

*'Dagongzhe' Write to the magazines: suffering, borders stretching and longings. Dialectics of identification and legitimation.*

Eric Florence, PhD in Political and Social Sciences, Researcher at the Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies, the University of Liege.

In this paper, I will look at the different kinds of values that are fostered within articles (diaries, letters, etc.) published in magazines for rural migrant workers. After having detailed the criterion used by editors of these magazines in the process of selecting or rejecting writings sent to them by migrant authors, I will detail three types of narrative modes found in magazines aimed at migrant workers. The first one signals suffering, disillusionment and sometimes irony. The second narrative mode entails claim making by migrant workers which are often backed by editors. I argue that this belongs to what O'Brien calls "contentious politics". Eventually, the third mode examined in this paper will be thought of as strategic narrative framing on the part of migrant authors. In such framing the pedagogic role of guidance by editors is central I shall stress. But I shall argue at the same time that despite such framing, much of these writings are permeated by a powerful politics of desire and that such politics is particularly hard to analyse. In addition to a qualitative analysis of both published and unpublished writings by migrant workers and editors, I will also confront such writings and the values they convey to the fruit of my ethnographic fieldwork carried out in the Pearl River Delta between 2001 and 2007.