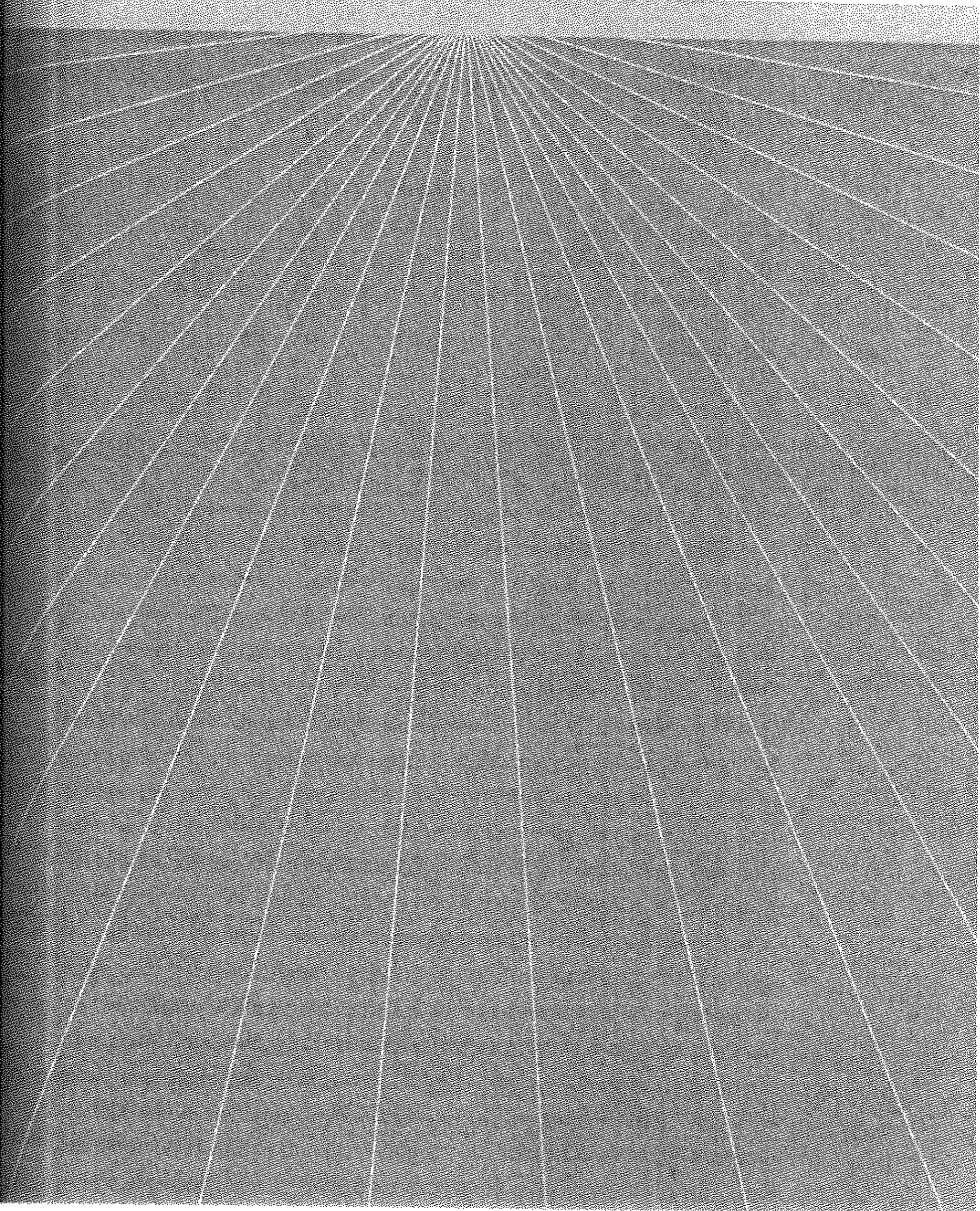
EPILOGUE



THE END OF STUDENTS?

WRITING AFTER THE END

In *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault famously argued that "man," far from being a timeless concern, came into being only when a modern space of inquiry was traced by the intersecting fields of the human sciences. "Man" was the disciplinary horizon that coalesced out of a radical redefinition of the epistemic structure in the late eighteenth century; a horizon, he concluded, that in the late 1960s, seemed on the verge of disappearance. Foucault was writing at the liminality of the death of man, at the time of the impending dissolution of the epistemic order that allowed his existence.[1] This, he implied, was the very condition that made it possible to see "man" as a particular and finite historical development and to outline the evolution of that epistemic order. It seems then that a category of thought must be dead, dying, or on the verge of disappearance before we can question its seemingly naturalness and inquire into what made its existence possible in the first place and in those specific forms.

Without incurring a crime of *lèse-majesté*, I wonder whether we can apply the same reasoning to the much simpler and limited analysis produced in the previous pages. Indeed, while there are an unprecedented number of students

in today's China, most observers would agree that there is no political category of "students" at work and that the parable of twentieth-century student activism did not extend into the new millennium.[2] When, then, did "students" end? And why? These are questions that are not directly relevant to the purported goal of this volume (which dealt mostly with beginnings, not ends) but, if we accept Foucault's perspective, these questions outline the very conditions that made this book possible. I feel therefore obliged to try and suggest some tentative and provisional answers.

I start by adding another question: *what* ended? In the previous chapters, I discussed how the category of "students" carries a double legacy: it marks, on the one hand, the signifier of radical unsettlement and the possibility of a politics of subjective self-definition, and, on the other, the continuity of a repertoire, a symbolic identitarian bond. The latter, as we have seen, ironically emerged at the same time that students were articulating political positions that exceeded their status as "students." In this sense, the process by which a repertoire of "students" took shape started immediately on May 4, 1919. It developed through the interplay between students, the people, the media, and the government. Images of students as victims or as legitimate representatives of true national interests were deployed both by the media and by students themselves as very effective tactical measures. The state contributed at first indirectly, by earmarking students as privileged target of government repression, and later directly, in its nationalist and communist forms, by recognizing student actions as having "a certain ambiguous legitimacy."[3] As McAdam and Sewell have argued for the French Revolution, the invention of the modern concept of "students" involved the coding of an episode of transgression and limited violence (May Fourth) "as an act of sovereign will, and hence a legitimate basis for a new form of government."[4]

This student identity was maintained throughout the century, despite the sociological and political instability of historical students, through the continuous reference to a set of institutions (like universities) and its inscription in the teleology of the nation, the state, and the parties.[5] In ritual commemorations and history writing, both the Nationalists (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) replayed the heroism of 1919, but tried to defuse it by calling students to build the party and the nation.[6] The state tried to harness activism by either depoliticizing it—for example, channeling it into limited forms of self-government and associational practices[7]—or incorporating it into the successful mythology leading to the present form of the state itself. However, these attempts were incomplete and never wholly successful, and the celebration of student activism as foundational also potentially legitimized "students" to repossess that repertoire again and use it with other, confrontational effects.

This was the case in the spring of 1989, when students took over state ritual occasions—Hu Yaobang's funeral, Gorbachev's historic visit, and the commemoration of May Fourth's seventieth anniversary—and brought them to completely different outcomes. This case also provides the first obvious answer, barren in the brutal evidence of violence, to our question about the end of "students." If "students" appeared when real, live students gathered in front of Tiananmen and took to the streets of the capital, then the evacuation of Tiananmen Square on the dawn on June 4, 1989, the massacre of citizens by soldiers from the People's Liberation Army on Chang'an Avenue, and the many arrests that followed all bloodily configure an ending moment. The literal disappearance of "students" was made evident by the physical hunting of actual students who hid, escaped, or were imprisoned, and violently inscribed by the massacre of their supporters in the night. Symbols do not come in starker relief than this.

The massacre of June 4 signaled the violent end of "students" as a category—and not only that of a specific episode of activism—precisely because the legacy and the position of "students" (in relation to the state, history, and nation) were at the core of the protests of the spring 1989. The student demonstrations laid claims to the legacy bequeathed by 1919 and saw a calculated deployment of the repertoire evolved since May Fourth. Others have analyzed in detail the connections between 1989 and 1919,[8] visible in the use of specific keywords (science and democracy), the appropriation of meaningful places (the Monument of the People's Heroes and Tiananmen Square in general), and the centrality of the date of May 4, when a massive student demonstration ended in the square. It is evident that, despite the macroscopic differences with 1919, students in 1989 willfully stated a direct connection with their predecessors seventy years earlier. In particular, they fully embraced the symbolical and historical connection between "students" and the nation-state, the references to the May Fourth legacy legitimizing the right of the contemporary students to be heard and respected. In this perspective, students in 1989 protested mainly to be better represented as "students": much of the discontent of students and intellectuals in the years before the movement concerned the disparity between their depressed economic conditions and the crucial role they perceived to have played in China's modernization.[9] Harking back to the celebrated role of students in the history of the nation-state was therefore also a way to assert the need to recognize the importance of their contemporary counterparts.[10]

The repression acted precisely on the symbolic bond with the nation-state, which was, as we have seen, always unstable. Violence removed any ambiguity and affirmed that "students" could exist only inside the past mythology of the Chinese nation, making them de facto historical. After June

4, 1989, the repertoire of student activism was made practically and symbolically unavailable.

This dissolution is made evident in the space of Tiananmen Square. William Sewell argues that the 1989 protests acted on the square first by desacralizing a place for state rituals (through unlawful occupation), then by resacralizing it (making it into a place for different rituals). The massacre finally and completely desacralized the square, which, not surprisingly, in the years that followed ceased to be used for ceremonial purposes and was turned into a more commercial and tourist destination.[11] I remember vividly the first time I saw Tiananmen in September 1990: Beijing was hosting the Asian Games and the huge scale of the square was dwarfed by balloons, signs, flowers and enormous inflatable reproductions of the games' mascots. It was a garish display that made that iconic place almost unrecognizable and whose only purpose seemed to be preventing the possibility of even thinking about what had happened only one year earlier.

In 1989, while demonstrators were claiming to be the legitimate inheritors of the tradition initiated in 1919, they were also very forcefully trying to distance themselves from other students in the past, the Red Guards of the Cultural Revolution. To a government that defined the 1989 protests as *dongluan* ("disorder," "turmoil"), a term closely associated with the last decade of Maoism, the students responded by emphasizing legitimacy, order, concern for the state, and the need of a dialogue. They vehemently disassociated themselves from the students of 1966, which represented an obstacle they had to "jump over" in order to recover the legacy of 1919. The Red Guards and the Cultural Revolution were, in this sense, an aberration outside the true history of "students" (and, possibly, history tout court).

They were not alone in this judgment. In his analysis of the evolution of the student repertoire in the twentieth century, Jeffrey Wasserstrom argues that "because of their general rejection and hatred of Western culture as well as foreign imperialism, their anti-intellectualism, and their intense personal loyalty to Mao Zedong, the Red Guards need to be placed outside the May 4th tradition."[12] But that depends on how we define the "May Fourth tradition." May Fourth invented "students" as a repertoire, but also as the name of the possibility of political action and organization programmatically outside any state-defined bond, one that challenged and unsettled the boundaries of the politically proper. In the second part of this epilogue, I would like to suggest (once again, provisionally and as a provocation to further analysis) that we should consider the first phase of the Cultural Revolution precisely as the last manifestation of this second legacy of the signifier "students." I am obviously not trying to make the Red Guards into a replica of May Fourth activists, which would be absurd. What I am suggesting is that, if we look closely, the first few years of the Cultural Revolution saw students attempting, for the last time in the century, to stage autonomous political positions precisely by challenging, in their specific historical conditions, the consistency of sociological categories, including "students."

STUDENTS, CLASS, PARTY

This volume has been framed under the premise of Alain Badiou's argument that true politics can only exist by placing the state at a distance.[13] Politics makes evident the classificatory order of classes, groups, and collective identities that the state imposes, and by revealing and challenging sociological categories, politics puts a measure to the excessive power of the state. The Cultural Revolution, in this perspective, represents the extreme example of politics in that it radically (and definitively) questioned and laid bare the ordering of the socialist state, down to its very foundational categories, such as worker, class, and party. To borrow another one of Badiou's suggestions, the Cultural Revolution opened a gaping hole in the *political*, meant as the communitarian tie (class and social status) and its representation in a form of authority (the party-state).[14]

Surprisingly, the first phase of the Cultural Revolution was dominated by a category that was not properly socialist, that of "students." In 1966, students came to the political fore unexpected and unannounced: they intervened in politics from an eccentric and largely problematic position in the socialist sociological order, from a location that had been central yet paradoxical for the socialist system (and for the revolution as a whole) since its inception. In this, the Cultural Revolution also disrupted the communitarian bond of "students," both by exploding its contradictory position vis-à-vis the party-state and its history, and by dissolving, in very practical terms, the illusion of a unified status of students. Students split into adversarial groups and fought against each other, to the point that the issue of student activism in the Cultural Revolution became subsumed under the codeword of factionalism.

The first question we should ask is once again a historically situated one: what made *these* students political? As in the case of May Fourth, we have first to dispel the assumption that the politicization of students in 1966 was just a byproduct of other social determinants and that student political organizations simply reflected more general differences of class and status. Recent research has revealed that student factions were formed according to many different and often contradictory patterns and has shown how it is impossible to define factionalism on the basis of general social determinants.[15] Which is not to say that class, status, and so on did not play a crucial role. Rather, as Joel

Andreas has suggested, while the Cultural Revolution was probably not a conflict between classes, it was *about class*, about the persistence of class and other state-sponsored classifications that continued to organize and divide socialist society.[16] Student activism was also a rethinking and a (failed) attempt to resolve the issue of this persistence, as it was this persistence that made the category of students the locus of political contradictions.

I propose then that we take the very category of "students" as constitutive and essential in the expression and formation of radical politics during the first phase of the Cultural Revolution. In 1966, "students" epitomized a particular historical legacy, an intellectual position, a set of physical locations, and weakly defined social condition, in which the contradictions of the sociological order were particularly glaring and could be more easily exposed. The figure of "students" stood at the intersection and was framed by the unresolved tension between the state project of disciplined reproduction of the existent and the promise of political and intellectual independence.

A similar tension had been at play, as we have seen, in and around 1919 when Mao Zedong himself took his first political steps as a student, teacher, and educational organizer. Interestingly, he continued, before and during the Cultural Revolution, to make reference to that period. While his insistence on initiatives and experiences so far removed from the situation of a socialist society might sound surprising, it signaled that "students" and schools continued to materialize long-standing issues in the connection between state and politics that the Communist Party still found troublesome.

More specifically, "students"—in the light of the modern history of this category—referred to the equality of each subject vis-à-vis thought and knowledge; to the inequality that schools produced as a result and fostered as a practice (authority, teaching, disciplining); and finally to the uneasy coincidence of the infinite possibilities of creative thinking and political organization under a name that was always necessarily connected with state-imposed bonds. It was this position that allowed the students to define a politics that exceeded the established order of the socialist state; but also it was in large part through these activities that the category of "students" itself was exhausted.

AN UNREFORMABLE SYSTEM

In education, maybe more so than in any other fields, the socialist state seemed to be confronting the same problems of any other state; problems that were metonymic of larger policy contradictions at the national level and that invested the very existence of the party-state. Since 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) pursued a dual purpose in its educational policy. On the one hand there was popularization and literacy, on the other, the production of experts to satisfy the need of economic development, bureaucratic administration, and technological modernization. Neither of these goals signaled a major delinking from the assumptions of progress and development that had informed the previous experience of the Chinese state and, in general, any modern state.[17] Even in 1956, when the so-called achievement of socialism marked the radical shift in property ownership, the educational system continued to produce largely presocialist distinctions. As Wang Shaoguang observed: "The state might be able to socialize private ownership of the means of production, but it could not socialize the human capital possessed by the old elites."[18] Educational qualifications remained a mechanism of class differentiation in the socialist society and, far from chafing under the fetter of socialism, educated elites had a stake in maintaining the social order that was taking shape under communist rule.[19]

The perturbing factor of equality, which in the case of the PRC is subsumed under the name "Maoism," however, continued to disrupt this evolution. In the ten years before the Cultural Revolution, schools and students were the objects of a series of experiments and reforms. The Great Leap Forward, the Socialist Education Movement, the various *xiafang* campaigns, all incorporated attempts to solve the problems that seemed endemic to the system of education, even in its socialist declination. In each and every instance, however, the issue of institutional continuity, the state need for intellectual and political reproduction, as well as production, presented an unsolvable impasse.

Each time there were various reasons why these "revolutionary" attempts were defeated and the educational system returned to its regular functioning, which Hinton describes as "more a caricature than a copy of bourgeois education."[20] But for the purpose of this discussion, it is important to note how it always reverted to a seemingly "natural" conception of schools and students, fixed in their relationship with the state and national development. The educational system always seemed capable of restoring a pedagogical routine, the discipline of learning, the established roles of authority and the ongoing reproduction of class and other social hierarchies. The Great Leap Forward reforms were criticized particularly by professors and university presidents for "lowering the quality of academic life." Lu Ping, the newly chosen president of Beida, summarized the renewed focus of the school in 1959: "The university must avoid and overcome the impetuous greediness for quantity and size and impatience for success, as well as the tendency toward unwillingness to bear hardships, to act realistically, and to do concrete work." Lofty goals and ambitions "must be combined with the good academic tradition of learning with realism and perseverance."[21] But the "good academic tradition of

learning" and the "quality of academic life" had been configured not simply as a means of excluding some groups but also as a stultifying disciplining of roles. The bureaucratic restoration of the early 1960s decried that in the past "there was too much revolution and teaching was placed in a passive position," with the result that *the university did not look like a university at all*.[22] This implies, obviously, that there is only one way that a university might look.

Mao, for his part, hinted continuously at alternative ways in which students and schools could be construed, and he did it largely via direct or indirect references to ideas first expressed during the May Fourth period. In the dominant perspective of education as reproduction and transmission of learning, Mao's suggestions sound quite strange. He encouraged students to copy and to talk to other students during exams: copying was just another way of learning. He told them they should sleep if lectures were boring; at least "sleeping may help one to recover from fatigue. Students should be given the choice not to listen to monotonous lectures." Not only did he criticize exams as mindless routine, detrimental to talented men, women and children, but also he stated that exams were "designed for dealing with the enemy" (*duifu diren de banfa*) as "they poison people to death"(*haisi ren*).[23] Exams, then the backbone of the school system in communist China, were part of the "repressive apparatus," a dictatorial method designed for the enemy, not the people. This was clearly not a marginal note on minor problems of the educational system; rather, as in the May Fourth period, Mao was addressing the central issue of the relationship between the discipline of learning and the search for knowledge.

Before the Cultural Revolution, Mao had stressed how the brilliant poets and writers of the past (Han Yu, Pu Songling, Du Fu) had generally performed poorly on the civil service exams, and that degrees had no relationship with talent. Later, in 1968 he questioned whether the school could actually teach you to write a novel, create a painting, or produce art.[24] From these haphazard comments, we can extrapolate a radical critique of whether schools—any school—could foster thinking, creation, invention, and whether there was any room for individual subjective positions among "students."

The issues Mao posed were even more urgent and crucial because schools not only had to produce technicians and managers, but also, for lack of a better term, politically mature people. In the words of the time, they had to train "revolutionary successors." While, in Mao's view, revolutionaries could only be shaped by participation in revolutionary politics—in the actual organizing, thinking, and living—students were instead asked to be zealous, to study hard. Politics was to be learned from the example of history, by bringing revolutionary experience inside the school as a subject of learning. The *yiku* (recalling bitterness) sections reminded the students of the possibility

and the historical achievements of political participation but postponed indefinitely its fulfillment. Students were paradoxically supposed to learn how to be "revolutionary successors" through a system that required them to study, memorize, and be tested on "revolution" as an objective subject of learning. We see here an exacerbation of the contradiction, the ambiguity that resided in the name of "students" since its emergence on May 4, 1919. "Students" could be reminded of their collective role in the history of the revolution and could be rallied in the name of their patriotic predecessors, but always inside the bond that connected the historical-political category of "students," the state, the nation, and a particular notion of modernity. As "students" existed only inside this particular connection, academic performance expressed through the repressive apparatus of exams became the measure of everything: everyone is equal before grades. As a former student at Qinghua recalled, "The idea of a politically reliable person was a person with an average of eighty or above."[25] Politics for students was reduced to the fulfillment of their sociological mission.

In the mid-1960s therefore, the category of "students" was traversed by complex issues related to class, status, and family background; it was framed by an educational routine that seemed impossible to reform; and it was perturbed by the contradiction between the exaltation of the revolutionary history of "students" and a practice that condemned students to a strictly subservient role and to an always deferred political activity.

STUDENT REVOLT

In 1966, Chinese students took the lead of the Cultural Revolution precisely because of the eccentric, yet central, location of "students." It was as "students" that they lived and were able to identify the issues of socialist inequality: the crisis of the category of class, the continuous reproduction of difference down to everyday gestures, the inscription of the sociological order in the physical space.

Psychological and sociological issues were indeed at work but they needed to be taken seriously, which is to say, politically. If class is the organizing principle of the communist state, students are not a class. Yet, as individuals they belong to classes and bear the burden of specific class backgrounds. The persistence of the problem of equality of access and result, which took the form of exams, marked the continuity of the issue of class in a socialist society. But it was an issue of politics, not simply of sociology. And surely there was a psychological side in being continuously reminded of the greatness of revolutionary activism (some of which referred directly to the name of

"students") while being trapped in a status that was defined by discipline and repression. In contrast, this psychological malaise pointed directly to the failure of a socialist system of education to work differently from the ideological apparatus in any modern state.

It makes then sense that students' actions in the first months of the Cultural Revolution were aimed precisely at interrupting the institutional consistency of the schools and disrupting what guaranteed the continuity of the state classificatory order (including the category of "students"). An analysis of students' actions and their significance would require a volume of its own; here, I will just offer some general examples.

The emergence of student organizations in the late summer and autumn of 1966 signaled the first time that "all students, regardless of their family origins, were given the freedom to set up political groups in schools."[26] While many of these organizations remained based on class and were formed in loyalty to the party, the very possibility of creating mass organizations not subject to direct control of the political hierarchy marks a radical break from the constrictions lived in the Chinese schools.[27] Beyond this, their activism took the form of a radical disruption of the physical, sociological, and intellectual borders that the status of "students" signified.

In contrast to a system dominated by regimented production of exam papers, split into classes, and rigidly supervised, students launched into a veritable deluge of writing and reading, a sort of massive public debate to which the city took part.[28] The very mechanism by which this debate was conducted, the *dazibao* (big-character poster) stood as a glaring contrast to the party media in that it was accessible to everyone and carried an extraordinary amount of diversity in terms of content, authorship, and readership.[29] But it was also the antithesis of the students' production as "students"—essays or answers waiting to be evaluated, formulaic, and strictly limited to the inside of the classroom and the university. In the first days of the Cultural Revolution, when the party conservatives tried to limit the Wu Han controversy[30] to a "purely academic debate," the *dazibao* laid bare the impossibility in the state school system, traversed by class and political contradictions, to claim the fiction of academic or professional purity.[31]

Student organizations also broke the vertical segmentation of the *danwei* (work unit) by forming cross-unit alliances. Students literally moved first between schools, then in the city and finally through the country. Even this movement was a radical innovation, especially if compared with the isolation of many campuses in China, and particularly in Beijing. As two sympathetic observers recall: "How many times had we urged our students to seek out the museums and parks of Peking on a Sunday and how many times had they decided against venturing out of the school gates? Many of them had turned the walls of their universities into new villages."[32]

With all these activities, students were attempting to reframe the very category of "students" by no longer acting according to the framework imposed by their status, by dissolving the physical and institutional confines of the schools, and by ceasing to behave as "students." They recognized the separated status and the particular bond inscribed in the category and expressed, in practice, the need to "negate oneself" (*fouding ziji*).[33]

Once again, as in the case of May Fourth, it is the strategy of containment and repression that better highlight the unsettling character of Cultural Revolution student politics. Many of the work teams sent to the main Beijing campuses in the early summer of 1966 tried first and foremost to establish borders: they closed off the schools and limited criticism to academic debates in classrooms and course papers.[34] In short, they tried to keep the students inside of what was proper for "students."

On June 13, 1966, at Qinghua, the work team ordered the students to return to the classrooms to conduct self and mutual criticism. Ye Lin, the work team leader, "forbade any contact among students of different classes, different departments, and different campuses. To insure the latter he ordered the campus gate locked: no one could go out or come in without special permission."[35] The work teams imposed "news black-outs" in the effort to isolate each group of students from the others. They compartmentalized each academic class, department, school, and confined the *dazibao* to the boundaries of each campus. "The school gate was strictly guarded, and inspection teams patrolled day and night."[36] The Beijing Party Committee instructions forbade the posting of *dazibao* in the streets, at rallies, parades, or the encirclement of residences; they enforced the distinction between the inside and the outside.[37] A circular called in October 17 to restrict revolutionary alliances "on the basis of trade, profession, and class."[38] These were direct attempts to contain activism in spaces that were physically and logically traced by the party-state.

Even from these few examples it is clear that student organizations were pointing the finger precisely at those bonds that articulated authority (the party-state) in connection with the structure of society, a sociological determination of groups, and places, tasks, and status. This criticism, as mentioned earlier, was expressed first and foremost through the opening, the breaking-up of the category of "students" itself. Official educational activity had been interrupted when classes were called off in 1966 to allow students to carry on the revolution. But without the institutional functioning, the physical and logical boundaries of schools, was there any meaning left to be ascribed to "student"? The fact that the Red Guards, in name and possibly in

reality, increasingly responded to the logic and rhetoric of military organizations seems to provide a negative answer to this question.

DISSOLUTION

To sum up, in the first phase of the Cultural Revolution, students attacked and refused their status as students. By ceasing to be "students" they produced, by a position outside the state, a larger disentanglement of the bonds that connected politics, party, and state. But "the fact that this provoked at the same time the anarchy of factions signaled an essential political question for times to come: what gives unity to a politics, if it is not guaranteed by the formal unity of the state?"[39] And in fact, the factional strife into which student organization devolved by 1967 and 1968 seemed to have as the only objective the control of the local branches of the state, which constituted a surrender to the hypothesis of reducing political initiative to the control of state power.

This is why the government intervention that put an end to the Red Guards in 1968 and 1969 also sanctioned the exhaustion of "students" as a sign of radical unsettlement and of the possibility of a politics outside the state. Students were either dispersed into the countryside or called back into schools to wage revolutions in their classrooms, a proposition that the very first months of the Cultural Revolution had made absurd. That does not mean that significant reforms did not take place in the years 1969 through 1976; in the field of rural education, in particular, successes were obtained. But the educational reforms were possible only after two major issues, crucial in the student activism of the Cultural Revolution, had been resolved. First, the dissolution of the Red Guards coincided with a reimposition of a rigid class-line, which came to be largely accepted as unproblematic, at least at the top. In the spring of 1968, the *Liberation Army Daily* quoted Mao describing the Cultural Revolution as a "political revolution under the conditions of socialism made by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes," a continuation of the prolonged struggle between the CCP and the Nationalists.[40] This statement brought the radicalism of the Cultural Revolution back into the historical framework of class struggle and the leadership of the party-state. Educational policies after 1969 were accordingly based on the radical imposition of class line, harsh controls of both political and intellectual elites, and a leveling of the hierarchy of middle schools in urban areas.[41]

The second prerequisite for these reforms was precisely the dissolution of "students," at least in the urban context. That means not simply that workers, peasants, and soldiers were admitted into the major universities, but also that the introduction of pedagogical reforms followed the literal dispersal of the majority of each class into the countryside. The destruction of the elite character of many of the major schools and universities became possible only when the number of students in the schools was drastically reduced.

True politics undermines the illusion of the bond.[42] In the May Fourth years, students faced a weak state and expressed—through organizations, everyday practice, overt demonstrations, and the productive crossing of borders—the claim to a political subjectivity always open and always self-defined. This was an often dormant part of the legacy inscribed in the category of students. In 1966, students, by stating the existence of politics outside the party-state and its organization of society, disrupted the illusion of the communitarian bond marked by "class," "party," and even "students." The disruption came violently, however, and the fracture of the communitarian ties ended up producing a situation of radical instability and violence, as well as the consequent need for repression and reordering. After the Cultural Revolution, factionalism appeared to be the inevitable end product of student politics, thus making it impossible for "students" to continue to be the name of a productive radical unsettlement and the sign of a politics that exceeded sociological boundaries.

Students obviously continued to exist in the Deng era; the universities were filled again, teacher authority was restored, exams were back in vogue, and so was discipline. In many ways, it is not difficult to see post-Mao education as a mirrored and inverted image of the Cultural Revolution critique, where acceptance and celebration of what could not be changed—down to the disciplinary function of the educational state apparatus—had replaced the stubborn will to try to change it. As for the category of students, it did survive the Cultural Revolution, but in a reduced, mutilated version. In the 1980s, students embraced their position as "students," its relationship to the state, nation, and history, and waged actions that were dependent on and justified by that position. In 1989, the struggle was not whether students could be the name of a political subject, but who owned that name, its legacy and its authority.

I end where I began, at Tiananmen, the Gate of Heavenly Peace. In August 1966, millions of Red Guards gathered in Tiananmen Square, each of them waving a copy of the Little Red Book. Unlike the students of 1919, they were looking up, waiting for Mao Zedong to appear. But after he took his place, something happened that twisted once more the symbolic relationship between the gate, activism, and the state. Mao climbed down from the gate and joined the students at street level. It was a small gesture, usually subsumed under the paradigm of the cult of personality. However, through this gesture a separation was enacted between the gate, symbol of the state, and the space of protest. Students could stop looking up, they could revert their gaze to

street level. The gate became uninteresting. The cult of personality provided Mao with an authority that was independent from the party-state and by moving down to the students' level, Mao transferred part of that authority to them, outside the state. What this gesture sanctioned was precisely the possibility for politics and political organization to subsist outside the state. Politics can exist only by leaving the gate behind.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. The painting is by Liang Yulong (Changsha, Hunan, 1922–), who is still an active painter. See www.iisg.nl/~landsberger/sheji/sj-lyl.html.
2. Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
3. Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1978), and *The Contentious French* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986).
4. On the use of this repertoire in 1989, see Joseph W. Esherick and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, "Acting Out Democracy: Political Theater in Modern China," in *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China*, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 32–69. Jeffrey Wasserstrom provides a thorough analysis of the performative aspects of student protests through the twentieth century in his *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).
5. On May 4, 1989, a statement entitled "The New May Fourth Manifesto" was read publicly by Wang Dan, a Beijing University student. See Han Minzhu and

79. "Pingmin Jiaoyu Jiangyan Tuan baogao" (Notice of the Lecture Groups for Popular Education), *BDRK*, April 27–28, 1920, reprinted as "Fengtai jiangyan zu huodong de xiangxi baogao" (Detailed report of the activities of the lecture groups in Fengtai), *WSSQST* 2:165.
80. Ibid. The long queue was a symbol of conservatism, meaning continued allegiance to the Qing dynasty.
81. Ibid., 165
82. "Changxindian jiangyan zuzhi de baogao." The document mentions a chapel or gospel hall (*fuyintang*), which implies a certain population of Christians in the area.
83. See "Pingmin Jiaoyu Jiangyan Tuan he laodong buxi xuexiao" (The Lecture Groups for Popular Education and the continuation school for workers), *WSSQST* 2:256–66.
84. After the first unsuccessful experience in 1920, Changxindian later became famous as one of the centers of the labor movement and the location of a successful workers' school. Deng Zhongxia and Zhang Guotao were especially active in the area. See Daniel Y. K. Kwan, *Marxist Intellectuals and the Chinese Labor Movement: A Study of Deng Zhongxia, 1894–1933* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997). See also Hans J. Van de Ven, *From Friend to Comrade: The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, 1920–1927* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
85. "Pingmin Jiaoyu Jiangyan Tuan qishi" (Announcement of the Lecture Groups for Popular Education), *BDRK*, January 27, 1921, reprinted in *WSSQST* 2:195.
86. Arif Dirlik, "Ideology and Organization in the May Fourth Movement: Some Problems in the Intellectual Historiography of the May Fourth Period," *Republican China* 12, no. 1 (November 1986): 13.

8. THE END OF STUDENTS?

1. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 386–87.
2. Obviously, we cannot foresee the future and a student protest might again shake China while this book is in print. But an explosion of activism organized under the twentieth-century category of students would truly be a surprise to anybody familiar with today's China.
3. William H. Sewell Jr., "Space in Contentious Politics," in *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*, Ronald R. Aminzade et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 79.
4. Doug McAdam and William H. Sewell Jr., "It's About Time: Temporality in the Study of Social Movements and Revolutions," in Aminzade, *Silence and Voice*, 103.

5. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 87.
6. Joseph W. Esherick and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, "Acting Out Democracy: Political Theater in Modern China," in *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China*, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 5.
7. See Robert Culp, *Articulating Citizenship: Civic Education and Student Politics in Southeastern China, 1912–1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Jianli Huang, *The Politics of Depoliticization in Republican China* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996).
8. Dingxin Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Elizabeth Perry, "Casting a Chinese 'Democracy' Movement: The Roles of Students, Workers, and Entrepreneurs," in *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China*, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 74–92; Craig C. Calhoun, "Science Democracy, and the Politics of Identity," *ibid.*: 93–124.
9. A manifesto of the self-image of intellectuals in the 1980s is offered in the famous TV series *Heshang*. See Su Xiaokang and Wang Luxiang, *Deathsong of the River. A Reader's Guide to the Chinese TV Series* Heshang, trans. and intro. Richard W. Bodman and Pin P. Wan (Ithaca, NY: Cornell East Asia Papers, 1991). See also, Jing Wang, *High Culture Fever: Politics, Aesthetics, and Ideology in Deng's China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
10. I think it is possible to see the insistent request that autonomous student unions be officially recognized as part of this effort to stake a practical ground for "students" that matched their perceived centrality.
11. Sewell, "Space in Contentious Politics," 66. See also Craig Calhoun, *Neither Gods Nor Emperors: Students and the Struggle for Democracy in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
12. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests*, 296.
13. Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics*, trans. Jason Barker (London: Verso, 2005), 143.
14. Alain Badiou, *Peut-on penser la politique?* (Paris: Seuil, 1985).
15. See for example Andrew G. Walder, "Beijing Red Guard Factionalism: Social Interpretation Reconsidered," *Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no. 2 (2002): 437–71; Joel Andreas, "Battling Over Political and Cultural Power During the Chinese Cultural Revolution," *Theory and Society* 31 (2002): 463–519; Hong Yong Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Xiaowei Zheng, "Passion, Reflection, and Survival: Political Choices of Red Guards at Qinghua University, June 1966–July 1968" in *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, ed. Joseph W. Esherick, Paul G. Pickowicz, and Andrew G. Walder (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006): 29–63.

16. Andreas, "Battling Over Political and Cultural Power," 506.
17. See Arif Dirlik, "The Politics of the Cultural Revolution in Historical Perspective" in Kam-yee Law, ed., *The Chinese Cultural Revolution Reconsidered: Beyond Purge and Holocaust* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 158–83.
18. Wang Shaoguang, *Failure of Charisma: The Cultural Revolution in Wuhan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 43.
19. Andreas, "Battling Over Political and Cultural Power," 464.
20. William Hinton, *Hundred Day War: The Cultural Revolution at Tsinghua University* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 23.
21. Victor Nee, *The Cultural Revolution at Peking University*, with Don Layman (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969), 28.
22. Ibid., 34. Emphasis mine.
23. Mao Zedong, "Guanyu jiaoyu geming de tanhua" (Talk about the revolution in education) (February 13, 1964), in *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao* (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1996), 11:26.
24. "Zhaojian shoudu hong dai hui fuzeren de tanhua" (Talk with responsible persons of the conference of the Red Guards of the capital), *Mao Zedong Sixiang wansui* (n.p.), 687–716. See also Alessandro Russo, "The Conclusive Scene: Mao and the Red Guards in July 1968," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 13, no. 3 (2005): 535–72.
25. Hinton, *Hundred Day War*, 40.
26. Wang Shaoguang, *Failure of Charisma: The Cultural Revolution in Wuhan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 84.
27. Wang Shaoguang, "Between Destruction and Construction: The First Year of the Cultural Revolution," in Law, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution Reconsidered*, 38.
28. David and Nancy Milton, *The Wind Will Not Subside: Years in Revolutionary China, 1964–1969* (New York: Pantheon, 1976): 148–49. Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Shoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 67.
29. Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 45.
30. On the campaign against Wu Han, see MacFarquhar and Shoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 15–19.
31. Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 23.
32. Milton, *The Wind Will Not Subside*, 159.
33. Andreas, "Battling Over Political and Cultural Power," 499.
34. MacFarquhar and Shoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 71–75.
35. Hinton, *Hundred Day War*, 45.
36. "Li Hsüe-feng Is the Executioner Suppressing the CR in Peking Municipality," *Supplement to Survey of China Mainland Press* 162 (February 14, 1967), quoted in Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 37.

37. Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 40.
38. Wang Shaoguang, *Failure of Charisma*, 177.
39. Alain Badiou, "The Cultural Revolution: The Last Revolution?" *positions: east asia cultures critique* 13, no. 3 (2005): 484.
40. "The Working Class Leading Struggle-Criticism-Transformation in All Spheres of the Superstructure is Fine," quoted in Milton, *The Wind Will Not Subside*, 315.
41. Andreas, "Battling Over Political and Cultural Power," 507.
42. Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 77.