Beauty Queens on the Global Stage

Gender, Contests, and Power

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Routledge / New York and London
1996

apolitical, slightly frivolous, and "women's business." In this sense, the queen rallies provided a forum for expression and competition that was simply unavailable elsewhere. Translated into national policy, however, these newly fabricated "tribal hatreds" could not be contained by mapping them onto the bodies of young women. In such a contest, beauty was the last thing on anyone's mind.

Notes

This essay is based on fifteen months of fieldwork in southeastern Liberia in 1982-83, supported by a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship and a Hannum-Warner Alumnae Travel Grant from Mount Holyoke College. I am grateful to Colleen Ballerino Cohen, Richard Wilk, and Beverly Stoeltje for their helpful editorial comments and for the comments of several anonymous reviewers.

1. It is conventional among scholars of Liberia to use "Glebo" to refer to the people of the two coastal confederacies (*dakwe*) occupying the coast from Fishtown Point to the Cavalla River, including Cape Palmas. "Grebo" is used to refer to the language group which includes the Glebo and a large number of other individually named coastal and interior *dakwe*. As used by the national government, "Grebo" (like "Kru" and "Krahn") has come to be used as a "tribal" designation, but it implies a homogeneity and political solidarity that has no historical basis.

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Miss Tibet, or Tibet Misrepresented?
The Trope of Woman-as-Nation in the Struggle for Tibet

Carole McGranahan

The Tibetan nation debuted on stage December 1991 at the Lhasa Holiday Inn as twenty-five women in "traditional" Tibetan costume competed for the title of "Miss Tibet." The first and only pageant to take place thus far in Chinese-ruled Tibet, the "Miss Tibet" pageant introduces the trope of woman-as-nation to Tibet. Almost all the expected features of any Western pageant were present, yet the Chinese state via the Communist Party left its distinctive trademark on the contest, resulting in a pageant that resembled a stereotypical Chinese "minority nationality" cultural show. Participation also diverged from the expected: workplaces were ordered by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to enter their most beautiful employees as contestants in the six and a half hour contest. Orchestrated by Western expatriates, judged by Western and Chinese (male) officials, and participated in by Tibetan (and, it was rumored, Chinese) women, what was the event titled the "Miss Tibet" pageant? For whom is Tibet represented as woman?

Beauty pageants can be read as attempts to circumscribe women's worlds within that of the nation. The idea that women both physically and culturally reproduce members of the nation, and are as well foci and symbols of ethnic and national identity is offered by Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989). However, an analysis of the gendering of nations, of the positioning of women in relation to the state, and of complexities of discursive representations of women does not necessarily arrive at a universal locale from which to theorize about women and the nation. We must question the ease with which women have been made available as signs of the nation, and instead interrogate both discourses of gender, and discourses that become gendered. Ortner (1990) writes of the need to examine discourses that both challenge and parallel dominant tropes of gender. In so doing, essentialist tendencies linking women and the nation break down, revealing the vagaries of specific constructs and contexts, and illuminat-

ing the very lack of clarity in which the discourses of gender and nation have been deployed as aligned. A growing body of interdisciplinary (and often feminist) literature that attempts to theorize the discursive relations between women and nation often begins with a link to nationalist projects.[1] Yet, it is important to differentiate between women's participation in nationalist projects and the representation of the nation as female. If nation-as-woman is presented as a dominant trope in beauty pageants, we must question who offers that formulation, who partakes of it, and how other discourses appear in response. Unrecorded meanings ascribed to the pageant by the contestants may be located within, outside, or parallel to Chinese- and Western-intended readings of the Miss Tibet pageant. As dominant Chinese discourse and infrastructure penetrate the political border of Tibet, the power of the Chinese state, while hegemonic in its formulation, fails to be exclusive or exclusively totalizing.

Inasmuch as the beauty pageant is about women and the relation of women to nation, it is also about relations between states and nations. In the Miss Tibet pageant, women are used as both an instrument in the debate over the Tibetan nation, and as representatives of the debate. Politics in Tibet strays far from the boundaries of nationalism and nationalist discourse. Debates over Tibet center on questions of history, of cultural and political identity, and of the power to represent and the condition of being represented. Thus the task of representing Tibet does not begin or end with "Miss Tibet." Instead it is a continuous process tied into plural notions of history, culture, and political agenda. The identity that China has crafted for Tibet rests in selected readings of history and culture. Chinese views seek to legitimate Chinese rule in Tibet to both international governments and monitoring agencies, and also to Tibetans and Chinese alike. As portrayed by the Lhasa Holiday Inn, Tibetan culture, and current tensions surrounding Chinese-Tibetan relations, are marketable commodities open to appropriation and consumption. What are the motives behind these definitions? What is their salience?

In this paper I will explore how the Miss Tibet pageant is a microcosm of larger issues at play in Chinese-ruled Tibet, and examine how women have come to stand for nation within the Miss Tibet pageant. The groups involved—Westerners,[2] Chinese, and Tibetans—occupy varied positions in complex political, social, and economic hierarchies in Tibet. Acting both with and for these groups are the pageant contestants: Miss Tibet's carefully scripted, yet selectively read, role in the mapping of the Tibetan and Chinese nations. My analysis will show the connections between the refraction of nation in representations of Tibetan women, and the interests of Chinese Communist Party officials and Lhasa Holiday Inn staff in sponsoring a beauty pageant in Tibet. Within the "Miss Tibet" pageant, an imagined and idealized Tibetan woman represents Tibet to

foreigners, to the Chinese state, and to other Tibetans. How has the beauty pageant brought together Western and Chinese factions in their struggle to define Tibet? As the Chinese and the Westerners ostensibly collude in promoting this particularly gendered representation of nation, Tibetans appear to stand outside the contest as key players in a watchful position. Tibetan nationalism does not validate the cultural trope of woman-as-nation. How, and why then, have women become implicated in this struggle for nation?

STAGING THE PAGEANT: PLACE, POLITICS, PROBLEMS

"In the End, Beauty Triumphed Over Bureaucracy"

The Lhasa Holiday Inn (LHI), home of the Hard Yak Cafe, is one of a number of strangely liminal tourist hotels that hover on the outskirts of cities in China.[3] Middle- and upper-income foreign tourists tend to stay at the Holiday Inn, which is the only international-class hotel in Tibet. It was here that the Miss Tibet beauty pageant was held in December 1991.

The pageant was the kick-off event for the Tibet Autonomous Region's "1992 Golden Year of Tourism," celebrating the fortieth anniversary of China's "Peaceful Liberation of Tibet."[4] The idea for the pageant originated with Western staff at the Holiday Inn who presented it to the TAR branch of the Communist Party for approval. Initial plans were for the beauty contest to be a large-scale media affair. More than four hundred foreign film and television crews requested to participate. As the question of both political problems and potential reprimands from Beijing arose, local government enthusiasm began to wane. Foreign journalists renowned for their tendency to critique China's presence and policies in Tibet were the first to be eliminated. The Party's reshaping of the pageant was under way.

Under the orchestration of the CCP, the pageant resembled a specific genre of "minority" cultural production. Such productions focus on costume, song, and dance of China's "minorities" and are performed for both domestic and foreign tourists.[5] Pageant participants were instructed to model local fashions, and Tibetan cultural performers (as well as two yaks and a pony) joined the contestants on stage. Pageant promotional buttons ("I Love Miss Tibet") and posters were vetoed immediately. Posters were only allowed to be hung within the hotel itself. Even the name of the pageant was not immune to official scrutiny. Objections to the title "Miss Tibet" were raised, and the more innocuous "Miss Fashion Parade Evaluation" was suggested by the Chinese. However, the Westerners prevailed in this matter, and the pageant winner was crowned "Miss Tibet."

The CCP sent directives to local work units requiring participation of each unit's most beautiful women. Twenty-five women participated, a ma-

jority of whom were professional actresses, dancers, or singers. Among foreign judges and spectators, unconfirmed rumors circulated that Chinese women as well as Tibetans were participating. Pageant contestants were judged on general impressions, artistic qualities, poise, appearance, and interviewing skills. No interviews actually took place, however, and impromptu questions went unanswered. For each of the ten foreign judges, the CCP dictated that there would be two Chinese judges. As a result, there were five more judges than there were contestants. In addition to the judges, over one hundred spectators, mainly journalists from Hong Kong, flew into Lhasa to view what one journalist called the Miss Tibet "Forbidden Tour" (Woolrich 1992). Finally, the intended grand prize of a trip to Hong Kong (and thus, out of China) was vetoed by the CCP. Instead, a fur coat was awarded as first prize. The winner—a married Tibetan woman, a mother, and member of a Tibetan dance troupe—was escorted from the event in the sidecar of a police motorcycle. The front of her cart read "Holiday Inn, Lhasa—Miss Tibet."

The three groups competing to define Tibet do so from revolving positions of power, as the Miss Tibet pageant demonstrated. Packaged to fit specific (yet shifting) needs, Tibetan identity is simultaneously constructed in different ways by LHI staff and CCP officials. Collusion occurs in the presentation of the pageant as a tourist spectacle, yet breaks down in meanings ascribed to the pageant by the two groups. The staff at the LHI seek to frame Tibet in Western-defined humanitarian terms sensationalized by local political tensions; in opposition, CCP officials seek to circumscribe Tibet within Chinese terms of state and nation through historical and political rhetoric. Thus, as crafted by Western LHI staff to promote the authenticity of cultural experience available by staying at the LHI, and by the CCP as an occasion to legitimate continuing Chinese rule in Tibet, the pageant does not necessarily correspond to Tibetan constructs of cultural and political identity. Assumed by both the LHI and the CCP is an oppositional Tibetan stance: an independent Tibet that is remembered and recast by the Holiday Inn, and is patrolled and policed by the Chinese state.

Tibet vs. China: Constructs of Identity and History

In 1949, Chinese troops marched into eastern and northern Tibet, and by 1950 they had effectively gained control over the country. At this time, Tibet was an independent state. In 1951, the 17-Point Agreement was signed incorporating Tibet into the People's Republic of China. According to anthropologist Melvyn Goldstein,

> In the next few months, several thousand troops of the People's Liberation Army arrived in Lhasa; although the old system continued to exist in some form for another eight years, October 1951 marks the end of the de facto independent Lamaist state. (Goldstein 1989, 813)

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet, fled a suspected Chinese kidnap attempt on March 10, 1959. Many members of the Tibetan government, and thousands of other Tibetans from all areas of Tibet, joined him in escape to exile in India. They remain there and in countries around the world today. According to Shakya (1993), the fall of Lhasa to the Chinese was a pivotal point in the minds of the Tibetan people. Despite regional differences among Tibetans, Lhasa was the symbol of Tibet—"the center of their universe" (Shakya 1993, 10). With the Chinese invasion, life in Lhasa was disrupted as Tibetan scripts of history, identity, and nation were rewritten in Chinese characters.

Today, Lhasa is the capital of the Chinese-designated Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). The population of Lhasa is over one-half Chinese.[6] Recent changes are reflected in the city's landscape. Architecturally, many of Lhasa's new buildings resemble those of a Chinese city, and in the fall of 1993, against the advice of UNESCO, a series of historic Tibetan houses in the Barkhor, the Tibetan quarter of Lhasa, were demolished under government order. Economically, opportunities abound for Han Chinese who come as government cadres and also as small business owners or laborers. Hui and Uighur entrepreneurs, among others, have also found their way to Lhasa's bazaars and market areas. However, amidst the hubbub of destruction and reconstruction Lhasa remains the center of the Tibetan Buddhist world, and a sacred space for Tibetans inside, and outside, the boundaries of Tibet.

With the consolidation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, China viewed itself as a Han Chinese nation inclusive of other peoples as "minority nationalities" (see D. Norbu 1991). Together, the Han and these others form the Motherland, the People's Republic of China. The question of a Chinese national identity is necessarily tied to the state. It has been suggested that Sun Yat-Sen's creation of the "imagined" Han nationality, and subsequently the idea of China as comprised of the Han and four other nationalities (the Hui, Manchu, Mongolians, and Tibetans) "led to the invention and the legitimization of the Self" (Gladney 1991, 87).[7] Currently, some fifty-five non-Han Chinese groups—comprising eight percent of the PRC population, yet inhabiting over 60 percent of the PRC's total land mass—are recognized by the Chinese government as "minority nationalities" (Dreyer 1993, 358-9).[8] This number includes peoples who have been all but assimilated into Chinese culture, as well as groups who remain distinct from the Chinese. Current Chinese data reports approximately 4.6 million Tibetans within the PRC (Dreyer 1993, 363). Of this number, 2.08 million reside outside of the Chinese-designated Tibet Autonomous Region; an additional 100,000 live as refugees outside of

Tibet.

In Lhasa, and throughout Tibet, practices and beliefs of Tibetans are governed, legislated, and defined on Chinese terms through the programs of the Chinese Communist Party. Chinese state literature on Tibet typically emphasizes the national "unity" of the PRC.

> Ever since the Tibetans have overthrown once and for all invasions from imperialist powers, and within this great family of the motherland, where equal rights for nationalities are enjoyed, they have started marching forward along the promising path of unity. ("Exhibition of Reconstruction Achievements," 1991)

In Tibet, actions directed against Chinese rule are classified by the Chinese government as "splittist activities," including protests, the distributing of pamphlets, the forming of pro-independence organizations, possession of literature from the Tibetan Government in Exile, or any other activities perceived by the state as potentially "splittist." Such activities are portrayed by China as attempts to "divide the Motherland." Since the 1950s, a large number of Tibetans have been arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and killed for asserting their belief that China should free Tibet (See *Defying the Dragon* 1991). Mass protests rocked Lhasa from 1987 to 1989, and continue today, with recent unrest exploding in other Tibetan provinces as well. Today Tibetans continue to escape Tibet for a life in exile; those crossing the border into Nepal are on occasion forcefully repatriated by a Nepali government sympathetic to Chinese policies.

As a result of these tensions, the status of Tibet as a polity within China is wholly structured in political terms at the regional, prefectural, and county level. For example, the Tibet Autonomous Region's branch of the CCP, and not a local cultural organization, ordered contestants' participation in the Miss Tibet pageant. The limits of acceptable ethnic or cultural expression—such as that by the participants in the Miss Tibet pageant—are circumscribed by the state, and subsequently categorized as either harmonious or threatening. Under either pretense, the political overtones are clear—certain aspects of Tibetan (or "minority") culture are acceptable to the state in certain times and certain contexts, and the authority to decide when, what, and where rests with the state.[9] Within China, even the smallest organizations require the involvement of a CCP representative. The role of the party is not just to police behavior, but to circumscribe it within a very present notion of the state. According to Anagnost:

> The socialist realist text...projects utopian fiction onto the space of lived reality, and it does this not through the individuation of its characters, but through a different operation. It classifies characters into coded positions, representations that are moral exemplars, clusters of signs that must be made visible in order to circulate throughout the social body and thereby produce the effects of power by making the party, in its turn, also supremely visible in a dazzling display of presence. (1994, 149-150)

Thus, the Chinese Communist Party, Chinese government structures, and organizations such as the Public Security Bureau and the People's Liberation Army order certain spheres of life within Tibet—dictating the limits of ethnic boundaries reconstructed as a single national boundary. In this way, Tibetan transgressions against Chinese rule in Tibet become not mere ethnic unrest, but violations of a shared identity located in a fictive history—that of members of the People's Republic of China.

In many ways the struggle over nation and identity in Tibet is a struggle over history. In terms of writing Tibet's history, the form and history of the state is contested. Tibetan histories emphasize Tibet's independence from China through the notion of separate states, and intersecting but separate histories (see T. Norbu and Turnbull 1968; Shakabpa 1967). Countering this are Chinese presentations of Tibetan history which consistently portray Tibet as a historical, inalienable part of China (see Wang and Suo 1984). In addition, Western political discourse currently reconfigures both Chinese and Tibetan concepts of history, nation, and state in line with specific liberal notions of how these categories are constituted. For example, political arenas such as the United Nations, diplomatic tables, and international legal bodies, demand an adaptation of history and politics to a specific Western framework.[10] On the relationship between history and national identity in China and India, Prasenjit Duara writes:

> [P]remodern political identifications do not necessarily or teleologically develop into the national identifications of modern times. A new vocabulary and a new political system—the world system of nation-states—select, adapt, reorganize, and even recreate these older identities...The real significance of the historical question lies in understanding how it is articulated within the contest over the meaning of the nation. (1993, 784)

In the struggle for Tibet, history, nation, identity, and politics necessarily intertwine. Different degrees of categorical inflection are manifest in varied representations of Tibet. As history and identity become entangled in the process of defining Tibet, it is important to note that they are neither separable nor singular entities.

THE DISPLAYED AND THE CONTESTED

Returning now to the pageant, foreign spectators and judges were supplied with letters from the Chinese government warning against activities "incompatible with the status of a tourist," i.e., the distribution of photos,

books, or videos that offer a version of Tibet different from state literature. The few foreign journalists who did manage to attend the pageant were watched closely by the Public Security Bureau (PSB). An electricity failure during the evening wear segment provided a photo opportunity for the foreign media (the "hack pack") as both picture-takers and picture-subjects.

> Up to this point, the hack pack had been reasonably well-behaved but en masse they now decided to get to work. Out came the cameras and enough flash power was emitted to light up the room again. The PSB had obviously been waiting for the moment it could catch the impostors red-handed, as they too whipped out powerful lenses and began taking pictures. The stand-off lasted about ten minutes with each side aiming its weaponry at the other, until one of the better-looking contestants appeared and the guns swung round and trained on her. (Woolrich 1992, 26)

The scene depicted here is not just that of the pageant, but a reading of the political tension between China and Tibet, and subsequent Western and Chinese claims to represent Tibet. As the pageant relies on the unstated recognition of Tibetan resistance to Chinese rule in Tibet, it also inserts Tibetan women into the male world of conflict. As such, they, and Tibetan culture, are caught in the crossfire of Western and Chinese debates over the Tibetan nation. Woolrich's weaponry metaphor is appropriate on two levels: first, because Tibetan struggles against Chinese rule have been met by armed resistance; and second, because the pageant contestants can be read as silent signs of Tibetan nationalism, and thereby signify the potential for resistance. Control over this potential is exercised by both Chinese and Western arms-bearing factions. Thus, as the "guns" turn to the woman, she becomes not just a female on display but a figure in the drama of constructing and contesting modern Tibet. I now turn to a discussion of the "displayed and the contested"—first, the trope of woman as nation within the beauty pageant; second, an exploration of Chinese and Western contexts for the state/nation/woman debate in Tibet; and third, the place of Tibet and Tibetan identity within the global realm.

The Beauty Pageant: Woman as Nation?

"Miss Tibet." Tibet as woman. Whose definition is this? Do nationalist sentiments require an essentialized notion of female?[11] Or are women merely an available vehicle for the banner of nation? Within the Miss Tibet pageant, the trope of woman as nation is double: salient for Chinese and Western interests, and not so for Tibetan interests. In addition, the woman-nation-Tibet triad is specifically located within the current political context that allows competing Chinese and Western factions to argue for—through the medium of the pageant—the inclusion of Tibet within their respective ideologies of state and nation.

While the pageant itself was contingent upon and informed by a nationalist Tibetan discourse in spirit, it did not require (nor allow) the participation of its representatives. Women's presence in the pageant follows the same dualistic logic found in the pageant structure. In the triad woman-nation-Tibet, the category of woman is empty insofar as it does not stem from identifiable Tibetan cultural or political traditions.[12] Tibetan formulations of national identity do not rely on an image of the nation that is gendered feminine.[13] In fact, Makley (1994, 22) argues that "the main repository of Tibetan culture/identity is *not* Woman, but male-dominated institutional Buddhism." And Klieger recognizes the Dalai Lama as the "biological and spiritual *father* of the Tibetan people" who embodies the patron/client dyad prevalent in notions of Tibetan identity (1992, 78, my emphasis). The pages of *Tibetan Review*, a journal published in India by exile Tibetans, reverberate with calls for the preservation of Tibetan culture and national identity through education: a project that is not gendered male or female in exile (see D. Norbu 1994; Phuntsog 1994; Shastri 1994). Yet, in regard to capitalist and communist promotions of Tibet, woman as bearer of nation is marketable to specific audiences and is therefore an externally valid category. In negotiating readings of the pageant, it is clear that while Tibetan Woman is the object upon which our gaze is focused, she is not the subject of the pageant. Instead, the Tibetan nation and the Tibetan state are the subjects under contention.[14] In struggling to define the Tibetan nation, how has a beauty pageant provided the stage for debate? Whose fantasy of nation does Miss Tibet fulfill?

In China, beauty pageants are one of the latest rages. As increasingly liberal economic policies open China's eastern provinces to the capitalist world, the number of beauty pageants skyrocketed to around forty-five during 1991 alone (Tefft 1993). In her article "Goodbye Mao Cap, Hello Tiara: Beauty Pageantry Sweeps China," Sheila Tefft focuses on the irony of beauty pageants in a country led by philosophies ranging from Confucianism to Communism. Interestingly, a majority of the pageants are held under the auspices of the local Communist Party, as was the case in Tibet. Contests in eastern China crowned "Miss Air Hostess," "Miss Etiquette," and "Miss International Coconut Festival" signaling the apolitical nature of these contests, and a continuity with the CCP's desire to crown a woman "Miss Fashion Parade Evaluation" rather than "Miss Tibet." Within China, despite the devaluing of minority nationality cultures as evolutionarily primitive, there is a romantic fetishization of (specifically women's) minority costumes and customs. Ethnic dance troupes perform for official state visitors. Minority women are popularly

thought of as beautiful (and sexually liberal);[15] their pictures grace the pages of *Beijing Review* with surprising frequency. In many ways, the person, the culture, the people, are reduced to a visual representation manifest in women.

The spheres of discourse that pageant contestants enter are varied, and often it is images of women, rather than the women themselves that are important. The gaze that constitutes women as representative of nation, or as any form of fantasy, is necessarily external, and in the case of the Miss Tibet pageant, male. The "trope of nation-as-woman" is located within a "particular image of women as chaste, beautiful, daughterly or maternal," whereby nation can be "gendered feminine...despite or rather *because* of the actual experiences of their female populations" (Parker et al. 1992, 6). Nationalist projects are also involved in the definition of women's subjectivity at certain levels—"The very language of nationalism singles out women as the symbolic repository of group identity" (Kandiyoti 1994, 382). Yet, within the Miss Tibet beauty pageant, women are a vehicle, not a repository, for national and cultural identity in that they carry but do not embody the nation. Additionally, nationalism in the Miss Tibet pageant is not singular: multiple nationalisms as well as multiple constructs of Tibetan nationalism are present. Constructed images of women within the pageant do not require a correspondence to women's realities for legitimation. Thus, a privileged image of woman-as-nation within the spectacle of the beauty pageant links women to the nation in hypothetical or ideological senses only. As nations are "gendered feminine," the multiple groups declaring this relation seek to promote specific agendas (e.g., Chinese political legitimacy), and do so within well-established frameworks (such as Western beauty pageants). In the Miss Tibet pageant, space was not provided for the female contestants to declare their own relation to nation—be it Tibet or China. Instead they remain the Defined. The trope of woman-as-nation is thereby constituted as empty, a colonized sign, on the Tibetan side of the struggle.

Tibet and Tibetan Women in China: Representations, "Minorities," and the State

Why not "Miss Tibet?" Chinese government resistance to the pageant title is not surprising, for allowing a territorially-defined title might suggest a legitimately sovereign territory. As local CCP officials debated the pageant title, perhaps they envisioned Miss Tibet winning the Miss China title and ultimately representing the PRC at the Miss Universe pageant, resulting in a political media fiasco in which Miss China is referred to as *"Miss Tibet."* The potential legitimation of territory that is present in the pageant title debates brings us to the center of recent events in Tibet—the struggle for power, legitimate rule, and the authority to represent a people and a country.

Tibetan women in Lhasa necessarily operate within a number of realms, including that of a normalized gender established for women in communist China.[16] Recently, numerous authors have argued against essentialized notions of Chinese women and Chinese feminism (see Chow 1991a, 1991b; Rofel 1993; Barlow 1994). In contrast they espouse a more nuanced and complex view of women within the modern Chinese state. Yet, their arguments lack a recognition of the experiences of "minority nationality" women in China, which are similarly circumscribed within the rhetoric of the state to which they have a different relationship than Han Chinese women. How might the stories of these doubly peripheralized women force us to ask new questions of both state and nation in China? In post-1949 China, women received a new place in society in line with then current politics of state and nation.

> [T]he revolution resituated Chinese women inside the state under a Maoist inscription. Women could only be represented as women through the state's Women's Federation....[T]he socialist state in China...colonized and produced feminism. "National woman" became the only viable feminist under Maoist politics. She was a revolutionary, a "backbone cadre," who has reached an elevated status through commitment to class politics and wholehearted support for state policies. (Barlow quoted in Rofel 1993, 45)

Women's voices are regulated through the state. As individual Tibetan women conduct their lives within Chinese dictates, they and groups that represent them, such as the Tibet Women's Federation, become to an incomplete extent a part of the Chinese national project. The PRC construction of a national identity both involving and relying on "minority nationalities" is evident in Chinese government attempts to write minority women, and minorities in general, into the Chinese state. The beauty pageant is a method by which minorities in the PRC are placed as public adornment to Han culture—anachronistic peoples to be brought into temporal and spatial alignment with the Chinese world. In the beauty pageant, Tibetan women provide a template for the legitimation of this PRC project.

PRC state ideology is influenced by a Marxist framework that places Tibet within evolutionary stages of "feudal serfdom/class-based primitive exploitation" at the time of the Chinese "liberation" of Tibet.[17] Through this reductionism, Chinese histories of Tibet are "emptying" in that Tibetan history is fractured and fragmented in the process.[18] Chinese writings also tend to highlight certain aspects or events at the expense of larger historical or ethnographic records. One recurring example is a fix-

ation on Chinese Princess Wen Cheng, married in 641 A.D. to the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo.[19] Rarely is it mentioned that Songtsen Gampo was also married to a Nepali princess and had a healthy number of Tibetan wives as well. TAR Tourism officials suggest that tourists travel Wen Cheng's route from Xian to Lhasa, and the princess is often featured in Chinese tourist literature about Tibet (see *Xinhua* February 6, 1994). Diamond (1988) has suggested that this Chinese historiographic feature is used by the Chinese state with regard to all "minority nationalities."[20] In essence, what we are presented with is the writing of a "simplex history," socialist style.[21]

While the focus on Princess Wen Cheng is Chinese-selected, the focus on Miss Tibet is not a unilateral Chinese project. The image of the beauty queen is available through Western cultural constructs, approved (and reconstructed) by CCP government officials, and is carried by the Tibetan women contestants. Potential for conflict within the pageant was sufficiently diminished through Chinese government action—the choosing of judges, of contestants, and of pageant format and advertising. The power of the state to construct nation extends to the specific agents—in this case, Miss Tibet—that the state employs. Thus, although women are not immune to the ills of "splittist activities," their carefully rehearsed roles in the Miss Tibet pageant are claimed by the state as representative of, rather than threatening to, the nation of Tibet within the PRC.

Transnational Capital and Culture at the Holiday Inn

The site of the pageant, the Lhasa Holiday Inn, is a privileged space in Tibet. At issue with regard to the pageant is the LHI's manipulation of political tension as a tourist attraction, and a corresponding claim to present an authentic Tibet to tourists. In so doing, LHI staff presents the hotel as an actor, thereby minimizing the distance between their guests and the authentic cultural experience available by staying at the Holiday Inn. In 1991, the LHI was the only establishment in Lhasa managed by a Western staff. At the time, LHI staff included Italians, Americans, Belgians, and British employees among others. The hotel has a somewhat unstable history.[22] Opened in 1985 by the Chinese government, the hotel closed as a result of numerous complaints six months later. At the request of the Chinese government, the Holiday Inn was asked to take over hotel management. Original staff were both Westerners and Chinese employees from other Holiday Inns in the PRC. Gradually, Tibetans were trained to move into non-menial positions, and at the time of the pageant comprised the majority of the staff. Management, however, remained in the hands of the Westerners. Currently, the Holiday Inn has a ten-year contract, with all hotel proceeds returning to the Tibet Tourism Bureau, a government

agency. This arrangement places the hotel in a powerful economic position, according to former hotel manager Ernesto Barba, as seventy-five percent of all foreign revenue in the Tibet Autonomous Region comes from the LHI. Barba also stated,

> If I told them [the Chinese] I wanted a white elephant grazing in the garden, they'd let me do it. (Thurston 1992, 19)

The economic power that the LHI wields is evident to the CCP. Despite Chinese attempts to avoid "Westernization," the LHI escapes full censorship because of the revenue that the hotel returns to the state. This collusion between state and hotel allows the pageant to take place, despite the contestory nature of their individual messages.

The Lhasa Holiday Inn is Tibet's only international-class hotel, and therefore host to package tourists, VIPs, and visiting human rights delegations. The image of Tibet presented at the hotel is one steeped in stereotypes, yet it hints strongly at discord beneath the surface. Consider the following hotel literature:

> Khy Khy Club, the world's first Tibetan discotheque opened at the Holiday Inn Lhasa on April 17th. Guest of honor, Mr. Harrison Ford, the original Indiana Jones, joined in the celebrations as dancing at Tibet's most exclusive nightspot continued well into the early hours. Already being dubbed "the Club 54 of Lhasa" crowds have been gathering each night outside the Khy Khy Club in the hope of gaining entrance or of catching a glimpse of the exclusive clientele.
>
> The ribbon cutting ceremony was performed by Mr. Mao Ru Bai, the Vice Governor of Tibet, to the tune of a military drill display by a local security force.
>
> Among the guests at the Khy Khy Club are Miss Tibet contestants, tall Khampa beauties and local dignitaries who mix with the international jetset for fun-packed evenings of intrigue and possibly subversive activities.
>
> The music is nostalgic "Mao Tse Tung Swing" by the live band, mixed with the latest international nightclub hits spun on the turntable by the Khy Khy Club's South American disc jockey. (Holiday Inn document in English, 1992)

With liberal poetic license, Western staff at the Holiday Inn create for Tibet a role in a world whose boundaries are easily (and superficially) transcended by the "jetset" crowd. The "possibly subversive activities" in effect involve two groups—those represented by "Miss Tibet contestants," of which there were perhaps some "tall Khampa beauties," and the "local dignitaries" who represent one end of the political spectrum. By

linking and inherently juxtaposing the Tibetan women and the "local" (most likely both Chinese and Tibetan) political representatives of the CCP, Holiday Inn literature places Miss Tibet at the opposite end of the spectrum, as the antithesis to Chinese rule. In the Western cultural world of beauty pageants, writ large in spheres like the Miss Universe pageant, is the notion of women as representative of nation. It is this same notion that the Holiday Inn is suggesting here.

Self-positioning is also prevalent in hotel literature for reasons of legitimacy. The hotel's tourist audience requires reassurance that their experiences are not just authentic but unique; the hotel makes every attempt to provide this. Subversiveness then can be seen as a mark of authenticity. In this manner, claims in Holiday Inn literature replicate standard tourist industry writings in sheer exaggeration and exoticizing of culture (see Crick 1989; Rossel 1988; Smith 1978). The appearance of Harrison Ford demonstrates this. His presence in promotional literature lends credence to the Holiday Inn's ability to authentically package Tibet. As Indiana Jones, as a movie star, and as a supporter of the Free Tibet movement, Harrison Ford embodies the role that the LHI has claimed for itself: an authoritative presenter of culture and navigator of political undercurrents. Ford is perfectly positioned to be associated with glamorous Miss Tibet contestants, and therefore to bring an international aura to the jet-setting tourist experience one may have at the Holiday Inn. According to one journalist, "Tibet was *the* chic place to go" for Italian tourists during the summer of 1992 (Thurston 1992, 18).

When the Holiday Inn arranged for an Italian fashion show to take place in Lhasa, the foreign press exploded. Special behind-the-scene privileges were offered by the LHI to the Italian group such as visits to monasteries usually off limits, and a luncheon at the site of Lhasa's sky burial grounds. The occasion at hand was the opening of a pool in the shape of Tibet at the LHI.[23] The opening was to coincide with the annual Tibetan bathing festival. An editorial in *The Observer*, a London-based newspaper, accused the LHI of blasphemy in the form of "fashion shows in front of the Dalai Lama's palace, photo opportunities where the Living God once meditated, luncheon next to Lhasa's most sacred burial site" (quoted in Thurston 1992, 18). The Holiday Inn denied the charges, and the event went on. Their actions, however, have not gone unnoticed.

On November 20, 1993, a boycott of the Lhasa Holiday Inn was announced by the London-based Tibet Support Group.[24] The organization accuses the Holiday Inn of "cultural insensitivity," and makes specific reference to the "Miss Tibet" pageant held at the hotel. In response, an England-based spokesperson for the Holiday Inn stated that the Lhasa hotel is "particularly sensitive politically, and the hotel monitors the local

situation very closely," and that the hotel employs "a significantly high proportion of Tibetans." (Bennett 1993). This last comment appears to be a response to a 1992 criticism of the hotel by the Tibet Information Network, also based in London, for

> insensitivity to local culture and its close relations with the (Chinese) regime. For one period during the last four years, the hotel was staffed by Chinese people dressed as Tibetans and wearing Tibetan name badges. (TIN news release, May 27, 1992)

The LHI's manipulation of the local political situation is in a sense protected by a strong economic position. In terms of power, the Holiday Inn claims multiple spheres, yet ultimately is only operating in Tibet at the invitation of the Chinese government.

The addition of the Western contingency in claiming to offer a version of Tibetan culture factors into the state-nation struggle between China and Tibet. As the Chinese population of Lhasa grows, and ties between Tibet and the global Tibetan diaspora strengthen in some areas, the foreign staff at the Holiday Inn simultaneously seek to incorporate a vision of Tibet into its transnational worldview. What is the vision of Tibet that the LHI is assuming? Is it a vision of Tibet that recognizes the Tibet Government-in-Exile and the more than 100,000 Tibetans in exile, or one that limits its definition to the Tibet of the Tibet Autonomous Region? It appears to be simultaneously neither and both. The LHI orchestrated a "Miss Tibet" pageant not a "Miss T.A.R." or even a "Miss Lhasa" pageant. The Tibet that the Holiday Inn speaks of is the pre-1959 Tibet, not the geographic area currently bounded by Chinese political claims. The commodification of Tibet for tourism, and the appropriation of political tensions, is presented alongside conflicting Chinese state dialogue regarding Tibet. By doing so, the LHI invalidates the state's monopoly on representations of nation.

> Commercial interests, too, engage in objectification, promoting festivals of authentic folk culture, national-historical theme parks, world's fairs, beauty contests, and international sports competitions. All of these national-cultural forms can be found throughout the world. (Foster 1991, 249)

The political nature of many of these representations must be addressed. While the Chinese state undoubtedly has political motives as well as commercial interests in Tibet, does the Holiday Inn seek merely economic gain? Or is there more at stake in their hosting of the Miss Tibet pageant?

Analyses of transnational interventions into national culture can be read in terms of power struggles. For Dirlik (1994), the power to represent others is itself an issue of contention at many levels:

> Managers of this world situation themselves concede that they (or their organizations) now have the power to appropriate the local for the global, to admit different cultures into the realm of capital (only to break them down and remake them in accordance with the requirements of production and consumption). (1994, 351)

Through this lens, the Holiday Inn can be seen as appropriating local events for global consumption, inserting Tibetan culture, Tibetan women, and the Tibetan nation into the realm of transnational capital and onto the global stage.

Extending the Gaze: Tibet and the Global Realm

The woman who won the Miss Tibet pageant recently toured the United States as a member of a Tibetan cultural dance troupe from Lhasa. Sponsored by the Chinese government, the troupe's performances were boycotted by Tibetans and Tibet supporters. For these protesters the Tibetan nation was not represented, but desecrated by Chinese support of the performances. What definitions of Tibet form in the transnational realm?

Beyond the borders of the Tibet Autonomous Region exists a larger Tibet. It is this Tibet, potentially the referent of the title "Miss Tibet," that the Chinese government seeks to delegitimate. The Tibetan Government-in-Exile, thousands of Tibetans living in exile, and numerous supporters of their cause around the world contest Chinese representations of Tibet. Foreign governments are also involved. During the early years of the Chinese occupation, the CIA trained Tibetans in Colorado to fight against the Chinese. In 1993, the U.S. Congress attached conditions requiring human rights improvements in Tibet to Most Favored Nation trading status with China. Diasporic Tibet reaches into Tibet. Identities crafted in exile are imported to Tibet through travelers, radio broadcasts, publications, and word of mouth. For example, a Lhasan woman who was arrested for shouting "Long live Independent Tibet" and "May all people be free," had the following dialogue with the police:

> "How many relatives do you have in India?"
> "All Tibetans in India are my relatives."
> (quoted in Devine 1993, 63)

In Lhasa, while definitions of Tibet embraced by Tibetans arise from within a larger Tibetan community, in many ways Tibet also exists as seen (and presented) by the Chinese government and the expatriate staff of the Holiday Inn. Chinese rule in Tibet has caused a Tibetan identity of unity to be privileged, shifted, recovered, and rethought. In this transnational

context—from Tibet to the diaspora and back—a national identity takes hold. The answer to the question of who partakes of this identity varies both inside and outside of Tibet.

Portrayals of the Miss Tibet pageant in the foreign media picked up on the potential threat within the pageant by highlighting both the irony of the contest and the unease of the contestants. Articles by male journalists also emphasized that the Tibetan participants were not familiar with the concept of a beauty pageant:

> not one of them ["the girls"] had the faintest idea of what a beauty contest was and...had never heard of Miss World.

Nonetheless, they report that the pageant winner embraced the idea wholeheartedly, stating:

> Now that I've won, I'd like to go on and be Miss World and try to help people. (Woolrich 1992).

Thus, these women, assumed by Western journalists to be unfamiliar with worlds beyond Lhasa, are exposed to Western values through the pageant. A Western view of Tibet as an isolated Shangri-la becomes transformed into a new modern Tibet.[25] However, the fact that this was the first beauty pageant in Tibet does not necessarily lead to similar conclusions. Despite the actual extent of contestants' knowledge of the Miss World pageant, Lhasa residents are undoubtedly familiar with a "modern" world—both Western and Asian.

Modernity travels to Lhasa through other venues as well. In their publicity literature, the LHI claims that their Khy Khy Club, opening in April, 1992, will be Lhasa's first disco. However, at the time of the pageant, there were at least four discos in Lhasa. Run by Tibetans, Chinese from Sichuan, and also Chinese security forces, these discos were gathering spots for the hip young of Lhasa—visiting Tibetans from India, local Tibetans, Chinese newcomers, and children of high-placed cadres dressed in the latest Hong Kong fashions and carrying cellular phones. In many ways Hong Kong appears in Lhasa as the merger of Asia and the West. Foreign judges were flown in from Hong Kong, the winner was originally to travel to Hong Kong, and Hong Kong fashions and music predominate in the disco scene beyond the Holiday Inn. At the same time, influence seeps in from India as Tibetans living in exile in South Asia return to Lhasa with twists on modern Tibetan culture shaped under a different national tradition.[26]

In the Chinese press, modernity is often presented within the realm of traditional "Tibetan" culture. Women are shown to be modern through changes in fashion, a further example of the selective focus on non-controversial aspects of "minority" culture discussed previously. Articles ap-

pear in Xinhua News Service and *China Daily* with titles like "Lhasa Sees Rebirth of Traditional Fashion," "Nomadic Tibetan Women Take to Modern Life," and "Tibetans Take to Puffed Sleeves." According to one article, women's notions of their bodies, and of fashion have changed in recent years through the wearing of new "bright and lively" clothing:

> One Tibetan girl explained that she never before thought she could become so slim and so confident, but that her thinking changed after wearing a new style Tibetan robe.

In addition to the jump to a Chinese modernity, the women are able to retain their ethnic identity, according to a Xinhua article:

> Zhouma, a Tibetan primary-school teacher, said: "I can still easily be identified as a Tibetan girl in this kind of fashion, which is both stylish and easy to wear.

These developments fit well into PRC plans—encouraging a modernity compatible with Chinese characteristics—and indeed are the very aspects of Tibetan culture that the Holiday Inn does not highlight.

Control over access to the outside world, and therefore outside ideas, recently slipped from the hands of the state with the advent of satellite television in Lhasa. To rectify this situation, in early March 1994, the TAR government banned the Holiday Inn and other establishments from "receiving and relaying programmes from...outside Tibet" for, among other reasons, "poor censorship of programmes" ("Tibet," March 9, 1994). The directive specifically mentioned the BBC, the Chinese Channel, and Star TV as stations televising programs at odds with state ideology. Modernity is to arrive in Tibet only through the channels of the state, or is not to arrive at all.

This modernity with which China seeks to infuse Tibet and Tibetan culture is a modernity with Chinese characteristics.[27] This project in every way seeks to legitimate Chinese rule in Tibet as it highlights the political, social, and economic progress made by Tibetans since their "peaceful liberation" and incorporation into the PRC. Schwartz states this project has backfired on the Chinese:

> The Chinese would have the Tibetans see them as modernizers rather than oppressors. But Tibetans identify their own national aspirations with "modernity" in the global sense, a point of view that further highlights the deficiencies of Chinese rule in Tibet. (1991, 13)

A different tactic is employed by the Holiday Inn to claim legitimacy in Tibet. By focusing on the "real" aspects of Tibetan culture, and on the potentially explosive political situation, the LHI frames Tibet within Western modernity—beauty pageants, fashion shows, international tourism, and jet-

setters mingling with local officials and glamorous Tibetan women. As a result of these two varied approaches, different commentaries are present in the Miss Tibet pageant regarding Tibet, representations of Tibet, and on the role of women as markers of Tibetanness. In the beauty pageant, the representation of Tibet is located at the intersection of multiple issues—the multiple definitions offered of Tibetan identity; the interplay of Westerners, Chinese and Tibetans in Lhasa; and the spheres participated in by women within and outside the context of a beauty pageant.

CONCLUSION: STATES, NATIONS, AND BEAUTY QUEENS

It is tempting to conclude that the local branch of the CCP allowed the Miss Tibet pageant to take place because they viewed women as non-threatening political actors. However, Tibetan women in Lhasa have long been central in the resistance to Chinese rule. The anniversary of a major women's protest in Lhasa on March 12, 1959, following the Dalai Lama's flight to India is honored each year in exile. Both nuns and laywomen participate in anti-Chinese movements through protests, signed petitions, and political songs.[28] The Chinese state's awareness of women's participation in Tibetan independence activities is certain. The attempt to present the pageant as non-political relied on a revision of the pageant structure to constitute an acceptable forum for the spectacle of "minority nationality" culture. In changing pageant structure to resemble a cultural arts program, the government directs focus towards the women (as symbolic or cultural, not as political), and through them to the Chinese state. The potential viewing of Tibet as separate from China is challenged through the inclusion of songs that inevitably praise Mao, the PRC, and the Chinese Communist Party. This deflection would only be recognizable to Tibetan and Chinese present at the pageant, and not to the majority of Western spectators and LHI employees who spoke little or no Tibetan or Chinese.

As China imagines a state that includes the Tibetan nation, Tibetans recall not only two nations, but two separate states. Thus, Anderson's definition of the nation as "an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" is salient at very different points for China and Tibet (1991[1983], 6). The power of the Chinese state takes hold in the form of a "national-cultural imperialism," an extension of Anderson's concept of "official nationalism" in which nation is stretched over empire (Chen 1992). In this form, nationalism protects the interests of the state.

> The most intriguing "official nationalism" of its kind—since it has a strong appeal among the Chinese people even today—finds its expression in the military and religious suppression of "national

> minorities" such as the Tibetans, Uighurs, and Mongolians, with the justification of "national territorial integrity." This is an example of what I call national-cultural imperialism by which a Third World country such as China can legitimate and exercise its own central, imperial hegemony over regional or ethnic groups in all spheres. (Chen 1992, 709)

China's central hegemony is thus dependent on non-Chinese others.[29] The position of non-Han cultures within the Chinese state is delineated by the PRC's self-definition as a state composed of many nationalities (but led by the Han) (Chen 1992). State appropriation of local cultural symbols is often a means of constructing an inclusive PRC state and nation (see Mueggler 1991). Such actions are evident in Tibet in PRC claims of credit for the reconstruction of Buddhist monasteries destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. However, much rebuilding is financed by local Tibetan communities, not by the state. The Chinese state defines the Chinese nation, and includes Tibet in the definition. The discourse surrounding claims to define and represent the Tibetan nation is shifting as a result of the many participants—Tibetan, Chinese, and Western, among others. Yet, while the Tibetan nation remains, the struggle for state continues.

In representing Tibet, "Miss Tibet" does not merely assume an identity crafted by Westerners, approved by the Chinese, and judged by both. As much as she is Miss Tibet, representative of a nation, this is also a misrepresentation. In certain circles in Lhasa, people know exactly who Miss Tibet is. In others, the term and the title remain foreign. Thus, the question to be asked is not are woman bearers of nation, but how do both women and men navigate the available definitions of Tibet, of nation, that intersect with their lives, and perhaps clash with their own definitions? While subscribing to one view of "Tibetan," at times it may be expedient for Tibetans in Lhasa to adhere to other definitions. In this way, the trope of woman as nation is double in the Miss Tibet pageant: it is both simultaneously empty of and laden with meaning.

Miss Tibet's identity was in part written by male judges and journalists, thereby transculturally implicating gender in the modern locale of the beauty pageant. Further, her position has been saturated with Chinese political propaganda through the various restrictions placed on the pageant by the CCP, and the cultural performances included in the program. The script prepared for the twenty-five women who competed for the pageant title was co-authored by the Chinese and the Western hosts. Once prepared, the script was open to revision at the hands of the pageant contestants, whose voices remain to be heard amidst the raucous crowd of the thirty judges, the organizers, and the media who gathered to dictate the

boundaries of nation, to present a suitably exotic and subversive yet sanitized Tibet, and to photograph women on display. Unanswered interview questions, and her parting comments—"I want to help the world"—notwithstanding, Miss Tibet still has not spoken.

My argument here is not that Tibetans are not active agents in the construction of Tibetan nationalism. However, those who do participate in nationalist activities are classified by the current government as "splittists" and therefore left out of certain public discussions of Tibetanness such as the "Miss Tibet" pageant. Although the Holiday Inn acknowledged "possibly subversive activities," this serves not to bring Tibetan nationalists into the discussion, but diffuses their power and reiterates their absence. Through the forum of the "Miss Tibet" pageant, Tibetan nationalism (present as an underlying potentiality) and Chinese power are negotiated in a setting familiar to a Western audience: woman as representative of country. This gendered depiction of Tibetan identity may be economically salient for the expatriate management at the Holiday Inn, or rhetorically recognizable for "minority" women in China, Tibetans, however, are absent from this particular discussion of the nation. They do not need to speak, they are spoken for.

Postscript

In the midst of writing this paper, I returned to Lhasa. At the Holiday Inn I was told that the Miss Tibet file had been "canceled." There were no Western staff remaining who worked at the hotel at the time of the pageant. The only managerial level employee available was a Tibetan who told me that the pageant was a "success." During my stay in Lhasa, week-long festivities to celebrate the reconstruction of the Potala Palace, the former home and monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, had been arranged by the government to coincide with the Tibetan festival of Shodon. The nearby monasteries of Drepung and Sera, as well as the monastery at the Potala, had been instructed by the government to display their giant thangkas (Tibetan Buddhist religious paintings) during the festival. It was the first time since the Dalai Lama fled Tibet in 1959 that the thangkas were displayed. I attempted to schedule a meeting with Miss Tibet,[30] but to no avail. I was told repeatedly that she was too busy for interviews. She was performing for Chinese government officials on the roof of the Potala and at other events around Lhasa.

Notes

I wish to thank the following people for offering advice and criticisms on early drafts—John Ackerly, Colleen Ballerino Cohen, Val Daniel, Norma Diamond, Ann

Forbes, Laura Kunreuther, Bill Lockwood, Char Makley, Sherry Ortner, Warren Smith, and especially Crisca Bierwert, Beth Drexler, Maureen Feeney, and Javier Morillo-Alicea for their patience in not only reading and commenting on successive drafts, but for challenging me to fully develop my argument. Thanks also to Mary Moran, who suggested that I write this essay in the first place, and to Robbie Barnett for providing crucial references. I regret that for political reasons I cannot name the many people who helped me with my research in Lhasa. Information about the pageant was obtained from the following sources: Thurston (1992), Tierney (1991), and Woolrich (1992); and was supplemented by research conducted in Lhasa during September through November 1991, and August 1994. My research was supported by the Thomas Watson Foundation, the National Science Foundation, and the International Institute of the University of Michigan.

1. See Barlow (1994); Chatterjee (1993); Jayawardena (1986); Kandiyouti (1994); Liu (1994); Natarajan (1994); Radakrishnan (1992); Skurski (1994); Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989).
2. Within the context of the beauty pageant, I use the term "Westerners" to refer to those non-Chinese, non-Tibetan, primarily European and American spectators and organizers of the pageant.
3. The quote in the header above is from Tierney (1991).
4. The political boundaries of Tibet differ between Chinese and Tibetan rule. The current "Tibet Autonomous Region" is a political entity created by the Chinese state, and does not include a number of regions that were governed by the Tibetan Central Government in Lhasa prior to the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Areas outside the T.A.R. include Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and Counties in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan Provinces.
5. Blum (1992) suggests that the mythologization of "the Other" in China occurs on two levels—an ideal romanticization paired with an exaggeration of perceived negative aspects of non-Han cultures. The Other is seen as both different and subservient to the Chinese. Wenhua, "culture," is inherently judgmental implying of the "national minorities" either a "low" or "high" level of culture, or no culture at all (Diamond 1993, 75). As a result, Chinese culture is often portrayed as a gift to be given to the culturally backward "minority" peoples. Examples of this view are often present in magazines intended for a foreign audience, such as *Beijing Review* and *China Reconstructs*. Consider this excerpt from an autobiographical article of Tibetan singer Tseten Dolma:

   > In 1956, I was lucky enough to be chosen to visit other parts of China with a group of young Tibetans. ... I visited a number of provinces and prefectures, and saw a way of life that I had never imagined before. For the first time I felt what an honorable thing it was to be Chinese, and I longed from the bottom of my heart to sing about it. (Dolma 1989, 14-15)

   As presented for Western eyes, ethnic minorities of the PRC aspire to be Chinese as an honorable goal. Their voices and stories are channeled to the outside world through the Chinese Communist Party-guided media apparatus.
6. The question of Chinese migration to Tibet is a difficult one. The International Campaign for Tibet (October 1994) recently revealed as national policy the Central Committee of the Communist Party's policy of "helping Chinese move to Tibet as part of an economic development program to counter the region's separatist movement." Chinese settlers in the Tibet Autonomous Region include Communist Party officials, security personnel, and Chinese entrepreneurs from all parts of China among others. See J. Norbu (1989) and Sun (1994) for a review of Chinese migration to Lhasa.

7. Contributors to debates over the construct of Chinese national identity include Blum (1992); Cannon (1990); Diamond (1993); Dikotter (1992); Dreyer (1976); Gladney (1991); Samuel and Dittmer (1993); and Wu (1991) among others.
8. Importantly, many "minority nationality" groups occupy the politically strategic frontier areas along the Indian and former Soviet borders.
9. In the Amdo area of Tibet, official cultural policies have to some extent recently allowed for a temporary revival of Tibetan culture and religious practices. According to *Beijing Review*, traditional theater is "flourishing" in Tibet (May 25-31 1992: 32-33). However, the flourishing of "culture" is contingent on current trends in policy. During the summer of 1993, six Tibetan officials, students and cultural figures, including a famous comic, a writer, and other Tibetans involved in official work on the Tibetan language were arrested prior to Jiang Zemin, China's Communist Party Secretary's visit to Amdo. This was the first time that cultural activists had been arrested in Tibet (Barnett 1993).
10. See van Walt (1987) for a reading of the case of Tibet within international law.
11. Or male, as the case may be?
12. What I am suggesting here is that women have not been equated with nation in Tibet. This is not to say that Tibetan gender ideologies regarding women are not implicated in the structure of Tibetan culture or society, or in women's experiences within established structures. The collection *Feminine Ground: Essays on Women and Tibet* (Willis, ed., 1987), and specifically the articles by Janet Gyatso and Barbara Nimri Aziz, as well as Charlene Makley (n.d.) contribute significantly to an understanding of the role of gender in Tibetan culture and Buddhism.
13. Klieger has suggested that Tibetan national identity is negotiated between a "perceived western mythology [regarding Tibet] and indigenous historical reality" (1992, 149). He further states, "The image of Tibet which modern exiles often choose to present to the world is rooted in quasi-mythical Buddhist realm of Emperor Ashoka, and modified over the centuries through interactive experience with T'ang, Mongol, Manchu, and various western agents of patronage: Tibet, a land so sacred that even the mighty emperors of China saw fit to pay religious homage; a people intent on preserving the Complete Transmission of Buddha's teachings for the benefit of the world" (1992, 149).
14. I make this point to highlight the supposed focus of the beauty pageant on women rather than the nation. While beauty pageants may separate these two realms, actual production of both nations and states is often contingent upon specific gender (and other) ideologies. The work of Ann Stoler (1989a; 1989b; 1991) has been important in revealing this link.
15. Han Chinese stereotypes of ethnic minority women are explored by Diamond (1988).
16. Contributions towards the cultural theorizing of women and gender in Tibet is offered by Barbara Aziz (1987) and Charlene Makley (n.d.).
17. For examples of Chinese writings on ethnic minorities within the PRC, see the works of Fei Xiaotong (1979; 1981a; 1981b), and Yan (1984) for a discussion of "inequality" between "nationalities" in the PRC.
18. In neighboring India, claims by a foreign power to rule and to write Indian history were dependent on both the categorization of Indian society in European historical stages, and on "an emptying out of all [Indian] history" (Pandey 1990, 94).
19. See Chodag (1988), Heyu (1988), and Wang and Suo (1984) for examples.
20. Swain (1990) offers a reading of the "commodification" of non-Han Chinese ethnicity through tourism in southwest China.
21. See Daniel (in press) for elaboration on the concept of "simplex history"—a single-minded project that implies a form of "cultivated selectivity."

22. For further information about the Lhasa Holiday Inn, see Forbes and McGranahan (1992).
23. The question of borders arises at this point. What is the shape of Tibet, and thus of the hotel's pool? Pre-Chinese rule boundaries, ethnic Tibet borders, or those of the Tibet Autonomous Region?
24. For further information on the Holiday Inn boycott, see *Working With the Dragon: Holiday Inn and China in Tibet* (1993).
25. For critiques of Western romanticizations of Tibet, see Bishop (1989) and Lopez (1994).
26. Two independent Tibetan publications present exile perspectives on Tibet: the English-language *Tibetan Review* published in Delhi, and the Tibetan-language *Mang-Tso* ("Democracy") published in Dharamsala.
27. For a detailed discussion of modernity and alternative modernities in China, see Xudong Zhang (1994).
28. See Goldstein (1982) for an analysis of Tibetan political satire songs in pre-1959 Tibet.
29. In this sense China can be viewed as not just an imperial power, but a colonial one. As Ann Stoler has demonstrated for twentieth-century colonial cultures in Southeast Asia, the power of the colonists is exerted not just in the ruling of another, but as a means of engaging in self-definition through this Other.
30. Although her name is public knowledge, and the "real" woman holding the title is not unimportant, I have chosen not to use her name. To do so in the context of this paper would locate the problematic discussed not in the category of "Miss Tibet," but rather with the individual title holder. I am arguing that the representations of nation-as-woman, in the context of this pageant, were controlled largely by non-Tibetan people, and not by the pageant contestants.

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