ABSTRACT

A CRITICAL-COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHINESE AMERICAN RHETORIC: ANALYZING THE FORTUNE COOKIE AS A DISCOURSE

by Yuanyuan Li

In response to the global flows of cultures and communities, this thesis calls for an expansion of the application scope of comparative rhetoric from indigenous rhetorical traditions to transcultural rhetorics. Drawing upon methodologies from the field of critical discourse analysis and comparative rhetoric, I propose a hybridized methodology—the critical-comparative approach—to study Chinese American rhetoric. To verify the applicability of this methodology, I conduct a critical-comparative discourse analysis of fortune cookies and demonstrate how they can be served as the exemplification of Chinese American rhetoric. The findings reveal that the negotiating process of the Chineseness and Americaness of the transcultural artifact is embedded in the fortune cookie sayings, in the production, distribution and consumption of the dessert, and in the larger historical and sociocultural contexts. Committed to pursue a dynamic equilibrium in transcultural communication, this project is the first step toward understanding how the critical-comparative approach could open up dialogue among different rhetorical traditions and afford the possibilities of reversing the power imbalance from within. Implications upon the pedagogy of comparative rhetoric and upon the understanding of transcultural rhetorics are suggested, followed by a discussion about the limitations of the current study and the possible directions for future studies.
A CRITICAL-COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHINESE AMERICAN RHETORIC:
ANALYZING THE FORTUNE COOKIE AS A DISCOURSE

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Table of Contents

List of Tables .......................................................................................................................... v
List of Figures .......................................................................................................................... vi
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................. vii
Introduction ............................................................................................................................. 1

Chapter One: Situating Chinese American Rhetoric within Comparative Rhetoric ................. 4
  The Objects of Comparative Rhetoric ....................................................................................... 4
  Approaches to Comparative Rhetoric ...................................................................................... 6
  Investigating Chinese American Rhetoric through a Comparative Perspective .................... 8
  Summary .................................................................................................................................. 11

Chapter Two: Toward a Critical-Comparative Approach to Chinese American Rhetoric ......... 12
  Discourse as the Manifestation of Rhetoric ............................................................................. 12
  A Critical Perspective on Doing Comparative Rhetoric ......................................................... 13
  A Comparative Perspective to Understanding Chinese American Rhetoric ....................... 15
  Developing a New Methodology ............................................................................................ 16
  The Trajectory of Critical-Comparative Analysis .................................................................. 17
  Research Questions ............................................................................................................... 20
  Procedures of Analysis ......................................................................................................... 20
  Summary .................................................................................................................................. 21

Chapter Three: Textual Analysis of Fortune Cookie Sayings .................................................. 22
  Previous Studies of Fortune Cookies .................................................................................... 22
  Data Collection ....................................................................................................................... 23
  Generic and Syntactic Patterns of Fortune Cookie Sayings .................................................. 24
  Thematic Patterns and Cultural Values in Fortune Cookie Sayings ..................................... 27
    Overview of the Data ............................................................................................................. 28
    Attitude toward Time ........................................................................................................... 29
    Attitude toward Change ....................................................................................................... 30
    Attitude toward Work .......................................................................................................... 31
    Attitude toward Adversity .................................................................................................... 31
    Relations with Self .............................................................................................................. 32
    Relations with Others ......................................................................................................... 33
  Universally Shared Themes and Values ............................................................................... 34
  Summary .................................................................................................................................. 35

Chapter Four: Interpreting the Fortune Cookie as a Cultural Hybrid .................................... 36
  Fortune Cookie as a Discursive Practice ............................................................................... 36
    The Production of Fortune Cookies .................................................................................. 36
    The Distribution of Fortune Cookies ................................................................................. 37
    The Consumption of Fortune Cookies .............................................................................. 38
    Summary .............................................................................................................................. 41
  Fortune Cookie as a Sociocultural Practice ......................................................................... 41
    Fortune Cookie as an Artifact Emerging from Rhetorical Borderlands ............................. 41
    Fortune Cookie as a Rhetoric of Becoming ...................................................................... 42
    Fortune Cookie as a Rhetoric of the Other ....................................................................... 44
    Fortune Cookie as a Rhetoric of Hybridity ...................................................................... 45
    Fortune Cookie and Chinese American Rhetoric .............................................................. 45
  Summary .................................................................................................................................. 46
Chapter Five: Conclusion ........................................................................................................47
Works Cited .................................................................................................................................51
Appendix..................................................................................................................................56
  Appendix 1: Philosophical fortune cookie sayings (wisdom) ........................................56
  Appendix 2: Advisory fortune cookie sayings (advice) ..................................................59
  Appendix 3: Predictive fortune cookie sayings (prophecy) ...........................................62
  Appendix 4: Complimentary fortune cookie sayings (compliment) ..........................64
  Appendix 5: Humorous fortune cookie sayings (humor) ...............................................65
  Appendix 6: Advertising fortune cookie sayings (advertisement) ..........................66
List of Tables
Table 1 Generic and Syntactic Patterns of Fortune Cookie Sayings ......................... 25
Table 2 Communication Styles in Compliments .................................................... 26
Table 3 Thematic Patterns in Fortune Cookies ...................................................... 28
Table 4 The Values Americans Live by .................................................................. 29
Table 5 Human Attitudes toward Time ................................................................. 29
Table 7 Key Elements of Fortune Cookie Papers .................................................. 41
Table 8 Comparison of the Categories of Fortune Cookie Sayings.......................... 43
# List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Three-Dimensional Framework</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Golden Bowl Fortune Cookie</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Baily Fortune Cookie</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rose Brand Fortune Cookie</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Golden Plaque Fortune Cookie</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Introduction

I am not an American to them. I was an American-born Chinese. Maybe the same thing was true of Chinese food back home: It’s Chinese. It just happened to be born in America.
Or maybe the truth was closer to this: It’s American. It just looks Chinese.

(Jennifer 8. Lee, The Fortune Cookie Chronicles 16)

The fortune cookie is a dessert specially served by Chinese restaurants in North America. It has been a custom for diners in America to end their Chinese meal—either dine-in or takeout—with cracking a fortune cookie and reading the “fortune” aloud. However, although the fortune cookie acts as “the most important restaurant staple not on menus” in Chinese restaurants (Tsui) and is frequently used to promote Chinese culture in North America/Outside China, it is by no means a traditional Chinese food. According to Jennifer 8. Lee, the author of The Fortune Cookie Chronicles: Adventures in the World of Chinese Food, the fortune cookie was actually invented by Japanese, popularized by Chinese Americans, and ultimately consumed by Americans (“If the Fortune Cookie”). It had not been introduced to China until 1990s and was described as “genuine American fortune cookies” at that time (Lee, The Fortune Cookie Chronicles 13). An obvious question arises then: Why is a fortune cookie described as a “Chinese fortune cookie”? Similarly, how can a fortune cookie be served to spread Chinese American culture?

The fortune cookie manufacturer Derrick Wong provides a tentative answer: “The Japanese may have invented the fortune cookie. But the Chinese people really explored the potential of the fortune cookies. It’s Chinese American culture. It only happens here, not in China” (qtd. in: Lee “Solving a Riddle”). Mao sees the Chineseness of fortune cookies through a rhetorical perspective. He considers the fortune cookie as a metaphor of “Chinese American rhetoric” (being “togetherness-in-difference”)—a hybrid of Chinese and American rhetorical traditions emerging from the borderland (Mao, Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie 4). The identity of the fortune cookie as a cultural hybrid is constituted of dual social expectations—American clients desire to have a “genuine” Chinese dessert after a meal, while Chinese proprietors hope to accommodate Americans’ dining customs in spite of the fact that traditionally Chinese seldom have desserts at the end of the meal. Straddling both Chinese and American traditions, the fortune cookie thus becomes a transcultural artifact that blurs the boundaries of nations and cultures (as is indicated in Lee’s narration at the beginning of this thesis) and is enabled to represent the rhetorical practices of Chinese Americans in the contact zone.

Mao uses the fortune cookie as a metaphor of Chinese American rhetoric in the sense that the dessert contains both Chinese and European-American traditions, but he gave less emphasis on the fortune cookie sayings. However, since what sets apart fortune cookies from other Western dessert and what gives them special cultural marks are the small pieces of paper (i.e. the “fortune cookie sayings”) stuffed inside the cookie, the rhetorical connotation of fortune cookies becomes more complex when taking the sayings into consideration. In reality, there appears to be a disjunction between those seemingly “non-Chinese related” fortune sayings and their Chinese-Americanized carrier—the fortune cookie. On the one hand, as a commonly-recognized “Chinese” product, the fortune cookie is principally circulated within Chinese American restaurants, and it is often used as a means of promoting Chinese culture; on the other hand, the design and the circulation of fortune cookie sayings are increasingly diversified and adapted to
customers with various ethnic backgrounds. In this case, how and why is the fortune cookie constructed and legitimated from a “Chinese-related product” to a “cultural hybrid”? How does the inclusion of fortune cookie sayings contribute to the making of Chinese American rhetoric reflected in fortune cookies? Through what approach can the complexity of those hybridized cultural artifacts be performed and understood? How does a critical-comparative approach developed from the methodologies of comparative rhetoric and critical discourse analysis help understand and perform the complexity of such hybridized cultural products as fortune cookies? These are the questions that intrigued me and that were the beginning of this thesis project.

Similar to fortune cookies, increasing products are made in a transcultural environment like the borderlands, where the boundaries of cultural spaces are continuously getting blurred. To name a few, the Chinese American dishes such as the General Tso’s Chicken and the Crab Rangoon within the American context; and the Sino-American collaborative products such as the Kung Fu Panda franchise in a global level. What these artifacts share in common is that they are neither made out of a single cultural tradition nor a “simple blending of Western and Asian cultures” (Liu 3); rather, they are a result of the negotiation between various distinct cultural traditions—or in Ang’s words, each of them is a cultural “hybridity” which “foregrounds complicated entanglement rather than identity, togetherness-in-difference rather than separateness and virtual apartheid” (Ang, “Together-in-Difference” 2), which constitutes the main features of the Chinese American rhetoric proposed by Mao.

Mao articulates that the aim of comparative rhetoric is to “reach and cultivate what may be called a ‘creative understanding’ with another rhetorical tradition and with ‘its new aspects and new semantic depths’” (“Reflective Encounters” 401). Although current publications of comparative rhetoric mostly focus on non-Western rhetorical traditions within nation-states, as the international and transcultural communications continuously take place in the contact zones under the background of globalization, such rhetorical practices of specific ethnic groups in the borderlands may very well evolve into another “rhetorical tradition” that requires a “creative understanding.” Therefore, I consider Chinese American rhetoric as a component of comparative rhetoric. Inspired by Mao’s Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie: The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric, I intend to further investigate the meaning-making process of Chinese American rhetoric by inquiring into the rhetorical representations and discursive constructions of the fortune cookies. Drawing upon the methodologies of comparative rhetoric and critical discourse analysis, I attempt to develop a critical-comparative approach to understand the cultural specificities of Chinese Americans in larger sociocultural and historical networks. Such an approach emphasizes why and how the cultural artifact known as the fortune cookie represents a certain reality and cultural identity, in hopes of helping comparative practitioners rethink the “interdependence” and “interconnectivity” (Mao, “Writing the Other” 47) among history, identity, and discursive reality in the field and set the stage for more sophisticated studies of transcultural rhetorics in the new century.

To articulate the significance of this project, in Chapter One, I first review the literature on the evolution of comparative rhetoric, articulating the objects and the approaches of doing comparative rhetoric against the backdrop of globalization. I then tease out the features of Chinese American rhetoric, providing a rationale of seeing Chinese American rhetoric as a subfield of comparative rhetoric. Through a thorough review of the related literature, I intend to identify the gaps and trends of comparative rhetorical studies in the new century.

Chapter Two is devoted to the theoretical framework and methodology for the analysis of fortune cookies. Aligning with Mao, I view the discursive and rhetorical formation of fortune
cookies as a meaning-making process of Chinese American rhetoric. In particular, I regard the contents of fortune sayings to be (1) a discursive representation of the cultural values in a hybrid milieu and (2) a dynamic and rhetorical product based on the changes of historical and social contexts and the cultural identities of Chinese Americans. To test these assumptions, I situate my analysis of fortune cookies in the methodological intersection of comparative rhetoric and critical discourse analysis. The former provides me an entry point to discuss transcultural phenomenon in the global context while the latter affords specific analytical framework for understanding and interpreting the rhetorical dynamic within those cultural hybrids. Based on these methodologies, I intend to develop a critical-comparative approach, which aims to address the thematic choice and generic arrangement of the patterns in the transcultural product in relationship to the historical, social, and cultural ideologies as well as contexts.

Seeing the fortune cookie as rhetorical discourse, the next two chapters present a critical-comparative analysis of fortune cookies. Chapter Three examines the fortune cookie in the textual level with a content analysis of the fortune cookie sayings. Through identifying the generic and semantic patterns, the thematic features and the cultural values embedded in the fortune cookie sayings, this chapter intends to demonstrate how different thinking patterns and cultural traditions interact in the transcultural product.

Chapter Four investigates the discursive practices and social practices of fortune cookies in the process of their production, distribution and consumption by taking into consideration the historical, political and sociocultural contexts. Seeing fortune cookies as discursive practice, through engaging the activities of the key agents (e.g. fortune cookie manufacturers, Chinese restaurant owners, and fortune cookie customers), I hope to reveal how the fortune cookie reflects the construction and negotiation of the cultural identity of Chinese Americans and the reasons behind that. Drawing upon the historical and sociocultural backgrounds of there and then and here and now, I construct the fortune cookie as social practice that discloses the power dynamics between the dominant and the Other and as a cultural hybrid that indicates the cultural identity of Chinese Americans.

In my conclusion in Chapter Five, I summarize the ways in which the fortune cookie acts as a microcosm of the making of Chinese American rhetoric. I then point out the advantages of the critical-comparative approach in studying transcultural products and transcultural rhetorics. I also acknowledge the limitations of my project and identify the unexplored sites for future studies. By incorporating other kinds of transcultural product in the follow-up research, the approach would further redraw the boundaries between different cultures and to reposition them beyond their existing frames. I hope my interpretation of the rhetoric of fortune cookies will carve out a new space to interrogate the rhetorical dynamic and cultural flows of different cultures and subcultures, and serve as a beginning for different communities to reconsider their common assumptions toward specific cultural groups.
Chapter One: Situating Chinese American Rhetoric within Comparative Rhetoric

In this project, I regard the making of Chinese American rhetoric as a subfield of Comparative rhetoric. With a literature review on the evolution of comparative rhetoric and the emergence of Chinese American rhetoric, I intend to answer three core questions that are infrastructural in my research: (1) What is Chinese American rhetoric? (2) Why should we investigate the making of Chinese American rhetoric through a critical-comparative perspective? (3) Why should we examine Chinese American rhetoric through the transcultural artifacts such as fortune cookies arising from the borderlands instead of through canonical works? Situated against the backdrop of globalization, I start from the evolution of comparative rhetoric, with an emphasis on its research scope and its methodologies. Reexamining the research scope offers a necessity of comparative rhetoric to study the rhetorical practices beyond the constraints of nation-states, while revisiting the methodologies elicits the approach that constitutes a significant part of my methodological design. I then review the discussion of the politics of comparison to identify the rationale of categorizing Chinese American rhetoric into the realm of comparative rhetoric. With a close look into the previous studies of Asian American rhetoric and Chinese American rhetoric, I attempt to clarify the key features of Chinese American rhetoric through a comparative perspective. More importantly, by reviewing and critiquing these works, I try to locate gaps in the studies of comparative rhetoric and to further theorize the critical-comparative methodology.

The Objects of Comparative Rhetoric

Comparative rhetoric, as a “cross-cultural study of rhetorical traditions as they exist or have existed in different societies around the world” (Kennedy 1), starts from challenging the dominant position of Western or Aristotelian traditions in the studies of rhetoric. As early as the 1950s, Robert T. Oliver has argued for rhetoricians studying Asian rhetoric with an independent value system instead of basing their observations on the western interpretations or representations. In his groundbreaking work Communication and Culture in Ancient India and China, he points out the dangers of imposing Platonic-Aristotelian concept of rhetoric on non-Western traditions due to the distinctive conditions that results in the birth of respective rhetorical systems. Since then, classical texts have become the major focus of non-Western rhetorical studies. For example, Michael V. Fox challenges the conventional Greek rhetoric and explores the ancient Egyptian rhetoric by looking into the literature of Pharaonic Egypt. Vernon Jensen’s “Rhetorical Emphases of Taoism” and Mary Garrett’s “Classical Chinese Conceptions of Argumentation and Persuasion” continue to interrogate Chinese rhetoric after Oliver’s works. Philip Halldén’s examination of Arab Islamic rhetoric in the aspect of oratory and preaching and Megan Schoen’s inquiry into African (Tswana) rhetoric through traditional Tswana praise poetry enrich the studies of non-Western rhetoric through classical works. To supplement the lack of South Asian or Southeast Asian rhetoric pointed out by Hum and Lyon, in Rhetoric Society Quarterly’s special issue, Keith Lloyd delves into the Indian rhetoric of Nyāya — “a truth-centered and rhetorically egalitarian method of analogical debate” (285)—and sees as an alternative to Western confrontational rhetoric. Through these studies, it can be noticed that the investigation of non-Western rhetoric within nation-states has constituted a large part of comparative rhetorical studies. The rhetorical traditions of those ethnic communities in the borderlands are seldom touched upon.

Another type of objects of comparative rhetoric is a comparison of non-Western ancient
literate cultures to Greco-Roman rhetorical traditions. In his book *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-cultural Introduction*, George Kennedy examines various non-Western rhetorical practices ranging from non-literate societies among the Australian aboriginal inhabitants, South Pacific islanders, and North American Indians to the ancient societies (Egypt, Palestine, China, India, and Greece) with well-developed writing systems. By interpreting these cultures in Greco-Roman terms and models, he intends to test “the applicability of Western rhetorical concepts outside the West” (5) and to develop a universal approach, which I will return shortly in the discussion of methodologies of comparative rhetoric. Although Kennedy brings attention to these non-Western cultures, his study reveals an orientalist-like ideology, which makes an ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and non-Western inferiority (Said 42). On the contrary, by examining historical and literary texts of five philosophical schools in ancient China, Xing Lu identifies six rhetorical conceptions—yan, ci, jian, shui/shuo, ming, and bian—in their own terms. With a comparison of the social environment and the philosophical contexts that contribute to the contextualization of the rhetorical traditions in ancient China with that in ancient Greece, she demonstrates that China has developed a separate but equally rich system of rhetorical theories and practices independent of Greek traditions.

Either focusing on the comparison of Western and non-Western rhetorical traditions or solely on non-Western cultures in particular, much primary groundwork of comparative rhetoric has tended to center on those canonical texts—which Mao calls as “facts of usage” (“Thinking beyond Aristotle” 450) along national lines, with less attention to transcultural artifacts and cross-cultural traditions. B. Wang points out that such a focus entails the misassumption that “canonical works and closed taxonomies carry more weight than rhetorical transactions and larger geopolitical contexts out of which works, genres, and concept arise” (“Comparative Rhetoric” 232). Therefore, she proposes to begin comparative works with “the basic human experiences that exist in a given culture such as language, expression, understanding, and interpretation and examine how theoretical issues arise from such basic experiences in different cultural and discursive formulations” (ibid. 234). Such a proposal echoes the objects of comparative rhetorical studies articulated in “A Manifesto of What and How of Comparative Rhetoric”:

> Working with a premise that objects of study have significant ethical, epistemic, and political implications, comparative rhetoric explores communicative practices frequently originating in non-canonical contexts and focuses on practices that have often been marginalized, forgotten, dismissed as anything but rhetoric, and/or erased altogether. (“A Manifesto” 273).

These objects can be categorized into what Mao defines as “facts of non-usage”—“linguistic and other symbolic behaviors and experiences that have been disqualified, forgotten, or deemed something other than rhetoric” (“Thinking Beyond Aristotle” 449). Echoing the calling for “studies of rhetorical borrowing and the inter-reliance of rhetorical traditions across national boundaries” (Ashby 257), I suggest a transcultural turn in the objects of comparative rhetoric—to study those “facts of non-usage” emerging from cultural borderlands to respond to Hesford and Schell’s criticism that comparative rhetoric “may not sufficiently analyze the interrelations and interconnections between and across nations” (465-466).

It is such a material shift that encourages me to look into the rhetoric of the transcultural artifacts such as fortune cookies. I consider the fortune cookie as a “‘fact of non-usage’-becoming-‘fact of usage’” or what Burke calls the “representative anecdote” (59-61) in the mundane. On the one hand, the fortune cookie is so trivial and negligible in the everyday life that
its importance tends to be easily disqualified or forgotten. In other words, it is by no means “representative.” On the other hand, as a transcultural product, the fortune cookie possesses the potential of reflecting the process where Chinese Americans recontextualize their living environment and acculturate themselves into the Western milieu. In addition, by examining the influence of the geopolitical context on the emergence and changes of fortune cookies arises, we can associate and represent the meaning-making process of Chinese American rhetoric. In this sense, in spite of the mundaneness, the small fortune cookie can become significantly “representative” when it is given rhetorical significance. I will return to the analysis of fortune cookies anecdotes in later chapters.

**Approaches to Comparative Rhetoric**

The past two decades have seen the vigorous development of comparative rhetoric in collaboration with myriad fields such as cultural anthropology (Lipson), colonial studies (Romano), and feminist studies (Wang, “Rethinking Feminist Rhetoric”). Comparative rhetoric is therefore defined as “an interdisciplinary practice” that “intersects with cognate studies and theories to challenge the prevailing patterns of power imbalance and knowledge production” (Mao et al. 273). Under this definition, comparative rhetoric presents unbounded possibilities of engaging rhetorical practices across time and space within “facts of non-usage” in the mundane.

Alongside with the progress of the definition of comparative rhetoric is its methodology. In his essay “Studying the Chinese Rhetorical Tradition in the Present,” Mao critically summarizes three main types of approaches in studying non-Western rhetorical traditions (217-221), which lays out the skeleton of the present review. The first approach, represented by George Kennedy, is to develop a universal theory of rhetoric—most often, the traditional Western rhetoric—that can embrace the rhetorical traditions of all cultures. He regards comparative rhetoric as a way to “test the applicability of Western rhetorical concepts outside the West” (5). Mao criticizes this approach for creating a “rhetorical hierarchy” where the “presence of Greco-Roman rhetorical terms” is foregrounded and where one set of terms and systems is valued over other sets (“Reflective Encounters” 411). The approach is problematic also in that the diversity of rhetoric may be deliberately ruled out in order to be conformed to the “universal” rules, as what Mao says “representing the Other beyond its Otherness” (“Studying the Chinese Rhetoric Tradition” 220).

The second method is what Geoffrey E.R. Lloyd criticizes as a “piecemeal approach” (5)—that is, to compare the target culture to the original culture and see whether there is some equivalency in between. Using western rhetorical terms to define and develop non-Western rhetorical traditions is a typical example of such an approach. This approach is problematic in that it is easy to fall into a “deficiency model” in which “one particular culture (read as non-Western) is determined to be lacking a concept of rhetoric or, worse still, a rhetoric tradition” (“Reflective Encounters” 401), when it is divergent from the western “standard.”

The aforementioned shortcomings brought forward the emergence of the third approach, which is to examine non-Western rhetoric in their indigenous terms and within their own historical and cultural contexts. Many scholars have contributed to perfecting this approach (e.g. Garret, “Some Elementary Methodological Reflections;” Hall and Ames, *Anticipating China*; Lu, *Rhetoric in Ancient China*; Mao, “Reflective Encounters,” etc.). Garrett points out the “methodological paradox” (54) within the approach: on the one hand, we advocate studying another culture in its own terms and context; on the other hand, it is inevitable to start from our familiar principles (within our own culture) as “an interim way” of entering an “unfamiliar
terrain” (54). In response to this paradox, Hum and Lyon suggest a dialogic engagement with other rhetoric, since doing comparative rhetoric on the standpoints of either disparate culture will limit our views on the whole picture (161). Hall and Ames propose doing comparative studies in a focus/field perspective by engaging the “art of contextualization.” In their view, the individuals and their respective experiences—the foci—are shaped by and in turn influence the “fields,” which are constituted of various specific contexts defined by particular sociopolitical orders and community relations (Hall and Ames 273). Since the focus and field are interdependent and interconnected, they stress the need of paying special attention to the respective contexts that shape each cultural tradition.

Similarly, Mao proposes an “etic/emic approach” (“Reflective Encounters” 418), which is to study non-Western rhetoric starting from the conceptions and frames close to home and then directing attention to the contexts and materials of the native tradition so as to develop “appropriate forms and language” to deal with disparities between different cultures. This transition is not static. On the contrary, it is a dynamic process filled with negotiation, which Mao calls “reflective encounters” (418). It opens an ongoing dialogue between home and other rhetoric traditions, cultivates an intention for western scholars to interrogate their own modes of thinking as well as a willingness for rhetoricians from “the other” culture to complicate their representations of the native rhetoric tradition. Drawing from Hall and Ames’ approach of “the art of contextualization,” Mao further develops the dynamic process into “the art of recontextualization as a discursive third,” which not only “relies on terms of interdependence and interconnectivity to constitute and regulate representation of all discursive practices,” but also “engage[s] in an open dialogue where self and other work together to eliminate the use of any overarching context to determine the context of the other and yield continuous moments of what may be called ‘togetherness-in-difference’” (“Writing the Other” 46-47). This approach is more advanced in that its focus goes beyond the dichotomy of the West and the other and accommodates the newly arrived rhetorics (e.g. the Chinese American rhetoric) in the borderlands, which feature the hybridized influence of difference cultures.

Under the background of globalization, where intercultural communication becomes frequent and ubiquitous, scholars in the field start to consider how they should pursue comparative rhetoric “in ways that are ethical, robust, and dialogic and when border-crossings of all kinds are unfolding on an unprecedented scale” (Mao and Wang 240). B. Wang proposes the “geopolitical approach” which connects the specificities of the local culture into “larger geopolitical forces and networks” (“Comparative Rhetoric” 233), appealing to a focus/field model to practice the rhetoric of “glocalization.” Paying attention to the rhetorical practices in the borderlands has become a trend for the future of comparative rhetoric.

The aforementioned approach—“the art of recontextualization as a discursive third” proposed by Mao is also a well-timed response to the trend of globalization. It provides a rationale for the need of bringing different and imbalanced cultural resources—both the representative and the less represented—into (the) dialogical negotiation:

Enacting the art of recontextualization in today’s world means negotiating between developing a localized narrative and searching for its new and broader significance within and outside its own tradition, between looking for rhetoric where it has been categorically ruled nonexistent and rejecting a concomitant temptation to reduce rhetorical experiences into facts of essence and equate heterogeneous resonance with either sameness or difference, and between using the other for transformative agendas and resisting methods and logic that continue to silence or make invisible the same other. In so doing, enacting
the art of recontextualization redraws the boundary between the global and the other, possibly shifting the global and the other into a new alignment where the global may very well aid the less dominant in opposition to the dominant within the other” (“Beyond Bias, Binary, and Border” 221).

Considering the power hierarchy between different cultures in the rhetorical borderlands, Mao’s approach is of great significance in that it highlights the uniqueness of each cultural components and cautions the less represented local culture not to “uproot itself from its own indigenous environment.” In the next chapter, I will refer back to the art of recontextualization to build my own methodology for analyzing Chinese American rhetoric through fortune cookies. Before I reach to the methodology part, I will elaborate the rationale of situating the studies of Chinese American rhetoric under the discipline of Comparative rhetoric.

Investigating Chinese American Rhetoric through a Comparative Perspective

As is discussed in the previous section, the studies of comparative rhetoric have primarily focused on the examination of non-Western cultural traditions in their own social context (e.g. Xing Lu, Rhetoric in Ancient China; Garrett, “Tied to a Tree”) or the comparison of similar rhetorical practices in separate contexts (e.g. B. Wang, “Rethinking Feminist Rhetoric” and “Comparative Rhetoric”), less attention is paid to the studies of the “rhetorical traditions across national boundaries” (Ashby 257). Mao’s Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie: The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric (2006) is a groundbreaking work in such rhetorical practice arising from both the substantial and rhetorical borderlands. His theorization of Chinese American Rhetoric is further extended in the 2008 co-edited volume Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric (Mao and Young). I regard “Asian” in “Asian American rhetoric” as a specific national-origin group (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipina/o, etc.) instead of as a mixture of various groups, because the latter implicates a vision of “panethnic solidarity” struggling for “racial equality and social justice” (Chan 126-127), which is beyond the scope in this project. In this sense, the discussion of Asian American rhetoric in Mao and Young’s volume is also applicable to Chinese American rhetoric. They share the essential ideas in characterizing the emergent ethnic rhetorics. Drawing upon the illustrations of Asian/Chinese American rhetoric in the two works, in this section, I attempt to tease out the key features of Chinese American rhetoric and identify the needs for further studies in this particular type of rhetoric.

Firstly, Chinese American rhetoric emerges from the rhetorical borderland (or what Pratt calls the “contact zone”). “Borderland” is literally described as a place “where two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy” (Anzaldúa 19). In addition to the physical encounters, Giroux expand the definition of borderland in a rhetorical sense—a space “crisscrossed with a variety of languages, experiences, and voices” which “intermingle with weight of particular histories that will not fit into the master narrative of a monolithic culture” (209). Pratt uses the term “contact zone” to refer to the rhetorical borderlands. Instead of celebrating homogeneity and searching for identification, the “contact zone” emphasizes “the social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (34). It is in such borderlands that the Chinese American rhetoric becomes visible because they provide a “third space” where other positions emerge and where “new structure of authority” and “new political initiatives” was set up (Bhabha 211). In other words, in these ambiguous and indeterminate spaces, the
power imbalance between the majority and minority cultures comes to the fore, which affords Asian Americans a possibility to reassert their “discursive agency and authority in the dominant culture” (Mao and Young 3).

Secondly, Chinese American rhetoric is a rhetoric of the Other. Mao and Young conceptualize the spaces that Asian [Chinese] American inhabit, where “identities are constructed and negotiated and responses to particular conditions are generated”, as the “rhetorical space” of Asian [Chinese] Americans. To appropriate Mountford, such rhetorical space carries “the residue of history” (42) which, according to Mao and Young, includes “a legacy of U.S. racial ideology” that has often placed Asians and Asian Americans in “particular spaces” (6). Mao and Young further point out the “ideological underpinnings” that continuously imagine Asians [the Chinese] as the “Other,” and as “foreign against the domestic space of the United States” (7). The case of Asian [Chinese] Americans is more complicated than that of the Asians [Chinese] in America, for instead of being completely shaped as the “Other,” their rhetorical space is often constructed as “both foreign and domestic, as a site of both containment and community.” In either way, the voice of Chinese Americans in such rhetorical space is to some extent suppressed and even silenced. It is such rhetorical space that renders Chinese American rhetoric the feature of the “Other.”

Thirdly, Chinese American rhetoric is a rhetoric of hybridity—a process of “heterogeneous resonance.” To appropriate Ang,

Hybridity is not only about fusion and synthesis, but also about friction and tension, about ambivalence and incommensurability, about the contestations and interrogations that go hand in hand with the heterogeneity diversity and multiplicity we have to deal with as we live together-in-difference (On not Speaking Chinese 200).

“Togetherness-in-difference” constitutes the core concept of Chinese American rhetoric. On the one hand, “Chinese American rhetoric,” with Chinese and American rhetoric mixing into a single term, suggests a blurring of “rhetorical hierarchies and discursive boundaries” and a synthesis of differences in two individual rhetorical traditions” (Mao, Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie 25). It challenges the established relations of cultural power between central and periphery, dominant and subordinate through a process of “boundary-blurring transculturation” (Ang, On not Speaking Chinese 198). On the other hand, as an intercultural practice in the contact zone, it inevitably involves irreducible “conflicts, contestations, and ambiguities” (Mao, Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie 2) that disrupt the “happy fusion” of two incongruous traditions. Mao advances the term “togetherness-in-difference” into “heterogeneous resonance” aiming to “evoke a way of thinking where different phenomena or things come to interact with and influence each other not necessarily by shared essence, but by association, by complementary opposition” (ibid. 151). By looking into the “specific contexts and conditions” (On not Speaking Chinese 197)—or a “particular past” in Mao’s term (Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie 5)—where fortune cookies are produced and where fortune cookie sayings evolve, I attempt to further interrogate how the fortune cookie as a cultural hybrid illustrates the complicated entanglement (“On not Speaking Chinese” 17) embedded in the Chinese American rhetoric, and how such rhetoric shifts the subject position so that “heterogeneous voices at rhetorical borderlands” (Mao, Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie 5) can be heard.

Fourthly, Asian/Chinese American rhetoric is a rhetoric of becoming. Due to the ambiguous, uncertain and sometimes contradictory properties of rhetorical borderlands, and the asymmetrical and dynamic relations of power, the making of Chinese American rhetoric is far from being established. Rather, it is a becoming process where identities and subject positions
are constantly negotiated and adjusted through nuanced histories and memories, and where
different cultural and rhetorical traditions continuously entangle and transform between each
other. Such rhetoric of becoming supports my attempt to re-explore fortune cookies as a symbol
of the making Chinese American rhetoric. As Mao and Young state, “Asian American rhetoric is
always situated in particularizing situations and that it always generates new meanings and new
significations at every discursive turn possible” (23). Ten years after Mao’s reading on Chinese
fortune cookies, when the boundaries between time and space are increasingly blurred by the
advance of technology, the fortune cookie must have been rendered new meanings and new
significance in the making of Chinese American rhetoric. Therefore, in this project, I intend to
depen my investigation into the fortune cookie—not only to rethink the Chinese and American
traditions it evokes (as Mao argues in his book) but also to explore the rhetorical values
imbedded within the diet and the sayings. More specifically, I aim to investigate how the
fortune cookie interprets the becoming aspect of Chinese American rhetoric in the new decade.

In the previous four features, I extract the connotations of Chinese American rhetoric
from the definition of Asian American rhetoric, which entails a question: how can Chinese
American rhetoric be coherently differentiated from other ethnic rhetorics? As Mao puts it,

One may expect Chinese American rhetoric to be able to show its own unique
characteristics—that are consistently different from other rhetorical traditions and from
their corresponding manifestations—in order for it to achieve both visibility and viability.
(Mao, Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie 13)

Therefore, for the last-but-not-least feature, I intend to unpack the “Chinese-Americaness”
(or the transcultural property) of Chinese American rhetoric. In other words, Chinese American
rhetoric is a transcultural interaction specifically between Chinese and American
rhetorical traditions. The prefix “trans-” per se indicates a rhetorical practice that transcends time and space
and locates at the rhetorical borderlands. The “tradition” in this particular sense is including but
not limited within the canonical rhetorics in each culture (e.g. Confucius or Daoist rhetoric in
China or the Greco-Roman rhetorics in North America). Since rhetorical practice is a becoming
process, it also refers to the discursive features and communication styles that are influenced by
the cultural values and thinking patterns formed in each society, and further influencing the
production and consumption of new discourses. Adopting “transcultural” as an umbrella term, I
aim to emphasize that the Chinese and American conventions do not utterly separate from each
other (or else it would become Chinese rhetorics or American rhetorics); rather, Chinese
American rhetoric is a dynamic hybrid of Chinese and American rhetorical traditions, as well as
any new patterns emerging from the “third space” in between. The separation of Chinese and
American rhetorical traditions is more practiced by Chinese sojourners or immigrants who first
come to the States. They place themselves in the continuum between the exile, who are
“indifferent to the values and characteristics of the host culture” and are bothered by a “structural
nostalgia” on the one hand, and the immigrant, who desire to become “a full-fledged subject of
the new society,” on the other hand (JanMohamed 223). The newly emerging rhetorical patterns,
however, more often occur in the rhetorical practices of American-born Chinese such as Jennifer
Lee, who may maintain the historical ethnic backgrounds in their family, but have been deeply
affected by European American cultures. To be noted, the focal point of Chinese American
rhetoric is not who practices it—as Mao states, in addition to Chinese Americans, any Chinese
and European Americans\(^1\) can participate in the making of Chinese American rhetoric **(Reading**

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\(^1\) I might also include Americans with other ethnic backgrounds as long as they bring Chinese
Chinese Fortune Cookie 19). Rather, the focus lies in how to bring both rhetorical traditions together in a process where “relations of power continue to make their present felt” (ibid. 19). This focus engages a process of identity negotiation—the process of how to deal with the relations between ethnic identity and the national community, which turns back to the discussion of Chinese American rhetoric as a rhetoric of the “Other” (see more illustrations in Chapter Four). So far, the term “transcultural” has contained all five features of Chinese American rhetoric—the context of borderlands, the process of becoming, the state of hybridity, the identity negotiation of the “Other,” and the particular reference to Chinese and American rhetorical traditions. Therefore, it is fair to say Chinese American rhetoric is essentially a transcultural rhetoric, which I will discuss in more detail in the following chapters.

Summary
In this chapter, I trace the objects of and approaches to comparative rhetorical studies with an aim to conceptualize the fortune cookie (a fact of “non-usage” and a transcultural product—as the subject of my analysis and the art of recontextualization as a timely approach to investigating Chinese American rhetoric. I then summarize the key features of Chinese American rhetoric and clarify the rationale of seeing Chinese American rhetoric as a new field for conducting comparative rhetoric beyond the nation-states. In Chapter Two, I will develop the methodological framework for the inquiry of Chinese American rhetoric through the examination of fortune cookies.
Chapter Two: Toward a Critical-Comparative Approach to Chinese American Rhetoric

As Mao and Young articulate, “central to our interest in the making of Asian American rhetoric is how Asian Americans use language and other symbolic resources to perform their identity in their own communities” (13). Discourse thus can be considered as a rhetorical practice that constitutes the major objects of the studies of Asian/Chinese American rhetoric. In this chapter, I refer to rhetorical theories and the theoretical constructs of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to specify the primary assumptions of my thesis—viewing the fortune cookie as discourse and identifying the relationship between rhetoric and discourses. I also clarify concepts that stand foundational to my project, namely, my understanding of “critical,” “comparative” and “transcultural.” Adding the critical perspective to comparative rhetorical analysis, I propose a hybridized approach to doing Chinese American rhetoric through those transcultural discourses and continue to tease out the specific procedures for enacting the proposed methodology.

Discourse as the Manifestation of Rhetoric

To begin with, I see the practice of Chinese American rhetoric as a knowledge-making process under specific historical and sociocultural contexts. Accordingly, each artifact of Chinese American rhetoric (e.g. the fortune cookie) entails the circumstances that contributes to its emergence and the changes it has experienced from there and then to here and now. Bearing this assumption in mind, I ally myself with Robert L. Scott viewing rhetoric as epistemic. Scott considers truth “not as something fixed and final but as something to be created moment by moment in the circumstances in which [human beings] find [themselves] and with which [they] must cope” (17). Human knowledge, hence, does not a priori exist but emerges from and is negotiated within the contingent situations in a specific temporal and spatial context. Based on such an epistemic view, I endorse Covino and Jolliffe’s definition of rhetoric as “a primarily verbal, situationally contingent, epistemic art that is both philosophical and practical and gives rise to potentially active texts” (5). The philosophical perspective echoes the capacity of rhetoric in making knowledge and defining “contingent truths” (Lunsford et al. xxi) while the practical view majorly concerns the product of rhetoric—specific “texts” (or I would rather call “discourse”). In this project, I will explore the “philosophical” knowledge-making process of Chinese American rhetoric through its “practical” embodiment—the discourse of the fortune cookie.

To fully explore the rhetorical potential of fortune cookies as a discourse, I hereby adopt Norman Fairclough’s definition of discourse², which contains three dimensions: the “text” dimension concerning both the meanings and forms of texts; the “discursive practice”³

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² In the previous paragraph, I replace “text” with “discourse” to explain the practical perspective of rhetoric in that I agree with Van Leeuwen’s distinction of “texts” from “discourse.” In Van Leeuwen’s view, “text” is seen as the “extended stretch of connected speech or writing” while discourse as a “social cognition, a socially constructed knowledge of some social practice” (Discourse and Practice 6). However, although he recognizes the social dimension of discourse, he does not address how different forms of discourse are contextualized with each other and generate new discursive effects—that is, the “discursive practice” dimension of discourse in Fairclough’s definition.

³ Fairclough first names the second dimension of discourse as “discursive practice” in his 1992 monograph Discourse and Social Change, emphasizing the processes of text production,
dimension attending to the nature of “the processes of text production and text interpretation”; and the “sociocultural practice” dimension specifying how the “immediate situational context” and the “wider frame of the society and the culture” of the event help shape the nature of discourse and vise versa (Fairclough, “Critical Analysis of Media Discourse” 57-58). “Text,” hence, is deemed as “the written or spoken product of the process of text production,” which constitutes the first dimension of discourse (Discourse and Social Change 3). However, it is the second and third dimensions that afford discourse a rhetorical sense—interactional, social, and contextual. As a “discursive practice,” discourse emphasizes the interactions between the text producer (e.g. speaker, writer, etc.) and the audience in the process of producing and interpreting a particular subject. In this sense, discourse specifies “something people do to, or for, or with each other” (Van Leeuwen, “Genre and Field” 193). As a “sociocultural practice,” it highlights both the social effect of discourse—on not only reflecting/representing but also constructing/constituting social entities and relations (Fairclough, Discourse and Social Change 3), and the contextual effect—how a new, complex discourse is produced from different discourses under various social conditions (ibid. 4). Both Fairclough’s and Van Leeuwen’s definitions mirror Foucault’s view of discourse as “ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them” (qtd. in: Weedon 108). Foregrounding the capacity of constructing knowledge, the interactions between knowledge and power, and the function of representing social practices and social cognition, discourse in Foucault’s sense serves as a manifestation and realization of rhetoric.

Probing into the relations of rhetoric to discourse enables me to locate various examples of Chinese American rhetoric, one of which is the fortune cookie. I consider the fortune cookie as a discourse, not in the linguistic sense, but in a sociological perspective. As is mentioned above, the discourse in Fairclough’s definition is not limited to verbal practice but also covers other “symbolic forms,” which echoes James Paul Gee’s notions of d/Discourse. To Gee, discourses with the little “d” attend to “language in use” (or verbal practice) on particular occasions while “Discourses” with the capital “D” involves non-linguistic forms of life including “ways of acting, interacting, feeling, believing, valuing, and using various sorts of objects, symbols, tools, and technologies” (154). The former is integrated into the latter to enact “specific socially recognizable” identities and activities at the “right” places and times (ibid. 155). In the case of fortune cookies, the fortune sayings constitute the textual dimension of discourse (or the little “d” discourses); the interactions between manufacturers and customers through the fortune cookies (both in its visual image of the shape and package design and the text of fortune cookie sayings) attend to the “discursive practice” dimension; and finally, as a sociocultural practice, the fortune cookie as a whole (in this case, considered as the “big D” Discourse) evokes the historical and sociocultural contexts that help construct the cultural identity of fortune cookies as well as that of Chinese American rhetoric.

A Critical Perspective on Doing Comparative Rhetoric

Considering the discursive property of fortune cookies, I regard the fortune cookie as
transcultural discourse that represents and construes Chinese American rhetoric. As is mentioned in the last chapter, the making of Chinese American rhetoric is about the realization of “togetherness-in-differences” in the borderlands. The key to understanding Chinese American rhetoric is to figure out how its practitioners produce and negotiate such “togetherness-in-differences” among “highly asymmetrical relations of power” (Mao, Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie 29) through various kinds of rhetorical practices. Analyzing the discourse through a critical perspective will be conducive to realizing this goal.

In this project, I delimit my discussion of “critical” within the scope of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Epistemically speaking, the “critical” perspective sees knowledge “as local, as contingent, and as grounded not in universal structures but in local, situated practices” (Sullivan and Porter 10), which echoes Scott’s view on rhetoric. Applied in the discourse analysis, such a perspective sees discourse as a “situated practice” (Sullivan and Porter 9), which requires a “particular and pragmatic sensitivity to the particulars” of the context (ibid.). The notion of “context”—cultural, social, or historical—hence, is crucial to critical studies.

Another defining concept of the critical approach is “power.” The task of critical theory, according to Wodak, is to “assist in ‘remembering’ a past that was in danger of being forgotten, to struggle for emancipation, to clarify the reasons for such a struggle and to define the nature of critical thinking itself” (9). In other words, a critical approach aims to expose the power imbalance between the dominant and the dominated (which is often hidden), and to empower those less privileged (or even forgotten) group in a certain society. Doing discourse analysis in a critical sense, thus, is “to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, and legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)” (Wodak 53).

Such concerns about contexts and power enable critical discourse analysis (CDA) to become a powerful methodology for Composition and Rhetoric studies. As Huckin et al. argue, both CDA and Composition and Rhetoric concern with “the power of spoken and written discourse” (109) and are respectively regarded as an “interdisciplinary endeavor” (110)—with the former borrowing from linguistic pragmatics, social theory, psychology, etc. while the latter profiting from areas such as sociolinguistics, communication, and cultural studies. Therefore, CDA provides Composition and Rhetoric scholars and practitioners “a repertoire of precise, context-sensitive tools” that can assist them “in interrogating power and ideology as they are indexed and produced in specific instances of public discourse” (110). Specifically, they suggest that CDA fits within the domain of Composition and Rhetoric studies in three ways:

First, it explicitly draws our attention to issues of power and privilege in public and private discourse…second, it facilitates the parallel analysis of multiple, multimodal, and historical texts; and third, it provides a lens with which the researcher can coordinate the analysis of larger (macro) political/rhetorical purpose with the (micro) details of language. (111)

Such affordance of CDA is particularly conducive to the studies of comparative rhetoric in that it provides systematic framework and methods to examine “communicative practices across time and space by attending to historicity, specificity, self-reflexivity, processual predisposition, and imagination” (context) and to disclose and challenge “the prevailing patterns of power imbalance and knowledge production” (power). (“A Manifesto” 273). In the case of Chinese American rhetoric, through interrogating the social contexts and discursive practices emerging from the borderlands, CDA provides an effective approach to problematizing the power imbalance between the dominant (Greco-Roman) rhetoric and the emergent ethnic rhetoric, and to foregrounding the voices of the subordinated/disadvantaged group—how they form their
knowledge and beliefs, establish their social relationships, and cultivate their social identities (Mao, *Reading Chinese Fortune cookie*, 30).

**A Comparative Perspective to Understanding Chinese American Rhetoric**

As is mentioned in Chapter One, I consider Chinese American rhetoric as a subfield of Comparative rhetoric. In this section, I shall first illustrate the transcultural property of Chinese American rhetoric. I then articulate the rationale of using comparison in the studies of Chinese American rhetoric. In doing so, I intend to argue that investigating the transcultural artifacts through a comparative perspective is not only appropriate but also essential to the understanding of Chinese American rhetoric.

In their edited work *In Search of Boundaries: Communication, Nation-States, and Cultural Identities*, Chan and Ma propose the transcultural perspective in international communication and depict its characteristics in the following ways. Firstly, the transcultural perspective is “history specific,” stressing the “creative mixing and blending of exotic and domestic cultures” under different historical circumstances (Chan and Ma 16). Secondly, the transcultural perspective stresses the evolving process in which the cultural boundaries are “in a constant state of flux, being created, maintained, elaborated, contested, eroded, and deconstructed” (ibid. xv) and “the foreign culture is decontextualized, essentialized, indigenized and recontextualized” (ibid. 7) so as to meet certain “local needs” (ibid. 8).

According to Chan and Ma’s illustration, Chinese American rhetoric is essentially a transcultural rhetoric since both focus on the interactions and negotiations between localities and larger global processes, structures and “flows of people, ideas, and discourses across localities” (ibid. 9). The discourses that emerge from the rhetorical borderlands and are formed under the influence of two or more rhetorical traditions thus can be regarded as “transcultural discourses,” such as the fortune cookies. To be noted, I use “trans-” instead of “multi-” here in that while both terms challenge “rhetorical homogeneity” and recognize the co-existence of differences, “trans-” tends to emphasize the persistent-changing positions of each rhetorical traditions and the dynamic interactions between them—be it in harmony or in contradiction. Similarly, I use the term “transcultural” instead of “transnational” in order to highlight “the exchange of information and cultural flows not only among individual nation-states but also among diverse cultures as represented by “communities of different geopolitical, ethnic, class, and gender compositions” (Ding 9).

In traditional comparative rhetoric studies, the trope of comparison is used in investigating “two fully developed, self-contained, and non-intersecting structures” under different cultural settings (Hayot 90). As a rhetoric arising from the borderlands, where the boundaries of social and cultural traditions have been blurred and constantly interacted with each other, can we also adopt a comparative lens to look into Chinese American rhetoric? If the answer is positive, how then does a comparative perspective enrich the studies of transcultural discourses?

To answer these questions, I ally myself with Hayot to recognize the shaping power of comparison. According to Hayot,

Any comparison is, inevitably, not just a comparison of two things that pre-exist the comparison, but itself an attempt (conscious or unconscious) to determine their natures, to solidify their outlines, to locate them in some social, political, or historical space (88). In other words, comparison is not just identifying similarities and differences; rather, as Hayot articulates, “any comparison shapes what it compares” and we learn about the compared through
the act of comparison (ibid. 88). Comparison, in this sense, is epistemological—it is a way of generating new knowledge. Radhakrishnan assumes that the real motive behind any comparison is the desire to learn from “other” experiences that are not one’s own (454-455). The ultimate objective of such learning is not just to “hector, proselytize, or hierarchize difference in the name of a dominant ‘superior’ identity” (Radhakrishnan 455), but to obtain a new knowledge that could be “more sophisticated, progressive, worldly, and cosmopolitan than a form of knowledge that is secure in its own identity and provenance” (ibid. 456). Comparison, hence, possesses the capacity and potentiality to substitute a “prior epistemological object” with a new one (ibid. 457).

In this project, I take the epistemological view of comparison and consider the Chinese American rhetoric as a new knowledge generated under the comparative interactions between Western and Chinese rhetorical traditions in the rhetorical borderlands. However, Radhakrishnan also points out the political character of comparison: it inevitably functions under the “unequal and asymmetrical relationships” (459) (e.g. familiarity and unfamiliarity, majority and minority, dominant and subordinated, etc.) among the compared subjects. If comparison is simultaneously epistemological and political, how does it generate new knowledge without considering the compared subjects as discrete entities on the one hand, or completely abandoning their differences and “being parsed within the regime of the sovereign one” on the other (Radhakrishnan 454)?

Understanding the transcultural discourse through a comparative perspective, the comparison in the borderlands is not refrained from a simple “cultural homogenization” or a “random hybridization.” Rather, it is a complex exchange process of history, culture and information flows between two distinct rhetorical traditions. Therefore, in addition to identifying the specialties of respective cultures, the comparative perspective should further interrogate (1) the interconnectivities and interrelations between one culture with the other; (2) the cross-border and cross cultural mobilization of people, power, and language resources in a global context; and (3) the power relations and historical legacies manifested in the above exchanges (adapted form Hesford and Schell4 465). These interrogations serve as heuristics to understand the complexity of Chinese American rhetoric. However, in order to answer these questions, more studies about transcultural artifacts should be done. This calls for an effective methodology to transform these abstract heuristics into answerable questions. In the following section, I synthesize the perspectives I have reviewed and put forward a critical-comparative methodology to study Chinese American rhetoric.

Developing a New Methodology

To probe into Chinese American rhetoric comprehensively, I developed a methodology of the “critical-comparative analysis” which synthesizes insights from comparative rhetoric and CDA.

In their book *Opening Spaces*, Patricia Sullivan and James Porter pay particular attention to the rhetorical nature of methodology, arguing that “all methodology is rhetorical, an explicit or

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4 In the 2008 special issue of transnational feminist rhetorics in *College English*, Hesford and Schell suggest a transnational rhetorical perspective to the studies of feminist rhetoric. Although I distinguish the transcultural practice from the transnational one, the transnational perspective does provide some shared assumptions that can enrich my illustration of the transcultural property of Chinese American rhetoric.
implicit theory of human relations which guides the operation of methods” (11). Adopting a
critical practice perspective, they further see methodology as heuristic, guiding research to
generate “situated knowledge,” which is local and contingent (ibid. 9-10). In this view,
methodology is not merely a “theory in the sense of rules governing practice” (ibid. 47); rather, it
is itself an “intervening social action and a participation in human events” (ibid. 46). As Ding
points out, imposing existing Western theories and methods indiscriminately in the investigation
of other cultures is dangerous, since it tends to subjugate and silence the compared cultural
knowledge and to essentialize the diverse cultures by foregrounding the dominant Western
counterparts (ibid. 30). Such dangers are especially explicit in the ethnic practices in the
borderlands. Sullivan and Porter’s proposal of a critical perspective of methodology helps to ease
these dangers. Considering its attention to the particular situatedness of the participants, its
sensitiveness to human practices and its independence from theory, methods, and disciplinary
rules, a methodology with a critical perspective facilitates a research to accomplish its ultimate
goal—to help people in a disadvantaged situation and to achieve some improvement in their
circumstances (xvi).

The proposed critical-comparative methodology strives to achieve that goal by providing
a framework to examine Chinese American rhetoric and to hear the voice of the under-
represented ethnic group. As an alternative to the current tendency in comparative rhetoric of
focusing on nation-states as the unit of non-Western rhetorical studies and to oversimplify other
cultural traditions in terms of power imbalance, this methodology is devised to recognize and
take into consideration the full complexity of transcultural activities and its multifaceted contexts
in the making of Chinese American rhetoric.

The Trajectory of Critical-Comparative Analysis

This section elaborates the way I scaffold my methodological apparatus. The art of
recontextualization and the comparative dimension of this methodology are first explicated,
followed by an illustration of Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of critical discourse
analysis.

Mao develops the methodology of recontextualization as a response to what Mary Garrett
calls the “methodological paradox” (54) in comparative studies, appealing to cultivating an
“intersubjective, interdependent ethos” that enables the “historically privileged dispositions” to
be constantly “challenged and made manifest throughout the entire process of representation”
(Mao, “Writing the Other” 44). Specifically, he puts forward three steps toward the enactment of
the art of recontextualization. Firstly, instead of taking the context of the Other at its face value
or equating the Other with one homogeneous entity, the art of recontextualization requires
researchers to look to the local context (including its “political, economic, and sociocultural
underpinnings”) to reconfigure and develop terms of engagement and modes of representation,
as well as to investigate “how the other’s own heterogeneity inhabits its space” and “how it
inexorably influence the other’s own multiplicity” (Mao, “Beyond Bias, Binary, and Border”
219). Secondly, based on the assumption that “real understanding can happen only through a
dialogic process,” the art of recontextualization stresses developing terms of “interdependence
and interconnectivity” and engaging the self and the Other in an open dialogue in order to
reverse, to recalibrate, and to replace the self/other boundary, and moreover, to yield continuous
moments of “togetherness-in-differences” (ibid. 219-220). Thirdly, the art of recontextualization
calls on researchers to recontextualize the “contingencies of the present,” which is realized in
twofold—by recognizing the influence of the conditions of the present on the act of
representation and its ability to perpetuate the existing boundaries and power imbalance; and by
cultivating a processual model of representation where the relations of interdependence and
incongruity are recognized and the facts of usage and the facts of “non-usage” are under
interaction (ibid. 220).

Conflating the space (local context), time (contingencies of the present), and the process
of engagement, Mao’s three suggestions provide comprehensive guidelines to engage the
rhetorical tradition of the “Other”. However, when it comes to the study of a specific
transcultural subject, a more detailed and pertinent analytical model is in need. Norman
Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework will serve as supplements to demonstrate how to
enact Mao’s art of recontextualization under specific social, historical, and intercultural contexts
for specialized purposes.

As is discussed before, I consider discourse as the instrument that realizes the
effectiveness of rhetoric. Hence, discourse in this project serves as the basic unit of the analysis
of Chinese American rhetoric. As I mentioned earlier, Fairclough views discourse in three levels:
discourse as text, as discursive practice, and as sociocultural practice. Accordingly, he sketches a
three-dimensional framework aiming to bring together linguistic-oriented discourse analysis and
social and political thoughts and to supplement the methodological repository of social scientific
research (*Discourse and Social Change* 62).

The first dimension is analyzing discourse as text. Fairclough organizes text analysis
under four main sub-categories: vocabulary (individual words), grammar (words combined into
sentences and clauses), cohesion (the ways in which clauses and sentences are linked together),
and text structure (organization of texts) (*Discourse and Social Change* 75). I locate the analysis
of the fortune cookie sayings on the textual level. However, different from Fairclough’s text
analysis, which is linguistic-oriented, my analysis on the fortune cookie sayings tends to be
content-oriented—identifying, quantifying, and analyzing “specific words, phrases, concepts, or
other observable semantic data in a text or body of texts with the aim of uncovering some
underlying thematic or rhetorical pattern running through these texts” (Huckin 14). Therefore,
the generic features (together with syntactic patterns) and the thematic features (with the cultural
values embedded) constitute two main domains of my textual analysis.

Fairclough’s second dimension, namely, discursive practice, is about the processes of text
production, distribution, and consumption. He points out that the text producer can be
deconstructed into a set of positions, which might be “occupied by the same person or by
different people” (*Discourse and Social Change* 78). As for distribution and consumption,
Fairclough articulates that texts produced by different groups are “distributed across a range of
different institutional domains, each of which has its own patterns of consumption, and its own
routines for reproducing and transforming texts” (ibid. 79). Similar to the first level, Fairclough
sets up three features in the analysis of discursive practice: the “force” of utterance (various sorts
of acts such as promises, requests, threats, etc.), the “coherence” of texts, and the intertextuality
of texts (ibid. 83-84). In my analysis, I see the fortune cookie as discourse. Rather than merely
focusing on the textual and linguistic elements, I refer to historical texts (mainly news reports
and anecdotes) to analyze the production, distribution, and consumption of the fortune cookie as
a discursive practice, and the identity construction throughout the process.

In the third dimension of his framework, Fairclough situates discourse within “a view of
power as hegemony,” and “a view of the evolution of power relations as hegemonic struggle.”
Such views see ideological struggle as a dimension of social practice, which aims to “reshape
discourse practices and the ideologies built into them in the context of the restructuring or
transformation of relations of domination” (*Discourse and Social Change* 87-88). “Ideology” in Fairclough’s view is “located both in the structures which constitute the outcome of past events, and in events themselves as they reproduce and transform their conditional structures” (ibid. 89). In other words, ideology is both “a property of structures” defined by social conventions, and “a property of events,” an ongoing process of forming, reforming, and transforming (ibid. 88). It is through this dimension that the art of recontextualization comes to take effect. By recontextualizing the cultural, historical, and social contexts where those temporary events occur and functions on each other, the hidden ideologies of certain practices are revealed, the power relations between different cultures are reformed, and the cultural identities constructed through the discourses are manifested.

Corresponding to the three dimensions of discourse, Fairclough develops three stages of CDA—the textual *description* of the language text, the *interpretation* of the relationship between the (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text, and the *explanation* of the relationship between the discursive processes and the sociocultural processes (“Discourse, Change, and Hegemony” 96-98). As is shown in figure 1, discursive practice (examinations of how a text is produced and interpreted) serves as mediation between the text and the sociocultural practice, since “what discursive practices are drawn from what order(s) of discourse and how they are articulated together, depends upon the nature of the sociocultural practice which the discourse is a part of” (ibid. 97). In other words, the discursive practice provides rationale of the organizations and representations of what is “there” at the textual level, on the one hand, and elicits the social and cultural practices that shape and influence the discourse, on the other. In Fairclough’s framework, therefore, the three dimensions of discourse are interconnected, each serving a particular purpose, but co-contributing to the revelation of the underlying power dynamic behind the discourse.

![Three-Dimensional Framework](image)

Figure 1 Three-Dimensional Framework (adapted from Fairclough, “Discourse, Change, and Hegemony” 98)
Combining Fairclough’s three-dimensional design and Mao’s theory of recontextualization, the critical-comparative approach offers me a systemic framework for analyzing the discourse of fortune cookies, especially the relations between the transcultural artifact itself and the multifaceted contexts around it. Incorporating tools offered by critical discourse analysis studies into comparative rhetorical analysis, I can simultaneously engage with the textual features of transcultural products and the knowledge-making process of a new rhetoric in the contact zones. The critical and comparative dimension of my methodology complement each other to uncover the functioning and appropriating of politics and ideologies in textual details, and to reveal the historical and sociocultural determinants standing behind the physical and rhetorical formation of fortune cookies as an exemplification of Chinese American rhetoric.

Research Questions
Taking a critical-comparative approach, the present study is designed to re-perform the making of Chinese American rhetoric through the fortune cookies. Specifically, I intend to explore the following questions.

(1) How does the inclusion of fortune cookie saying analysis influence the construction and legitimation of fortune cookies as a “cultural hybrid”?
(2) How is the Chinese American rhetoric embedded in fortune cookies shaped by historical and sociocultural interconnectivities and transcultural mobilization of power, language resources, and people?
(3) How does a critical-comparative analysis of the fortune cookies as a social practice account for the different power relations and historical legacies embodied in the cultural encounters?

Procedures of Analysis
In this project, the critical-comparative analysis is applied to analyzing the fortune cookie as a performance of Chinese American rhetoric in the following steps. First, at the textual level, I conduct a content analysis to investigate the general patterns of the fortune cookie sayings. As MacNealy points out, categorization is the basic principle of tools for discourse analysis (131). As a derived type of discourse analysis, the current content analysis follows the methodological procedures of developing effective categorization schemes (132-136). Therefore, the samples of fortune cookie sayings are collected and coded according to the following two constructs of interests: (1) generic and syntactic features and (2) thematic features (recurring topics) and the cultural values embedded in them.

Next, I turn to the investigation of the fortune cookie as a whole. Considering the fortune cookie as a discursive practice, I examine the production, distribution, and the consumption process of the dessert in the contact zones. I first inquire how the fortune cookie is constructed as a Chinese product in its production process, with special attention to the fortune cookie manufacturers. I then refer to the newspapers to demonstrate how the Chinese American restaurant owners deepen the cultural identity of fortune cookies through the process of distribution. For the consumption part, I intend to look into the ways in which the audience—mainly the Chinese American restaurant customers—influences the identity construction of the fortune cookie through their consumption of the dessert.

In the third dimension, I see the discourse of the fortune cookie as a sociocultural practice. Therefore, the final task of my analysis aims to interpret how the recontextualization of the
cultures, social practices and the history of Chinese Americans influence the knowledge making of Chinese American rhetoric, and the identity legitimation of Chinese Americans in the borderlands. To realize this goal, in this section, I first compare the Western and Eastern cultural traditions and examine their interactions embedded in the fortune cookie. I then draw from the historical, social and cultural contexts to trace the changing process of the power-knowledge dynamic presented in the fortune cookies. It is hoped that through enacting the critical-transcultural methodology, the understanding of Chinese American rhetoric can be deepened and updated, the importance of conducting comparative rhetoric through “representative anecdotes” in the mundane can be highlighted, and the voice of Chinese Americans from there and then to here and now can be noticed and heard to a certain extent.

Summary

In this chapter, by taking critical and comparative perspectives from discourse analysis and comparative rhetoric, I discuss the theoretical assumptions and methodological frameworks for my study. Focusing on the three dimensions of discourses, in the following three chapters, I carry out a critical-comparative analysis to trace the sources that authorize the representation of Chinese American rhetoric in the discourse of fortune cookies.
Chapter Three: Textual Analysis of Fortune Cookie Sayings

In the following two chapters, I apply the methodological framework proposed in the last chapter to the analysis of the fortune cookie as a discourse. At the textual level, I place my focus on the fortune cookie sayings. Following a review of the previous studies of fortune cookies, I conduct a textual analysis specifically pertaining to the sayings to better understand the fortune cookie as a cultural hybrid, on the one hand, and the cultural diversities that underpin the fortune cookie sayings, on the other.

Previous Studies of Fortune Cookies

Other than Chinese restaurants, the fortune cookie often appears in popular culture (e.g. TV series, music, movie, etc.) and Chinese-American literature (e.g. Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club*). However, few academic studies about this particular Chinese American product have been conducted in either field, let alone the studies of fortune cookie sayings.

Jennifer 8. Lee’s *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles: Adventures in the World of Chinese Food* is the first book that systematically delves into the origins and the history of fortune cookies. She conducts an empirical and half-ethnographical research by traveling around the world and to nearly every state in the US to interview the anecdotal Chinese restaurateurs. According to her discovery, the fortune cookie was most possibly invented in Japan and then brought into America by Japanese immigrants in the nineteenth century. However, when and how the fortune cookies started to appear in Chinese American restaurants is still a mystery. One of the assumptions is that during the 1920s and 1930s, many Japanese immigrants in America owned Chop Suey restaurants that served Americanized-Chinese food and distributed fortune cookies; during World War II, when Japanese-Americans closed their business and were sent to internment camps, the Chinese-own manufacturers and restaurants began to take over the fortune cookie business (Lee, “Solving a Riddle”). Lee also points out that although fortune cookies are primarily consumed by Americans, they can be barely found in China (ibid.). With such a historical and cultural background, it is reasonable to assume that the fortune cookie sayings embedded in the fortune cookies have also been through a wave of cultural transitions as they are circulated across countries.

Mao’s *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie: The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric* interrogates fortune cookies through a rhetorical lens. He sees the fortune cookie as a rhetorical embodiment of Chinese American Rhetoric—“togetherness-in-difference,” which “allows two different traditions to coexist with each other without denying each its own history and its proper place in a Chinese meal” (“Rhetorical Borderlands” 430). He illustrates the rhetorical connotation of the dessert as the following:

On the one hand, the fortune cookie represents a centuries-old Chinese tradition of using message-stuffed pastry as a covert means of communication—a tradition that started in fourteen-century China. On the other hand, serving dessert at the end of a meal is a European-American tradition, because the Chinese traditionally do not eat dessert at the end of a meal. (*Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie* 4)

As intriguing as this analogy between the fortune cookie and the Chinese American rhetoric may be, Mao’s observation of fortune cookies mainly focuses on the dining tradition. Little attention is paid to the fortune cookie sayings embedded in the dessert. Since “most [individuals] consider the fortune to be the essence of the cookie” (“Fortune Cookie History”), whether and how these
fortune cookie sayings manifest the making of Chinese American rhetoric is worth further examination.

Noticing the gap between the studies of fortune cookies and fortune cookie sayings, Yin and Miike pioneer a textual analysis on fortune cookie sayings. According to their research, they discover that “the fortune sayings (a) delimit ‘fortune’ in terms of money, prosperity, and romance; (b) make compliments about sociability and talents; (c) provide advice on life and relationships with others; and (d) offer wisdom regarding integrity, spirituality, and the past” (18). Further, by connecting the fortune sayings with American and Chinese cultural traditions as well as philosophy, they argue that the fortune sayings are a hybrid cultural product with “a fusion of the American Dream and the Chinese upward mobility” (ibid.18). Their study is significant in that for one thing, it provides a preliminary approach to categorizing fortune cookie sayings in terms of generic and thematic patterns; for another, it demonstrates the necessity to make sense of the transcultural artifact by involving the social and historical contexts. However, although noticing the existence of power asymmetry between different cultures, their association of the “Chinese upward mobility” with the “American Dream” tends to naturalize the acculturalization of the marginalized group into the dominant community; little attention is paid to the conflicting and agonistic features of the cultural hybrid.

In this chapter, I would like to conduct a bottom-up textual analysis of fortune cookie sayings so as to identify the congruity and diversity in terms of their discursive patterns, their themes, and the cultural values they convey. The purpose of the textual analysis is twofold: firstly, to test the results of Yin and Miike’s observations and interpretations, which were conducted nearly a decade ago; and second, to serve as the complementary evidence for the larger discussion of fortune cookies as a microcosm of Chinese American rhetoric.

Data Collection

According to Collins Online Dictionary, the “fortune cookie” is traditionally defined as “a cookie eaten at the end of a Chinese meal which contains a small piece of paper with a prophecy written on it.” Similarly, Oxford Dictionary defines it as “a small biscuit containing a slip of paper with a prediction or motto written on it, served in Chinese restaurants”; while in Cambridge Dictionary Online, it refers to “a biscuit containing a message, usually about your future, eaten especially after a Chinese meal.” Based on these definitions, fortune cookies generally share two commonalities: firstly, they are mainly served at Chinese restaurants; and secondly, each of them contains a slip of paper with certain information on it—most of them are predictions about the future, but it is not necessarily a “fortune” as the name “fortune cookie” entails; other genres such as wisdoms, advice and compliment are also included.

With an aim to conform my data to aforementioned conditions, I have planned to collect fortune cookie sayings by purchasing them in batches from the largest fortune cookie manufacturer in the United States—the Wonton Food Inc. (Lee, “Solving a Riddle”). However, based on my pilot study of the fortune cookie sayings from a 400-pack box of fortune cookies, I found this approach problematic: some fortune sayings in one box are repetitive, and the randomness of the fortune cookie sayings is difficult to be ensured. Specifically, as I found that the amount of fortune cookie sayings in a certain type (e.g. wisdom) is more than another one (e.g. advice), I could not ascertain whether it is because they are encased at random (a coincidence cause) or according to certain sequences (a necessary cause). In addition, due to the variety of fortune cookie manufacturers spreading all over the country, choosing fortune cookies produced by one manufacturer will render the neglect of the Other. The separation of fortune
cookie saying producers from fortune cookie manufacturers further increases the difficulty of the data selecting process.

Considering the defining features of the fortune cookies and the problems shown on the pilot study, I collect the fortune cookie sayings from fortunecookiemessage.com, a website with a collection of fortune cookie sayings contributed by netizens from all over the country, regardless of the places and manufacturers of production. Admittedly, the fortune cookie sayings in the website may not merely come from fortune cookies the diners get from Chinese restaurants; they might also be created by individuals for their personal purposes. Since the latter source less conforms to the common definition of fortune cookies, my focus of data collection is on the former type. Therefore, among the 839 entries of fortune sayings collected from the website, I further filter them according to the following criteria: (1) The fortune cookies should be actually produced and circulated in Chinese restaurants instead of merely appearing on the Internet; (2) to increase the representativeness of the data, the collected fortune sayings should not be accustomed to a local area, but are circulated through the whole country; (3) the individually customized fortune cookie sayings for individual and special purpose such as political campaigns, wedding or birthday parties should be excluded in this study. To meet these criteria, I search each entry of fortune cookie sayings through the largest searching engine (google.com) and two of the most influential social network (the Facebook and Twitter) in the United States for their origins. Normally netizens will post the picture of the actual piece of paper with fortune cookie sayings on it (as an indication of the existence of specific manufacturers) or articulate the Chinese restaurant where they get the fortune cookies. I exclude the fortune cookie sayings that do not show on the three sites or have no clues of their origins. Only those entries with equivalent images of the actual original pieces of fortune cookie sayings and those with clear articulation of the places where the fortune cookie is circulated are adopted. As a result, 447 pieces of fortune cookie sayings remained in the final data set.

To identify the general patterns of fortune cookie sayings, I go through the entire data set and analyze each fortune cookie saying based on the unit of clauses. The samples of fortune cookie sayings are coded according to their generic features and thematic features. The frequency of occurrence is used as the criterion of grouping and categorizing the schemes of fortune cookie sayings. The generic features of fortune cookie sayings are examined through quantitative counts of the frequency of various genres. The syntactic patterns of each genre are also identified during the coding process. The thematic features are elicited from the recurring themes of the fortune cookies. When the themes are overlapped, I resort to the social network such as the comments on the Facebook or Twitter (where they post the sayings) for various interpretations and adopt the commonly accepted one. The cultural values are categorized primarily based on the themes identified from the fortune cookies.

**Generic and Syntactic Patterns of Fortune Cookie Sayings**

Based on a meticulous examination, the collected 447 fortune cookies can be categorized into six genres: wisdom—philosophical sayings about life experience, knowledge and judgment; advice—guidance to human actions or conducts; prophecy—predictions about future; compliment—remarks of praise or admiration; humor—comical expressions that create amusement; and ads—promotional words of Chinese restaurants and fortune cookies. Except for the humor and ads that are presented through various forms, each genre demonstrates its exclusive syntactic patterns (see table 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Syntactic features</th>
<th>Typical sentence structure</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom (No./%)</td>
<td>Assertive sentence, present tense</td>
<td>… is…</td>
<td>Poverty is no disgrace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>…do…</td>
<td>Love conquers all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>He who…</td>
<td>He who climbs a ladder must begin with a single step.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It is + adj. + to do …</td>
<td>It is never crowded along the “extra mile.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice (No./%)</td>
<td>Directive sentence, without direct address</td>
<td>Be…/Do…</td>
<td>Be a generous friend and a fair enemy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Imperative)</td>
<td>Accept what comes to you each day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If…, …</td>
<td>If you feel you are right, stand firmly by your convictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Conditional or hypothetical)</td>
<td>If you speak honestly, everyone will listen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(It is) time to…</td>
<td>A good time to finish up old tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Euphemistic)</td>
<td>Travelling more often is important for your health and happiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophecy (No./%)</td>
<td>Predictive sentence, Future tense or present tense indicating future activities</td>
<td>You will… or Somebody/something will…</td>
<td>You will overcome difficult times. Soon life will become more interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>… is…</td>
<td>A cheerful message is on its way to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>… is going to…</td>
<td>Your present question marks are going to succeed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>… is doing…</td>
<td>Your golden opportunity is coming shortly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliment (No./%)</td>
<td>Descriptive sentence, present tense</td>
<td>You are…</td>
<td>You are not a person who can be ignored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You have…</td>
<td>You have a deep appreciation of the arts and music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Rarely do great beauty and great virtue dwell together as they do in you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor (No./%)</td>
<td>Multiple patterns</td>
<td></td>
<td>About time I got out of that cookie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ads (No./%)</td>
<td>Multiple patterns</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyed the meal? Buy one to go too.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is shown in the table, most of the philosophical fortune cookie sayings (wisdom) are narrated in an assertive mode. The use of the present tense indicates the saying as a fact or a proposition, which increases the indisputability of the wisdom the fortune cookie aims to convey. As for the prophecy, its predictive features are typically presented in the use of the future tense or the syntactic structures that indicate future conditions.

Special attention is paid to the advisory and the complimentary fortune cookie sayings.
While the majority of advice is written in the imperative mode without direct addressing to the audience, some advice is presented in more euphemistic manners. For example, other than giving direct orders, the advisory sayings with “If…, …” structure provides certain circumstances (conditional) for the enactment of the advice or the positive outcome if the suggestive action is carried out (hypothetical), which serves as an invitation to conduct certain behavior. Similarly, the sayings starting with “it is (better/important/time…) to do…” implicitly conveys the expectation for the audience to take the advice.

So far, we can see two distinctive communication styles in the advisory fortune cookie sayings—the European American directness (94/120) and the Chinese indirection (26/120). While directness is defined as one of the thirteen key values Americans live by (Kohls), indirection is often linked to the “Chinese preference for harmony and stability” (Mao, Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie 60). Except for the maintenance of harmony, the Chinese indirection may also be a result of the “shui (说)” strategy dating back to the Warrior States Period in Ancient China. According to Xing Lu, “shui” as a technique of persuasion, features “an analysis of advantages and disadvantages for the persuadee” and appeals to the audience with “utilitarian considerations and an analysis of practical benefits” (81). Such technique is applied to the euphemistic patterns of the advisory fortune cookie sayings: “if you want to accomplish X, do Y” or “it is better to do X because it will bring Y benefits.”

Similar distinctions also occur in the genre of compliments. Although people from all countries and cultures desire being recognized, it is the ways of making compliments that manifest cultural differences. Among 42 entries of fortune cookie compliments, over two thirds make direct comments on other’s goodness, while one third of them are addressed in an indirect way, even though they are positive (see table 2). For example, instead of using the commenting structure of “you are + adjective” (e.g. “you are the best”) or “you have certain personality” (e.g. “you have an unusually magnetic personality”), the fortune cookie articulates “your smile brings happiness to everyone you meet.”

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>No. (%)</th>
<th>Directive (No./%)</th>
<th>Indirect (No./%)</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>16 (38.1)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Creative, high-minded, talented, vigorous, eloquent, skillful, well-judged, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociability</td>
<td>11 (26.2)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Adventurous, influential, popular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual goodness</td>
<td>9 (21.4)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Artist, happiness, patience, understanding, beauty, virtue, generosity, innocence, honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6 (14.3)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Emotional, quiet, unobtrusive, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42 (100)</td>
<td>29/69.0</td>
<td>13/31.0</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Yin and Miike points out, in U.S American culture, “people are expected to impress others within a short period of time in social and professional settings …the unique quality of an individual will not be acknowledged until it is displayed in communication” (29). Directness thus can be assumed as a typical communication style in the U.S. society. On the contrary, in certain society such as China, attention is mainly gained through “respect and prestige commanded by a
person’s virtue or morality” (deeds) instead of verbal communication (ibid. 29). In addition, the traditional view of maintaining a harmonious relationship between each other enables people to behave modestly—neither too bold nor too conservative.

Mao warns that such kind of comparison may “runs the risk of over-generalizing each communicative style and of decontextualizing its internal complexities” (Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie 62). Nevertheless, for the specific purpose of revealing the imbalanced contrast, it is inevitable to take the risk. To be noted, by attaching “European-American” and “Chinese” to directness and indirection respectively, I am not acclaiming that directness is the exclusive communication feature of the European Americans, nor is indirection unique to the Chinese. However, considering the respective rhetorical tradition, it is reasonable to state that directness is the “importantly present” (Hall and Ames xv) communication style for Americans, so is indirection for the Chinese.

It is from such coexistence of Chinese and American rhetorical styles in the syntactic patterns that Chinese American rhetoric comes into play. Although we cannot ascertain that all the indirect advice/compliments are written by Chinese or Chinese Americans while those directive sayings are composed by Americans, there indeed exists a power asymmetry between the two communication styles in the fortune cookie sayings. According to the statistic result, the imperative form of advisory and complimentary fortune cookie sayings (123 entries) in the database outnumbers other syntactic patterns (39 entries) in the same category, which shows the dominant position of directness in the fortune cookie advice. Such preference is clearly stated in the advice of the use of words: “be direct, usually one can accomplish more that way.” In this case, the fortune cookie may serve as a platform for what Mao calls the “reflective encounters” of two different rhetorical patterns, and the Chinese American rhetoric (as a hybrid of two cultures and a representation of power dynamics) is being enacted through the fortune cookies.

**Thematic Patterns and Cultural Values in Fortune Cookie Sayings**

In Yin and Miike’s study, themes in one category are exclusive to another (e.g. prophecies about money, prosperity and romance; compliments on people’s sociability and ability; advice on life and people, and wisdoms about maxims, happiness and time). However, with an examination of the fortune cookie sayings in each genre (local level) as well as the overall database (global level), I notice that fortune cookie sayings in different genres are interrelated and interacted with one another (especially wisdoms, advice and prophecy). Moreover, they are more or less related to human activities such as human’s attitudes toward life, human’s relations with others, human minds, and human’s personalities, which demonstrates a state of what Ang calls “togetherness-in-difference.”

Another major scheme I am to examine is the cultural values embedded in the themes of fortune cookie sayings. According to Clyde Kluckhohn, “value” is defined as “a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action” (395). In other words, “values” can be used as criteria for “cognitive, affective, or behavioral judgments” to take certain action out of available options (Kuzio 33). As Hall and Ames state, these values are shaped under particular historical and cultural circumstances, and will “continue to qualify our cultural and intercultural understandings in significant manners” (xvii). Therefore, although there exists certain basic values that are recognized as “culturally universal” (Schwartz), each culture has its own preference of “value orientation”—the “complex but definitely patterned (rank-ordered) principles… which give order and direction to the ever-flowing stream of human acts.
and thoughts as these relate to the solution of “common human problems” (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 4). Based on such an assumption, I will look into the cultural values embedded in the themes to examine the value orientations (either congruent or conflictive) of fortune cookie sayings, and to identify the values of important presence revealed in the database.

**Overview of the Data**

Wisdom, as the largest category of fortune cookie sayings (155 entries or 34.7%), covers all the four topics of human behaviors mentioned above. Most of them focus on non-material matters such as human attitudes (toward time, work, adversity, changes, happiness and wealth), human relations (with self and others), human minds (hope, faith, dream, etc.), and human personalities that is universally recognized (courage, humor, integrity, talented, etc.) or disliked (anger, greed, jealousy and overconfidence). Interestingly, each theme of wisdoms in the fortune cookie sayings has its advice (120 or 26.8%) and prophecy (110 or 24.6%) counterparts, as is shown in table 3. For example, as the wisdom tells, “meeting adversity well is the source of your strength,” the fortune cookie accordingly suggests the audience to “instead of worrying and agonizing, move ahead constructively” and foretells “you will overcome difficult times.” The wisdom articulates the “what” (including the knowledge, experience or the truth value) of the theme, while the advice provides specific instructions on how to process the wisdom. As for prophecies, since 99.1% of them are positive predictions, they reflect human’s deep expectations to their future.

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>No. (%)</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Wisdom</th>
<th>Advice</th>
<th>Prophecy</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human attitudes</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adversity</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human relations</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Self-other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-human</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Encouraged qualities</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discouraged qualities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human minds</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Mental support (faith, hope, dream, etc.)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L. Robert Kohls, the former director of International Programs in San Francisco State University, lists thirteen key values that Americans live by, as is shown in table 4. These thirteen values are formed under the influence of the ideology of American Dream, which originates from the Declaration of Independence in 1776, popularized by James Truslow Adams in 1931 and
continuously evolves in the 21 century (White and Hanson 3). As Adams depict, American Dream is defined as:

A dream of being able to grow to fullest development as man and woman, unhampered by the barriers which had slowly been erected in older civilizations, unrepressed by social orders which had developed for the benefit of classes rather than for the simple human being of any and every class. (qtd. in: White and Hanson 3)

Most of the values are dominantly revealed in the fortune cookie sayings, with a few contrasts against them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value 1: Personal control over the environment/responsibility</th>
<th>Value 3: Time and its control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value 2: Change seen as natural and positive</td>
<td>Value 5: Individualism/independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value 4: Equality/fairness</td>
<td>Value 7: Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value 6: Self-help/initiative</td>
<td>Value 9: Action/Work Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value 8: Future Orientation</td>
<td>Value 11: Directness/openness/honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value 10: Informality</td>
<td>Value 13: Materialism/Acquisitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value 11: Practicality/Efficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Since the genres of wisdom, advice, and prophecy make up the majority of fortune cookie sayings (86.1%), in the following sections, I will examine the consistence and incongruence of cultural values through these three genres.

**Attitude toward Time**

In their 1961 work *Variations in Value Orientations*, Kluckhohn and Strodbeck divide their interpretations of “the temporal focus of human life” into three ranges (past, present, and future), stating that each society has their own “preferential ordering of the alternatives” (14). Such time orientations are best manifest in the wisdom and advice of fortune cookie sayings (see table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Orientation</th>
<th>Past (No./%)</th>
<th>Present (No./%)</th>
<th>Future (No./%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>2 (6.4)</td>
<td>8 (45.2)</td>
<td>9 (48.4)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (35.2)</td>
<td>6 (35.2)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2 (6.4)</td>
<td>14 (45.2)</td>
<td>15 (48.4)</td>
<td>31 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Kluckhohn and Strodbeck, Gallagher, and Hill, people in a society with past-time orientation advocate to draw the values they live by and learn from history, and they strive to preserve traditional teachings and beliefs. Among 31 entries of philosophical and advisory fortune cookies sayings pertaining to time orientation (see table 5), only two pieces of
wisdom reflect the past-time orientation, stating to learn from the past and the mistakes we have made:

a. How can you have a beautiful ending without making beautiful mistakes?

b. The best prophet of the future is the past.

On the other hand, based on Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s theory, people in society with future-time orientation prefer to plan ahead and seek new ways to replace the old. They believe that planning and goal setting make it possible to accomplish miracles, to change and to grow; a little sacrifice today will bring a better tomorrow. 48.4% of the selected fortune cookie sayings about time are under this category. For instance,

a. Working out the kinks today will make for a better tomorrow.

b. Find a peaceful place where you can make plans for the future.

As is shown in table 5, 45.2% of fortune cookie sayings are present-time oriented; such an orientation encourages people to make the most of the resources they have owned at present, seize every opportunity and enjoy every moment of today. For example,

a. The man who waits till tomorrow misses the opportunities of today.

b. Live each day well and wisely.

One of the values that Americans live by listed by Kohls is time and its control, which echoes this present-time orientation. As Kohls illustrates, time is of utmost importance for the average Americans; they stress the value in using time wisely, setting and working toward specific goals, and expending the energy and time today so as to obtain the “delayed gratification” in the future (Value 3). Another value that Americans think highly of in Kohl’s index is the future orientation. According to Kohl’s illustration, Americans are seldom satisfied with the present situation; they tend to regard the present condition as preparatory to a later and greater event, which will “eventually culminate in something even more worthwhile” (Value 8).

In the fortune cookie database, most of the fortune cookie sayings about time are future-oriented (48.4%) and present-oriented (45.2%), while only a small portion of them focus on the past (6.4%). It would be arbitrary to state that the present and future-time orientations are exclusive to American culture, while the past-time orientation is exotic. However, the disproportion seen here proves that in the American milieu, the content of fortune cookie sayings is more likely to conform to the local values instead of presenting the differences, as what their distributors (e.g. Chinese American restaurants) will do. To be noted, the distinctions of time orientation are not mechanically segmental; rather, they may be best visualized as successive points on a continuum. The imbalanced proportion of fortune cookie sayings to some extent reflects the asymmetrical coexistence of different cultural values in terms of time preference—the dominant present-to-future time orientation and the less represented past-to-present time orientation.

**Attitude toward Change**

As Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck point out, a future-oriented society is seldom content with the past (15). Therefore, people in such society keep challenging themselves and urge a change of reality. Change thus constitutes another value that is commonly embraced by Americans, which, according to Kohls, is seen as nature and positive and is strongly linked to “development, improvement, progress, and growth” (Value 2). Reflected in the fortune cookie sayings, changes and adventures are the typical themes:

a. Life to you is a dashing and bold adventure.

b. Now is the time to try something new.

c. There are big changes ahead for you. They will be good ones!
However, there also exist a few fortune cookies (3 items)—despite its scarcity—that advice people to accept the reality without making efforts in changing it, which is in opposition to the above value. For example,

a. Accept what comes to you each day.

b. Face facts with dignity.

c. There is a time to be practical now.

Regarding the attitude toward change, the fortune cookie sayings display two different and imbalanced value orientations—to pursue the changes (31 items), on the one hand, and to keep the status quo, on the other. Embracing changes and adventures in life has become a typical lifestyle of Americans, which is deeply rooted in the American dream—to keep looking for “a dream of land” where life will be better and fuller for every person with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement (Adams, qtd. in: White and Hanson 3). Conforming to the representative American values, the former (pursuing changes) takes a dominant place in the fortune cookie sayings.

**Attitude toward Work**

Another typical theme in the fortune cookie sayings relates to human’s attitudes toward work. All the fortune cookies in this category advocate the virtue of hard work and share the belief that anyone can achieve success and greatness if they do their best. For example,

a. Never give up. Always find a reason to keep trying.

b. Your hard work will get payoff today.

c. If you don’t do it excellently, don’t do it at all.

Action/work orientation is also on Kohls’ index of American values. As Kohls explains, under this orientation, action is seen to be superior to inaction (Value 9); hardworking and persistence are encouraged while rest and relaxation only take a small portion in one’s life. Relaxation must be served as “recreating” the ability to work harder and more productively (Value 9). For example,

a. The simplest answer is to act.

b. The race is not always to the swift, but to those who keep on running.

c. Rest is a good thing, but boredom is its brother.

Accordingly, under the action/work orientation, the fortune cookies urge the audience to stop procrastinating (e.g. Finish your own work on hand, don’t be greedy), take timely actions (e.g. Stop wishing, start doing), keep working hard (e.g. Never give up. Always find a reason to keep trying), and strive for excellence (e.g. If you don’t do it excellently, don’t do it at all).

The value of action/work orientation can be seen as a direct result of pursuing the “American Dream.” The connotation of “American Dream” might have evolved constantly since the publish of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, but its key value remains, which believes that everyone has a chance of success, there are ample opportunities to do so, and their hard work will be rewarded. The United States has long been considered as a land of opportunity, which attracts thousands of immigrants coming to seek for a better development. The work orientation, as a means of realizing their “American Dream,” may be the most ubiquitous value shared by all Americans including immigrants. Although the emphasis on hard working and persistence can be found in other cultures as well, it is the seeking for realizing “American dreams” in different historical periods (e.g. the independence of the United States, the westward movement, the immigration waves, etc.) that renders work orientation its “American” value.

**Attitude toward Adversity**

It is noticeable that the attitudes toward adversity and failure conveyed in the wisdoms
are consistent. The related sayings view adversity as a must pass on the way to success. It is a temporary rather than a permanent state. For example,
   a. If you want the rainbow, you have to tolerate the rain.
   b. Meeting adversity well is the source of your strength.
   c. Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.

Either incidentally or intentionally, in addition to the positive attitudes toward difficulty that are commonly viewed by Americans, these wisdom sayings entail a Chinese Daoist worldview. As Ames and Hall interpret,

[The Daoist rhetoric] encourages a comprehensive, processual view of experience that requires a full understanding of the larger picture and the ability to locate and appreciate the particular event within it. This broad view of the field of experience allows one to contextualize particular events, and it provides the peripheral vision needed to stay focused at the center while at the same time anticipating future turns. (33).

Based on this understanding, adversity or failure is not necessarily negative. Under certain circumstance, they can turn into the advantages that contribute to success (e.g. “meeting adversity well is the source of your strength”). Furthermore, the fortune cookie wisdoms in this category also present a yin-yang dynamic, where reality is a ceaseless alternation between “rising and falling...equilibrium” (Combs 76) and the opposites constantly blend and interdepend with each other. For instance,
   a. Failure is the mother of all success.
   b. Difficulty at the beginning usually means ease at the end.

In terms of advice, the fortune cookies suggest two distinctive approaches to dealing with problems—to prevent problems beforehand (e.g. “Be on the lookout for coming events; They cast their shadows”) or to solve problems after they happen (e.g. “Instead of worrying and agonizing, move ahead constructively”). Both approaches admit that the adversity is temporary; with appropriate measures, it can be overcome and the situation will take a favorable turn.

To briefly mention, another set of sayings that related to such “eventful” and processual worldview is the wisdom of accumulation:
   a. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.
   b. Two small jumps are sometimes better than one big leap.

Ames and Hall consider such “inseparability of continuity and multiplicity” (178) as the awareness of “focus/field,” which foregrounds the relational character of the web of events and the contributions of “focus” (minutia) to the “field” (the process to a goal).

As so far, the wisdoms of the attitudes toward adversity and failure have conformably reflected a processual worldview. They might be written by Chinese or Chinese Americans, who take Daoism as a mental support to overcome the difficulties of survival. However, they can also be regarded as a spiritual legacy that is left by the pioneers who first come to this land and build up the country. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that in the category of attitudes toward adversity, there appears a combination of Chinese thinking patterns and American values.

**Relations with Self**

The second largest topic of the fortune cookie wisdoms and advice describe the relationship between human beings. I integrate the focus of self into this group in that the “inner self” can also be considered as an unfamiliar “other” that deserves to be discovered.

The self-orientation reflected in the fortune cookie sayings resemble what Schwartz defined as the value of “self-direction,” which “derives from organismic needs for control and mastery and interactional requirements of autonomy and independence” (Schwartz 5). The most
often seen topoi regarding “self” in the fortune cookie sayings are “know yourself” (22/38) and “decision making” (16/38). Inconsistency exists regarding these two subthemes. While some of the cookies (15/22) suggest knowing one’s own potentiality and go direct for their dreams, some (6/19) express the need to know and accept the present self (7/22). For example,

- Discover the power within yourself. (Know your potentiality)
- Become who you are. (Accept the present self)

Regarding the decision-making process, while 13 out of 15 entries encourage following one’s own instincts and be assertive of their decisions, only two fortune sayings suggest obeying parents’ will.

- You don’t need the answers to all of life’s questions. Just ask your father what to do.
- Go ask your mom.

Overall, the “self” values embedded in the fortune cookie sayings reflect the dominant individual orientation, which, according to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, emphasizes on the right to make decisions independently from others and the complete control over one’s destiny. Kohls includes the individualism and self-control into his index of American values. The former sees the uniqueness and potentials of individuals (Value 5) while the latter gives credits to those who gain achievement by themselves without any outside assistance (Value 6), even in terms of decision making. While most fortune cookie sayings reflect this self-initiative value that is well accepted in America, the hierarchical orientation (obedience to parents), although very inconspicuous, represents a tiny space of incongruence of value preference in the decision making progress.

Relations with Others

In the 54 entries of fortune cookie sayings describing the relation between individual and others, more than 90% of them encourage making connections with and being friendly to others, among which 38.9% are specifically about friendship, one-third are about reciprocity, and 27.8% are the foretelling of romance and an unexpected relationship. Conflict values are found in the previous two themes.

Among the 21 entries about friendship, 16 (76.2%) of them suggest people be open and inclusive to friends, and predict the coming of friendship (e.g. “the time is right to make new friends”), while the rest five entries warn the audience to be cautious when making friends (e.g. “prosperity makes friends and adversity tries them”). According to Yin and Miike, under the guidance of Confucian principles “ren” (benevolence, compassion, and duty) and “yi” (righteousness, justice, and loyalty), trust and loyalty are the virtue of one’s relationship with others (33). On the other hand, since family is defined in Confucianism as the basic unit of Chinese society, it draws distinct boundaries between the in-group and the out-group (ibid. 33). The cautiousness of making friends displays a distrust of the out-group. Therefore, while friendship is regarded as a universal value shared by all cultures (including the American culture), the small portion of inconsistence does exist and the paradox it produces (the trust of friends versus the distrust of the out-group) is amplified in the fortune cookie sayings.

Another major theme of human relationship with others is cooperation and reciprocity, which advocates sharing with others, helping others and appreciating other’s help (11 entries). For example,

- You cannot become rich except by enriching others.
- Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.

The sayings about reciprocity convey that “giving” is a means of gaining more and it will ultimately be rewarded.
Although competition is considered as one of the American values, it is to a large extent downgraded in this category. Most of fortune cookie sayings of human’s relations with others emphasize the mutual benefits and universal equality between individuals, and speak highly of the advantages of cooperation. Only six pieces advocate competition and stress on the hierarchy between human beings. For example,

a. Hone your competitive instincts.
b. Better be the head of a chicken than the tail of an ox.

Instead of stating there is a dominant Chinese collective ideology in the fortune cookie sayings of human relations with others while a prominent individualism in the sayings about self, I would rather consider them as a result of practicing the discourse of “shu” (“恕”) or reciprocity, which evokes an analogy “within the filed of the relationship constituted by self and other” (Hall and Ames, Thinking through Confucius 286). Here I align with Mao to understand “shu” (or reciprocity) beyond a Confucius concept of realizing humaneness in the specific Chinese concept. Rather, it is a discursive strategy that “enables us to overcome the ideology of individualism which has underpinned much of our borderland conversation” and “points to a different space where self and other are irreducibly linked to each other in an ever-changing, every shifting circle of relations” (Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie 108). In other words, by practicing the discourse of “shu” (or reciprocity), the dominant ideology (e.g. competition) in the local context is understated, while the wishes of connecting with others (either through building up friendship or through mere give and take) can be heard. Thinking fortune cookies as a platform of rhetorical borderlands, the foregrounding of cooperating building friendship with others rather than competing with each other can be seen as a successful practice of the discourse of “shu,” and a nice try to reverse the discursive and ideological power asymmetry in the borderland.

**Universally Shared Themes and Values**

Except for the incongruent culture values in the themes shown above, the fortune cookies also include certain common themes and values that are recognized by different cultures and societies. Most of them are located in the categories of human attitudes toward happiness, human personalities and human minds. For example, in terms of pursuing happiness, the fortune cookie sayings emphasize the importance of happiness (e.g. “A merry heart does good like a medicine”) as a mental support and the non-material factors that lead to it (sharing, mundanity, outlook, etc.). Material wealth (i.e. money) is not mentioned and it is no longer considered as the source of happiness in these two aspects.

As for human personalities, overconfidence, anger, greed and jealousy are commonly criticized because they cause blindness. In the present database, the fortune cookie sayings celebrate such qualities as courage, diversity, humor, integrity, love, passion, punctuality, responsibility, innocence and talents, which are commonly recognized by all human beings, regardless cultural and national differences.

Regarding the category of human minds, the focus is on the power of faith (“fear can keep us up all night long, but faith makes one fine pillow”) and hope (“hope brings about a better future”). The common view conveyed through these sayings is that powerful human minds (e.g. concentration and determination) provide endless motivation and mental support to the success of individuals. For example,

a. A focused mind is one of the most powerful forces in the universe.
b. Determination is the wake-up call to the human will.
c. Action speaks nothing, without the Motive.
The fondness of happiness, good personalities and mental strengths are not cultural particulars; they have their universal appeals. No contradiction is found in these three themes. These common values also reveal that cultural differences become less explicit when the inner world of human beings comes into the picture.

Summary

The previous section has shown that fortune cookie sayings are a combination of various genres including wishes, prophecies, wisdom, advice, humor, and ads, where the first four take up more than 95% of the collected data. Each genre has various but stable syntactic patterns to stress the rhetorical effects of fortune cookie sayings. In the genre of advice and compliment, in particular, two distinct communication styles are revealed: the dominant directness which is believed to often appear in American society and the less-representative indirection that is more commonly practiced in the Chinese tradition.

Similar to proverbs, the sayings such as wisdom, advice and prophecy are often the “indigenous, localized expressions that often encapsulate cultural values and ideals,” which “may allow for the clearer identification of value priority differences among different groups or types of individuals” (Weng and Kulich 69). Other than the generic and syntactic patterns, the hybridized characters of fortune cookie sayings are also reflected in the thematic patterns as well as the variations and preferences in the cultural values. Examining these patterns in the wisdom and advice can elicit productive results of the hybridized values of fortune cookie sayings.

In terms of thematic patterns, each genre contains certain themes that are both celebrated in Chinese and American cultures, especially for those related to human personalities and the power of human minds. The data also identifies the values that are more “importantly present” in American culture (e.g. the work orientation and the longing for changes and adventures) and that in Chinese culture (e.g. the Daoist processual worldview of adversity and the emphasis of reciprocity on the self-other relationship), although the latter takes quite a less sizable portion than the former. As for the cultural value orientation related to time and self-regard, the fortune cookie sayings demonstrate an overt preference of present-to-future-time orientation (compared to past-time orientation) and of the individualist thinking on self, which are highly in accordance with the values Americans live by.

The uneven constitution of cultural values in the fortune cookie sayings deepens the hybridized character of fortune cookie sayings. The values of different cultures do not contribute equally to the making of fortune cookie sayings. On the contrary, the power imbalance of cultural values always exists. It is reasonable to analogize such hybridized phenomenon in fortune cookie sayings to the American milieu, where various ethnic groups (including Chinese Americans) contribute collaboratively but unevenly to the diversification of American culture.

In the following chapter, I will combine the result of the textual analysis with the analysis of the fortune cookie per se (considering it as discursive practice) and put in context the historical and sociocultural resources (considering it as social practice) to interpret the fortune cookie as a microcosm of Chinese American rhetoric.
Chapter Four: Interpreting the Fortune Cookie as a Cultural Hybrid

In the previous chapter, I see the fortune cookie as text and demonstrate the disproportionate representation of American values in the fortune cookie sayings. Meanwhile, the attribute “Chinese” is still often attached to the term “fortune cookies.” Therefore, where is Chineseness in all this? How is it conveyed through fortune cookies? How is Chinese American rhetoric practiced through the interconnections between fortune cookie sayings and the fortune cookie itself? To answer these questions, in this chapter, I move forward to the next two stages of Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework—perceiving the fortune cookie as a discursive practice and further a sociocultural practice.

Fortune Cookie as a Discursive Practice

According to Fairclough, discursive practice, which “straddles the division between society and culture on the one hand, and discourse, language and text on the other” (“Critical Analysis of Media Discourse” 313), involves processes of text production, distribution, and consumption in society. Considering the fortune cookie as discursive practice, I intend to investigate how “Chineseness” is embedded in fortune cookies during the above processes and how it complicates the construction of cultural identity of fortune cookies.

The Production of Fortune Cookies

In the process of fortune cookie production, the fortune cookie manufacturer plays a significant role in creating the sense of “Chineseness” in fortune cookies. It is noted that the main large fortune cookie manufacturers are run by Chinese Americans. To name a few, Wonton Food Inc., the largest fortune cookie manufacturer in the United States (“Our Story”), was established by a Cantonese in 1973; Baily International Inc., the major manufacturer in the Midwest, was founded by a Taiwanese in 1983, who continued his business back to Taiwan in 2010 (Wang and He).

Most of these manufacturers are family business. For example, founded in 1917 and based in Seattle, Tsue Chong Company (targeting the Pacific Northwest market) has been operated through four generations by the Louie family (immigrating from Toishan, Guangdong) (“Tsue Chong Company History”). Peking Noodle Company Inc. (started in 1924 in Los Angeles area), similarly, has come to its third generation run by the Woo family (“The Peking Noodle Company History”). As is shown in each company’s website, in addition to producing fortune cookies, these enterprises also manufacture other Chinese (or Chinese American) products such as dry noodles, egg/spring roll and wonton wrappers, bean sprouts, etc.

Interestingly, all the listed manufacturers own a name that can evoke a sense of Chineseness among the audience. While “wonton” refers to a traditional Chinese food and “Peking” is drawn from China’s capital city, “Baily” and “Tsue Chong” are the transliteration of the Chinese auspicious words “百利” and “聚昌,” literally meaning “large profits” and “affluent prosperity.”

Admittedly, there does exist certain manufacturers that are not run by Chinese Americans, and the debate about the origin of fortune cookies is still undergoing. However, since the mass production of fortune cookies mainly concentrate on these large Chinese American manufacturers and the other related Chinese food business, people have formed a general impression that the fortune cookie is a Chinese product regardless of its actual origin—which might not be concerned unless it is specially mentioned.
The Distribution of Fortune Cookies

As is revealed in the previous chapter, fortune cookies are mainly served in Chinese restaurants in the United States. Therefore, these Chinese American restaurants become the major agent to circulate fortune cookies. “Chineseness” is exercised through three functions the fortune cookie plays in the Chinese American restaurants.

Firstly, the fortune cookie is used as a marketing strategy of Chinese food. As is shown in the analysis of fortune cookie sayings, most of the fortune cookies make positive prophecies and adorable compliments, which according to Yin and Miike, creates a “discursive relationship among fortune, Chinese food, and the customer” (22). By associating Chinese food with good fortunes, the fortune cookie evokes a good feeling among the customers of eating Chinese food and thus increases the chances of a second visit. The analysis also reveals a new genre (ads) among the selected fortune cookie sayings, which allures the customers to consume more. For example,

a. A good way to keep healthy is to eat more Chinese food.

b. Did you remember to order your take out also?

In addition, cracking a fortune cookie and reading the fortune aloud have become an exclusive table manner in Chinese American restaurant. They can neither be found in Chinese traditions nor in American customs. In spite of the fact that Chinese restaurants have a history of more than 150 years in the United States, for those who less often dine at Chinese restaurants, the unfamiliar table manner can still evoke a sense of exotic mystery among them. Experiencing unfamiliarity thus becomes another sound attraction for customers to dine in Chinese restaurants.

Secondly, the fortune cookie is often used as a way of promoting Chinese-related products. For example, as the Sino-American co-produced animation Kung Fu Panda 3 was about to release at the beginning of 2016, Wonton Food Inc. collaborated with the animation producer DreamWorks to manufacture a hundred million fortune cookies with Kung Fu Panda themes. They were distributed to customers through Chinese restaurants from December 2015 to March 2016. These cookies share the same genre categorization with ordinary cookies but feature (1) a beginning with “Po says” in Po’s tones, (2) a reflection of the characteristics of the main character (slow, humor, and a Chinese food lover), and (3) the reference to other characters and plots in the movie. For example,

a. Po says: It does not matter how slowly you go if you get to the top.

b. Po says: Feast upon life’s dumplings before they get tough to chew.

c. Po says: Peace can be found at Mr. Ping’s noodle shop.

Through these fortune cookies, the promotion of the movie permeated people’s daily life. Although they might arouse annoyance among the customers who prefer to get an ordinary fortune with wisdom or sound blessing, the Kung Fu Panda cookies indeed increase the potential audiences of the movie. Jianrong Chen, the president of Chinese American Restaurant Association, revealed the purpose of this fortune cookie promotion—to enlarge the influence of Chinese American culture as well as Chinese American cuisines ("Kung Fu Panda Fortune Cookies").

Thirdly, the fortune cookie can also be used as a portal to promote particular cultural values around the country. In 2016, Panda Express, the largest fast casual Chinese restaurant chain in the U.S., launched a fortune cookie marketing campaign (from July 20 to August 10) to foster the awareness of gratitude and generosity. During the campaign, they replaced traditional

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Po is the main character of the movie.
fortune cookies with “Fortune Cookies” that featured “FortuNotes” with messages of gratitude and giving (Jennings). Guests were invited to tag anyone they felt thankful for on social media with the hashtag “#ShareGoodFortune.” According to Peggy Cherng, the co-chair and co-CEO of Panda Restaurant Group, the aim of the campaign is “to inspire guests and associates to take an intentional pause, show appreciation and recognize how even the smallest act of thoughtfulness and generosity can enrich lives and trigger impactful acts of kindness” (qtd. in: Jennings). The fortune cookie as a discourse fulfills both functions in this campaign. It not only promotes the Chinese restaurant and its food, but also advances the Chinese reciprocity by exerting a positive impact on the community and further on the world (Elavia).

The Consumption of Fortune Cookies

In Chapter Three, I have demonstrated the existence of dominant American values in the fortune cookie sayings. Although the fortune cookie packaging and papers are designed or selected by the fortune cookie manufacturers, they directly take effect on the customers. In other words, when a fortune cookie is handed over to a customer, in addition to the dessert, the packaging and the paper of fortune cookie sayings are also consumed. Therefore, I place the packaging and paper design of fortune cookies under the consumption process of fortune cookies, aiming to emphasize their rhetorical effects on the consumers.

The packaging of fortune cookies

Opposite to the verbal discourse, the fortune cookie itself is visually presented as a Chinese-related artifact. Table 6 lists four types of fortune cookies (see figures below) that are produced by the main fortune cookie manufacturers in the United States and are largely distributed to the Chinese restaurants all over the country.

Table 6
Main Fortune Cookie Manufacturers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Targeting areas</th>
<th>Fortune Cookie Brand</th>
<th>Picture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Wonton Food Inc.</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Golden Bowl</td>
<td>Figure 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baily International Inc.</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>Baily</td>
<td>Figure 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsue Chong Company</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>Rose Brand</td>
<td>Figure 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keefer Court Food Inc.</td>
<td>Upper Midwest</td>
<td>Golden Plaque</td>
<td>Figure 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What these fortune cookies share in common is that the Chinese characters of the brand name are imprinted in their packaging. When these fortune cookies are circulated in Chinese restaurants, customers tend to form an immediate sense of Chineseness through the linguistic message sent from the characters before they crack the cookie. Then coupling with the English brand name aside, they may soon realize that the fortune cookie in hand is produced by Chinese (American) manufacturers, and thus regard it as a Chinese (American) product, even though they might not fully grasp the meaning of the Chinese characters. Admittedly, there are thousands of newly developed local fortune cookie factories that are not run by Chinese or Chinese Americans. Customers can by no means find any trace of Chinese features on their products. However, due to the long history of those major fortune cookie manufacturers, the impression has been formed at the outset of the popularization of the fortune cookies, which is long before the emergence of the local companies.
Tracing back to the fortune cookie history, Jennifer 8 Lee narrates that it is the American customers who helped promote fortune cookies in the local Chinese restaurants to all over the country. According to Lee,

[During the World War II fortune cookies] were a regional specialty, served in California Chinese restaurants, where they were known as “fortune tea cakes.” There, according to later interviews with fortune cookie makers, they were encountered by military personnel on the way back from the Pacific Theater. When these veterans returned home, they would ask their local Chinese restaurants why they didn’t serve fortune cookies as the San Francisco restaurants did…the cookies rapidly spread across the country. (Lee “Solving a Riddle”)

The narration indicates that before fortune cookies became popular nationwide, they have been considered as a specialty in Chinese restaurants. Up to now, cracking fortune cookies and read the fortunes aloud have been ritualized and stationed in the Chinese restaurants. Only in the Chinese restaurants will customers have the certain expectation that they would get fortune cookies after a meal. Regardless of their origin, Chineseness has long been inserted in the small artifact. In this case, the association of fortune cookies with Chinese culture will be continuously consolidated as long as they are served in the Chinese restaurants.
The elements of fortune cookie papers

As is analyzed in the previous chapter, the collected fortune cookie sayings have displayed the dominant preference of American values and universal themes that are mostly embraced in the domestic context. In this case, Chineseness is less found from the contents of fortune cookie sayings but from the key elements of the contents.

Among the 447 pieces of fortune sayings in the database, 398 entries have their equivalent images of fortune cookie papers (for the remaining 49 pieces, only the information of restaurants they are collected from can be found). In addition to the regular formats such as colors, fonts and layouts, the fortune cookie papers also display the diversity in terms of the key elements they include. With an examination of the 398 images, it is found that four types of fortune cookie papers are most commonly seen in the market (See table 7).

According to the statistics, the most common type of fortune cookies include a short sentence of fortune sayings, a series of lucky numbers, and a section of learning Chinese. For the “learning Chinese” part, the fortune cookie gives out a word with its Chinese mandarin pronunciation (pin-yin), the Chinese characters, and its English meaning (the sequence of each may vary in the papers produced by different factories). With the addition of type four, where a Chinese translation is attached under the fortune sayings, nearly three quarters of fortune cookies circulated in the market are Chinese-included. Customers may not necessarily practice pronouncing the Chinese word or writing the Chinese characters, but the inclusion of Chinese
elements will inevitably strengthen their impression of Chineseness in the fortune cookies in general.

Table 7
Key Elements of Fortune Cookie Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Fortune sayings</th>
<th>Lucky numbers</th>
<th>Learning Chinese</th>
<th>Chinese translation</th>
<th>No. (%)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 1</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>283 (71.1)</td>
<td>Figure 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>85 (21.3)</td>
<td>Figure 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>17 (4.3)</td>
<td>Figure 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 4</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>13 (3.3)</td>
<td>Figure 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>398 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary
In this section, I trace the Chineseness of fortune cookies through the processes of its production, distribution, and consumption. In this regard, the fortune cookie is not simply a dessert served in the Chinese restaurant, but also a discursive practice that contextualizes all the rhetorical efforts during above processes and generates a new knowledge (i.e. the fortune cookie is a symbol of Chinese culture) that may be different from its origins. However, the textual level of fortune cookies—the fortune cookie sayings—displays the other way. How the dominant Americanness in the fortune cookie sayings and the Chineseness in the fortune cookie artifacts interact with each other would be the major concern in the following section.

Fortune Cookie as a Sociocultural Practice
In the third stage of Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework, discourse is seen as sociocultural practice, which concerns the underlining potential of discourse to reveal the power imbalance between the dominant and marginalized groups and the possibilities of change and resistance. Seeing the fortune cookie as sociocultural practice, in this chapter, other than examining the micro-level of text, I will recontextualize the macro-level of historical, social, and cultural factors that complicate the interaction between Americaness and Chineseness in the fortune cookies. In so doing, I intend to display the main characteristics of Chinese American rhetoric thorough the fortune cookies.

Fortune Cookie as an Artifact Emerging from Rhetorical Borderlands
The nationwide popularization of fortune cookies starts from Chinese restaurants, which are still the prime sites for fortune cookies to be circulated today. According to Haiming Liu and Lianlian Lin, restaurant business was “one of the earliest economic enterprises pursued by pioneer Chinese immigrants” who originally came to the States for the transcontinental railroad construction and the California Gold Rush (136). Later, during the Exclusion period (1882-1943), due to the racial discrimination, many Chinese immigrants were driven into menial service jobs, and the restaurants became one of the limited available employment opportunities for them. In order to make a living in the United States, these Chinese restaurants started adapting the ingredients, flavors, and cookery of their dishes to meet local tastes. As the Chinese American dish Chop Suey became popular in the early 1900s, Chinese restaurants not merely served the
Chinese immigrants in Chinatown, but attracted numerous non-Chinese tourists and visitors who longed for an exotic dining experience (Liu and Lin 136-138).

As Samantha Barbas states, “more than mere eating establishments, [Chinese restaurants] have been important regional landmarks, community meeting spots, and cultural institutions” (669). In this sense, Chinese restaurants have become a site for the negotiation between cultures as well as “the formation of Chinese American ethnicity” (Liu 3). In this project, I align with Barbas to consider Chinese restaurants as the rhetorical borderlands, from which the cross-cultural interactions take place, and the boundary of “ethnic and cultural barriers” is crossed (669).

The borderlands are regarded as the space where “fixed and unitary identities are hybridized, sharp demarcations between self and other are unsettled, singular and absolute truths are ruptured, and so on” (Ang, *On not Speaking Chinese* 164). Chinese restaurants, as the anchor business in the history of Chinese Americans, not only witness but also afford a third space for the formation of Chinese American ethnicity, which was, according to Haiming Liu, “not a simple blending of Western and Asian cultures but a process in which Chinese immigrants and their descendants adapted to their social environments, built new identities, and new cultural sensibilities” (3). Such a process is reflected in the evolution of fortune cookies. Similar to Chop Suey, which Liu regards as “imagined authentic Chinese food” (1), the emergence of fortune cookies is a result of various social expectations: American diners desire Chinese food they believed to be authentic, while Chinese restaurant owners hope to accommodate American tastes and dining traditions (having dessert after a meal). As a transcultural artifact, the authenticity and cultural identity often lie in its imagined Chinese roots, while its popularity rests on how well the Chinese proprietors (both manufacturers or restaurant owners) adapt the food to the markets of local American communities. Fortune cookies thus become a visible and enduring emblem of Chinese American ethnicity—maintaining the Chineseness while developing the identification to Americaness.

As is pointed out previously, the Americaness of fortune cookies is mainly reflected in the fortune cookie sayings, while its Chineseness is kept in the outer appearance of the fortune cookies (including its packaging, forms of paper, etc.). Since the essence of fortune cookies is in the fortune cookie sayings, there exists a power imbalance between the representation of Americaness and that of Chineseness. As a site where fortune cookies are circulated around, and the ritual of reading fortune cookie sayings was enacted, Chinese restaurants thus serve as a rhetorical borderlands (or contact zones) for the negotiation process to take place and the power imbalance to become visible.

**Fortune Cookie as a Rhetoric of Becoming**

The feature of Chinese American rhetoric as a becoming process can be reflected in the fortune cookie sayings. In 2008, Yin and Miike have initiated a textual analysis of fortune cookie sayings with the data collected during the period of 1999 to 2004. A decade after their research, I reexamine the fortune cookie sayings collected from the website (fortunecookiemessage.com) where the sayings were posted since 2007. The result of my analysis shows certain differences from that of Yin and Miike’s.

According to table 8, in Yin and Miike’s research, prophecy constitutes the largest proportion (67.1%) followed by relatively average amount of wisdom (15.1%), advice (12.1%) and compliment (11.1%). In my collection of 447 fortune cookie sayings, however, wisdom occupies the majority (34.7%) while advice takes the second place (27.1%), both of which double their proportion compared to Yin and Miike’s counterparts. On the contrary, the
percentage of prophecy (24.4%) decreases dramatically in the new database while the ratio of compliments (9.4%) is slightly reduced. Except for the above four genres that have been identified by Yin and Miike’s, two new genres occur (humor and ads), in spite of the small proportion they hold in the new database.

Table 8
Comparison of the Categories of Fortune Cookie Sayings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>My study</th>
<th>Yin and Miike’s Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percentage (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophecy</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliment</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ads</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the name “fortune cookies” indicates, “fortune” (or positive prophecy) used to be the major genre of fortune cookies. This is reasonable when the fortune cookie just started its popularization around the country. For one thing, the activity of fortune telling conveyed a sense of oriental mysticism, which attracted customers who sought for an exotic experience. For another, considering the fortune cookie as a desert, good fortunes were associated with Chinese food, and they evoked good feelings about dining in Chinese restaurants. Fortune cookies thus were used as a marketing strategy to attract more non-Chinese customers. However, as Chinese food became a regular constituent of Americans’ dietary culture, the main function of fortune cookies shifts from evoking exoticism and mysticism to dealing with the mundane life, from giving abstract prophecy to providing practical wisdom and advice. The marketing function was condensed to the ads, and the genre of humor takes effects as a way of entertainment.

Another significant change in the fortune cookie sayings is about the monetary fortune. In Yin and Miike’s study, money is the most frequently recurring theme as a sign of good fortune (181 entries or 30.4%). Expressing the will of making money for survival and the wish of getting money without efforts are two major sub-themes. Yin and Miike point out that this type of fortune cookie sayings is “a manifestation of the constant concern about money that is shared by most immigrants” (24). In my archive, however, only five pieces reveal the attitudes toward wealth—three of them foretell a future with material comforts, while two of them emphasize spiritual wealth. For example,

a. You will spend old age in comfort and material wealth.
b. You will inherit a large sum of money.
c. You will have a long and wealthy life.
d. Poverty is no disgrace.
e. Broke is only temporary; poor is a state of mind.

Such changes are not hard to understand if we connect the theme of pursuing money with the mindset of immigrants. Chinese migration to the United States has been through two waves: the first wave was from the 1850s to 1880s, featuring the manual laborers coming for the Gold
rush and the transcontinental railroad construction; the second wave started in the late 1970s, following normalization of Sino-U.S. relations and changes to the U.S. and Chinese migration policies (Hooper and Batalova). The latter features the immigration of technological talents; exercising professional knowledge outweighs the aim of making money for survival. Since the new century, China is undergoing a third wave of migration, the majority of which are the elites with decent social status and fair economic capital (H. Wang). The three waves of Chinese immigration indicate that making money is no longer the major pursuit of these immigrants; looking for spiritual wealth takes its place. Such changes of attitude toward money are also appropriate for domestic Americans. According to Maslow, there exists a hierarchy of motivation in human needs. Once the most basic level of needs (survival) is met, the higher level needs (respects, freedom, spiritual happiness, etc.) start to be taken into consideration.

As Mao puts it, Chinese American rhetoric, as a process of becoming, may not settle into a discourse of established identity any time soon (Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie 19), since it is always located in specific contexts and it always “operates at many different but interlocking levels informed or implicated by both Chinese and European American rhetorical traditions” (ibid. 17). The changes of genres and the decrease of monetary themes can be considered as an adaptation of fortune cookies to different historical and social contexts, as well as the changes of mindsets of both Chinese Americans and European Americans. With a comparison between Yin and Miike’s work and my textual analysis on the fortune cookie sayings, the feature of Chinese American rhetoric as a becoming process is manifested.

**Fortune Cookie as a Rhetoric of the Other**

Similar to the Chinese in Australia in Ang’s article, speaking about “the Chinese in America” immediately conjures up two entities: “the Chinese” (as the ethnic group), and “America” (as the nation) (Ang “Beyond Chinese Groupism” 1186). According to Ang, there exists an enduring tension between “ethnic” and “national” identity among overseas Chinese, which is structural, but not contingent. She argues that the linear movement from ethnic to national identity is impossible, because national states, as “irrevocably ethnically diverse spaces”—whether as a consequence of recent immigration or as a legacy of the colonial past—will always contain the “frictions between sameness and difference, unity and diversity” (ibid. 1185). On the other hand, the ethnic minorities are “routinely treated as substantial entities to which distinct interests and agency can be attributed,” both in common-sense knowledge and in government arrangements (ibid. 1186). In this point of view, Chinese Americans, as a minority group, are inevitably conceived as the exclusive other, although Chinese immigrants have taken roots in the United States since 1800s.

The identity interrogation of Chinese Americans is vividly represented in the fortune cookies. They keep their Chinese appearance (as is seen in the outer packaging of fortune cookies and the forms of fortune cookie papers), but most of the sayings share the core values that Americans believe, conveying a sense of Americanness. Although the essence of fortune cookies is their sayings, people keep identifying the cultural identity of fortune cookies according to their surface instead of the intrinsic values embedded in the sayings.

As Ang states, the insistence on disjoining the ethnic (Chineseness) from the national (Americaness) is “a discursive habit with exclusionary consequences” (Ang, “Beyond Chinese Groupism” 1194). Similar to Fitzgerald’s remarks on Chinese Australians, in the United States, I hear many whites reserve the word “American” for themselves and many Chinese Americans refer to whites as “Americans” and to themselves as “Chinese” (qtd. in: Ang, “Beyond Chinese Groupism” 1194). In this case, the identity of the Other is not merely constructed by the
dominant group, but also by the minority themselves. Reflected in the fortune cookies, while the American customers contribute to the values of fortune cookie sayings, it is the Chinese American manufacturers and restaurant proprietors who make larger efforts to remain the Chineseness of the fortune cookies. In the naming of “Chinese fortune cookies” or “Chinese Americans,” as Ang puts it, the label “Chinese” itself, in its invocation of a discrete and solidly bounded group, contributes to the absolute divide between the ethnic “Other” and the national community (ibid. 1194).

** Fortune Cookie as a Rhetoric of Hybridity **

The fourth feature of Chinese American rhetoric, as a hybrid of Chinese and American rhetorical traditions, is reflected both in the fortune cookie sayings and the fortune cookie dessert.

As is mentioned previously, the fortune cookie sayings are written by different writers with various cultural backgrounds. They are infused with the author’s individual values either consciously or unconsciously. As fortune cookies being circulated in the markets, those sayings that conform to the local cultural conventions continue to exist, while those out of the social contexts fall into disuse. Targeting American customers, the fortune cookie sayings present a predominant preference of American values (e.g. future-time orientation, desires for changes and adventure, self-initiative orientation, etc.) and communication styles (69% of directness), while Chinese thinking patterns (e.g. the Daoist processual worldview) and communication modes (31% of indirection) are downplayed. These differences are not always complementary; some sayings express contradictory views even on the same theme (e.g. “challenge the reality” compared with “accept the reality”), although the former appears more common than the latter.

The power imbalance of the hybridity is also seen in the function and forms of fortune cookies. Although there appears increasing catering business of fortune cookies to special occasions such as weddings, birthday parties, company anniversaries within a complete American context, such businesses are limited at the individual level. In terms of large-scale consumption, fortune cookies are mainly used as an artifact to promoting Chinese culture or Chinese American business (e.g. Chinese food manufacturers or Chinese restaurants). In this sense, the Chineseness takes more power in the fortune cookie artifacts.

To be noted, the tensions between Chineseness and Americaness in the fortune cookies are asymmetric. While the increase of American values in the fortune cookie sayings may weaken the effects of promoting Chineseness through the fortune cookies, attaching Chineseness to the fortune cookies cannot annul the Americaness conveyed in the fortune cookie sayings. Such processes precisely demonstrate the “tensions, ambivalences, and incommensurabilities” of the fortune cookie as a complex hybridity.

** Fortune Cookie and Chinese American Rhetoric **

In this thesis, I treat the fortune cookie as the microcosm of Chinese American rhetoric, which is a continuing process for borderland residents (including both ethnic groups and European Americans) to negotiate the cultural identity of the Other (i.e. the minorities). As Stuart Hall puts it, instead of thinking of cultural identity as an already accomplished past, we should think of it as a “production,” which is “never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation” (222). He further argues that cultural identity is not an essence, but a positioning within the discourse of history and culture (226). In this sense, Chinese American rhetoric is not merely about visualizing Chinese ethnic identity through rediscovering the Other’s “common historical experiences and shared cultural modes” (223); rather, it entails a practice of “reproduction”—an act of inventing a new knowledge about “what
we have become” instead of “what we really are” (224). To appropriate Hall, it is simultaneously a matter of becoming as well as of being. In terms of rhetorical traditions, as Liu puts it, A tradition may experience constant negotiation and contestation in the process of cultural migration. Traditions that seem timeless and ancient are in fact being constantly modified and reinvented within any given historical context. Hence what is authentically Chinese in one place or time is often not so in another. (3)

Emerging from Chinese American restaurants—a borderlands where Chinese and American culture meet, the origin of fortune cookies draws less attention than its imaginative identity (a Chinese-American artifact); since in the rhetorical borderlands, there is always a politics of identity that gives no guarantees in an “unproblematic, transcendental ‘law of origin’” (Hall 226). It always changes according to different time and spaces. For example, the Chineseness of fortune cookies was at first popularized and reified in the United States during the World War II. When the desserts were transported back to China at the beginning of the new century, it has become an invention of American Chineseness. Its continuous popularity in the United States nowadays, however, is largely depending on the degree it is adapted to the dietary habits, tastes and values of European Americans.

To sum up the key features of Chinese American rhetoric through fortune cookies, first of all, the fortune cookie foregrounds the interrelations between Chinese and American rhetorical traditions while backgrounds its practitioners in the borderlands. Secondly, the changing of genres and themes of fortune cookie sayings suggests that Chinese American rhetoric is a continuous evolving process of transculturation. Then by contextualizing the result of textual analysis with the role of fortune cookie played in Chinese culture, it is demonstrated as a tool for the less-privileged group (regarded as the “Other”) to negotiate their cultural identity in the national community. Fourthly, the rhetoric of hybridity is then signified through the imbalanced coexistence and interplay of Chineseness and Americaness embedded in the fortune cookies.

With all above features interacting with one another in the larger historical and cultural background, the asymmetrical power relations between the dominant and the “Other” become visualized, and the voices of the ethnic group are to be heard.  

**Summary**

In the latter section, I integrate both the Chineseness and Americaness of fortune cookie sayings into the discussion of Chinese American rhetoric. Specifically, I recontextualize the historical, social, and cultural backgrounds from there and then to here and now to unpack how the transcultural features of Chinese American rhetoric—a subject arising from borderlands, a process of becoming, a practice of the Other, and a rhetoric of hybridity—are exemplified in the fortune cookies. I believe that only when the complexity of Chinese American rhetoric is fully unpacked can the practice of Chinese American rhetoric serve as a positive channel to let heard of the voices of the Other instead of a forced reaction to the dominant European-American rhetoric.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

As a student of language concentrating on transcultural studies, I am constantly being attracted to the rhetorical effects that are brought about by the encounters of different cultures. Studying in a foreign country, I cannot help but wonder how a third rhetoric—Chinese American rhetoric is developed for Chinese sojourners and Chinese Americans to negotiate their cultural identities in the borderlands. Such an interrogation inevitably involves the trope of comparison. Past decades have witnessed the effectiveness of comparative rhetoric on exploring non-euro-American and indigenous rhetorical practices, but most of them are confined within nation states. Since “comparative rhetoric coincides with the increasingly blurred, shifting, or disappearing boundaries” (Mao and Wang), I can see the potential of comparative rhetoric in interrogating the rhetorical practices that emerge from the specific space of borderlands.

Unlike the examination of a particular non-Western rhetoric, what complicates the understanding of the emergent ethnic rhetorics such as Chinese American rhetoric is the interconnectivity and interdependence of different rhetorical traditions embedded in one rhetoric practice. Intrigued by such complexity, I started this project by asking how to understand Chinese American rhetoric in a critical-comparative lens and how the discourse of Chinese American rhetoric creates a hybridized identity. By virtue of the Chinese American artifact—the fortune cookie, I locate my main interest in the interplay among the knowledge-making in texts, in the contextualization of discursive practices and in the recontextualization of the sociocultural practices in the discourse of Chinese American rhetoric. Specifically, my purposes of this project are threefold. Firstly, I aim to unpack the transcultural mobilization of power, language, and people in Chinese American rhetoric through a comparative and critical perspective. Secondly, I intend to expand the application scope of comparative rhetoric from indigenous rhetorical traditions to the rhetorical practices that transcend cultures and nations. Thirdly, in response to the calling for moving away from “facts of essence” to “facts of (non-) usage” as the future of comparative rhetoric (Mao, “Thinking Beyond Aristotle” 449-450), I adopt fortune cookies as the exemplification of Chinese American rhetoric instead of resorting to the “canonical” Chinese American literature. To achieve these objectives, I develop a methodology—the critical-comparative approach, which I believe is much in need in analyzing the fortune cookie as a transcultural discourse and illustrating Chinese American rhetoric through the transcultural artifact. I then conduct my analysis of fortune cookies as an example of deploying my proposed methodology to study the interconnectivity and hybridity of Chinese American rhetoric. The findings reveal the negotiating process of Chineseness and Americaness of fortune cookies embedded in the sayings, in the production, distribution and consumption of the dessert, and in the larger historical and sociocultural contexts. More importantly, it displays the rhetorical effects the fortune cookie brings about on reflecting the power asymmetry and challenging the dominant discourse. It is literally a battlefield of dominant values and the minority representation.

As I go through the case analysis, I realize certain limitations need to be pointed out. Firstly, the results of my discourse analysis show obvious differences from that of Yin and Miike’s conducted in 2008. Since Yin and Miike collect their data directly from Chinese restaurants, to what extent the discrepancy of the methods of data collection contributes to the result needs to be further explored. Secondly, to examine the rhetorical purpose of those main agents (manufacturers, restaurant owners, domestic American customers, etc.) in the process of fortune cookie production, distribution and consumption, I draw their opinions from various news reports. Still, engaging in-person interviews with the agents can more solidly verify the distinct but interconnected relations that I have demonstrated in this project. Thirdly, I trace the
becoming nature of Chinese American rhetoric back to the changes of fortune cookie sayings between the interval of a decade from Yin and Miike’s research and mine. If time and resources permitted, an ethnographic project (interviewing the fortune cookie manufacturers and restaurants with a long history; collecting fortune cookie sayings of each decades; comparing the differences of fortune cookies in various areas, etc.) should be conducted.

This project also leaves me several sites to work on in future studies. In terms of perfecting the theoretical constructs of Chinese American rhetoric, follow-up research would incorporate the pentad theory evolved from Kenneth Burke’s dramatism to better investigate the interrelations of the key elements in Chinese American rhetoric. In Chapter one, I summarize the features of Chinese American rhetoric individually; however, each feature can be regarded as an indispensable focus, which interacts with other foci and co-contributes to the formation of Chinese American rhetoric as a comprehensive discursive field. Burke’s pentad theory is conducive to visualizing such focus/field relations. Furthermore, it can also be used as an analytical framework to supplement the critical-comparative approach, increasing the performativity of the transcultural artifacts in representing the Chinese American rhetoric. Specifically, by examining the act—what happen to initiate Chinese American rhetoric, the agent—who practices Chinese American rhetoric, the agency—by what means Chinese American rhetoric is practiced, purpose—why to practice Chinese American rhetoric, and scene—in what circumstances Chinese American rhetoric is practiced, and teasing out the effects of each dimension has on the other, we can stabilize certain aspects in the definition of Chinese American rhetoric although it is a continuously evolving concept. To briefly mention, If Chinese American rhetoric is considered to be a performativ practice in Burke’s dramatistic pentad, the Other will be the agent who performs Chinese American rhetoric; the Chinese and American rhetorical traditions as well as the artifacts emerging in between will serve as the “agency” (the instruments being used); and the rhetorical borderlands will provide the scene—a third space for the interactions between Chinese and American rhetorical traditions to be enacted. Hybridity thus becomes the result of various acts—not only synthesizing, but also confronting, intermingling, and contradicting, which aims to realize the purpose of visualizing and further reversing the power imbalance between the less-represented ethnic group and the dominant European American community. Further studies may focus on uncovering the “ratios”—the “internal relationships,” the “possibilities of transformation,” and “the range of combinations” (Burke xi) among the five elements of these features.

As Peter Simonson points out, to date the pedagogy of comparative rhetoric remains undeveloped as an articulated public component of the field (261). In terms of the implications for pedagogy, Chinese American rhetoric as a cultural hybrid will serve well as conducive resources for the teaching of comparative rhetoric in two senses. First of all, unlike contrastive rhetoric, which focuses on composition and production, comparative rhetoric, at least at present, features criticism and interpretation (ibid. 262). Therefore, close reading followed by seminar discussion will be the major way of teaching comparative rhetoric. In this case, the critical-comparative approach provides a new perspective to interpret works of Chinese American rhetoric—enacting Mao’s the art of recontextualization not only in the textual and discursive level, but also through larger scale of social and cultural practices (e.g. institutions, social structures, technologies, etc.), as what Simonson calls the “anthropological imaginations” (ibid. 262). After all, the ultimate goal of the pedagogy of comparative rhetoric is to cultivate a transrhetorical sensibility or the “embodied mindfulness” (ibid. 262) to the rhetorical practices that are not deemed as the “canon”. Secondly, the process of reading Chinese American rhetoric
is also a process of comprehending the definition, the objects, and the goals of comparative rhetoric. For one thing, as a rhetoric of the Other, Chinese American rhetoric perfectly matches the goal of comparative rhetoric—to “discover and/or recover under-represented and under-recognized cultures and their discursive practices” (“A Manifesto” 273). For another, as a rhetoric of hybrid, with Chinese and European American rhetorical traditions dynamically interact with other, it can simultaneously “promote and practice a way of doing, knowing, and being…that transcends borders, binaries, and biases” and that of “enrich, engage, and intervene in dominant rhetorical traditions and practices” (ibid. 273), which other sole non-Western rhetorics cannot achieve.

To take a step forward, future research might expand the application of the critical-comparative approach to other transcultural artifacts that emerge from the rhetorical borderlands. Take the franchise Kung Fu Panda as an example. Kung Fu Panda 3 was co-produced by Chinese and American corporations and targeting the audience in each country. Regarding the whole movie as a discourse, the critical-comparative approach can be applied to analyzing the interaction of different rhetorical traditions in the movie. My current project on fortune cookies is a first step in testing the proposed methodology because I concentrate on the parallel between the fortune cookies and the connotations of Chinese American rhetoric. I have not yet fully discussed how the dialectical interaction between two distinct rhetorical traditions varies according to different contexts of the rhetorical borderlands. For example, in the case of fortune cookies, Chinese restaurants as their physical borderlands are completely situated in the American context, which renders the power negotiation in the fortune cookies leaning to the Americaness instead of the Chineseness. However, the borderlands that engender the movie Kung Fu Panda are quite uncertain, since it involves the efforts of producers coming from both countries and targeting the audiences and markets of each. The Chinese American rhetoric in Kung Fu Panda is thus practiced by the Chinese, the Chinese Americans, and the European Americans (esp. sinologists). Analyzing the Chinese American rhetoric embedded in the movie Kung Fu Panda with the proposed methodology could not only help us rethink the division between different cultures and challenge the China/the West binary as I did in the fortune cookie analysis, but also supplement our understanding on how European American producers (in an ethic perspective) perform Chinese American rhetoric in the movie. Specifically, it exemplifies how the group with Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition background situates Chinese philosophy within the frames of American cultural values, and how they deal with the tensions, ambivalences and uncertainties in between.

In this project, I strive to sketch out the key concepts of Chinese American rhetoric and exemplify them with the artifact of fortune cookies through a critical comparative perspective. Beneath the discursive constructions of the cultural identity in fortune cookies are the historical traditions, cultural values and social particularities that shape the ethnic identities of Chinese within the national community. I hope my analysis of fortune cookies through the recontextualization of their various backgrounds challenges the absolute binary of China/the West and recovers the history that has long been forgotten or uncovered. Committed to pursue a dynamic equilibrium in transcultural communication, this project is the first step toward understanding how Chinese American rhetoric could open up dialogues among different rhetorical traditions and afford the possibilities of reversing the power imbalance within. Towards the end of the thesis, I hope my project has achieved its multi-layered goals: to demonstrate fortune cookies as a microcosm of Chinese American rhetoric; to integrate the emergent ethnic rhetoric into comparative rhetorical studies; and to exemplify the possibilities of
material innovations (moving from “facts of usage” to “facts of non-usage”) in comparative rhetoric.
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Appendix 1: Philosophical fortune cookie sayings (wisdom)
1. Two small jumps are sometimes better than one big leap.
2. He who climbs a ladder must begin at the first step.
3. Before the beginning of great brilliance, there must be chaos.
5. Rivers need springs.
6. Failure is the mother of all success.
8. If you want the rainbow, then you have to tolerate the rain.
9. Truth is an unpopular subject. Because it is unquestionably correct.
10. Life always gets harder near the summit.
11. Adversity is the parent of virtue.
12. Meeting adversity well is the source of your strength.
13. Failure is not defeat until you stop trying.
14. Difficulty at the beginning usually means ease at the end.
15. To be old and wise, you must first be young and stupid.
16. Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.
17. An upward movement initiated in time can counteract fate.
18. Life to you is a dashing and bold adventure.
19. Sometimes travel to new places leads to great transformation.
20. The greatest risk is not taking one.
21. A great pleasure in life is doing what others say you can’t.
22. All progress occurs because people dare to be different.
23. Life is like a dogsled team. If you ain’t the lead dog, the scenery never changes.
24. The only certainty is that nothing is certain.
25. Too many people volunteer to carry the stool when it's time to move the piano.
26. The days that make us happy make us wise.
27. A merry heart does good [sic] like a medicine.
28. People who are late are often happier than those who have to wait for them.
29. Joys are often the shadows, cast by sorrows.
30. Happiness is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with it.
31. There is no greater pleasure than seeing your loved ones prosper.
32. Your happiness is intertwined with your outlook on life.
33. If you’re happy, you’re successful.
34. A well-aimed spear is worth three.
35. To make the cart go, you must grease the wheels.
36. Well-arranged time is the surest sign of a well-arranged mind.
37. The measure of time to your next goal is the measure of your discipline.
38. Hard work pays off in the future, [sic] laziness pays off now.
39. Minor aches today are likely to pay off handsomely tomorrow.
40. Do you believe? Endurance and persistence will be rewarded.
41. It is better to have a hen tomorrow than an egg today.
42. Working out the kinks today will make for a better tomorrow.
43. The best prophet of the future is the past.
44. How can you have a beautiful ending without making beautiful mistakes. [sic]
45. A bird in the hand is worth three in the bush!!
46. It is better to be the hammer than the anvil.
47. Life consists not in holding good cards, but in playing those you hold well.
48. Sometimes the object of the journey is not the end, but the journey itself.
49. Today is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday.
50. Bread today is better than cake tomorrow.
51. The man who waits till tomorrow, misses the opportunities of today.
52. The problem with resisting temptation is that it may never come again.
53. Poverty is no disgrace.
54. Broke is only temporary; poor is a state of mind.
55. Excellence is the difference between what I do and what I am capable of.
56. Life is a verb.
57. Try? No! Do or do not, there is no try.
58. I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.
59. Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds.
60. The simplest answer is to act.
61. The man on the top of the mountain did not fall there.
62. There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.
63. When you get something for nothing, you just haven’t been billed for it yet.
64. It’s never crowded along the “extra mile.”
65. The race is not always to the swift, but to those who keep on running.
66. The one who snores will always fall asleep first.
67. One is not sleeping, does not mean they are awake.
68. Rest has a peaceful effect on your physical and emotional health.
69. Rest is a good thing, but boredom is its brother.
70. A focused mind is one of the most powerful forces in the universe.
71. Nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing.
72. The quotes that you do not understand, are not meant for you.
73. A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
74. A human being is a deciding being.
75. Any decision you have to make tomorrow is a good decision.
76. Determination is the wake-up call to the human will.
77. Hidden in a valley beside an open stream-This will be the type of place where you will find your dream.
78. The phrase is follow [sic] your dreams. Not dream period.
79. Emotion is energy in motion.
80. Fear is just excitement in need of an attitude adjustment.
81. Fear can keep us up all night long, but faith makes one fine pillow.
82. Hope brings about a better future.
83. Hope is like food. You will starve without it.
84. What ends on hope does not end at all.
85. There are no limitations to the mind except those we acknowledge.
86. Action speaks nothing, without the Motive.
87. Alas! The onion you are eating is someone else’s water lily.
88. Human evolution: “wider freeway” but narrower viewpoints.
89. The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.
90. All the water in the world can’t sink a ship unless it gets inside.
91. Land is always in the mind of the flying birds.
92. It’s tough to be fascinating.
93. A man is born to live and not prepare to live.
94. In music, one must think with his heart and feel with his brain.
95. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
96. You cannot love life until you live the life you love.
97. Human invented language to satisfy the need to complain.
98. A kind word will keep someone warm for years.
99. To affirm is to make firm.
100. Hard words break no bones, fine words butter no parsnips.
101. Birds are entangled by their feet and men by their tongues.
102. Integrity is doing the right thing, even if nobody is watching.
103. An angry man opens his mouth and shuts up his eyes.
104. Those grapes you cannot taste are always sour.
105. Patience is a key to joy.
106. Humor is an affirmation of dignity.
107. Integrity is the essence of everything successful.
108. Excuses are easy to manufacture, and hard to sell.
109. Love is as necessary to human beings as food and shelter.
110. For hate is never conquered by hate. Hate is conquered by love.
111. Kiss is not a kiss without the heart.
112. Love conquers all.
113. In the eyes of lovers, everything is beautiful.
114. A different world cannot be build by indifferent people.
115. Punctuality is the politeness of kings and the duty of gentle people everywhere.
116. Life to you is a bold and dashing responsibility.
117. To courageously shoulder the responsibility of one’s mistake is character.
118. A truly great person never puts away the simplicity of a child.
119. The pleasure of what we enjoy is lost by wanting more.
120. Anyone who dares to be, can never be weak.
121. Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.
122. Nothing in the world is accomplished without passion.
123. Over self-confidence is equal to being blind.
124. Only talent people get help from others.
125. The world is always ready to receive talent with open arms.
126. Love can turn cottage into a golden palace.
127. Jealousy doesn’t open doors, it closes them!
128. All your fingers can't be of the same length.
129. To determine whether someone is beautiful is not by looking at his/her appearance, but his/her heart.
130. Dogs have owners, cats have staff.
131. The earth is a school learn in it [sic].
If winter comes, can spring be far behind?

The wise are aware of their treasure, while fools follow their vanity.

Those who walk in other’s tracks leave no footprints.

The smart thing to do is to begin trusting your intuitions.

We cannot change the direction of the wind, but we can adjust our sails.

Our perception and attitude toward any situation will determine the outcome.

The majority of the word “can’t” is can.

The leader seeks to communicate his vision to his followers.

The ultimate test of a relationship is to disagree but to hold hands.

Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this planet.

Teamwork: the fuel that allows common people attain uncommon results [sic].

Digital circuits are made from analog parts.

You cannot become rich except by enriching others.

Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.

We can't help everyone. But everyone can help someone.

We are here to love each other, serve each other and uplift each other.

A friend asks only for your time not your money.

Prosperity makes friends and adversity tries them.

A smile is your passport into the hearts of others.

An understanding heart warms all that are graced with its presence.

Laughter is the shortest distance between two people.

No distance is too far, if two hearts are tied together.

Movies have pause buttons, friends do not.

Love thy neighbour, just don't get caught.

Appendix 2: Advisory fortune cookie sayings (advice)

1. The cure for grief is motion.
2. Be calm when confronting an emergency crisis.
3. Be on the lookout for coming events. They cast their shadows beforehand.
4. Remember the fate of the early Worm.
5. Your problem just got bigger. Think [sic], what have you done.
6. Conquer your fears or they will conquer you.
7. Instead of worrying and agonizing, move ahead constructively.
8. Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you.
11. You can fix it with a little extra energy and a positive attitude.
12. There is a time to be practical now.
13. Accept what comes to you each day.
14. Face facts with dignity.
15. Now is the time to try something new.
16. You can never been certain of success, but you can be certain of failure if you never try.
17. Take the chance while you still have the choice.
18. Eat something you never tried before.
19. If you are afraid to shake the dice, you will never throw a six.
20. Don’t pursue happiness - create it.
21. Enjoy life! It is better to be happy than wise.
22. Put your unhappiness aside. Life is beautiful, be happy.
23. Share your happiness with others today.
25. Stop searching forever. Happiness is just next to you.
27. Put your mind into planning today. Look into the future.
28. Keep your plans secret for now.
29. Plan your work and work your plan.
30. Find a peaceful place where you can make plans for the future.
31. Be prepared for extra energy.
32. Adjust finances, make budgets, to improve your standing [sic].
33. Bend the rod while it is still hot.
34. If you have something good in your life, don’t let it go!
35. Be tactful; overlook your own opportunity.
36. Never regret anything that made you smile.
37. Live each day well and wisely.
38. Seize every second of your life and savor it.
39. Your life will prosper only if you acknowledge your faults and work to reduce them.
40. A good time to finish up old tasks.
41. Do what is right, not what you should.
42. Finish your work on hand don’t be greedy.
43. Let's finish this up now, someone is waiting for you on that.
44. Good clothes open many doors. Go shopping.
45. Don't wait for your ship to come in, swim out to it.
46. Stop wishing. Start doing.
47. Stop procrastinating - starting tomorrow.
48. If you don’t do it excellently, don’t do it at all.
49. Anything you do, do it well. The last thing you want is to be sorry for what you didn’t do.
50. Demonstrate refinement in everything you do.
51. Customer service is like taking a bath you have to keep doing it.
52. Never quit!
53. Never give up. Always find a reason to keep trying.
54. Perhaps you’ve been focusing too much on that one thing.
55. Perhaps you’ve been focusing too much on spending.
56. Be most affectionate today.
57. Dream your dream and your dream will dream of you.
58. Aim high, time flies.
59. Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so shall you become.
60. The secret of staying young is good health and lying about your age.
61. Focus in on the color yellow tomorrow for good luck!
62. Today is an ideal time to water your personal garden.
63. Tomorrow Morning, take a left turn as soon as you leave home.
64. Affirm it, visualize it, believe it, and it will actualize itself.
65. Word to the wise: Don’t play leapfrog with a unicorn...
66. Be direct, usually one can accomplish more that way.
67. Keep it simple. The more you say, the less people remember.
68. Whenever possible, keep it simple.
69. If you speak honestly, everyone will listen.
70. Traveling more often is important for your health and happiness.
71. It is best to act with confidence, no matter how little right you have to it.
72. Be patient: in time, even an egg will walk.
73. Be patient! The Great Wall didn’t got build in one day.
74. Love because it is the only true adventure.
75. Judge not according to the appearance.
76. For true love? Send real roses preserved in 24kt gold!
77. Become who you are.
78. Enjoy yourself while you can.
79. Accept yourself.
80. Treasure what you have.
81. Stay to your inner-self, you will benefit in many ways.
82. Ask yourself if what you are doing today is getting you closer to where you want to be tomorrow.
83. Take control of your life rather than letting things happen just like that!
84. It’s up to you to clarify.
85. Pick a path with heart.
86. You don’t need the answers to all of life’s questions. Just ask your father what to do.
87. If you feel you are right, stand firmly by your convictions.
88. Use your head, but live in your heart.
89. Use your instincts now.
90. Listen to yourself more often.
91. When the moment comes, take the top one.
92. Be assertive when decisive action is needed.
93. Go ask your mom.
94. When in doubt, let your instincts guide you.
95. Make a wise choice everyday.
96. You create your own stage ... the audience is waiting.
97. Express yourself: Don’t hold back!
98. Present your best ideas today to an eager and welcoming audience.
99. Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can.
100. Discover the power within yourself.
101. Use your talents. That’s what they are intended for.
102. It’s amazing how much good you can do if you don’t care who gets the credit.
103. Let your fantasies unwind... (Open up your mind. Let your fantasies unwind)
104. Keep true to the dreams of your youth.
105. Grant yourself a wish this year only you can do it.
106. Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.
107. Better be the head of a chicken than the tail of an ox.
108. If everybody is a worm you should be a glow worm.
109. Hone your competitive instincts.
110. Do not hesitate to look for help, an extra hand should always be welcomed.
111. To build a better world, start in your community.
112. Never underestimate the power of the human touch.
113. Don’t worry about the stock market. Invest in family.
114. Keep your feet on the ground even though friends flatter you.
115. Cooperate with those who have both know how and integrity.
116. Back away from individuals who are impulsive.
117. One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears--by listening to them.
118. The time is right to make new friends.
119. Be a generous friend and a fair enemy.
120. When all else seems to fail, smile for today and just love someone.

Appendix 3: Predictive fortune cookie sayings (prophecy)
1. You will conquer obstacles to achieve success.
2. All your sorrows will vanish.
3. Serious trouble will bypass you.
4. You will be forced to face fear, but if you do not run, fear will be afraid of you.
5. The troubles you have now will pass away quickly.
6. You will overcome difficult times.
7. There are big changes ahead for you. They will be good ones!
8. Your secret desire to completely change your life will manifest.
9. He who seeks will find.
10. Your life becomes more and more of an adventure!
11. A new voyage will fill your life with untold memories.
12. The best is yet to come.
13. There is a prospect of a thrilling time ahead for you.
14. Traveling this year will bring your life into greater perspective.
15. You will take a pleasant journey to a place far away.
16. You will make many changes before settling down happily.
17. You will travel to many exotic places in your lifetime.
18. You will travel to many places.
19. You will soon witness a miracle.
20. A pleasant surprise is in store for you tonight.
21. Your life will be filled with magical moments.
22. A pleasant experience is ahead: don’t pass it by.
23. Right now there’s an energy pushing you in a new direction.
24. You will have many happy days soon.
25. A lifetime of happiness is in store for you.
26. The joyful energy of the day will have a positive affect on you.
27. A big fortune will descend upon you this year.
28. You will have good luck and overcome many hardships.
29. Fortune smiles upon you today.
30. Enjoy the good luck a companion brings you.
31. You will always have good luck in your personal affairs.
32. A small lucky package is on its way to you soon.
33. The Wheel of Good Fortune is finally turning in your direction!
34. Sing and rejoice, fortune is smiling on you.
35. May you have great luck.
36. Your future will be happy and productive.
37. It is very possible that you will achieve greatness in your lifetime.
38. Expect great things and great things will come.
39. You will have a bright future.
40. No matter what your past has been, you have a spotless future.
41. You will win success in whatever you adopt.
42. You will be successful in love.
43. Your success will astonish everyone.
44. You are contemplating some action which will bring credit upon you.
45. You will soon emerge victorious from the maze you’ve been traveling in.
46. You will always get what you want through your charm and personality.
47. Your present question marks are going to succeed.
48. You will spend old age in comfort and material wealth.
49. You will have a long and wealthy life.
50. You will inherit a large sum of money.
51. Money will come to you when you are doing the right thing.
52. Your hard work will get payoff today.
53. You will receive some high prize or award.
54. If your desires are not extravagant, they will be rewarded.
55. Generosity will repay itself sooner than you imagine.
56. Your golden opportunity is coming shortly.
57. A new business venture is on the horizon.
58. You have an important new business development shaping up.
59. There are many new opportunities that are being presented to you.
60. A golden egg of opportunity falls into your lap this month.
61. You are a lover of words; One day you will write a book.
62. Soon you will be sitting on top of the world.
63. Enthusiastic leadership gets you a promotion when you least expect it.
64. You will outdistance all your competitors.
65. The project on your mind will soon gain momentum.
66. You will be called to fill a position of high honor and responsibility.
67. You will be selected for a promotion because of your accomplishments.
68. You will soon embark on a business venture.
69. The dream is within you.
70. The object of your desire comes closer.
71. You are offered the dream of a lifetime. Say yes!
72. Your dream will come true when you least expect it.
73. Your fondest dream will come true within this year.
74. Your wish will come true.
75. Next full moon brings an enchanting evening.
76. A cheerful message is on its way to you.
77. Good health will be yours for a long time.
78. Soon life will become more interesting.
79. A new outlook brightens your image and brings new friends.
80. Elegant surroundings will soon be yours.
81. A letter of great importance may reach you any day now.
82. Today is going to be a disastrous day, be prepared!
83. Today it’s up to you to create the peacefulness you long for.
84. This is really a lovely day. Congratulations!
85. Spring has sprung. Life is blooming.
86. You will discover your hidden talents.
87. Your many hidden talents will become obvious to those around you.
88. People in your surroundings will be more cooperative than usual.
89. You will become better acquainted with a coworker.
90. You will always be surrounded by true friends.
91. Friends long absent are coming back to you.
92. A new friend helps you break out of an old routine.
93. You will soon be surrounded by good friends and laughter.
94. Good news from afar may bring you a welcome visitor.
95. A chance meeting opens new doors to success and friendship.
96. Every Friend Joys in your Success.
97. There will be a happy romance for you shortly.
98. The love of your life is sitting across from you.
99. One who admires you greatly is hidden before your eyes.
100. Love is on its way.
101. A beautiful, smart, and loving person will be coming into your life.
102. A very attractive person has a message for you.
103. An admirer is concealing his/her affection for you.
104. An alien of some sort will be appearing to you shortly!
105. Your worst enemy has a crush on you!
106. You will soon be honored by someone you respect.
107. An unexpected relationship will become permanent.
108. An unexpected acquaintance will resurface.
109. A short stranger will soon enter your life with blessings to share.
110. Soon, a visitor shall delight you.

Appendix 4: Complimentary fortune cookie sayings (compliment)
1. You have a flair for adding a fanciful dimension to any story.
2. You have an unusual equipment for success, use it properly.
3. Your high-minded principles spell success.
4. Your ability to pick a winner will bring you success.
5. You are not illiterate.
6. You are the master of every situation.
7. You should be able to undertake and complete anything.
8. You are one of the people who “goes places in life.”
9. You are admired by everyone for your talent and ability.
10. You are talented in many ways.
11. You are vigorous in words and action.
12. You are admired for your adventurous ways.
13. You are far more influential than you think.
14. You are not a person who can be ignored.
15. You have a curious smile and a mysterious nature.
16. You are always welcome in any gathering.
17. Everyone agrees. You are the best.
18. You have an unusually magnetic personality.
19. People are naturally attracted to you.
20. You are not a ghost.
21. You are a person of culture.
22. You love peace.
23. You have a quiet and unobtrusive nature.
24. You have a deep appreciation of the arts and music.
25. You have a deep interest in all that is artistic.
26. You have a fine capacity for the enjoyment of life.
27. You will be rewarded for your patience and understanding.
28. You are never selfish with your advice or your help.
29. You have a reputation for being straightforward and honest.
30. Your tongue is your ambassador.
31. You know where you are going and how to get there.
32. Some pursue happiness; you create it.
33. They say you are stubborn; you call it persistence.
34. You never hesitate to tackle the most difficult problems.
35. Your smile brings happiness to everyone you meet.
36. People enjoy having you around. Appreciate this.
37. Everybody feels lucky for having you as a friend.
38. Your emotional nature is strong and sensitive.
39. Your emotional currents are flowing powerfully now.
40. You have a strong desire for a home and your family interests come first.
41. Rarely do great beauty and great virtue dwell together as they do in you.
42. You believe in the goodness of mankind.

Appendix 5: Humorous fortune cookie sayings (humor)

1. Some men dream of fortunes, others dream of cookies.
2. About time I got out of that cookie.
3. Help, I’m being held prisoner in a Chinese cookie factory.
4. If your cookie still in one piece, buy lotto.
5. You will be traveling and coming into a fortune.
6. If you eat a box of fortune cookies, anything is possible.
7. Wow! A secret message from you teeth!
8. Warning, do not eat your fortune.
9. Do not upset the penguin today.
10.  Oops... Wrong cookie.

Appendix 6: Advertising fortune cookie sayings (advertisement)
1. The food here taste so good, even a cave man likes it.
2. You love Chinese food.
3. A good way to keep healthy is to eat more Chinese food.
4. Enjoyed the meal? Buy one to go too.
5. Here we go. “Moo Shu Cereal” for breakfast with duck sauce.
6. You may be hungry soon: order a takeout now.
7. Save the whales. Collect the whole set.
8. Did you remember to order your take out also?
9. Aren’t you glad you just had a great meal?
10. You are about to become $8.95 poorer. ($6.95 if you had the buffet)