INTRODUCTION

ENCOUNTERING INTERCONNECTIVITY

I vividly remember my first semester teaching first-year writing as a graduate student in my early twenties. I was fifteen minutes early in the classroom on the first day of class, setting up the projector and organizing course materials. As students gradually came to class, a few students, after noticing me standing in the front, walked outside of the classroom to double-check the room number, came back in, and hesitantly asked other students whether or not the class was really an English writing course. There might have been many reasons why students double-checked. Perhaps it was because the room was relatively empty. However, I cannot help but wonder to what extent my Asian woman face played into these types of encounters. Would there be fewer students doubting whether or not it is the right classroom if the professor had a different look—say, if the professor looked like an "American" teacher?

On the day the class discussed the concept of discourse, I used examples of diverse rhetorics to elaborate discourse as a network of social practices that uphold and transform values and identities.[1] I explained to students, "Discourse varies as the situation changes. For instance, one may perform language in a particular manner when speaking to power from a less privileged position. Another example: people in the places where you self-identify as homes

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might use slang /slān/ that is different from the specialized vocabularies you learn in your major at the university."

"But," a student interjected, "by 'slang' /slān/, you mean 'slang' /slaNG/, right?"

The class fell quiet. The air was stagnant. My heart pounded. In that fickle one or two seconds, I laughed nervously and said, "Yes, that is what I mean." I quickly dropped the other examples I planned to offer and hastily started a small group activity because having my difference accentuated and corrected in the middle of speaking sent me into shivers.

My experiences illustrate the "non-Western Other" perception that scholars, teachers, and practitioners in global rhetorics navigate on a daily basis. While students frequently praise my courses as providing much-needed education about the diverse functions and forms of rhetoric across time and space, and while students appreciate me as a knowledgeable and passionate professor, I am also troubled by perceptions such as "a Chinese teaching non-Western rhetorics," "a teacher of international rhetorical theories and philosophies," "a professor who studies stylistically different cultural rhetorics," and "a non-native speaker teaching English writing." I notice that these comments often position me and my work in opposition to a presupposed center such as "the West," identify me by negation, and tokenize my work into stabilized categories of difference such as "the non-West" and "non-Greco-Roman."

Not limited to classrooms, such oppositional and essentialist logics are entrenched in global rhetorics research and sustain othering as a power hierarchy. In a scholarly essay, I focus on the correlative thinking exemplified by Guiguzi, a rhetorician in the Warring States period of China (475–221 BCE), which has only recently received attention in the field. My essay argues that Guiguzi's emphasis on correlative thinking or relationality is useful for enacting living together and living otherwise—a mode of doing, thinking, and be(com)ing that I consider crucial to global rhetorics. In addition to Guiguzi, my essay also cites Confucius's *Analects* because relationality is one of the philosophical underpinnings of Confucian rhetoric. One reviewer comment I received is that my citation of Confucius is worrisome because Confucianism is fundamental to Chinese imperialism. I have no quarrel with

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the comment's presupposition that Confucianism is an orthodoxy. Confucius's thinking has been appropriated and systematized by regimes to rationalize ethnic and gender hierarchies and, in that regard, can be a suppressive discourse.[2] However, as reflected by 和而不同 or "seeking harmony not sameness" (13.23)—a saying from the *Analects* that has become canonical, Confucianism also promotes engagement in difference and across difference.[3] Confucian rhetoric functions with Guigucian rhetoric and other pre-Qin thinking to establish critical and relational engagement as a mainstream value in the Chinese rhetorical tradition, advocating the importance of befriending other states (*Analects* 12.5), and serving as a philosophical foundation for transforming contentious ethnic relations to "togetherness-in-difference" (Ang 200; Mao, *Reading* 5).[4] Additionally, my engagement with Confucius does not center on Confucianism but is a constellation with Guigucian rhetoric for a more nuanced account of correlative thinking in the pre-Qin period (before 221 BCE), a time before imperial China and a time when Confucian thinking was not yet established as the mainstream.[5] In places where I delve into Confucius's words, I focus on quotes from *Analects* that define personhood as fundamentally intersubjective. This line of thinking emphasizes relationality and provides important insights into a question vital to today's global rhetorics—that is, how to form human connections across divides and co-become with others. In Chinese rhetoric, state-sponsored canonical rhetorics cannot be totalized as suppressive discourses.

I conjecture that the comment I received reveals oppositional and essentialist logics, in addition to falling into the trap of the Western liberal democratic belief that oversimplifies Chinese society as authoritarian and dogmatic: it expresses the identity of Confucian rhetoric through a center/periphery dichotomy. The dichotomous perception of Confucian rhetoric is made possible by essentializing the borders between Confucian rhetoric and the rest, generalizing Confucianism as entirely imperial, and abstracting it into the category of villainous on the basis that Confucianism has been an orthodoxy. In operating an oppositional and essentialist understanding of subject position and power relations, the comment flattens the multifaceted meanings of Confucian rhetoric and neglects that it has been reinvented by generations of

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intellectuals to various ends and has played a multitude of functions in history and in today's society.

How do disenfranchised subjects such as people, rhetorics, and discourses enunciate their heterogeneity, specificity, and historicity without rigidifying themselves as scripted figures of difference or totalizing more privileged subjects as sheer imperial schemes? How do global rhetorics break through the antithetical and essentialist logics that have sustained othering as a power structure and knowledge model? Such systematic production of the Other has further produced more specific power hierarchies such as the West/non-West, has set up and maintained the very categorization of the marginalized/dominant, has led to the presumption that a certain rhetoric is naturally more just and ethical because of its marginalized social location, and has resulted in the sweeping generalization of canonical rhetorics as only wicked. For example, how do I speak on local terms and pronounce experiences that do not neatly fit into Euro-American experiences, and at the same time forge a level of connection with my interlocutors so as to make heard marginalized voices, reconstitute all participants involved including myself and dominant discourses, and in this way, subvert othering that has projected me and my work as a cultural, ethnic, and linguistic alien? Being marked as an othered subject, how do I interact with interlocutors who are complicit in dominant discourses, and how do I cope with canonical rhetorics, mainstream narratives, and disciplinary structures in ways that disrupt centrical regimes and work toward a world of coexistence and coevolution? How do we actualize an other reality in Writing and Rhetoric Studies (WRS) where we can fully appreciate the unfixity of subjects, contingency of difference, and instability of power? How do we engage with rhetorics in differing positions of power for renewed meanings so that they can jointly reshape the theory, history, and education of rhetoric?

ADDRESSING THE SYSTEMATIC PRODUCTION OF THE OTHER

In responding to the questions, this book is most interested in global rhetorics' intervention in power. All rhetorics participate in "the play of power" (Berlin 77). To global rhetorics especially, it is pivotal to address how disenfranchised subjects subvert the sys-

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tematic production of the Other, a power structure that is marked by an oppositional and essentialist thinking of subject position and power relations. In this book, "global" first means a historical condition that characterizes the current field; that is, difference has become more conspicuous and recognized. Nevertheless, the proliferation of difference has spawned escalated particularist politics, an enlarged non-West/West divide, and resurgent xenophobia and nationalism, although paradoxically, we continue experiencing connectivity among people, rhetorics, and discourses that are situated in different sociohistorical circumstances.[6] Indeed, global rhetorics are often described as "alterity-based studies of difference" (Swearingen 122). The amplification of difference is partly indebted to speaking on one's own terms, a main model of resistance in global rhetorics (Hall and Ames, *Anticipating*; G. E. R. Lloyd; Lu). Speaking on one's own terms advocates for difference and multiplicity of difference. It resists universality that Greco-Roman concepts and Euro-American experiences often claim for themselves in the process of establishing Western hegemony—that is, the making of commonality to an extent of homogeneity, the abstraction of similarity in pursuit of transcendence, and the overemphasis on association to a level of control. Within its firm insistence on difference, speaking on one's own terms connotes a move to speak against established figures, speak outside the West, and speak without canonical rhetorics.

Take the two representative anecdotes at the beginning of this book's introduction as examples. One way to destabilize othering in the classroom is to resist dominant discourses and emphasize difference, such as to defy standardized white English ideology by foregrounding difference as the norm in any language. Teachers may also refuse the traditional curriculum that centers on Greek terminologies, feature instead heterogeneous rhetorics in the world, and urge students to employ multiple local concepts to study rhetoric. In my scholarly essay on relationality in pre-Qin rhetorics, one possible revision is to exclude the canonical Confucian rhetoric but use Guiguzi only to elaborate relationality as a cosmological view. After all, Guigucian rhetoric that is pivotal to my essay has been peripheralized.[7] Writing an essay without referencing Confucius would be a political move to pluralize voices in the field and decenter Confucianism in the history of rhetoric. As

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the model of speaking on one's own terms shows, it is important to sponsor difference, promote particularity, and represent subjectivity as multifaceted so as to integrate diverse subjects for structural change, to counter assimilation, and to challenge supernarratives that attempt to declare a centrical status. Thanks to speaking on one's own terms, othered subjects now are more likely to have designated spaces to explore other possible ways of doing, thinking, and being.

However, as a model of resistance, speaking on one's own terms is tied to oppositional and essentialist logics. Evoking terms of opposites or cultural essentialism is not necessarily wrong. It has strategic purposes—to reclaim voices that have long been suppressed and distorted and to fabricate independent identities as part of decolonization (Spivak 3–5). Nevertheless, when it ossifies cultural essentialism and terms of opposites, speaking on one's own terms poses a danger of perpetuating the prevailing pattern of power production known as othering. That is, to have terms of "one's own," one would need to force boundaries between one and subjects that surround one, imagine one's existence against counterparts that have been accepted as a priori (oppositional), and further solidify the distinctions between oneself and others (essentialist). Not infrequently, speaking on one's own terms is implicated in constructing difference as irreducible, as current comparative and decolonial studies have critiqued (Baca, Cushman, and Osborne 7; Chow 13; Cortez 124; Hayot 98; Spivak 3). In insisting on difference as irreducible, speaking on one's own terms establishes two worlds (non-West/West) or many worlds (multicultural silos) within a hegemonic order. For example, a subject of difference called the non-West comes into being because a cluster of polyvocal subjects (e.g., people, rhetorics, locations) are lumped together and positioned in reaction to a preemptive presence called the West. More than an ambiguous geographical signifier that is not limited to a particular ethnicity, race, or nationality, the non-West is what the West postulates and relies on in order to establish its sociopolitical identity and maintain global domination. As chapter 1 will unpack, oppositional and essentialist logics operate concurrently to entrench an immutable center and produce nonmimetic Others, reactionary Others, and authenticated Others.

In addition, while speaking on one's own terms is believed to

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guarantee self-determination of how one wants to represent one's histories, experiences, and knowledge, it summons a management apparatus that governs which type of difference is proper and codifies what kind of subjectivity is acceptable. Speaking on one's own terms easily replicates the same paternalistic model of knowledge production and the same logic of captivity that it sets out to confound. Dipping into oppositional and essentialist logics, speaking on one's own terms might intensify siloing, taxonomize subjects, and result in monolithic judgments such as global subjects as non-Western Others and canonical rhetorics as mere colonial. A frame of power subversion that breaks through the oppositional and essentialist logics is much needed.

I call for a frame of power subversion that is situated in the third (or fourth, fifth, etc.) space to not only advance theories of global rhetorics but also address a dual need of disenfranchised subjects. Disenfranchised subjects face an urgency to avow difference and particularity as a way to counter normalizing force while, at the same time, they are pressured to draw commonality across difference in order to interrupt the programmatic strategy of othering that has reduced them to exotic aliens. There are situations where the resistance model of speaking on one's own terms is inadequate to unsettle perceptions of subjects as foreign, deficient, or even disposable. One example is my experience in the predominantly white classrooms, which is shared by many scholar-teachers of color with international backgrounds: I cannot quite act against students who are complicit in white nationalism. Disciplining students would aggravate the already contentious classroom environment and make students further disengage from global subjects. Recycling the mainstream image of "authority" and dictating in-class discussions contradict with the teacherly ethos of participatory knowledge-making that many of us are committed to.[8] At particular moments of conflict, it may also be unsafe for me to confront behaviors and speeches mired in xenophobia and monolingualism. I do need to forge a level of connection with students and renew human relationships beyond the structural distinctions of nonwhite/white, international/American, and non-native/native to reinvent a classroom where students can engage in knowledge and subjects of all kinds with more complexity and specificity. Nor can I quite fulfill the expectation to step outside canonical dis-

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courses because mainstream rhetorics haunt me, and because as a global subject, I embody "Western" and "non-Western" discourses in varying, fluid shades. As we continue growing differing voices, how do we pursue simultaneous distinctness and connection and, better, make an *other* dynamic association across divides so that there will be no single normative standard by which the Other is known and judged but subjects of various walks of life can live and become in common with one another?

ARGUING FOR INTERCONNECTIVITY

I argue that interconnectivity is one option. Interconnectivity, then, is the second connotation of "global" in this book, an ideal that I believe to be worth seeking. By "interconnectivity," I mean a relating-yet-separating relationship where interdependence becomes more possible. Interconnectivity embraces discursive open-endedness. Subjects in interconnectivity engage in each other with "an abiding sense of self-reflection . . . and accountability" (Mao, "Writing" 46) and, I would add, with a commitment to self-transformation. To relate to yet separate from subjects that surround one, one not only pronounces unsettled distinctness and unstable connection but also self-challenges and devotes oneself to relearning one another, because of which interdependence ferments. Subjects in interconnectivity become interdependent in the sense that they are reconstituted by one another into "*an-other*" (Escobar 205; García and Baca 4; Mignolo 464) that cannot be preconceived but only emerges from perpetual responses among interlocutors. The notion of interconnectivity is evident in LuMing Mao's "interdependence-in-difference," which captures a relationship where a subject "necessarily depends on, but remains distinctively different from, the other" and where "the value of both" subjects is "constituted by the communicative contexts to which they are tethered" ("Returning" W49). Krista Ratcliffe's "non-identification" similarly deciphers the intersubjective ethos of interconnectivity: it refers to a "strategic third ground" where two subjects are "not necessarily on common grounds" but are juxtaposed and "integral to the formation of each other" (73). Interconnectivity also finds its trace in the concept of "in-between," which symbolizes "responding, if not responsible, relationships

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