of Macro-History and Micro-Mechanism Analysis], Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 3-4.

11 Although the book uses a shorter term of *sixiang yundong* for convenience, Li Honglin 李洪林 prefers the term of *sixiang douzheng yundong* 思想斗争运动 [the movements of ideological struggles]. The former usually refers to the emergence and dissemination of ideas without political interference. It could be used to describe the European Renaissance and the Chinese New Culture Movement in the May Fourth Era. The latter denotes an exclusive phenomenon in contemporary China, which refers to the CCP-led political movements that remould the thinking of Chinese people. The incited massive *pipan douzheng* 批判斗争 [judgment and fighting] dwarf Chinese people in order that they become the docile instruments of the Party. See Li Honglin 李洪林, *Zhongguo sixiang yundong shi (1949-1989 nian)* 中国思想运动史1949-1989年 [A history of ideological movements in China (1949-1989)], Hong Kong, Cosmos Books Ltd., 2010.

12 In the 1930s, many intellectuals fled from the lost urban cities and settled themselves in Yanan, the centre of Chinese Communist Party regime. They were welcomed with great respect and, of course, much expectation that they should serve for Chinese revolution. In the early 1940s, some intellectuals represented by Ding Ling 丁玲, Xiao Jun 肖军, Wang Shiwei 王实味, disillusioned by the Epicureanism among some high-rank party cadres and the party's failure to live up to its own egalitarian goals, wrote quite a number of biting criticism against the wrongs in the communist regime (Hsia 1999:308-309). Confronted with these unexpected attacks, Mao then launched the Rectification Movement (*Zhengfeng Yundong*) in the spring of 1942, which he directed toward building a unified party committed to common ideas, methods, and goals. See Mark Selden, *The Yanan Way in Revolutionary China*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1971, p 392.

13 In May of the same year, Mao convoked the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art. Mao delivered an opening speech at the first session of the forum and a conclusive speech at the last session. These two lectures were later edited as *Talks from the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art*. In this text, Mao proposed the unification of high culture and low culture, in which he cleverly handled the duality between the elite intellectuals and the masses by giving a double-sense meaning to “the masses” as the potential audience and readers of “popularized literature and arts.” He excluded the landlord class, imperialists, and bourgeois from the body of “the people.” By this negative definition, the purified “literature for the masses”, contrary to the “literature for the exploiters and oppressors” and “traitor literature,” should be for and only for the “broadest selection of the people.” For a full text of the *Talks*, please see Mao Zedong 毛泽东, « Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua » 在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话, translated by Kirk Denton, Kirk Denton ed., *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on literature*, 1893-1945, p. 473.

14 See Merle Goldman, « The party and the intellectuals: phase two », Merle Goldman and Leo Ou-fan Lee ed., *An Intellectual History of Modern China*, Cambridge & New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp 349-394.

15 As Huang Manjun sees it, this orthodoxy shaped the cultural dynamics of contemporary China through the triad of state ideology, intellectual traditions and popular/folk cultures. See Huang Manjun 黄曼君 Eds., *Mao Zedong wenyi sixiang yu Zhongguo wenyi shijian* 毛泽东文艺思想与中国文艺实践 [Mao Zedong's ideas on arts and literature and the praxis in China], Wuhan, Normal University of Middle China Press, 2002, pp.181-183.

16 For a detailed account, please see Macfarquhar, Roderick, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Vol. 3 the coming of the cataclysm 1961-1966*, Oxford & New York, Oxford University Press and Columbia University Press, 1997.

17 See Xu Jilin, « The Fate of An Enlightenment: Twenty years in the Chinese Intellectual sphere (1978-98) », translated by Geremie R. Barmé and Gloria Davies, in Edward Gu and Merle Goldman (Eds.), *Chinese Intellectuals between State and Market*, London, Routledge-Curzon, 2004, p.184.

18 See Jing Wang, *High Culture Fever: Politics, Aesthetics, and Ideology in Deng's China*, Berkeley and London, University of California Press, 1996, p1. Jin analyses *Heshang* 河殇 [River Elegy] television series aired on CCTV in 1988 as an example of the intellectual endeavour to steer the state's project of modernization in the right direction in Chapter 3 "Heshang and the Paradoxes of the Chinese Enlightenment" (pp.118-136).

19 See Edward Gu and Merle Goldman, « Introduction: The transformation of the relationship between Chinese intellectuals and the state » in Edward Gu and Merle Goldman (Eds.), *Chinese Intellectuals between State and Market*, pp.1-13.

20 Xu identifies the divergence between the Chinese liberalists and the New Lefts as their different perception of liberty and democracy. In a very general sense, the liberalists are concerned with the liberty of intellectuals while the New Lefts pay more attention to the rights of the less-privileged. Xu prioritizes constitutional construction over such controversy. See Xu Jilin 许纪霖, « Xunqun 'disantiao daolu' » 寻求“第三条道路” [Pursuing “the Third Way”], Xu Jinlin 许纪霖, *Lingyizhong qimeng* 另一种启蒙 [An alternative enlightenment], Guangzhou, Huacheng chubanshe, 1999, pp. 287-291. For an alternative presentation of the two camps, see Wang Hui 汪晖, « Dangdai zhongguo de sixiang zhuangkuang yu xiandaixing » 当代中国的思想状况与现代性 [Contemporary Chinese Thought and the Question of Modernity], and « Zhongguo 'xinziyouzhuyi' de lishi genyuan – zailun dangdai zhongguo dalu de sixiang zhuangkuang yu xiandaixing wenti » 中国“新自由主义”的历史根源——再论当代中国大陆的思想状况与现代性问题 [The historical roots of the Chinese 'new liberalism' - Rethinking contemporary Chinese thought and the question of modernity], *Quzhengzhizhuan de zhengzhi: duan 20shiji de zhongjie yu 90niandai* 去政治化的政治：短20世纪的终结与90年代 [De-politicized politics: the end of the short 20th century and the 1990s], Beijing, Sanlian shudian, 2008, pp. 58-160.

21 See Xu Jilin, « The Fate of An Enlightenment: Twenty years in the Chinese Intellectual sphere (1978-98) », translated by Geremie R. Barmé and Gloria Davies, in Edward Gu and Merle Goldman (Eds.), *Chinese Intellectuals between State and Market*, pp. 183-203.

22 See He Baogang, « Chinese intellectuals facing the challenges of the new century » in Edward Gu and Merle Goldman (Eds.), *Chinese Intellectuals between State and Market*, pp. 263-279.

23 The term *discourse* in this paper denotes the discursive events and the statements uttered during these events. The author is fully aware of the dispute between Foucault and Habermas on discourse, yet this divergence is beyond the scope of this paper. In a Foucauldian sense, discourse is “made up of the totality of all effective statements (whether spoken or written), in their dispersion as events and in the occurrence that is proper to them.” As Koller and Wodak put it, Habermas, however, continued to disentangle reason from discourse. Objective reasoning, i.e. critique and reflection on the status quo, remains a positive force for him that is not a form of rational domination by discourse as a negative force. See Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & the Discourse on Language*, A.M. Sheridan Smith trans., New York, Pantheon Books, 1972. See also Ruth Wodak and Veronika Koller edit., *Handbook of Communication in the Public Sphere*, Berlin & New York, Mouton de Gruyter, 2008. For more of the dispute, please see *Foucault contra Habermas: recasting the dialogue between genealogy and critical theory*, edited by Samantha Ashenden and David Owen, Thousand Oaks, California, London, SAGE, 1999.

24 See Peter Garrett and Allan Bell, « Media and Discourse: A critical review », Bell, Allan and Peter Garrett, edited, *Approaches to Media Discourse*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998.

25 Meng Niu, literally Mongolian Cow, is the biggest Chinese milk-production enterprise.

26 This is a literal translation of its slogan, which is *Xiang chang jiu chang, chang de xiang liang* 想唱就唱, 唱得响亮.

27 Considering the fact that every contestant on the main show is young and skillful, I would challenge such assertion and consider it as a marketing strategy.

28 The cities where the auditions take place are selected according to the marketing campaign of Meng Niu. In year 2004, the cities include Chengdu, Wuhan, Changsha and Nanjing. In year 2005, the cities include Guangzhou, Changsha, Zhengzhou, Chengdu and Hangzhou.

29 Shanghai Tianyu Company is an agent of artists established by Wang Peng, husband of the producer of the Super Girl Voice Contest and former staff of HNTV.

30 This is a literal translation of *Suansuan tiantian jiu shi wo* 酸酸甜甜就是我.

31 This group contains a certain number of voted-out regional finalists and volunteer viewers chosen by the Hunan TV.

32 Each mobile number could send 15 votes, and a mobile number that is registered at the China Mobile call-in service could have 15 extra votes. It costs 0.1 yuan (RMB) to make one text message vote. The call-in voting service charges 1 yuan (RMB) per minute.

33 See http://www.time.com/time/asia/2005/heros/li_yunchun.html, retrieved on August 29th, 2007.

34 See Spencer, Richard, « Best-seller urges Chinese to release their inner wolf », *The Daily Telegraph*, October 29, 2005, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/1501764/Best-seller-urges-Chinese-to-release-their-inner-wolf.html#continue>, retrieved on June 10th, 2008.

35 Most of these are owned by the Nanfang Media Group, an influential national media group based in Guangzhou. Nanfang Media Group owns eight newspapers and six magazines including *Nanfang Ribao* 南方日报 [Southern Daily], *Nanfang Zhoumo* 南方周末 [Southern Weeked], *Nanfang Dushi Bao* 南方都市报 [Southern Metropolitan Daily], and *21Shiji Jingji Baodao* [21st Century Business Herald]. *Nanfang Zhoumo* is internationally renowned for their in-depth domestic and international coverage. During his China visit in 2009, President Obama of the United States wrote a letter to *Nanfang Zhoumo* and its readers, congratulating them for contributing to the analysis and flow of vital political information. *Nanfang Dushi Bao* is nationally acknowledged for its investigative report and provoking commentary. With its target readers mainly in the Pearl River Delta area, it has a nation-wide daily circulation of 1.58 million. It has been ranked among the top 20 Chinese metropolitan newspapers in four consecutive years (2004-2007) in surveys conducted by the Centre for Media Development under the General Administration of Press and Publications of China.

36 A study on media coverage of the Super Girl Voice Contest from the preliminary auditions in March to the national finals in August shows a disparity of press coverage by Party organs and market-oriented newspapers. See « *Zhongguo qingshaonian yanjiu zhongxin 'qingshaonian wenhua xianxiang yu radian wenti jiance yanjiu' ketizu* » 中国青少年研究中心“青少年文化现象与热点问题监测研究”课题组 [The group for “Adolescent cultural phenomena and key issue monitoring research” at the China Youth & Children Research Center], *Guanyu 'Chaojinüsheng' de meiti baodao fenxi* 关于“超级女声”的媒体报道分析 [An analysis of the media coverage about ‘the Super Girl Voice’], <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/40555/3754217.html#>, retrieved on October 1, 2010.

37 « Century China » is a website where liberal commentaries are published. This website is no longer accessible. Articles published on it were collected and published on the website of Xueshu zhonghua 学术中华 [Academic China]. See <http://www.xschina.org/item.php?channel=%D0%C7%C6%DA%CE%C4%DD%CD&item=2005%C4%EA8%D4%C2C>, retrieved on July 1, 2010.

38 See Liu Qing 刘擎, « Chaojinüsheng yu shenghuo shijie de chenggong shenhua » 超

- 级女声与生活世界的成功神化 [The Super Girl Voice and the successful apotheosis of the living world], *Xin Jing Bao* 新京报 [New Beijing Express], August 18th, 2005.
- 39 See Zhang Hong 张闳, « Chaojinüsheng de jiti kuangmi » “超级女声”的集体狂迷 [The collective craze of the ‘Super Girl Voice’], *Zhongguo xinwen zhouban* 中国新闻周刊 [China News Weekly], Issue 21, May 26, 2005.
- 40 Zhu Dake 朱大可, « Guainühai de kuqixing kuanghuan » 乖女孩的哭泣性狂欢 [The good girl’s carnival of tears], *Zhongguo xinwen zhouban* 中国新闻周刊 [China News Weekly], Issue 32, 2005, p 68.
- 41 See « Dizhi Disu Yule Jiemu, Cui Yongyuan: Shoushiliü shi Wane Zhiyuan » 抵制低俗娱乐节目 崔永元：收视率是万恶之源 [Resistance to vulgar entertainment programmes, Cui Yongyuan: television ratings are the root of all evils] in *Jinghua Shibao* 京华时报 [Beijing Times], July 20, 2005. See also Zhao Nannan 赵楠楠, « Yule jiemu disu aipi zhuanjia cheng ‘chaojinüsheng’disu » 娱乐节目低俗遭批 专家称“超级女声”恶俗 [The vulgar entertainment programmes criticized; experts claim that ‘Super Girl Voice’ is vulgar], *Jinghua shibao* 京华时报 [Beijing Times], July 20, 2005.
- 42 See Lian Yue 连岳, « Cuiyongyuan ban disu xiaoshuo » 崔永元版低俗小说 [Cui Yongyuan’s version of pulp fiction], *Nanfang dushibao* 南方都市报 [The Southern Metropolitan Daily], July 22, 2005.
- 43 See Cao Junwu 曹筠武, You Shanshan 由珊珊, Zhang Jian 张健, « ‘Chaonü’ anzhàn: yidang jiemu he ta suo yingxiang deyi qie », “超女”暗战：一档节目和它所影响的一切 [The implicit war of Super Girl Voice: a television programme and all those it affects], *Nanfang Zhoumo* 南方周末 [Southern Weekend], August 18, 2005.
- 44 See Shi Tongyu 时统宇, « Wannong le qinggan, zhizao de queshe lirun » 玩弄了情感，制造的却是利润 [Emotion is manipulated yet profit is made], *Xin Jing Bao* 新京报 [Beijing News], August 22, 2005.
- 45 Tao uses this term to describe the shared ground of most advocates of “the humanist spirit” that use the Frankfurt School approach to criticize the commercialism-dominated mass culture for its vulgarity, deceptiveness, and negativity. See Tao Dongfeng 陶东风, « Pipan lilun yu zhongguo dazhong wenhua piping – jianlun pipan lilun de bentuhua wenti » 批判理论与中国大众文化批评——兼论批判理论的本土化问题 [Discussing Critical theory, criticism of Chinese popular culture, and the domestication of critical theory in the Chinese context], *Dongfang wenhua* 东方文化 [Oriental culture], Issue 5, 2000.
- 46 See Shi Tongyu 时统宇, « Cong falankefu dao bominghan – dianshi piping de xifang sixiang lilun ziyuanzaixi » 从法兰克福到伯明翰——电视批评的西方思想理论资源再析 [From Frankfurt to Birmingham- Rethinking the western theoretical resources for television criticism], *Xiandai chuanbo* 现代传播 [Contemporary communication], Issue 4, 2002.
- 47 To illustrate the state’s direct control over the Chinese mass media, Zhao Yuezhi quotes an in-house ditty for journalists at China Central Television’s News Commentary Department to present a miniature sketch of the journalists at CCTV. “I am a dog of the Party/ Sitting in front of the Party’s house/ I attack whomever the Party wants me to/ And I attack as many times as the Party wants me to// I am a dog of the Party/ Sitting in front of the Party’s house/ I kiss whomever the Party wants me to/ And I kiss as many times as the Party wants me to.” See Zhao Yuezhi, “Underdogs, Lapdogs and Watchdogs: Journalists and the public sphere problematic in China.” Gu, Edward and Merle Goldman (Eds.), *Chinese Intellectuals between State and Market*, pp.43-74.
- 48 See Cui Yongyuan 崔永元, « Wo yao paianerqi » 我要拍案而起 [I want to stand up and protest], *Nanfang Renwu Zhoukan* 南方人物周刊 [Southern People Weekly], September 12, 2005.
- 49 See <http://media.people.com.cn/GB/35928/36353/4671059.html>, retrieved on July 1, 2010.
- 50 See « Chaoji Nüsheng: Dazhong wenhua dui jingying wenhua de fandong » 超级女声：大众文化对精英文化的反动 [Super Girl Voice: Popular culture’s reaction to elite culture], *Xin Jing Bao* 新京报 [Beijing News], August 20, 2005. This article is compiled in Wo Wei Chaonü Kuang 我为“超女”狂 [I am mad about Super Girl], Zhongxin chubanshe, Sun Xiantao 孙献韬 (Eds.), Beijing: Zhongxin chubanshe, 2005, pp 132-166.
- 51 Yu’s praise of the egalitarianism in SGV Contest reads naïve when we take into

account the fact that all the national finalists are young and experienced singers, if not all sexually appealing from their femininity. The top three finalists are trained in provincial conservatories or semi-professionals. The national champion Li Yuchun and first runner-up Zhou Bichang distinguish themselves with their tomboy style.

52 See Gan Yang 甘阳, *Bashi niandai wenhua yishi* 八十年代文化意识 [Cultural consciousness in the 1980s], Shanghai, Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2006, pp. 8-10.

53 See Wang Bin 王宾, *Houxiandai zai dangdai zhongguo de mingyun: zhutixing de kunhuo* 后现代在当代中国的命运：主体性的困惑 [The destiny of post-modernity in contemporary China: the troubled subjectivity], pp. 373–389.

54 See Dai Jinhua 戴锦华, *Yinxing Shuxie: 90 Niandai Zhongguo Wenhua Yanjiu* 隐形书写：90年代中国文化研究 [Invisible Writings: Chinese Cultural Studies in the 1990s], Nanjing, Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2004, pp.10-11.

55 Wang Zhengxu 王正绪, « Chaojinüsheng rebo yu gongmin shehui de xingqi » 超级女声热播与公民社会的兴起 [The popular Super Girl Voice contest and the emergence of civil society], *Nanfangdushibao* 南方都市报 [The Southern Metropolitan Daily], July 31, 2005.

56 *Jiangnan Times* is a daily newspaper established on September 1, 1999. It is owned by the People's Daily and targets readers in the Yangzi River Delta.

57 In a physical sense, entropy is considered a sibling concept to equilibrium in modern thermodynamics. It was utilized by Gibbs, Pareto, and Henderson in social systems analysis in the late 19th century and middle 20th century. In a more general sense, social entropy refers to the stability of the social system. It includes the concept of equilibrium, which can be used to describe a situation where an entropy level remains constant. However, sociologists studying social change prefer the concept of social entropy since the degree of entropy in a given society can be determined empirically. (Bailey 1990:49-87). See Kenneth Bailey, *Social Entropy Theory*, Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990, pp.49-87.

58 Zhu Zhida 朱志达, « Chaojinüsheng jiang xingcheng shenme 'yi'? » 超级女声将形成什么“熵” [What kind of entropy will the Super Girl Voice Contest bring?], *Jiangnan shibao* 江南时报 [Jiangnan Times], August 22, 2005.

59 This term refers to the grassroots elections held up to the late 1940s in certain areas controlled by the Communist army. This election was covered in an article in the *Xin Hua Daily* on January 24, 1946. The method adopted was the “bean voting method,” in which the candidates stood with a bowl behind their back, facing away from the citizens, and the voters filed by, dropping a bean or a stone in the bowl of their preferred candidate. This practice of village democracy was illustrated by Chinese woodcut artist Gu Cun in a print titled “Bean Election” in 1948. See *Crisis and Reform in China*, E. Blinney (Eds.), Commack, NY, Nova Science Publishers, 1997, p 137. For the illustration, see James A. Flath, *The Cult of Happiness: nianhua, art, and history in rural north China*, Vancouver, UBC Press, 2004, p144.

60 *Zhongguo qingnian bao* 中国青年报 [China Youth Daily] is the official newspaper of Communist Youth League of China.

61 Yang Liangqing 杨亮庆, « Chaonü pingxuan zhong de gongmin yishi » 超女评选中的公民意识 [The citizen awareness in the Super Girl Voice selection], *Zhongguo qingnian bao* 中国青年报 [The Chinese Youth Daily], August 26, 2005.

62 An Ti 安替 is the pseudo name of Zhao Jing 赵静, a blogger, columnist and former journalist at suspended liberal newspaper *Ershiyi Shiji Huanqiu Baodao* 二十一世纪环球报道 [21st Century World Herald]. He is most known for his anti-war reports during the Iraq war in 2003.

63 An Ti 安替, « Chaonü jieshu le, shenme caishi zhongguo de chaonan juexuan? » 超女结束了，什么才是中国的超男决选？ [The Super Girl Voice contest has ended; what is China's superman selection?], http://www.boxun.com/hero/anti/129_1.shtml, retrieved June 10, 2010.

64 Rene Patnode, PhD candidate of sociology at University of California at San Diego traces the etymology of “PK” from its use in English to its implication in Chinese popular culture. This term has three major meanings in English: 1) “Penalty Kick” for fans of soccer; 2) “Primary Key” for a computer database programmer; and 3) “Player Kill” for video gamers. The third meaning has become a dominant slang term that acquired the meaning of “defeat” or “competition” in current Chinese popular culture

due to the flourishing of game culture and the influence of Super Voice Girl Contest that employed this term to name its one on one competition. See Rene Patnode, « PK Phenomenon in China », unpublished paper.

65 See Wang Xiaoyu 王晓渔, « Yule de cuileidan, minzhu de cuimianji- guanyu uchaojinüsheng'hengpinglun de pinglun » 娱乐的催泪弹, 民主的催眠剂——关于“超级女声”的评论的评论 [The tear gas bomb of entertainment and the hypnosis of democracy—my remarks on the remarks about the Super Girl Voice], An abridged version is published on *Dongfang Zaobao* 东方早报 [The Dongfang Morning Post], August 26th, 2005.

66 See Teng Wei 滕威, « Xunzhao ziwo yu xiangxiang minzhu: jiedu 2005 nian de “chaoji nü sheng” qiguan » 寻找自我与想象民主--解读2005年的“超级女声”奇观 [A search for oneself and imagination of democracy – reading the Super Girl Voice spectacle of 2005], Sa Zhishan 萨支山 and Yang Zao 杨早 « Huati 2005 » 话题 2005 [Topics 2005], Beijing: Sheng huo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2006.

67 See Xu Jilin 许纪霖, « Chuochuan Chaonü minzhu de shenhua » 戳穿“超女民主”的神话 [Demystifying the “Super Girl Voice democracy”], *Nanfang dushi bao* 南方都市报 [The Southern Metropolitan Daily], August 29, 2005.

68 See Xu Jilin 许纪霖, « Xunqun ‘disantiao daolu’ » 寻求“第三条道路” [Pursuing “the Third Way”] in Xu Jinlin 许纪霖, *Lingyizhong qimeng* 另一种启蒙 [An alternative enlightenment], pp. 287-291.

69 Metzger observes that willingness to accept the moral dissonance of the three marketplaces as a normal aspect of history is rarely found in modern Chinese intellectual writings, while the sense of predicament is still basic to modern Chinese intellectual discourse. See Thomas A. Metzger, *The Western Concept of the Civil Society in the Context of Chinese History*, Stanford, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University, 1998, p 26.

70 See An Ti 安替, « Xie gei Xujilin jiaoshou de gongkaixin: jiran nin bugan fan zhuanzhi ,naji qingbie luoji hunluan di fan chaonü » 写给许纪霖教授的公开信：既然您不敢反专制，那就请别逻辑混乱地反超女 [An open letter to Professor Xu Jilin: Since you don't dare stand up against totalitarianism, please don't criticize the Super Girl (Contest) in an illogical way], <http://www.tianya.cn/publicforum/content/no01/1/177435.shtml>, retrieved on October 1, 2008.

71 Hoggart gives this vivid account: “To the very poor, especially, they compose a shadowy but numerous and powerful group affecting their lives at almost every point: the world is divided into ‘Them’ and ‘Us’. ‘They’ are ‘the people at the top’, ‘the higher-ups’, the people who give you your dole, call you up, tell you to go to war, fine you, made you split the family in the thirties to avoid a reduction in the Means Test allowance.” See Richard Hoggart, « ‘Them’ and ‘Us’ », *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of working-class life with special reference to publications and entertainments*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1958, pp.72-101.

72 See Cui Weiping 崔卫平, « Minzhu de shenduan » 民主的身段 [The posture of democracy], *Xinjingbao* 新京报 [New Beijing Express], August 31, 2005. The term *shenduan* 身段 in the title literally means a woman's figure or a dancer's bodily movement.

73 This is a free translation of the Chinese proverb “you xin zai hua hua bu fa, wu xin cha liu liu cheng hang” 有心栽花花不发，无心插柳柳成行. A literal translation would be: flowers may not blossom when planted with much care, while willows grow in line after being left in the soil.

74 See Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: on Modernity, Post-modernity, and Intellectuals*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1987, pp.1-5.

75 See Liu Xiaobo 刘晓波, « Chaonü de weiyandayi » “超女”的微言大义 [Sublime words with deep meaning about the “Super Girl Voice” (Contest)], http://www.boxun.com/hero/liuxb/422_1.shtml, retrieved on July 1, 2010.

76 See Xu Ben 徐贲, « Yule wenhua xiaofei he gonggongzhengzhi—chaoji nü sheng de gongzhong yiyi » 娱乐文化消费和公共政治——“超级女生”的公众意义 [Consumption of entertainment culture and public politics – the public significance of “Super Girl”], initially published on <http://www.ccforum.org.cn/archiver/?tid-22368.html>, later published on <http://www.xschina.org/show.php?id=4825>, retrieved on July 1, 2010. In

its original version, the title of the contest is “Super Girl” rather than “Super Girl Voice”. For an edited version, please see Xu Ben 徐贲, « Yule wenhua xiaofei he gonggongzhengzhi—chaoji nü sheng de gongzhong yiyi » 娱乐文化消费和公共政治——“超级女声”的公众意义 [Consumption of entertainment culture and public politics – the public significance of “Super Girl Voice”] in Xu Ben 徐贲, *Zai shazi he yingxiong zhijian : qunzhong shehui de liangzhang miankong* 在傻子和英雄之间：群众社会的两张面孔 [Between idiots and heroes: The two faces of mass society], Guangzhou, Huacheng chubanshe, 2010, pp. 37-55.

77 See Zhang Longxi, « Western theory and Chinese reality» in Zhang Longxi, *Mighty Opposites: From Dichotomies to Differences in the Comparative Study of China*, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1998, p.171.

78 See Douglas Kellner, *Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy: Terrorism War & Election Battles*, Paradigm Publishers, 2005, p xx.

79 See He Baogang, « Chinese intellectuals facing the challenges of the new century » in Edward Gu and Merle Goldman (Eds.), *Chinese Intellectuals between State and Market*, pp. 263-279.

80 See Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: on Modernity, Post-modernity, and Intellectuals*, pp.1-2.

81 Edward Said, in his 1993 Reith Lectures, addressed two categories of intellectuals in Western history. He extends Benda’s “philosopher-king” notion to the Gramscian category of “organic intellectual”. See Edward W. Said, *Representations of the intellectual-the 1993 Reith Lectures*, New York, Pathenon Books, c1994, pp.8-9.

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