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The Chinese currency is literally called the people's money (Renminbi). And the congressional building just on the west side of Tiananmen Square is called the Great Hall of the People. To western ears it still sounds a bit odd. 'The People'...Which People? Talk about a gigantic We-the-People. In the Hall of the People they can host banquets for five thousand. Hard to imagine the sheer mass of bodies, and tables, and food involved in such a feast. The din of 5,000 forks and knives on china, and glasses clinking. Makes my head spin. (I must be hungry.) We estimated the ceiling height to be about 50 feet, and the structure above this giant room, that holds, in this column-free space, the 5,000 dining we-the-people, to be several stories thick of chunky concrete trusses. And imagine this shift in scale—if we were to say that we were having a little demonstration in Tiananmen Square, that is really a one million person gathering of we-the-people. How does that compare to the Mall in Washington, DC? I'm trying to recall the photos of Martin Luther King standing on the steps of the Lincoln memorial, making a speech, and the images of the crowd extending back, around the reflecting pool, and off in a seemingly endless sea of heads. We talked about how this, being so flat, and paved, devoid of trees, somehow makes the space of Tiananmen Square seem even more anonymous and vast. There is no 'place' for any one specific person. Okay. Except for Mao's portrait at the north end of it. But otherwise you really are just on this undifferentiated, flat plane of space which definitely makes you just a micro-unimportant entity which through accumulation makes up the 'we' (the people).

So, I've been on this trip for a while, and while I've been on this trip, which started out as a solo voyage, I think that I have dined alone maybe three times, at most, and been accompanied on almost every day's adventure by someone or other. Sometimes, people I met on the spot. So, as I've been recounting one part of the trip to the companions of the next part of the trip, I have unavoidably been speaking in, what my mother would refer to as, the 'Imperial 'we'.

How many times have I caught myself doing this? And I see the perplexed expression on the face of my present

listeners, as they try to figure out who is 'we'? Where's the other part of me that makes me a we. But really, it hasn't been an erroneous use of the 'we', as there was a 'we' there, just a not-necessarily-important-to-identify-the-other-parties 'we', as the other parties of the 'we' are unlikely to ever be encountered by this present person. And I wonder, is this present person thinking that I am slipping into the use of the imperial we to make a solitary journey seem to have been some jovial group event? Maybe the use of the term 'we' should be limited to only include people present in the room. No bodies not present! That would clarify whether there really was a we there or myself and some (specific, un-specified or generic) other.

Many people, I first met, in Paris seemed to never speak specifically about *je* (I), or *nous* (we), but rather used the impersonal 'on'. I couldn't help but think that in doing so they completely give up responsibility for participation in acts or ownership of ideas through the use of 'on'. *On a fait. On a mangé. On a pensé...* I wondered at the time whether this was a culture-wide manner of speaking which reflected the non-ownership of specific ideas; a reflection instead of the participation in a vague mass idea, or vague mass action. Not wanting to take a risk, go out on a limb, say something that one actually thought, as opposed to reiterating manufactured, received ideas, received from the media. Or is it about communicating to someone the sense that there was/is/will-be some major collective phenomena which ONE should be part of and experience.

The space of the Parisian 'on' and this Beijing 'we', although quite different, seem to share so many things. Maybe that thing which is similar but different is the continuity of the urban fabric—the *hutong* or new slab building here, Hausmann there. Something that might allow places to be both unique, because of the people, the events, and interchangeable, common through repetition. Or, Tiananmen-style, simply indistinguishable through the massive obliterating scale, something that helps to construct that 'on' or we.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Beth Weinstein.