

大理想 学想

AN IDEAL UNIVERSITY LIFE

EMPOWERING CHINESE
COLLEGE STUDENTS
TO REVISIT THEIR VALUES

RONGFEI GENG

MAY 2013

Summary of Project in Lieu of Thesis
Presented to the Graduate School of the
University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Committee Chair: Maria Rogal
Committee Member: Brian Slawson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my committee chair, Maria Rogal, for being a great mentor, who has always supported me through her knowledge, criticism, and guidance, as well as much encouragement in this project and my MFA graduate study as a whole. My deep gratitude also goes to my committee member, Brian Slawson, who has always been resourceful and open-minded; he helped me throughout this project and the three years leading up to my MFA thesis.

I extend my appreciation to my peers in the Graphic Design MFA program at the University of Florida, whose critical feedbacks helped me grow as a designer.

I thank Dr. Dori Griffin, Mengfu Zhang, Dr. Guolong Lai, and the faculty members who taught me at the University of Florida, for unselfishly helping me in my academic growth.

I thank my brothers and sisters at the Gainesville Chinese Christian Church, especially the F4 young adults fellowship, who supported me with love and encouragement as a big family would throughout these three years.

Last but not least, I thank my beloved parents, my in-laws, and my wife Dan Zhai, without whose love and support I wouldn't be at this point in life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

iii	Abstract
01	Project Background
01	My University Life: A Story of Higher Education in China
03	Different Experience When I Studied in the US
05	A Glance at Students' Value Views in Chinese Universities
08	Problem Statement
08	Points of Departure: Some Questions
09	Justification and Delimitation
10	Target Audience
11	Methodology
11	Reading About Related Literatures
12	Borrowing from Ethnography
12	Co-design and Storytelling
14	Project Process and Design Iterations
15	Visualizing the Problems
18	Call to Action
20	Storytelling and Critical Thinking
23	Public Exhibition
28	Other Ideas
29	Conclusion
33	Future Directions
34	Terminologies
37	Bibliography
42	Appendix A
43	Appendix B
48	Appendix C
52	Biographical Sketch

ABSTRACT

Having studied in both China and the US, I experienced two different cultures and thus two different value systems. According to my experience and observation of Chinese college life, a lot of students were and are in a state of bewilderment. Once students enter college, they are no longer solely focused on the Entrance Exam and, without a plan for future directions, become lost and bewildered. Many lose their interest in studying or aspirations in life. They become apathetic about many things, such as self-realization, knowledge-seeking, or social accountability, and many thus simply follow trends, doing things that they have to do, are told to do, or follow what others are doing.

In this project, I explore how concepts, strategies, forms and methods of graphic design can be used to explore and to communicate questions about values to Chinese college students. This includes the values they hold and new values that they are exposed to, and will be mainly narrowed down to self-development and social responsibility. My goal is to develop their empathy and awareness for active and critical thinking, to communicate messages that have long-standing influence on them, and to empower them for a more meaningful college life, both to themselves and to others.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

MY UNIVERSITY LIFE: A STORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN CHINA

In the past few decades, China has gone through great changes. The ending of Cultural Revolution is followed by the Opening Up Policy, and the unified faith of Mao's vision (Schwartz, 1968) to transform Chinese society into a Communist utopia eventually faded out with Mao's death (Shirk, 1982). Chinese people entered into a state of being lost, lost in faith, in personal emotion, in language, etc. (Bei Dao in Cha, 2006) New thoughts, cultures, fashion, technologies, life styles, and values from the west came and diversified people's mind. Chinese who were born in the 1970's, the 1980's, and the 1990's were divided into different generational groups, and are considered to have notable differences in the social environment that create the generation gap.

1. One Child Policy is a population control policy in the People's Republic of China, introduced by the government in 1978 and enforced since 1979. The policy requires one urban family can only have one child, except some special cases.

I was born in 1985 and therefore belong to the Post-80's Generation, which is the generation born right after the One Child Policy¹ was strictly enforced. As the only child in my family, I grew up with parents' and teachers' indoctrination that good grades would lead me to good life, and getting into the best schools at the next level became goals of different phases in my life. Therefore the College Entrance Exam became the ultimate goal in my life at that time, because I was told once I entered a good university, I could do whatever I wanted and no longer had to labor for study.

My entrance exam score got me accepted to a tier-two university. We chose our major after the Entrance Exam but before entering college. I wasn't able to study what I wanted to because the major

English was decided in a family meeting by senior family members. But my parents and my high school teachers didn't lie—once I entered college, no one would force us to study, though some teachers would still encourage us to study hard. We barely had any homework, nor did we have a lot of things to memorize like we did in primary school and middle schools. We didn't have another big exam like the Entrance Exam to fight for, except one called TEM-4 (Test for English Majors, level 4) (Jin & Fan, 2011). We had to pass that exam to graduate. But that was in the end of the sophomore year.

The “life goal” I had always been working hard for became reality, yet another three quarters of my life were still waiting ahead of me. I felt lost, and didn't know what to do. So were many of my peers. “Bewilderment” was a word frequently found in our daily conversions and blogs we wrote on the web. Such bewilderment was just a microcosm of the bigger social context—just like how Chinese people became lost in diversified values after the Communism faith faded out, when we no longer had the single mission in our lives to fight for, we only felt emptiness and started to look at different things with our abundance of free time.

FIGURE 1

A classroom of the university I attended during lunch break. Many students studying in the room are out for lunch and some remaining students are taking a nap.

Sadly, because of the exam-oriented education system, few of us knew what our interests were. Therefore some of us maintained what we were doing prior to college, studying hard and trying to



get good grades on exams, because we knew that was what we were suppose to do; Some of us realized how fierce the competition we had to face when we graduate, and therefore carefully chose what was “useful” to work on, trying to get as many credentials as we could; Some also organized and participated social activities, joined student government and then the Party, preparing the future path of officialdom, etc. And a lot of us, just stopped caring about anything and indulged ourselves into the pleasures of idleness watching time elapsing.

I have always been a hardworking student, as I was told to be since childhood. I couldn't agree with lots of other students around me, who started playing video games all day long. But most of my time was devoted to student government activities instead of study—I designed poster boards, flyers, and websites for activities, I organized new student orientations, lectures, speaking contests and singing contests, and emceed most of them. I became recognized, and earned much respect. I was considered an excellent student model in many others' eyes. But I still felt lost, because I didn't know what I could do after graduation—I didn't have a goal, until one of my professors recommended I further my studies aboard.

DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE WHEN I STUDIED IN THE US

Unlike China, there are no unified values in the United States—it is defined as an individualistic society (Georgianna, 2007). From the beginning, this is a country formed by different people coming from different cultures and places. It is a country that respects free spirit, and that believes in people's unalienable rights in life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I met students coming from different parts of the world in the United States. Students' lives before and in universities were quite different here. They do have a “entrance exam”, called SAT or ACT, but it wasn't anything they had to fight for since they started school. The score they get on the standardized test was not the only standard to evaluate them, nor would these scores, or the universities they get in, be compared and ranked and posted on bulletin boards in campus. They actually don't have to take those exams or go to college—some go to work after they graduate from high school, and they would still be respected by others because of their hard work.

As I observed, American students don't have to compete with their peers much. They don't have to go to the best universities, and attending a community college doesn't mean their lives will become a failure—they still will have responsible teachers, they still can work hard and be respected by society. Everyone has their own path, and their parents wouldn't compare them frequently with other kids—actually, parents will do the opposite: they will encourage them, and stop their children from comparing themselves to others.

The students I met in universities were actively seeking direction based on their own interests, and they went to graduate school not because they only think that provides them better jobs. They set goals and work hard to achieve them. They work hard because they love what they do and they are being responsible for themselves. They stay up over-night working on projects. They conduct research and independently solve problems, they care about things happening outside this campus and issues beyond their future career. They do projects to promote biking and food health, to promote equality and human rights, to comment on cultures and other social issues.

FIGURE 2

Art majors doing a critique in class. Many of these students have a strong interest in what they are studying and the future direction they will pursue.



The academic honesty policy is highly reinforced and plagiarism is punished. Cheating on school work will be criticized not only by instructors but also by peers. They may ask for help, but most of them tend to independently confront problems, instead of paying someone to do it. I can recall when I was in the student government in China, I received an offer letter from someone to pay me to take a standardized English exam for him. And little flyers selling standard answers to certain exams were not difficult to find on the walls of restrooms.

Many of these observations in the United States amazed me, because they weren't found in my college life in China. I barely wrote any papers before my undergraduate thesis, nor did I do any projects. I didn't know what research was, nor did I finished reading one book from cover to cover. But ironically, I was still considered to be an excellent student in China.

A GLANCE AT STUDENTS' VALUE VIEWS IN CHINESE UNIVERSITIES

Before entering universities, most Chinese consider the Entrance Exam as the top priority. Once they are accepted, things they value become different. These different values can be manifested through the phenomena below. I am using the term “phenomena” because they are not necessarily mutually-isolated stereotypes, even though some students might possess only one of the phenomena and seem stereotypical. Overall, these phenomena are seen in many students and they are interlaced—a student might possess more than one phenomenon at the same time, or possess different phenomena at different periods of his/her university life.



FIGURE 3

An internet café in China. Some college students spend days and nights here.

One phenomenon that differentiates itself from others is that students do not care about anything at all. They stopped laboring for anything as they used to do before entering university. Instead, they would go to internet café day and night or persuade their parents to buy laptops for them so they can immerse themselves in video games. Other activities include sleeping, downloading and watching movies/TV series, online chatting, dating, etc. They attend few or no classes, and their grades usually suffer. They generally ignore teachers' and peers' warnings until the end of their university life. Ming Zhang, a professor and a critic in China, thought this was due to the generation gap and those students had different value views at the beginning, but he later concluded that it was not the

case, because those students didn't have any value views, they were just becoming numb (Zhang, 2011).

Among the other phenomena, competition is the most widely seen and it is an overarching one. There are many sub-phenomena such as students working hard for grades and ranking, fighting for opportunities to be recommended for graduate school, and fighting for other credentials that are only assigned to a certain amount of students.

Competition can trace long back to the early history of China. In ancient China, the Imperial Examination was used to select officials of different level, and the Confucian slogan "He who excels in study will follow an official career" set a norm that the purpose of education was to become an official, and the exam score determined the official ranks, therefore different levels of power, wealth, and dignity. Even today, officialdom is still considered, especially by parents, to be the best future direction for students. Not only because this provides the "iron rice bowl" (meaning secured employment), but also many other benefits and welfare offered by the state. For a working family or families in rural areas, becoming an official also brings honor to the whole family, and some will even celebrate with banquets and firecrackers (Lin et al., 2013). In Chinese university campus today, the competition for officialdom was also witnessed by students eager to take the Civil Service Exam and joining the Party. Being a Party member in China means you are standing out from other students, and a lot of students make efforts to do so in order that they can later find good jobs in government or state institutions or increase the chance for a graduate school recommendation.

Competition is also widely seen in grades and other credentials. Those who aren't necessarily interested in the officialdom path will focus more on their grades from class, and the scores they get from every exam will become their goal and the thing they care about the most. Georgianna's comparison study of goal striving across culture (2007) reveals that Chinese students consider hard work and preparation for the exam as the path to their goals. Such phenomena is an extension of the exam-oriented education they received prior to college. Chinese students are often referred to as rote learners, who are reported to replicate behavior and passively receive knowledge rather than understanding it, and to demonstrate obedience and compliance to their in-group (Sadler-Smith & Tsang, 1998). Focusing on hard work and exam scores

provide students good academic standing but many still do not think about anything beyond grades, and therefore they still feel lost when they face graduation.

Students may also realize that hard work in exams is no longer a must in universities, thus become “smart” to carefully calculate how their time can be spent as if they are making marketing decisions. In Chinese this is described as being “utilitarian”, which means students tend to acquire the greatest benefits with the least amount of effort. Typical examples include students evaluating what is “useful” to study, what major can earn more money after graduation, what courses or credentials might increase chances of better jobs, which professor gives better grades so they might get a better GPA, what extracurricular professional certificate is easy to get, etc. Being student leaders and joining the Party mentioned heretofore are also examples of such phenomenon.

The pressure of the bigger social context and most parents’ expectation is more and more directing students’ focus on the “end results” of higher education. These end results range from small things like test scores to larger things like how well a job pays after graduation. Fewer students are concerned with their interests, their dreams, their curiosity for knowledge, or their seeking for truth. A high-school student commented on contemporary Chinese students in her composition: “Dreams, courage, persistence, and creativity, all vividly and truly existed in their hearts at the beginning of their lives, no matter they are the citizens of the old China who became numb, or the current Chinese youth who lost their ability to critically think (Zhang, 2011).”

PROBLEM STATEMENT

POINTS OF DEPARTURE: SOME QUESTIONS

According to my experience and observation of Chinese college life, a lot of students were and are in a state of bewilderment. They lose their interest in studying or aspiration for life, and thus become apathetic about many things, such as self-realization, knowledge-seeking, or social accountability. They follow trends, doing things that they have to do or are told to do, or what others are doing. They live in the background of what are China's fastest changing decades, with the diversified thoughts, culture, knowledge and an inundation of information, and colliding cultures between the west and the east, the new and the old. After their matriculation to college, their priority in life is no longer limited to the Entrance Exam that they had to strive for when they were in high school, nor are they compared to those older generations who pursued the unified faith of a communist utopia before China's opening up. What are their values now? Are they aware of these values? Do they have other options? Why are they feeling lost? How can they develop a critical judgement while still being inundated with the pressure from the social context and their parents? In what way can they develop critical attitudes about their current value views?

As a designer and visual communicator, my intent in this project was to explore how concepts, strategies, forms and methods of graphic design could be used to explore and to communicate questions about values to Chinese college students. This included the values they hold and new values that they might be exposed to, and was mainly narrowed down to values related to

self-development and social responsibility. My goal was to develop their empathy and awareness for active and critical thinking, to communicate messages that can have long-standing influence on them, and to empower them for a more meaningful college life, both to themselves and to others.

JUSTIFICATION AND DELIMITATION

I explored how a social/cultural problem could become a design problem and how can such problem be solved through design methodology and process. At the same time, I also explored the power of graphic design concepts, strategies, forms, and methods, such as how visual and verbal information could be integrated, how concepts were communicated through forms like a designed notebook, an illustrated story, or a web-interface on a digital device, etc., to influence Chinese college students and develop their awareness on value problems they face, and provoke deep thinking on their value views.

While the word “value” contains vast breadth and depth of philosophical contents and aspects, I limited my exploration on aspects related to students’ self-development and responsibility to others, such as how normative ethics like utilitarianism and egoism influenced their decisions on choosing majors, making career plans, spending their time in their university years, and interacting with others when there was limited resource, etc. Students’ values on certain existence beyond this delimitation were not specifically explored, examples of this kind include how they value modern culture over traditional culture, how they value a certain philosophical trend, or their moral choice on certain ethics problems, etc.

In this project, I did not directly comment on the Chinese higher educational system or policy from an educational science perspective, nor did I attempt to solve problems in this system from a scientific approach that follows a “literature review—data collection analysis—conclusion” process, even though some education-related, China-related, value-related and design-related literature was reviewed to inform this creative project. Examples of these problems from an educational science perspective include teacher salary, institution evaluation system, teacher motivation, students’ learning style, curriculum arrangement, or corruption phenomena in the academic realm, etc.

Finally, I studied ways and media that Chinese college students use to access information to the extent of informing design choices in this project, but this project was not intended to become a purely theoretical discussion on differences between media, such as the printed and the digital.

TARGET AUDIENCE

There are three layers of target audience, to three different extents this project will be addressing. The first layer, or the core, of the target audience definition includes Chinese students who are currently registered in universities in China, or those who just graduated from universities in China. The second layer includes all the stakeholders of higher education in China, for instances teachers, parents, to-be college students, etc. The third layer includes the non-Chinese audience who are interested in this project and the related problems. For the first and second layers, this project aims to develop empathy, critical thinking, and attitudinal and behavior changes; for the third layer, this project aims to inform.

METHODOLOGY

This project is based on and informed by design research, combined with explorations of design prototypes. From the preliminary research phase to the final iterations in the public exhibition, methodologies have been borrowed from various disciplines, including literature review, ethnography, narrative, and participatory design.

REVIEWING RELATED LITERATURES

My literature review was used to inform this project. I reviewed books, newspapers, websites and blogs, and other design projects that are related to 1) Chinese higher education, 2) value studies, and 3) design as activism/design authorship. These three categories also corresponded to the three different phases of my projects. During the ideation process in China, I started my preliminary literature review process on research about and critiques of Chinese higher education, which helped me identify problems in Chinese academia, such as pressure for faculty members, government's evaluating criteria of universities, bureaucracy and corruption in universities, students' fierce competition, etc. I highlighted and wrote down key words to inform the next phase of my research for developing questions and interviewing students. The second and third literature review phases happened when I came back to the United States and informed the process of building design prototypes.

BORROWING FROM ETHNOGRAPHY

In this project, qualitative research methods were borrowed from ethnography, which is an anthropological approach to discover and describe the culture of a group of people (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). During the ideation process, observation of the urban Chinese people's lives in the public space was made through recording, photographing and taking field notes.

Once the research problem and questions were narrowed down to Chinese college students' values about self-development and social responsibility, a semi-structured interview was developed based on the reviewed literatures and my own experiences in college. These were conducted via either face-to-face manner or online communication. Interviews were audio-recorded and notes were taken. This qualitative research data was later used to inform my design decisions when developing prototypes.

In addition, some developed prototypes (e.g. the story book and story posters for exhibition, see p. 22 and p. 26) were also brought to a setting for audience-testing, in which the potential audiences read and interacted with the prototypes. During the audience-testing, I observed and documented the interactions of and feedbacks from the audience. This documentation was used to inform further improvement and iterations for the prototypes being tested.

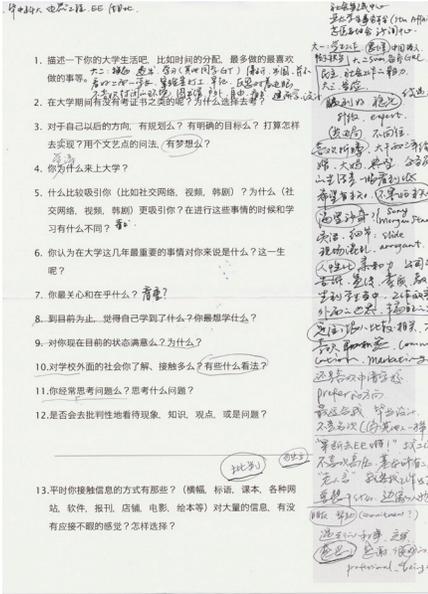


FIGURE 4

An question sheet with open-ended questions and notes taken during the interview. An enlarged version can be found at Appendix A.

CO-DESIGN AND STORY-TELLING

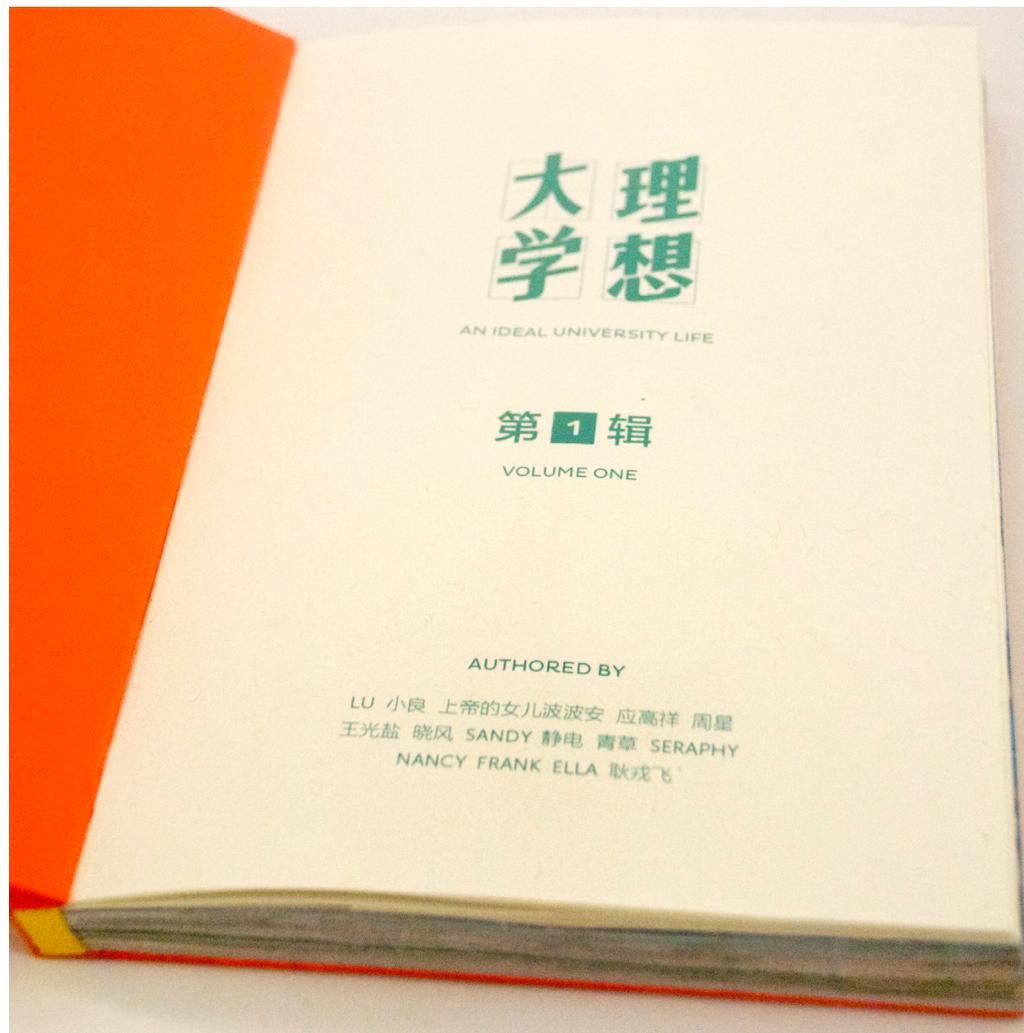
This project also combined the concept of “design together” (Fuad-Luke, 2009) and the strategy of story-telling. The “design together” concept was discussed by Alastair Fuad-Luke (2004, p. 146) as he agrees with Woodhouse and Patton (2004) that the inherent nature of design as a human activity is being deeply socially oriented. Participation in the design process emancipates people by making them active contributors rather than passive recipients, and it leads to transformation of the participants (Fuad-Luke, 2009). Such transformation can become “empowerment” for participants, which is one of the goals of this design project.

Stories written by the participants were collected from a designed website, and my interaction with participants was through this website. Each participant was promised a copy of the book. I also asked them to select visual materials that illustrate their stories,

and at the same time informed them that they are designing these stories together with me. On the title page of the designed story book, I listed participants, along with myself as the co-authors of this book. It was intended that, through this process, our relationships would become beyond binary—designer and user, or researcher and participants, but a combination of both, as well as collaborators, co-designers, and co-authors. The hope was that such transformation would not only empower the students who participated in this project, developing their empathy to the stories of other participants, but also would become a call-to-action to the readers of the stories and encourage them to participate in future volumes of the book.

FIGURE 5

The title page of the story book, with names of all the authors/designers listed.



PROJECT PROCESS AND DESIGN ITERATIONS



FIGURE 6

TOP: Chinese trying to get in a metro in a chaotic manner.

BOTTOM: Books selling on the shelf entitled "You have to win at your thirties— Things those successful people did in their twenties."

In the summer of 2012, I went back to China and started ideating for this project and collecting materials. The combined personal experience of growing up in China and attending graduate schools in the United States enabled me to look at social happenings in China from both emic and etic perspectives. I witnessed cynicism and people's apathy towards each other, and at the same time egoism that stimulates young people to become rich and successful. I observed people on the streets, documented their facial expressions, photographed books on bookstore shelves, and collected news about happenings such as one where a two-year-old girl was run-over by two vehicles and no one was trying to help (Landreth, 2011), or a girl jumped into the lake and no one went to save her (Shi, 2011), etc. I also observed cars wouldn't give way to pedestrians and people on the bus fight with each other just because of a slight body collision. Everyone was trying to protect their own benefits and resources, and it seemed like no one was happy. I kept the things to be documented very open in this phase, in order to identify and then delineate emerging problems to work with.

These observations compelled me to think about current Chinese's values, and I couldn't help but relate these observations to the bigger historical context of China. Twenty years ago, China was not as rich, and the social disparity wasn't as big, people did not seem to be this apathetic or upset with each other, with this society, nor were they so desperate for the benefits they could get—at least not in my memory. As a designer and visual communicator, these observations thus led me to think about how design can contribute in finding out, telling, and communicating these value-related problems.

While the scope of complete society is too big to look at, I narrowed it down to universities in China, because universities prepare individuals who will not only create but also influence Chinese society. Problems happening in universities will happen in society, and values identified in universities will reflect values in the society. On the other hand, I also recall that myself and many peers constantly had the feeling of bewilderment, at the same time many desperately sought benefits without hard work—a university campus is being a microcosm of the society. I therefore start to focus on value-related problems in Chinese universities.

VISUALIZING THE PROBLEMS

After my preliminary phase of literature review and interviewing several Chinese students, I combined the research findings and data with my own experience, analyzed these materials using highlights and side notes to develop themes about students' values. These were used to help me start building design prototypes. The first step of my design explorations was to communicate these findings to the target audience in an engaging way.

Examples of these findings about students' values and pursuits are included: going to graduate school (without exam if possible), officialdom or Civil Service, going abroad to study, good jobs after graduation, etc. These values and pursuits were only embodied by students who still care or were still trying to working hard, whereas there were students who do not care about anything and no longer work hard in college, and those students differ fundamentally from the students who were pursuing things.

After interviewing three students, reviewing self-published journals and comments on Chinese online social media, and reading on other literature, I discerned a universal phenomena that students holding opposite attitude between caring about things very much and not caring about anything, working very hard to not working at all. This can be utilized as a visual metaphor of axis diagram, or infographics (Figure 7), based on which I started to add other axes about values such as altruistic vs. selfish, spiritual pursuit vs. material pursuit, etc.

At the same time, I attempted to develop some archetypes (Figure 8) based on the research findings, such as student A being hardworking but conforming to norms, student B being smart but

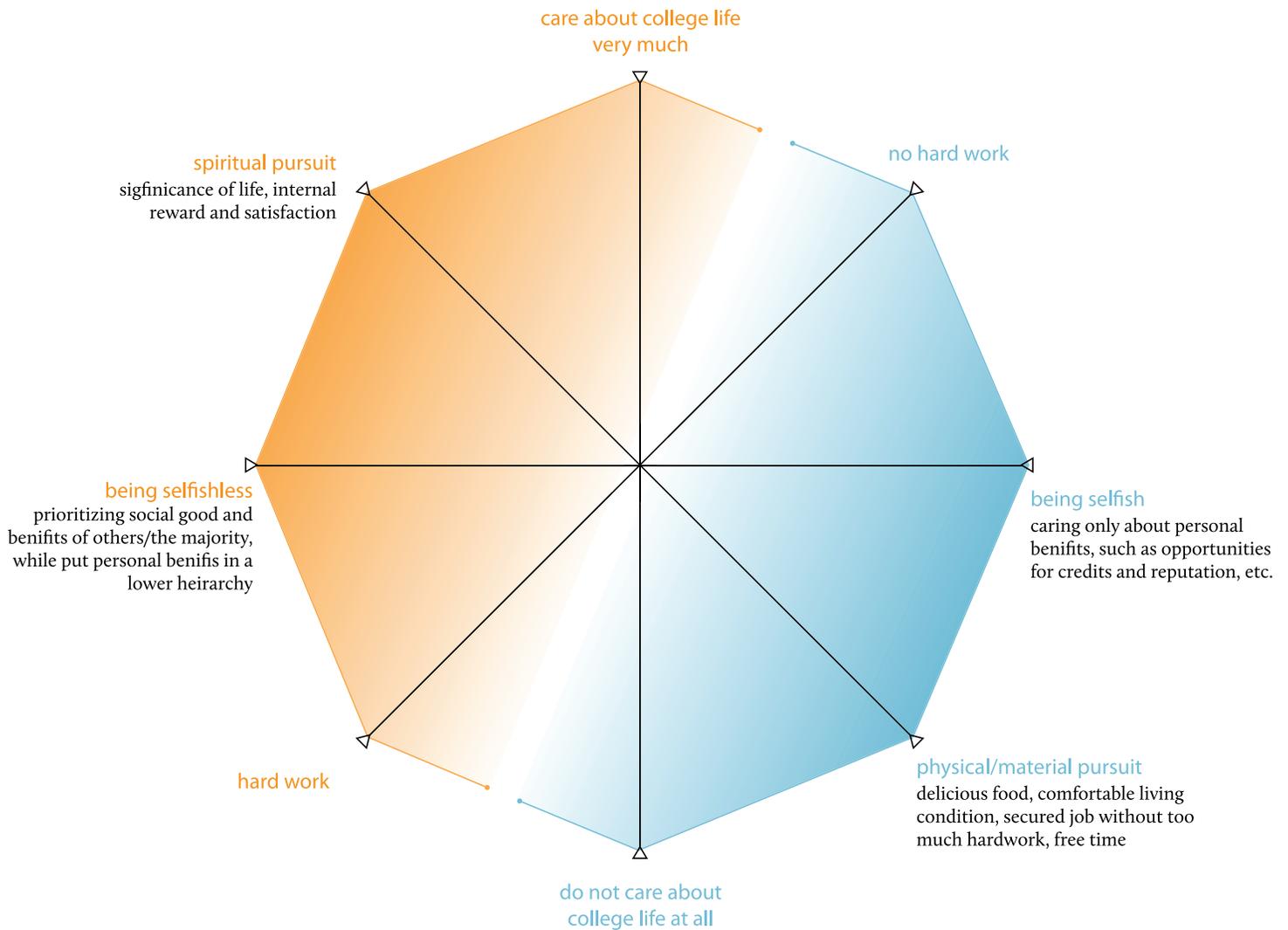


FIGURE 7

The draft to diagramming out axes of different value spectrums.

not hardworking, rebellious and innovative, student C somewhat hardworking but very critical, so on and so forth. These archetypes would be illustrated in a style that is abstracted but funny, instead of too representational and therefore being too serious and lacking the layer of engagement. This was borrowed from design research methods of personas (Visocky O’Grady, 2006). While these archetypes were temporarily emulated, the idea behind them was that an infographic could be later used to show real Chinese students and they would be able to find their own place, therefore it became an interactive way of story-telling that prompts critical thinking and self-examination.

Through feedback from other designers it became clear that many axes of values can not be put together in a two-dimension

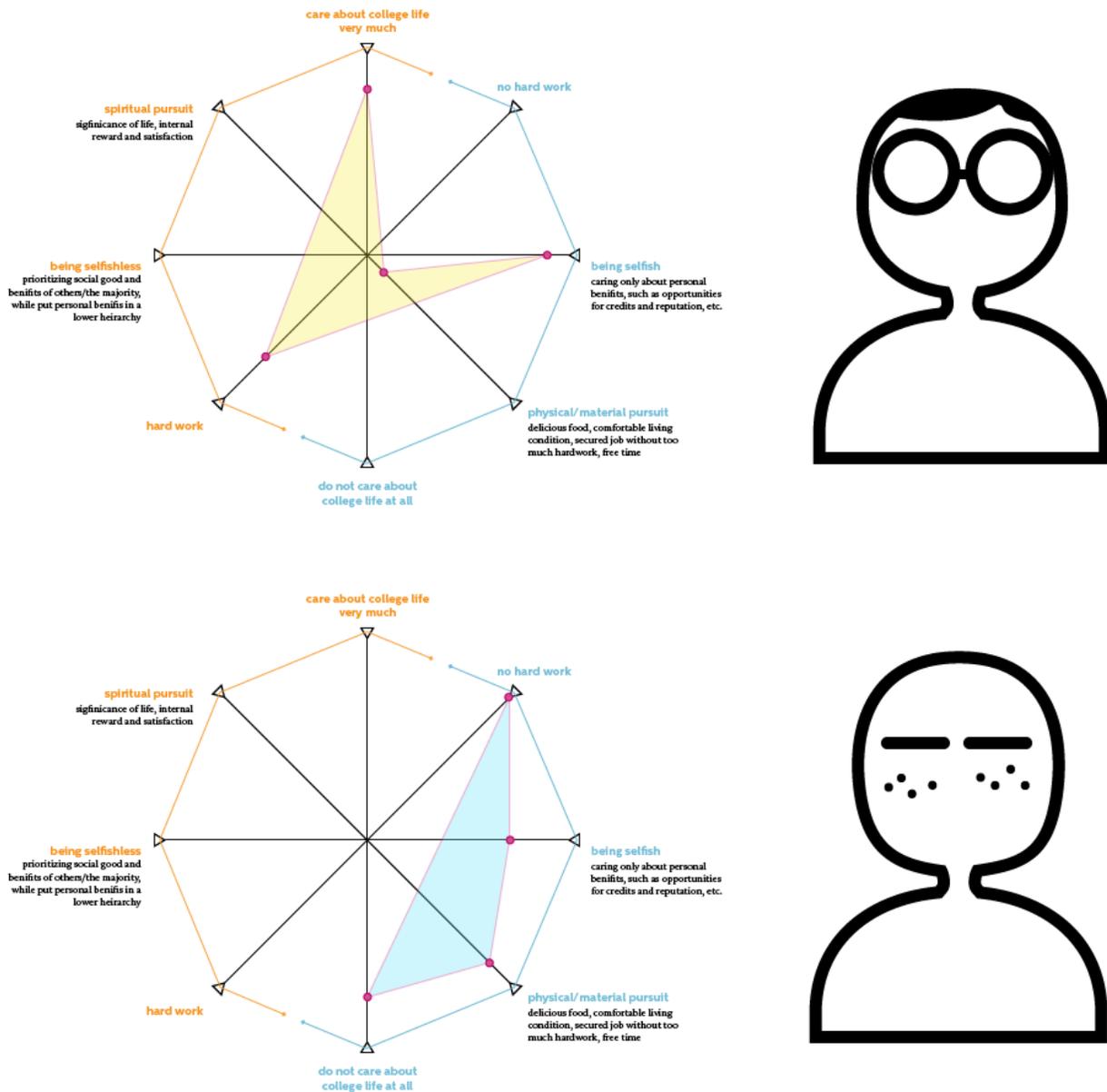


FIGURE 8

Emulated archetypes on typical students who hold combined value views.

coordinate system that was only based on x and y, because every axis was one dimension; and that the concern that using stereotypes of people might get personal. I therefore revisited my research data in order to further develop the prototype based on the feedbacks. I realized many of the pursuits themselves are stereotypes and they all have a Chinese word that is widely known and used by all the Chinese students. For example, entering graduate school via recommendation without taking exams in Chinese is referred as *baoyan*, literally meaning “guaranteed for graduate school”. This had been a goal of many good students after they entered universities. When translating those words into

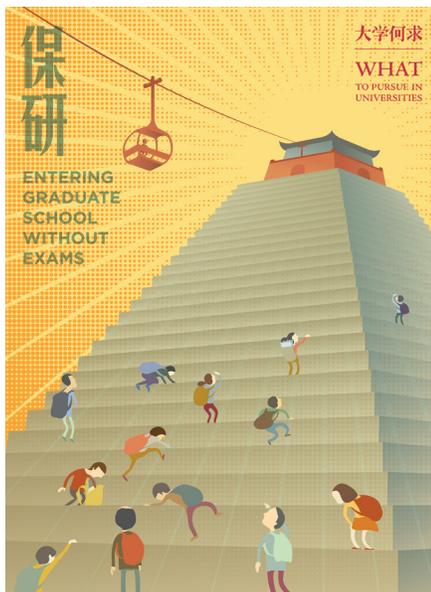
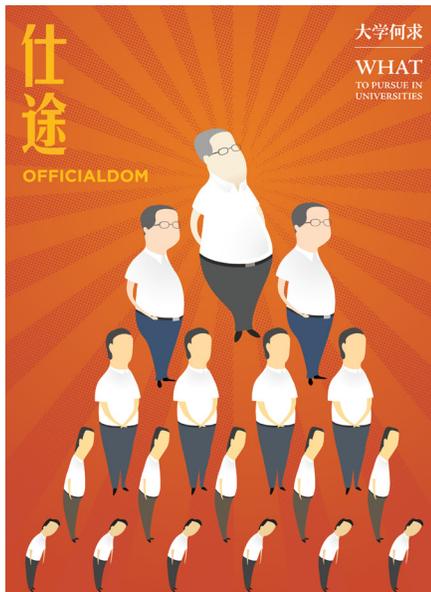


FIGURE 9

The “What to Pursue in Universities” poster series.

TOP: Officialdom.

BOTTOM: Entering graduate school without exams.

English, the cultural context and recognizability of the original text was lost. Therefore visually communicating the concepts along with cultural context through graphics became the problem to be solved, aiming to explore the power of visual language and how it can enhance verbal language.

On the other hand, these goals and pursuits can be compared to goals and slogans that Chinese people were striving for in Mao’s era. Their similarity lies in the fact that they both were/are widely known and pursued by many Chinese people to change their fate. Since the value problem in universities can not be separated from its bigger social context as I mentioned heretofore, borrowing from the visual language of Chinese revolutionary posters then become the idea to develop story-telling prototypes for the next step. I used stereotypical values/pursuits of college students in China, and designed them in the form of posters with the combination of illustration and typography (Figure 9). The concept behind this is to tell the story to Chinese students in a way of “the revolutionary posters in the new era”, bringing humor and nostalgia together, combining the retro and modern visual language together. I named the series of posters “What to Pursue in Universities” in order that the audience are not only engaged to the narrative that the posters present, but also think about the question they raise. The posters received positive feedback, along with question for the next step—now that I had communicated the problem, what was next?

CALL TO ACTION

The second phase of my prototype building was based on the design problem of how to communicate the values further and deeper, how to develop more empathy of student, and then how to engage them to take actions. Students live in an age where they are being inundated by information. The new media has changed their ways of perceiving information. The posters can not be carried by students in their daily lives and therefore fall short to provide long-standing impact on them. I then started to ideate on smaller objects that can be used and carried by students, such as booklets, card-holders, calendars, stationery, zines, etc.

At the same time, I developed the concept of how these smaller objects can have an impact on students as they were carried by them in their daily lives. I went back to researched data and found out students tend to do things without thinking why, such as they



FIGURE 10

TOP: Process of letterpressing quotes from interviewed students.

BOTTOM: Finished products of the notebooks.

pursue graduate school study because they were told by teachers and parents or their peers, but barely thought what that meant to them. I developed questions such as: “What did my parents want me to do?”, “What do I really want to do?”, “What am I doing now?”, “What is meaningful to do?”, etc. in my sketchbook. I also thought about those students who are feeling lost and do not know what to do, and sketched out an action notebook that contained steps of suggestions to help them find their interest and meaningful things to do in universities.

I also revisited my own experience of what I wanted to study and what my parents wanted me to study. The reality (what students eventually end up doing) had already being emphasized, but the ideal (what students originally wanted to do) were lost in students’ certain period of lives. So instead of comparing the ideal and the reality, I decided to emphasize on and call their attention back to what the ideal is, the ideal that many of them had given up because of the reality. I built prototypes and called them “Inscribe Your Childhood Dream on Paper”, which are notebooks with the visual message of 1) what they really wanted to do, and 2) why they wanted to do it. The latter questions is very important as it can be contrasted with why students were convinced to give in to reality, which are mostly materialistic reasons such as good jobs, good salary, social positions, etc. The word “inscribe” connotes “remember” and therefore encourages them to keep pursuing. I interviewed some Chinese students with these two questions, and used these responses to design small notebooks (Figure 10).

I also utilized this opportunity to explore hand-made objects that differentiated themselves from the omnipresent digital media that inundate people with information. As part of the design problem was to create long-standing and deep impacts to the students, the notebooks should be able to draw their attentions to the essential questions about what and why they wanted to do something, and enable them to think quietly every time when they open the notebook. I therefore combined hand-drawn illustration, folklore and nature-inspired motifs, Chinese character forms used in moveable-type era that are designed by myself, and traditional printing technique such as silk-screen printing and letterpress.

STORY-TELLING AND CRITICAL THINKING

As I pushed the project forward to the third phase, I was reading discussions about designer as author (Rock, 2006; de Almeida & McCarthy, 2002) as well as design approaches that encourage participation (Fuad-Luke, 2009). I also intended to push the strategy of story-telling as it is familiar, accessible and engaging to many people, and it is characterized of empathy, personality and the spirit of sharing. The idea of inviting university students in/from China to share their stories was thus developed, in the hope that this can become a collaboration instead of a linear, one-way persuasion endeavor. Through sharing stories, co-designing, and co-authoring these stories with me, the students who participated will be empowered to think, reflect on, and question their values, and later be enabled to empower others.

I started designing a website and branded it with the name *daxue lixiang* in Chinese. *Daxue* means university, *lixiang* can be either adjective or noun. When being adjective, it means “ideal”; when being noun, it means “dream”, as in the phrase “American dream”. These two meanings give the name two layers of meanings, one being the question of what someone wanted to pursue in college, namely what his/her dream is, the other being the question of what should be pursued in college, namely what constitutes an ideal university life. The website used bold color and a modern, geometric visual language. I also referenced typeface in posters in Mao’s era, and designed the logotype based on gothic Chinese typeface with a slanted angle of the horizontal strokes, the direction pointing up right connotes to look forward to a promising future.



FIGURE 11

TOP: Screen shot from website home page.
BOTTOM: Screen shot from the story page.

The website was launched at the end of 2012. I promoted the website through Chinese social media, including renren.com, weibo.com, and douban.com. I also invited people I know who are still in college and who graduated from college within years, and have them refer people to participate in the story collection process. The website was built bilingually, in both Chinese and English. On the website I wrote paragraphs encouraging people to critically think the purpose of attending university and what do they value the most. I intended to use a neutral tone of language without guiding them and kept the theme for their stories really open. I provided an online form, a Microsoft Word template, and an email address for them to choose whichever way was convenient for them to submit their stories. I announced on the website that I would design those stories into zines/books and promised to give each participants a copy.

One of the challenge in the process is to really get people's attention and get them interested. The way social media communicates information has formed the users' habit to quickly scan through information, so asking them to sit down and write a story became quite challenging. Another reason might also be that they could not see what the designed book looked like and therefore could not develop empathy or interest. I also contacted some students who agreed to participate but didn't submit their story at the beginning, and got different responses such as no time to write, no interesting experience to write a story, needing to recall college life details, etc. I therefore realize the story-collection process itself became a user-testing process for the website as a designed object. It not only generated some feedback for the design of the website, but also revealed new problems that are related to the culture/social problem being explored. For example, more than one participant said they do not know where to start, and suggested I use more specific and guided questions, rather than keeping the theme of the story open, so that the participants could just answer the questions. Such feedback reflected the fact that those students do not have critical thoughts about their college life, and the exam-oriented education taught students how to passively answer questions instead of to positively create. To this extent, the story-collection itself surprisingly become a design strategy that can be utilized to further explore and dig deeper the value problem and sub-problems.

In late January of 2013, more than twenty stories were submitted to the website. I decided to call that the first phase of story collection and began to design those stories. I contacted the participants via email and discussed with them how visual materials could be used. I also informed them that by writing the story and selecting visuals, they were co-designing their stories with me. The visual materials I collected from participants were digital, taken by different cameras, some scanned, and of varying quality.

Given the different sources of the collected images, and the concept for story-telling the happenings in Chinese students' college lives, through which I intended to communicate the truthfulness of these stories to people in order to develop empathy, I considered using photo collage. Traditional collage "allowed free composition independent of subject matter," and the texture of collages usually "signify objects" (Meggs, 1992, p. 239). Dada artists such as Hannah Höch and John Heartfield use this technique, manipulating found photographic images from different sources to create "jarring juxtapositions and chance associations" (Meggs, 1992, p. 246).



FIGURE 12

One spread of the story book. More sample pages can be found at Appendix B.

More recent work using similar collage technique such as Robert Rauschenberg's posters (Döring, Gundel, & Rauschenberg, 2001) also inspired my design decisions. I went for the route of using digital photo collage, acknowledging that the pictures were cut from different sources like magazines, newspapers, family photos, etc. Digital collages enabled me to also add my own hand-drawn illustrations that reflected my understanding and emotion, combined but also contrasted with the photos that communicate the truthfulness of the stories. I also made all the photos in half-tone effect to 1) recreate the textures of cut images from printed media such as newspaper, 2) solve low resolution problem of part of the pictures, and 3) respond to some participants' requests that people in their photo should be somewhat blurred to protect their identity.

In contrast to the website which mainly served as an data-collection research tool and only had stories as digitally displayed texts, the



FIGURE 13

One photographed spread of the story book. More sample pages can be found at Appendix B.

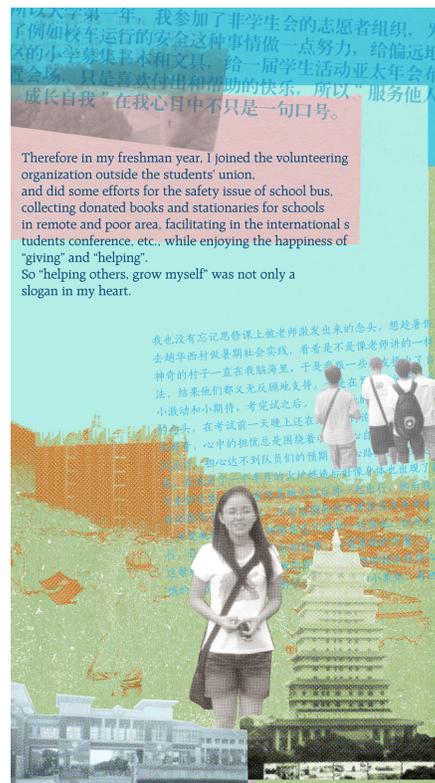
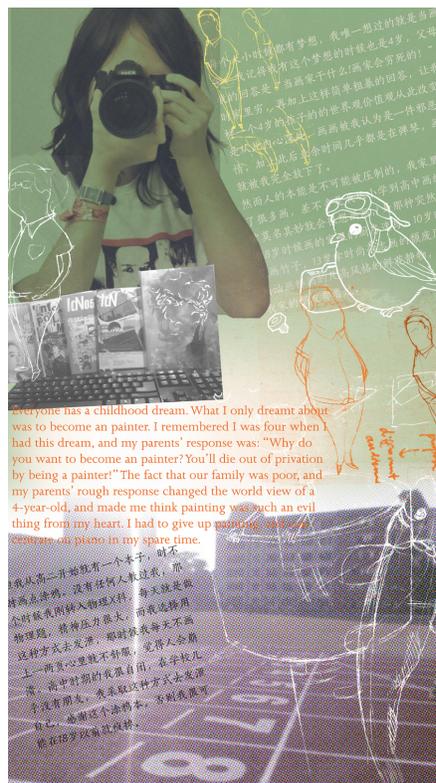
exhibition thus became a sub design problem to communicate collected stories about Chinese university students' values to a broader audience that included both Chinese and non-Chinese, in a non-Chinese cultural setting.

While it was not possible, given the time I had, to translate the entire book to English, I translated one story to see if I could design that complete story in the form of one poster, in both English and Chinese. I made some quick prototypes (figure 14) using only typography and colors, along with the visual principle of hierarchy and layering, resolving the problem to communicate heavy amount of information. But one poster could hardly include the one entire story, even though I made the poster in a large size of 16 by 29 inches and I was only using Chinese, without adding English or images. After collecting feedback, it became clear that posters could not be read like a book, they exist in a public setting and are read by many people at the same time. With too much text and long stories, the audience often loses interest and gets bored.

The prototype was then developed to be several posters (figure 15), each containing an excerpt from one story, with the idea of them

FIGURE 15

Mid process of designing story posters. Information was reduced and stories from more than one stories were translated and designed. The idea for this phase was to develop 8-10 posters like these.



being enlarged book pages and having a coherent visual language as the story book in Chinese. In this way I could fit both Chinese and English for different audiences, and the visuals in the book (illustrations, photo collages, textures, etc.), as those were also important content for the audience to be read. I selected several typical stories and translated the key excerpts into English in order to create several posters of different stories, with each representing a unique value/phenomena. The values that are represented through these stories included: grades, personal interests, social responsibility, officialdom, material wealth, love, following the majority, freedom, ambition to win, etc.

In order to test how the design prototype worked to communicate the stories, I did user-testing with both American and Chinese audiences by displaying the prototypes to English-speaking graduate students who were studying design and Chinese students who were studying different disciplines at the University of Florida. The following activities were included in the user-testing:

1. I observed how these audiences interact with the posters, where do they look at and how long do they looked at it;
2. I also asked questions such as:
 - a. What elements in the posters interest you?
 - b. What elements in the posters confuse you?
 - c. Which part arouses your own memories?
3. I documented their responses to the questions I asked on notebooks as reference for further developing the posters.

This time the feedback I received included questions about some specific terms mentioned in the stories, and possibility to push hierarchy to have different layers of information, possibly with my comments and descriptions, and the recommendation to increase the size of the poster so it's easier for different people to read while also providing a stronger visual impact.

The final iteration before the exhibition (Figure 16) included several adjustments to the prototypes, which were: increased poster size, stronger color, increased hierarchy of visual elements ranging from extra large to extra small, my descriptions of cultural specific terms in the story and background information of the protagonists of the stories, etc.

The exhibition space (Figure 17) was designed in the form of a Chinese classroom, with framed posters hanging on the wall, a

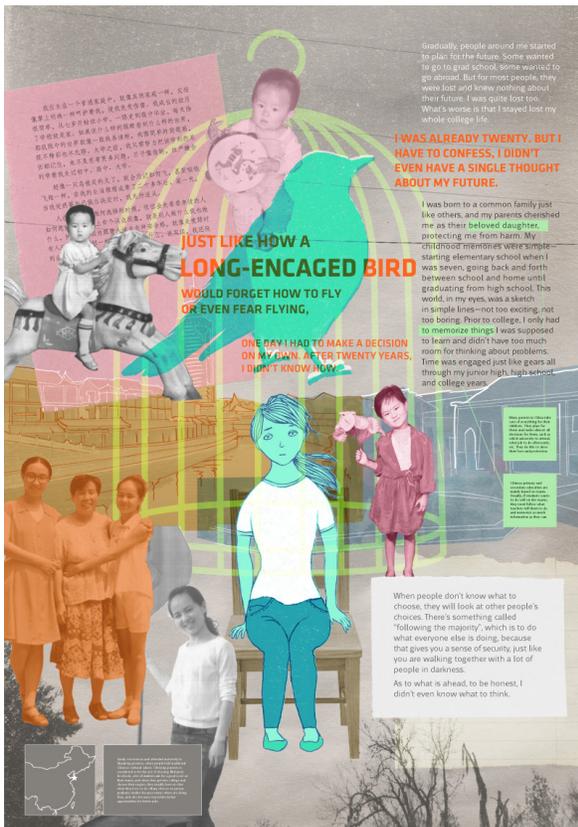
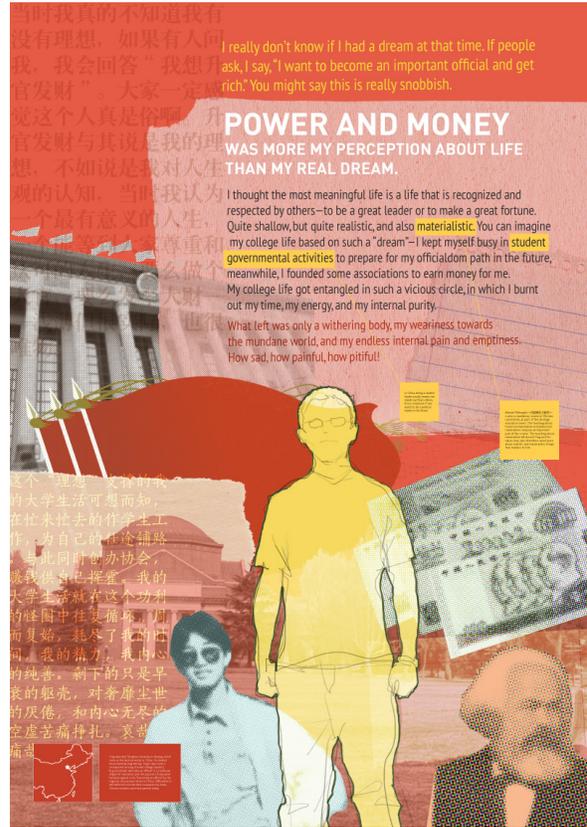
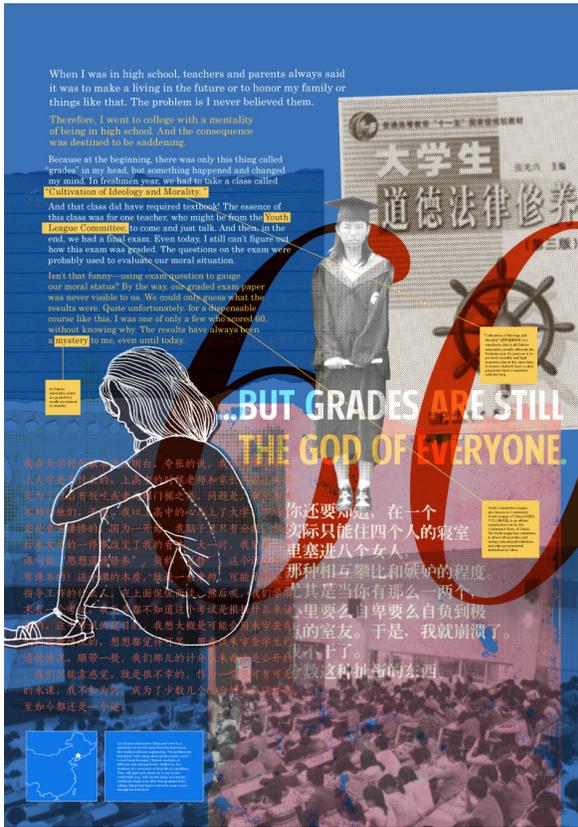


FIGURE 16 Final round of iterations for the story posters to be displayed in the public exhibition.



FIGURE 17 Photographs of the public exhibition.

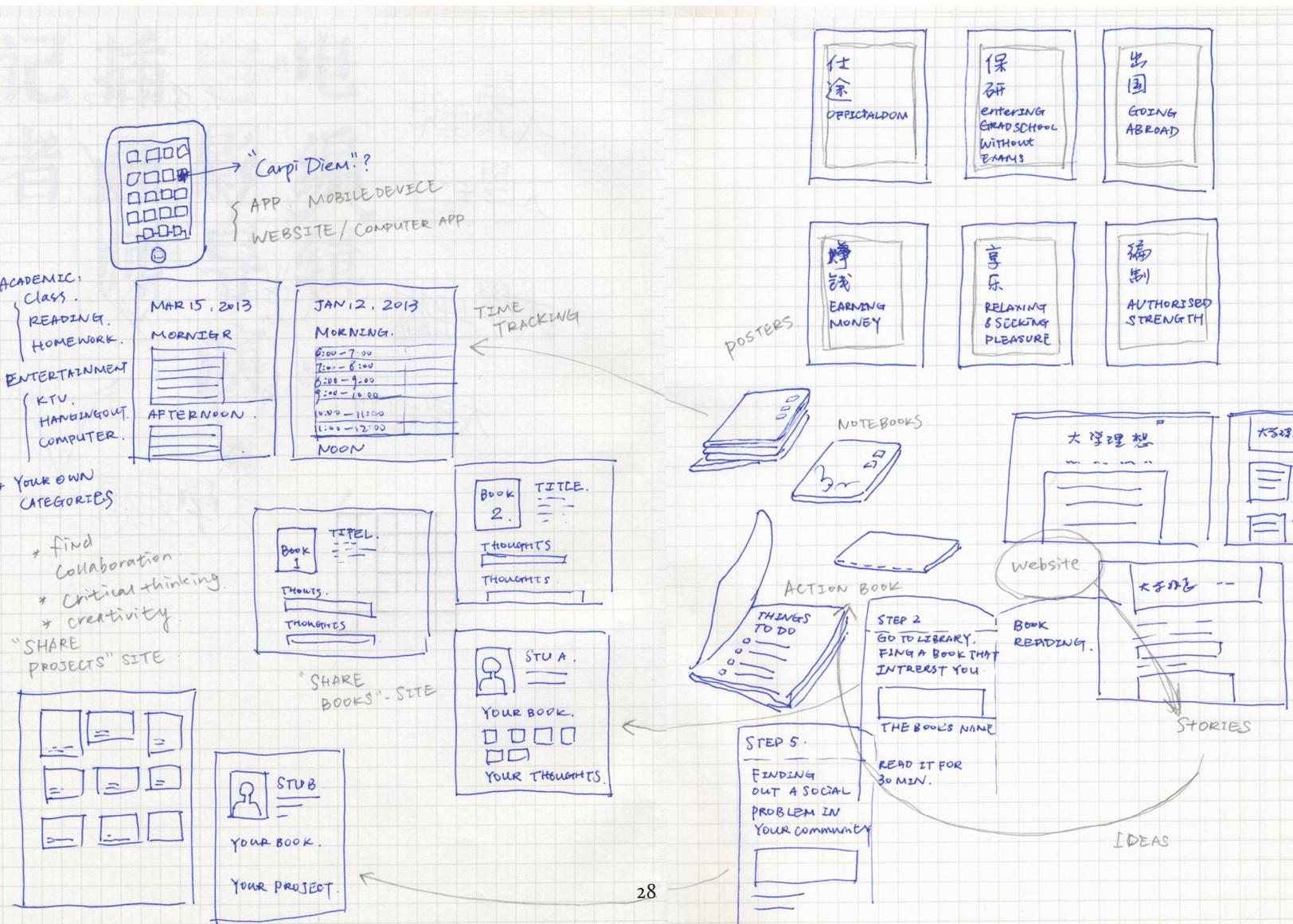
computer showing the story-collection website, and two copies of the story book, one on the desk and one on a bookshelf.

OTHER IDEAS

Because of the time constraints I had, there are many ideas that I was not able to execute. In addition to the above-mentioned infographics of value axes and students stereotypes (Figure 8, see p. 17) that stayed in its drafting phase, and the action books, I also sketched out possibilities of a web-based app, that can be accessed through computers and smart phones to help students share ideas, projects, and readings. In addition, I had sketches of a time-tracking notebook that help students document how their time had spent, and a digital version of the action book, so that they inspire and empower each other to lead a significant university life.

FIGURE 18

Diagram of sketched out ideas for different design prototypes.



CONCLUSION

This project focused on how design can be used to communicate concepts related to values, which are essentially broad, philosophical, and sometimes, vague, specifically in contemporary Chinese society. It incorporates theoretical models of the design process (Nini, 2006; Lupton, 2011) with the practice of testing these processes in solving real-world social/cultural problems, which are reflected in one generation of Chinese young adults. It therefore become a reference for designers and design researchers who are making relevant endeavors in exploring design as a problem seeking and solving process in a specific social and culture background. The exploration also expanded my understanding on relationship between a social-cultural problem and a design problem, and my experience of borrowing research methods from social science and design theories to inform design decisions, while utilizing design strategies to empower people and develop empathy.

Upon the completion of the project and the several different design explorations, I do have an expanded knowledge about Chinese university students' values. Yet I have also come to realize that this is not the most important outcome for this project. More importantly, I also have new knowledge on understanding design as a problem solving process, and on the relationship between a cultural/social problem and a design problem.

The quest to know more about Chinese university students' values can be actualized by reading, collecting data through interviewing students, and using a scientific method that involves inductive and deductive reasoning. In fact, I was doing all these at the beginning until I realize that I was approaching a cultural or social problem

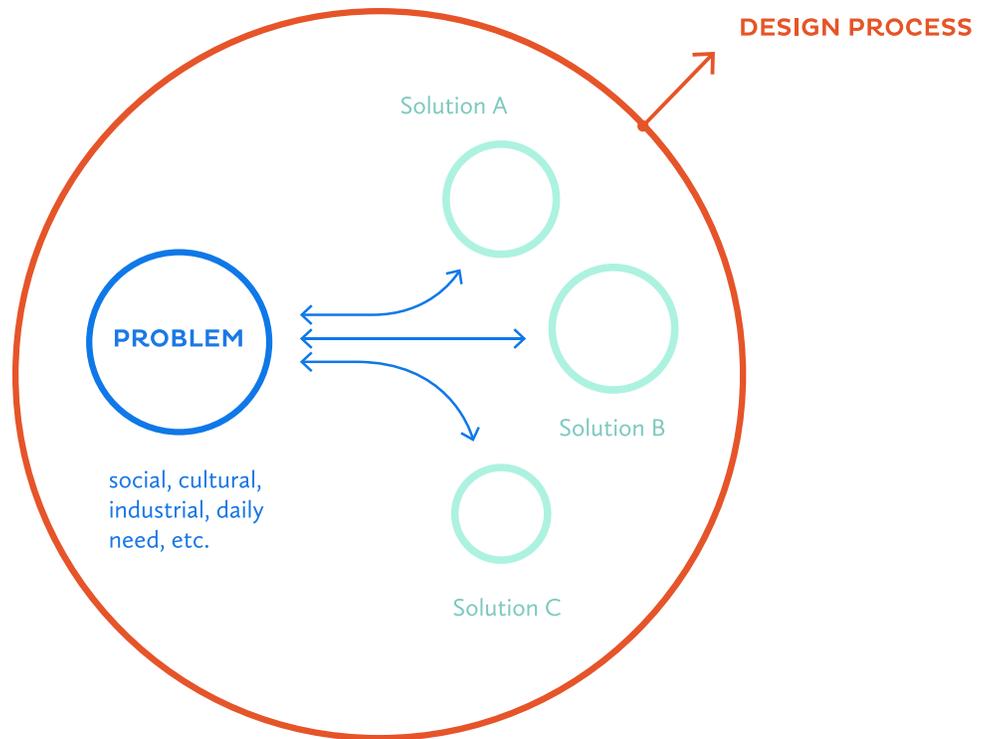


FIGURE 19

Diagram how a real world problem evolves into a design problem.

using only a social science method, instead of integrating design methods. I particularly needed to explore what design forms and methodologies could contribute to exploring the social-cultural problem, and to what extent those forms and methodologies can address it. A design problem comes from other problems, be it a social problem, cultural problem, scientific problem, medical problem, mathematics problem, learning problem, or even small needs in our daily life like opening a bottle or drilling a hole. When we seek, choose, and evaluate methods of solving these existing problems, for example determining what to use to open a bottle, it then becomes a design endeavor, and such process of seeking, choosing, and evaluating then defines a design problem (Figure 19). Therefore in this project, reading and interviewing is just one step of learning about Chinese college students' values and empowering them to critically examine their values, the design exploration of infographics, posters, and website to solicit stories, etc. defines the design problem and compose the process of addressing it.

This also helped me to develop a deeper understanding on making as a research process. Successful design solutions are based on

a process of iterations, which contain the steps of gathering information, visual analysis, ideating and building prototypes, user-testing, developing prototypes, and a repetition of certain steps. The definition of research is not limited to gathering information, making observation, or collecting data through questionnaires and interviews, it also includes making the prototype and testing it. This can be comparable to scientific experiments in a science project.

Through this project, I also explored how designers can think both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantity and quality are both important parameters to evaluate design decisions.

For example, when I designed the website to collect stories from Chinese students, it reached a very broad audience, yet it did not generate much of emotional feedback, nor did it have any strong impact on those students—many looked at the site and just ignored it; whereas when I designed and handcrafted the story book, it only reached about 50 Chinese, but it aroused empathy, emotional feedback, and critical thinking. Some readers asked if they could buy the book. The website had only one copy but could reach unlimited numbers of people as long as there is internet access. The book has to be mass produced to reach a certain group of people. Each medium impacts people differently—one succeeded in quantity but not quality, one succeeded in quality but not so much in quantity.

Additionally, when I was evaluating the difference of the two approaches, and thought about the question: “to what extent should we use the web media and to what extent should we use printed media?”, I realized I could also use both quantitative and qualitative ways to address it—I could calculate the cost of making a website or a book and compare with the size of the audience I intended to reach. I could also investigate, observe, and document what responses of the audience response when using a website or a printed book, and decide on whether and how a hand-crafted object can be combined with a virtual platform. In this case, quantity and quality were not only used as parameters to evaluate designed products, but also methods for the evaluation.

I also explored design authorship along with the concept of participatory design. In his discussion about designer as author, Michael Rock (2006) argued that artist’s books using words, images, structures and materials to tell stories or invoke readers’ emotions may be the purest form of graphic authorship. He also

mentioned “a reading of exterior social and historical phenomena directed at a specific audience—the illustrated book, often overlooked by the design community, is almost entirely concerned with the generation of creative narrative (Rock, 2006).”

Through the combination of photo collage, typography, texture, and the choice of paper materials and structure, I added extra layers of emotion, personality, and message to the stories. I not only communicated the participants’ voices through their stories, but also integrated my own voice. My designing became part of the authoring and their authoring became part of the designing. While we are co-authoring the book, we are also co-designing the book. In this process, design is authoring and authoring is design. When these participants witnessed such process, they themselves became empowered, as well as rewarded. When their stories were shared with others, they not only repetitively and critically reflect upon the message they delivered, but also allow others to critically think about the values those stories communicated.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Design exists in people's lives, in real social and cultural contexts. As I considered the exhibition in the gallery setting to be an opportunity for user testing, I still plan to bring this project back to the target audience and keep pushing it forward—because design also has no end, it can be constantly optimized through the iterative research process, based on different or changing contexts, people, and other subtle parameters that influence the problem.

There are still stories being submitted. As I promised on the website during the first phase of story collection, I would give each participant a story book. My immediate next step is to further develop the story book and share it with a larger audience of Chinese college students, graduates, and stakeholders of Chinese higher education. I will also publish it online, to respond to the request of many readers who didn't have a chance to participate in this project. Ideally, if the website keeps getting new stories, there would not only be this very first volume of the “An Ideal University Life” book, but also volume two, volume three, and so on.

My hope is to actualize some of the unexecuted prototypes, and prototypes that weren't pushed enough. In addition, I would also love to see how these prototypes can really become solutions in the real context of Chinese higher education, how they can promote more critical thinking, attitudinal change, and behavioral change for students in Chinese universities and university graduates in contemporary Chinese society.

TERMINOLOGY

authorship While commonly understood as a profession and act of writing (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, April 2, 2013), designers and design critics broaden this concept to refer to a person who originates or gives index authoritarian and existence to things (Rock, 1996), and more specifically in the design realm, to initiate content and to work in an entrepreneurial way rather than simply reacting to problems and tasks placed by clients. The concept hinges on a nostalgic ideal of the writer or artist as a singular point of origin (Lupton, 2005).

bewilderment This term is used to describe the state of students who are confused about the purpose of attending college, or who have lost their directions or goals in their academic or professional life, when they have to maintain the process of pursuing the degree out of social and family pressure.

civil service examination Exams used by different country's governments for admission to the civil service. In China, the history of this exam can be traced back to the Imperial Examination in ancient China. Many Chinese students and parents consider it to be the gate to officialdom, which in Chinese culture leads to secure employment, good salary and welfare, high social status, and honors to families.

co-design A catch-all term used by Fuad-Luke (2009) to embrace design approaches that encourage participation. A fundamental premise of co-design is that it is predicated on the concept that people who ultimately use a designed artifact are entitled to have a voice in determining how that artifact is designed (Carroll, 2006).

critical thinking	Reflective reasoning (Ennis, 1987) that calls for a persistent effort to examine any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the evidence that supports it and the further conclusions to which it tends. It also generally requires ability to recognize problems (Glaser, 1941). In this project, it refers Chinese university students' tendency to independently examine and reflect on the values they hold or told to have.
egoism	A philosophical or ethical theory that advocates selfishness, or self-interest, as the correct moral stance, and that people should always act in what they take to be their own best interest (Palmer, 2005). The phenomenon of people care about self-interest is surprisingly found in a collectivist society like China (Shirk, 1982).
empathy	A human impulse entangled with sympathy or compassion or commiseration, and submerges into altruism. It can be broadly understood as the ability to feel for another person, to imagine ourselves in the same situation, enduring those same experiences and emotions. (Gibson, 2006) For example, Chinese student A describes how she feels lost in college in a story and student B sees the story and immediately recalls similar feeling and thus has empathy for A.
empowerment	A dynamic process that gives power to somebody, that releases individual potential within a workforce and use that potential to the benefit of both the organization and the individual (Cartwright, 2002).
entrance exam	National Higher Education Entrance Examination, also known as National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) or <i>gaokao</i> in Chinese, is a nation-wide examination held annually in China, taken by students at the end of their high school years. The exam is a prerequisite for entrance into almost all higher education institutions at the undergraduate level (Wikipedia). It also marks the end of secondary education for Chinese students.
ethnography	A research method that is originated from anthropology, which discovers and describes the culture of a group of people (Johnson & Christensen, 2008), and produces a detailed, in-depth observation of people's behavior, beliefs and preferences by observing and interacting with them in a defined environment (Ireland, 2003).
graduate school recommendation	Known in Chinese as <i>baoyan</i> , literally meaning "guaranteed for grad school". Chinese universities have a quota for a certain amount of excellent students they recommend enter graduate school without taking the graduate entrance exam. The policy is made by China's Ministry of Education and is executed by universities. Because

preparing for exams is a laborious process and the quota is limited, these opportunities are usually highly competitive.

officialdom Known in Chinese as *shitu*, officialdom is a literary word meaning the path to become an official. As an authoritarian country since ancient times, China has a predominant official culture, in which the social values are ranked by the levels of officialdom. Positions associated with the government brings power and authority, is highly respected, well-paid, and provide better welfare and secured employment. Officialdom had always been the goal and purpose of academic endeavors since ancient China, and today it is still pursued by many students as their life directions.

post-80's generation A term mostly used in mainland China to refer people born between the year of 1980 and 1989. Originated from the Chinese literary circle to refer to writers who were born after 1980, it later became widely used in mass media and thus known by most Chinese. People born within this decade share a common historical background of China, for example they are the first generation effected by the one-child policy, a generation born right after the opening-up policy, etc. Terms like post-70's, post-90's, and post-00's were derived from post-80's and also became widely known.

social responsibility Often known as corporate social responsibility (CSR), namely an entity's obligation to act to benefit the whole society at large. In this project it specifically refers to Chinese students' attention on happenings outside the campus, the phenomena of whether they care about others in addition to their focus on their own benefits.

utilitarianism, utilitarian A philosophical or ethical theory that advocates the maximization of happiness, underlined by two fundamental ideas, that the results of our actions are the key to moral evaluation, and that one should assess and compare those results in terms of the happiness or unhappiness they cause, or more broadly, in terms of their impact on people's well-being (Shaw, 1999). While philosophically defined to produce "greatest amount of happiness on the whole, that is, taking into account all whose happiness is affected by the conduct (Sidgwick, 1966)", the term "utilitarian" is used in China more specifically referring to individuals' pursuit of the end results with the least amount of effort.

value In this project, the meaning of value are reduced to the personal perception and opinion on what we consider as important, what pleases us, what is desired, and the object of our interest, which contain the characteristic of polarity (negative and positive value) and hierarchy (implied order of importance). (Fronidizi, 1971)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Carroll, L. M. (2006) Dimensions of participation in Simon's design. *Design Issues*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 3-18.
- Cartwright, R., & NetLibrary, I. (2002). *Empowerment*. Oxford, U.K: Capstone Pub. Retrieved from <http://www.netLibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=67238>
- Cha, J. 查建英. (2006). 八十年代訪談錄 (trans. *The Eighties: Interviews*) Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Coady, C. A. J. (2000). *Why universities matter : A conversation about values, means, and directions*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- de Almeida, C. & McCarthy, S. (2002). *Designer as author: Diffusion or differentiation?* Declarations, Concordia University, Montréal. Retrieved from: <http://lokidesign.net/declarations/knowledge/DA-DD.pdf>
- Delbanco, A. (2012). *College: What it was, is, and should be*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- Döring, J., Gundel, M., & Rauschenberg, R. (2001). *Rauschenberg : Posters*. Munich: London: Prestel.
- Ennis, R. H. (1987). A Taxonomy of Critical Thinking Skills and Dispositions. In J. B. Baron and R. J. Sternberg (Eds.), *Teaching Thinking Skills: Theory and Practice* (pp. 9-26). New York: Freeman.
- Entrance Examination. (n.d.). In Wikipedia. Retrieved April 15, 2013, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entrance_examination

- Fronzizi, R. (1971). *What is value?* Open Court Publishing Co. La Salle, Illinois.
- Fuad Luke, A. (2009). *Design activism : Beautiful strangeness for a sustainable world.* London ; Sterling, VA: Earthscan.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures selected essays.* New York: Basic Books.
- Georgianna, S. (2007). *Self-leadership and goal striving across cultures: A comparison of united states and Chinese undergraduate students.* Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Gibson, L. (2006). *Mirrored emotion.* The University of Chicago Magazine, 98(4). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Retrieved from <http://magazine.uchicago.edu/0604/features/emotion.shtml>
- Glaser, E. M. (1972). *An experiment in the development of critical thinking.* New York: AMS Press.
- Ireland, C. (2003). Qualitative methods: From boring to brilliant. In B. Laurel (Ed.), *Design research: Methods and perspectives.* (pp. 23-29). Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Jin, Y., & Fan, J. (2011). Test for English majors (TEM) in China. *Language Testing*, 28(4), 589-596.
- Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. B. (2008). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon. (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Landreth, J. (2011, October 21). Chinese toddler Yue Yue dies in hospital after shocking hit and run. *National Post.* Retrieved from: <http://news.nationalpost.com/2011/10/21/chinese-toddler-whose-hit-and-run-sparked-global-outrage-dies-in-hospital/>
- Laurel, B. (2003). *Design research: Methods and perspectives.* Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Lehrer, W., & Sloan, J. (2003). *Crossing the blvd: Strangers, neighbors, aliens in a new America.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Lin, X., Zhang, Z., & Li, Y. 林曉蕾 張智威 李玉紅. (2013, March 25). 公務員被曝隱性福利名目繁多: 連衛生巾都補助 (trans. Reported hidden benefits for civil servants, including governmental allowance for sanitary towels). *Heilongjiang Morning*

Post. Retrieved from: <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2013-03-25/031726627898.shtml>

- Lupton, E. (2005). The designer as producer. In S. Heller (Ed.), *The education of a graphic designer* (2nd ed.). (pp. 214–219). New York: Allworth Press.
- Lupton, E. (2011). *Graphic design thinking: Beyond brainstorming*. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press.
- McLuhan, M., & Fiore, Q. (1967). *The medium is the message*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Meggs, P. B. (1992). *A history of graphic design* (2nd ed.). New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Mill, J. S., & NetLibrary, I. (n.d.). *Utilitarianism*. Raleigh, N.C., Boulder, Colo: Alex Catalogue.
- Minick, S., & Jiao, P. (2010). *Chinese graphic design in the twentieth century*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Nini, P. J. (2006). Sharpening one's axe: Making a case for a comprehensive approach to research in the graphic design process. In A. Bennett (Ed.), *Design studies: Theory and research in graphic design*. (pp. 117–129). New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2010). *Not for profit: Why democracy needs the humanities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Palmer, D. (2005). *Why it's hard to be good: An introduction to ethical theory*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Papanek, V. J. (1985). *Design for the real world: Human ecology and social change* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: Academy Chicago.
- Rock, M. (1996). *The designer as author: What does it mean to call for a graphic designer to be an author?*. Eye Magazine. Retrieved from <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/the-designer-as-author>
- Schaeffer, F. A. (1976). *How should we then live?: The rise and decline of western thought and culture*. Old Tappan, NJ: F.H. Revell Co.
- Schwartz, B. I. (1968). The reign of virtue: Some broad perspectives on leader and party in the cultural revolution. *The China Quarterly*, No. 35, pp. 1-17.

- Shaw, W. H. (1999). *Contemporary ethics : Taking account of utilitarianism*. Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers.
- Shi, Y. (2011, November 2). Rescuer didn't save a life for fame. *China Daily*. Retrieved from: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-11/02/content_14019692.htm
- Shirk, S. L. (1982). *Competitive comrades: Career incentives and student strategies in china*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sidgwick, H. (1966) *The methods of ethics*. New York: Dover.
- The World Bank. (2012). *Putting higher education to work: Skills and research for growth in East Asia*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Visocky O'Grady, J. & Visocky O'Grady, K. (2006). *A designer's research manual: Succeed in design by knowing your clients and what they really need*. Massachusetts: Rockport Publishers.
- Woodhouse, E., & Patton, J. W. (2004). Design by society: Science and technology studies and the social shaping of design. *Design Issues*, vol 22, no 2, pp. 27-34.
- Yang, D., Chai, C., & Huang, S. 楊東平, 柴純青, 黃勝利. (2012). 教育藍皮書: 中國教育發展報告 (2012) (trans. *Blue book of education: Annual report on China's education 2012*). Beijing: Social Science Academic Press.
- Zhang, N. 張內咸. (2010). 待業青年 (trans. *No country for young man, Independent Movie*). China. Retrieved from: <http://edge.neocha.com/places/beijing/zhang-neixian-caifang/>
- Zhang, M. 張鳴. (2011). 中國教育病了麼 (trans. *Is Chinese education sick*). Beijing: Central Compilation & Translation Press.
- Zhang, Y. 張旖天. (2011, March 28). 我們執筆的意義 (trans. The significance for us to hold pens). *China Youth Daily*, pp. 12. Retrieved from: http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2011-03/28/nw.D110000zqnb_20110328_4-12.htm

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Sample Page of Question Sheets
Used for Interviewing Chinese Students

APPENDIX B

Sample Story Book Pages

APPENDIX C

Sample Page Feedback for the Public Exhibition

潍坊市初中学业水平考试
学 试 题

试卷类型: A

2012.6

I卷4页,为选择题,36分;第II卷8页,为非选择题,84分

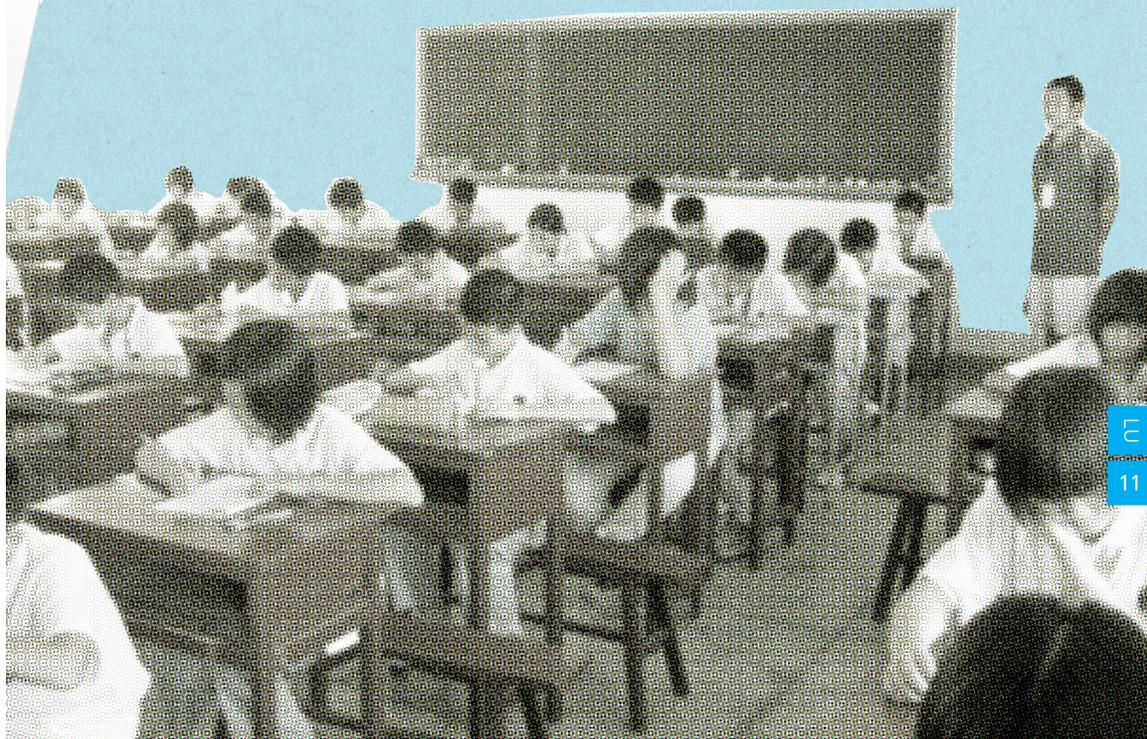
考试科目填写在答题卡上,考试结束,试题和答题卡

卡上对应题目的答案标号(ABCD)涂黑,如需改动,

用橡皮擦净,再涂

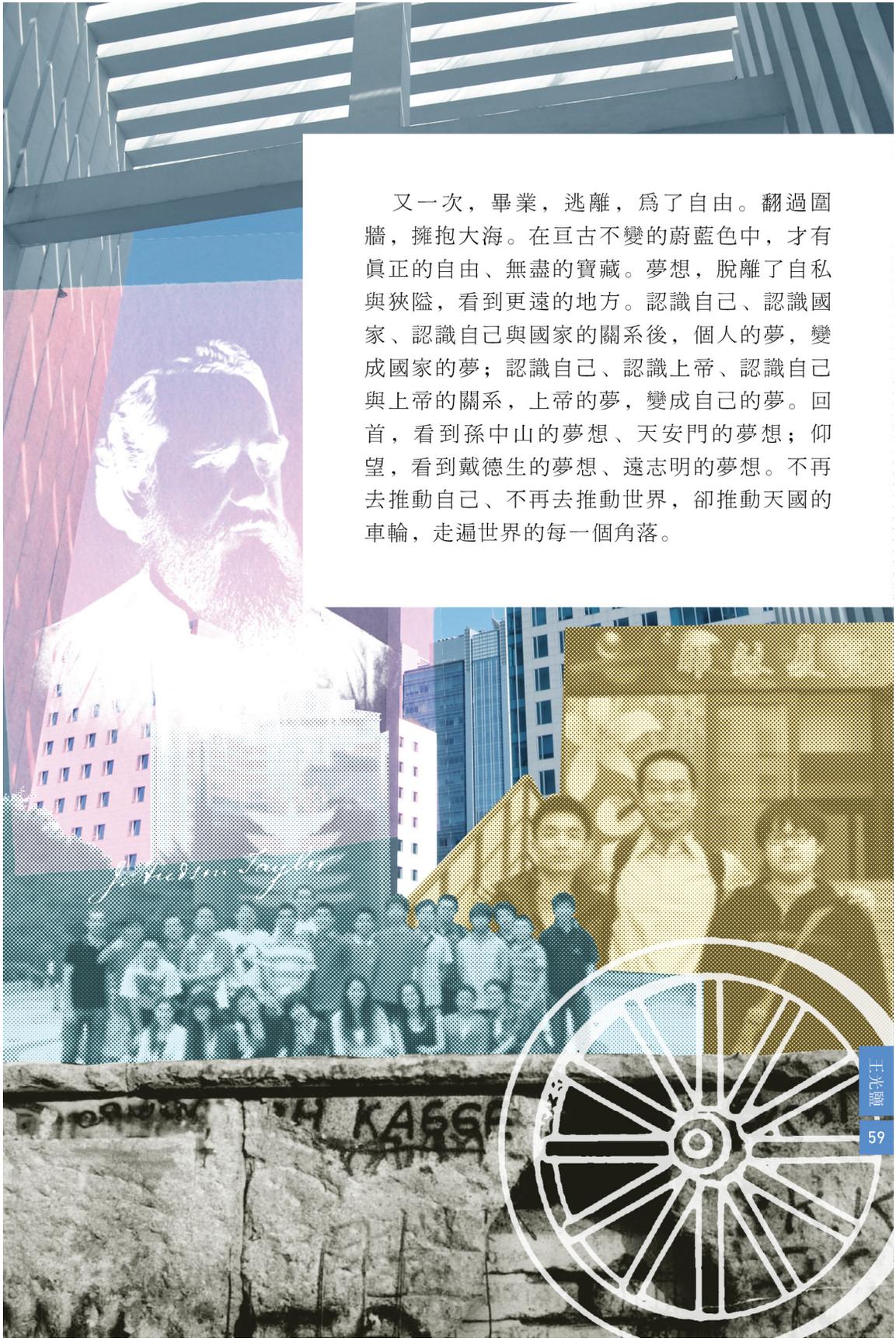
记数法表示数

可是分数还是大家的上帝。



E

11



又一次，畢業，逃離，爲了自由。翻過圍牆，擁抱大海。在亘古不變的蔚藍色中，才有真正的自由、無盡的寶藏。夢想，脫離了自私與狹隘，看到更遠的地方。認識自己、認識國家、認識自己與國家的關係後，個人的夢，變成國家的夢；認識自己、認識上帝、認識自己與上帝的關係，上帝的夢，變成自己的夢。回首，看到孫中山的夢想、天安門的夢想；仰望，看到戴德生的夢想、遠志明的夢想。不再去推動自己、不再去推動世界，卻推動天國的車輪，走遍世界的每一個角落。

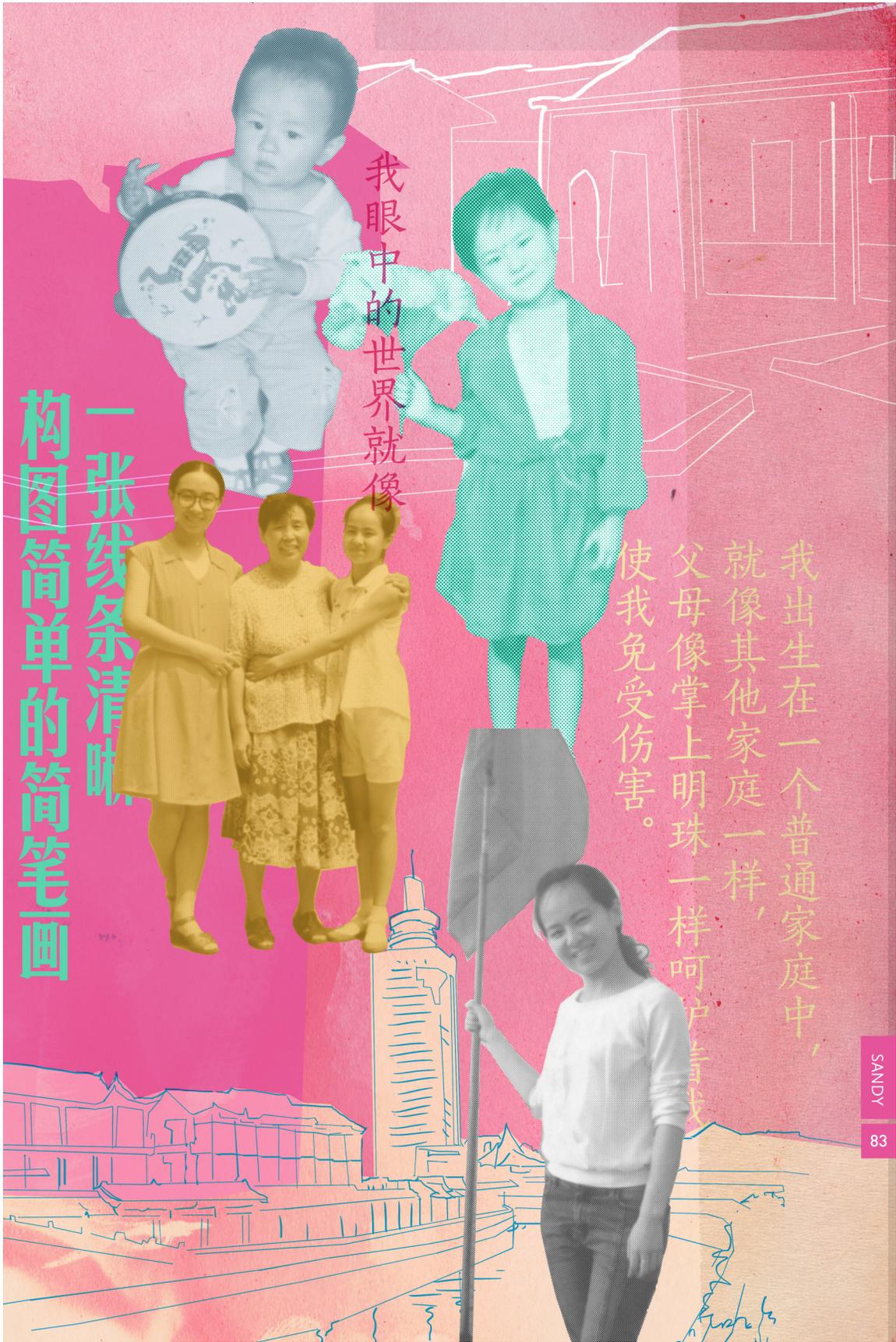
**I entered college because,
I didn't know what to do
with my life.**

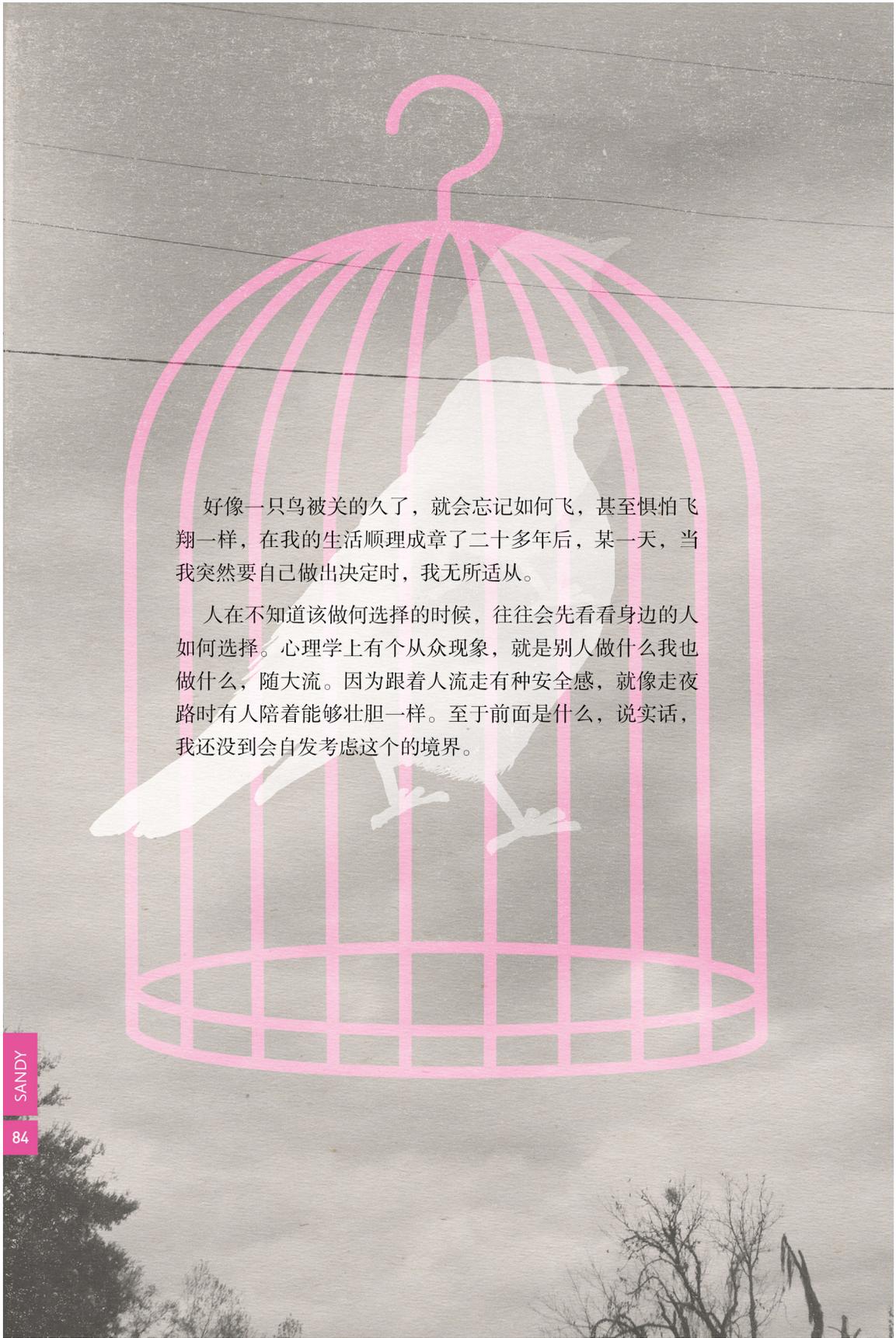
**But I know, I didn't have to
make the minimum wage
of 7.25 dollars per hour at
McDonald's, or Wal-Mart
for the rest of my life.**



FRANK

103





好像一只鸟被关的久了，就会忘记如何飞，甚至惧怕飞翔一样，在我的生活顺理成章了二十多年后，某一天，当我突然要自己做出决定时，我无所适从。

人在不知道该做何选择的时候，往往会先看看身边的人如何选择。心理学上有个从众现象，就是别人做什么我也做什么，随大流。因为跟着人流走有种安全感，就像走夜路时有人陪着能够壮胆一样。至于前面是什么，说实话，我还没到会自发考虑这个的境界。

在上大学期间，你最在乎和重视的是什么？

What did/do you value the most when you were/are in college?

在乎的就是学习成绩啦。

这个展出有没有唤起你大学时光的回忆？都是什么样的回忆？

Does this project bring back memories of your college years? What are they (if yes)?

当然有唤起我回忆。

回忆里有辛酸，无奈，欢笑，但更多的是迷茫，对事的迷茫，对人生的迷茫，和对未来的迷茫。虽然现在仍然迷茫，但是书中的一句话使我有所触动“主动去创造自己的梦想”

你有什么别的评价和反馈么？

Do you have any feedback or comments?

希望有一天能在书店看到这本书，或可以在网上分享这本书。

如果你有任何问题和想法，我会非常乐意与你交流讨论。

If you have questions or comments about this project, please feel free to contact me.

如果愿意，请留下称谓和联系方式：

Please let me know your name and how to contact :

大理想
大学

AN IDEAL
UNIVERSITY
LIFE

在上大学期间，你最在乎和重视的是什么？

What did/do you value the most when you were/are in college?

I was seeking.

这个展出有没有唤起你大学时光的回忆？都是什么样的回忆？

Does this project bring back memories of your college years? What are they (if yes)?

My Generation (I went to university in the 80's) one somewhat different from those you are collecting but I hear similar feelings & stories from my students & relatives.

你有什么别的评价和反馈么？

Do you have any feedback or comments?

You should develop this into a real ^{long-standing} website. So more students can express themselves. I hopefully find the real idealism of their life through the process. Some of the story & expression you recorded are typical for contemporary students in the university.

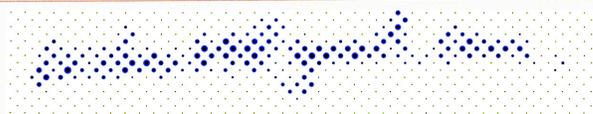
Great work. Congratulations!

如果你有任何问题和想法，我会非常乐意与你交流讨论。

If you have questions or comments about this project, please feel free to contact me.

如果愿意，请留下称谓和联系方式：

Please let me know your name and how to contact :



大理想
学想

AN IDEAL
UNIVERSITY
LIFE

在上大学期间，你最在乎和重视的是什么？

What did/do you value the most when you were/are in college?

最在乎如何才能充实大学生活，按照老师和社会的评价标准充实自己的简历。
也在乎自己未来要做什么，如何从现在开始做准备。

这个展出有没有唤起你大学时光的回忆？都是什么样的回忆？

Does this project bring back memories of your college years? What are they (if yes)?

有，不仅让我回忆起自己的大学时光，而且想起了自己或身边同学一些共同的感触。

你有什么别的评价和反馈么？

Do you have any feedback or comments?

中国大学里有很多弊端，比如，整学期不用听课期末照旧可以考90+分，比如奖学金跟与辅导员的关系有很大联系，比如要学一些没限制人思维的课（思修、马哲）。
但是也不可一概而论。就我亲身体验，国内现在有些大学有些课程有些老师已经在试着创新，上课方法跟美国接轨。

如果你有任何问题和想法，我会非常乐意与你交流讨论。

If you have questions or comments about this project, please feel free to contact me.

如果愿意，请留下称谓和联系方式：

Please let me know your name and how to contact :

Wang Jinyi

大学理想

AN IDEAL
UNIVERSITY
LIFE

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rongfei Geng was born in southwest China. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Yantai University in China, where he focused on learning technology for foreign languages. He later studied at The University of Southern Mississippi and graduated with a Master of Science in Instructional Technology. He continued his graduate studies in Graphic Design at the University of Florida and received the Master of Fine Arts in May 2013.

Rongfei has worked in both educational institutions and commercial companies where he designed various projects including multimedia textbooks for college-level English courses in Chinese universities, web-based applications, illustrated books, visual branding identity, environmental graphics, and so on.

During his graduate studies, his research interests focused on his cultural identity and was informed by his experience of living and working in a different cultural environment. His explorations resulted in a range of scholarly and creative outcomes that addressed these and related issues. They include comparisons of western typographic study with East Asian characters, how storytelling could be used as a strategy to communicate values in Chinese culture, and how design activism can be used to approach social problems, especially those that are culturally-specific. His creative project, *An Ideal University Life*, can be viewed on his website <http://rongfeigeng.com>.