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Radically decentered in the Middle Kingdom:
Interpreting the Macartney embassy to China from a contact zone perspective

by

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The Reception of the Diplomatique, & his Suite, at the Court of Pekin.

James Gillray (1757–1816)

“The Reception of the Diplomatique and His Suite, at the Court of Pekin”
September 14, 1792

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CHAPTER 1.
THE MACARTNEY EMBASSY TO CHINA 1792–1794:
“AN IDIOM OF DUBIETY”

Nothing could be more fallacious than to judge of China by any European standard. My sole view has been to represent things precisely as they impressed me.

–British Ambassador Lord George Macartney, 15 January 1794¹

The above statements, written while the Macartney was reminiscing on his failed attempt on behalf of the British government to establish diplomatic relations with the Chinese court, captures the conundrum Westerners must confront when making evaluative statements about “things Chinese.” How does we come to know China well enough to avoid drawing fallacious conclusions in our interpretations of Chinese cultural practices? Macartney tries to escape this epistemological trap by grounding his impressions in his “sole view,” but that view, of course, is only realized through a comparison of standards. But if the standards are not comparable in the first place, what then becomes the basis for our judgments?

The quandary captured in Macartney’s thoughts appears in various forms throughout the writings he and others produced following the highly anticipated and greatly publicized British embassy to China from 1792 to 1794. Today, understanding the complexities of the quandary are central to a range of critical methods involving the analysis of discourse, including the rhetoric of how we talk about and generate knowledge of people who are different (ethnically, culturally, politically) from ourselves. Ironically, Macartney’s assertion that he represented “things precisely as they impressed” his “view” anticipates postmodern

¹ J. L. Cranmer-Byng, *An Embassy to China: Being the Journal Kept by Lord Macartney’s during His Embassy to the Emperor Ch’ien-lung* (Hamden, CT: Archon 1963), 219. Also, when I quote material from the travel journals I do not standardize the spellings of Chinese words using the *pinyin* system. I use “Pekin” throughout, but I use Rehe instead of Jehol or Gehol.

concerns on the very possibility of representing cultural otherness while simultaneously recognizing and challenging the bases upon which those views, or ways of seeing, are constructed.

Radically Decentered in the Middle Kingdom

The title of this dissertation, *Radically Decentered in the Middle Kingdom*, captures some of the feelings and emotions that Macartney and some of the other embassy participants experienced. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt summarizes the decentering dynamic of foreign travel best when she refers to travel journals as narrating an “idiom of dubiety—a mode of cultural tale-telling that is neurotically conscious of its own self-censoring apparatus” (1992: 3). Using Pratt’s discussion of discourses produced during contact zone encounters, I examine the Macartney embassy to China from a contact zone perspective. Pratt’s notion of the contact zone is referenced, often in a manner far beyond the original formulation, in a range of disciplines, but those articulations of the contact zone have not resulted in a widely used methodology, particularly in rhetoric studies.

Why, then, is Pratt’s critical method a suitable base for approaching traveler’s interpretations of China? In *Imperial Eyes* Pratt pays “serious attention to the conventions of representation that constitute European travel writing, identifying different strands, suggesting ways of reading and focuses for rhetorical analysis” (11). By combining the study of genre with a critique of ideology, Pratt sets out both to unify and “disunify” “what might be called rhetoric of travel writing” (11). In suggesting a “dialectical and historicized

approach to travel writing" (7), furthermore, Pratt hopes that her "ways of reading ... will be suggestive for people thinking about similar materials from other times and places" (11).

Although Pratt limits her scope to writings about travels and explorations in Africa and South America during certain time periods, this dissertation extends the range and application of Pratt's concepts to writings done by those who traveled to and wrote about China, and also expands the entire notion of the contact zone by loosening its affiliation with colonialist discourses that reflect radically asymmetrical power relations.

To be sure, China in the eighteenth century presented a special type of contact zone encounter for Westerners, especially because many Europeans already knew a great deal about China before the Macartney embassy departed in 1792. In *Imperial Eyes* Pratt's stated goal is to understand "how travel books by Europeans about non-European parts of the world went (and go) about creating the 'domestic subject' of Euroimperialism" (4). The "domestic subject" refers to the effect that empire building had on the home population, but for Westerners, an interest in "things Chinese" during the mid-eighteenth-century chinoiserie movement was already evident well before the Macartney embassy. Unlike the locations that people wrote about in Pratt's study, China was not an object of colonial desire, making Pratt's assertion that the "contact zone" is synonymous with "colonial frontier" a problematic designation. In fact, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, many of the terms in Pratt's definition of the contact zone take on unexpected meanings when the lens of the contact zone is focused on China.

One goal of this dissertation then is to adjust the lens in order to articulate the conventions of representation that constitute European travel writing about China. Using Pratt's notion of the contact zone as a conceptual point of departure, I establish discursive

connections between the rhetoric of Westerners who saw themselves as producing knowledge (through representation) of China and those Western writers who saw themselves as producing knowledge about people and places in the rest of the world. The research on writers in the later category is voluminous, primarily because of the emergence of fields of inquiry such as Third World studies and colonial discourse studies, as well as more hybrid critical approaches such as borderland and migration studies and global studies. Yet in the nineteenth century alone, a period that corresponds with much of the work related to European empire building, there are hundreds of journals and exploration narratives written by Westerners who went to China that to date have received little scholarly attention.²

A second, broader goal of this dissertation is to systematize Pratt's notion of the contact zone because sometimes her emphasis on disparities in power between those involved in a contact zone encounter gets in the way of our being able to recognize the wider possibilities of the contact zone. Turner's observation that Pratt's template for "understanding how the 'domestic subject' is constructed through accounts of abroad has not been widely adapted from a literary perspective" (6) is, in fact, misleading in that the contact

² Mary Gertrude Mason in *Western Concepts of China and the Chinese: 1840-1876* (1939) claims that between the years given in her title more than 4000 books and articles on China appeared in Europe and America. Also *Western Books on China Published up to 1850 in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London: A Descriptive Catalogue* (1987) list well over 1000 texts, including 80 books in "Encyclopedic Works," a category that corresponds with the types of works that Pratt labels as manners and customs texts. Only 36 of the 80 "Encyclopedic Works" listed in *Western Books on China* are written in English, and that number drops to 23 if we do not count multiple editions by the same author. But as with the genre of travel writing, it is impractical to discuss these texts in terms of numbers and types. William Alexander's *The Costume of China*, for example, appears in Lust's book in the "Arts, Architecture" category along with Sir William Chambers' satirical *A Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (1773), while George Henry Mason's *Costumes of China*, which is nearly identical to Alexander's book, does not appear at all. My goal is neither to argue that the categories need to be reconsidered nor the exact number of certain types of texts be determined. Instead, I want to stress that manners and customs type texts about China contemporary to the works that Pratt examines do exist in significant numbers. Also, Lust explains that the end date, 1850, is arbitrary, marking a time "when footholds were being won in the south, and diplomatic representation was to be imposed by force on a China that was rapidly weakening, both militarily and politically" (Lust vi).

zone itself has never been articulated in a template format. Instead, Pratt has given us detailed interpretations of certain texts, pointing out where and how generic conventions and political ideologies intersect. Her “ways of reading” (11) facilitate comparisons between historical and literary artifacts, but they must be modified to serve as a more generic tool for rhetorical analysis of past, present, and future artifacts produced in spaces where different peoples co-exist.

The Idea of China

To study Chinese language, society, or geography is to learn about grammatical structures, customs and manners, and rivers and valleys, but to study processes of the Western production of knowledge about China is to interrogate artifacts, rhetorical conventions, and systems of thought that in part have been constructed through the way China has been talked about by Chinese and non-Chinese alike. To study the *idea* of China, then, is to interrogate what Soren Kierkegaard labels a “kind of autonomous reality” that exists “independently of its particular historical manifestations” (Booth xiii).

The “autonomous reality” in this dissertation is the China that was experienced by members of the Macartney embassy. The embassy is most well-known for the infamous “kowtow incident” where Macartney opted to kneel to the Chinese emperor as opposed to kowtow to him, an act that has gained a “near legendary status” (Liu 129) in studies of cross-cultural communication and international relations.³ Prior to departing for China, Macartney had been instructed by King George III “to conform to all the ceremonials of the Chinese

³ A kowtow consists of three iterations of kneeling and touching one’s head to the ground three times.

court which did not compromise the honor” of either the king or the dignity of Macartney himself (156).⁴ Those instructions proved to be problematic. During the ceremony Macartney chose not to kowtow to the emperor, a breach of etiquette from the Chinese perspective but the most appropriate course of action according to the English understanding of reciprocal respect between rulers of equal stature.

Several weeks after the meeting, following tours of the area as well as a lavish banquet for the emperor’s birthday, the emperor respectfully told Macartney to leave China and refused to grant any of his requests. In addition to a condescending letter addressed to the King of England, the emperor also composed a poem on a large Chinese tapestry-picture that recorded “the fact that the King of the red-haired English sent his envoy, Macartney, and others, who arrived bearing a state message and tribute” (Cranmer-Byng x):

Formerly Portugal presented tribute;

Now England is paying homage.

They have out-traveled Shu-Hai and Heng-chang;

My Ancestors’ merit and virtue must have reached their distant shores.

Though their tribute is commonplace, my heart approves sincerely.

Curios and the boasted ingenuity of their devices I prize not.

Though what they bring is meagre, yet,

⁴ In *The Rise of Modern China*, Hsu explains that in addition to collecting as much information about China as possible, Macartney was instructed to achieve six specific objectives: 1) Acquire one or two places near the tea-and silk-producing and woolen-consuming areas, where the British traders might reside and English jurisdiction be exercised. 2) Negotiate a commercial treaty with a view to extending trade throughout China if possible. 3) Relieve existing abuses at Canton. 4) Create a desire in China for British products. 5) Arrange diplomatic representation at Peking. 6) Open Japan, Cochin China, and the Eastern Islands to British commerce (156).

In my kindness to men from afar I make generous return,

Wanting to preserve my good health and power. (x)⁵

The so-called “curios” and “devices” represented to the English the epitome of their ingenuity, their scientific superiority; and until recently the traditional reading of the embassy to China has been one of “contact in terms of a dynamic and expansive West,” powered by a notion of scientific progress, “versus a stagnant and isolated East” that held steadfastly to ancient traditions (Hevia 1995: xii). The journals written by embassy participants have been analyzed in terms of their truthfulness as historical narratives, but not as artifacts of a contact zone produced during the age of the exploration narrative. Pratt’s studies of similar texts from similar times but other places help us to identify some of the discursive features that influenced how the embassy participants came to understand and articulate their experiences, and later how readers of these texts read and understood those experiences and the consequences of the embassy as well.

Viewing “the rest of the world”

Imperial Eyes explores European travel and exploration writing in connection with European economic and political expansion from 1750 to the twentieth century. Pratt considers how travelers and explorers “produced ‘the rest of the world’ for European readerships at particular points in Europe’s expansionist trajectory” (5). Although the time period covered in Pratt’s study is broad, her point of departure in the mid eighteenth century is specific. She chose this time period because of the “intersecting processes” that were

⁵This is Cranmer-Byng’s translation, taken from the introduction to *An Embassy to China*. See Hevia (1995: 84-87) for an interpretation of the poem.

taking place, namely the emergence of “natural history as a structure of knowledge and the momentum toward inland, as opposed to maritime exploration” (9). As natural historians continued to circumnavigate the globe, they developed methods to catalogue and organize systematically the many different plant and animals species they encountered, which Pratt argues led to a “planetary consciousness among Europeans” that helped to facilitate the “expanding search for commercially exploitable resources, markets, and lands to colonize” (30).

Drawing on the research of Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things*, Pratt explains that the process of discovering nature was “an undertaking that was realized in many aspects of social and material life” (29), from the publishing of books to the founding of amateur and professional societies. In *Travels, Explorations, and Empires: Writings from the Era of Imperial Expansion, 1770–1835*, Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson elaborate, explaining that as explorers discovered new plants, the classification of “unique and indigenous growth” was superseded by its placement within the Western “scientific sign-system in which all things are allotted a symbolic place in so far as they conform to arbitrary criteria” (xxiv). Scientific discovery, Fulford and Kitson contend, effected “a benign colonization” that nevertheless prepared “the way for actual occupation of territory” (xxv). The dynamics of the pursuit of understanding nature demonstrates for Pratt that “knowledges exist not as static accumulations of facts, bits, or bytes, but as human activities, tangles of verbal and non-verbal practices” (Pratt 29). As Hall summarizes, natural history was “not simply neutral information gathering, but information gathering with a purpose” (24).

Part 1 of *Imperial Eyes*, titled “Science and Sentiment, 1750–1800,” covers a period that includes the China embassy and the beginning of the global taxonomic project

established by Linnaeus and his followers (one of whom traveled to China in 1750, giving us the only reference to that country in the entire text). Pratt explains that the type of writing typical of this era is “marked by an orientation toward interior exploration” (15), and as such the early travel narratives were not scientific in their literary style but more similar to “the popular genre of survival literature” in that they emphasized “hardship and danger on the one hand, and marvels and curiosities on the other” (20).⁶

Scholars have recently come to realize that travel writing as a genre was greatly affected by the success of the Linnaeus system. During the second half of the eighteenth century, Pratt explains, “natural history played a part” in virtually every foreign expedition (27).⁷ In travel literatures, the scientific descriptions of nature were oftentimes placed in appendices or in “formal digressions from the narrative” (27) as the “observable and cataloguing of nature itself became narratable” (28). Various versions of the scientific expedition emerged: some incorporated the discovery of certain plants into a predictable sequence of events; others crafted stories in which the discovery formed the main storyline. It is not surprising then that researchers now view travel writing as an admixture of fact and fiction, “autobiography, essay, adventure novel, and amateur ethnography” (Burton 226).

To varying degrees all of the learned men of the embassy were natural historians, and even though the journey to China has traditionally been treated as a historical event, we can view the writings by embassy participants as contributions to the emerging interest in and

⁶ Another noteworthy genre was “civic description” (20), described by Pratt as “neither science nor survival literature” but enormous compendiums of information on many aspects of geography and life, except, of course, “mines, military installations, and other strategic information.” Civic description texts, Pratt comments, are “virtually devoid of anecdote” (20).

⁷ For example, the “herborizer,” who desired “nothing more than a few peaceful hours alone with the bugs and flowers,” emerged as a frontier figure, joining the “seafarer, the conqueror, the captive, [and] the diplomat (27).

attention to travel writing as a dynamic, knowledge-producing genre. The chinoiserie vogue, inspired in part by Jesuit panegyrics and fueled by individuals who never traveled to China, had already faded by the time the embassy departed, so many people were interested in reading a truthful account, written by respectful diplomats, of the interior of China and the workings of the Chinese government. As with so many other expeditions around the globe, the embassy to China was very much an example of information gathering with a purpose.

Rhetoric in the Contact Zones

In her study Pratt coins three concepts: contact zone, anti-conquest strategy, and autoethnography.⁸ Each of the concepts operates at different levels of awareness both in Pratt's writings and in the works that she examines. So, for example, an entire text might possess an anti-conquest narrative strategy, but that strategy can appear as well on the sentence level through the use of certain metaphors or tropes. Likewise, a text that introduces the customs and manners of an entire race of people is the product of a contact zone, but contact zone can also refer to a literal meeting between peoples from different cultures. Today, the notion of the contact zone is commonly used to refer to interactions in college classrooms or even "meetings" in hyperspace.

In its original incarnation in *Imperial Eyes*, Pratt refers to a contact zone both as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination, as well as "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated

⁸ In this study I do not deal with autoethnographic texts.

come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (6). Pratt explains that she has borrowed the term contact "from its use in linguistics, where the term contact language refers to improvised languages that develop among speakers of different native languages who need to communicate with each other consistently, usually in the context of trade" (6).

While the notion of contact zone is "grounded within a European expansionist perspective," Pratt contends that "contact zone" is also "an attempt to invoke a spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect" (7). The term "contact" thus foregrounds the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A contact perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations with each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and "travelees," not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understanding and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power. (6-7)

The anti-conquest strategy is a narrative technique that helped to foster "a utopian, innocent vision of European global authority" (57).⁹ The anti-conquest narrative, according

⁹ *Imperial Eyes* uses the concept of transculturation to discuss ways in which colonies select and appropriate metropolitan modes of representation and on ways metropolitan culture is produced by the colonies. Transculturation is the transference of culture in a reductive fashion imagined from within the interests of the metropolis. MacKenzie, who argues that Said's conception of Orientalism offers too much of a one-way street, denying any sort of discussion of influence, appropriation, and mutual modification, demonstrates that "oriental arts and crafts were subjected to a repeated process of adaptation and manipulation" (108). The process that Mackenzie describes is similar to transculturation. Contrary to popular belief, MacKenzie claims that

to Pratt, underwrote colonial appropriation aided by writers, usually naturalists, “whose conspicuous innocence acquires meaning in relation to an assumed guilt of conquest” (57). That is, despite the fact that “travelers were witnessing the daily realities of the contact zone, [and] even though the institutions of expansionism made their travels possible, the *discourse* of travel that natural history produces, and is produced by, turns on a great longing: for a way of taking possession without subjugation and violence” (57). Anti-conquest includes rhetorical strategies such as self-mockery, displays of innocence and vulnerability, as well as the consistent use of certain tropes, including metaphors of vision. The rhetoric of anti-conquest also appears in the form of omission, involving violence and destruction in contact zones being left out of the narrative or reported only anecdotally or as events long since passed.¹⁰

“chinoiserie, the construction of an imaginary Orient to satisfy a Western vision of human elegance and refinement within a natural and architectural world of extreme delicacy, was as much a product of Chinese craftsmen as the West” (109).

¹⁰ The West, of course, never dominated China in a colonial sense, and the Macartney embassy was not attempting to conquer or colonize the country. Yet in order to be successful, the embassy needed to overcome the Chinese tradition of treating non-Chinese as cultural inferiors, which they hoped to do by demonstrating how trade with England would be mutually beneficial. Thus, for my purposes in this dissertation the designation of a contact zone as being a space of “colonial” encounters does not limit my ability to apply the notions of the contact zone to Western writings about China, especially since the desire to establish reciprocity was the basis of the embassy and the ideological foundations of both the Chinese and English empires.

George Steinmetz, furthermore, has shown that there is a “spectrum of colonialisms” (46). In “‘The Devil’s Handwriting’: Precolonial Discourse, Ethnographic Acuity, and Cross-Identification in German Colonialism” Steinmetz compares German ethnographic representations and native policy in the German overseas colonies in Somoa, in southwest Africa, and on Qing Island in China. He discovered that there were considerable differences in how German colonizers treated, that is, represented and created rules and regulations for dealing with, the native peoples in their colonies. In his study he criticizes Bhabha’s failure to distinguish between “unstable forms” of colonial “in-betweenness” that were “produced by pre-colonial contact” (46).

China and the Contact Zone

The travel accounts Pratt examines were written during periods of noted historical transitions, and the embassy to China, likewise, marked numerous “transitions” in the Western idea of, and relations with, China. More so than any other event to date, the embassy produced visual and factual knowledge about “Celestial beings” of the “Middle Kingdom.” Several books depicting Chinese customs and manners were published in the years following the embassy, and words and images from those texts appeared in various places throughout the next century. In addition, Jonathon Spence in *The Chan’s Great Continent: China in Western Minds* (1998) explains that during the late eighteenth century the Western understanding of China was already transitioning from a “dreamy parody” (62) of Chinese art and culture found in the cult of chinoiserie to an understanding that was beginning to reflect the increased contacts between China and the West.¹¹

Focusing on the embassy allows me to cross what John M. Mackenzie describes as the “glaring divide between an alleged historicism and the complex historiographical understanding” (37) that appears in the works of literary critics whose “lack of sophistication” is evident in their “inability to handle historiography” (36). Mackenzie’s criticisms, which appear in *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts* (1995) are largely directed at Edward Said, whose research, according to Mackenzie, “lacks a single instance in

¹¹ Porter (1996) cites Walpole’s response to *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* as the beginning of the end of the chinoiserie fad. Also, in the 47-year period from the departure of the embassy until the beginning of Opium War (1839–1942), the idea of China in the West moved from “naïve enthusiasm to cynical disdain,” marking a “shift” in China’s “function in the realm of signification” (101). In *Scratches on Our Minds: American Views of China and India* (1958; 1980), Issacs notes a chronology of changing attitudes in the West’s attitude toward China and the Chinese. He calls the eighteenth century the “The Age of Respect,” which was followed by “The Age of Contempt (1840–1905). Of course each age “lives on into and through the other, and in all their many expressions [six Ages in total] they coexist” (71). Interestingly, Isaacs does not label the 47-year period between the Macartney embassy and the Opium War.

which cultural artefacts are directly influenced by specific events” (37). The China embassy travel narratives are not only products of a real encounter, but as I argue, they are also connected rhetorically because later texts sought to correct or rewrite the narrative presented in earlier ones.

Conclusion

Works written by Westerners who traveled to and wrote about China and the Chinese are not often included in studies concerned with the rhetoric of othering or Western representations of non-Western others. Chapter 2 of this dissertation provides a literature review of research related to the Macartney embassy, examining those texts primarily in terms of the methodology that the authors use to interpret embassy artifacts. Chapter 3 considers how Pratt’s reading strategies can be applied to both the embassy in general and to the dynamics of the kowtow incident in particular. The historical circumstances that distinguished the Macartney embassy to China makes comparison with other contact zone encounters problematic; therefore, Chapter 3 also identifies seven important features of a contact zone encounter that exist above and beyond specific historical circumstances. In Chapter 4, I use Pratt’s ways of reading to identify “moments” in the travel narratives where genre and ideology intersect. Chapter 5, the (slightly decentered) centerpiece of the dissertation, examines a meeting-of-the-heads-of-state scene as depicted in an English satirical engraving from 1792. The print is an extraordinary depiction of a contact zone encounter, yet its proximity from the actual event demonstrates the potential of the contact zone as an analytical tool for interrogating a of range cross-cultural representations. The last

chapter of the dissertation argues that the embassy and the kowtow incident were, in some ways, the realizations of preconceived visual and literary metaphors. The features of a contact zone encounter identified in Chapter 3 should help researchers to access and interpret systematically and comprehensively those visual and literary metaphors associated with a contact zone.

CHAPTER 2.

THE MACARTNEY EMBASSY TO CHINA 1792–1794: DOCUMENTING IMPERIUM

Chapter 1 explained that China has often been left out of studies dealing with European representations of non-European others. Even though the Macartney embassy to China is one of the most well-known events in global and international relations studies, I have yet to encounter a discussion of the embassy artifacts as products of a contact zone. The travel journals are usually read as historical accounts, but not as texts written during an era when travel writing as a genre was gaining in popularity and evolving in multifarious formats. This chapter reviews studies that have informed my understanding of the embassy to China, especially with regard to analytical methods for interpreting and interrogating the textual artifacts that were produced by embassy participants.

Ritual, Diplomacy, and Interpretation: Reconstructing History

The kowtow incident and the Macartney mission are discussed in many books and articles, and to some degree scholars are divided on what actually transpired early on the morning of September 14, 1793. Chinese and English accounts of kowtow ceremony differ. One Chinese version, for example, claims that Macartney had no intention of performing the kowtow, but when he found himself in the presence of the emperor he was overwhelmed and spontaneously performed the expected obeisance. Not surprisingly, there are no English language versions that support this particular narrative, and in fact, J. L. Cranmer-Byng, who published the most comprehensive version of Macartney's journal in 1963, contends that

discussions of Macartney's supposed misconduct in the presence of the emperor are irrelevant because the emperor never had any intention of granting the British government's requests. After all, "previous embassies from Europe had performed the ceremony without obtaining any benefits" (1963: 32–34).¹²

In addition to being discussed in historical accounts of China, the embassy to China is also the subject of numerous studies, beginning with Earl Pritchard's *The Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1750–1800* (1970), which examined the embassy journals as well as Western and recently-available Chinese archival material. John K. Fairbank and Teng Ssu-yu's "On the Ch'ing Tributary System" considers the institutional context in which the Chinese court tried to contain the Macartney embassy. J. L. Cranmer-Byng (1962) published a scholarly addition of Macartney's journal, complete with extensive notes and historical commentary. Earlier, Helen Robbins wrote a biography of Macartney titled *Our First Ambassador to China; An Account of the Life of George, Earl of Macartney* (1908), a book that Cranmer-Byng criticizes for its selected use of Macartney's notes and materials. Aubrey Singer has also done a wide-ranging study of the embassy that includes lesser-known accounts by individuals who participated as well as previously unpublished paintings and sketches by William Alexander, the embassy draughtsman.

Most recently, in *Ritual and Diplomacy: The Macartney Mission to China 1792–1794*, Robert A. Bickers concludes that "there is still more work to be done about the mission, its context, its written and visual products, and its reverberations" (9). *Ritual and Diplomacy* was published on the two hundredth anniversary of the embassy and includes

¹² Singer reports that "between 1656 and 1753 six embassies had reached China—two Dutch, two Russian and two Portuguese. All but one had sought trading concessions...and in some degree or other they all failed" (3).

works by American, English and Chinese scholars. Zhang Shunhong, in an essay titled “Historical Anarchism: The Qing Court’s Perception of and Reaction to the Macartney Embassy,” concludes that the embassy to China “provided an opportunity for the Qing court to realize the extent of Chinese backwardness and to understand the real and changing international situation” (42). Unfortunately, the Chinese court failed to make these realizations, and as a result “had to endure the disasters of the nineteenth century” (42). P. J. Marshall provides evidence that prior to the Macartney embassy a shift from Sinophilia to Sinophobia was “well underway” (11) by the 1790s. Bickers also provides the concluding essay, titled “History, Legend and Treaty Port Ideology, 1925–1931,” demonstrating that during the period of his concentration the dramatics of the Macartney was still “the subject of live debate” (81).

One contributor to the collection was James Hevia, who in “The Macartney Embassy in the History of Sino-Western Relations” argues that the kowtow incident is, at least to some degree, a rhetorical construction, a convenient narrative to explain the reason relations deteriorated between China and the West during the nineteenth century. The problems encountered during the ceremony only became problems retrospectively during the nineteenth century, when other economic issues arose and the English found the Chinese to be unwilling to “kowtow” to the English world system. Hevia claims that the kowtow incident (and a letter written by the emperor to the English king) authorized “certain assumptions about the China visited by Lord Macartney” (58). In addition, the kowtow incident and the letter historically have served as “empirical evidence to support” the characterization of late imperial China as “despotic or autocratic, jealous or sino-centric, isolated and exclusionary, aloof and haughty” (58).

Hevia continues his research on the embassy in a book titled *Cherishing Men from Afar* where he looks closely at Qing dynasty ceremonial code. Hevia concludes that researchers need to reinterpret the code based on the emperor's willingness to permit Macartney to deviate from the official ritual, which Hevia contends was an open-ended "discourse about agency" (132). Recognized as the best study on pre-twentieth-century China published in 1997, *Cherishing Men from Afar* ignited a debate among Sinologists concerning, among other issues, the application of "post" theories to the study of China.

Joseph Esherick strongly criticizes *Cherishing Men from Afar*, accusing Hevia of translating certain phrases, including the phrase that became the title of the book, as a way to support his argument. Esherick states that nothing in Hevia's text adds anything new to the traditional understanding of the embassy as a collision of two contrasting civilizations. The only thing new in Hevia's account, according to Esherick, was his "analytical perspective" (136), which is based on postmodern theories of interpretation. Most of Esherick's disapproval centers on the new light that was shed on the embassy based on the translation of previously untranslated materials. Esherick not only finds errors in the translation, some of which he labels as "howlers" (139), but also with Hevia's assertion that certain phrases had meanings that were not historically stable. In a restrained response to Esherick's review, Hevia argues that researchers too quickly draw methodological lines between social science research (abstract models that lead to universalized generalizations) and "humanities-oriented history" that prefers "to treat phenomena as unique instances" (July 1998: 325-6). The challenge for scholars, Hevia contends, is to use the specific event to make a universal comment.

A study that uses a model to explain not only the happenings of the kowtow incident but also communication dynamics during cross-cultural encounters is Linda Beamer's article "A Schemata Model for Intercultural Encounters and Case Study: The Emperor and the Envoy." Beamer uses the kowtow incident to consider the process by which "humans understand, or in other words attribute meaning to, messages across cultures" (141). Beamer proposes a "model that shows how meanings are generated from the attributions by the perceiver as well as from knowledge of the actual culture" (141). Her primary concern is with the cognitive process involved in generating an understanding of something, in this case an entire culture, with which one is not very familiar.

The embassy to China, understandably, serves as an ideal case study for her interests. Beamer hypothesizes that "individuals hold preconceived conceptions about other cultures and project mental schemata of other cultures based upon their preconceptions" (158). She concludes that during the kowtow ceremony the Chinese and the English "persisted in communicating with the projected image of the other," without contact between what she labels as "actual" and "projected" mental schemas. According to Beamer, the reasons for the actions of the other, reside "in the mind of the meaning-maker," which "may not correspond to the messages being communicated" (158).¹³

¹³ There are several problems with Beamer's study—that is, in addition to her misspelling the name of the emperor and the dynasty—that greatly inform my own study. Beamer relies on Peyrefitte's (1992) discussion of the embassy as her only source of historical interpretation of the event. Peyrefitte's book, which was been translated as both *The Immobile Empire* and *The Collision of Two Civilizations*, conveniently but deceptively sets up the sort of clean dichotomy necessary for Beamer's model. The problem is not with Peyrefitte's account, which has been "criticized for its essentialist view of Chinese culture" (Esherick 142) but also praised for its recreation of the embassy, but with her ahistorical treatment of the kowtow incident. For Beamer, the kowtow ceremony has gained emblematic significance as a ideal example of cross cultural miscommunication. If Beamer had read Macartney's travel journal, however, she would have had a difficult time arguing that his "cognitive dissonance" was triggered by "feelings of distrust" (141). If anything, by the end of the embassy he grew tired of the Chinese not agreeing to honor his requests, and he became unnerved by the Chinese inquisitiveness, which he associated with their native jealousy. But those observations are altogether separate

Beamer's analysis reinforces a reductive cultural dichotomy (East and West, or in this case, culture "A" and culture "B") by invoking the idea of China as the West's cultural other. Her use of the kowtow incident works well to demonstrate how her model functions, but it does not really inform other researchers interested in the topic; it only informs her model. Thus, her study demonstrates two important realities of scholarly research. First, it is difficult to take a specific historical instance and interpret it through a pre-existing model, but it is just as difficult to work the other way, crafting a model of communication that can inform particular historical events. Beamer's concedes that the "model does not discuss how meaning is accessed" (159), leaving open the critical question of how one comes to know the other, a question that falls within the province of rhetoric and representation studies.

China in the Western Mind: Modes of Interpretation

There are several studies that have introduced Western images of China and the Chinese, including Mary Gertrude Mason's *Western Concepts of China and the Chinese, 1840-1876* (1939), which provides "a summary of the curios and absurd generalizations of a large number of badly informed writers and also of the observations of many shrewd and intelligent missionary and lay scholars, consular officials, and travelers" (vii-viii). Harold Isaacs's *Scratches on Our Minds: American Values of China and India* (1958) uses newspaper reports and interviews in an attempt to understand not only why the Western perception of China sits at both ends of the spectrum of orientalism, but also why the

from his audience with the emperor. To be sure, what Macartney saw in China confirmed what he already knew but at other times refuted what he thought he knew, and even though he and others gained a new perspective on China, that perspective was complicated in more ways than a model can ever convey. Most of Beamer's observations regarding the "suspicion and fear of a failed outcome to their trade mission" (155) are not evident in Macartney's own words.

Western image of China is decidedly more positive than the image of India. Raymond Dawson's *The Chinese Chameleon: An Analysis of European Conceptions of Chinese Civilizations* (1967), although never mentioned in any study dealing with Western representations of non-Western others, is an early contribution to the discussion that the West's representation of non-Western others had more to do with the West than the non-West. David Porter's *Ideographia: The Chinese Cipher in Early Modern Europe* (2001) traces the development of the China trope in the West, demonstrating how China gained a "rhetorical currency" (6) as the West's most significant cultural other. Colin Mackerras has published two books, *Western Images of China* (1999), which like Porter and Dawson's "covers images from the very beginnings to contact between China and the West to the present time" (4), and *Sinophiles and Sinophobes: Western Views on China* (2000), an anthology that includes passages from the travel journals of two embassy participants, ambassador Lord Macartney and comptroller John Barrow.

In *The Chan's Great Continent: China in Western Minds* (1998), Jonathon Spence considers why China keeps appearing in the Western consciousness, a phenomenon he refers to as China "sightings." While some sightings are well known, Marco Polo's travels to China, for example, other sightings are less famous but just as intriguing, including Francis Bacon's interest in Chinese "real characters," William Chambers' book of Chinese arts and architecture, and Jose Luis Borges' fictional Chinese taxonomy in "The Garden of Forking Paths." According to reviewers, Spence's book lacks a theoretical paradigm, giving one the impression that the sightings existed independent of one another, and the work itself, despite its title, did not really advance or complicate our understanding of "China in Western

Minds.” But the reviewer does not offer us a strategy either, and I contend that the sightings can be linked rhetorically through a systematic study of tropes.¹⁴

In *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (1993), Spurr identifies twelve recurring schemes and tropes in the writings of those who had to construct “a coherent representation of the strange and often incomprehensible realities confronted in the non-Western world” (3). Spurr examines images, figures of speech, and lines of argument in an effort to establish “the unexpected parallels and the common genealogies that unite these apparent disparate occasions for discourse” (4).

Unlike Pratt, whose research does not wander far from the texts that she examines or the people who published them, Spurr works ahistorically, even though the artifacts he examines (as evidenced in the book’s title) are largely journalistic essays or documents of historical events. Interested in articulating the manner in which “traditionally Western ideals have served in the process of colonization” (1), he argues that a “rhetoric of self-idealization” served Westerners in their efforts “to establish political and ethical order” throughout the world.

In *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, Mackenzie does not mention *The Rhetoric of Empire*, but he claims that colonial discourse critics (such as Spurr) simply read “present values into past ages,” and he contends that unlike historians, who can be “lumpers

¹⁴ Earlier, in an essay titled “Western Perceptions of China from the Late Sixteenth Century to the Present,” Spence concluded that it was not adequate to view the majority of Western views of China as “solely reflecting the biases within Western culture or a patronizing and exploitive attitude toward Eastern civilizations” (13), an opinion he attributes to Said. Therefore, in *The Chan’s Great Continent*, Spence never even mentions Said (or Foucault), defining his purpose as only providing readers with “a sense to the multiplicity of intellectual and emotional attitudes that Westerners have brought to their attempts to deal with the phenomenon of China” (13).

and splitters, enthusiastic builders and sceptical doubters,” discourse theorists can only “lump ... building unwieldy piles [of tropes, themes, etc.] out of the ruins of dismantled texts” (38-9). Yet Spurr provides an argument to support circumscribing historical difference by looking for “convergence, correspondence, and analogy” in “ways of writing about people” (3), including rhetorical modes based on the acts of surveying and classifying non-Western others. Both historical and rhetorical modes are important for this dissertation because the “unexpected parallels and common genealogies” (between Western representations of Chinese and non-Chinese) unite the dissimilar historical circumstances. Identifying these parallels and genealogies makes us more sophisticated consumers of language because we are able to understand in more complicated ways how language influences the subsequent interpretation of the events that resulted in the written artifact.

Mackenzie’s point, though, is well taken: it is easier to find colonial gestures in language if you know that the writer was (to whatever extent) a “colonizer” and the geographic area was (again, to whatever extent) “colonized.” Many travel narratives, furthermore, offer hundreds of pages of description, and although there might be certain stylistic consistencies, such as the frequent use of passive verbs or infrequent references to the concerns of native peoples, in many texts one is hard pressed to find explicit arguments supporting imperialist efforts.

As researchers, how should we approach the divide between literary and rhetorical criticism and historical methodology? One strategy would be to examine the embassy artifacts through the critical lens offered in *Orientalism*. The individuals of the Macartney embassy could not be called Orientalists because the Western study of China at this time was in its infancy, but as Ali Behdad reminds us, Said’s study is important because it displays

“the ideological underpinnings of the scientific and artistic representation of ‘otherness’ in European thought” (3). For contemporary researchers, the exposure of those underpinnings “promoted a shift in the interest of literary and cultural theoreticians from textuality to historicity, from aesthetic to the political, and from individual receptions to collective responses” (3)—a shift in Chinese studies that was greatly influenced by the artifacts of the Macartney embassy.

Orientalism: The Struggle to Make China Fit

In *Orientalism* Said identifies rhetorical schemes and tropes in the works Westerners who have talked about the people and places of the “Orient,” primarily the Middle East, although he does include Jesuit panegyrics on China and Oliver Goldsmith’s *Citizen of the World* in his discussion. Said contends that Westerners in their paintings, novels, travel books, and other arts essentially invented the “Oriental other,” and in doing so managed to justify and extend their political and social dominance in the modern world order. Said goes on to explain that the term Orientalism extends to “the discipline by which the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery, and practice” (73).

In “Orientalism Reconsidered” Said compliments American Sinologist Benjamin Schwartz for reflecting “seriously upon what the critique of Orientalism means for” (13) the field of Chinese studies. What Said does not note is that China scholars have largely dismissed *Orientalism* as being irrelevant to their own intellectual interests. Most recently, in March 1996 Clifford initiated an electronic discussion on H-ASIA regarding the

applicability of Said's considerations on Orientalism to Western discourses on China.¹⁵ The responses were generally negative. As rightly rationalized by those who responded, the West never dominated China, so the application of Said's considerations to the systematic study of China is problematic. Several respondents referred Clifford to "Orientalism and Sinology," an essay by Simon Leys in a book titled *The Burning Forest*. Leys' essay personifies a now familiar posture that others have used in distancing themselves from Said's ideas. For example, in presenting his case against the application of Orientalism to Sinology, Leys admits that he has been "selective, arbitrary, incoherent, and flippant" (97) in his critique, but he claims that he styled his rhetorical approach by imitating Said's own.¹⁶

Leys' argument, if not his approach, is well taken, and when Clifford published "*A Truthful Impression of a Country: British and American Travel Writing in China, 1880-1949*," the book that eventually resulted from his inquiry, he handled the Orientalism issue with aplomb, claiming that his (Clifford's) work is not "yet another study of Orientalism or another exercise in the analysis of colonial discourse," adding almost gleefully that "once one unpacks their sometimes tendentious language," such works actually "have valuable things to say" (4). Clifford does conclude, however, that Orientalism does not "fit" as a theory for interrogating Western representations of China because there is no way that any theory can accommodate the "multiplicity of meanings" in the Occidental

¹⁵ The discussion can be found at <<http://ww2.h-net.msu.edu/~asia/threads/thrdorientalism.html>> (April 16, 2003).

¹⁶ Among other points of disagreement Leys argues that the Western contribution to China studies has remained "a mere footnote appended to the huge Sinological corpus that Chinese have been building for centuries," and he questions the usefulness of the notion of an "other" culture, which he claims "seems to end inevitably in self-congratulation, or hostility and aggression" (97). Leys did agree with Said that scholars "should question the advisability of too close a relationship between the scholar and the state," but he notes that that argument is "hardly an original conclusion" (99).

response to China, the “heterogeneity” of responses “that arose both from changes in and outside of China” (17).

Clifford’s text is also important because of the hesitancy with which he accepts conclusions based on colonialist discourse strategies. At one point, for example, when demonstrating that Edgar Snow, in his description of Chinese communists, made favorable comparisons with middle class citizens in the United States, Clifford mentions Pratt’s rhetoric of familiarity whereby travelers, in describing foreign landscapes, compare those scenes to ones in their native countries. This is done to bring the complexities of the foreign under control, but can we assert that Snow’s discursive strategy had an unrealized motive? According to Clifford, “Perhaps. Although it does seem odd to suggest that Snow was using a bourgeois strategy of representation to engage in an imaginative colonization of China” (142). Elsewhere in the book Clifford again relies on Pratt’s trope of the “commanding imperial gaze,” concluding that travelers to China were less likely to cast a colonizing gaze over China’s landscape in part because, for Westerners traveling through China, the sense of “newness, discovery, and penetration was muted” (16). Thus, in both instances Clifford includes Pratt in his discussion without being dismissive, leaving open the possibility of alternative methodologies for interpreting Western travel narratives to China.

Susan Thurin, in *Victorian Travelers and the Opening of China, 1842–1907*, identifies rhetorical strategies in the works of Western writers who traveled throughout China following the Opium War up until (approximately) the fall of the Qing dynasty when a republican government was established, a period that precedes and overlaps the era examined in Clifford’s book. Her theoretical debts to researchers such as Said and Pratt are limited in part because the book focuses more on biographical information about six different authors

than on theoretical exploration. Nevertheless, many of the rhetorical figures and tropes that Thurin identifies also appear in the works that Pratt consulted and in writings of the Macartney embassy, including tropes of space and seeing. Three of the travelers examined in her book, for example, found the “reciprocated gaze” (where the Chinese would stare at them) unnerving or “contaminating,” while another enjoyed “being turned into a tourist attraction” (194).

The multiple and often contradictory perceptions of China are the focus of Zhang Shunhong’s dissertation, which looks at a great range of works in the decades prior to those examined in Thurin’s book. Zhang examines *British Views on China during the Time of the Embassies of Lord Macartney and Lord Amherst (1790–1820)*, offering the term “self-criterion” as the notion that most influenced Western writings on China. British views on China during the “embassies were often not based on Chinese realities, but to a great extent were moulded by a general background in Britain and by the individual social attitudes, political ideas and personal experiences of the writers” (312). Unlike Europocentrism, ethnocentrism, or Said’s Orientalism, self-criterion is “not necessarily linked with colonialism, imperialism, or cultural hegemonism” (287). Self-criterion “applies to those writers who had favorable opinions of China and to those who criticized it, whereas Europocentrism and ethnocentrism can only suit writers who, convinced of British superiority, were critical and disdainful” (286–7). The usefulness of self-criterion is that it “can apply to all writers, even among those who were of contradictory views, while the latter can apply only to those who were critical” (287).

In dismissing the application of Said’s argument to Western writings on China, Zhang acknowledges that writers “did not base their views of China on accurate information,” but

such a reality, Zhang contends, “can hardly be taken to mean that what they wrote was little more than a product of their imagination” (285). Said’s observations are of limited use to the profession of Chinese studies, but to characterize his analytical method as an all-or-nothing approach is inaccurate. Said is interested in knowing how the generic conventions interact with the collections of images that shape or influence how one ultimately represents the other, and he makes an important distinction between early and modern forms of Orientalism. The modern forms emerged in the late eighteenth century, and the Macartney embassy is the historical event that signifies the change from the earlier forms of (proto-imperial) Orientalism to the later, more studied and ethnographically produced forms of Orientalism whose tropes and schemes within a short period of time are indistinguishable rhetorically from Western representations of other others.

Expanding the Contact Zone

Victorian literature scholar R. Mark Hall has used the contact zone to examine a fiction novel by Mary Elizabeth Braddon titled *Lady Audley’s Secret*. Although he acknowledges that “Pratt’s reading strategies were developed for another purpose” (23), he is able to use the contact zone because the novel shares certain affinities with “the values that underwrote the economic expansion and ‘civilizing mission’ of Europe during the Victorian era” (23). Those “values” are the “standards” that Macartney confronted during and after the embassy. More importantly for my purposes, Hall uses the contact zone as a means “to further examine and test Pratt’s underlying assumptions and claims” (23), arguing that as “terms such as ‘contact zone’ gain currency and become ... common parlance in discussions of imperialism,” it is “tempting to apply them uncritically” (Reitz cited in Hall 26). If

researchers want such terms to be useful, Hall argues—and I concur—then “we must challenge them, examining not only where they work, but where they fall short” (26).

Using Pratt’s ways of reading, the next chapter investigates the historical and political dynamics of the Macartney embassy to China. While the notion of the contact zone is useful for identifying basic things to look for, such as moments where contact and coercion took place, overall the contact zone “perspective” does not hold up well under the weight of historical specificity. Therefore, the next chapter also identifies seven features of a contact zone encounter that are transportable across genres, times, and media.

CHAPTER 3.
THE MACARTNEY EMBASSY TO CHINA 1792–1794:
A CONTACT ZONE ENCOUNTER

This chapter introduces the grammar of a contact zone encounter and articulates how Pratt's terms and concepts either do or do not apply to the Macartney embassy. In addition to providing historical background, the chapter demonstrates that Pratt's concepts are helpful but only in a partial manner, which is the result of both the unique historical aspects of this particular cross-cultural encounter and the limited scope of Pratt's original articulation of a contact zone. I focus on three concepts: contact language, reciprocity, and narrative non-events. These concepts do help us bring the texts from the Macartney embassy into more general discussions of Western representation of non-Western others, but a great deal of effort is needed to explain how the terms are relevant. The misfit nature of a fourth concept, the "commanding imperial gaze," demonstrates just how limited Pratt's notion of the contact zone is for understanding the rhetorical dimensions of the Macartney embassy artifacts. Indeed, the commanding imperial gaze takes on a literal dimension (albeit in a reversed trajectory) as the Chinese restricted or reciprocated the English view of the Chinese empire.

Overall, despite the comparative utility in identifying various moments or commonplaces, collectively, the terms and ideas of Pratt's contact zone do not prepare us to interrogate systematically the China journals as contact zone artifacts. In fact, after using Pratt's vocabulary to introduce the specific dynamics of the kowtow incident and the embassy's journey through China as a whole, what we are really left with is a tangle of ideas and idioms, which might actually serve to reinforce the nature of the contact as unique and

beyond meaningful comparison with other instances in other places—even though from historical and experiential perspectives there are numerous commonalities between the text that Pratt examines and the ones of the Macartney embassy. To make the contact zone perspective more useful as an analytical tool, this chapter concludes with an elaborate set of contact zone concepts, giving researchers a means to move beyond travel literature and the governing assumptions (specifically the deterministic nature of the imperial project) that Pratt has offered.

Similarities and Differences between Contact Zones

Details of the Macartney embassy appeared in the press in the months leading up to departure. On January 24, 1792, *The Times* reported that “a very splendid Embassy to the Emperor of China is about to be sent from this country, and Lord Macartney has had the offer of being appointed to it.” Two days later *The Times* again reported (of Macartney) “No man in this country perhaps is so eminently qualified to give grace and dignity to the embassy, but particularly to China, where firmness of mind and pliability of manners is absolutely necessary.” Also in the January 24 article, as well as several others over the next few months in *The Times*, it was reported that “the choice of Lord Macartney does honor to the Minister” because he is “the most proper Gentleman.” *The Times* goes so far as to assert that the “integrity and talents” of Macartney “are “probably not unknown to the Emperor.”¹⁷

¹⁷ On May 29, 1792, *The Times* reported that the embassy was “well calculated to catch the attention and goodwill of the Chinese,—the box alone, which contains his Majesty’s letter to the Emperor, cost nearly *nine hundred guineas!*” On June 22 *The Times* listed a model of the steam engine, “every modern invention in mechanics,” and “a copious chemical apparatus” as some of the items being taken to China “as specimens of all our excellent manufactures.” A gift for the emperor (the transportation of which delayed the departure of the embassy) was discussed on August 2 and 29.

The magnitude, importance, interest in and coverage of the embassy distinguishes it from many other types of travel, especially those that were self-financed expeditions where explorers set out to “discover” nature in the form of Lake Victoria, the Niger River, or the African gorilla.¹⁸ In those examples, all of which appear in *Imperial Eyes*, the sense of adventure and accomplishment is high. Pratt also notes that of the individuals who authored books in her study only Alexander Von Humboldt “has been the subject of significant academic scholarship” (239). The China journals, by contrast, were written by accomplished men, either as career diplomats, authors, or in the case of John Barrow, both. Barrow published “numerous biographies and accounts of naval personalities and voyages” (Fulford and Kitson 55) and even authored the popular *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1831). A total of nine China journals were produced (not including Alexander’s three books of paintings), and each writer knew that outlandish claims about heroic feats could easily be challenged and dismissed.¹⁹

While the realities of the China embassy are evident in the narratives, the underlying economic motivation and the sense of adventure and anticipation were comparable to other explorations around the world. Furthermore, there was some sense of accomplishment with the embassy in that a great deal of information about China was recorded, a feat that was almost inevitable given the size of the embassy and the talented people who were involved.

¹⁸ Fulford and Kitson explain that “explorers were often not gentlemen, but common soldiers, adventurers, trappers or hunters. Their texts were rendered into gentlemanly discourse to ensure their acceptance by reviewers and scientists” (xxiv).

¹⁹ According to Appleton, *The Annual Register*, *Anti-Jacobin Review*, *The British Critic*, *The Gentlemen’s Magazine*, *The Monthly Review*, and *Scots Magazine* all carried “lengthy accounts and selections from” (169) Staunton’s, Anderson’s, and Barrow’s narratives of the China embassy.

In fact, prior to departure *The Times* even reported that “should the Embassy fail, the expence [sic] of it will not be wholly lost, for much improvement will be gathered from the observations of those Professors of Science who are to accompany Lord Macartney into the interior parts of China.” Pritchard notes as well that after the embassy “a leading officer of the East India Company remarked that the information alone to be acquired from the embassy would far more than compensate for the expense” (375).

Western-ignorance-meets-Chinese-arrogance: The Problematic Metaphor of Contact

Pratt’s use of the word “contact” is borrowed from linguistics and “refers to improvised languages that develop among speakers of different native languages who need to communicate with each other consistently, usually in the context of trade” (6). The kowtow ceremony was itself an improvised language, not of words, but of rhetorical gestures. As a communicative act the kowtow is an example of epideictic discourse. Most often associated with ceremonial oratory on public holidays or religious and academic occasions, epideictic speeches “console or inspire an audience by instilling or renewing values and beliefs and a sense of group identity” (Kennedy 20). A kowtow also inspires, instills, and renews values of respect and beliefs in the supremacy of the emperor.

Although historical accounts differ on what actually took place, all agree that Macartney’s conduct was a calculated and negotiated improvisation of what they would have been expected to perform for his own king. Furthermore, if the English were to be successful in their goals of establishing a presence in the Chinese capital, some sort of contact language of ceremony would need to be established for future communications. Thus, whether Macartney did or did not remove his hat nine times (Hsu 156), or somehow did manage to

kneel and bow at the same time (Esherick 152), is not altogether relevant to the larger issue of the context in which the meeting took place. According to Pratt, contact languages usually emerge in the context of trade, but the ceremony in Rehe took place “in the context of trade” only from the English perspective, because the Chinese viewed the ceremony as a tributary gesture. Trade, for England, was the lifeblood of the empire; for the Chinese, trade was largely symbolic, an extension of their age-old system of tribute.

Hall criticizes Pratt’s use of the word contact, pointing out that she “uses words such as ‘clash’ and ‘grapple’ to describe battles that take place inside the ‘contact zone’” (26). Hall notes that the word contact “suggests contingency, touch, close association, commerce, intercommunication, even companionship—just the opposite of the breach, break, rift, rupture, and split that often result from the turbulent association she recounts” (26). Just as Pratt claims that the rhetoric of discovery sanitizes the process of discovering, Hall contends that the term contact has the same effect on the violent conflicts that often resulted from imperialism. The effect, according to Hall, is that Pratt has romanticized “the very domination she seeks to ‘demythologize’” (Pratt cited in Hall 2).

Coercion and Conflict: Contact as Reciprocity

One of the benefits of using the contact zone as a critical lens is that it encourages one to avoid “diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination” that tend to ignore or suppress the “interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters” (6). A contact zone usually involves “conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (6). These conditions were present throughout the entire time the Macartney embassy was in

China, yet oftentimes the inequality and conflict were overcome not so much through coercion but simply because the two groups tried to maintain mutual deference.

Discussions prior to the kowtow ceremony can be read as coercive, but only in the sense that the Chinese and the English both tried to persuade each other into performing their own ceremonial gestures. At least during the ceremony the “intractable” conflicts were overcome after each group modified their expectations of the others’ conduct. In particular, the Chinese court relented and allowed Macartney to conduct a modified version of his own ceremonial, a concession that was interpreted by the English as a sign of China’s willingness to negotiate and grant the English their requests. But the “understanding” was not exactly “interlocking” as the modified obeisance was not an indication of a divergence from the tradition of treating guests to the empire as culturally inferior bearers of tribute.

Nevertheless, the notion of the contact zone helps us to see through the traditional metaphor of the embassy (and hence any given textual artifact produced from the encounter in China) as being a product of a “cultural collision” because unlike that metaphor, contact (more) accurately conveys the improvisational and interactive dynamics that Pratt argues resulted from encounters between Europeans and non-European others.²⁰ Many of the phrases that Hall used to criticize Pratt’s term (“contingence, touch, close association, commerce, intercommunication, even companionship”) describe the experience the English had in China more so, perhaps, than the experience the English had in other places around the world.

²⁰ In addition to Peyrefitte’s *The Collision of Two Civilizations* (also translated as *The Immobile Empire*), Cranmer-Byng has also authored an essay using the same metaphor, “Case Study in Cultural Collision: Scientific Apparatus in the Macartney Embassy to China, 1793” (1981). Esherick (1998: 152) also uses this metaphor.

When Pratt discusses “radically asymmetrical relations of power,” she appears to assume that the power is in favor of the traveler, not the travelee. In the case of the Macartney embassy, however, the Chinese were undoubtedly the ones in control of almost all aspects of the embassy participants’ lives. Furthermore, for over a hundred years prior to the embassy, Chinese merchants in the southern port city of Canton controlled trade between China and all other nations. But the “asymmetrical relations of power” are most evident when viewed vis-à-vis the European notion that “relations with the other were governed by a desire for reciprocity and exchange” (82), which was certainly the justification for the embassy, where England had hoped to curb the trade imbalance. As Kitson explains in *Travels, Explorations, and Empires*, “the Chinese attitude toward foreigners ... was not conducive to free trade” (xix). The Chinese had traditionally dealt with nations “that were less sophisticated” than China, which led the Chinese to develop the belief and practice that other people would be transformed “through acquaintance with Chinese virtue and culture” and desire to avail themselves “of the benefits of the empire” (xx). The emperor, “in reciprocation” was bound to be compassionate towards “men from afar” (xx).

The notion that both groups in contact zones are “constituted in and by their relations to each other” is grounded in the concept of reciprocity. In the case of the Chinese and European societies, however, Pratt’s notion of reciprocity does not encourage us to consider cultural and economic influence that China had on Western society. Until that point in history, there was nothing in China (despite the persistent efforts and small successes of Jesuit missionaries) even remotely comparable to the chinoiserie vogue that had swept through Europe, and although the Chinese did appreciate Western clocks and enjoyed various

other mechanical devices, especially toys, the English taste for tea and other luxury goods was never reciprocated by the Chinese.

Anti-conquest: The Innocent Gaze

A prominent narrative strategy in contact zone literature is for authors to assume a pose of innocence as a way to divert attention away from the realities of the (sometimes devastating) impact of their presence. Pratt labels this as an “anti-conquest strategy” (7).

Anti-conquest refers

to the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony ... The main protagonist of the anti-conquest is a figure I sometimes call the “seeing man,” an admittedly unfriendly label for the European male subject of European landscape discourse—he whose imperial eye passively looks out and possesses. (7)

As Pratt explains, “the eye scanning prospects in the spatial sense knows itself to be looking at prospects in the temporal sense—possibilities of a European future coded as resources to be developed, surpluses to be traded, towns to be built” (61).

Pratt’s discussion of the anti-conquest narrative precedes her analysis of John Barrow’s *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa in the Years 1797 and 1798*, which first appeared in London in 1801. Barrow’s account is especially remarkable for his development of the gaze trope, and perhaps the most dramatic difference between Barrow’s experiences in Africa and in China is that his “European improving eye” could not produce “empty landscapes” in China that were “meaningful only in terms of a capitalist future” or for “their potential for producing a marketable surplus” (61). Again the difference is literal, as few

landscapes were empty in China, and although there are occasionally references to “improvements” that the English could offer the Chinese through their advanced understanding of the sciences, the Chinese disinterest in “things European” left little opportunity for the English to feel guilty about their presence in the country.

Pratt uses Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia in observing that any sort of historical account of a contact zone encounter brings with it a “heteroglossic dimension” whereby “knowledge comes not just out of” the writer’s “sensibility and powers of observation, but out of interaction and experience usually directed and managed by ‘travelees,’ who are working from their own understandings of the world and of what the Europeans are and ought to be doing” (136).²¹ Pratt’s comments regarding the “powers of observation” are important for two reasons. First, a major category of gifts that the English took to China was instrumentation for observing and measuring, including astronomical tools and land surveying equipment. The literary gaze associated with the contact zone is not limited to metaphor. The English recognized the Chinese need for such instruments, which also represented the scientific advancement—and their best opportunity to achieve economic reciprocity—that the English had to offer the already culturally and artistically rich nation of China.

²¹ To be sure, the West’s understanding of China at the end of the eighteenth century developed largely from contacts in the southern port city of Canton, which represented only a tiny portion of the Chinese empire. Chinese artisans produced crafts that Europeans wanted, and in that regard they engaged in a sort of dialectic on Chinese culture. As a simple example mentioned in “Chinese Traits in European Civilization: A Study of Diffusion,” Cressey notes that “the use of tea created a large demand for porcelain tea sets but the Chinese type of handleless tea cup was not accepted in Europe so the Chinese manufactured cups with handles to suit European taste” (599–600). A common element of post-colonial literature is the use of parody and self-parody in satirizing the Western conception of the other. This same dynamic appears dramatically in Western writings about the chinoiserie fad, a reversal of the notion of transculturation since it is probably counterproductive to argue that the “Chinese taste” had a “colonizing effect” on the English sense of style.

Second, the Chinese had remarkable control over what Macartney (and all foreign travelers) could and could not “survey,” a reality that is repeatedly referenced in the journals of the Macartney embassy. A long, anecdotal footnote from the introduction to George Mason’s *The Costume of China, Illustrated by Sixty Engraving* (1800) illustrates this phenomenon. Mason explains that the events recorded here took place in Canton (several years prior to the Macartney embassy), and in addition to demonstrating the power of the Chinese to control the English gaze, the passage also provides “convincing proof of the difficulty, if not of the danger, attending inquisitive strangers in China” (n.p.).

A party of Englishmen, on the 24th of December 1789, had agreed with an old Chinese soldier for a view of the city of Canton—to afford, which, he pretended he would conduct them to the top of a considerable eminence that is near the walls of the city, and commands it. Having suffered the customary verbal abuse from boys and from the common rabble, in their way through the suburb streets, and being attended by a vast multitude, on their arrival at the foot of the hill they were disappointed by their guide refusing to proceed. This produced some strong remonstrances, during which one of the gentlemen flipped through the surrounding crowd, and began to ascend the hill; he was arrested near the summit by two stout natives; two of the party attempting to follow him were intercepted immediately, and a detachment of Tartar soldiers, rushing from a sally-port, carried the first offender within the walls of the city. The remaining gentlemen then used all their rhetoric of signs (for the language on either side was perfectly unintelligible to the other) to obtain a release of the prisoner, or even to be permitted to accompany him, but without effect; a rescue was equally impracticable, and they were compelled into a precipitate retreat amidst the

shouts and scurrilities of thousands. It was several hours before the gentleman was released, and then at the intersection of the Hong merchants with the executive power. His treatment had been better than expected, since, with the exception of their repeatedly attempting to snatch his watch,²² and regarding him with ignorant curiosity, he got home to the Factory without farther molestation. (n.p.)

The irony of the Chinese treating the English with “ignorant curiosity” seems to be lost on the author who has just narrated the ignorant actions of the curious English who only sought a view of the city. Aeneas Anderson’s *Narrative of the British Embassy to China in the Years 1792, 1793, and 1794* includes a similar story. At one point during the embassy Lieutenant-Colonel Benson, the Commandant of the Ambassador’s Guard, “was so hurt and mortified at being denied the liberty of passing the walls of the palace, that he made an attempt to gratify his inclinations, which produced a very unpleasant affray, when he was not only forced back from his design, but threatened with very illiberal treatment from the Chinese who were on duty at the gates” (113). Anderson notes that “several other disputes of a similar nature took place between the suite and the natives who guarded the palace,” an experience that was “very humiliating” (133) for the Englishmen.

In *The Rhetoric of Empire* Spurr demonstrates that in colonialist discourses the subjected other is “gazed upon” while simultaneously being “denied the power of the gaze” (13). During the embassy to China the English gaze was repeatedly reported as being

²² In a manners-and-customs text titled *China: Being “The Times” Special Correspondence from China in the Years 1857–58* (1858) author George Wingrove Cooke relates the following story about the Chinese fondness for Western fashions. According to Cooke, “the highest ambition of a Chinaman is to have an English watch. A pirate, who took a missionary and set him free, risked his life [the] next day by calling on him at his house. He produced the revered gentleman’s watch, and the rightful owner thought the repentant man had come to return it. Not so; the dandy Cantonese pirate had come to beg the missionary to teach him how to wind up that watch” (186).

obstructed, but the other (imperial) gaze was everywhere. As Macartney stated in his journal, he was conscious at all times of being “very narrowly watched, and all our customs, habits and proceedings, even of the most trivial nature, observed with an inquisitiveness and jealousy which surpassed all that we had read of in the history of China” (Cranmer-Byng 87–88). The watchful gaze, for Barrow, was downright unnerving. Barrow, who did not accompany Macartney to Rehe for the audience with the emperor, recalled that the Chinese guards in the capital were suspicious of government officers having conversations with embassy members, so much so that the guards acted as spies, and even though they could not understand what was spoken, the guards would watch “the actions, and even the motions of the eye, and [make their] report accordingly” (79). Thus reciprocity was only achieved by the Chinese watching the English watching the Chinese.

Despite Ziauddin Sardar’s claim in *Orientalism* (1999) that “by 1785 the Enlightenment had happened, science had been born and the whole terrestrial globe had been visited, reported on and after a fashion had become known and/or conquered by Europe” (25), access by foreigners to China was still severely restricted by the time of the embassy. The embassy journals are marked by an absence of what Pratt labels a “monarch-of-all-I-survey” rhetoric, which was produced by individuals as they traipsed through jungles or across mountains surveying, naming, and possessing (if not politically then at least nominally) other places around the world. The absence reflects the different agenda for those who traveled to China. Macartney was not trying to “possess” China as a colony; instead, he was trying to achieve diplomatic representation, or gain a foothold in China as a market.

The gaze as a rhetorical trope (as reversed, reciprocated, or obstructed) is valuable to researchers primarily if they want to identify the unique historical and experiential aspects of

the Macartney embassy. Furthermore, the literal dimension of the gaze (either in the form of surveying equipment or as a door being closed, denying a view) demonstrates a historical fact but is not really a useable rhetorical observation. The problematic aspect of reading the China journals using Pratt's terms and concepts is most evident in the next section where her ways of reading get bogged down in the messy details of the narrative of the historical importance of the kowtow incident.

The Kowtow Incident: Event or Non-Event

Travel writers oftentimes included descriptive promontory passages whereby they would verbally paint events as being "momentously significant," even though from a narrative point of view, the events were usually "non-events" (202). The discovery of a geographic marker, for example, fit certain types of adventure-oriented narratives. The "heroics of discovery" plot, however, served a dual purpose: it made the story more interesting, which sold more books, and it helped to persuade readers of the importance of the expedition (and by relation imperialism) itself. As an example Pratt offers "the string of British explorers who spent the 1860s looking for the source of the Nile," resulting in "peak moments" in their narrative when "'discoveries' were 'won' for England" (201).

A meeting that was more than a year in planning cannot easily be dismissed as a non-event,²³ and in Staunton and Macartney's travel journals the ceremony with the emperor is

²³ The idea that the Chinese court expected all visitors to the emperor to perform the customary obeisance was well known before the embassy departed. *The Times* reported that Macartney must demonstrate a "firmness of mind" (in negotiations) but "a pliability of manners" (in conduct) if the embassy had any chance of succeeding. On July 24, just three weeks prior to departure, *The Times* also claimed that

An Embassy to China is by no means a new thing in this country, though, from want of proper precautions and prudent conduct, it has hitherto failed of the wished for effect: some years since, a

described in detail—yet the kowtow itself is not, and there is almost no discussion of the symbolic importance of the obeisance.²⁴ Staunton devotes several pages to describing the circumstances leading up to the meeting, and the audience is presented in one paragraph.

His Excellency held the magnificent gold box, ornamented with jewels, containing his Majesty's letter to the Emperor, between both hands, above his head, and thus ascending the few steps leading to the throne, and bending on one knee presented it, with a short address, to his Imperial Majesty, who, taking it with both hands, placed it by his side, signifying pleasure which he felt in his Britannic Majesty's sending him an Embassy, with a letter and presents; that he also entertained like sentiments towards the King of Great Britain, and hoped that the harmony would always continue between their respective subjects. (355)

Staunton then points out that the "reception was regarded by the Court as particularly honorable; the Emperor seldom receiving Embassadors on the throne, or their credentials into his own hands, but through one of his courtiers" (355).

Macartney's journal, which is much richer in detail, never even mentions the obeisance.

As soon as he had ascended his throne I came to the entrance of the tent, and, holding in both my hands a large gold box enriched with diamonds in which was enclosed the

party reached Peking, but not adhering to the ceremonies laid down by the Chinese Court, they were turned out of the capital with contempt.

Although the report is not accurate—there was an earlier embassy to China headed by Ambassador Colonel Cathart, who died en route, thus ending the embassy before it ever reached China—the warning that visitors must observe Chinese court etiquette was clearly known.

²⁴ Prior to the meeting Staunton noted that "it had been signified to his Excellency that his Majesty would receive the same form of obeisance which was accustomed to pay to his own Sovereign. This was a welcome piece of information to the Ambassador, who was relieved by it from much anxiety" (350).

King's letter, I walked deliberately up, and ascending the side-steps of the throne, delivered it into the Emperor's hand, who, having received it, passed it to the Minister, by whom it was placed on the cushion. (Cranmer-Byng 122)

Contemporary readers could not have ascertained the historical consequence of Macartney's decision not to kowtow from Staunton's journal, and as such, the kowtow incident was a non-event.

But by the time Barrow relates his version of the ceremony with the emperor in *Travels in China* (1804), Macartney's refusal to kowtow has become a characteristic of the "proud, headstrong Englishmen" (92). The introductory section of Barrow's text is an elaborate defense of the ambassador's "absolutely necessary" conduct (22). Barrow described the reaction of the Chinese (who are now the ones who are "mortified") when news got back to the capital that Macartney had "refused to comply with the ceremony of prostrating himself" (91).

Although little was thought of this affair at Gehol, the great officers of state in the tribunal or department of ceremonies in Peking were mortified, and perplexed, and alarmed; and that, in short, it was impossible to say what might be the consequence of an event unprecedented in the annals of the empire. That the Emperor, when he began to think more seriously on the subject, might possibly impeach those before the criminal tribunal who had advised him to accede to such a proposal, on reflecting how much his dignity had suffered by the compliance; and that the records of the country might hand it down to posterity, as an event that had tarnished the luster of his reign, being nothing short of breaking through an ancient custom, and adopting one of a barbarous nation in its place. (91–92)

As Barrow concedes, “little was thought of this affair” at the time it took place, but in providing a behind-the-scenes (and retrospective) perspective, Barrow shows how the English taught the Chinese a lesson about “the absurd notions of [China’s] own vast importance” (24). Using Pratt’s terms, we can argue that the “conquest” has finally occurred, and the publishing of his *Travels in China* marks a “momentously significant” change in the interpretation of the kowtow incident, and in the Western “estimation of China” (Zhang 127).

Unlike the non-events explored by Pratt, though, where authors (or their editors and publishers) created meaningful moments, the kowtow incident has gained significance as a watershed largely without the assistance of those who participated. Peyrefitte claims that Macartney’s refusal to kowtow so insulted the Chinese court that it “ignited a tragic chain reaction” resulting in “the clash of the two nations, the collapse of China, British domination of Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century, [and] malevolent misunderstanding between the West and the Third World in the twentieth” (xix). By the Opium War (1839–1841) the kowtow had risen to the level of a cultural trait, an example of Pratt’s textually produced otherness, culminating in John Quincy Adams’ claim that the “cause” of the Opium War was “the kowtow!—the arrogant and insupportable pretension of China that she will hold commercial intercourse with the rest of mankind, not on terms of reciprocity, but upon the insulting and degrading forms of lord and vassal” (qtd in Esherick 10; see also Hevia 232–3).

Systematizing the Contact Zone

This chapter has explored the Macartney embassy to China using the terms and associated ideas of the contact zone. Pratt’s “ways of reading” (1992: 11) are helpful for establishing connections and highlighting differences between the political dynamics of this

particular contact zone and other contact zones that also resulted in travelers recording and publishing their experiences in journals. The contact zone for example encourages us to look beyond the metaphor of the embassy as a collision of two cultures, and the travel journals that embassy members produced can be read as literary works in addition to historical records. The kowtow incident itself was a negotiation of ceremonial languages, and the “miscommunications” draw our attention to similarities and differences in systems of thought, especially regarding cultural assumptions in displaying deference. Pratt’s work also helps us to see the important role that notions of reciprocity played in the maintenance of empire, regardless of the location of the empire’s controlling center. To claim that the kowtow incident, furthermore, was a non-event lends support to Hevia’s (1993) argument that the emperor’s letter and his snub of the king’s requests only became events as historians searched for ways to explain the deterioration in relations between China and the West during the nineteenth century.

Yet while Pratt offers us scenarios for comparison, the more one’s analysis is focused on a particular contact zone encounter, the less insight we can draw from the “application of” (or perhaps “reference to”) her terms and ideas. Furthermore, despite numerous instances where Pratt’s observations describe the experiences of those who participated in the embassy to China, her terms have to be qualified or modified often before they apply well to the embassy event.

What is needed to produce meaningful insights from contact zone encounters is a more systematic, and less historically embedded, approach to interpreting artifacts of a contact zone. As such, this section of the dissertation first offers a definitional exploration of the contact zone. I then break down the contact zone according to seven important features.

The features here are not meant to be hierarchical or comprehensive; instead, I unpack Pratt's ways of reading so as to facilitate the transportation of the contact zone idea more analytically and flexibly beyond the sorts of texts, individuals, and environments that she examines.

Before identifying the features of the contact zone that I consider especially important, it is necessary to discuss the primary metaphors themselves: contact and zone. Both words float considerably in terms of referents. Sometimes, for example, travelers have physical contact with others, but other times the contact is less precise as one "grapples" with vaguely conceived or understood cultural ideas or beliefs. Contact can be murderous or metaphoric as in the example of making eye contact. A zone, likewise, can refer specifically to a literal space where an encounter takes place, such as under a tent in Rehe, China, or it may refer more generally to the entire journey where one is physically in the foreign "zone."

A zone also refers to a continuing relationship that is established whereby separate cultures are forced to deal with each other in an ongoing manner, almost as though they are uncomfortably confined in a delimited space. The set up of the zone as a place where people are "dealing" with each other, of course, implies intolerance and assumes a threat of confrontation. Given the underlying contentiousness in the zone, perhaps it is surprising that the contact zone has been so eagerly discussed as a possible strategy for establishing an interactive and challenging classroom environment. But it is not surprising that researchers oftentimes begin their inquiries into the contact aspect of an encounter by trying to identify, isolate, and then articulate the consequences of, the power relations between people or groups within the zones where the contact is taking place. To begin one's inquiry by looking for (or assuming) "radically asymmetrical relations of power" inevitably leads one to

reinforce the separateness between those co-existing in the zone or partaking in the encounter. As evidenced earlier in this chapter (where both the Chinese and the English believed in their own cultural superiority), the assumption that differences and inequalities exist and are mutually sensed and recognized can be misleading.

Given the many ways in which “contact” and “zone” can be used and understood, it is useful to think of contact in terms of something that is measurable and accessible from a rhetorical point of view. Perhaps the most beneficial aspect of Pratt’s research is that she has identified structural and rhetorical moments that occur in (most) travel writing texts. These moments can serve as starting points for helping us to uncover something interesting about the manner in which the contact has been represented. For example, Pratt examines commonplaces in travel writing. Commonplaces, such as the moment when a traveler arrives at a destination, are concrete surface features that are potential sites for ideological excavation. As will be seen in the next chapter, “arrival scenes” can become significant sites for understanding how a traveler positions his or her own presence in the zone of contact. As such, commonplaces give us some sense of where to dig as we try to unearth the ideological underpinnings of the contact zone representation.

Below are seven features that researchers should consider in their efforts to produce the most comprehensive examination of a contact zone environment and its artifacts. Not all of these features are equally important for a given representation, and there is always the possibility that other features need to be included as well, including such basic concerns as the medium by which the representation is made known. The features, furthermore, may overlap and intersect, but in doing so they are also meant to serve as a sort of rubric or heuristic that enables deep comprehension and rigorous comparison.

Character of the interaction

What is the stated purpose of the interaction or the artifact? How, if at all, does the stated purpose differ from the performative function? How evident is the difference? For example, in John Barrow's *Travels in China*, the stated purpose as found on the book's title page is to determine where China ranks "in the order of civilized nations." More than six hundred pages later, though, in the conclusion, Barrow admits that his effort to determine China's ranking has been incomplete. Has the stated purpose of the book been fulfilled? Probably not, but one can confidently conclude that the performative function of the text has been successfully achieved because throughout *Travels in China* Barrow compares China to England, and only occasionally is the comparison favorable to the Chinese. Thus Barrow's underlying (unstated) intention to establish difference and China's inferiority is finally realized.

Scope of the interaction

As with the metaphors of contact and zone, scope can have several interpretations. Was the contact encounter, for example, between individuals, groups, or a combination thereof? To what degree or extent (however those are understood) is scope, i.e., the breadth or opportunity to function, a key component, and hence identifiable, in the representation?

Scope can also refer to the range of one's perceptions, thoughts, or actions. Thus an individual's scope can differ from the broader scope, or the stated purpose, of the contact zone. There are preconceptions (based on previous and familiar instances) that influence how one interprets the interaction. It may be useful to think of the scope metaphorically as in

an instrument for observing or detecting. Generally, the broader the scope of the interaction, the less specific the representation; the more detailed the representation the greater the likelihood toward specificity, which ideally diminishes broader, more stereotypical claims.

Power disparity between actors

Scope can also refer to an individual's range of perceptions, thoughts, or actions. The scope of one's actions (thoughts, perceptions), then, is greatly influenced by the power dynamic that is implicitly or explicitly a part of the interaction. In any contact zone environment, therefore, researchers need to consider just how clearly understood is the power disparity? As stated earlier, many scholars begin with the power disparity as the point of departure for interrogating a contact zone artifact. But what happens to the analysis if the disparity is not radical? Indeed the very presence of a reciprocated (or obstructed) gaze and the degree to which travelers relied on native peoples should cause one to question to what extent those involved in the contact zone actually agreed on issues such as cultural equality and hierarchy. The many references to uncivilized others laughing at the follies of the civilized travelers, which Pratt reads as an anti-conquest strategy on the part of the travelers, rather obviously demonstrates that the differences and inequalities were not sensed and recognized by all involved. In other words, the all-important power disparities are most important when they are agreed upon.

Self-awareness among actors

One of the consequences of the asymmetrical relations of power articulated by Pratt is that the dominant culture's perspective, values, rules, and ways of expression seem normal.

Thus, writing from contact zone encounters is oftentimes dismissive of other views and experiences. The dismissive stance depends on (and reflects) how aware individuals are of their own situations. Is there an awareness of the contact as an encounter between inequitable cultures? How does the interpretive utility of the contact zone change if the participants are aware that cultural differences are comparable or perhaps non-threatening? Do the participants view themselves as being representative of their own culture in some way? In the journals examined in the next chapter, both authors clearly position themselves as members of different social classes in England, and that reality is evident at key moments in their travel narratives.

Furthermore, as is evidenced by Barrow's casting of Macartney's decision not to kowtow as a victory for the English, not all representations of contact zone encounters are produced by those who actually participated. Therefore, one needs to determine how a given rhetor has positioned his or her artifact vis-à-vis the contact zone?

Unstated rhetoric

What has been left out of the representation of the contact zone? Pratt contends that the interactive and improvisational dimensions of contact zone encounters are too often suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. Many scholars believe that what is left out is the element that is most in conflict, so identifying those "missing" features is essential. A photographer, for example, can manipulate how one views a photograph by focusing on certain elements that draw the reader's attention to, or away from, certain other elements.

Emblematic quality of the artifact

In the literature review in Chapter 2, I criticized Beamer's treatment of the kowtow incident as an event that could be interpreted without careful reference to the historical dynamics surrounding it. For Beamer, the kowtow incident is emblematic of difficulties in communicating cross culturally. To what degree does a contact zone event (artifact, gesture, or rhetorical reconstruction) function emblematically? Another way to ask this is to question whether or not the artifact functions as a commonplace. Is the representation likely to recur in numerous contact zone encounters? Is the emblematic nature identifiable and hence worthy of being extrapolated and labeled as a commonplace?

Proximity of the artifact to the actual contact zone encounter

All artifacts, to varying degrees, interpret a contact event. How close, though, is the actual artifact to the event itself? The more time that elapses between an event and the production of the artifact, the greater the opportunity for self-reflection to occur and for pretensions of truthfulness to be more pronounced. A close proximity between event and artifact, allows, potentially, for more naïve or spontaneous impressions.

The seven characteristics identified here are meant to draw on the strengths of Pratt's research while at the same time expanding the applicability of her terms and ideas in order to make the contact zone a more agile analytical tool. The next two chapters of this dissertation used these seven aspects as a means to expose the salient contact zone features of three quite different artifacts related to the Macartney embassy: a travel journal, a manners and customs text, and a satirical engraving. The analysis in the next two chapters does not mechanically march through each of the features. Instead, I generate a holistic analysis, drawing on the

more profitable results of the feature-based analysis. I approach each of the artifacts in a manner that reflects Pratt's own technique, moving from more general generic observations to specific sentence-level commentaries that inform larger cultural and ideological perspectives. As such, in Chapter 4 comparison and contrast strategies between the travel journal and the manners and customs text are limited so as to afford greater opportunity to consider the rhetorical styles and personal motivations of the individual authors. Chapter 5 extends Pratt's research even further, examining a representation of an engraving that is infused with a remarkable sense of self-awareness that, by the nature of the genre, is transmitted to the role of the viewer.

The next chapter examines two of the embassy travel journals, Aeneas Anderson's *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China* (1795) and Barrow's *Travels in China* (1805). For different reasons, neither text has received much attention by scholars interested in travel writing.²⁵ In fact, Robert Bickers states in the introduction to *Ritual and Diplomacy* that from Staunton's *An Authentic Account* onward most works written by embassy participants "have been narratives or else based heavily on individual memoirs of the mission" (7). Staunton's text may be the official narrative of the embassy, but Anderson's was published

²⁵Barrow's work has received more attention than Anderson's. *Travels in China*, in fact, is recognized as an early effort to schematize the varied inheritance of Western images of China. Barrow accomplishes this, in part, through the "racialization of the Chinese, their transformation into generic 'natives'" (Steinmetz 74). In fact, he compares the Chinese to the Africans he encountered when he and Macartney served as officers in Cape Colony, a part of southern Africa that was under British occupation during the nineteenth century. Barrow's *Account of Travels* is one of the texts that Pratt uses to develop her reading strategy, yet interestingly, she makes no mention of Barrow's *Travels in China* (1805) anywhere in *Imperial Eyes*, even though Barrow traveled to China before he went to Africa. The significance for Barrow, and for Pratt's conclusions regarding Barrow's imperialist rhetoric, is that Barrow's experience in southern Africa, and his conception of the planetary responsibilities of the English, at the very least had to be filtered through his understanding of empire vis-à-vis his experiences in China. If Pratt had looked at Barrow's China journal she would have found an entire passage that indicates he does not appear to make distinctions between non-European others (i.e., regardless of their status as colonized subjects), going so far as to assert that the Africans (Khoikoi) and the Chinese are people derived "from the same stock" (50).

first, and the production of the text therefore tells us something about the embassy, the genre, and the current treatment of the embassy artifacts. At the very least, Anderson gave subsequent writers a narrative that they could respond to, elaborate on, confirm, or rectify.

CHAPTER 4.
THE MACARTNEY EMBASSY TO CHINA 1792–1794:
“A STRIKING FEATURE ON THE FACE OF THE COUNTRY”; OR, WHAT MR.
BARROW DIDN’T SEE IN THE LAND OF THE CHINAMAN

In this chapter, I accept Mary Louise Pratt’s invitation in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* to employ her critical reading strategies to investigate European ethnographic discourses of non-Western cultures. Pratt specifically calls on researchers to interpret texts from other times and places that are similar to the travel narratives she examines (1992: 11). Her stated goal in the study of travel writing tropes is both to unify and disunify “what one might call the rhetoric of travel writing” (11). Pratt’s template for “understanding how the ‘domestic subject’ is constructed through accounts of abroad has not been widely adapted from a literary perspective” (Turner 6), but it nevertheless is useful for my purposes, especially given that Pratt bases some of her observations on the work of John Barrow.

This chapter first introduces the principle China journals as a way to demonstrate their similarities with the types of work that Pratt examines. Thereafter I discuss the “arrival scene” and the treatment of certain commonplaces in Aeneas Anderson’s *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China* and John Barrow’s *Travels in China*.²⁶ (I also bring in examples from Staunton’s book, but because he saw himself as writing an official document based on someone else’s interpretation, I do not treat it in the same manner as the other two.) I chose

²⁶ The full title of Anderson’s book is *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China in the Years 1792, 1793, and 1794; Containing the Various Circumstances of the Embassy, with Accounts of Customs and Manners of the Chinese; and a Description of the Country, Towns, Cities, etc., etc.* The full title of Barrow’s text is *Travels in China, Containing Descriptions, Observations, and Comparisons, Made and Collected in the Course of a Short Residence at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-Min-Yuen, and on a Subsequent Journey through the Country from Peking to Canton.*

Anderson and Barrow's works because of the former's historical importance as the first embassy journal published and the status in marking a significant change in the Western perception of China and the Chinese. In addition to the obvious issue of the proximity of the text to the event, the character and the scope of the interaction are key elements that differentiate Anderson and Barrow's works. Emblematic encounters within the narrative direct our attention to commonplace elements, including different types of gazes, as well as loss and departure scenes in Anderson's work and the recognition of cultural value codes in a disguised pejorative in Barrow's book.

The China Journals

In the foreword to a republished edition of William Alexander's *The Costume of China* (1988), editor Lord Macle hose calls the original book a "very early attempt at a 'documentary' [of] people, places, costumes, and crafts" (5). Perhaps the China journals collectively should be labeled not just as travel journals but as cultural-historical documentaries. Sir George L. Staunton (1737–1801), the secretary of the embassy, kept a journal that Cranmer-Byng describes as "competent, worthy, and dull" with a "ponderous eighteenth-century rhythm which eventually dulls the reader's awareness" (351). That description brings to mind Pratt's summary of nineteenth-century "manners-and-custom" texts (141), a genre that included an "informational branch of travel writing" that reversed and refused "heroic narratives" (146), unlike the "sentimental, experiential" (153) narrative. Manners-and-customs texts, which Pratt calls "ethnography's antecedents" (139), seldom appeared "on their own as discrete texts"; instead, they were "embedded in or appended to a

superior genre” such as travel books or “an assemblage, as in anthologies and magazines” (140). Macartney and Anderson both included manners-and-customs sections, with Macartney’s “Observations on China” covering no fewer than fourteen different categories. Anderson’s “Supplementary Chapter” is a combination of corrective and polemic. His eyewitness accounts address erroneous notions of China, which he uses then as an opportunity to critique his own country. Thus, although Pratt calls these appended pages “dumping grounds for surplus data” (1986 33), they can be rhetorically charged as well.

Macartney’s notes were edited, annotated, and published by Cranmer-Byng in *An Embassy to China: Lord Macartney’s Journal 1793-4* (1962), a work that is now regarded as the most valuable and reliable account of the embassy. George Staunton’s *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (1797) is regarded as the official account of the embassy, although Cranmer-Byng notes that the “amount of official information is rather meager” (350). Macartney never published his journal, but he “regularly took notes and memorandums of the business [he] was engaged in and the objects [he] saw, partly to serve [his] own use and recollection, and partly to amuse the hours of a tedious and painful employment” (Cranmer-Byng 220). Macartney concluded the travel portion of his journal with a self-effacing statement that he would not “flatter” himself to think that his notes could “be of much advantage or entertainment to others” (220). Staunton used Macartney’s notes in writing *An Authentic Account*, and although I do not agree with Cranmer-Byng’s analysis of his prose, a comparison with the original notes reveals that Macartney was a more engaging writer than Staunton.²⁷

²⁷ Staunton was primarily interested in “incidents and transactions” (Porter 211), which perhaps accounts for his less descriptive prose.

A “vamped up” Book versus a “disgraceful literary imposition”

The proximity of Anderson and Barrow’s travel narratives to the contact zone encounter is obvious and telling. Anderson’s *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China*, the first text published by a member of the embassy, was dismissed by Barrow as “a work vamped up by a London book seller as a speculation that could not fail, so greatly excited was public curiosity at the return of the embassy” (579). Barrow discusses the embassy in several texts, the most notable of which is *Travels in China* (1806), described by Cranmer-Byng as “a hotch-potch consisting of some first-hand narrative of the embassy, some descriptions already given by Macartney and Staunton, and scraps of information on Chinese history and culture taken from earlier books” (Cranmer-Byng 344). Interestingly, Cranmer-Byng cautions readers against the validity of the thoughts contained in Barrow’s *An Autobiographical Memoir of Sir John Barrow, Bart* (1847) because “they may contain afterthoughts on the embassy, rather than immediate impressions” (345).

Much more so than Barrow, Anderson produced “immediate impressions.” Anderson’s nearly 300-page book does not include images but does have specific dates and even times when events took place. His entries are reportorial and repetitive, and his narrative begins and ends in England. Anderson’s “principle objective” in publishing his journal is “to give a strong and accurate out-line” (ix) of the events of the narrative, and interestingly, he specifically states his refusal to apologize, apparently for producing his work before the official narrative appeared. The “Supplementary Chapter” (269–78) includes four paragraphs of observations by another embassy participant as well as Anderson’s “detached accounts of the manners and customs of the Chinese” (270). An appendix of transactions

from one of the embassy supply ships and a glossary of Chinese words containing more than seventy examples complete the book.

Barrow's *Travels in China*, by contrast, is 632 pages and was published ten years after the conclusion of the embassy and eight years after the publication of the third edition of Anderson's work. Given the differences in proximity, it is not surprising that *Travels in China* begins with a section of "Preliminary Matters" that addresses "Mistaken Notions entertained with regard to the British Embassy" (v). If Anderson's daily entries recount and describe, Barrow's, reflecting the benefit of hindsight, compares and critiques as his stated goal is "to shew this extraordinary people in their proper colours, not as their own moral maxims would represent them" (4).²⁸ With four color paintings by William Alexander, notes and lyrics to Chinese songs, pull-outs of musical instruments and military weapons, as well as two other engravings, *Travels in China* is an extensive manners-and-customs book with a chronological account of the embassy interspersed within and between discussion of cultural and historical topics.

Travels in China, furthermore, consistently undermines, or flatly contradicts, Anderson's accounts and conclusions. The two disagree on, among other things, the social status of Chinese women, the presence of slaves in China, and the overall attractiveness of Chinese cities. The men did agree on the general happiness of the citizenry, but even in agreement their comments are telling. Zhang explains that the social positions of different authors influenced their interpretations of the events that took place in China with "writers of low social position" being "more likely to praise China" (232). Anderson was a personal

servant to the Macartney family, but Barrow “had an established social network which included nobility” (220). As such, Anderson compliments “the wise and beneficent Sovereign of China” (276) for never ceasing to watch over and increase the happiness and prosperity of his people a situation that from Anderson’s perspective is not realized in England. Barrow, likewise, grants the Chinese people extraordinary “cheerfulness,” adding that “one could scarcely expect to meet” such a condition “in so despotic a government” (62).

Emblematic Entrances

The point of this example is to demonstrate that despite significant differences a comparison of these texts based on rhetorical concerns is instructive for understanding how each writer interpreted and represented the events of this historic contact zone. Barrow’s comments on the cheerfulness of the Chinese people appeared in his entry for August 21, 1793, the day the embassy first entered the Chinese capital.²⁹ One probably cannot overstate the significance of this moment for the English. After months of difficult travel the embassy is finally about to enter the capital “said to be the greatest in the world” (Staunton 19). This will not only afford them the opportunity to represent England to the Chinese, but they will also see something that few other Westerners have had the privilege to see, giving them the chance to form their own opinions on England’s status as the most advanced and ordered society in the world. Furthermore, on this day the embassy was to travel through the Chinese

²⁸ Zhang states that *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China* was “contentious” (218), and that in *Travels in China*, which he described as a “systematic inquiry into Chinese civilization,” Barrow “disparaged unsparingly the achievements of China” (223). Neither comment, in my opinion, wholly characterizes the texts themselves.

²⁹ Barrow has actually taken this reference to the Chinese government as despotic from Macartney’s entry for Sunday, August 17. Barrow does not consistently provide dates, but the sentence that follows the one quoted does state that “according to arrangement, on the 21st of August,” (84) the embassy departed for the capital.

capital to the famous Summer Palace where they would stay for several days before some of them would proceed to the emperor's residence north of the capital. The Summer Palace and surrounding gardens were well known in England, and the anticipation of seeing the capital was no doubt matched by the excitement of staying at "the Garden of Gardens."³⁰

The remainder of this chapter compares the arrival scenes that are narrated for August 21, 1793, as found in *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China and Travels in China*.

Because the emblematic quality of arrival scenes is high, they are "particularly potent sites for framing relations of contact and setting the terms of its representation" (Pratt 1992:

78–80).³¹ Focusing on this particular moment gives me some measure of control over the many factors that can influence the story that emerges from a contact zone encounter.

Everybody arrives at the same time and sees the same things, and differences in the accounts reveal differing rhetorical purposes of the individual authors.

Aeneas Anderson: "In short, we entered Pekin like paupers ... "

The embassy entourage of upwards of 3000 men³² arose at 2:00 in the morning at Tong-tchew, a city outside of the Chinese capital, and their day's journey did not end until

³⁰ The name "Garden of Gardens" (95) appears in Macartney's journal. Cranmer-Byng explains that the "name literally means 'round bright garden' and has the connotation garden of perfect brightness, or 'the garden *par excellence*'" (359).

³¹ The purpose and position of the writer usually impacts how the arrival scene trope is told. If, for example, a writer is dropped off alone at a remote location, the "image of an old-fashioned castaway" (1986: 39) adds a tremendous amount of authenticity to writer's observations (1986: 38).

³² The estimated numbers of the people in the entourage vary. Anderson notes that there were 400 porters, but Barrow puts the number at 3000 porters used to carry 600 packages (84). Macartney states that there were 2,495 men (91), and Staunton estimates that there were "within a very few hundred of three thousand labouring men" (17).

they arrived at the Summer Palace at 5:00 in the evening. This leg of the trip only covered thirty miles but the 96-degree temperature, coupled with the enormous crowds that not only hindered their progress but also kicked up clouds of dirt that filled the air, made for a grueling fourteen-hour journey. Before arriving at Pekin the embassy had breakfast at a large town called Kiyeng-Foo and then proceeded to the capital. The embassy traveled through the suburbs of Pekin for about fifteen minutes before they reached the gates to the city, and then they only spent about two hours in the capital before heading to Yuanming. The palace at Yuanming was in a state of disrepair and deemed “unworthy the residence of the representative of a great monarch” (Anderson 111); therefore, the embassy (except for Barrow and several others who stayed to supervise the handling of the gifts that were stored at the palace) quitted the imperial summer palace after only three days and returned to Pekin where they took up residence at an estate (supposedly built by a merchant from Canton using bribes he received from English traders). On September 2nd eleven members of the embassy then proceeded on to Rehe for the celebrated audience with the emperor.

As a “convention of almost every variety of travel writing” (78), arrival scenes allow for comparisons between different people (in this case within the same embassy) but also between locales and across times.³³ As such, one might expect the arrival to the Chinese capital to be developed using what Pratt calls the “royal-arrival” trope that paints a picture of respect and dignity associated with the first-ever appearance of a distinguished ambassador

³³ To quote from Barrow’s introduction: “for as different persons will generally see the same things in different points of view, so, perhaps, by combining and comparing the different descriptions and colouring that may be given of the same objects, the public is enabled to obtain the most correct notions of such matters as can be learned only from the report of travelers” (3).

and his considerable entourage.³⁴ And indeed, the firing of guns announced their arrival and refreshments (not quite a royal feast) were prepared at a resting spot inside the city gate. There were crowds of onlookers, of course, but when the embassy entered the capital Staunton observed that the area was full of people “who did not so much appear to be collected for the expected sight” (19). The “concourse of people,” in fact, was only “diverted for a while by the passing spectacle” (19). When they reentered the capital on the 26th (after departing from the palace unannounced), there was no crowd, their progress was unimpeded, their arrival uneventful.

Indifference and Disappointment

If Staunton had been interested only in enlightening readers on the manners and customs of the Chinese in the capital, then the nature of their arrival would not have been disappointing because, like the scene where the anthropologist witnesses “traditional society doing its traditional thing” (Pratt 1986: 43), Staunton saw, among many other things, both a funeral procession and a marriage procession. But the importance of the embassy distinguishes it once again: the crowds of curiosity seekers were more interested in the gifts, which were said to include “an elephant of the size of a monkey, and as fierce as a lion; and a cock that fed on charcoal” (21). The embassy’s initial stay in the capital was brief, and collectively the city “did not come up to the idea they previously had formed of the capital of

³⁴ In a chapter in *Writing Culture: The Culture and Politics of Ethnography* (1986) Pratt identifies different types of arrival scenes, including the royal-arrival scene and the “classic Polynesian arrival scene,” which she claims “acquired a mythic status in the eighteenth century” (35). In that version “the European visitor is welcomed like a messiah by a trusting populace ready to do his or her bidding” (36). Pratt also describes a hypothetical arrival scene that takes place at dawn where “traditional society [is] doing its traditional thing” (43) and a nocturnal arrival scene, which contains few of the interactive dynamics of its morning counterpart.

China" (23). When they returned to the capital, they were virtually imprisoned at the imperial residence. Zhang notes that during their forty-day stay in Peking the embassy participants "were largely confined to their lodgings" (204). James Dinwiddie (listed in Anderson's text as the Mechanist, Conductor of mathematical and astronomical presents) stated that the embassy was always guarded, and when traveling outside they had to "hurry forward 'with hardly time to look at an object'" (cited in Zhang 204). Barrow claims that he made "little excursions" to a famous garden "by stealth" (96). As he explains, "the idea of being stopped by an eunuch or some of the inferior officers belonging to the court, was sufficient to put us on our guard against meeting with such mortification; pride, in such circumstances, generally gets the better of desire, however strong, of gratifying curiosity" (96). Furthermore, the emperor at this time was staying in Rehe, so the meeting-of-the-heads-of-state component of the royal-arrival scene never takes place, at least not at this particular moment. In short, the drama of arrival never develops, the royal-arrival trope is nowhere to be found, and the story that unfolds is one of decentering resulting from indifference and disappointment.

Arrival scenes include certain commonplaces, a term that Pratt applies to frequently appearing elements in the travel narratives. The appearance and treatment of each commonplace can serve to differentiate the historical dynamics of each particular contact zone encounter. For example, when travelers arrive at a location they are often met by a crowd of people, and the manner in which the meeting unfolds tells a great deal about the relationship between the travelers and travelees and the personal interests of the individual narrating the encounter. In some arrival scenes, mutual appropriation occurs as the traveler arrives and "interrupts the local ritual, which then reconstitutes itself around" the traveler

(Pratt 1992: 80). Other times, such as in Barrow's writing about southern Africa, the travelers and travelees remain in their "separate non-interacting spheres" (80).³⁵

Moments of Mortification

Not surprisingly, probably the most frequent commonplace in Western writings on China appears in a context when someone's ability to survey their surroundings is obstructed, restricted, or reciprocated. Interestingly, the power that the Chinese possessed to control the English gaze is usually understood as a problem of jealousy on the part of the Chinese. So, when discussing his arrival at the Summer Palace, Anderson tells of his attempt "to take a view" of the Chinese soldiers.

To the west of these buildings there is another gate, but constructed of wood, which leads to another building, where I observed a considerable number of Chinese soldiers; but on my approach to take a view of them, they suddenly retired, and locked the door against me. Indeed, the native jealousy of these people respecting strangers seemed to be awakened in a very great degree, when they thought it necessary to watch all our actions with such minute and scrutinizing attention.

³⁵ When the embassy arrived into Chinese cities, throngs of people witnessed the event. At Kiyeng-Foo, their stop just prior to the capital, Anderson made the following comments about the city, and then the Chinese population in general.

To call it populous, would be to employ a superfluous expression, that is equally appropriate to the whole kingdom, as every village, town, and city; nay, every river, and all the banks of it, teems with people. In the country through which we have passed the population is immense and universal: every mile brought us to a village, whose inhabitants would have crowded our largest towns; and the number of villas scattered over the country, on each side of the road, while they added to its beauty, were proofs of its wealth. (99)

As the embassy departed Kiyeng-Foo, Anderson regrets not even being able to see the countryside that "occupies the few miles between Kiyeng-Foo and Peking because "the crowds of people that surrounded us, either intercepted our view, or distracted our attention" (101). Anderson's preference for see the view (as opposed to the crowd) is reflected in the narratives of other travelers as well.

The English travelers were restricted in terms of where they could go and what they could see, a reality that by comparison with their missions to other places around the world is suggestive of Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque, especially for an embassy of distinguished ambassadors.

When the embassy departed Kiyeng-Foo, Anderson reports that "a scene of confusion and disturbance" occurred among the English. Confusion scenes take on an added significance in the Macartney embassy journals given the diplomatic standing of the travelers. Confusion often occurs during departure scenes when the order and precision relative to royalty and command should be most evident, but is frequently almost entirely absent, making the efforts and impressions of the embassy laughable. Anderson recounts the problematic journey from Tong-tchew to Peking.

The day our journey from Tong-tchew to Peking was, I doubt not, a matter of general notification, from the prodigious concourse of people who absolutely covered the road; and, notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the mandarins to keep it clear, the pressure of the crowd was sometimes so great, that we were obliged to halt, for at least a quarter of an hour, to prevent the accidents which might otherwise have happened from the passage of the carts amidst this continual and innumerable throng. I cannot but add to the obstacles which we received from the curiosity of the Chinese people, some small degree of mortification at the kind of impression our appearance seemed to make on them: for they no sooner obtained a sight of any of us, than they universally burst out into loud laughter: and I must acknowledge, that we did not, at this time, wear the appearance of people, who arrived in this country, in order to obtain, by every means of address and prepossession, those commercial privileges,

and political distinctions, which no other nation has had the art or power to accomplish. (100)

Such moments of mortification are telling. Anderson observes that whatever the “real effects” of the spectacle might have been, the scene “was not calculated at least to give any very favourable impression of the manners and disposition of the English nation” (100–1). Anderson turns the critical commentary around and the manners-and-customs observations are now directed at the English. As Anderson commented, he could not help but “feel some degree of regret” at the “shabby appearance” of the embassy.

Loss and the sensation of sentiment

Loss is another travel writing commonplace especially in journeys through Africa where individuals, in addition to losing control or running out of food, often find themselves bartering personal items in order to continue their journey. In Anderson’s arrival scene one finds the English losing their dignity, which while not exactly a commodity, is nevertheless extremely important is their efforts to demonstrate cultural reciprocity with the Chinese. Pratt observes that interactions in contact zones often involve “parodic reversals of Eurocentered power relations and cultural norms, especially norms of seeing and being seen” (1992: 62). In the passage below, the loss of dignity leads to a parodic reversal for the English even before they have passed through the city gates.

At two o’clock we arrived at the gates of the grand imperial city of Peking, with very little semblance of diplomatic figure or importance: in short, for I cannot help repeating the sentiment, the appearance of the Ambassador’s attendants, both with respect to the shabbiness of their dress, and the vehicles which conveyed them, bore a

greater resemblance to the removal of paupers to their parishes in England, than the expected dignity of the representation of a great and powerful monarch. (102)

The Western representatives of royalty, now reduced to paupers, are upended and the scene is nothing short of carnivalesque.

Another arrival scene commonplace discussed by Pratt is the “sentimental commonplace” in which “the natives undress the foreigners to determine their humanity and, symbolically, level the difference between them” (1986: 37). After the embassy passed through the eastern gate of the capital, Anderson reported that yet another episode of confusion arose, causing “the whole procession ... to halt” (109). Anderson took the opportunity to ease his cramped limbs and make contact with some of the onlookers.

Perceiving a number of women in the crowd that surrounded us, I ventured to approach them; and, addressing them with the Chinese word *Chou-au* (or beautiful) they appeared to be extremely diverted, and gathering around me, but with an air of great modesty and politeness, they examined the make and form of my clothes, as well as the texture of the materials of which they were composed. When the carts began to move off, I took leave of these obliging females by a gentle shake of the hand, which they tendered to me with the most graceful affability; nor did the men, who were present, appear to be at all dissatisfied with my conduct, but, on the contrary, expressed, as far as I could judge, very great satisfaction at this public attention I paid to their ladies. It appears, therefore, that in this city, the women are not divested of a reasonable portion of their liberty, and consequently, that the jealousy attributed so universally to the Chinese men, is not a predominant quality, at least, in the capital of the empire (108–9).

Here, the confusion affords the opportunity for knowledge-producing contact to take place as the curiosity expressed by Anderson is reciprocated, serving to “level the difference” between the Chinese and the English. This passage is all the more intriguing when read against Barrow’s claim that “young girls were sometimes seen smoking their pipes in the doors of their houses, but they always retired on the approach of men” (72).

In Staunton’s journal a similar scene takes place on the day before they arrived in the capital. As is described in other places, Staunton notes that their arrival interrupted the “occupations of the people” but only “for a while” (8).

Other Europeans, mostly missionaries, had traveled thro’ the city; but in order to escape notice, they were clad in the long dresses of the country, and had suffered their beards to grow, in imitation of the Chinese. The short coats and smooth faces of the present strangers, form, therefore a new spectacle. The greatest surprise, however, was occasioned by a black servant, who attended one of the gentlemen of the party. He had been brought from Batavia, to supply the place of an European who returned home. The jet hue of his complexion, his woolly head, and features, peculiar to the negroes, nothing like which had been remembered to have been seen before, in this inland part of China, led some of the spectators almost to doubt, whether he belonged to the human species; and the boys exclaimed that it must be a black demon, *fan-quee*; but a good-humoured countenance soon reconciled them to his appearance, and they continued to stare without apprehension or dislike. (8)

Note that in order for the “other Europeans” to enter the city, loss, this time in the form of their native clothing, must take place. More importantly, however, is the manner in which Anderson treats the above exchange. Pratt states that sentimental texts are “characteristically

dialogic in the Bakhtinian sense: they represent the other's voices in dialogue with the voices of the self and often tender the other some credibility and equality" (Pratt 1986: 151). When Anderson describes the Chinese reaction to the same slave in Canton, the Chinese merchant surprises Anderson with an "extraordinary answer" in broken English ("quoted" in its entirety [and "verbatim"] in the text) to the question of how "the British nation should suffer a traffic [in slavery] so disgraceful to that humanity which they were so ready to profess" (272).

Anderson uses these encounters both to challenge the moral authority of the English and to dispel several popular Western notions of the Chinese, including the belief that Chinese women were rarely seen outside of the living quarters as well as the notion that jealousy was thought to be a trait of Chinese men. That Anderson qualifies his comment as possibly being limited to describing the men and women of the Chinese capital adds an element of respect to his interpretation of the events that transpired in Peking.

Why the other journals do not narrate similar moments of personal contact is curious indeed, and as such, one element that distinguishes Anderson's text is that it contains these knowledge-producing decentering episodes where Anderson witnesses the English as they might have appeared to the Chinese, almost as though a mirror were raised, revealing the vulnerabilities of the embassy.

John Barrow: "*The first appearance of this celebrated capital ...*"

Zhang has shown that those who gave favorable reviews of Anderson and Barrow's books were divided along political lines. For example, the anti-revolutionary *British Critic* praised *Travels in China*, claiming that it "exhibited the 'pencil of a master'" (222) but

“condemned Anderson’s book as being a work “replete with absurdities and gross mistakes” (218). Another publication, this one a supporter of reform titled *English Review*, observed that “although Anderson was neither a philosopher nor a scholar, he ‘had sound sense and just observation’ as evidence by his restraint in distorting “any of the objects he describes by any favourite theories” (219).

Barrow was very much “influenced by a ‘philosophic reflection’ and ‘spirit of system’” (Zhang 222) in writing *Travels in China*, and his goal was not just to narrate the happenings of the embassy but also to “show that China was in a very low state of social evolution” (223). *Travels in China*’s title page actually contains a range of rhetorical motives for publishing the text, including Barrow’s claim that in the book he attempts “to appreciate the rank that this extraordinary empire may be considered to hold in the scale of civilized nations.” Barrow compliments the Chinese on occasion, and frequently compares the Chinese to the ancient Greeks, Romans and Egyptians, usually in an effort to establish similarities between the ancient civilizations and contemporary China, which then indirectly strengthens his claim of China as a fossilized or stagnant culture. In his conclusion Barrow reiterates that his objective was to assist his readers in helping them to form in their own minds “some idea what rank the Chinese may be considered to hold, when measured by the scale of European nations” (621). Although Barrow admits that his effort was “very defective” (621), he has successfully addressed the “errors” of preceding writers, including the “fictitious accounts” of China found throughout eighteenth-century Jesuits texts (Barrow 3-4).

In terms of the prose found in *Travels in China*, Barrow’s dry description, which likely reflects the scientific impulse of the natural historian, provides readers with the

physical dimensions of buildings as opposed to his personal impressions or emotional reactions. As such, Barrow may see himself as making the complex less complicated, a strategy of unstated rhetoric that Spurr identifies as the fundamental principle that governed efforts to establish differences on the scale of nations from civil to savage. Codifying differences, that is, fixing the other in a “timeless present,” according to Pratt, is a “normalizing discourse” commonly found in manners and customs portraits (1986: 139).

In addition, Barrow’s book, again reflecting the proximity dynamic as well as the performative function, appears to have carefully placed passages that anticipate the drama that was to unfold.³⁶ In at least two places, including in the pages leading up to their arrival in the capital, Barrow sets the stage for disappointment.

How flattering, then, and gratifying must it have been to the feelings of those few favoured persons, who had the good fortune to be admitted into the suite of the British Ambassador, then preparing to proceed to the court of that Sovereign who held the government of such an extraordinary nation; how greatly must they have enjoyed the prospect of experiencing, in their own persons, all that was virtuous, and powerful, and grand, and magnificent, concentrated in one point in the city of Pekin! (26).

How can the capital possibly live up to this billing? In fact, it doesn’t. In the paragraphs prior to the moment he arrives in the capital Barrow describes the roads, walls, and gates, but he brings a personal impression to “the first appearance of this celebrated capital,” which he

³⁶ Anderson also appears to forecast problems, and like Barrow, he strongly adjudicates Macartney’s conduct during the ceremony with the emperor. Anderson’s analysis of what went wrong during the embassy appears in the book’s summative assessment as an expected conclusion to the narrative, not, as in *Travels in China*, in the introduction, which gives Barrow’s text a much more argumentative feel.

laments "is not much calculated to raise high expectations, nor does it in the least improve upon a more intimate acquaintance" (92).

The Carnival of Peking

If Anderson narrates a scene that is carnivalesque in his analogy where the British representatives of royalty are reduced to paupers, Barrow turns Peking itself into a carnival complete with tinkers, barbers, cobblers, blacksmiths, officers, soldiers, corpses, brides, husbands, peddlers, jugglers, conjurers, fortune-tellers, mountebanks, quack-doctor comedians, and musicians. The scene described in this long paragraph is buzzing with "confused noises" (96), and Barrow abandons his usual narrative style in describing the squalling, buying, selling, bartering, bawling, crying, wrangling, twanging, and jarring, all of which is punctuated by "the mirth and the laughter that prevailed in every groupe" (70). Modern Peking has taken on the emblematic quality of a medieval festival, and if we embrace Bakhtin's notion of carnival as signifying the symbolic destruction of authority and official culture, then the Chinese capital is a life form not unlike popular and folk culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but not at all like the grandeur that is a European capital, a center of culture. Readers should not be surprised to learn that the "most remarkable and a striking difference between the general population of London and Peking" is that "the whole attention and soul of the multitude" of Londoners "would have been wrapt up in the novel spectacle" of the arriving entourage (71). But "in Peking, the shew was but an accessory; every one pursued his business, at the same time that he gratified his curiosity" (97).

From their arrival until the embassy departed Peking through the Western gate two hours later, Barrow devotes thirteen paragraphs, mostly to general descriptions of the city,

but also to structures, Chinese and Tartary women, the police, and perhaps most importantly, night soil. A predictable descriptive strategy in arrival scenes is to compare the familiar to the unfamiliar. Barrow compares Peking to European cities where “it generally happens that a great variety of objects catch the eye, as the towers and spires of churches, domes, obelisks, and other buildings for public purposes [tower] above the rest” (66). In Peking, by contrast, “not even a chimney is seen rising above the roofs” (67). Such comparison fits Barrow’s purpose and also supports Said’s contention that comparison is meant to establish and encourage difference so that the defining culture “never loses the upper hand” (1994: 117).

But as Macartney articulated in the quote that opened this dissertation, comparison between unlike things is difficult. Barrow, after three paragraphs where he calculates the dimensions of the city, which of course looks too much like other Chinese cities and not enough like European ones, he finally finds something by which to develop comparative analysis of the Chinese and Western civilizations:

Although Peking cannot boast, like ancient Rome, or modern London, of the conveniences of common sewers to carry off dirt and dregs that must necessarily accumulate in large cities, yet it enjoys one important advantage, which is rarely found in capitals out of England: no kind of filth or nastiness, creating offensive smells, is thrown out into the streets, a piece of cleanliness that perhaps may be attributed rather to the scarcity and value of manure, than to the exertions of the police officers. (73).

In a book filled with dry observations and critical commentaries, the surprise expressed by the Barrow almost seems out of character. He apparently did not expect China to be capable

to constructing the “conveniences of common sewers,” even though, of course, he has already witnessed architectural marvels throughout his journey.

A Filthy Absence

In Western writings on China discussions of dirt are so common that dirt merits an entire section in Clifford’s book and is mentioned often in the works examined by Thurin as well. Clifford explains that there are so many references to dirt because, for one thing, the dirt was very real and a constant hindrance for travelers, but the unstated rhetorical impact of references to dirt reflects “the nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxon Protestant mind [where] dirt was proof of a moral failing, a standard signifier of degeneration and the uncivilized” (46). Clifford goes on to say that “dirt served one useful function in China and one only: it helped to validate the traveler’s experience in the country” (47). Furthermore, the “naming of an absence” (in this case filth), according to Spurr, “ultimately reveals itself as the presence of an ideological imperative” (92).

What can we make of this passage in Barrow’s text then? Given Clifford’s interpretation of the dirt trope and Barrow’s observation that Peking, like London, lacks filth, can it be that after arriving in the celebrated capital, Barrow suddenly realized the Chinese were civilized after all and not in a state of moral failure? Hardly, because later in the same paragraph, after describing in some detail the process of disposal, Barrow points out that even “though the city is cleared of its filth, it seldom loses its fragrance. In fact, a constant disgusting odour remains in and about all the houses the whole day long, from the fermentation of the heterogeneous mixtures kept above ground, which in our great cities are carried off in drains” (73). In the next paragraph Barrow criticizes the “medical gentlemen of

China” for their failure, unlike their counterparts in Madrid during the middle of the previous century, to recognize that “putrescent particles floating in the air” would eventually “find their way into the human body” causing “pestilential sickness” (101).

That the Chinese had succeeded at raising “filth to the status of circulating commodity” (Porter 215) was not likely lost on Barrow’s readers, from the scientific tone (“fermentation of the heterogeneous mixtures”) to the discomforting coupling of images in the explanation that the Chinese collect manure in large earthen jars and then have no “difficulty of converting its contents into money, or exchanging them for vegetables” (73). The ironic use of the word “fragrance” and the alliterative playfulness in “putrescent particles” should caution his audience against reading anything positive into this passage.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that in addition to arrival scenes, departure scenes are also rhetorically and ideologically forceful moments in travel narratives, especially for a diplomatic entourage. Passages that involve decentering (or “moments of mortification”) afford writers (and hence researchers) opportunities to reflect and judge, revealing (in some instances) the ideological underpinnings of their words. Within the individual instances of decentering there are certain narrative styles and reportorial strategies. In the case of the Anderson and Barrow’s journals, both authors develop scenes similar to Bakhtin’s articulation of carnival. In Anderson’s text the carnival elements provide a counter-

hegemonic reading to the official embassy narrative. Barrow, by contrast, uses the carnival trope to confirm British superiority.³⁷

Examined in terms of the features identified in Chapter 3 we find that the proximity of the artifacts to the actual contact zone encounter bring differences between these texts to the forefront of our analysis. As previously stated the late publication date enabled Barrow to produce a nuanced and calculated argument that contains a great deal of unstated rhetoric.

³⁷ Another comparative narrative strategy that appears often in Western writings on China involves apology and humor. In the passage above describing filth, Barrow begins his analysis by appearing to grant the Chinese the benefit of the doubt, but then quickly turns reassuringly to self-complimentary comparison and contrast. Barrow uses a pattern of comparison found in other texts from the proto-imperialist era whereby praise of China is conditionally accompanied. Helen Saxbee noticed this strategy in an essay on Chinese pottery. There, the author muses that Chinese "porcelaine, for which they have always been so much famed, appears to have undergone no change or improvement; it still retains its primitive heaviness ... but I could not help admiring it" (Wilkinson cited in Saxbee 95). A similar sense of reluctant deference to the Chinese culture appears as well in certain places in Macartney's journal, especially in the manners-and-customs section where direct comparisons are sometimes made.

In the passage below a rhetoric of apology is evident in Lord Macartney's comments about Chinese women. My point here is not that Macartney uses the words "apologise" and "sorry" in these long examples but that his method of discourse, the process of immediately qualifying a critical comment, is found throughout Western discussions of the Chinese, especially during this time period.

I by no means want to apologise for the Chinese custom of squeezing their women's petticoats into the shoes of an infant, which I think an infernal distortion. Yet so much are people subject to be warped and blinded by fashion, that every Chinese above the vulgar considers it as a female accomplishment not to be dispensed with. Nay, a revered apostolic missionary at Peking assured that in love affairs the glimpse of a little fairy foot was to the Chinese a most powerful provocative. Perhaps we are not quite free from a little folly of the same kind ourselves.

The text goes on to question fashion in England, and includes the humorous observation that English "ladies' shapes were so tapered down from the bosom to the hips that there was some danger of breaking off in the middle upon any exertion" (228). Saxbee came across a similar comment in *Tales about China and Chinese* (1843) in which the author proclaims that the Queen of England was said to have the "smallest and most beautiful pair of feet in the empire--and long may she wear them" (Parley cited in Saxbee 107). The author then observes that footbinding "is certainly not worse than our 'tight-lacing' system" (107).

In the same section in Macartney's journal there is an even better example of the rhetoric of apology though the Chinese has properly but one wife at the head of his family, the number of his concubines depends on his own opulence and discretion. So far in this point Chinese and European manners seem pretty much alike, but they differ widely in another. The mistresses of a Chinese live in tolerable harmony together in the same house, and even under the authority of a wife, who adopts and educates their children, and these children inherit from the father equally with hers.

I have been less reserved in what I have said about this subject, because I was willing to convey an impartial idea of some things in China, which to our local vanity and prejudice appear monstrous or incredible. Nor was I sorry to have this opportunity of remarking how little right we have to despise and ridicule other nations on the mere account of their differing from us in little points of manners and dress, as we can very nearly match them with similar follies and absurdities of our own. (229-30)

His awareness, however, of disparities in power clearly positions his argument as defensive and corrective. Emblematic moments in Barrow's text tend to be rhetorical reconstructions as in his interpretation of the kowtow incident as an example of the ambassador's wherewithal in refusing "to submit to the degrading ceremony" (21).

Anderson appears to have been every bit as aware of the disparities in power dynamic, and he develops the moments when the disparities are most evident into emblematic scenes that portray the English as lacking diplomatic dignity. Other emblematic encounters in Anderson's book are commonplace features that depend on tropes (loss, sentiment, and moments of self awareness) that are also identified in *Imperial Eyes*. Anderson's tale of reaching out to make contact with the female spectators in the crowd is a literal gesture that includes an emblematic quality, and his self-awareness, not as an Englishman but as a member of the servant class in England, leads him to identify with the Chinese, forgoing the compare and contrast strategy that so often establishes and then dismisses cultural differences.

The next chapter of this dissertation examines "The Reception of the Diplomatique and his Suite, at the Court of Peking" as a representation of a contact zone encounter. A prominent feature of the China trope is that the Western self is criticized when viewed vis-à-vis the Chinese other. Although the scene depicted in the print is consistent in many ways with the legend of the event, the value of the print resides in its overdetermined and fictitious representation, an act of rhetorical othering. Indeed, the event itself appears to some degree to be the realization of preconceived metaphors, which according to Pratt is one of the

As with Anderson's confusion scenes, the humor in Macartney's text also brings a certain counter-hegemonic vitality, but in this instance the strategy adds to the objective stance of his narrative.

attributes associated with the essentialized production of cultural knowledge. In certain types of literature, actions of the other, Pratt contends, are characterized not as resulting from particular historical events but as instances “of a pre-given custom or trait” (139), the homogenized attributes of the other.

Another benefit of “The Reception” for this study is that it allows me to interrogate simultaneously the preconceptions of those who participated in this historic embassy, as well as the assumptions of contemporary researchers who write about Western representations of non-Western others. What familiar schemes and tropes of the other was Gillray able to draw on to “predict” the outcome? Of course, the ceremony did not actually occur as seen in the print, but Godfrey’s contention that the cartoon highlights the “ignorance of the English in assuming that the Emperor of such an ancient civilization would be impressed by their gifts” (96) inarguably articulates a central point of disappointment for the embassy. In fact, just as Mark Hall discovered in *Lady Audley’s Secret*, the print also “undercuts the signifying practices that encode and legitimize the aspirations of nineteenth-century British Empire-building” (26). But under the care of Gillray’s artistic stippling, Pratt’s rhetoric of presence (which reveals an “explicit interaction between esthetics and ideology” [205]) found in monarch-of-all-I-survey scenes, transforms itself, becoming in “The Reception” the English ambassador’s hoped-for rhetoric of *presents*, thus undercutting all that signified and legitimized the British presence in the Middle Kingdom.

As with any good artifact, the print has been invaluable in helping me to generate intriguing questions without directing me to inarguable conclusions, and my analysis of “The Reception” allows a reader to visualize the rhetorical strategies that Pratt locates in travel narratives. For example, Pratt observes that European travel writing features “estrangement

and repulsion” as being “entirely mutual and equally irrational on both sides” (1986: 151), a dynamic wonderfully portrayed in the print. It appears, then, that her reading strategies persist across a range of artistic texts, and my analysis of “The Reception” extends those strategies even further. Pratt’s articulation of the contact zone, as modified and broadened in Chapter 3, works well for explicating visual depictions of contact zone encounters.

CHAPTER 5.
THE MACARTNEY EMBASSY TO CHINA 1792–1794:
A TABLEAU OF THE GAZE

Practical exemplification [of caricature] has proved that the preservation of feelings excited at the moment when an event occurred is invaluable to a proper realization of its actual importance. It falls to the province of caricature to embalm, not only events, but those who direct them with a familiarity of expression which is tangible evidence of their existence. If the caricature were simply unlike in resemblance and unfaithful in spirit, it would perish, from want of popularity, in its own day; the designer would obtain no encouragement, the artist and his works would be lost in oblivion. These creations which survive owe their vitality to the truthful libel, to the grotesque-like presentment which animates them.

—James Wright, *The Works of James Gillray, the Caricaturist, with the Story of His Life and Times* 2

This chapter provides the first extended critical analysis of “The Reception of the Diplomatique and His Suite, at the Court of Pekin.” My analysis operates on both rhetorical and historical levels. I first examine the print in terms of audience. Gillray’s works, which were collected by wealthy and connected individuals, are generally not considered examples of popular art. Yet the display of the prints made them accessible to many people. As such there is an element of folk humor in the prints, opening them to interpretations based on Bakhtin’s notion of the carnivalesque. Furthermore, Pratt explains that the solemnity and self-congratulatory tone found in promontory descriptions (and specifically in the monarch-of-all-I-survey scene) is a “virtual invitation to satire and demystification” (Pratt 1986: 151). The same can be said for the ritual gestures in the meeting-of-the-heads-of-state scene.

“The Reception” is replete with rhetorical features that can read on multiple levels, and its unusual proximity quality draws our attention again to the role of preconceptions in shaping how events are played out and later interpreted. Perhaps the most stunning feature of this print is the artistic self-awareness that is visually infused in the caricature and, by the

nature of the genre, transmitted to the role of the viewer as part of an interpretive game that creates a delicate scenario where the artist finds himself satirizing, but not trying to insult, his audience. Indeed, by placing a Mongol warrior from the Yuan dynasty in a Qing dynasty setting, more than 400 years out of place, and depicting the Chinese as looking suspiciously like Turks, Gillray appears to assume not only the role satirist, but of teacher as well. In fact, the largely non-caricatured image of the English, especially Macartney, simultaneously violates the decorum of caricature while satirizing certain dimensions of ethnography and other sorts of rhetorical othering. Identifying emblematic features in the print, such as the regal recline of the emperor and the highly ornamented “Oriental” backdrop helps us contextualize how people read and understood “The Reception” and similar images. Using the same strategies discussed in Chapter 3, we also notice that the Chinese and the English are in separate spheres and that the Chinese are all slightly higher than their English counterparts, visually emphasizing disparities in power and thus making even the layout of the print rhetorical, a subtle but fundamental part of the print’s argument. Even the emblematic differences in hand gestures used by the emperor and the envoy, one rejecting what the other has to offer, are interpretable outside the specific purpose for which the text was produced.

As with the previous chapter, this one also generates a holistic analysis of the primary artifact, one derived from attention to the contact zone features introduced in Chapter 3. Structuring the chapter in this manner again imitates Pratt’s approach but also emphasizes the learning and discovering process that I experienced while contemplating this image throughout the writing of this dissertation. This chapter concludes with a brief rhetorical analysis of a newspaper article published several months before the embassy departed from

England. The article, like the print, anticipates many of the problems that embassy participants were to encounter, raising the possibility that an eighth feature needs to be added to the list, this one, perhaps, based on the notion that believing is seeing.

Receiving the Diplomat

Tipped inside the back cover of our university's copy of William Alexander's *The Costume of China, Illustrated in Forty-eight Coloured Engravings* (1805) is a 49th illustration that comically presents the pivotal moment in the historical meeting between the British envoy Lord Macartney and the Chinese Ch'ien-lung Emperor (see frontispiece).³⁸ Macartney, respectfully down on one knee, is extending to the emperor a list of requests in one hand while the other hand is motioning to a small pile of gifts strewn on the floor. Behind Macartney are numerous other members of the British entourage, five of whom are kowtowing while the others are offering various oddities to the Chinese court. In response the obese and sinister-looking emperor, reclining on a pillow and smoking from a long, curved pipe, looks at Macartney with a mixture of interest and disdain. Behind the emperor are a warrior and two mandarins whose expressions range from stoic to threatening, although the pink and blue robes and hats they are wearing tend to lessen the gravity of their presence.

The same print appears on one of the last pages of William Appleton's book titled *A Cycle of Cathay: The Chinese Vogue in England during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* and as the frontispiece to Alain Peyrefitte's *The Collision of Two Civilizations*:

³⁸ It is important to note that the print is not part of the original book; instead, the print was slightly cropped and tipped inside the back cover when the book was rebound sometime between 1930 and 1950.

The British Expedition to China in 1792–4.³⁹ The location of the print at the end of one text and the beginning of another symbolizes the pivotal nature of the event itself: the British expedition to China marked the end of China as an artistic vogue inspired by a faraway land of single arch bridges and towering pagodas, and the beginning of the West's sustained, sometimes violent, contact with the Chinese. The placement of the same print in Alexander's work additionally (and ironically) highlights a collision of contrasting epistemologies, where the picturesque meets the scientific, while the caricaturist satirizes the assumptions and assuredness of both.

Titled "The Reception of the Diplomatique and His Suite, at the Court of Pekin," the print was drawn by James Gillray (1757–1816), a leading English caricaturist during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, an artistic time period known as the "golden age" of caricature.⁴⁰ Despite an abundance of scholarly attention devoted to both the era and the artist, to date no study has critically analyzed this particular print.⁴¹ In this chapter I do more than explicate "The Reception"; I use the print as a point of entry into the complexities of Western representations of China and the Chinese. Amazingly, Gillray created the print several weeks before Macartney left England, and the print was published one year to the day

³⁹ Neither Appleton nor Peyrefitte discuss the print in their books. "The Reception" is also referenced in two works by J. L. Cranmer-Byng, yet he does not offer an analysis in either location.

⁴⁰ The age of caricature covers approximately 1750–1811, a period that roughly corresponds with the life of King George (1738–1820). The "golden age" of that time period, according to Diana Donald in *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III*, is the "later Georgian period" (vii).

⁴¹ There are several texts that contextualize the print historically and offer comments related to Gillray's technique. In particular Thomas Wright's *James Gillray, The Caricaturist with the Story of His Life and Times* (161–3), Draper Hill's *Fashionable Contrasts: Caricatures by James Gillray* (138–9), and Richard Godfrey's *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature* (96). Wright's (1873) text devotes more attention to Peter Pindar's poems about the embassy than to "The Reception" itself. *Fashionable Contrasts* includes a full-page blow up of the emperor to demonstrate the print's detail. "The Reception" also appears in Cranmer-Byng's essay "A Case

(September 14, 1792) before the actual meeting took place. In this chapter “The Reception” is treated as a cultural artifact that transcends the event depicted, capturing the spirit and excitement of an entire time period. The eighteenth century vogue for things Chinese (generally known as chinoiserie) referred to in Appleton’s title was in decline by the time the print was made, but the books published by embassy participants renewed many Westerners’ interest in China, giving “rise to a late flowering of chinoiserie—a Chinese spring, as it were” (Morely 15). The print is similar to other images throughout history that have grabbed viewers’ attention “by articulating an idea or a mood” (Lester): soldiers erecting an American flag at Iwo Jima; children running toward the camera with open mouths and fire scorched arms held awkwardly away from their sides in Vietnam; a busboy cradling Dr. Martin Luther King’s head following his assassination.

As Paul Lester explains in *Photojournalism: An Ethical Approach* regarding the King photograph, “the loss seen on the boy’s face symbolizes all the world’s loss” (Lester).⁴² The faces of the individuals in “The Reception” likewise symbolize that interest, but also the skepticism, fear, and excitement associated with the event and China in general. Lester, in reference to photographs, claims that the “powerful stillness of the frozen, decisive moment ... describes the tragic event like no other combination of words ever could” (Lester). Of course, unlike photographs, “The Reception” was not instantly recorded but deliberately, carefully crafted, nor was the event tragic, although the outcome was certainly disappointing

Study in Cultural Collision: Scientific Apparatus in the Macartney Embassy to China, 1793” and is referenced in his introduction to Macartney’s embassy journal. Cranmer-Byng does not explicate the print in either work.

⁴² This text is online at <http://commfaculty.fullerton.edu/lester/writings/chapter4.html>.

to the English. All in all, however, the print is every bit as telling as the above-mentioned photographs.

Draper Hill, James Gillray's biographer, would concur. In *Fashionable Contrasts: Caricatures by James Gillray*, Hill notes that despite the inclination toward misrepresentation,

there is scarcely any need to justify the study of [Gillray's] caricatures on purely historical grounds. Working decades before the invention and perfection of photography, Gillray stands as one of the great pioneers of modern pictorial journalism. Reporter, entertainer, social critic, dramatist of sorts, he traps and hold the robust vitality of an age less unlike our own than one might suppose. (8)⁴³

My analysis of "The Reception" operates on both historical and rhetorical levels, although my goal is to use one method of analysis to inform the other. I make a distinction between the print as art, a period piece, characterized by certain stylistic conventions, and the print as artifact, a remnant of one of the most studied events in relations between China and the West. A rhetorical reading of the print opens up new possibilities for interpreting works from the "golden age" of caricature while complicating the narrative of the event itself. Likewise, the historical reading sheds light on our understanding of the Western mindset at the time the print was produced.

⁴³ In the seven volume series titled "The English Satirical Print 1600-1832," editor Michael Duffy, in the preface to each volume, explains that the goal of the series is to "remedy" the frequent neglect with which scholars have treated the prints, which are "immensely attractive, entertaining and very fruitful source for the study of Stuart and Hanoverian England" (9).

Inventing China

“The Reception” offers a timely local commentary, but there is also a timelessness to the depiction that is lost if one does not possess a specialized knowledge of Western representations of non-Western others. For example, the positioning of the emperor’s hand not only feminizes him, a common theme in later representations of the Chinese, but also serves to express disinterest as the emperor shoos away the visitors and their gifts. Unfortunately, there is not a satisfactory, ready-made theoretical or interpretive paradigm that I can apply to the print, as a caricature or as a Western representation of a non-Western other, to better understand its argument. Michael Duffy’s book, *The Englishman and the Foreigners*, for example, concentrates “on those foreigners who made the greatest and most lasting impact on the minds of Englishmen [between 1600–1832] and on whom they bestowed particular national or foreign attributes” (12). Although it is difficult, of course, to determine a degree of “impact” on the “mind,” Duffy selects his artifacts based on the argument that the foreigners in the book’s prints “were those closest at hand” because they “constituted the greatest threat to English security and livelihoods” (12). It is not surprising, then, I suppose, that the Chinese appear in only one of more than 150 images he introduces. Yet during the same period that Duffy covers, the Chinoiserie vogue certainly left an impression on the minds of more than a few English men and women, and furthermore, the trade imbalance with China was increasingly viewed as an economic threat.

The point is that studies in caricature or Western representations of China and the Chinese are not altogether helpful in understanding the many messages scattered throughout “The Reception” or the rhetorical strategies used in the print’s argument. Nor do they enlighten us on the predictive character of the print itself, the best evidence of which is found

in the title: a “diplomatique” properly refers to a document that regulates international relations, which in this case is the letter from the king. The letter (or the main idea contained therein) was not well *received*; Macartney, the “diplomat,” by contrast, was for the most part received with dignity. As the representation of an intercultural event, though, “The Reception” dramatically anticipates one of history’s most important contact zones.

Pratt developed the notion of the contact zone after she came across an “erstwhile unreadable text,” a manuscript from 1613 “written in a mixture of Quechua and ungrammatical, expressive Spanish” that was an “extraordinary intercultural tour de force” (“Arts of the Contact Zone” 34). Given this description of her primary artifact, one might assume that “The Reception” would be particularly suited to an analysis based on the notion of a contact zone. After all, “The Reception,” a sort of reverse ekphrastic presentation of the excited discussions taking place in England at the time, is also a work of fiction that includes a mixture, not of languages, but of remarkably expressive visual images. The event depicted would become an “extraordinary intercultural tour de force,” and in looking at the clothes and faces of the Chinese, there is a sort of ungrammaticality because viewers are presented with a farcical “mixture” of fact and fiction. As Bakhtin reminds us, in any complexly represented discursive space, dialogic processes proliferate. In the print the emperor and Macartney are having a conversation, represented by the string from the balloon (a visual pun) that appears to extend from Macartney’s mouth, and the smoke curling away from the emperor’s lips, symbolically speaking volumes about the understanding of the self and the other at this time.

Rhetoric of Caricature

Caricature is particularly suited to a study of representation because a caricature simultaneously reflects and exploits the knowledge upon which it is based. As Wright notes, there must be a familiarity of expression (both socially and artistically) for a print to be popular. The caricature must connect with the audience through similarity (a recognizable scene) while exploiting through difference (not seeing oneself portrayed in the scene). Many prints from this era, for example, satirize English fashion. One can either laugh at the enormous wigs worn by English women during the 1790s, or one can connect with the print by recognizing (or convincing oneself) that the fashion in which they are partaking is important enough to be satirized. There is an element of cultural cache to being caricatured, and a similar satisfaction in not being foolish (or, in this instance, wealthy) enough to be caricatured.

One defining characteristic of eighteenth-century caricature according to Draper Hill is that it not only involves “satirical, humorous or grotesque representation,” but also “a language of exaggeration, a method of projecting inner characteristics, real or imagined, into appearances” (1). Caricature is diverse in scope as it “may be brought to the service of portraiture, propaganda or ridicule, according to the need and temperament of the artist” (1). And perhaps most importantly, Hill summarizes the art of caricature by describing the process of creating these works as “the effort to distill an essence of personality, even if prompted by malice” (1). In this regard caricature shares important rhetorical characteristics with the sorts of ethnographic texts examined by scholars such as Pratt.

An important distinction, however, between caricature and works of ethnographic description, is one of familiarity. Gillray, more often than not, represents local individuals

already known to the viewing audience; travel writers, by contrast, represent faraway peoples and places. Yet in both types of representation there is an identifiable language and method, and both, in differing ways, involve some degree of disapprobation. A popular strategy with travel writing scholars is to identify the “colonialist” (i. e., malicious, or self-serving) ideology embedded in the discourse of the travel narrative. The caricaturist’s disdain is usually much more easily identified. What makes “The Reception” so useful to scholars interested in the rhetoric of othering is that we have identifiable individuals on both sides as well as generic representatives of both races.

“Take the eye by assault”

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, graphic satire became one of England’s most popular and influential art forms, in part due to the biting wit and creative imagination of James Gillray, the first master draftsman to take caricature as a primary occupation.⁴⁴ Gillray is credited with bringing the art of political caricature from its “struggling infancy” to its “fullest maturity” (Wright 3). In 1778 Gillray became a student at the Royal Academy and later set himself up as a portrait painter. But he did not obtain many commissions, so he was forced to continue producing engravings for print shops. His first prints were chiefly devoted to social subjects but by 1782 he began to concentrate on

⁴⁴ Donald attributes the demise of the Georgian satirical print in the early nineteenth century to the new and urgent political purposes of radicals in the post-Napoleonic era (viii). In *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III*, Donald studies eighteenth-century caricatures vis-à-vis the changing roles of women and constructions of gender, the alleged rise of a consumer society, the growth of political awareness outside aristocratic circles, and the problems of defining “class” in the later Georgian era. Donald also discusses the social position of the Georgian satirist, including Gillray, within the hierarchy of high- and low-art production; the relation between the shifting styles of political prints and the antagonisms of different political cultures; the caricatures of fashion as expressions of ambivalent attitudes to luxury and “high society”; the treatment of the crowd in the prints and the light this sheds on the myth of the freeborn Englishman; and the British reactions to the French Revolution in the 1790s as revealed in the caricatures.

political caricatures. Between 1780 and 1810, Gillray revolutionized graphic satire by expanding its range and depth, and imbuing it with parody, fantasy and burlesque. And as Lee Vedder points out in his thesis on Miltonic allusions in the political caricatures of James Gillray, like many other academically trained artists of his age, Gillray exercised an impressive command of English and classical literature as evidenced by his use of “cleverly crafted literary allusions” which can be traced throughout his oeuvre (3).

Gillray has been the subject of numerous book-length studies, including James Wright’s 1873 *The Works of James Gillray, the Caricaturist with the Story of His Life and Time*, which was republished in 1970 and Draper Hill’s *Fashionable Contrasts: Caricatures by James Gillray* (1996) and *James Gillray: The Caricaturists* (1965). An exhibition of Gillray’s works in 2001 resulted in Richard Godfrey’s *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature* (2001) that includes an insightful introductory essay by Mark Hallett. Each of these works contains an introduction to the era, a note on the art of caricature, biographical data on Gillray, and page after page of historical and artistic commentaries on his work.

Most of the above-mentioned studies use the phrase “the art of caricature” in arguing that the prints from the “golden age” of caricature are worthy of critical examination. In this study I am interested primarily in the *rhetoric* of caricature. Gillray is making an argument in each print, and the challenge for us today, as it was for those who first viewed the prints, is to understand not only the argument, but to appreciate how emblematic features (images and words) are used to present the argument and instruct and persuade the audience. It is significant to note that the bottom of “The Reception” includes Gillray’s signature and an indication that he both designed and engraved the print, which indicates that Gillray, for the first time in his career, is taking ownership of his ideas as being arguments, not just

amusements. This is not to assert, of course, that amusements are not arguments, but we can assume that Gillray is now seeing himself as a serious engraver whose opinions are influential and important.

"The Reception" is different from most of the other works that Gillray produced. Hill explains that up until March of 1792 "Gillray had reserved his highest order of technical skill to the engraving of 'serious' subjects. Abruptly this virtuosity was turned loose on the so-called popular work" (1966: 12). Hill lists "The Reception," along with "A Voluptuary under the Horrors of Digestion" and "Temperance Enjoying a Frugal Meal," as other well-known works from this period. Hill describes this time in Gillray's life metaphorically: "As if some private dam had burst, an opulence of stipple and tone flooded" the front window of the shop where Gillray displayed his works. Hill offers his conclusion that the "outpouring of effort [during this period] ... seems to represent a commitment to satire" (12).

To be sure, "The Reception" lacks the grotesque and mean-spirited representation that earned Gillray a reputation as someone who "had all the manners of a hungry cat in mid-spring" (Hill 1965: 45). In an exhibition catalogue of Gillray's works, John Russell describes Gillray's technique for choosing subjects as similar to "a greyhound at the trap until the electric hare of NEWS flashed past him" (Russell n.p.). The metaphors here emphasize suddenness and precision in prints that "take the eye by assault" (n.p), contrasting starkly with the tableau, frozen-moment-like presentation of "The Reception." Russell's claim, furthermore, that Gillray's "humour is of a low-spirited, calculating sort," does not do justice to "The Reception," nor does the assertion that Gillray's invention (in the rhetorical sense) is "of a crowded, anxious, hurrying order," his observation "destructive, unaffectionate, and cold" (n.p.).

“Truthful libel”

Part of the art of caricature comes from the experience of interpreting the print. Today, historians may view caricatures as indications of “popular” opinion, but methodologically, historical opinion is difficult to substantiate. A caricature certainly reflects at least one person’s ideas, but whether that person or anyone else espouses those views is another issue entirely. Art historians or scholars of certain artistic styles may trace fashion trends in the prints or examine artistic techniques used to produce the prints, but how is one to determine if the style, or even the technique, is not the subject of the satire?

For example, the clothing worn by the Prince of Wales in “A Voluptuary” (as well as numerous other Gillray prints) is often cited in history of fashion texts, yet the usual reading of the print stresses the inappropriateness and ill fit of the clothing. The level of detail in the clothes reinforces the arabesque style of the print. Indeed, as Donald explains, even the “oriental associations of the word ‘Voluptuary’ may hint at the over profuse décor” (100). One critic, in addition, notes, in reference to “A Voluptuary” that “the use of the fashionable dotted medium for a caricature parodies its conventional use for elegant portraiture. The contrast between the delicate and refined medium and the Prince’s gross figure ridicules him” (www.thebritishmuseum.com.ac.uk). Likewise, the sheer brilliance of yellow in “The Reception” undoubtedly satirizes the one sure bit of knowledge that most Westerners possessed—in China yellow is a color of respect—but its abundance in this print simultaneously makes the English and the emperor appear rather foolish.

Gillray’s prints operate rhetorically through a process of accumulation. Not only are there satiric commentaries scattered throughout each print, but collectively the sheer number

of images adds to the vitality of the text, encouraging viewers to interact with the print's (to use Wright's term) spirited display of "truthful libel" (2). And therein lies the art. Some readers will note that the physical positioning of the Prince of Wales (affectionately known as the "Prince of Whales") resembles the Chinese emperor in "The Reception," which Dozier insightfully describes as drawn in "complete Eastern voluptuary" (cited in Donald 42). Recognizing the resemblance, however, is not necessary to appreciate the satire in "The Reception."⁴⁵ The rhetoric of excess (whether seen in the ornate details of the carpet in "The Voluptuary" or in the similarly patterned clothing worn by the emperor in "The Reception") works equally well when applied to an English prince or a Chinese emperor.

Dickinson explains that "caricaturists had to cater to as many different shades of opinion as possible," which they accomplished by learning to "veil their own opinion under layers of cynicism and irony" (20). In doing so, caricaturists provided "a large public with what it wanted, they increased public knowledge of political issues and helped create a larger market for subsequent political prints" (20).⁴⁶ That layering, though, resulted in different levels of rhetorical impact that produced decidedly different interpretations on the part of the viewers. For example, in *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature*, Godfrey explains that

⁴⁵ In fact, the similarity between the two figures likely demonstrates an artistic shortcut that helped to facilitate the schematization of things Chinese by reiterating and confirming associations of otherness. The borrowing and adapting of images (or parodying entire works of art) was common practice amongst caricaturists. Paulson notes that Gillray's image of George III appeared again and again for more than a decade in other artists' works (162). In another example, the dice and case in "A Voluptuary" and "The Reception" are nearly identical. In 1816 George Cruikshank (1792–1878) produced a print titled "The Court at Brighton a la Chinoise!!," which visually recalls "The Reception" as the "emperors" in each print are sitting on the same pillow. That pillow shows up again in William Heath's "New Baubles for the Chinese Temple, We are but Children of a Larger Growth," which, like "The Court," satirizes the obsession some people had for chinoiserie.

⁴⁶ In "Gillray: The Ambivalence of the Political Cartoonist," Ronald Paulson argues against the view that a cartoonist is disinterested. In reference to one print in particular, he notes that Gillray reduces both parties (Napoleon and William Pitt) "to comical figures who are manageable for the ordinary person who buys the print

Gillray's clients, those who actually purchased his prints, were from a "moneyed, educated and sophisticated class" (Godfrey 235). They likely recognized the literary allusions, appreciated the craftsmanship, understood multiple layers of meaning in each print, and collected the prints for preservation along with other types of artwork.⁴⁷ Priced on average at two shillings and sixpence in his mature career, Gillray's prints were too expensive for most people to purchase (235). As such, Godfrey contends that Gillray's prints should not be considered, as they so often are, as "so-called popular prints" (235).

Yet the prints themselves were posted in the windows of the shops that produced and sold them, so those strolling by could certainly look at and experience the prints on some level of social and artistic awareness.⁴⁸ For example, Huttner, the man holding the caged bird, has the most striking face, a morose expression that presents a wonderfully learned visual and cultural joke. For some viewers, the detail and expression enable them to enjoy the human aspect of the print. (The anatomical exactness of Macartney, Huttner, and Staunton also serve as visual points of comparison, another technique found throughout Gillray's prints.)

Huttner's facial expression, Staunton's face and hands, and Macartney's profile and dress, then, do not require any interpretive sophistication or even a great deal of knowledge

in order to be comforted, not discomforted. The cartoonist has the role of a therapist whose duty is to make the horrors of contemporary life palatable, or at least bearable" (150).

⁴⁷ Godfrey explains that Gillray's prints generally were not framed, which would have caused the colors to fade. The most usual way of conserving the prints was for collectors, or their agents, to paste them into large albums, often of blue paper, and keep them as a form of library entertainment (235). His most elevated collector was The Prince of Wales, an avid collector of English caricatures of all periods and types. The bulk of his collection was de-accessioned by Windsor Castle in 1921, and purchased by the Library of Congress (tate.org).

⁴⁸ In fact, this aspect of English culture is captured in many prints, including one by Gillray titled "Very Slippery Weather." Paulson questions whether this aspect of the prints is itself a fiction.

of the event. Surely those who walked by the shop had been in a situation where they, like Huttner, felt terribly uncomfortable. But other, more knowledgeable viewers would have recognized the bird as a magpie, a symbol of the imperial Manchu Empire. Those viewers who knew that a chattering magpie represented the arrival of guests in Chinese symbolism, would most likely also have known that in China the magpie is the “Bird of Joy,” and thus, as a contrast to Huttner’s sad expression, part of a visually incongruous pun.⁴⁹

Ritual Spectacle

“In *Rabelais and His World*, Mikhail Bakhtin examines the culture of folk humor in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, contending that laughter and its forms represent “the least scrutinized sphere” (4) of public and popular culture. Prior to Bakhtin’s work, the “profound originality expressed in the culture of folk humor” had remained unexplored, despite a boundless variety of “humorous forms and manifestations” (4). Given the content

⁴⁹ The layering of interpretations found in the prints is important both for my interpretation of the rhetoric of the text, but also for collectors. Collectors might be interested, for example, in purchasing only those prints that mocked members of the royal family, such as seen in “A Voluptuary.” Others simply enjoyed the art of mockery, a favorite pastime in England especially during the eighteenth century. But there is no doubt that the multiple audiences for the prints were sharply divided along class lines. As mentioned earlier, there was some sense of cultural cache in being featured, even lampooned, in caricature. For example, the essay “James Gillray: The Art of Caricature” (tate.org), explains Gillray’s technique and the cultural cache associated with being caricatured:

Gillray regularly attended debates in the House of Commons, making sketches on little cards which he used as the basis of his caricatures. For the most important politicians he established a prototype set of characteristics which could be used again and again, allowing instant recognition. Despite the violence of Gillray’s images, most politicians knew that if they failed to appear in, or disappeared from, his satires, their careers were either insignificant or approaching eclipse.

(<http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/gillray/politics.htm>)

Wright also relates the story of Charles Fox, who visited Gillray at his shop to inquire about the latest prints. Fox, when learning that he was the subject of Gillray’s latest satire, was disappointed at the nature of the caricature, but nevertheless “laughed outright at the joke and pocketed the affront together with the print, but not without paying his eighteenpence, [before] he took it away to exhibit at his club” (13). Not everyone viewed being caricatured as a sign of importance. Hill notes in particular that “Gillray almost certainly accepted an ‘indemnification’ or two from the Prince of Wales in return for acts of suppression or abstention, and it is conceivable that similar honoria were offered by other sensitive individuals” (1996: 24).

and their availability as publicly displayed texts (at least temporarily before they were purchased by collectors), eighteenth-century English caricatures can be considered a type of folk humor. Bakhtin, furthermore, divides folk humor into distinct forms, including ritual spectacles and comic verbal compositions. To varying degrees each of Gillray's works is a comic *visual* composition, and "The Reception" in particular caricatures spectacle associated with ritual culture.

The important connection to make here is between ritual spectacle and cultural motifs. "The Reception" was not reportorial but depended instead on familiar tropes through which typical events and real individuals could be adapted to an established ideological language. We can discover that language through a systematic analysis of the rhetorical features of visual arguments.

Graphic satire usually deals with fleeting events, so that its value as social commentary typically lasts no longer than the topicality of its subject matter. In "The Reception" Gillray is poking fun at the then current discussions and great expectations that accompanied the departing embassy. There are two commonplaces of ritual spectacle with which viewers would likely have been familiar. The first (and more general) is the meeting of the heads of state, a scene that usually includes an entourage of guests who are being formally received by a host. The second involves the specific display of deference where the highest-ranking guest is kneeling and offering the host a document of some sort. (Ironically, in "The Reception" the English travelers are literally making a spectacle of themselves behind Macartney.) Commonplace episodes of contact and deference are featured in many prints and paintings from the eighteenth century.

Godfrey claims that “The Reception” is one of Gillray’s “most refined and carefully worked prints” as evidence by his “careful study of chinoiserie” (94). Chinoiserie scenes, especially those that include an emperor, typically depict a flurry of activity in both the traditional baroque sense and a festive-like atmosphere with many people surrounding the emperor.⁵⁰ The point is that many of the artistic conventions used by Gillray transcend the “topicality of the event,” making the argument in the print more than a “fleeting” commentary. The positioning of the emperor in “The Reception” brings to mind the sheik in Jean-Leon Gerome’s (1824–1904) “The Snake Chamber,” which appears on the cover of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* and “The Musician” by Rudolf Ernst (1854–1932), one of the paintings in Mackenzie’s *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts*. Mackenzie describes the figure in “The Musician,” although it applies equally well to all three, as “reclining at ease amidst a riot of abstract patterns in carpet, fabrics, and architectural details” (42). Connecting these disparate genres rhetorically is a practical exercise for understanding how discourse works. Not only does this demonstrate the process of how the unfamiliar other becomes familiar, but as V. G. Kiernan explains in “Europe in the Colonial Mirror,” a chapter in *Imperialism and Its Contradictions*, in cosmopolitan eighteenth-century Europe “Eastern Fables, Persian Letters, [and] Chinese travelers” were deliberately arranged against “an Oriental backdrop” (157) by which Europeans could then contemplate themselves.

The “Chinese” features in particular draw from a small list of semiotics that invokes an essentialized understanding of China that serves to satirize the English. There is, in fact, the sort of “profound ambivalence,” the mixture of “derision and desire” (Pratt 1992: 9) that

⁵⁰ There are several well-known examples of these tapestries from the eighteenth century, including “The Emperor on a Journey” and “Reception Given by a Chinese Emperor.” These are introduced in Porter (2001).

Stephen Riggins associates with the rhetoric of othering. Gillray capitalizes on descriptions of China as a rhetorical device commonly found in the late eighteenth century, where just the idea of China could be used to provoke lighthearted laughter or draw a thoughtful smile. Fanciful accounts of the “Chinese taste,” often in reference to architecture and landscape gardening, were common in Western popular discourses, and descriptions of the Chinese manner or style frequently included terms such as “amusement,” “flippant” or “bizarre and entertaining” (Von Erdberg 139).⁵¹ While comparative references to the “grotesque” Chinese style served to emphasize the superiority of Western civilization, oftentimes the idea of China was used to satirize the self in a way that overpowered any real commentary on the (Chinese) other.

Additionally, the effectiveness of China as a humorous rhetorical device⁵² derives from the incongruous and disorienting perspective evoked when one juxtaposes contrasting cultural systems as seen in the print. Visually this juxtaposition is represented in the layout of “The Reception,” which is divided into two frames (Pratt’s non-interacting spheres), with the Chinese in the left frame and the English in the right one. Only Macartney’s hand offering a letter from King George and the small child carrying Chinese tea in English china bridge the divide. The irony here works on several levels, especially since tea and chinaware are at the center of the picture and the problem. As previously explained, the primary reason

⁵¹ Saxbee notes that by the 1840s, “pagoda-like structures and ‘oriental’ architectural motifs had long been connected with frivolity and amusement through their use on private estates and in public pleasure parks and gardens” (310).

⁵² Saxbee discovered (in reviews of the exhibition) that people would routinely laugh when they walked into the China room (313). In 1858 a note referring to a forthcoming exhibition of Chinese art to be held in London remarked that “everything about China seems to be quaint and strange and madly comical” (Spence review)

for sending the embassy to China was to reverse the trade practices that heavily favored the Chinese. But while the English still wanted Chinese products such as tea, the Chinese never did want the English china, or any other European manufactures.⁵³

Historically, the stated reason for the embassy then makes it unique when compared with English missions in other countries, but the symbolic value of the print as a timeless cultural critique is seen in the acknowledgement that boundaries separating the self from the other exist, and that it is not always the other that is oversimplified and essentialized. The political message in "The Reception" is not directed at the Chinese but at the English, who, in their early efforts to envision a new world order, are apparently expecting the men of the embassy to discover the Chinese emperor in a harem-like atmosphere, lounging on pillows and smoking from a curved opium pipe. Indeed, the crescent moons hanging from the eaves are a Turkish motif,⁵⁴ and the dragon, with its short wings and fire breath, are a European fiction, the nemesis of civilization in a land much admired for the timelessness of its civilization.

Parodic Reversals

Although the depictions of the Chinese were likely inspired by images found in Jean-Baptiste Du Halde's *Description of the Chinese Empire* (1741), Gillray appears to have

⁵³ The Chinese reaction of indifference and contempt is best exemplified in a now famous letter from the emperor to King George III: "You O King, live beyond the confines of many seas, nevertheless, impelled by your humble desire to partake of the benefits of our civilization, you have dispatched a mission respectfully bearing your memorial ... I set no value on objects strange and ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures" (Cranmer-Byng 41).

⁵⁴ Saxbee has shown that in terms of Chinese material culture, up until the mid-1800s, the "overriding ideology of the Museum regarding distant cultures was one of opportunism, ambivalence and lack of discrimination" (78).

adapted a literary text to assist him in making his visual argument. In the case of the observations concerning the Turkish motif, Gillray, I believe has taken his ideas from letter thirty-three in Oliver Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, a text that purchasers of the print would have read.

I am disgusted, O Fum Hoam, even to sickness disgusted. Is it possible to bear the presumption of those islanders, when they pretend to instruct me in ceremonies of China! They lay it down as a maxim, that every person who comes from thence must express himself in metaphor; swear by Alla, rail against wine, and behave, and talk and write like a Turk or Persian. They make no distinction between our elegant manners, and the voluptuous barbarities of our eastern neighbors. Wherever I come I raise either diffidence or astonishment; some fancy me no Chinese, because I am formed more like a man than a monster; and others wonder to find one born five thousand miles from England endued with a common sense. Strange, say they, that a man who has received his education at such a distance from London, should have common sense: to be born out of England, and yet have common sense! impossible! He must be some Englishman in disguise; his very visage has nothing of the true exotic barbarity. (160–1).

The letter, which also makes reference to a pipe and a pillow, uses a narrative strategy where the author effaces his own presence through a ventriloquial technique of giving a voice to an imaginary foreign traveler. The most well known of such “visitors” to England was the letter’s “author,” Goldsmith’s Lien Chi Altangi.

Riggins’ claim in *The Rhetoric of Othering*, then, that “the discourse of the dominant group fashions the other, endows them with certain characteristics or habits, and thereby

allows them to function as a contrast to the dominant group" (412) is certainly evident in "The Reception." But the self/other satire that Gillray offers has numerous nuances as well. For example, the countenances of the Chinese depicted in the print follow European notions. The 1758 Linnaeus system of classifying *homo sapiens* according to "main features" posits that the Asiatic was "melancholy," "rigid," "severe," "haughty," and "covetous," among other descriptors, including "covered in loose clothing" (cited in Pratt 1992: 32). Those features are undeniably present in this depiction, but what is also seen is a group of eight European men who do not appear to be "sanguine," "brawny," "gentle," and "acute" (32).

The print in effect presents a sort of fissure in the pre-colonial mindset, an undermining of the common assumption of English superiority that, at least to some degree, drove European imperialism. If the Chinese are represented according to eighteenth-century European stereotypes, one cannot deny that the English, if not caricatured, are at least lampooned, making "The Reception" a broader comment on English ethnocentrism as opposed to the self-complimentary discourse commonly found in the literatures of those who traveled to and wrote about "exotic" locals around the world.

Helen Saxbee has labeled the decades prior to the first exhibition of Chinese artwork in the West (in London), as "a proto-imperialist period when other cultures could arouse respect, interest, indifference, and contempt simultaneously in the West" (337). That "The Reception" clearly depicts such a range of emotions in the English indicates that there was a great understanding of the developing imperial mentality and recognition that different cultures could elicit different cognitive and emotional responses. It also indicates that this period was marked by uncertainty regarding English imperialism.

Said claims that the Western depiction of the Orient is “at one and the same time trying to characterize the Orient as alien and to incorporate it schematically on a theatrical stage whose audience, manager, and actors are for Europe, and only for Europe” (71–2). But in “Orientalism and its Problems,” Dennis Porter claims Said “fails to show how literary texts may in their play establish distance from the ideologies they seem to be reproducing” (71). Thus, while one might read Macartney as the only person on the stage who is composed, we might also want to interpret his manner as oblivious to the spectacle taking place behind his back, where his followers have lost all semblance of diplomatic dignity. Clarke observes that “comic elements are ubiquitous” in travel writing, which is understandable given the “misunderstandings, presumptions and an ‘endemic lack of dignity’ experienced by travelers in far away lands” (cited in Barreuto). Gillray again appears to have drawn inspiration from travel literature as “bumbling, comic innocence” (Pratt 215) was a authorial stance anti-conquest literature.

As already stated in the previous chapter, in travel writing the desire for reciprocity and exchange oftentimes leads to “parodic reversals of Eurocentric power relations and cultural norms, especially norms about seeing and being seen” (82). That reversal is present both literally and figuratively in the cartoon; after all, at least some of the English are kowtowing, while the Chinese ignore the picture of the English king. The print parodies the theme of observing or envisioning the distant and different other commonly found in travel and exploration literatures as even the furniture and the face on the emperor’s rotund stomach glower at the embassy entourage. And unlike the dragons associated with eighteenth-century chinoiserie designs, the European-style dragon on the roof above the warrior is turned around (a double “parodic reversal”), allowing its tail to puncture the child’s balloon while the eave

extends to poke the English lion symbolically in the eye. (Hence the European [dragon] is literally "poking" fun at the European [lion]). The reversed color pattern of the Union flag, an image found in several Gillray prints, and the misplaced directional letters on the weather vane are additional symbolic subversions of the British sense of political confidence and cultural superiority. Notably, the only individual who is neither seeing nor seen in the print is the person holding those subversive objects. Gillray has presumably placed himself in the scene, functioning ethnographically as the self-effaced presence, the information producer "gazing in from the periphery" (Pratt "Scratches" 146).

Gazing into the Imperial Mirror

Bringing China into the discussion of the rhetoric of othering is important because, as Saxbee reminds us, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, other cultures were "treated [by the British] according to their relative status" to England, which "considered itself to be a dominant and superior nation" (337). The Chinese, however, felt the same way about themselves, and they certainly did not require British travelers or government officials to justify Chinese ways and means. Thus, in examining European representations of the Chinese other, we can also discover the European conception of the self.

One of the most striking features of "The Reception" is the English travelers' multifarious expressions that depict a range of disorienting emotions, including respect, fear, suspicion, and curiosity. Their looks are being returned (reciprocated) by the collective Chinese gaze, a phenomenon that in particular distinguishes the Western experience in China. As Spurr explains, those who gaze do so as a "privilege of inspecting, of examining,

of looking at" (13) an inferior cultural other, but unlike other sorts of Western representations, the gaze in the print marks the privilege of the other, not the self.

The ubiquitous "imperial" gaze, discussed so often in travel and exploration narrative studies, is indeed present in "The Reception," but it is headed in multiple directions, from the imperial Chinese court to the fledgling imperialists of the English court, from the English to the Chinese, and, perhaps most importantly, from the English to the English. After all, one of the satirical images in the corner of the print, partially obstructed by the flag, is a mirror. The mirror, for Gillray, signifies what Foucault calls the destruction of the "age-old distinction between Self and Other" (xv). In a review of one of the Macartney embassy travel journals the writer comments on the manner in which the "partial and contradictory representations" of China create equal parts distrust and admiration in the West, noting that it is "scarcely possible to ascertain the amount of ... refraction" found in the travel journals. Nor can one hope to "rectify" their "first observations in any other way than by repeating them frequently, and by comparing [their] conclusions with those of others upon whom the same causes of illusions have operated in an opposite direction" (*Edinburgh Review* cited in Zhang 281).

Toward a Rhetoric of Things Chinese

In examining artifacts related to the Macartney embassy to China, I have been interested in identifying the "cultural, ideological, or literary presuppositions" (Spurr 3) upon which authors based their representations of China and the Chinese. I would like to close this chapter and the historical discussion of the Macartney embassy with a rhetorical analysis of an article (quoted below in its entirety) that appeared in *The Times* on February 17, 1792.

Written almost seven months before Lord Macartney departed for China, the article reveals in many ways the English understanding of China and the hopes of the nation that accompanied the Macartney embassy. The article also articulates the presuppositions that embassy members carried with them as they traveled to the Middle Kingdom.

Lord Macartney, if he goes to China, will have a very difficult *card to play*, so as to win the affections of the people there.

Every person acquainted with modern history knows that the Chinese are not only the most suspicious and most superstitious people in the world, but that they despise all other nations as inferior to their own. This idea makes them hold little or no intercourse with even their neighbours: the Christian religion, however, having found its way thither, has paved a road to refinement, and Lord Macartney may probably make as good an impression on their superstitious minds, as he did on the rough and uncultivated manners of Russia.

Our Historical Writers differ much as to the manners of the people of this country. *Someret* and *Professor Paw* of Berlin, call them strange, uninformed, proud, self-opinionated people, among whom there is not any substantial happiness, whilst from *Abbe Grosser's* preliminary discourse, in his general history of China, there is a strong vindication to free them from the aspersions of other writers.⁵⁵

In some ways the quote typifies the rhetoric of “things Chinese.” One finds, for instance, that reportorial strategy relies on the readers’ willingness to accept that the subject is inherently interesting but also unknowable. In *The Cycle of Cathay: The Chinese Vogue in*

⁵⁵ Abbe Grosser (1743–1823) wrote *Description Generale de la Chine* (1785), which was later translated into English and published in 1788 (Cranmer-Byng 387).

England during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (1951), William W. Appleton asides that early travel narratives about China were often “zestful descriptions of curiosa and admiranda” (170). A general rhetoric of *curiosa*, an interest in the other, is in some ways characterized by a sort of detached amusement. But in the case of China, *curiosa* results in things Chinese either being set aside for admiration (*sinophilia*), or singled out for contempt (*sinophobia*). These contradictory rhetorics of attraction and repulsion simultaneously construct and deconstruct the Western understanding of things Chinese, trapping the rhetoric of representing China in an epistemological tug-of-war.

Comments about China and the Chinese often had as much to do with the writer’s rhetorical purpose as with his specific knowledge of the Chinese. The writer of *The Times* articles relies on stereotypes regarding the character of the Chinese people, but he also acknowledges that not everyone agrees on these characteristics. After all, one writer in particular is attempting to provide “strong vindication” (a rhetoric of apology) to the Chinese by freeing them “from the aspersions of other writers.” The author’s attempt at objective reporting is misleading, of course, because before mentioning the efforts of one writer (to free the Chinese from the “aspersions of other writers”) the author has already noted that the Chinese are “suspicious,” “superstitious,” “strange,” “uniformed,” “proud,” and “self-opinionated,” not to mention living “without any substantial happiness.”

The idea that the people of China were living “without any substantial happiness” became something of a mantra during the late eighteenth century, and many nineteenth-century travelers to China were surprised (and confused) to discover just the opposite. Nineteenth century texts about China abound with references to the industrious Chinaman, who appears to enjoy his (and her) oftentimes arduous work conditions. The cumulative

effect of these sorts of contradictory descriptions is writing that can be characterized as trying to scrutinize an inscrutable (i.e., impenetrable) topic, presenting different opinions but never arriving confidently at a conclusion. The writer's inability to scrutinize the Chinese becomes an example of the "textually produced" (Pratt 1986: 40) others' trait, resulting in the notion of the inscrutable Chinese.

Given the fact that the Chinese, or at least some of them, were reportedly miserable, *The Times* article also has something of a humanitarian tone. Not only do readers feel a sense of detachment when it comes to understanding the Chinese, but they are hopeful that Macartney can bring salvation to the country. If Macartney was able "to make an impression on the rough and uncultivated manners" of the Russians, there is a gambler's chance that he can overcome the "superstitious minds" of the Chinese.

But the reasoning and language here is both problematic and deceptive. In addition to its failure to articulate what "manners" were "uncultivated," the argument presumes that the Chinese are seeking the sort of cultivation that the English have to offer. The "manners," furthermore, are couched in religious imagery. Unlike Christians, the Chinese are superstitious and arrogant, which prevents them from holding "intercourse with even their neighbors"; but the Christian religion has "found its way thither," thus "paving the road," not to moral redemption, but to "refinement," that is, economic sophistication, which was the sole impetus for the Macartney embassy and a fact not lost on (or entirely supported by) the English populace.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ A letter to the printer of *The Saint James Chronicle, or the British Evening Post* complained that the embassy had no chaplain. The writer, who signed his name HONESTUS, was both grieved and astonished that he found "dyers, weavers, mathematicians, etc" but no "Ecclesiastical Dignitaries." HONESTUS asks "with what countenance can we ask to have a treaty of commerce with any religious nation, if we, when *ostentatiously* exhibiting a specimen of our nation, appear to have no religion at all."

The “kowtow incident” attracts the attention of scholars in a diversity of disciplines, including history, cross-cultural psychology, and global studies and understandably so, given that this was the first significant contact between representatives from both governments. George Kennedy, in *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction* (1998), embraces studying rhetorical systems comparatively, that is cross-culturally, in order “to identify what is universal and what is distinctive about any one rhetorical tradition” (1). “The Reception” both identifies “what is universal” (the show of deference) while satirizing “what is distinctive” (the specific acts of kneeling and kowtowing). Kennedy also contends that a comparative approach to rhetoric studies has “proved to be useful in the natural and human sciences to reveal features of some object of study that may not be immediately evident in its own context” (1). “The Reception” reveals the obeisance gestures as being inherently comical, as one is required to demonstrate their reverence by performing acts that are meaningless outside of the scene. Placed side-by-side, the act of “knocking” one’s head on the ground appears to be no more ridiculous than kneeling to kiss someone’s hand. The phenomenon that Kennedy associates, then, with comparative rhetoric, studying the other to better understand the self, is axiomatic now in a range of disciplines, and to be sure, the English become more aware of their own values and assumptions through their interactions with the Chinese.

CHAPTER 6.
THE CONTACT ZONE:
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE ENCOUNTERS

In “Place and Displacement: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in the Humanities,” literary critic and longtime resident of China Rufus Cook explains that “the whole impetus of postmodern fiction and postcolonial studies has been to break down any sense of origin or center, to promote the kind of hybrid cultural identity that goes with globalization and the new world order” (19). Although written during a time that was not “post” and about a place that was not “colonial,” the two-sentence quote that opens this dissertation tells us that Macartney experienced something of a “breakdown” of his sense of center, which to that moment had placed the English as the purveyors of the “new world order.” Cook summarizes the phenomenon of cross-cultural encounters as entailing the “experience of being taken out” of oneself, of “suddenly seeing” oneself “through the lenses of the other” (23).

A contact zone encounter can offer participants a similar experience, directing us to consider what has our extended contact zone analysis of the Macartney embassy to China, the kowtow incident, and travel writing about China yielded. We can conclude that, despite significant parallels between literary genres, historical eras, epistemological interests, and even people, West-China encounters often do not fit the colonialist notion of radically asymmetrical power relations, which oftentimes serve as the point of departure for studies involving contact zones. Nevertheless, the contact zone metaphor is still fruitful as an analytical approach if we modify it by loosening its affiliation with colonialist discourses,

looking at encounters in a variety of media and in locations where the contact involves co-existence and reconciliation in addition to, or in place of, confrontation and violence.

Pratt's articulation of a contact zone as being a "social space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (1992:4) has been widely extracted and made to fit a remarkable range of situations and scenarios. To my knowledge, the contact zone has never been used as an analytical tool to interrogate Western representations of China and the Chinese. China has been left out of these discussions ostensibly because cultural and historical relations between China and the West are incompatible with existing theoretical models of how one represents a (usually colonized) cultural other. This study, therefore, hopes to extend and reinvigorate the promising methodology that Pratt initiated, but with a more rhetorical rather than anthropological emphasis. To that end, seven features of contact zones have been identified and broadened, allowing researchers to approach any contact zone encounter, as articulated via any medium, systematically. For any given artifact, not all seven features will be equally useful in generating a deeper understanding of a text's rhetorical elements, but the purpose of the heuristic is to help readers discover potentially interesting sites for ideological excavation.

For example, I first encountered "The Reception" in William Alexander's *The Costume of China*, a text of water-colored portraits of Chinese people working or performing everyday tasks. Thurin calls Alexander's pictures "the one success of Macartney's mission" because it "gave the English some of their first realistic images of Chinese people, places, crafts, and cultural practices" (205).⁵⁷ Alexander's texts are attractive, arhetorical, and

⁵⁷ Alexander produced several books of sketches and paintings after the mission, including *The Costume of China*, published in 1805, and *Picturesque Representations of the Dress and Manners of the Chinese*, which did

accurate to a fault. His works lack (unstated rhetoric) any sort of emotion regarding the human experience of confronting the unfamiliar, unlike Gillray's print, which portrays strong senses of awkwardness and uncertainty. *The Costume of China* resulted from Alexander's personal observations, and he strove to represent the Chinese in realistic settings, resulting in emblematic images scattered throughout the background of each print. The self-awareness of Alexander as an artist likely contributed to his use of vibrant colors and his depiction of the Chinese people as lively and robust, the countryside serene and placid. Yet no foreigners are present in any of the book's forty-eight pictures, a rhetorical move that lends visual authenticity, and hence ethnographic credibility, to the text, but then blurs the line (as all travel writing does) between documentary fact and artistic fiction, especially given that when the artist originally sketched the pictures there were probably anywhere from a few to several dozen fellow embassy participants in the extended scene.

James Clifford contends that "ethnographic writings can properly be called fictions in the sense of 'something made or fashioned'" (6), and in terms of representing otherness, *what* is represented by Alexander ("systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery, and practice"—to reiterate from Said), in this case, is just as important rhetorically as *how* things were represented by Gillray. Both involve a degree of deception or distortion that is inevitable in representing a cross-cultural other. But in what ways does Gillray's image of the Chinese represent deliberate distortion? This is not an easy question to answer, but we can conclude that the "sole view" of both artists is neither objective nor simple. An artist chooses what to paint and how to present the subject. Alexander's portraits are colorful, the

not appear until 1814. The first book that Alexander published based on his trip to China was titled *Views of Headlands, Islands etc. taken during a Voyage to China* (1798).

scenes active and exotic, despite the plebian nature of what is usually depicted. Gillray, who was every bit as skilled artistically as Alexander, presents the same brilliant color, the same sense of activity, the same mixture of reality and exoticness. As consumers of other peoples' discourses, how are we to know where fact ends and the fiction begins? As researchers interested in the rhetoric of representations in contact zone encounters, we can begin with the seven features identified earlier in this dissertation.

In this dissertation, Pratt's commonplaces, which emphasize clusters of physical features in encounter events, have been extended to include such occurrences as decentering episodes and departure scenes, both of which are moments when travelers are likely to challenge or affirm their moral values or cultural assumptions. The identification of these iconic moments gives researchers surface clues about where to dig for ideological elements. The meeting-of-the-heads-of-state scene is a familiar and rhetorically transparent commonplace, a choreographed contact zone encounter that is nonetheless valuable in terms of generating comparative analyses, not only cross-culturally, but also within the same culture using certain repeated rhetorical reconstructions that have proven their staying power. The discussion of commonplaces in this dissertation has been augmented with attention to the role of rhetorical tropes in exposing motive and ideology underlying those commonplaces. The rhetorical tropes that have been identified in particular include loss, apology, a disguised pejorative, as well as different varieties and levels of humorous expression such as parody, self-mockery and comic exaggeration.

How might this new heuristic be used for more contemporary or recent events? An obvious choice for scholars interested in colonial (imperial, post-colonial, Orientalism) studies would be scenes from the war in Iraq. Perhaps the first image that comes to mind of a

contact zone encounter is the drama that played out when the large statue of Saddam Hussein was pulled down by United States military personnel before a frenzied crowd of onlookers. That contact zone was loaded with emblematic qualities: a tank toppled the statue; a child removed his shoe and beat the face of the statue; the head of the statue was removed and dragged by a chain. The crowd jubilantly expressed its hatred as they attacked the image of their former leader. Power disparities were on display (and even reversed symbolically) and in many ways the character of the encounter was well known as well, a mock up of a heroic arrival or save-the-day scene. Attention to the unstated rhetorical features of the encounter, however, reveals that missing from the “representation” (i.e., the media coverage) of the encounter was quite literally a broader scope (or view) of the encounter. Wide-angle camera photographs revealed the vast public square in which the event took place to be largely empty, and even a few hundred yards away the street scene appeared mundane.

What are the implications for identifying and analyzing other contact zone artifacts, and how might the features identified in this dissertation change as mobility and globality continue to challenge our existing assumptions and ways of reading? This dissertation has not only brought examples from China into the realm of studies dealing with Western representations of non-Western others, but in doing so the notion of a contact as an analytical tool has been broadened and refined, given both increased flexibility and critical precision as a strategy for interrogating contact zone encounters.

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