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Articles

Constructing "Superstitious Myth(s)": The Transcultural Practice of Mythological Knowledge in China from the 1920s to the 1930s

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Abstract:

This paper traces the origin of modern China's conception of myth as superstition by addressing the transcultural practice of mythological knowledge in 1920s-1930s China. In the 1920s, Chinese intellectuals devoted to folklore studies constructed a body of knowledge related to myth and superstition through appropriating Western and Japanese modern scholarship. They borrowed the methodology and ideas of textual research on myth from the West and Japan but further developed their original interpretation by equating mythical belief with superstition. This transformation of knowledge made myth into the target of anti-superstition movements in modern China and even laid the foundation for the political regulation of literature and arts (especially in traditional Chinese opera) featuring magical content that was initiated by the Nanjing KMT government. The transcultural practice revealed in this research made us reconsider the suppressed mythical and supernatural experience in modern Chinese thought and literature.

Keywords: superstitious myth(s), transcultural practice, literary and artistic governance

Introduction

In China during the early 1950s lasting and influential debates on literary expressions of myth and superstition took place, and these involved famous writers and artists such as Tian Han 田汉, Zhou Yang 周扬, Huang Zhigang 黄芝冈, and Ma Shaobo 马少波. The essential question of these debates lay in how to deal with the supernatural content present in literature and the arts (especially in traditional Chinese operas) in order to create anti-superstition new works. Most maintained that myth should be distinguished from superstition; however, they were also clearly aware of the difficulty in properly defining and tackling the magical element and transcendental beliefs embodied in myth.[1] The issues put forward in these debates were fundamental in shaping the contemporary Chinese literary and artistic experience. Myths that made references to the story of gods with supernatural and religious beliefs were inevitably questioned from a modern scientific discourse and in turn became entangled with the concept of superstition.

The debates and topics above were so important that they have drawn attention from current scholars. Most studies put them in the framework of socialist ideological structure in order to regard them as a cultural practice exclusive to PRC culture after 1949.[2] My paper intends to intervene in the discussion of mythical

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1   For debates on myth and superstition in literature and the arts, see Tian Han. "Fight for the People's New Opera of Patriotism" (Wei aiguozhuyi de renmin xin xiqu er fendou 为爱国主义的人民新戏曲而奋斗), *People's Daily* 人民日报, January 21st, 1951, 5th edition; Zhou Yang. "Reform and Development of National Opera Arts" (Gaige he fazhan minzu xiqu yishu 改革和发展民族戏曲艺术), *Journal of Literature and Art* 文艺报, (24) 1952; Ma Shaobo 马少波. "The Essential Difference Between Superstition and Myth" (Mixin yu shenhua de benzhi qubie 迷信与神话的本质区别), *Reference Materials On Opera Reform*, Volume 2 (Xiqu gaige lunji 戏曲改革论集), pp. 46-49; Huang Zhigang 黄芝冈. "On 'Mythological Operas' and 'Superstitious Operas'" (Lun "Shenhuaju" yu "Mixinxi" 论"神话剧"与"迷信戏"), Huang Zhigang. *From Yangko to Local Operas* (*Cong yangge dao difangxi* 从秧歌到地方戏), Shanghai: Zhonghua Book Company, 1951, pp. 51-71.

2   The representative research focused on the reform of ghost operas in the PRC includes works such as Zhang Lianhong张炼红. *Cultivation of the Soul: Research on the Reform of Chinese Traditional Operas in the People's Republic of China* (*Lilian jinghun: Xinzhongguo xiqu gaizao kaolun* 历炼精魂：新中国戏曲改造考论), Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2013; Wang Ying王英. "The Nation without Ghosts: Debates on the Ghostly Operas in the CCP Party and Province of Shaanxi (1949-1966) " (Wugui zhi guo: Zhonggong yu Shaanxi diqu de "Guixi" zhi zheng 无鬼之国：中共与陕西地区的"鬼戏"之争), *The Journal of Twenty-First Century*, December 2016, pp. 51-66; Margaret Caroline Greene. "The Sound of Ghosts: Ghost Opera, Reformed Drama, and the Staging of A New China, 1949-1979", UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2013.

and superstitious experience entangled in modern Chinese cultural and literary practice, but contrary to the mainstream discourse and perspective, I take this 1950s historical event as a sequel and echo of earlier Chinese anti-superstition discourses dating back to the 1920s and 1930s, when traditional Chinese myths clearly became the target of anti-superstition enlightenment movements and were criticized by modern intellectuals and the KMT government. Some academic intellectuals at that time, especially those who studied folklore, established systematic knowledge of myth to support or even construct anti-superstition discourse. They appropriated the research methodology Western and Japanese scholars developed from the late 19th to early 20th centuries in order to deconstruct mythical belief and look down on folk magic as superstition. Their knowledge affected the political governance of social customs initiated by the Nanjing KMT government, which took measures to ban performances involving deities and ghosts.

The historical perspective leads my paper to center on the period from the 1920s to 1930s in China, when the epistemic framework of "superstitious myth(s)" was constructed and the political governance of mythical literature and arts developed. In terms of the specific research objects and scope, my paper focuses on the academic practice of modern Chinese folklore scholars in the late 1920s and the KMT governmental regulation of traditional operas around the same time. The academic knowledge of myths was converted into political discourse at the level of the KMT government's cultural governance. In this sense, this research emphasizes two signs of interaction: on the one hand, there was transcultural interaction among the West, Japan, and China that produced the knowledge of "superstitious myth(s)"; on the other hand, the new knowledge that was formed from transcultural contact interacted with the political practice conducted by state authority in China. By combining the two signs, my paper goes beyond common influence studies or parallel studies and combines various flexible transcultural connections and trends. China's modern conception of myth was not only constructed in cross-cultural ideas but also spanned and crossed multiple boundaries, such as knowledge/politics, scholarly research/social practice, and cultural thought/literary experience. This transcultural study leads my research to depict a contact "site" or "zone," in which various elements, including knowledge, thoughts, literature and politics from

different nations, collided, merged and transformed.[3] The concept of contact sites or contact zones inspired this research to break out of the linear and simplified relationship of "influence/acceptance" between China and the world by revealing more complex connections and practices.

1. Background: Faces of Mythological Conception in Modern China

China's perception of myth was inseparable from contact with Western anthropological and ethnographic knowledge since the first emergence of the concept of Shenhua (Myth 神话) in the late Qing Dynasty. Liang Qichao 梁启超 first used the Chinese word for myth (Liu 19) and mentioned the term "Greek mythology" in his article "Relationship Between History and Race" (Lishi yu renzhong zhi guanxi 历史与人种之关系) published in *Xin Min Cong Bao* 新民丛报 in 1902: "The Semite was the source of the world religions, from which Judaism, Christianity and Islam originated. The Ancient Greek myths and the names of gods and their sacrifices all came from Assyria and Phoenicia." (Liang 21) Here, Liang showed awareness that the myths were about names and stories of gods as the products of religion. He talked about the origin, evolution and distribution of Western myths and related the mythical phenomenon to races of the world. Liang's understanding demonstrated the thinking pattern of comparative mythological study popular in Europe since the 19th century. Comparative mythology aimed to redraw the evolutionary history of human civilization by investigating the origin and evolution of myth around the world, which closely overlapped with modern disciplines of anthropology, archeology, geology, and ethnography.

Like many contemporary Chinese intellectuals, Liang Qichao was exposed to Western knowledge and ideas through Japan, which acted as an intermediary, and in fact, the modern Chinese word for myth was also derived from modern Japanese kanji. During the same period, the terms "myth" and "comparative mythology" clearly appeared in popular Japanese works *History of Chinese Civilization* by Shirakawa Jiro 白河次郎 (Shirakawa 8) and *History of World Civilization* by Takayama Jiro 高山林次郎 (Takayama 21) , and these two books were translated and published in China in 1903. Shirakawa and Takayama introduced myth and mythology by redrawing the origin, distribution and blood relationship of races, a method that was inherited and displayed in Liang Qichao's article. These two

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3　The concept of contact site or zone is borrowed from Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. In this book, Pratt used "contact zone" to describe cultural contacts and translations from different cultural regions in the context of imperialism and colonialism .

Japanese scholars referred to the prevailing framework of the history of human civilization that labeled human history and the world under the dichotomy of barbarism or civilization, a presented advancement through a linear and hierarchical theory of evolution theory, something which represented anthropological and ethnographic discourse popular in the late 19th century in Europe (Shirakawa 1-27; Takayama 11-131).

Modern knowledge of anthropology, ethnography and comparative mythology primarily influenced Chinese intellectuals in regard to how to understand the meaning of myth in the late Qing dynasty and the early Republican China. They tended to define myth as the product of magic belief at a primitive stage of human history within the perspective of civilizational evolution. However, myth was not belittled by most Chinese intellectuals for being the opposite of "civilization," and in contrast, it was always regarded as a useful resource in order to renew Chinese culture and national identity owing to its essentialist character. For example, Liang Qichao's peer Jiang Guanyun 蒋观云 deemed that myth had the value of the genius' imagination and the power of inspiring a people's ambition, although he was conscious that it was looked down upon by the intelligentsia in 1903 (Guanyun 18-19). Jiang's idea was echoed in Lu Xun's 鲁迅 famous 1908 article "Break Through the Voices of Evil" (Po e'sheng lun 破恶声论), in which Lu Xun spoke highly of myths created by primitive societies and regarded them as a demonstration of magnificent spirits and human nature (Lu 35-36). Jiang Guanyun and Lu Xun did not intend to develop a systematic and academic discourse on myth but integrated the ideas of myth popular in modern European and Japanese disciplines into China's enterprise of cultural enlightenment. For cultural reformers, the academic discourses on primitive myth were their narrative resources in building new national spirits.

The 1920s represented an obvious turning point as Chinese intellectuals paved the way for the acceptance of mythological knowledge, which was manifested mainly in two aspects. First, academic writings imitating or adapting European and American mythological and anthropological studies gradually began appearing in China beginning in the 1920s. For an increasing number of Chinese intellectuals, myth became the object of research and not merely a source of cultural ideas. Mao Dun 茅盾, Xie Liuyi 谢六逸, Lin Huixiang 林惠祥, Huang Shi 黃石, Zhao Jingshen 赵景深, Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎, amongst others, were all representative scholars who made achievements in mythological studies in the span of the 1920s and 1930s. They followed different Western scholars and developed different interpretations of myth, but most of them were inherited from the British and American schools

of cultural anthropology and traced the historical evolution of human civilization and took myth to be a "survival", an element of the primitive.[4] Second, and related to the previous point, these scholars emphasized the irrational and barbaric traits of myth when they adopted the academic system of British and American cultural anthropology.[5] Compared with the cultural enlightenment intellectuals who preached the power of myth in the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic, the scholars above subscribed more to the view of cultural hierarchy confirmed in Western evolutionary theory. In this context, the "backward" and "savage" myth gradually merged into the concept of superstition.

The claim that clearly articulated that both myth and legend should be considered superstition came from a group of folklore researchers at Sun Yat-sen University in the late 1920s. The term "folklore" was originally established by the British scholar W.J. Thoms in the mid-19th century and was later developed as a subject, the research objects and methodology of which were closely related to cultural anthropology. Folklore was introduced to China around the 1920s and was mainly led by Zhou Zuoren 周作人, Gu Jiegang 顾颉刚, Zhong Jingwen 钟敬文, Chang Hui 常惠, Rong Zhaozu 容肇祖 and others at Peking University. After the Northern Expedition in 1926, a number of scholars at Peking University went south to Sun Yat-sen University in order to rebuild the subject of folklore.[6] Rong Zhaozu's book *Superstition and Legend* (*Mixin yu chuanshuo* 迷信与传说) was amongst one of the most typical works in the folklorist group to insist that myth and legend were superstition. When *Superstition and Legend* was published in 1929, Rong was actively taking part in the construction of folklore studies in Guangzhou, and his book belonged to the "Folklore Society Series" (Minsuxuehui congshu 民俗学会丛书) at Sun Yat-sen University. The work was a compilation of articles written

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4   The theory of survivals was originally put forward by the British anthropologist E.B. Tylor. In his book *The Primitive Culture*, Tylor pointed out that some ancient customs lost their utility and integrated rituals but partly continued in modern society. He claimed these continuing customs as survivals. Tylor's theory of survivals was based on the framework of linear evolutionism and the division of the civilized stage and the primitive stage of human history.

5   For example, Huang Shi. *Mythological Studies* (*Shenhua yanjiu*神话研究), Kaiming Bookstore, 1927, pp.2-9; Xie Liuyi 谢六逸. *Mythology ABC* (*Shenhuaxue ABC*神话学 ABC), The World Publishing Company, 1928, pp.32-59; Lin Huixiang. *Mythology* (*Shenhua lun* 神话论), The Commercial Press,1933, pp.1-20.

6   On the construction of Chinese modern folklore, see Shi Aidong 施爱东. *Initiatives for Creating a New Discipline: Advocacy, Management, and Decline of Modern Chinese Folkloristics* (*Changli yimen xinxueke: Zhongguo xiandai Minsuxue de guchui, jingying he zhongluo* 倡立一门新学科：中国现代民俗学的鼓吹、经营和中落), Beijing: China Social Science Press, 2011.

in different periods, but the title of "superstition and legend" demonstrated the general theme of the author's discussion. In *Superstition and Legend*, Rong defined folk legends as superstition in a clear manner. He declared that the purpose of his writing was to break mythical superstitions through professional research: "We should study folklore when facing various bodies of knowledge, and we should focus more on the study of superstitions in folklore. Specifically, we should pay attention to Chinese superstition because of the convenience of materials." (Rong 3) This "convenience of materials" urged Rong Zhaozu to turn his eyes to myth and legend recorded in classical Chinese and folk literature. As far as he was concerned, his duty was to break the superstitious elements contained in Chinese myth and contribute to modern China's anti-superstition enterprise.

Why did Rong Zhaozu take myth and legend as superstition? How did he achieve the goals of breaking mythical superstition via academic research? Rong's article "Analysis of Legends" (Chuanshuo de fenxi 传说的分析) in the book clearly revealed his understanding. He wrote as follows:

> After myth and legend formed, people would take the attached meaning in growth and evolution as the origin of things. If you denied him, he would ask you in turn, 'Why did it exist, exactly?' If you could not answer him, you failed to break his superstitious belief, and people would insist that the attached meaning was hard evidence. (Rong 139)

The paragraph above actually exposed two meanings in Rong's understanding of myth and superstition. First, in his opinion, it was due to superstition that people believed in "attached meanings" in the formation of myth and legend. The attached meanings he mentioned particularly referred to the stories of gods and miracles that gradually appeared in the circulation and growth of stories. Rong criticized that most people were so convinced of the supernatural figures and magic conveyed in myth that they were not aware that the objects they worshiped were fictitious and accrued throughout generations. Second, Rong Zhaozu pointed out the way to break free from the mythical superstition popular with the people. He claimed to expose the origins and evolution of myth and legend to people in order to debunk the sacred gods in stories. He proposed in the preface of his book that intellectuals should "seek gods' sources and histories, and honestly describe their original and true faces." (Rong 2) Here, Rong emphasized the responsibility of scholars and hoped that academic practices would play crucial roles in anti-superstition political and cultural movements.

Rong Zhaozu's perception of mythical superstition was once representative and prevailing in folklore studies. Like Rong, a majority of folklore scholars consciously resorted to modern research methods as the way to debunk mythical superstition.[7] Here, we should not take the modern academic practice conducted by Chinese intellectuals merely as their weapon of choice to eliminate existing mythical superstitions, but more as the fundamental way to construct the meaning of myth and superstition in modern China. In other words, the modern methodology that folklore intellectuals adopted led them to regard myth as superstition and to destroy the mythical belief which was popular amidst the people.

Chinese intellectuals' construction of mythological knowledge was not completely invented by themselves but was the product of transcultural contact with the West and Japan in the 1920s. Chinese scholars, including Rong Zhaozu, locally appropriated the modern philology approach established in European and American disciplines. Some of them had direct exposure to Western knowledge, and some used Japan as an intermediary. In this atmosphere, deconstructing supernatural miracles in myth based on textual research that connected Western and East Asian scholarship became a global trend. This transcultural practice urged China to construct a significant conception of the myth and anti-superstition discourses. The next section of this paper elaborates on the transcultural experience in the China of the 1920s.

2. Evidential Research in the Transcultural Context: The Construction of Mythological and Superstitious Knowledge in Modern China

As mentioned in the previous section, Rong Zhaozu claimed to "describe the original and true faces of gods in various myths and legends" via academic research. Specifically, he resorted to the method of evidential research (kaozheng 考证) to analyze texts recording myth and legend, in the process of which he revealed the historical evolution of gods and miracles to tell people how they were fabricated and added in throughout generations.

Take Rong Zhaozu's article "Evidential Research of the God of Erlang" (Erlang shen kao 二郎神考) as an example. Rong compiled various ancient Chinese records on the God of Erlang and traced the historical development of how the image of the god was formed. Based on textual research, he asserted that the archetype of the God of Erlang was the historical figure named Li Bing 李冰, the guardian of Shu (Shu Shou 蜀守), originally recorded in *The Historical Records* (*Shi Ji* 史记) and *Books*

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7   The scholars will be discussed in Section 2.

of the Later Han Dynasty (*Houhan Shu* 后汉书). Over time, there were different myths and legends about Li Bing killing the god of the river before the Southern and Northern Dynasties, which began to mold Li Bing into a god (Rong 141-171). It was Rong's own opinion that the God of Erlang could be traced to the historical records of Li Bing, which contradicted other scholars' related research. For instance, Hu Shi 胡适 disagreed with Rong's conclusion and advocated that the historical figure Yang Ji 杨戬 was the prototype of the God of Erlang (Hu *Correspondence* 32-33). Although Hu Shi and Rong Zhaozu did not reach an agreement on any specific conclusion, the methodology of textual research and the intention to reveal the historical origin of the Erlang God were common points for them. Both of them attempted to deconstruct the sacredness of the god Erlang that was worshipped by the people.

The method of evidential research or textual research practiced by Rong Zhaozu and Hu Shi was widely popular amongst folklore scholars centered around Sun Yat-Sen University in the late 1920s. They regarded the research methodology as an effective way to construct anti-superstition discourse. Rong Zhaozu's practice completely followed Gu Jiegang, who was the central researcher and organizer in the subject of folklore at that time. Rong had studied under Gu at Peking University before he engaged in folklore research at Sun Yat-sen University.

As Rong Zhaozu's teacher, Gu Jiegang showed a more prominent tendency for historical textual research since he published in 1924 his famous article "The Transformation of the Story of Lady Meng Jiang" (Mengjiangnv gushi de zhuanbian 孟姜女故事的转变) in *The Ballad Weekly* (*Geyao zhoukan* 歌谣周刊). This publication was a sensation in folklore academia and encouraged Gu to continue a series of studies on the historical legends of Lady Meng Jiang in the next few years, which were finally compiled as *Lady Meng Jiang Story Research Collection* (*Mengjiangnv gushi yanjiuji* 孟姜女故事研究集) and published as one of the Folklore Society's book series of Sun Yat-sen University. In the study of Lady Meng Jiang legends, Gu Jiegang quoted extensive materials and a solid body of literary knowledge in order to verify how the legendary figure of Lady Meng Jiang originated from Qiliang's 杞梁 wife recorded in the *Chronicle of Zuo* (*Zuo zhuan* 左传) (Gu *Mengjiang* 1). He emphasized that the historical evolution and geographical spread of the historical figure's story promoted the formation of the transcendental myth and the custom of worship in the Lady Meng Jiang Temple. Gu Jiegang denied the essential existence of the folk goddess of Lady Meng Jiang by tracing her origin and evolution, which achieved a similar purpose of debunking mythical superstitions, just as Rong Zhaozu clearly advocated later.

Gu Jiegang's research on mythology and legend had a great impact, especially after he went to Sun Yat-sen University. He made use of the periodical *Folklore Weekly* (*Minsu zhoukan* 民俗周刊) , founded in 1928, in order to inspire numerous colleagues to follow him. Beyond those by Rong Zhaozu, many other articles imitating Gu Jiegang's research style appeared in *Folklore Weekly*. For example, the article titled "Textual Research of Fujian Three Gods" (Fujian sanshen kao 福建三神考) by Wei Yinglin 魏应麟 was a distinguished achievement among contemporaneous articles, and it was also compiled into a monograph and included in the book series of the Folklore Society together with Gu Jiegang's and Rong Zhaozu's books. In his book, Wei performed textual research on the mythical figures of Lady Linshui 临水夫人, King Guo Sheng 郭胜王, and the Queen of Heaven 天后, who all originated in the Five Dynasties in Fujian (Wei 1-3). He emphasized the imaginary and fictitious components that were added to the mythical gods through multiple generations by analyzing historical documents. For example, Wei collected ancient records and folk stories to compare Lady Linshui's different names, birthdates, birthplaces, ties of consanguinity and life legends found across different materials in order to reveal how the goddess was constructed throughout generations (Wei 6-26). This demonstration of historical evolution was consistent with Rong's research of the God of Erlang and Gu's research of Lady Meng Jiang.

Jiang Shaoyuan 江绍原 was another noteworthy intellectual working at Sun-Yat-sen University in the late 1920s. Differing from most scholars, who consciously followed Gu Jiegang's scholarly advocation, Jiang had no direct association with Gu or the scholarly subject of folklore, but worked in the study of English; however, he went on to have abundant achievements in folklore and mythological studies. He began to publish articles on Chinese rituals and customs in modern Chinese journals, including *Yu Si* 语丝, *Morning Supplement* 晨报副刊, *Meng Jin* 猛进, *New Women* 新女性, *Literature Weekly* 文学周报, and others, since he went to the University of Chicago to study comparative religions in the early 1920s. His article "The Ninth Ministry of Etiquette Document: Hairs and Claws" (Libu wenjian zhi jiu: fa, xu, zhua 礼部文件之九：发、须、爪), which was completed after discussions with Zhou Zuoren in 1926, was the original copy of his famous work *Hairs and Claws—The Superstition Surrounding Them* (*Fa，Xu，Zhua: Guanyu tamen de mixin* 发须爪——关于它们的迷信). In addition, books such as *Study on Ancient Chinese Travel* (*Zhongguo gudai lüxing zhi yanjiu* 中国古代旅行之研究) and *Chinese Customs and Superstitions* (*Zhongguo lisu mixin* 中国礼俗迷信) were his representative achievements on superstitious studies; the former was the monograph

first published by Shanghai Commercial Press in 1935, and the latter was compiled by the contemporary folklorist Wang Wenbao 王文宝 based on Jiang's syllabus in the 1920s (Jiang established courses on superstitious studies at Sun Yat-sen and Peking University). Compared with Gu Jiegang's historiographic and folkloric propositions, Jiang's mythological research was embodied in his general framework of superstitious study and more directly related to anti-superstition discourse. He wished to eradicate superstition in modern China by establishing systematic knowledge of superstition.

Jiang Shaoyuan adopted social customs and rituals as his research objects, which included extensive phenomena such as wedding activities, fertility, healing of diseases, exorcising evil spirits, and ancient adult rituals. His research was basically limited to collecting and summarizing traditional Chinese literature rather than direct fieldwork, which inevitably involved various myths recorded in Chinese historical documents. For example, in the book *Study on Ancient Chinese Travel,* Jiang analyzed the historical meanings of Chinese myths recorded in *Shanhaijing* 山海经, *Huainanzi* 淮南子, *Baopuzi* 抱朴子, and *Taiping Yulan* 太平御览 to verify how jade worn by ancient Chinese people before the Han Dynasty served as a travel amulet during journeys (Jiang *Travel* 1-32). This reflected his typical evidential research concentrated on his religious study, in which Jiang sketched the historical evolution of mythical gods in religions. For instance, Jiang's monograph *The Death of Gautama* (*Qiaodamo di si* 乔答摩底死) was based on textual research on historical documents recording the Buddha Shakyamuni to reveal the deification of Shakyamuni that occurred in later generations. He intended to erase the religious mystery of experience and to destroy people's "superstition" of Buddhism. This method was similar to that of Gu Jiegang (Jiang *Gautama1-11*) .

Chinese intellectuals' textual research on myth mentioned above was constructed in the scholarly convergence of the West and East Asia. The evidential research of historical literature dominated in the modern disciplines of anthropology, comparative mythology, and religious studies since the late 19th century in Europe and America, and came to China in the 1920s and motivated Chinese intellectuals to compile local mythical and religious literature. This cross-regional philological flow merged with the well-known academic movement of compiling information about national heritage (Zhengli guogu 整理国故) vigorously promoted by Hu Shi, Gu Jiegang, Fu Sinian 傅斯年, and others in China at the same time. Scholars from this group attempted to modernize the Chinese scholarly tradition of textual research by combining local and Western philology. Most of them had close contact with scholars who performed mythological and

religious studies because of their common interest in ancient Chinese literature. Like Gu, who typically showed the confluence of the two practices of compiling studies on national heritage and mythology. For Jiang, although he did not exactly promote compiling information about national heritage, he kept communicating with the group and received recognition from the movement's leader Hu Shi, who wrote the preface for Jiang's *The Death of Gautama.*

Starting from the trend of compiling information about national heritage, Chinese intellectuals' connection with overseas philology and mythology represented a global network of textual research that linked different cultural areas together. In this context, Chinese intellectuals' mythological study became a part of the global trend, although their writings and materials seemed extremely local and traditional. Precisely due to being placed within this common global trend, Chinese intellectuals always demonstrated the similarity of scholarly practice. Similar to Gu Jiegang and Jiang Shaoyuan, they had scarce direct mutual contact or common learning experiences with the others, but showed a consistent tendency for textual research on myth and the construction of anti-superstition discourse during the 1920s. My paper focuses next on the two representative scholars Gu and Jiang in order to present their respective transcultural practices. They were on specifically different cross-cultural paths in their construction of "superstitious myth(s)".

Jiang Shaoyuan was directly exposed to British and American philological scholarship by studying comparative religion in the United States and translating relevant works as part of his major. Before going to the United States, he began to translate and introduce famous Western scholarship on Asian religions, the most important of which was William Rhys Davids's *Early Buddhism.*[8] Perhaps Davids is little known today, but at the end of the 19th century, he was famous in the fields of Oriental Studies and comparative religion in the UK. He was not only skillful at Indian religious studies, with mastery of Sanskrit and Pali, but also participated in the founding of institutions at The British Academy and the London School for Oriental Studies (Wickremeratne 143-160). More importantly, Davids's associate colleague Max Muller was one of the founders of comparative religion, and established textual research of religious documents with the principle of historical evolutionism. In his representative work *Introduction to the Science of Religion,* Muller claimed that textual research of religious documents was a scientific practice, which was regarded by him as the way to revolt against orthodox theology (Muller 26-27).

8   The translation of *Early Buddhism* was published on *Journal of New Tide* (*Xinchao* 新潮) in issue 5, vol. 2 in 1920 and issue 1, vol. 3 in 1921.

Jiang Shaoyuan's translation led him to have knowledge of Davids's and even Muller's philology. He largely followed Davids's research pattern and studied Pali and Sanskrit at the University of Chicago. The original topic of his research proposal was, "What is the relationship between the Ahambu Sutra in the Chinese Tripitaka (Xiaocheng 小乘) and the Pali Tripitaka?" However, the thesis title was finally changed to "Comparative Study of the Nirvana Sutra" after he discovered that the Japanese modernist scholar Masaharu Azizakizi 姉崎正治 had already completed a similar research project (Geng 46-47).While training in textual research from Asian and comparative religious studies, Jiang Shaoyuan emphasized the historical evolution of Buddhism to deconstruct the absolute doctrine of religious belief and even more radically claimed Buddhism to be a superstition. He clearly mentioned "superstitious" Buddhism in a letter to Hu Shi and Jiang Menglin 蒋梦麟 when he was in Chicago, in which he said: "I could not help but realize the heavy responsibility on the shoulders of modern scholars who have a slight historical and critical vision! I should work hard to help ordinary Chinese people who are superstitious of Buddhism and contribute to the Chinese academics that have just become more prominent." (Geng 47) The idea of "superstitious Buddhism" encouraged Jiang to complete his writing *The Death of Gautama* mentioned above, and his understanding of myth was based on his religious study.

Jiang Shaoyuan defined religion and myth as superstition, taking inspiration from scholarship in the United Kingdom and the United States; however, he made a distinct transformation of Muller's and Davids's discourse during his learning and imitation. For example, in *Introduction to the Science of Religion,* Muller emphasized the study of original documents to establish the subject of "Science of Religion" : "A Science of Religion, based on impartial and truly scientific comparison of all, or at all events, of the most important religions of mankind, is now only a question of time… It becomes therefore the duty of those who have devoted their life to the study of the principal religions of the world in their original documents, and who value religion and revere it in whatever form it may present itself." (Muller 26-27) However, Muller's Science of Religion was aimed at renewing the methodology of theology by taking historical philology as the modern scientific approach; he did not directly equate religion with superstition, which was similar to Davids's academic practice. Jiang Shaoyuan absorbed their research pattern into his grand plan on the construction of anti-superstition discourse to participate in the enterprise of modern cultural enlightenment in China. He further developed the "scientific" standpoint claimed by Muller and Davids to shape the dualistic framework of "science versus superstition", thereby defining his research

objects (religion and myth) as superstition. Jiang's reinterpretation and radical ideas even astonished the professors at his university, as he recalled in a letter: "When I was in Chicago, I once wrote an essay that surprised our chief faculty. In this essay, I said that the clergymen from no matter which school would have no job one day. At that time or even before, we would gather scientists, philosophers, sociologists, and artists together to discuss how to beautify, develop, and adjust our personal and social lives." (Sun 3) Jiang's adaptation of the comparative religious concept contributed to the construction of knowledge of the "superstitious myth(s)" in modern China.

Gu Jiegang presented two different points from Jiang Shaoyuan in regard to the knowledge framework and transcultural experience of myth. First, Gu and his followers paid attention to mythological studies in the historiographical framework of discernment of ancient history (*Gushi bian* 古史辨), but not religious studies. Taking Wei Yinglin as mentioned above as an example, he conducted his textual research "Fujian Three Gods" mainly for the purpose of compiling the history of the Five Dynasties in Fujian (Wei 1). Gu's idea of historiography inherited the "New Historiography" (Xin shixue 新史学) advocated by Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 in the late Qing Dynasty, which followed the general principle of questioning the authenticity of the events recorded in ancient history. Gu Jiegang elaborated upon the meaning of "discernment of ancient history" in his first volume of *Discernment of Ancient History* published in 1926:

> [On the discernment of ancient history] First, it was necessary to evidentially study where the facts in the false historiography came from and how they changed. Second, it was necessary to evidentially study how the historical events were talked about by various individuals and list all their words to compare just like a lawsuit trial. This would reveal people's lies. Third, although the historiographical counterfeiters held different opinions from each other, they followed the same method. The stories in the plays were different, but the rules of the plays were the same. We could also determine their cases of counterfeiting (Gu *Discernment* 43).

In the process of discerning false historiography, the practice of "discernment of ancient history" included the discernment of myth that were often mixed in ancient history. One of Gu's most famous studies involved textual research on the Chinese historical ancestor "Yu" 禹. He boldly proposed that Yu, who was widely known in the myth of Dayu 大禹's water management, was actually an animal cast on nine

tripods (Jiu Ding 九鼎). Gu asserted that it was gradually depicted as a person in the later legends and was incorporated in the pedigree of the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors (Gu *Discernment* 118-127).

Second, Gu Jiegang had no direct contact with Western academia like Jiang Shaoyuan but was involved with the more complicated and abundant West-East interactive network. Gu never studied abroad or translated Western works, and he was reluctant to acknowledge the influence of Western Sinology or Japan's Chinese Studies,[9] which made his connection to European and American scholarship to be vaguer and more indirect. Nevertheless, as a junior student deeply impacted by Zhang Taiyan and as a positive responder to Hu Shi's call for compiling information on national heritage, Gu's textual research inevitably included features from the West and Japan: Zhang Taiyan's creation of national studies was based on the academic system of Chinese Studies established in Japan in the late 19th century, while Hu Shi's advocacy of compiling information about national heritage was directly inspired by his sixteen days of immersion in Dunhuang literature compiled by French sinologists (Hu *Heritage*117).

The School of Chinese Studies of the Research Institute (Yanjiusuo guoxuemen 研究所国学门) at Peking University, where Gu Jiegang participated in building the subject of folklore in the early 1920s, was built in the entanglement between national studies and overseas Sinology. The institution situated Gu Jiegang in a network of knowledge connecting Europe, Japan and China. A majority of the leading figures in the school were the disciples of Zhang Taiyan, including Shen Yinmo 沈尹默, Qian Xuantong 钱玄同, Shen Jianshi 沈兼士, Zhu Xizu 朱希祖, Zhou Zuoren 周作人, and Huang Kan 黄侃, who formed a scholarly group that could not disentangle itself from the existant Japanese style of historically textual research. Additionally, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, who strongly supported the School of Chinese Studies, was directly interested in Europe, especially French Sinology. Cai had already pointed out the popular phenomenon in Western countries a year before the establishment of the School of Chinese Studies, and he said, "For the ancient civilization of China, Western countries are now engaged in collecting classical Chinese literature for their research. On the one hand, we should pay attention to the import of Western civilization; on the other hand, we should attach importance to the export of our civilization." (Cai 423) In 1931, a course guide for the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University summarized the achievements of the School of Chinese Studies at Peking University since the 1920s. The course guide

9   In the first volume of *Discernment of Ancient History*, Gu only provided Chinese scholarly resources for his historiography of doubting antiquity.

indicated that modern Chinese intellectuals' historical textual research was directly influenced by European Sinology and Japan's Chinese studies:

> In recent decades, there have been so-called sinologists in many countries who study the knowledge of our country with a new vision and have made great contributions. Japan's achievements in so-called "Chinese Studies" based on the fields of writing, history, and geography have been particularly impressive during the past two to three decades. To be honest, in recent years, the promotion of the trend to compile our national heritage is somewhat inspired by this kind of Sinology or "Chinese Studies". (Li 329).

The School of Chinese Studies at Peking University set up five branches, namely, the "Ballad Research Association" (Geyao yanjiuhui 歌谣研究会), the "Ming and Qing Historical Materials Collection Association" (Mingqing Shiliao Zhenglihui 明清史料整理会), the "Archaeology Association" (Kaoguxuehui 考古学会), the "Customs Investigation Association" (Fengsu diaochahui 风俗调查会), and the "Dialect Investigation Society" (Fangyan diaochahui 方言调查会), all of which echoed the popular research fields of Sinology in the West and Japan. The school attracted eight world-renowned sinologists as the school's correspondent members around the 1920s, including Paul Pelliot, Marcel Granet, Ryu Imanishi, Sentaro Sawamura, K. Wulff, Therese P. Arnould, Richard Wilhelm, and Tanabe Hisao (Chen 83). Most of them were famous for their philological achievements with classical Chinese documents. Among them, the two French scholars Paul Pelliot and Marcel Granet are better known today, as they learned from the world-leading sinologist Emmanuel-Edouard Chavannes and published their many research achievements in France, Japan, and China. Compared with Granet, who subscribed more to the social theory of the Durkheim School, Pelliot inherited Chavannes's research style and published outstanding Dunhuang textual studies that spanned across extensive subjects in linguistics, geography, archaeology, and religion. Pelliot bestowed twenty papers to the School of Chinese Studies through Luo Zhenyu 罗振玉 in 1922,[10] and one of his articles on Oriental paleolinguistics

10 "Donation of Books by Pelliot" (Boxihe xiansheng zengshu 伯希和先生赠书), *Peking University Daily Journal* (*Beijingdaxue rikan* 北京大学日刊), March 11th, 1922.

and history was translated by Wang Guowei 王国维 in 1923.[11] When Gu Jiegang took part in folklore studies during his Peking University period, he did not fully focus on the Ballad Research Association or any certain branch. Instead, he served as an assistant and secretary of the school to take the responsibility of publication and organization for all the branches (Chen 121).This experience equipped Gu with easy access to scholarly resources.

Although Gu Jiegang never definitely admitted to his contact with European and Japanese sinologists' research, he expressed familiarity with mainstream Sinology in Europe in the preface he wrote for Henri Maspero's *Mythological Legends in Shangshu* (*Légendes Mythologiques Dans le Chou King* 书经中的神话), which was translated into Chinese by Feng Yuanjun 冯沅君 in 1939 (Maspero 1-2). Maspero was another famous student of Chavannes and mainly engaged in Chinese historical research. In *Mythological Legends in Shangshu,* Maspero distinguished myth and legend in ancient Chinese history by tracing textual evolution and pointed out various fictitious figures, such as Yu 禹, Yi He 义和, and Gong Gong 共工. His methodology and research objects (especially about Yu) were highly consistent with Gu Jiegang's assertion of "Discernment of Ancient History" and his representative research on the Chinese figure of Yu. Gu Jiegang's textual research on ancient Chinese myth not only showed similarities to Maspero's and the corresponding sinologists at Peking University but also echoed other overseas orientalists who performed philological research on Yu. As early as the mid-19th century, James Legge tended to deny the historical existence of the three emperors Yao, Shun and Yu in ancient Chinese history in his translation of *Shangshu* 尚书. Afterward, an increasing number of sinologists proposed elaborating on the mythical and fictitious essence of the Three Emperors, particularly Yu, with the basic idea that myth and legend were mixed up with Chinese history. The noted sinologists Thomas W. Kingsmill, Chavinne, and Fryer joined in this relevant discussion (Wagner 457-461).

Japanese scholar Shiratori Kurakichi 白鸟库吉 was a crucial link between Gu Jiegang and Western sinologists. Shiratori was one of Japan's most foundational scholars devoted to Oriental historiography in the early 20th century and established the Tokyo School of Philology. He studied the mythology, linguistics, religions, and folklore of ancient China through the methodology of textual

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11 Pelliot. "Recent Inventions and Conclusions in Eastern Palaeo-linguistics and History" (Jinri dongfang guyanyuxue ji shixue shang zhi faming yu qi jielun 近日东方古言语学及史学上之发明与其结论), trans., Wang Guowei, *Peking University Daily Journal* (*Beijingdaxue rikan* 北京大学日刊)*,* March 16th, 17th, 19th, 20th, 1923.

research under the influence of his teacher Ludwig Riess, who followed the well-known German Oriental historian Leopold von Ranke (Tanaka 25). In this sense, Shiratori's research showed obvious imprints from Western sinologists. One of his most famous research aims was to propose that Yao, Shun, and Yu were fabricated after the Warring States period to propagate Confucianism (Shiratori 2-8). Gu Jiegang himself strongly denied having any connection with Shiratori; however, Hu Qiuyuan 胡秋原, a scholar from the generation after Gu Jiegang's, claimed that Gu's research and conclusion on Yu were influenced by Shiratori thanks to methodological introduction and inspiration by Qian Xuantong's 钱玄同 (Hu *Outline* 84). Actually, Gu Jiegang was inextricably linked with Shiratori in the scholarly context. Except for Qian Xuantong, who had read Shiratori while studying in Japan, the corresponding member in the School of Chinese Studies at Peking University, Ryu Imanishi, was a student of Shiratori (Tanaka 235).

Similar to Jiang Shaoyuan's transcultural practice, Gu Jiegang also shifted his approach on textual research. Gu did not directly construct the framework of superstitious studies or point to myth as superstition as Jiang did, but he emphasized the "fake" nature of the myth. This standpoint made him distinct from European sinologists, who mainly focused on the process of historical evolution without criticizing the myth as an untrue story. For example, in *Mythological Legends in Shangshu*, Maspero distinguished six flood myths in Shangshu, while Gu appealed for doubting the truth of Shangshu in his preface to the book. He said, "In the two to three thousand years from the Spring and Autumn Period to the Qing Dynasty, who had not regarded the book of Shangshu as the supreme bible? And who had not read the book of Shangshu as the true ancient history? […] It proves that the book of Shangshu was a sacred book that should not be doubted. Unfortunately, in the hands of my generation, this dream can no longer be maintained. The surging trend of the times fills the world and strikes down any authoritative idol." (Masperp 1) Gu Jiegang's attitude toward the book of Shangshu obviously showed an awareness of the suspicion and rebellion that had been popular since the May Fourth New Culture Movement. He attached a fake nature to the myth recorded in the classics of ancient China, thereby overthrowing the sacred status of traditional idols. Gu Jiegang's transformation of European philology finally converged with the anti-superstition discourse of modern China. By defining Chinese myth as fake and false, Gu and his followers advised the people not to have faith in mythical gods or miracles.

3. Transcultural Politics: From Anti-superstition Knowledge to Political Regulation of Arts

Gu Jiegang's denial of Shiratori's influence reflected an interesting phenomenon in China's transcultural practice. Gu's vague attitudes toward Western and Japanese mythological knowledge not only stemmed from the transformation of knowledge or the intricate network of transcultural connections but also, more importantly, involved the politics of power across different nations.

The evolutionary principle of modern Western mythology originally emerged in the context of imperial colonial expansion in the 19th century. Johannes Fabian has revealed the colonial politics of the evolutionary framework used in European cultural anthropology in the 19th century—a subject that closely intersected with mythology—and assumed that the "universal time" constructed in linear evolutionary theory regarded non-European central regions or ethnic groups as the primitive and backward stage opposed to European patterns (Fabian 2-11). A similar idea of civilizational hierarchy in Western mythological scholarship also supported the ideology of politics, and it was further developed and modified in Japan. Shiratori adapted European colonial discourse into Japan's colonial system in East Asia in the early 20th century by appropriating Western methodology to establish historical knowledge of China.[12] The imperial ideology of Western and Japanese academia exposed Chinese intellectuals to political incorrectness when they were faced with knowledge. In this context, even though Chinese intellectuals attempted to modify colonial discourse in order to serve the national goal of self-enlightenment, they still risked being criticized once it was found to be related to imperial colonial knowledge. Liao Mingchun 廖名春 pointed out that Gu Jiegang denied his association with Shiratori out of worry over political incorrectness because Shiratori's debunking of Yao, Shun and Yu was a part of a knowledge system originating in Japan that sought to justify its invasion and destruction of China (Liao 127-128). This is one of the crucial reasons why Gu Jiegang and his disciples were resistant to admitting connections with Shiratori.

Gu Jiegang's case pushed us to rethink the limitation of the influence-acceptance study mode, which was ineffective in revealing the network of

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12 Shiratori's textual philology made him take part in the historical and geographical surveys organized by Japan's South Manchuria Railway Co., Ltd. (南満州鉄道株式会社) from 1908. The institution and its activities aimed to support Japan's colonial invasion in China and Korea by providing historical and geographical knowledge. (South Manchuria Railway Co., Ltd. *Historical Survey Report,Volume 1* 歷史調查報告第1卷. Maruzen 丸善株氏會社, 1940, preface.)

knowledge construction in the 1920s in China. First, transcultural contact did not follow a single or linear path but rather presented entangled and sinuous links. The transcultural experience was full of misappropriation and deformation within the politics of power. These were the key reasons why some contemporary scholars emphasized the term transcultural or translingual practice instead of influence-acceptance study.[13] Here, it is not so important for us to trace or criticize modern Chinese intellectuals' "original sin" rooted in the mythological knowledge in the West and Japan, but instead to pay attention to the transformation and reconstruction of imperial colonial knowledge when it came to China. Chinese intellectuals integrated mythological knowledge into the enterprise of national scientific enlightenment rather than coping with the idea of civilizational hierarchy. This process reshaped the discourse of colonial power and imperial ideology.

In fact, China's transcultural practice of Western mythological scholarship went far beyond Chinese intellectuals' academic achievements. Since the late 1920s, knowledge of "superstitious myth(s)" has intervened in the political control of Chinese literature and arts by the KMT government. With the establishment of the Nanjing KMT government in 1927, the government began to intensify the "political training" and regulation of social order throughout the country. In this atmosphere, the KMT government sought cooperation with folklore scholars at Sun Yat-sen University to renovate traditional Chinese culture and customs, in which local religions and mythical beliefs were attacked as superstitions that undermined social development. As Rebecca Nedostup pointed out, the Nanjing KMT government sought "nationalist secularism" through campaigns to destroy superstitions such as eradication or reforming of wealth-gathering temples, wasteful rituals, and parasitic clergy (Nedostup 4-16). In this anti-superstition context, the government's censure was aimed not only at social affairs such as ancestral temple customs but also at literary and artistic works that featured ghosts and gods. The academic knowledge that took myth as a superstition was appropriated by the government as political discourse for cultural and artistic control.

The folklore scholars at Sun Yat-sen University became involved in the practice of social regulation initiated by the Nanjing KMT government through the institution of the "Custom Reform Committee" (Fengsu gaige weiyuanhui 风俗改革委员会) established in 1929 in Guangzhou. The Custom Reform Committee was the official institution to implement the KMT's "political training," the core task of which was to "reform customs and break superstitions." (Custom Reform

13 As is put forward in Footnote 3.

Committee 3) It forbade and reformed various social customs in Guangzhou, including burning clothes and worshiping immortals on Chinese Valentine's Day, temple activities, the old calendar system, and divination and astrology. Although the committee's actions were mainly concentrated in the area of Guangzhou, its reform measures were widely carried out throughout the country at the same time. The Ministry of the Interior of the Nanjing KMT government formulated the "Outline of Customs Survey" and distributed it to all provinces in 1929 as the guide to investigate and improve social customs.[14] All provinces responded to the call of the Ministry of the Interior. For example, Shanghai also managed temples and divination by issuing relevant legal documents such as "Measures for the Elimination of Superstition" (Pochu mixin banfa 破除迷信办法, 1928) and "Regulations of Registration of Divination and Astrology in Shanghai Special City" (Shanghai tebieshi bushi xingxiang dengji zhangcheng 上海特别市卜噬星相登记章程, 1929).[15] In this context, the Folklore Society centered around Sun Yat-sen University was enticed to participate in political and social work and apply their academic research to governmental regulation. On its second regular meeting in 1929, the Folklore Society officially selected three scholars, Huang Weifu 黄伟夫, Rong Zhaozu, and Wei Yinglin, to attend the Custom Reform Committee and agreed on the anti-superstition work of banning fortune-telling and divination.[16] Rong and Wei were the scholars contributing to the construction of mythological knowledge mentioned in the previous sections. Rong supported the cooperation between folklore studies and social reform. He published the article "Custom Reform and Folklore Research" (Gaige fengsu yu minsu yanjiu 改革风俗与民俗研究) in the official municipal anthology Custom Reform Series (Fengsu gaige congkan 风俗改革丛刊), which emphasized that folklore study could both promote and benefit from the social practice of reforming customs (Rong 26). In the political practice of renovating customs and breaking superstitions from the late 1920s, the

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14 "Improvement of Morals and Manners" (Fenghua zhi gailiang 风化之改良), *Statistics of Political Achievements under the Guidance of the Chinese Kuomintang (Zhongguo Guomindang zhidao xia zhi zhengzhi chengji tongji*中国国民党指导下之政治成绩统计), (3)1933, p.31.
15 "Regulations of Registration of Divination and Astrology in Shanghai Special City", *Compilation of Municipal Regulations of Shanghai Special City, Vol.Two* (*Shanghai Tebieshi shizheng fagui huibian,Vol.2* 上海特别市市政法规汇编·第2卷*), Shanghai Municipal Government, 1929, pp.160-161.
16 *Overview of the Institute of Linguistics and History at National Sun Yat-sen University* (Guoli Zhongshandaxue yuyan lishi yanjiusuo gailan 国立中山大学语言历史学研究所概览), The Institute of Linguistics and History at National Sun Yat-sen University, 1930, pp. 81-82.

Nanjing KMT government also included literary and artistic works as regulating objects. Compared with other artistic forms, traditional Chinese operas were more closely related to supernatural and mythical thoughts and stories due to their historical origin of the village ceremony for community sacrifice. The wizards in the villages used witchcraft rituals to invite the gods to come down to earth, the process of which integrated various elements such as dance, singing, etiquette, and dialogue, and gradually formed the entertainment performance and operas.[17] Due to the tradition of deity worship and temple sacrifices, various local operas in China frequently expressed mythical stories or ideas, which led them to be regarded as superstitious activities that should be strictly censored and reformed by the government.

It is worth noting that although Chinese folklore scholars constructed the discourse of "superstitious myth(s)", they had not simply equated the literary and artistic works that expressed myth to superstitious activities. Scholars such as Rong Zhaozu, who directly took part in governmental reform work, did not target the literature or the arts; nevertheless, the Nanjing KMT government applied their academic knowledge to the political policy of forbidding operas. It had been a long historical tradition for Chinese officials to enforce the political regulation of "dangerous" operas because of the social effects of gathering a crowd and inciting strong emotions. In the early years of the Republic of China, the Beiyang government partly continued the practice of forbidding operas before modern times and took it as an effective measure to control social order. However, the Beiyang government mainly focused on pornographic performances and did not list operas with supernatural and mythical elements as superstitious performances that should be banned.[18] It was not until the formation of the knowledge of myth in the late

17 On the relation between Chinese traditional operas and Rural Ceremony for Sacrifice, see Tanaka Issei. *History of Chinese* Operas (Zhongguo xiju shi 中国戏剧史), trans., Yun Guibin 云贵彬, Yu Yun 于允, Beijing: Beijing Broadcasting Institute Press, 2002; *Patriarchal Clans and Operas of China* (Zhongguo de zongzu yu xiju 中国的宗族与戏剧), trans., Qian Hang 钱杭, Ren Yubai 任余白, Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1992.

18 Before the 1920s, the Beiyang government barely paid attention to the theatrical performance of ghosts and gods in their governance of operas but mainly focused on pornographic operas and activities. For example, the Ministry of Education and Peking police banned the performance of traditional Chinese operas with pornographic and violent content and forbade actors and actresses from performing on the same stage in the years 1916, 1917, and 1920. Refer to: Second Historical Archives of China (Zhongguo di'er lishi dang'an guan 中国第二历史档案馆), ed., *Collection of Archives and Materials of the History of the Republic of China, Part 1, Vol.5 Culture* (*Zhonghua minguoshi dang'an ziliao huibian* 中华民国史档案史资料汇编 · 第五辑), pp. 150-174.

1920s that the Nanjing government began to expand the scope of censorship and to forbid a large number of mythical operas.

Soon after the Nanjing KMT government was established, a majority of provinces throughout the nation set up institutions of opera censorship to echo the trend of custom reform. Under this system of surveillance, theatrical performances, including a wide range of opera types such as the national opera in Peking and various local operas, had to be registered for monitoring. Forbidden operas that were considered superstitious were often adapted from the myths recorded in ancient Chinese literature. Not only did they have prominent images of ghosts and immortals, but they also more or less implied the meaning of folk religious beliefs. Take the province of Zhejiang, for example. The Zhejiang Provincial Committee requested suspending the performance of sixteen Zhejiang Peking operas in 1928, which were criticized as "popular old operas that slandered and advocated superstitions, which hindered the progress of revolutionary construction."[19] Among the sixteen operas, there were six pieces that presented obviously mythical stories, including *Split Mountain to Save Mother* (Pishan jiumu 劈山救母), *New Bull Palace* (Xin douniu gong 新斗牛宫), *River Yinyang* (Yinyanghe 阴阳河), *Steal Immortal Grass* (Dao xiancao 盗仙草), *Explore Mountain Yin* (Tan Yinshan 探阴山) and *Seven Star Light* (Qixing Deng 七星灯). For instance, in the opera *River Yinyang,* Shanxi businessman Zhang Maoshen 张茂深 and his wife offended the Moon Palace due to their having sex while drunk during the Mid-Autumn Festival, which caused Zhang's wife to lose her life. Zhang sought for his wife in the netherworld, and they finally encountered each other by River Yinyang. The opera featured folk Daoist mythical gods and elements (Tao 301).

A majority of the banned operas mentioned above were banned again in 1934 when the New Life Movement was launched. In this national trend propagating discipline and social order, the governmental regulation of traditional Chinese operas was further intensified. The Nanjing Opera Committee forbade 108 pieces of Ping opera as soon as it started censoring work,[20] and the bans on mythical operas affected PRC cultural policy after 1949. The opera *Red Plum Pavilion* (Hongmei ge 红梅阁) on the banned list was a typical case. The traditional Chinese opera *Red Plum Pavilion* originated from the legend of the same title written by Zhou Chaojun 周朝俊 in the Ming Dynasty, and later, the story became popular in various types

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19 "Banned Opera in Zhejiang" (Zhejiang jinyan zhi jümu 浙江禁演之剧目), *Small Daily* (*Xao Ribao*小日报), August 9th, 1928.

20 "List of Banned Operas in the Capital" (Shoudu jinxi yilan 首都禁戏一览), *Film and Opera* (Ying yu xi影与戏), Vol.1, (10)1937, p.158.

of operas with different titles, such as "Red Plum Notes" (Hongmei Ji 红梅记，Sichuan Opera), "Li Hui Niang" (李慧娘, Henan Opera), and "You Hu Yin Pei" (游湖阴配, Peking Opera). The opera combined the two storylines of the female ghost Li and the student Pei Yuchun 裴禹春. After Li was killed by her powerful husband Jia Sidao 贾似道, she turned into a ghost to help Pei escape from Jia's persecution (Wang 496-497). The story expressed the folk desire to redress an injustice by means of ghostly magic, which went beyond the meaning of mythical and magical beliefs, although it still maintained a mythical prototype such as revival from Yin 阴 to Yang 阳. However, the *Red Plum Pavilion* did not escape the fate of being banned in the severe atmosphere of social purification by the KMT party, and it was still illegal after 1949. In the construction of socialist literature and art in the PRC in the 1950s, various operas of the *Red Plum Pavilion* with ghost images were regarded as superstitious, and transcendent or supernatural elements were required to be cut out in performances.[21] Thus, this knowledge regarding "superstitious myth(s)" constructed by Chinese intellectuals in the 1920s was continuously appropriated and modified within the political discourse and governmental practice of the times.

Conclusion

This paper traces the origin of modern China's conception of myth as a superstition by addressing the transcultural experience of mythological knowledge in the 1920s-1930s. The modern Western disciplines featuring textual research established a new understanding of myth at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. In the practice of disciplines, information on the historical formation and evolution of the myth was compiled, and the power of mythical beliefs was revealed. Modern mythological knowledge from the West quickly spread to Asian academia, and Chinese intellectuals also participated in the practice of mythological study in this global wave of textual research. Chinese modern folklore scholars further developed the conception of myth in Western scholarship and directly equated myth to superstition in the context of a new national cultural enlightenment. The transformation of knowledge led myth to be the target of anti-superstition

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21 For the fate and reform of ghost drama *Li Huiniang* in the 1950s PRC, please refer to: Lianhong Zhang. *Cultivation of the Soul: Research on the Reform of Chinese Traditional Operas in New China,* Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2013, pp.133-171; Maggie Greene. *Resisting Spirits: Drama Reform and Cultural Transformation in the People's Republic of China*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2019, pp.47-84.

movements and even laid a foundation for the governmental regulation of literature and the arts in modern China. With the conception of myth as a superstition, the Nanjing KMT government began to censor and ban traditional operas featuring mythical performances as a significant way to reform social customs in the late 1920s.

The transcultural itinerary outlined in this research involved multiple interactions and transformations, including from the West to China and from academic practice to governmental politics. This process not only generated the modification of mythological concepts but also accompanied changes in political ideology. Chinese scholars weakened the meaning of the civilizational hierarchy conveyed from European mythological study, and they converted Western imperial discourse into a national cultural resource that benefited scientific enlightenment. However, with the establishment of the Nanjing KMT government, mythological knowledge of cultural enlightenment became part of a political discourse for national governance and control. The transcultural practice revealed in this research led us to reconsider the suppressed mythical experience in modern Chinese literature and the arts.

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Queer Match of Literary Icons: Curtains up for Ma Liang's "Pig-head Lover" of the "Book of Taboo" Series[1]

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Abstract:

Conceptual Chinese photography offers a platform where threads of time and space can be weaved into a new colourful and surreal fabric of mixed and internationalized appearances, so called hybrids. This essay takes Ma Liang's (Maleonn b.1972) conceptual artwork "Pig-head Lover" of his "Book of Taboo" (2006—2007) series as a case study to discuss problems of interpretation, when it comes to hybridized works of art. Through the activation of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the "Third Space," an infinite location of connotations concerning signs, symbols and thought systems is opened up. *Foreign elements,* i.e signs foreign to the Chinese cultural context, appeal to our immediate interest and start the interpretational efforts. The initial *foreign element* of "Pig-head Lover" would be the elaborate white collar (a so-called cartwheel ruff) of the white-clad and sophisticated pale lady, central to the picture. The artwork "Pig-head Lover" invites us to a scene in which two vaguely recognized fictive personas are spotted, i.e the signs of Queen Elizabeth I as the mythical "Virgin Queen" and the pig "Pigsy (Zhu Bajie)" of the epic novel *Journey to the West.* How hybridized literary icons of the same time period but from two separate cultural spheres and narratives are transformed and mixed to visualize taboo issues of queer China of the 2000s will be discussed. When interpreting "Pig-head Lover" in its "Third Space" location it becomes clear that the subtle likenesses to world literature icons presents us with an allegory — an allegory that distorts the normative mirror of representation, indeed offering contemporary Chinese art as an important agent for shaping a more humane future for individuals in China. It will be argued that it is first when interpreting a work of art like Ma's in its hybrid form that the unknown becomes known.

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1   This is a revised and enlarged version of a chapter from my doctoral thesis, *"Bridal Couples: On Hybridity in Conceptual Chinese Photography, 1995-2009,* Stockholm University, 2013.

Introduction

This essay was inspired by a growing curiosity about contemporary Chinese art, which since the early 1990s has attracted much attention internationally through exhibitions, books and articles. Contemporary Chinese works of art have further sold for enormous sums at international auctions, which makes one wonder what it is in them that attracts such attention and triggers such high prices. A deeper concern of this essay is to discuss how works of art with mixed appearances, visually crossing cultural borders, may produce meaning. The interpretive context forms the starting point for the ensuing discussions, since *hybrids* with their complex visual surfaces create perceptive nervousness and are more difficult to understand. Due to the uncertainty about the connections between various lines of thoughts, a work of art like Ma Liang's 马良 (also called Maleonn, b. 1972) "Pig-head Lover" (Zhutou airen 猪头爱人) of the "Book of Taboo" (Jinji zhi shu 禁忌

Figure 1: Ma Liang 马良 Maleonn (b. 1972), "Pig-head Lover" (Zhutou airen 猪头爱人 2006-2007) of the "Book of Taboo" (Jinji zhi shu 禁忌之书) series.

之书) series proves to be a good case study. The odd match of a vulgar pig and a sophisticated lady inspired the present essay since the match clearly alludes to some kind of critique. At the same time it emphasises problems of interpretation *per se*. How may a contemporary Chinese work of art like Ma's, with very subtle likenesses to important icons of old fantastic tales, reveal something about modern China and its new social realities?

Pig-head Lover visually presents us with a space of a filthy backyard invaded by rats, running around the feet of an ill-matched couple. A white-clad Asian looking woman, wearing a white European cartwheel ruff, stands together with a semi-naked half-pig, half-human figure. The woman's stiff and armoured posture is contrasted with the more sensual and voluptuous body of the pig. Her icy, pale and serious countenance makes her look representative whereas the pig's naked breast, modern flowery shirt and pink glasses rather connote the vulgar. Colourful soap bubbles enhance the volatile feeling of the scene. The time we are invited to interact with is rather conspicuous. For one thing we are in a backyard of our modern time. But since there is something oddly familiar about the two characters posing at the centre of the scene, leading us back in history, we may assume that we are at the same time invited to another time spectrum — presumably the sixteenth century.

When observing the scene in its hybrid form a particular interpretive context is being activated, i.e Homi K. Bhabha's Third Space. By extension the articulation of a proposed fragmentation, typical for conceptual arts, links together narrative threads from different time and space settings. This opens up possibilities of interpretations that otherwise would not have been possible to reach. By embracing what we actually see on the surface, i.e some sort of recreation of two loved and well-known sixteenth-century icons, a new picture evolves as we go deeper into the analysis.

In its local context, a conceptual Chinese work of art may provide insights into the artist's reflections on life in general, history, patterns of tradition contra new life styles. In its global Third Space locality, the work of art, is engendered in the spaces of the gallery, the market and the academic sphere (both the Eastern and the Western) and is thereby in touch with arts and narratives from all times and all places. Further, this author understands the Third Space concept of *foreign element* as a trigger of interest, indeed functioning as an emotional trigger of interest in the same way as Roland Barthes semiotic concept(s) of *punctum* (and *studium*).[2] However the *foreign element* implied is here connected to something foreign to

2 For a deeper insight into Roland Barthes' ideas on the semiotic concepts of *Punctum* and *Studium* see *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (tr. to English by Richard Howard) (1980; New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).

the Chinese cultural context, not necessarily elsewhere in the world. In Ma Liang's "Pig-head Lover" the eyecatching *foreign element* would be the woman's white European cartwheel ruff (oftentimes associated with Elizabethan England), which will lead us forward in the analysis. The particular relationships between the signs of the local (domestic elements) and the signs of the global (foreign elements) are of interest here and a focal point for the discussion.

As conceptual Chinese art is often constructed according to an internationalized postmodern approach characterized by its fragmentedness it is possible to assume that this scene is playing with interrelations between foreign and domestic elements, here understood as signs of the two iconic personas Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603) as the Virgin Queen and Zhu Bajie 猪八戒 (Pigsy) of the epic Ming-dynasty novel *Xiyouji* 西游记 (Journey to the West), written by Wu Cheng'en 吴承恩 (c. 1500-1582). The question is what this particular match between two literary icons of two separate cultural spheres of the sixteenth century may tell us about Chinese contemporary times?

Introducing Ma Liang and His Conceptual World

Ma Liang was born in Shanghai in 1972 and grew up as the son of the head of the Shanghai Opera and a famous actress working with the Shanghai Youth Theatre (now called the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre). The Shanghai Youth Theatre was the first domestic theatre to play Western classical drama after the Cultural Revolution and the earliest to play Shakespeare dramas. Growing up among actors in an environment among props and costumes for the scene has certainly set the tone for Ma's many photographic works of art. Ma usually fabricates and constructs smaller scenes in his studio; sometimes he is inspired by existing icons, like for example Superman, but usually redefines and refines his ideas until he comes up with a more imaginative idea. Some of his works are shot outdoors, in backyards or on rooftops, or in visually spectacular quarters in Shanghai. The artist spends a lot of time preparing his scenes also when it comes to producing the most appropriate light to express the right mood.[3]

The artist has further declared a particular interest in the relationship between space and time and often completes his series with a poem, in accordance to the tradition of Chinese painting. Ma thus finds his inspiration in both the Chinese and the Western spheres; oftentimes in drama and film (he used to work as advertising film director before starting out as a photographic artist in 2004) and fantastic tales

3   Ma Liang 马良, 2016. Interview by Eva Aggeklint. July 4. In the artist's studio, Shanghai. See also Ma Liang, "The Fragment of Memories and Dreams" in *Maleonn* (Hong Kong: Voutu, 2013), 334.

as well as in (Western) medieval epics. One of his photographic series is entitled "A Midsummer Night's Dream".[4] What is of particular interest to this discussion is that the characteristics of an *epic* story is that it tends to highlight cultural norms and defines or calls into question cultural values, particularly as they relate to heroism. The *epic hero* indeed performs deeds and exemplifies certain morals that are highly valued by the society where the *epic* originates from. Many *epic heroes* are therefore recurring characters in the legends of their native culture.[5]

Ma's "Book of Taboo" (2006-2007) is a series of eight independent scenes of which "Pig-head Lover" is the second.[6] The series is introduced with a poem in which many contrasts such as fake and real, sadness and joy, life and death, illusion and truth add to the feeling of disorientation, loneliness and happiness that we are all confronted with in a lifetime. The poem implies that "Book of Taboo" as a series sets up an implicit confrontation, creating a detachment between text and reality. Furthermore, the book itself seems to be a metaphor of life leaving behind the feeling that we should be better at enjoying the moment rather than trying to peep into the future and figure out how it all will end.

First page, life: next page, death; first page, happiness; next page, [suffering]

First page, growing up; next page, growing old; first page, departure; next page [returning home]

First page, illusion; next page, truth; first page, song of praise; next page, sentence of trial.

First page, freedom, next page, restriction; first page, carnival; next page, long solitude after carnival

You are crying; poet; why are you crying?

You shouldn't peep at life — the book full of sadness and joy

For our lives

一页是生；一页是死；一页是欢乐；下一页就是痛苦
一页是成长；一页是衰老；一页是出发；下一页就是归宿
一页是幻觉；一页是真相；一页是颂歌；下一页是审判书
一页是笃信；一页是怀疑；一页是建立；下一页是颠覆
一页是自由；一页是束缚；一页是狂欢；下一页是狂欢后没长的孤独

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4   Ibid.
5   Britannica Academic, s.v. "Epic," accessed September 16, 2017, http://academic.eb.com. ezp.sub.su.se/levels/collegiate/article/epic/110448.
6   In the book Ma Liang 马良 *Maleonn* (Hongkong: Voutou, 2013) the series 'Book of Taboo' consists of ten scenes, which means that the series was completed with two more images at a later stage.

你哭了; 诗人; 你为什么哭?
你不该偷看生命 这本悲欣交集的书
就给我们的生活[7]

The eight photographic scenes of the series are all shot in obscure urban milieus; both outdoors and indoors. The titles of the separate scenes are:

1) *Dream with Carps* (Meng sui liyu qu 梦随鲤鱼去)
2) *Pig-head Lover* (Zhutou airen 猪头爱人)
3) *Life and Death like Running Water* (Shengsi caoshui 生死漕水)
4) *Lonely Favorite* (Gudu de hongren 孤独的红人)
5）*Piano Player without Fingers*（Meiyou shouzhi de gangqinjia 没有手指的钢琴家）
6) *Chubby Birdman* (Xiaopang niaoren 小胖鸟人)
7) *Boy with Fire Extinguisher* (Miehuo shaonian 灭火少年)
8) *Superman Husband and Wife* (Chaoren fufu 超人夫妇)

Young women, men and animals (in the form of animated animals, plastic toys or masks) are somehow intermingled in the eight scenes. Individuals perform tasks in lonesome places; oftentimes a surreal twist is added to the scene. An example is the first scene entitled *Dream with Carps* (Meng sui liyu qu 梦随鲤鱼去) in which a young woman is setting four black carp fish free from the pages of a book, which is turned upside down.

Although the eight scenes in the series are all coloured by the same kind of surreal mood, set in empty spaces (thus forming a series); each and every photographic scene should at the same time be understood as eight independent realities, not otherwise connected. According to this way of understanding the series, every single scene of "Book of Taboo" may first be read as part of the series as a whole thus introducing happiness and sadness in our lives; but at the same time every single scene belongs to its own specific universe and context. What kind of contexts and what sort of questions each scene are about would need to be further analysed for an in-depth answer.

The amalgamation of mixed fragments of cultural expressions from both near and afar makes most of the scenes mind twisting. As Ma's art bear references to both Chinese and Western culture, each scene of the "Book of Taboo" series may be analysed as a visual hybrid. Even so, "Pig-head Lover", in focus here, is the only

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7   Ma Liang 马良 *Maleonn,* 67.

work in the series that introduces subtle similarities to very particular icons of loved literary tales; moreover icons that belong to separate cultural spheres. Pig-head Lover is furthermore the only image in the series that introduces a very odd match of a couple; giving subtle associations to bridal portraiture, even.

The bridal couple in arts has in later years shown to be a tendency in conceptual Chinese photography, that started out as a performance entitled "To Marry a Mule" (Qu tou luozi 娶头骡子) by the artist Wang Jin 王晋 (b. 1962) in 1995. Since then many Chinese artists have made use of the concept of the bridal couple to discuss questions of personal identity and modernity as well as socio-economic development and new trends in urban China. Thus apart from being an image in a series of taboo issues, "Zhutou airen" 猪头爱人 , "Pig-head Lover" or "Pig-head Husband," may also belong to the category of images, in which the question of a perfect match is scrutinized thoroughly. Being an ardent collector of bridal portraits Ma has himself articulated a special interest in historical portraiture, which would speak for an interpretation dealing with how couples are matched in marriage in China's modern times.[8]

Photography and Personal Identity

The medium of photography has indeed proved to be an ideal locale for expressing personal identity in the arts. In the mid-1990s, many Chinese artists in the East Village in Beijing began to direct and/or make their own photographic works of art. Most photographers of the 1990s were still auto-didacts or originally trained as painters or graphic artists; they have therefore been referred to as *shiyan sheyingjia* 实验摄影家 (experimental photographers).[9] During this period, artists were still rather poor and the cameras in use were simple automatic ones.[10] In 1995, Liu Zheng 刘铮 (b. 1969), for example, started to work on a documentation plan that was to visualise his personal understanding of China. Liu developed

8   Eva Aggeklint, *"Bridal Couples": On Hybridity in Conceptual Chinese Photography, 1995—2009* (PhD dissertation, Stockholm University, 2013).

9   Wu Hung, "Intersections: An Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Photography and Oil Painting," in *Making History: Wu Hung on Contemporary Art* (Hong Kong: Time Zone 8, 2008), 135. See also Zhu Qi, "1990s Conceptual Art and Artistic Conceptualization," in *The First Guangzhou Triennial - Reinterpretation: A Decade of Experimental Chinese Art (1990-2000),* eds. Wu Hung, Wang Huangsheng and Feng Boyi (Guangzhou: Guangdong Museum of Art, 2002), 20-27.

10 Karen Smith, "Zero to Infinity: The Nascence of Photography in Contemporary Chinese Art of the 1990s," in *The First Guangzhou Triennial - Reinterpretation: A Decade of Experimental Chinese Art (1990-2000)*, eds. Wu Hung, Wang Huangsheng and Feng Boyi (Guangzhou: Guangdong Museum of Art, 2002), 35-36.

a new approach to portraying marginalized identities, one that differed from those produced by the Chinese documentary photographers of the 1980s. This artist's large photographic portraits explored, according to Chinese standards, less attractive sides of China and its people.[11] During this period Chinese society was also becoming more globalized. The market economy transformed the country into an urbanized, mass-consumer society; demolition made ruins out of many traditional buildings and there were great changes in lifestyles. Artists like Rong Rong 荣荣, Zhan Wang 展望, Sui Jianguo 隋建国 as well as many others were intrigued by their surroundings and documented the new conditions of the city in their art. Expressions of foreign culture as exposed in China, also became of special concern to artists behind the lens.[12]

Another important factor in the development of a more expressive photography was the launch of independent experimental art publications that predominantly circulated within the art community. In 1994, the book known as *Heipishu* 黑皮书 (The Book with the Black Cover), later followed by *Baipishu* 白皮书 (The Book with the White Cover) and *Huipishu* 灰皮书 (The Book with the Grey Cover), introduced modern Chinese and Western photography as a means for Chinese artists to get inspiration and develop new ideas. The new generation of Chinese experimental artists like for example Qiu Zhijie 邱志杰 (b. 1969) and Zheng Guogu 郑国谷 (b. 1970) and several American artists such as Jeff Koons, Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman, were also show-cased and discussed in these books.[13]

11 Wu Hung, "Photographing Deformity: Liu Zheng and His Photo Series 'My Countrymen'" in *Public Culture,* volume 13, number 3, (Fall 2001), 402. See also Yang Shihu 扬时昀, "Zhongguo guannian sheying shi nian qibu 中国观念摄影十年起步 [Chinese Conceptual Photography's Progression in the Past 10 Years]," in *Zhongguo xinwen zhoukan* 中国新闻周刊 [China News Weekly], no. 26 (2007), 72—74.

12 Zhang Zhaohui, "Globalization, Urbanization, and New Chinese Art," in *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art,* November Issue (2002), 44—54; Gu Zheng 顾铮, "Chengshi Zhongguo," in *Xiandaixing de di liu zhang miankong* (The Sixth Face of Modernity) 24-27; Gu Zheng, *Contemporary Chinese Photography,* 10-11. See also Wu Hong, "Guoqu yu weilai zhi jian" (Between Past and Future), 135. Available in English in Wu Hung, "Between Past and Future," in *Making History*, 103; Wu Hung "Between Past and Future" in *Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video From China*, 21.

13 The Book with Grey Cover was published in 1997. The publication is filled with black and white photographs produced by Chinese up-and-coming photographers, like Ai Weiwei 艾未未 (b. 1957) himself, Zheng Guogu and Qiu Zhijie just to mention a few. These avant-garde publications are difficult to obtain and my copy was bought in 798 for the price of 700 yuan through a contact under the table. Ai Weiwei's photographs in which he gives the finger at Tiananmen gate introduce the book. Ai Weiwei *Hui pi shu* 灰皮书 [The Book with the Grey Cover] (Beijing: Minjian yishu chubanshe, 1997). See also Shi Zhimin 石志民, "Zhongguo guannian sheying de jingzi" 中国观念摄影的镜子 [Chinese Conceptual Photography Through the Lens], in *Zhejiang Huabao* 浙江画报 (Zhejiang Pictorial), no.02 (2011), 33.

Figure 2: Qiu Zhijie, Good series, 1998.

The appearance of Rong Rong's and Liu Zheng's independent serial *Xin sheying* 新摄影 (New Photo) in 1996 was an important step in the development and spread of Chinese photography. The journal showed the newest photographic trends in China. *Guannian* 观念 (concept) was in this journal observed to have entered Chinese photography; this seems to be the first time the term *guannian* appears in the context of photography and came to play an important role to artists interested in developing idea-driven works of art. [14] These independent photographic magazines were rare and they introduced documentary experimental tendencies in China in a large format.

14 *Xin sheying* 新摄影 (New Photo), no. 1 (1996), 1; *Xin sheying* 新摄影 (New Photo), no. 3 (1997), 1 in Wu Hung and Zhang Li. *Xin sheying* was published in Beijing, but not by a publishing house. Originally Rong Rong and Liu Zheng used a copy machine and bound the four large format magazines themselves and distributed them to photographers and artists within the art community. In 2007 the exhibition *Newphoto: 10 Years* inaugurated Rong Rong's and Inri's photographic art centre Three Shadows and the magazines were published in a limited edition edited by Wu Hung and Zhang Li. Zhong Linchun 钟林春, the former Library Director at Three Shadows Art Photography Centre. E-mail message to the author. March 7, 2013. For more information see Wu Hung and Zhang Li, *New Photo 10 Years* (Beijing: Three Shadows Press Ltd, 2007), 9—18.

Many of the experimental artists of the late 1990s also developed a dialogue between the past and the present by exploring old photographs in the wake of what has been called the "old photo craze," partly caused by the publication of the book series *Lao Zhaopian* 老照片 (Old Photos) in 1996-1997. This series became an instant best-seller and more than 1. 2 million copies of the first four volumes were sold between October 1996 and December 1997.[15]

Memorabilia from China's more recent past, such as all kinds of old photographs but also old Shanghai advertisements and posters, so-called *yuefenpai* 月份牌, became highly appreciated since most people thought that these fragile objects had been destroyed during the political campaign of *Po si jiu* 破四旧 (Destroy the four olds) during the Cultural Revolution.[16] Photography of the late 1990s therefore became intertextual by way of presenting a close dialogue with the past. How the past was represented in old photographs and other traditional objects became a hype. Chinese photography's influence on artistic expression resulted in people being arranged in the poses of heroic figures of the close past. A good example is Qiu Zhijie's photographic series "Good" (Hao 好) of 1998, in which the famous trio of the farmer/soldier/worker from posters of the Cultural Revolution have been switched. Three modern men wearing suits are here gesturing dramatically with umbrellas instead of holding the little red book in their hands, which points at the

15 Wu Hong, "'Lao zhaopian re' yu dangdai yishu: jingying yu liuxing de xieshang" 老照片热与当代艺术：精英与流行的协商 ("'The Old Photo Craze' and Contemporary Chinese Art: [A Discussion on Essence and Trends]," in *Zuopin yu zhanchang*: *Wu Hong lun Zhongguo dangdai yishu* 作品于展场：巫鸿论中国当代艺术 (Art and Exhibition: Wu Hong on Contemporary Chinese Art) (Guangzhou: Lingnan meishu chubanshe, 2005), 162. Available in English in Wu Hung, "'The Old Photo Craze' in Contemporary Chinese Art," in *Making History*, 119. See also Wu Hung, "Intersections: An Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Photography and Oil Painting," 144.

16 This campaign was a violent confrontation with old culture, old ideas, old customs and old habits. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was aimed at, once and for all, destroying the old society and replacing it with a new socialist order led by the generation that was born and raised under the communist system. See for example Roderick Macfarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, "Eliminating the 'Four Olds,'" in *Mao's Last Revolution* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2008), 113—116. For more information and illustrations of calendar posters see, for example, *20 shiji Zhongguo pingmian sheji wenxian ji* 20 世纪中国平面设计文献集 (Documentary of the 20th Century Chinese Graphic Design), eds. Chen Xiangbo and Xu Ping (Nanning: Guangxi meishu chubanshe, 2012); *Minguo shangye meishushi* 民国商业美术史 [Commercial Art History of the Republic], ed. Lin Jiazi (Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 2008); *Zhui meng yang qing: Yuefenpai, xinnian hua zhan hua ji* 追梦扬清：月份牌新年画展画集 [Tracing the Dream一Spreading Clarity: An Anthology of Yuefenpai and New Year Pictures], ed. Zhang Jian (Shanghai: Liuhaisu meishuguan, 2012), 1-222. See also, Antonia Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, History, Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 123-126.

artist's critical exploration of the shift of ideological drama — from socialism to consumerism (Figure 2). Other artists still have juxtaposed old portrait photographs with newly taken group photographs of people (identical or nearly identical) to discuss trauma and/or memories of the more recent past.[17] At this time, Japanese artist Yasumasa Morimura's photographic appropriation art became known to Chinese artists, in which Morimura himself posed as iconic figures like Marilyn Monroe and Charlie Chaplin in his role as Adolf Hitler. Digital cameras and computer-manipulated images slowly started to appear in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as well as software programs to post-produce photographic works.[18] When Ma Liang started to work with photographic art in 2004 he predominantly worked with digital cameras and the new techniques that were available at that time.[19] Additionally Ma has since the beginning been idea-driven as an artist in his way of producing imaginative and visually dramatic scenes.

Further Development of the Ideas behind Conceptual Chinese Photography

In the autumn of 1997, a number of artists formed a discussion group to debate theories of Western conceptual art with the aim of developing Chinese art photography further. This group was called Saturday Photo Salon and the artists participating discussed ways to create Chinese experimental photography as an art form with its own language, albeit through the use of Western conceptual ideas and postmodern theories.[20] Photographer and photo historian Gu Zheng 顾铮 (b. 1959) has been active in defining the difference between *sheying* 摄影 (photography) and *guannian sheying* 观念摄影 [concept or idea photography]; confining that the most striking difference is that conceptual photographers are usually artists educated at the fine arts institutes. Artists at the time interested in the new *guannian sheying* saw themselves as artists, not photographers. This would be the reason why these artists have had no particular interest in a membership in the China Photographers' Association, the largest organization in the field of Chinese documentary photography. Gu argues that these two types of photography need to be approached

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17 "The Cultural Revolution Revisited," in *Chinese Art at the Crossroads: Between Past and Future, Between East and West*, ed. Wu Hung (Hong Kong: New Media Art, 2001), 17—56.
18 Karen Smith, 36. See also Francesca Jordan, "Photography and the Chinese Visual Environment," in *Out of the Red: The New Emerging Generation of Chinese Photographers,* eds. Primo Giovanni Marella et al. (Bologna: Damiani Editore, 2004), 15.
19 Wu Liang, 334-342.
20 Wu Hung and Zhang Li, 12-13.

in very different ways.[21] The development of *guannian sheying* in China is thus connected to the development of contemporary Chinese art rather than (documentary) photography.

At the beginning of the 2000s, the Chinese official photographic world still preferred words like *jishi* 纪实 (documentary) and *yishu* 艺术 (art) photography to *guannian sheying*.[22] This defines the tension between (official) aesthetic documentary photography and the more internationalized expression of *guannian sheying,* of which Ma Liang's work of art is a good example. Furthermore, contemporary Chinese photography as an art form can be described as having developed from photographs documenting performance art into a genre of its own: conceptual art photography. A number of different terms have been applied to what could be called conceptual Chinese photography: *xingwei yishu zhaopian* 行为艺术照片 (performance art photography), *xingwei sheying* (behaviour photography), *moni fangshi* 模拟方式 (appropriation style), *xingwei fangshi* 行为方式 (performance style) *and sheying zhuangzhi* 摄影装置 (photo installation), which may tell us that the term *guannian sheying* has proved to be a little too general to describe all the expressions included.[23] Moreover, a large number of photographs that present concepts in China are in the West referred to either as conceptual, postmodern or staged photographs.[24] Sun Ninglong, a scholar at the Beijing Film Institute, has defined these artists as directors rather than photographers and he states that as directors they do not even press the shutter button themselves, but just shout "ok" when the scene looks right, which pinpoints how conceptual photographers work as artists producing art and not as traditional documenting photographers producing documentary photographs.[25]

Many Chinese photographic artists born in the late 1970s and 1980s have no

21 Gu Zheng, "Guannian sheying yu Zhongguo de sheying" 观念摄影与中国的摄影 (Conceptual Photography and Chinese Photography), in *Zhongguo xingwei sheying* 中国行为摄影 (Behaviour Photograp[h]y of China) (Hangzhou: China Academy of Art Press, 2000), 7-10.

22 Gu Chengfeng 顾丞峰, *Guannian yishu de Zhongguo fangshi* 观念艺术的中国方式 [Conceptual Art with Chinese Characteristics],(Changsha: Hunan Meishu Chubanshe, 2002),76.

23 Sun Ninglong, "Guannian sheying - bei daoyan de jishi" 观念摄影 – 被导演的纪实 [Conceptual Photography - Staged Documentation], in *Xibei Meishu* 西北美术 (North West Fine Arts), no. 2 (2008), 3; Sun Ninglong, "Guannian sheying de qianshi jinsheng," 观念摄影的前世今生 [Conceptual Photography in Retrospect] in *Yishu yu touzi* 艺术与投资 [Art and Investment] No. 11 (2008), 59.

24 Gu Zheng, *Contemporary Chinese Photography*, 11-13.

25 Sun Ninglong, "Guannian sheying - bei daoyan de jishi" [Conceptual Photography - Staged Documentation], 2.

experience of the Cultural Revolution and many were too young to have had any direct involvement in the demonstrations at Tiananmen Square in June, 1989. Rather it is the one-child policy and the new consumer society that have defined their lives. Photography has in their hands become a medium to explore personal (sexual) identities and generational concerns tied to the many new fantastic spaces of present days consumer society.

A Theory of Spaces

The Western theoretical concept of space serves as a starting point for analyzing the rather complex dialogue that is visually apparent in Ma Liang's conceptual artwork. Interaction between cultures is of course not a new phenomenon. There is a long history of cultural import and export between countries in Asia but also between Asia and Europe, along with, for example, the Silk Roads and the East India Company's trade routes. It is well known that objects and ideas from the West (and Japan) have strongly influenced the development of society, politics and art in China since at least the nineteenth century.[26] Likewise, Chinese ideas, philosophy and art expressions have influenced other parts of the world for as long. This speaks for a multidirectional influence throughout history.

As early as the late 1960s, the concept of space won a special place in academic writing. Michel Foucault's (1926—1984) essay "Of Other Spaces", based on a lecture given in 1967, presented ideas of how to write about history through sites instead of focusing on linear progression only. Two decades later, in texts about cultural diversity, the concept was employed to specifically discuss the East and the West as separate spaces since Westerners had turned much of the Orient from alien spaces into colonial spaces. Edward Said (1935—2003) was the first to describe the idea of the imaginary space of the Orient. He argued that when Westerners wrote about the Orient, there was a "universal practice of designating in one's mind a

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26 Contemporary art in the era of mass communication and globalization has in recent years become a field of particular scholarly interest. See for example, *Art and Globalization,* vol.1, eds. James Elkins, Zhivka Valiavicharska and Alice Kim (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010); *Globalization and Contemporary Art,* ed. Jonathan Harris (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); *Is Art History Global?* ed. James Elkins (New York: Routledge, 2007; Iain Robertson, *A New Art from Emerging Markets* (Farnham and Burlington: Lund Humphries, 2011); Terry Smith, *Contemporary Art: World Currents* (London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd, 2011). In her unpublished doctoral thesis *Responding to the World: Contemporary Chinese Art, Exhibitions, and Criticism in the 1990s* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2010), Peggy Wang has noted that the 1990s observed an earlier unprecedented interest in making art from the periphery part of the international scene.

familiar space which is ours and an unfamiliar space beyond ours which is theirs […].[27] He further noted that this imaginative geography intensified its sense of itself by stressing "the distance and difference" between near and far. Said argued that Western writing about "the Orient was to be understood as a discourse that mainly represents institutionalized Western knowledge of the Orient". He subsequently coined the term Orientalism, convinced that the discourse "exerts a three-way force, on the Orient, on the Orientalist and on the Western consumer of Orientalism.[28] This implies that the Orientalist approach, according to Said, was performative in the sense that it encouraged people to preserve romantic ideas of the exotic or barbarian Orient. In the 1990s, Homi K. Bhabha (b.1949) rejected Said's idea of an imagined balancing act on a proposed border between the East and the West. This is of importance for the discussion below since Bhabha acknowledges that cultural products may simulate representations from other cultures but his ideas do not polarize, degrade, romanticize or exoticize such cultural expressions. From this point of view, Bhabha's reformulation of the dichotomy of the East and the West and his concept of a "third location of culture," the Third Space for so-called hybridized works is crucial for defining hybridized works as originals and not imitations.

Homi K. Bhabha further stressed that the usual definition of culture is often perceived as a kind of "imagined community" (for one thing bringing people in the same nation together by reference to ancient tradition).[29] He argues that this strict definition is unsatisfactory since it fails to explain the profound ambiguity of modern and contemporary artistic expression.[30] Instead, his construction of the Third Space explicitly erases the "mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open expanding code."[31] It further challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a "homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary [original/imaginary] Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People."[32]

In the case of Ma Liang's "Pig-head Lover", the sign of the Virgin Queen is foreign to the Chinese cultural context and therefore unstable to the interpreter. This is why the process of evaluating the *foreign* in what Homi K. Bhabha calls the

27 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978; London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2010),54.
28 Ibid., 54-67.
29 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).
30 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994; New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 231. In his book Bhabha polemizes against Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* on the origin and spread of nationalism.
31 Bhabha, 54.
32 Ibid.

hybrid becomes important to an interpretation in the Third Space.

According to Bhabha's ideas, the interpretation of *hybrids* is never simply an act of communication between the interpreter and the object. For him the production of meaning requires that the two "places" or "utterances" that are simultaneously visible in a *hybrid* are mobilized into the conceptual site of a Third Space. If this mobilization is not specifically articulated, the two utterances remain in the unconscious and produce ambivalence in the act of interpretation. This may prove that cultural expressions are still usually bound to specific cultural spheres. Even though Bhabha's theory primarily concerns literature, his concept of *hybrid* for a new kind of cultural and artistic product is applicable also to visual works of art.

However, the Third Space does not merely transform often degraded mixes of simulated Western sources into *hybrids* (new products). As this writer understands it, Bhabha's *hybrid* is, more importantly, connected to the postmodern concept of appropriation in a dichotomous relationship. Whereas an appropriation, dubious precisely because it is a simulation, is understood to transfer the whole original idea[33] to a new work in order to offer some kind of new reflection or critique, the *hybrid's* simulation is more complex. A *hybrid* only communicates with "originals" to a certain extent. The *hybrid* only vaguely resembles their "originals." In addition, traces of meanings from "originals" produces what Bhabha calls "foreign element" that, because of their mixed appearance, could result in what Bhabha calls "unstable elements." This vacillating conceptual instability can be compared to a kind of perceptual nervousness, which is why the concept of *foreign element* needs to be scrutinized before what he calls an "interstitial" or an "in-between" (Third Space) can be revealed. It is this process that produces an entirely new product, a *hybrid*. Thus the *hybrid* presents a much more subtle affinity to canonized works of art than the appropriation does, and the ways the *foreign elements* to a certain extent communicate with "originals" is important to the meanings of the new product.

Ma Liang's "Pig-head Lover" share the same characteristics of subtle recognition of something foreign (to the Chinese cultural context), in other words, this writer understands "Pig-head Lover" as a visual *hybrid* in the above sense. From this point of view, the foreign is a *sign*, tied to fantastic tales from both the Western and Chinese cultural spheres. It will further be argued that hybrid expressions are employed by Chinese artists who are interested in upsetting the borders of cultural and geographical imaginations and are interested in an intellectual debate. Bhabha

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33 An example is the above mentioned Japanese artist Morimura, who works with appropriations of visually identifiable icons like Marilyn Monroe, Charlie Chaplin etc. In these cases viewers may instantly recognize the originals, which is not the case with hybrids.

has acknowledged that even though he is reluctant to use terms like "original" and "copy," he concedes that it is rather evident that cultural expressions may travel, thereby producing new types of texts or images in an age of globalization. This is the reason why he argues for close studies of *foreign elements* and "insists [on scrutinizing] the textile superfluity of folds and wrinkles; [that] becomes the 'unstable element of linkage' [...]." He concludes the discussion of the foreign by saying that he is more engaged with

> the indeterminate temporality of the in-between, that has to be engaged in creating the conditions through which "newness comes into the world." The foreign element "destroys the original's structures of reference and sense communication as well" not simply by negating it but by negotiating the disjunction in which successive cultural temporalities are "preserved in the work of history and at the same time cancelled."[34]

According to Bhabha, it is the practice of translation that comprises "the performative nature of cultural communication."Thus, it is the *foreign* as translated that transforms the original utterance into a new phenomenon — the *hybrid*. Furthermore, the different utterances, the "split articulations that a *hybrid* introduces, give many different meanings to the work."[35] This corresponds well with the way Ma Liang's scene seemingly produces double or contradictory meanings; for this reason, Bhabha's theoretical approach functions well as a means to explore the image's double faces and what hybrids do. *Hybrid* works, like Ma Liang's, may be understood as expressions that can maintain but also form new social and political patterns, thus presenting the *hybrid* as an active agent and thereby utterly performative.

Performativity

The concept of performativity derives from J.L Austin. He launched the concept in the 1950s as a potential to discuss what he called language "speech acts."[36] Performances of words, phrases and images are to be viewed as such acts, and typically is that they do not merely describe the world but rather changes it. An example Austin referred to is the marriage act, in which the bride and the groom say I do, meaning that the phrase is an act that changes the civil status of the couple,

34 Bhabha, 326.
35 Ibid., 53.
36 J.L Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

meaning that it is a performative act involving some kind of transformation.

In the 1990s Judith Butler took the concept of performativity to discuss gender, suggesting that gender is something you do rather than something you are.[37] Thus, she applied Austin's theory on a new aspect of social relationships and transported the concept of performativity from the discourse of language to the discourse on identity. It is therefore possible to assume that expressions like those in contemporary arts photography could help questioning and reshaping expectations about gender, along with sexual identity, its status and perhaps also notions of how civil society should be formed around these questions. As pointed out by Butler, women are not the only subjects of feminism, claiming that anti-normative manifestations of the body may in many societies be punished if openly displayed, which is why visually breaking with norms is to be equated with political activity. Butler adds the queer identity to discussions on gender, thus giving multiple perspectives to the normative representation of gender.

The Politics of Spaces in Reform Period China

In the last few decades, China has witnessed fast economic development and with that a radical social change has been taking place. People have been presented with many new spaces of consumption and more money to spend. New places of consumption have proved to be more than just physical constructs; they also bear with them new social constructs. It is evident that when "people choose particular spaces over others, they are also choosing to engage in different sets of meanings. Spaces of consumption thus become staging grounds for the expression of social distinction, self-identity, and family relationships."[38] An interesting example is how the new bridal fashion in bridal portrait studios since the mid-1990s has slowly become a mode to express one's own personal (heterosexual) identity and with this also newly gained consumer rights.[39] The younger generation find their role models in fashion magazines rather than in model operas of the parent generation.

Moreover, traditional Confucian family values and conservative approaches to life start to change in this rapidly transforming society, making room for a greater consciousness not only of individual rights but also of expressing one's

37 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990; New York and London: Routledge, 2006).
38 LiAnne Yu, *Consumption in China: How China's New Consumer Ideology is Shaping the Nation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 34.
39 Eva Aggeklint,"*Bridal Couples:" On Hybridity in Conceptual Chinese Photography 1995—2009*, 2013, 122-123.

own individual sexual identity.[40] In China homosexuality was decriminalized in 1997 and since 2001 it is no longer counted as a mental illness. Although openness and tolerance towards homosexuality is greater in China after 2001 it is still controversial to live openly as a homosexual; this much because a central thought in Confucian tradition is that a son should provide for the continuation of the family line. Li Yinhe 李银河 (b.1952), a Chinese sociologist has tried to legalize samesex marriage several times since 2000. In 2006 and again in 2007 Li proposed the Chinese Same-sex Marriage Bill at the National People's Congress and has continued doing so without success. The first Pride Festival was held in Shanghai in 2009, two years after Ma Liang's work of art was produced. Despite reports of harassment and discrimination, a liberalization trend has gradually been taking place since the 1980s through the first decades of the 2000s.[41] Even so the question of coming out publicly may be a life-long and rather complicated process for most people especially in cultures like China, where people are living and loving according to the Confucian tradition to please the parents. The fast economic and social developments are naturally reflected in the visual arts, as will be discussed below.

"Pig-head Lover" - Curtains up!

As discussed earlier, Ma Liang's conceptual photograph stages a white-clad Asian-looking woman wearing a white European cartwheel ruff posing together with a semi-naked half-pig half-human queer figure. Through the activation of the Third Space an infinite space of connotations is unlocked; a space that would not otherwise have been possible to reach. It is in this in-between locality that the signs of the epic heroes of the Virgin Queen and Pigsy come alive and enables an interpretation that links together narrative threads from two literary classics, one Western and one Eastern, both products of the 1590s. This is to eventually weave a new fabric that in its turn presents a discussion on issues of personal sexual identity in China of the 2000s.

When looking at Ma's staged scene, the first visual clue that arouses a special interest — the so-called *foreign element* — would, as pinpointed earlier, be the white cartwheel ruff and in addition the dazzling white facade of what appears to be the sign of Elizabeth I as the Virgin Queen. When exploring "the folds and wrinkles of the original," the cult of Elizabeth I as the Virgin Queen "wedded to

40 Si Han, *Secret Love* (Stockholm: The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 2013), 8.
41 Si, 14-15.

her kingdom" tells the story of a gradual creation, which is said to have started as the Queen grew older without getting married. Living in a conservative society, in which both tradition and religion proclaimed the natural inferiority of women, Elizabeth consciously used her sex to her advantage by creating a personal myth that raised her high above the ordinary. When Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558 the Crown lawyers elaborated a legal theory known as the "King's Two Bodies," which in reality meant that the Queen's mortal natural body was wedded to an immortal body political to govern the country. The body political was timeless and perfect, which is why her gender was no longer believed to be a threat to the nation. Even though Elizabeth I had many suitors she had no wish for a husband. She rejected important proposed matches and ruled her country in more than just name.[42] Elizabeth's alleged virginity thus set her apart as an extraordinary woman. Artists and poets raised her to the level of a "virgin goddess" in literature, music and the arts; and attached allusions to her as the chaste moon-goddess Diana, the fairyqueen Gloriana, and even made her a rival to Virgin Mary.[43]

Most importantly, the colour white as a symbol of innocence and virginity helped create the myth around Elizabeth I as the Virgin Queen. Moreover, in Elizabeth's later years, her painted portraits grew less realistic and more iconographic. Elizabeth I was highly interested in fashion and in presenting an iconic facade creating a sphere of mystery around her persona. From 1562 she often wore heavy make-up and wigs due to scars she had received from small poxes.[44] One of the epic poems that especially contributed to Elizabethan mythmaking was Sir Edmund Spenser's allegorical poem *The Faerie Queen* of the 1590s, which is of importance to this analysis.

The Virtue of Chastity as Representation of Cultural Identity

In Spenser's England, *The Faerie Queen* was to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline."[45] *The Faerie Queen* was especially dedicated to Elizabeth I, the only living heir of King Henry VIII. She was the poem's primary addressee and was indeed invoked as a "mirror of virtue. "Even so,

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42 J.E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960).
43 Matthew Woodcock, *Fairy in The Faerie Queene: Renaissance Elf-Fashioning and Elizabethan Myth Making* (Aldershot: Achgate publishing Company, 2004). See also "The Virgin Queen," http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/SLT/history/elizabeth/virgin.html, accessed from the Internet 2010-12-08.
44 Neale.
45 Elisabeth Heale, *The Faerie Queen: A Reader's Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 9.

The Faerie Queen strongly questioned the queen's ability to rule effectively because of her gender and inscribed the "shortcomings of her rule."[46] As discussed above, the queen's female body represented more than a physical body; it represented a political body and as such it constituted the body of the nation. Elizabeth's physical health and purity was therefore intimately connected to the strength and stability of the nation. Sickness, doubtless sexual morality and infertility became political questions and the queen was closely observed to maintain the stability of the nation.[47] Despite the limitations she operated within, it seemed as though Elizabeth I self-consciously created the myth around her and was able to function powerfully as a ruler atypical of her time.

The concept of the virtuous political body of the Virgin Queen has been kept alive in popular culture. It was widely actualized in 2007, in the same period as Pig-head Lover was produced, in Shekhar Kapur's motion picture *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* (Figure 3).[48] The film addresses the status of Queen Elizabeth I as a self-determined unmarried woman of great political power. In the ending scene Elizabeth I enters the stage as the pale white virgin, clad in white (and with an elaborate white cartwheel ruff), a symbol of chastity, purity and political power.

Figure 3: Cate Blanchett as Elizabeth I in Shekhar Kapur's *Elizabeth: The Golden Age*, 2007.

46 Ibid.
47 Anna Whitelock, *Elizabeth's Bedfellows: An Intimate History of the Queen's court* (Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd: London, 2013), 19.
48 *Elizabeth: The Golden Age,* Blu-ray disc, directed by Shekhar Kapur (2007; Orlando: Universal Studios, 2010).

In "Pig-head Lover" the reference to the sign of the Virgin Queen is perceived only through the white cartwheel ruff, the woman's white complexion and the white dress that covers the queen's entire physical body like an impenetrable armament. Even so, this familiarity soon leads to ambiguity. The Asian-looking woman in Ma's constructed scene presents us with a highly hybridized figure, signifying Europeanness and Chineseness at the same time; meaning that within the European or North American spheres the white complexion and the cartwheel ruff would to some viewers directly connote the Virgin Queen and with her the virtue of chastity. In the Chinese cultural context, on the other hand, the colour white is often associated with grief but also with the moon. Thus, the colour white could rather allude to the Moon Goddess who, according to the tale of *Journey to the West*, was heavily courted by Pigsy (Zhu Bajie), who in his turn was punished for his lustful behaviour. This intricate weave of icons certainly moves the focus to the more general matter of chastity and sexual repression, tied to the Chinese cultural context; as hybrids address and reject the "original" at the same time.

In China, some of the deepest mysteries are those concerning sexual emotions and practices. The world's oldest sexology has its roots in China although good virtue has been celebrated alongside. Significant for the discussion here is Neo-Confucian philosophy, which has celebrated a sexual conservatism and with that the virtue of chastity, indeed introducing chastity as part of a national cultural identity.

Furthermore, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has since 1949 tried to wipe out what was perceived as the feudal past and make China pure, which has included suppressing deviating sexual expressions.[49] When scrutinizing the sign of Ma Liang's chaste queen it becomes evident that it may personify a deep-rooted conservative Confucian tradition imbued in Chinese culture as part of a heritage around a pure national cultural identity.

Individual Lust Proposed as an Important Part of Identity in Modern China

Moving the focus to the detail of the huge book in the hands of Ma's queen one may wonder what kind of ideology it would symbolise in the Chinese cultural context. To find out, it is again important to examine "the folds and wrinkels of the 'original'" — here proposed to be the Virgin Queen. During Elizabeth I's reign, she restored England to Protestantism and reintroduced the English translation of the Bible to her people, which had been banned during the Catholic Mary Stuart's

49 Ruan Fangfu, *Sex in China: Studies in Sexology in Chinese Culture* (New York: Springer Science, 1991), 83. See also Johan Lagerkvist, *Kina i globaliseringesn mitt* [China at the Centre of Globalization] (Stockholm: Forum, 2007), 126-167.

(1542—1587) reign.[50] This would certainly strengthen this queen's subtle likeness to the symbolism around the icon of the Virgin Queen. An interesting twist to the interpretation of Ma's work of art is the cult around Elizabeth I as the Faerie queen Gloriana, which includes her mate Arthur (King Arthur) who in the fairy tale is described as the boar of Cornwall — a pig — turning the scene's message upside down as it balances in-between cultures in an intriguing way. As discussed initially the queen and the pig of Ma's work of art will prove to be signs of their own. This implies that a *hybrid* may alert only certain virtues of the above icons (originals)— the Virgin Queen and Pigsy and reject others, as we will soon see.

Although, it is the sign of the Virgin Queen that may have ignited the above reading to a well-introduced Western scholar (also mobilized into the Third Space), the sign of Pigsy would probably be the initial focal point for the Chinese intellectual reader/viewer.

Wu Cheng'en's *Journey to the West* is based on the Chinese monk Xuanzang's (600—664) pilgrimage to India for the purpose of collecting Buddhist sutras. After returning to China the monk's adventurous journey became a source of many folk tales. To aid Xuanzang to overcome the dangers of attacks of evil monsters, the monk was assisted by the monkey Sun Wukong, the pig Pigsy (Zhu Bajie), the monk Sandy and a horse. Of interest to this essay is that *Xiyouji* can be read as an allegorical tale and as such the monk symbolises a man in search of enlightenment, the horse carrying him may be understood as his will, the monkey as his heart and mind and the pig as his physical powers and inclinations.[51]

According to *Xiyouji* the character Pigsy used to be an immortal in Heaven and was later sent to the human world as punishment for flirting too heavily with the Goddess of the Moon. After arriving on Earth, he was reincarnated into a half-pig, half-human by mistake. Pigsy is characterized as a simple and honest figure willing to bear hardships but at the same time, he is gluttonous, lustful and lazy. Pigsy is thus often described as an ordinary human being that people would easily identify with.[52] At first sight Pigsy would therefore not seem to best personify the *epic hero*, however, as he is constantly punished for his carnal and lustful behaviour but still overcomes difficulties, he serves as a good example of an everyday hero. The sign of the pig in Ma Liang's version is drawn as an ordinary, vulgar and feminine version of Pigsy, implying a moral twist of how one as a sexual being should not

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50 Neale.
51 Wilt Idema and Lloyd Haft, *A Guide to Chinese Literature* (The University of Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1997), 208-209.
52 Ma Liang 马良 ,2016. Interview by Eva Aggeklint. July 4th. In the artist's studio, Shanghai.

behave.

The connection between what appears to be the signs of the fictive personas the Virgin Queen and Pigsy, both products of the 1590s, certainly reveals a visual intertextuality somehow tied to a sixteenth century context; with an inclination to critically comment on the status of social reforms in modern China as being too old in a modern world. Furthermore, as signs, the queen and the pig represent each other's contrasting characters, alluding to the particular format of an allegory.[53] The scene certainly demonstrates a powerful interplay of Eastern and Western literary icons created by Ma Liang; a self-declared world citizen, at home in China as well as in the world outside. His artistry is part of one of the most transformative periods in modern Chinese and recent world history — 1989 to 2008; a period of time when China's artists presented us with some critical expressions of a very bold art movement, involving conceptual arts.

As discussed the signs of the queen and the pig introduce a variety of opposites and would imply many tangible dualities that are typical for an allegory. At the same time Chinese philosophical concepts of *yin* and *yang* describe well how opposite forces are at the same time complementary and interrelated. The sign of the queen as the Virgin Queen, signifying a powerful woman with masculine power, is tied to the literary rather than the vernacular sphere; whereas the sign of the pig as Pigsy signifies a beast and a commoner and is the outcome of a vernacular tale. Furthermore the queen of this allegory is presented as a symbol for the sage/king/ nation that within a Chinese cultural context would address the importance of acknowledging traditional Confucian ethics like purity and self-consciousness as the role model for China. The pig on the other hand would connote the opposite, an ordinary human being, with lust and flaws, who according to Confucian ethics is set to learn from the king.

According to the allegorical scheme the match of a virgin queen and a lustful pig would imply a conflicting meeting between chastity on the one hand and individual cravings of lust on the other hand. Another possible reading would be to understand the match between a queen and her subject as representing the normal hierarchical order of Confucianism; it is still the king who sets the examples and ordinary people who learn to become sages. The son is to look up to his father and the wife would answer to her husband — all in good harmony. However, judging by the pigs prominent breasts, the implication points to a more complex interpretation than that. Since the sign, of what simulates the popular folk hero

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53 *Britannica Academic.* "allegory," accessed October 2012, http://www.britannica.com/ EBchecked/topic/16078/allegory.

Pigsy, is here visually represented as a sow rather than a boar; "Pig-head Lover" may be understood as a visual riddle on queerness to discuss the status of same sex relationships in modern China. In Ma's work of art the sign of Pigsy is definitely presented as an everyday hero, openly visualising his flaws and carnal cravings (visually presented and hidden at the backyard), which implies a wish to depict a more humane attitude to life. Rather than the usual hunt for defining a socialist hero, as China has seen in the recent past, we are here invited to get glimpses of another reality, which embraces flaws and the right to be your individual self in many different situations.

An Allegory of the Representative and the Hidden

This essay started with questions about ambiguity and hybridity. The signs of the queen and the pig appeared to seduce the viewer with their intriguing surfaces, but at the same time they also provoked puzzlement since they only subtly recall recognisable literary sources while alluding to both Chinese and Western traditional expression. The interpretation above has revealed that this work, produced in an era of economic and social reforms, does not aim to please but engage in personal reflections on contradictions, foreign influences, social pressure as well as personal identity and gender constructions. It has been argued that hybrids are often constructed according to a postmodern expression. However, the critical edge is expressed in a manner slightly different from the way many Western postmodern works make use of mass media images, texts and other visual material. For one thing, Chinese artists like Ma Liang, make use of hybrid premeditated images in a humorous way, involve (Chinese) people in thinking of less attractive sides of their immediate Chinese reality.

When interpreting "Pig-head Lover" through the perspective of the Third Space, it becomes clear that the implied same-sex match distorts China's normative mirror of representation. The signs of the queer foreign hero/ine Virgin Queen and the local hero/ine Pigsy certainly alludes to a conspicuous balance between the representative and the hidden, given that the match between the chaste and the carnal is obscured in a dark backyard invaded by filthy rats, implying that this queerness is to be equalled with something that at the time should not be displayed openly.

However, there seems to be more to the allegory than just defining virtues. The allegorical format is close to satire and as such the scene is performative by way of problematizing the inherent struggle between what is traditionally and morally expected in a country where family plays a more pervasive part for an individual

than what an individual may personally crave. The majority of the people in China still get married and an example shows that about 90% of gay men in China are married because of their parents' requirement of a grandchild to maintain and prolong the family name.[54] This means that homosexuals still to a large degree, live with lies and that homosexual desires have been handled in utmost secrecy, literally kept secret in the backyard burdened by feelings of guilt and unhappiness.

Ma Liang's work was created in 2007, which is exactly ten years after homosexuality was decriminalized in China and six years after it was removed from the list of mental illnesses, in 2001.[55] The medium of photography as a frozen scene without a resolving end would here satirically imply a status quo regarding social development despite an otherwise rapid societal modernization. Homosexual relationships were in 2007 still not uncomplicated to display openly, which is still true in 2021-2022 when this essay was completed. Although sociologist Li Yinhe has struggled with the question of legalizing same sex marriages since 2006, it has still not materialized on the mainland, only in Taiwan.

This Third Space analysis of Ma Liang's hybrid scene of fluctuating opposites, contradictions and virtues to the utmost punctuates the superficiality of the progression of modernization in an internationalized China. The interchanging personalities and genders as well as the subtle simulations to iconic literary figures of the 1590s narrate a story of the controversy of existing hidden and secret love in a "fast-developing" but morally conservative society. It is possible to assume that "Pig-head Lover" is part of a broader act connected with challenging norms by introducing a queer approach to the discourse on gender, which in China historically has made woman the main focus of the feminist debate. Nota bene, in 2008 the first Queer Centre in Beijing opened its doors to the world and this event was followed by the first Pride Festival in Shanghai the year after; this making "Pig-head Lover" become one of many images in the beginning of the 2000s to stir a debate on the question of being able to "come out" openly from the backyard to express one's true sexual identity more freely for those who wish to do so and are interested in the matter.[56]

54 Zang Xiaowei,"Family, Kinship, Marriage, and Sexuality," in *Understanding Contemporary China,* ed. Robert E. Gamer, (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2008), 281—30& See also Ping Yao, *Women, Gender, and Sexuality: A Brief History* (New York and London: Routledge, 2021).

55 "Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo xingfa 79 ban" & "Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo 97 ban", http://vip.chinalawinfo.com/NewLaw2002/Slc/SLC.asp?Db=chl&Gid=556. Accessed from the Internet 2012-01-08.

56 See other examples of this motif in the catalogue of the exhibition *Secret Love* on homosexuality and queerness in China at the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 2012.

A visually perfected alliance between the conservative and the reformative may be understood as a longed-for but illusive state of mind. The final metamorphosis of tradition and modernization, a completion, which will see a mix of old and new into a true hybrid (new product) is still to come perhaps sometime in the future. Although that day seems to be far away, Ma Liang's visually beautiful and surreal surfaces may create some hope and help to stretch the borders of our imagination through both time and space.

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An Account of the Empire of China and the Sinological Thoughts of the Dominican Domingo Fernández de Navarrete

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Abstract:

The Dominican friar Domingo Fernández de Navarrete came to Asia with his colleague Juan Bautista Morales to assist the affairs of the Chinese Rites Controversy during the mid 17th century. His work *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious* was then published in Madrid in the year 1676, forming part of another great Spanish sinological text after *The History of the Great and Mighty Kingdom of China* (1585) by Juan González de Mendoza. The text of Fernández de Navarrete pioneeringly depicted various facets of Early Qing China, influencing a great number of European philosophers on the topic of Chinese civilization. A contemplation of "the Other" derived from the colonial experiences in the Americas, and a comparison of Chinese culture with the European was reflected. In the text of Fernández de Navarrete, a "Chinese imagination" of the time can be traced.

Keywords: Domingo Fernández de Navarrete, *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious,* Spanish Sinology, Chinese imagination

In the year 1676 the book *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious*[1] (*Tratados históricos, políticos, éticos y religiosos de la monarquía de China*) was published in Madrid, in which various aspects of Early Qing China were depicted. Its author, the Dominican friar Domingo

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1   The English translation was fulfilled by London literates H. Lintot (1703—1758) and J. Osborn (1704—1743) in 1732, and the title in English thus remained unchanged in the hispanic Sinology studies. A more proper and linguistically contemporary translation would be "Historical, Political, Moral and Religious Treatises on the Kingdom of China."

Fernández de Navarrete (1610—1689), was born in the city of Peñafiel, Spain, and entered the Order at the age of sixteen. He was a theology student and served as a Catholic preacher, that is, until the Dominican Order participated in the expedition to the Great China Area. Fernández de Navarrete was chosen as a member of the expedition and was then sent to Asia in the year 1646. According to Fernández de Navarrete himself, the decision came from his self-recommendation, in which he highlighted the tales and successes that the Mendicant Orders had achieved in the Philippines as the reasons behind his own motivation (Navarrete 294). Meanwhile, most past research also mentioned the influence of the Dominican Juan Bautista Morales (1597—1664), who had entered mainland China in 1633 and ignited the famous Chinese Rites Controversy, polemic that would last for centuries. Fernández de Navarrete entered mainland China in 1659 and devoted the rest of his life to "China narration." Based on his personal experiences and also referencing several sinological texts of the time, his work *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious* received great praise since the moment it came off the press. The publication was written in seven volumes. The first and second volumes provide a panorama of Chinese civilization, its history and customs. In the following two volumes, the author began to approach the inner spirit of this Eastern Empire. Confucius' thoughts were first systematically introduced to the Hispanic worldview, as well as a Castilian-language version by the author of the *Mingxin Baojian* 明心寶鑒. The fifth, sixth, and seventh volumes introduce journals and related documents collected by the author, which subsequently became important historical materials for further study to the early European sinologists. Fernández de Navarrete's text displays the influence of predecessors like Francisco de Xavier, Martín de Rada, and Juan Cobo. Moreover, unlike the texts of his ancestors of the Order, the naturalistic knowledge of mainland China was also reflected, setting up a new tradition of exploring the natural science of Asia, a project which was subsequently succeeded by the Franciscans Manuel de San Juan Bautista (1656—1711) and Pedro de la Piñuela (1650—1704).

An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious was the first and only publication by the author, due to his other works were banned by the Spanish Inquisition for containing anti-Jesuit opinions, thus remaining unpublished. In this sense, the best way of serving the study on the author and his thoughts lies in approaching this work, which reflects not only the reality of the China of 17th century, but also that of the Far East Empire imagined by Europe at the time.

The Dominican Order and the Mission in Asia during the 17th Century

The Dominican Order, one of the Mendicant Orders, was established early in 1215. Its first attempts toward proselytization in Asia were made by the Spanish friar Ascelin of Cremona in 1247, when the story of the Mongol Empire was sent back to Europe. Comprising the first relayed impressions of the East, the missionary messages of that time proved legendary and illusionary. Further explorations was required. However, considering the chaotic condition of the European regimes during the Middle Ages, the dispatches to the Far East proved relatively infrequent, and mainly concentrated on the affairs of the Inquisition and the American Conquest after the Columbus' discovery. As for how they reached China, the "Jesuit route," passing through the Indian Ocean, was then officially available only to Portuguese power, and thus expelled the Mendicant Order from this sphere. It was not until the year 1565 that the "seaway of Urdaneta" was first put into use, enabling the Mendicant friars the opportunity to reach the Philippine Islands from the city of Acapulco, New Spain (Mexico). Manila quickly became a "transfer station" of the Mendicant friars (Sanz 121), where they resided and obtained information relating to mainland China. The approach through the overseas Chinese residents in Manila provided the Spanish not only with commercial businesses, but also with knowledge concerning the language, culture, and even detailed military messages of the mainland.

The Chinese Empire, at the middle of the 17th century, happened to be weathering a political tsunami. The activities of Domingo Fernández de Navarrete in China coincided with the early years of the Qing Dynasty, in which epochal alterations, political turmoil and new trends of thoughts combined and brewed into a religious atmosphere distinct from that of the Late Ming Dynasty. The Jesuits' "Accommodation Strategy" once sheltered the European Catholic missionaries during the Ming dynasty, but this came to be seen as evidence of crime from the perspective of the Qing courtier Yang Guangxian (楊光先 1597—1669). Qing Governors, who tended to associate the European missionaries with the White Lotus Society 白蓮教, also held a cautious distance from the missionaries. The absence of a thorough knowledge on the European religions confused the Qing court in matters concerning the Catholic activities in the country, The quick diffusion of a foreign religion appeared as a great sensation to the court, which was continuously harassed by various rebellious local communities. In this condition, it seemed quite logical to see Catholicism as a kind of "heresy" — in much the same way as the missionaries would remark about Confucianism. This accusation first derived from the Late Ming Dynasty, when the local rebellion of Liu Tianxu 劉天

緒 was sentenced as both Catholicism and the White Lotus Society (Shen 2697). Till the epoch of Kang Hi 康熙, mentions of this "relation" were repeated by Yang and many of his colleagues, alleging the harmful result of Europeans joining the calendar-making department of the Empire. The emperor, at the beginning, chose to placate both sides, and refused the characterization of Catholicism as a hostile army. However, the activities of Juan Bautista Morales once again pushed the missionaries to the edge.

The Dominican Morales, once working in mainland China during the Late Ming Dynasty, was disgruntled by the "Accommodation Strategy" established by the Society of Jesus. After all, the tradition of worshiping the ancestors and Confucius was considered "idolatry" in the opinion of the Dominicans, who insisted on pure beliefs in the Catholic conventions. Morales went back to Europe in 1640, with handwritten reports to the Roman Curia on missionary activities and the obstacles they faced in the Far East. After appealing for years, in 1645 he finally convinced the Pope of the necessity of "rectifying" the local conventions of China. Fernández de Navarrete was thus chosen as one of his companions on his journey back to Asia (Cummins 72).

The New Continent and the Formation of Domingo Fernández de Navarrete's Thoughts

The journey to Asia was quite long and exhausting. Fernández de Navarrete, like many of his predecessors, had to detour across the Atlantic Ocean, sailing to China from Acapulco. The famous Manila Galleon, however, suspended the voyage of 1647. Navarrete had to reside in the American continent temporarily and wait for the next departure. It was at this time when he got acquainted with the bishop Juan de Palafox (1600—1659). As a dedicated apostle of the humanist Bartolomé de las Casas (who had also lived and worked in the New Continent for decades), Juan de Palafox functioned like a "mentor" to Fernández de Navarrete and introduced the thoughts of Bartolomé to the Dominican newcomer.

Having been activated in the first decades of the colonization, Bartolomé reflected on the "conquest" in the Americas and the chaos in ruling and evangelizing the natives, and then came upon a "solution." The rights of the natives were one of the demands he expressed in his *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552), with the purpose of protecting their rights to survive (Casas 26-34). However, Eurocentric discourse still haunts his text, in which the sense of European superiority as rulers or conquerors was repeatedly mentioned. The foundation of, and precondition for, saving the natives was keeping their physicality

and obliterating their mentality. That is to say, the natives were supposed to play the role of a necessary prop in the American evangelization, while the American pre-Columbian civilization and religion were left not given their due respect. (In fact, the pre-Columbian culture would eventually be almost erased by the so-called civilizing culture). Bartolomé's self-contradiction was "inherited" by Navarrete, who further pubshed to devleope this discussion of treating and contemplating "the Other."

When he first arrived the Americas, Fernández de Navarrete made a sarcastic taunt to the natives who gave their newborns Castilian names. The fact was that, ruled by the Spanish military, the aborigines had to submit to the culture of the invaders in order to live. However, Fernández de Navarrete concluded that this attempt was rather a show of "Indian vanity" (Navarrete 15). According to his text, this kind of event occurred frequently during the first months of his arrival. The Other was taken as an undignified antithesis to European culture. On the other hand, with an ampler "discovery" of the Otherness in Asia, a gradual transformation of attitude appeared in the following narrations by the author. Meditations about the "administrative style" and contemplative perspective of the Other frequently occurred in the texts of Fernández de Navarrete after he reached the Philippines and China. The Philippine natives, according to Fernández de Navarrete, proved "not that vulgar, but more civilized, mild and full of wisdom" compared to the native Americans (Navarrete 29). The American Indians thus transformed into a "criterion" for both reflecting on European culture and evaluating the Asian. A "Civilization/Barbarism" dialectics was thus established, in which the Great China, along with many other Asian countries in the narration of the author, were depicted positively. The "extreme praise" of the Chinese Empire which stunned Europe in the era of the Enlightenment, in this sense, actually derived its framing against the backdrop of contrasting with the New Continent. In comparison with the American Indians, the Chinese community residing in Manila proved articulate and peaceful, and, most importantly, they went to mass, as was relied by the missionaries. With a deeper exploration of the Asian cultural environment, the author further refined his contemplation methodology, pointing out that "the Tartare and the Japanese [were] by no means barbaric," and went on to appeal for a fair perspective on Asian cultures (Navarrete 14). The "neutrality" manifested in contemplating Asia stood in contrast against the attitude he had shown towards the native cultures of the Americas.

The disdain for American Indians was rooted in the mindset of Europe during the Age of Discovery. This prejudice against American natives first appeared in the texts by Columbus, who had been in constant search for "men with a tail"

when he had landed on the New Continent (See Colón 189-190). From the times of Bartolomé and then those of Fernández de Navarrete, the conqueror's pride eventually transformed into inertness, and the "New Continent" became a symbol of the availability of the overseas Spanish power. The colonization continued in the Philippines, Malacca, India, and other areas of Asia. The criticism on the Americas could be replaced with criticism of China, Japan, and any other countries that failed to conform to the conventions of Catholicism. Praise appeared only if the local condition fit with evangelization, that is, if it presented a proper condition for the greater expansion of the Spanish Empire. On the other hand, criticism against Chinese culture was severe not just during the Enlightenment but in fact had already bloomed by the 16th and 17th centuries. It was not in Martín de Rada or Alonso Sánchez (who never compared China to Europe or the New Continent), but the juxtaposition already appeared with the novelist Daniel Defoe (1660—1731) who, although as a Puritan, openly manifested his criticism toward Chinese culture, remarking it as "even more foolish than the Indians" (See Starr 437).

Sarcasm against the Americas became a sort of fashion during the 17th and 18th centuries, especially the latter. This hostility appeared more harshly in the texts by Cornelius Franciscus de Pauw (1739—1799) and Georges Louis Leclerc (1707—1788), who criticized the American natives for their "inferiority" and "retrogradation." As for Rousseau's (1712—1778) myth of "the noble savage," in it the American natives were once again idyllically elevated and idealized. In conclusion, the Other, being a reflection of the needs of its observer, is always shaped and also malleable by the observer. In the case of Fernández de Navarrete, to come back to the point, his experiences in the Americas and his stay in Manila could be considered as the basis of the conception of China in his thought, and to a large extent explain the formation of his sinological thought.

An Account of the Empire of China and the Sinological Perspective of Domingo Fernández de Navarrete

Fernández de Navarrete arrived in Manila in 1648, where he learnt Tagalog, a native dialect, in order to evangelize the local community. He became surprisingly affluent, and in five months the author could communicate with the natives and began the process of evangelization (Navarrete 29). The Dominican Province of Our Lady of the Rosary, set up by the friar Juan de Castro in 1587, took charge of the missionary activities of the Order in Asia and offered Fernández de Navarrete great help in accommodating himself in Asia (Aduarte 47). Fernández de Navarrete decided to enter mainland China after having stayed in Manila for a decade.

Having arrived in Macao in 1657, Fernández de Navarrete spent a year wandering in this "Jesuits' area," and secretly sailed to Canton in the following year. He then successfully joined the Dominicans hidden in Fujian Province (which is situated near Canton) in 1659. It was not until this year that Fernández de Navarrete began to learn Chinese. The approaches to learning Mandarin proved completely different to those of learning Tagalog, as the author commented upon the former as "ogreish but admirable" (Navarrete 105). By the moment of his departure, it is estimated that Fernández de Navarrete was able to understand thousands of Chinese characters, which was basically sufficient for his activities in the Empire.

The learning of the Chinese language, on the other hand, appeared to be a tradition established in the period of Francisco de Xavier (1506—1552), a practice which was maintained by both Jesuits and Mendicant friars. Despite the various conflicts between these two sects, the importance and necessity of mastering the language of the Other coincided with the practices of many of the missionaries. Dating back to the era of Marco Polo, the various dialects in provinces of "Cathay" were already noticed and mentioned (Polo 31), and the same information was shared in the text of the Portuguese Gaspar da Cruz (Cruz 28). These two pioneers were said to have taken the "language problem" into consideration, although neither ever intended to start learning it. Martín de Rada, the Augustine, who had already learnt the Otomi Indian language—the native tongue of the Americas—and the Visayan of the Philippines, once requested a residence from the governors of Fujian so that the missionaries could get acquainted with the language, convention and habits of the Empire (San Agustin 320). He collected Chinese publications from the Parian and Fujian, though he ended up with realizing the difficulty of mastering the enormous number of Chinese characters (Rada 28). The first European missionary that initiated the "language career" was Francisco de Xavier, who first acquired Chinese characters from Japanese publications during his stay in that country (See Zubillaga 408-409). The friar Juan Cobo of the Dominican Order counts as another exemplar of his time. In the era of the Chinese Rites Controversy, missionaries like Diego de Pantoja (1571—1618), Juan Bautista Morales and Fernández de Navarrete represented the peak of mastering this abstruse language, and also inherited Chinese and European culture.

The *Dictatus Papae* of Inocencio X, after being carried by Juan Bautista Morales to the Qing court, aroused the irritation of the Emperor. According to the Vatican Edict, the Chinese convention of rituals and sacrifices were ordered to be abandoned. These "Chinese Rites" that the Vatican targeted, in fact formed part of the basis of the government; thus, this kind of interference by Catholics was seen as

an obvious crossing of the line. The Emperor Kang Hi then demanded the closure of almost all of the Catholic churches, and missionary activities were banned and punished. Missionaries—Fernández de Navarrete and Juan Bautista Morales included—were then arrested and escorted to Canton, where they anxiously waited for further instructions from the Emperor. The author was imprisoned from 1666 to 1670. In his work *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious* these experiences were meticulously recorded, and became one of the most precious historical and sinological documents of the 17th century.

1. The "Denomination and Reality" of "China"

Fernández de Navarrete inherited the Odyssean progress present in the discussions of "China" within the European intelligentsia. The highlighting of these achievements might have been made in an unconscious manner by the author, who indeed did draw a full stop for this "ever-lasting topic." The topic of "Cathay" and "China," after having haunted European adventurers for centuries, finally came to the horizon of our author.

The country named "Cathay" first appeared in the texts of the famous Marco Polo, who depicted it as "El Dorado"—the golden land of the world. The great inspiration found within this text motivated a large number of adventurers, and Polo's narrations thus became a canonical reference in locating "Cathay." Christopher Columbus, a devoted follower of Polo, convinced himself of the certitude of his discovering "India" after looking at the gold ornaments the American natives wore (Colón 376). This same Columbus then took a tribe at war with the island of Cuba for the "Cathay" of legend (Colón 50), thus ending up mixing the geographic conception of Europe on both the Asian and American issues. The historian O'Gorman (1906—1995) commented on the "invention" of the Americas by Columbus (O'Gorman 3). In this sense, the "reinvention" of Asia by the great mariner was seen as forming another valuable academic contribution.

The concept of "Cathay" went on to be still mentioned—although doubtfully—in the texts of missionaries till the first half of the 16th century, leaving the country of "China" seemingly as "unknown." The Jesuit Francisco de Xavier once, in 1546, wrote about a conversation with a Portuguese merchant he met, who "told him of a country named China" (Zubillaga 196). "Cathay" and "China" were obviously considered isolated from each other or unrelated in the mind of Xavier. The mist had gradually faded by the times of Martín de Rada, who directly pointed out that the "Cathay" in Marco Polo was just another name for the Chinese Empire (Rada 15). Rada reached this conclusion from his personal experiences and explorations

in Asia, and aimed to bring an end to the discussions and confusions regarding this topic. However, Rada's conclusions resulted only in even greater suspicions and doubts, due to the fact that in Rada's explanation, the relation (or differences) between the two naming conventions was left unsolved. Were "Cathay" and "China" two countries that historically occupied the same territory? Or was "Cathay" once a dynasty of Great China? Questions of this kind were asked and in turn led to so heated a discussion that intellectuals like Gerard Mercator (1512—1594) and Peter Heylin (1599—1662) never arrived at a common ground.

The question was brought back into the spotlight and primarily solved during the era of the Chinese Rites Controversy. The Spanish Jesuit Deigo de Pantoja calculated for the first time the latitude of Peking, which precisely conformed with the location ascribed to "Cathay" in Marco Polo's chronicles (Pantoja 12). The location of these two geographical denominations was found to be the same, which revealed an isomorphism between both naming conventions. This held until Fernández de Navarrete, the final inheritor of the historical discussion on the concept of China by the Europeans, stated in his text that the denomination "China" had never been used as a title for a certain dynasty, but that it was rather a unified name taken on by foreigners (Navarrete 1). Furthermore, Navarrete mentioned various "epithets" of the country, like Tien Hia 天下, Hoa Kue 華夏 and Chung Hoa 中華 (Navarrete 2); names with which the Chinese described their own land, none of which ever referred to a dynasty or to a concrete country. Thus, the reality of a remote China became clearer to the European readers. By this point, the "dynasty-territory" issue momentarily came to an end. With the "Taibin" 大明 in Rada and the depiction of the Qing Empire of Fernández de Navarrete, the dynasties were first indicated. This signified a closing of the loop regarding the problem between the denomination of China and reality of China in the eyes of Spanish sinologists.

In addition, the division between the provinces and metropolis was another focal point of the author in exploring the "reality" of the Empire. In *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious*, the author noted fifteen Chinese provinces in total (Navarrete 5-7), when the actual condition of the administrative division during Early Qing China was eighteen. It can be deduced that the author failed to obtain a thorough understanding of the time. On the other hand, the information in the works of Martín de Rada also played a misleading role on Navarrete's narrative. According to Rada, the Chinese Empire was divided in fifteen zones, which included thirteen provinces and two capitals (Peking and Nanking) (Rada 22). The information of Rada was completely erroneous as a geographical depiction of the Late Ming. However, the administrative alteration

during the Early Qing era must have been ignored by Fernández de Navarrete when referring to the "Bible" of Martín de Rada. Readers and researchers can trace out the intertextuality between the two authors. Considering the fact that a unified worldwide toponym system had not yet been invented in the 17th century, one can draw a line by looking at the same spelling of the name of Chinese provinces in Martín de Rada and Fernández de Navarrete. For example, denominations like "Pe Chi Li" 北直隷, "Xansi" 山西 and "Xan Tung" 山東 are shared by Rada's and Naverrete's texts, while contemporary narrators like Cruz and Pereira never used these spellings when mentioning these provinces. What we can discover is that Navarrete followed the example of Rada, subtly citing his data, and by this ended up committing several errors that ignored his own experience of being physical located in the new dynasty. A direct extraction from Rada thus produced an obvious error in Navarrete's text. In this sense, we can conclude that Naverrete's concept of China basically came from Martín de Rada, which had been inherited, developed, and to some extent mechanically utilized by the Iberian writings at the time.

2. The Social Structure of China and the Approaches to Chinese Thoughts

The "four hierarchies of social classes" 四民 were also noticed by Fernández de Navarrete. These groups—"Literates," "Laborers," "Officials" and "Merchants"—were introduced specifically in the text (Navarrete 51), providing a relatively authentic depiction of ancient Chinese society. In the discussion, however, the author repeatedly emphasized the value of agriculture to the Chinese Emperors. "Laborers" in the text of Fernández de Navarrete's text were defined as peasants, with craftsmen and other kinds of "laborers" being classified under the category of "merchants." Listed as the second highest rank of the people in the country, the peasants were supposed to enjoy the great esteem of the Emperor, something which was highly praised by Fernández de Navarrete. Agriculture seems like a topic that would be irrelevant to religion, but in the author's mind the two were closely connected. In the following chapters of this publication, the history of the "Buen Ti of the Han Dynasty" 漢文帝 was picked as an exemplar (Navarrete 115), illustrating that only when the material burden was alleviated could the pursuit of mentality be made possible.

The discussion of the social classes of the Empire was supplemented with inner congruence, as in the third and fourth volumes of the work, the author introduced a great number of Chinese philosophers and ideas to his readers. The *Analects* 論語 of Confucius appeared in translation. The author also compiled the comments and translations of Confucius' words written by the Jesuits Prospero Intorcetta

(1626—1696) and Niccolo Longobardi (1559—1654). Navarrete left annotations on the understandings of the Jesuits, providing the text with even more polemical and academic features. Intorcetta's previos translation, in the author's eyes, was not up to standard. Moreover, instead of introducing Confucius' biography, Navarrete focused on helping uncover his philosophical and educational thoughts. In this activity, however, the author erroneously listed *La gran enseñanza* 大學 and *Mecio* 孟子 as the opus of Confucius, while each of those works belonged to other philosophers.

As for the translation of the *Mingxin baojian*, which occupied the fourth volume of Navarrete's work, the author presents similar but yet distinctive attention to this Chinese publication in comparison with his predecessor, the Dominican Juan Cobo. The friar Juan Cobo reached the Philippines in 1587, almost a century earlier than the arrival of Fernández de Navarrete. According to the Dominican documents, Juan Cobo communicated with the natives and learned Chinese in months, and even wrote academic articles in this language—this being the *Pien Cheng Chiao Chen-chu'an Shih-lu* 辯正教真傳實錄 (Aduarte 218-219). The *Mingxin baojian* was originally a Chinese "textbook" written by the Ming literate Fan Liben 范立本, functioning as an "introduction on morality" to educate the common people. The book was titled "Beng Sim Po Cam" by Juan Cobo, while Fernández de Navarrete named it "Ming Sin Pao Kien," both transcribing the title from the southern Fujian pronunciation. The Castilian subheading of the book was translated in different ways by the two friars. Juan Cobo translated the name as "Rich Mirror of a Clear Heart" ("Espejo rico del claro corazón"), while Fernández de Navarrete chose an intricate but more illustrative interpretation: "Precious Mirror of the soul, or Mirror that illuminates and communicates the hearts and internality of the people" ("Espejo precioso del alma o Espejo que alumbra y comunica luzes al coraçon y interior del hombre"). It could be noted that both friars noticed the educational value of the book, and that the relatively "newcomer" Navarrete seemed to capture more thoroughly the book's insight. The "mirror," here playing the role of an "exemplar," refers to the thought and sentences of the ancient Chinese philosophers compiled in the book. This way, the explanation of Fernández de Navarrete complemented the original connotation of the book. The translation of Juan Cobo was published in the year 1593. As such, Fernández de Navarrete's text probably used the former version as reference. However, in almost all Fernández de Navarrete's texts and documents, the name of Juan Cobo never appears, making their quite possible influential relation harder to trace. Another difference between these two translations was that, in comparison to Juan Cobo who faithfully adhered to the original text, Fernández

de Navarrete added many of his annotations in the work. A "spiritual relation" between the Chinese thoughts and many of the European religious texts was invoked by the author. Philosophers like Santo Agostinho, Tito Livio, and Santo Tomas are to be found referenced in footnotes throughout the translation, which revealed a pioneering attempt in relating and communicating between Asian and European cultures.

Furthermore, the comparison between Juan Cobo and Fernández de Navarrete here was to be continued in other aspects. In his letter "Letters from Parian" ("Cartas de Parian"), Juan Cobo mentioned and praised the local Fujian opera, which mainly included comedies, costume drama, and love story plays. Juan Cobo expresses great appreciation of the moral sense in those Chinese plays, in which the protagonists always conformed to a set of social rules and never disobeyed morals (Cervera 95). In Navarrete's text, although the relation of influence between the two friars was left unexplicit, the discussion of Chinese plays was further developed. Fernández de Navarrete commented that the Chinese love story plays out in a "less harmful" manner than that of European drama, which always ended up leading the youngsters to vice (Navarrete 156). A clear influence of the European morality play, as well as that of works of Calderón de la Barca (1600—1681) and Lope de Vega (1562—1635) can be spotted in Fernández de Navarrete's tastes. The moral sense in evaluating the Other always remained part of the Spanish missionaries' criteria.

3. Complex Attitudes toward the Chinese Empire

It has to be admitted that the shadow of Marco Polo's work is present throughout the first chapters of Fernández de Navarrete's work. The admiration and imagination of an Eastern empire was inherited from the medieval travel writers and entered into a large number of European sinological texts of the Early Modern times. According to Fernández de Navarrete, if European countries took the administration method of Early Qing China as a model, most of their conflicts could be solved (Navarrete 2). The praise of the Qing system mainly focused on the military plane. For example, the author commented that Tartare soldiers were far better than the European lansquenets even though "being infidels to Catholicism" (Navarrete 13). The image of the Emperor Kang Hi was set up as an exemplar an "energetic, generous and peaceful" ruler (Navarrete 8). Early Qing China at one time seemed to Fernández de Navarrete a utopia, an Eden with an intelligent governor in place of God.

A shift in the author's attitude occurred during his stay in Canton, where he came to possess more informative pieces of knowledge regarding the country

and was thus able to form for himself a "thorough impression" of the Far East Empire. The extreme affluence of the society present in Marco Polo's texts finally "evaporated" in Fernández de Navarrete's text. The bubble burst when the author noticed the high number of beggars and miserable peasants (Navarrete 27). Thus, a more "authentic" China was revealed, and more imperfections of the country rose to prominence, and in passages in which the land was described as of low-yield land (Navarrete 40), and in which the "inner conflicts" of Chinese philosophy were laid bare (Navarrete 51), the author changed his prior attitude in such a sudden manner that his previous depiction of the country eventually faded.

The most misleading information about Chinese society present in the complex "sino-conception" of Fernández de Navarrete is that related to a "rumor" about an edict of the Emperor Kang Hi. The author claimed that the emperor reduced the fixed income of one of Confucius' descendants, and thus criticized the suppression of intellectuals at the court. This piece of information came from hearsay from the missionaries exiled from the Capital in Canton. The author failed to give a more detailed picture about the identity of the philosopher's poor descendants, and to mention the reasons behind their losing their privileges. According to the historical documents of the Kang Hi epoch, the descendant in question might have been Kong Shangren 孔尚任 (1648—1718), who was dismissed from office for writing the play *The Peach Blossom Fan* 桃花扇. However, the case related to Kong Shangren happened in the year 1700, decades after the publishing of the work of Navarrete. Another possible candidate was the poet Kong Zhenxuan 孔貞瑄, a 63rd-generation descendant of Confucius and activated in the second half of the 17th century. According to Qing documents such as the *Qingren bieji zongmu* 清人別集總目 (Li 261) and *Queli Shixuan* 闕裡詩選 (Kong 434), the biography of Kong Zhenxuan happened to coincide with the time frame of Navarrete's narration. The experience of resigning from office occurred in the Kong Zhenxuan story made it possible that he is the one referred to in Navarrete. On the other hand, the fact that most of the documents related to Kong Zhenxuan come from the literates and historians of Shandong Province (for the reason that Kong himself was born in the very area), raises another curious question. That is to say, how did Fernández de Navarrete hear the story of a literate who was not so famous at the time? As discussed above, the author was active in the southern part of China, far away from Shandong Province and its chronicle documents. However, when he was taken into custody in Canton, Fernández de Navarrete had the opportunity to contact almost all of the missionaries in China—Jesuits and those of the Mendicant Orders included—, among which there were the Franciscans, who had established firm connections with the author.

The friar Antonio de Santa Maria Caballero (1602—1669), who once established the first Franciscan church in Shandong in 1633, happened to be amongst those exiled. The two Mendicant friars had been in contact for long, which could possibly explain the reference to the accusation of Kang Hi. Nevertheless, the information proved obviously erroneous in both factuality and veracity. The protagonist, supposing it was Kong Zhenxuan, was never forced to surrender his political or civil privileges, nor did the emperor deserve the charge of disdaining Confucian intellectuals in his court. On the contrary, Kang Hi made a solid contribution toward the enhancement of the status of Confucian philosophy. The episode recounted in this narration had been miscommunicated, and thus exaggerated. In other words, could it be possible that the author himself had intended to give a negative impression of the Confucian School in China to the European intellectual world? In Navarrete's text, the criticism of Chinese thought—the framework of Confucian theory and many of the folk religions and their conventions—was always juxtaposed against a glorification of modern European technology. Repeatedly pointing out facts such as the Chinese ignorance of the concepts of latitude and longitude, the lack of mathematical skills and the absence of physics education was all part of Navarrete's attack (Navarrete 431), an action borne out partly due to his own frustration at the Chinese Empire during its anti-Catholicism era, and partly from the necessity of evangelization during the Chinese Rites Controversy. From the epoch of Francisco de Xavier to the time of Fernández de Navarrete, Confucian power had always functioned as an unsurmountable obstacle greatly impeding the diffusion of Catholicism. As shown especially during the Chinese Rites Controversy, the Confucian thought proved a firm political curtain that deflected the approaches by the Catholic missionaries. Fernández de Navarrete, as a Dominican brought into China by Bautista Morales, was always supposed to stand by his side, which means that he was always ready to oppose the "Accommodation Strategy" of the Jesuits. In this sense, the accusation that the emperor had curtailed the privileges of the Confucians in the country might be an attempt at questioning the authority of both the Qing Court and Confucianism. The incident thus described a governor that disdained the knowledge-suppressing philosophical school that had until then failed to serve the development of the country. However, considering the consistent subtle attitude of Fernández de Navarrete, his conformity with Bautista Morales could still be cast into doubt. The neutral-toned narration blurs, to some extent, the possible personal bias of the author, which encourages a further exploration of this topic.

Conclusion

Fernández de Navarrete left for Europe in 1670. After almost a decade of preparation, the work *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious* finally saw the light of day. The information within partly came from his personal experiences, and partly from other European sinological texts, like that by Rada, as mentioned above. In an era when the Portuguese and Italian Jesuits' publications comprised most of the Early Modern European Sinology market, the publishing of Fernández de Navarrete's work was actually a counterweight against the non-Spanish narrations. The ambition of its author—to break through the blockade of the Jesuits' texts and struggle for a voice of the Dominican Order and his own country—proved particularly clear.

An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious was one of the earliest European chronicles of the Qing Empire. Unlike Fernández de Navarrete, predecessors such as Martín de Rada and Diego de Pantoja only had the chance to portray the Late Ming reality. The change of dynasties provided brand new information to Europe. Moreover, the author also made a comment on a kindred work of his time, which was Martino Martini's *De bello Tartarico historia*. The author explicitly warned European readers about the misleading messages in Martini (Navarrete 231). Navarrete's accusations mainly focused on the fact that Martini, compared to Navarrete himself, just lingered in the marginal southern areas of the Late Ming and Early Qing territory, and did not come into contact with the reality of this Eastern Empire. According to Fernández de Navarrete, the physical and mental distance of Martini was part of the reason behind the incredible nature of his narration. Further exploration about the contradiction between Fernández de Navarrete and Martino Martini was made by Cummins in *The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete, 1618—1686* (Cummins 218), which reveals both the academic and political struggles of the two authors. At the time Martini's work was adopted as an important source for *The History of the Conquest of China by the Tartars* by Juan de Palafox and many other sinological texts of the 17th century Europe. Because of this, a more realistic Qing narration tradition ought to be traced back to Fernández de Navarrete, who, unlike Martini and Juan de Palafox, was physically living and working in mainland China, and was in contact with various classes of the Chinese society. Martino Martini never responded to the allegations made by Navarrete. Although the criticism was, thus, unilateral and did not fully involve both parties, a competition hidden in the discourse of topics relating to the Far East can be identified.

Furthermore, a consideration of the fact that Juan González de Mendoza's *The*

History of the Great and Mighty Kingdom of China (1585) had been published nearly a century before Fernández de Navarrete's work, helps further frame the latter as the second Spanish contribution to the field of European Sinology. Juxtaposing these two sinological texts, researchers can easily identify traits in the formation of Early Spanish Sinology. The thematic concerns consists of topics like the geography, administration, religion, custom, and lifestyle of traditional China. The foundation of the Spanish sinological narration derived from Martín de Rada, González de Mendoza, Juan Cobo, Diego de Pantoja, and even Bartolomé de las Casas. Those were the missionaries who left important contributions to the academic field of Asian studies and deserved the merit of being called sinologists. In this list, however, Fernández de Navarrete set a precedent for lowering the contemplative horizon, changing the focus from honing in on the upper classes and discussing the grand narrative of China toward depicting the relatively common and unadorned daily life of Early Qing society, which, in Lach's words, demonstrated his absolute admiration of the common people (Lach 169). The conversion of unbelievers was part of the reason for his focus on the rural life and the livelihood of common civilians of Early Qing China. In the texts of his preceding countrymen, such as those by Martín de Rada and Diego de Pantoja, the concentration on the Other was always located within the interactions with the upper levels of Chinese society. Topics such as China's four social classes and their livelihoods were first developed by Fernández de Navarrete. This progress in themes arose first in the texts of Navarrete, which revealed a combination of the spirit of the Mendicant Order with the very call for evangelization against the cultural background of the Early Qing. The Mendicant friars—who were unlike the Jesuits and lacked any helpers in the capital—had to choose rural zones as their main area of activities. Having stayed in the rural zones of Macao, Fu'an, and Canton for decades, Fernández de Navarrete had the chance to be in contact with a wide swath of the population, as opposed to only a small coterie of Chinese officials only, a direct contact which allowed him to learn about the most basic national character of this remote land. These experiences provided the author with a more authentic understanding of Chinese culture in comparison with that of his predecessors. Meanwhile, the "China Empire" found in the texts of Fernández de Navarrete was by no means just the object of complete admiration. He expressed not only positive opinions, but also criticism and disagreements with it, as well as misconceptions about it. Fernández de Navarrete's work eventually afforded him acclaim throughout the European continent. The Chinese Empire depicted in his work became an indispensable source for European Sinology in the 17th century.

Fernández de Navarrete uncovered a "China" that inherently conformed to the development strategy of the Order, and that probably conformed to the prejudiced expectation of its European receivers. The "China" invented during the 17th and 18th centuries would eventually reveal itself to have been made out a conflation between the cultural environment of its time and its civilians, a self-sustaining reflection within the Baroque mirror.

Generally speaking, the majority of sinological texts of the 17th century came from Jesuits' hands. Works by Álvaro Semmedo, Martino Martini, and Athanasius Kircher spread rapidly, garnering a wide recognition amongst the European intelligentsia. Missionaries from Portugal, Italy, and Germany occupied a leading position in the discourse, even while the Spanish began to lose their colonies and venues of expression. In this circumstance, the popularity that Fernández de Navarrete had achieved proved particularly rare and valuable, as it provided new perspectives on China's image. For example, the comparison between China and Europe greatly sparked insights by some of the philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment, regardless of the fact that the "China" in the text was actually a reflection of their own desires or lacks. As for the author himself, the establishment of a "counterpart" closely relates to the decline of Spain's national strength during the reign of King Felipe IV. Thus, the "China" described by Fernández de Navarrete's brush had to shoulder the responsibility of stimulating and assisting the development of his own country. The idealization of a "model" also inspired important philosophers such as Diderot, Montesquieu, and Voltaire. The French sinologist Jacques Gernet (1921—2018) mentioned the impact of this work on the philosophical thought of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, mainly praising its author's depiction of Confucianism and its influence on Chinese society (Gernet 19). On the other hand, in consideration of the fact that the work of Fernández de Navarrete (as discussed above) also referred to the imperfections of Early Qing China, the "neutrality" of the work, which was an element scarcely seen in most of the sinological texts of the century, also stood out and, to some extent, paved the way for the criticism of Chinese culture that would take place in the following century.

After its publication, the *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious* was translated into Italian, English, German, and French. The overseas conquests of the Spanish Empire and the Chinese Rites Controversy affairs were the strongest explanation for the success of the book (Busquets Alemany 236). The activities of Juan Bautista Morales once provoked great discussion regarding Chinese philosophy. The "Confucius Problem," already having piqued the curiosity and caught the attention of European intelligentsia for

decades, went on to become one of the most discussed topics during the years of the Chinese Rites Controversy. In this way, the work of Fernández de Navarrete met the expectations of the European intelligentsia in regard to information on the Far East. The "identity" of Europe, in the words of Delanty, explored and formed itself against the background of the collision with the East (Delanty 84). Furthermore, the contact and conversations between the Fernández de Navarrete and other European sinologists of the time—such as Athanasius Kircher and Martino Martini—also led to a deeper meditation about China in Europe. In this process, a sort of Spanish-inflected Sinology, emanating from Domingo Fernández de Navarrete's text, was thus enunciated. This hint would eventually successfully shape much of the subsequent development of Sinology in Europe.

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Flair Donglai Shi and Gareth Guangming Tan, eds. *World Literature in Motion: Institution, Recognition, Location.* Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag. 2020. IBSN 9783838211633. 532 pp.

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It has been nearly 20 years since the seminal work, David Damrosch's *What is World Literature* (2003), marked the beginning of world literature as a contested field of scholarly debate, and the study of world literature has certainly come to an important moment of critical self-scrutiny of paradigms. In the intervening two decades, world literary studies have gradually become institutionalized—with a group of scholars claiming to be engaged in the study of world literature, with the establishment of academic journals around the world (especially in Europe and the United States) that address the field of world literature studies, and with graduate programs and summer schools devoted to world literature as a major. As the study of world literature becomes more and more institutionalized, it has had significant benefits in helping us to deepen our understanding of the global circulation of literature in the modern period: how "regional" writers have become international writers, and how local literary texts become globally circulated literature. Paradoxically, however, on the one hand, scholars of world literature tend to be obsessed with questions like "what is world literature?" A great deal of theoretical debates has revolved and continuously developed around this topic, but not much work has been done to test the epistemology of "world literature" in actuality. On the other hand, institutionalization could be a double-edged sword. Scholars of world literature around the world, especially from "peripheral" regions, seem to have gradually internalized the concept and began to look forward to how the literature of their regions can truly become "world literature," and hence actively putting the concept into practice. For instance, some scholars have consciously embarked on translation and literary dissemination projects. In such a way, scholars claiming to study world literature can be categorized into at least three groups: first, those who treat world literature as a critical problem, a

systematic tool, or a theoretical framework for examining various phenomena of literary interdisciplinarity, interculturality, and intertextuality; the second group treats world literature as a literary class that is unquestionably clear, pre-existing, and more "advanced" and appealing than national literature. They actively explain "What is considered to be world literature?" and "Does world literature have distinctive features? If so, what are they?" and start teaching "world literature" after the institutionalization of world literature as a learning object. The third kind, with an idealistic or pragmatic attitude, treats world literature as a utopian endeavor to reduce international conflicts and symbols of peace, or sees world literature as a concept beneficial to the international visibility of national literature. They, hence, strongly advocate world literature or act as a "practitioner" of world literature through academic work and intellectual side products (such as translation work). With various approaches to interpreting and debating world literature by scholars from different positions, world literature as a field has gradually developed a rift and ossification that makes it difficult to exchange thoughts, leaving them to express each in their own way. The key culprit of this crisis is that scholars have hardly ever problematized "world literature as a field" and treated it as an object of study that deserves serious examination.

The two distinguished editors of *World Literature in Motion*, Flair Donglai Shi and Gareth Guangming Tan, have acutely identified such considerations which have led to the manifesto of critical world literature studies (13-16), following the ideas put forward by Stefan Helgesson and Pieter Vermeulen. Within critical world literature studies, Shi and Tan have drawn a clear distinction between "World Literature" and "world literature," which are often confused with the notion of whether world literary scholars are referring to "world literature as a subject" or "world literature as an object" (14). The former comes in the form of questions such as "*How* certain literary texts come to be regarded as world literature," while the latter is best exemplified when a professor in a world literature class lists a bibliography of world literature by asking, "*What* kind of literary texts are considered world literature?" However, it is undeniable that distinguishing between the two is not an easy task, as both editors have stated: such a separation can be difficult to envision or maintain because the latter ("World Literature") is a meta-language in relation to the former ("world literature"), the conceptual boundaries of which in turn depend on this very meta-language (14). Yet, this is precisely what contributes to the crucial significance of proposing such critical world literature studies.

As has been discussed earlier, many scholars who contribute to the study of

world literature are often keen to answer the question with "yes" or "no." In other words, the debate is more confined to world literature rather than World Literature, thereby resulting in a variety of typologies on world literature proposed by different scholars. Among such works, none is better recognized than David Damrosch's canonical definition of "all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin," (Damrosch 4) and "world literature is not a set canon of texts but a mode of reading" (Damrosch 281). Meanwhile, key discussions of World Literature include Pascale Casanova's (2004) French-centered "Republic of World Literature," Franco Moretti's account of the systemic world of fiction through the digital humanities (the so-called methodology of distant reading), and Shu-mei Shih's (2004) study of the "technologies of recognition" dictated by the West in the process of classifying non-Western literature as world literature (18-19). The anti-world literature opposition tends to be more directed at World Literature rather than world literature. Critics such as Haun Saussy are concerned that World Literature may reduce "all language and literature departments to subsets of the English department" (22), while Emily Apter frets about the fact that World Literature tends "to homogenize and erase the linguistic and cultural identity of literary texts" (23). Meanwhile, the most significant contribution of *World Literature in Motion* is that it puts into effect what Stefan Helgesson and Pieter Vermeulen have called the claim that world literature should be "investigated in its actuality" (7). Through sociological approaches, ranging from archival data, book covers, and prize analyses, a solid research work on the problematic consciousness of World Literature has been made, responding to the mechanisms of postcolonial world literature in a resounding manner, and revealing the intricate relationship between world literature, postcolonial literature, and national literature.

World Literature in Motion contains 15 essays divided into four sections: "Postcolonial Institutions," "Recognition through Literary Prizes," "Minor Locations" and "Translations beyond the Anglophone." As can be discerned, the first three parts of this edited volume deal primarily with World Literature (as does the fourth part, in fact). It focuses on the various entanglements between postcolonial and world literature at the time of the period of decolonization. Through various concrete examples of materiality (as opposed to literary textuality), it brilliantly exposes how - and in what form and by what means - postcolonial literature was adopted into world literature. Some of the chapters also illustrate the ripple effects that occur when some postcolonial writers and literary works are adopted into world literature: in exchange for international prestige, non-Western writers may well need to comprehend their sense of agency (30), the international

marketplace to label writers or to homogenize writing from a certain geographic region (e.g. African Writing), which can cause travail for writers. In particular, I consider the third section, "Minor Location," to be a riveting part of this book. Again dealing with the tensions between postcolonial and world literature, it focuses on how Western-dominated languages, media, and international translations have had a beneficial or destructive effect on local/regional literature, such as how the BBC radio programme of the British Empire has shaped Anglophone Caribbean literature (345-375), or how two literary prizes holding different ideological forces contributed to the inability of Mauritius' literature to truly become the center of the literary world (289-313).

Although translation is certainly an important route to the study of World Literature, within the framework of critical world literature studies, the final section of this edited volume, "Translations beyond the Anglophone," makes a greater contribution, I assume, to the reconfiguration of world literature imaginary. It provides an important and non-negligible affirmation of the view that "world literature is in plural" (Liu) through four explicit case studies. In other words, globally circulated literature — or the so-called world literature in motion — is not necessarily entangled between the West and the postcolonial discourses, but also takes place in the Third World, or in other worlds more broadly. Thus the text (author, theory) responds positively to and revises Franco Moretti's view that "movement from one periphery to another (without passing through the center) is almost unheard of" (35). In two decades of world literary studies, a large part of the research has focused on a certain established and singular imaginary of world literature: the "equation between world literature and the global anglophone market for literary publishing" (35) (or the earlier francophone world) and thus on the division of the "world literary class." However, as we can find in the last section of this book (e.g. Yan Jia's study of Chinese-Indian literary relations during the Cold War or Kim's study of translational circulation of world literature from a minor location by *Kuunmong*), the so-called periphery and center are in fact not static but moving concepts that vary according to the different world literary circles. Even some of the chapters in this section further deconstructed the inevitability of the existence of centers and peripheries in the global exchange of literature: there is no distinct or discernible center within the periphery in the process of circulation. This means that the dynamism of the dichotomous concept of periphery and center is now being questioned. This also partly responds to the viability of Shu-mei Shih (2015)'s so-called "relational comparison" as a methodology.

From the development of the theoretical framework, the groundbreaking

attempts in methodology and the intellectual promise in excavation of new research objects, *World Literature in Motion* is a breakthrough in the study of world literature and World Literature. This is even further compounded by the compact and logical structure of the edited book and the above-average quality of each article. A comparable edited book is rare to find in recent years. For me, it reminds us that the study of world literature should not be confined to theoretical discourse, but should actively contribute to the production of more concrete case studies, so as to review, revise, and initiate a new understanding of world literature through the new and complex issues and phenomena uncovered by these different case studies. Despite the fact that I find this edited volume fascinating enough, if I were to say something about its flaws (i.e., something that critical world literature studies can work on in the future), I would like to raise the following two concerns:

1. Just as *World Literature in Motion* has shown, our understanding of world literature is mostly modern in origin. The circulation of literature in the modern age is backed by various modern ideological forces, be it Western modernization, global capitalism, neoliberalism, or the Cold War competition, which led to forming different "world literature" circles as we can see today. Nevertheless, our appreciation of the circulation of ancient literature is particularly meager. It is not always convincing to examine the global circulation of ancient literature in the context of present-day World Literature. As far as critical world literature studies are concerned, there are at least two tasks that ought to be carried out to correspond to world literature and World Literature respectively. First, what is ancient world literature—can the concept of ancient world literature be justified? Or is world literature/World Literature merely a reflection of the modern age? Has ancient world literature influenced modern world literature? If so, how did it come to shape modern world literature? Second, by what means has ancient world literature developed? In this way, from the methodological standpoint, perhaps in addition to sociology, it is more appropriate to audaciously introduce and explore ancient world literature by combining methodologies such as archaeology and philology.

2. Much of the current paradigm of world literary studies is based on the continental imaginary, including either cartographic literary material exchanges or the spatial hypothesis behind the theoretical construction of world literary systems. The understanding of islandic or oceanic literary circulation has not been particularly clear so far. Would it be more in

line with the reality of world literature to envisage the inclusion of the connection and imagination of oceanic space in the discussion of world literature theory? We might be able to discover a new path out of the theory of world literature based on the continental imagination that has never been discovered for making local literature world literature. I have seen the absolute potential of this approach in some of the chapters of this book. Thereby, I propose that there is a necessity to pioneer oceanic, islandic or archipelagic world literature.

Overall, I would genuinely recommend this significant and indispensable edited volume to all scholars interested in World Literature. For scholars of world literary studies, this is a must-read recent work.

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Liu Hongtao. *Xu Zhimo and the University of Cambridge*. Beijing: The Commercial Press. 2011. ISBN 9787100083737. 262 pp.

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The relation between Xu Zhimo and the University of Cambridge has always been a fascinating topic, for Xu Zhimo's poem "Saying Goodbye to Cambridge Again" is so renowned that all of Xu's readers know that he had a deep love for Cambridge. From 2004 to 2005, the author of this volume, Professor Liu Hongtao, stayed at Cambridge as a visiting scholar, and as a Comparative Literature scholar whose research interests include early twentieth-century Chinese literature, Professor Liu was keen to explore Xu Zhimo's life at Cambridge. During his stay, Professor Liu investigated the reason why Xu Zhimo came to Cambridge and why he became a poet there, as well as how he communicated with British writers and scholars. This volume is the first study that explicates Xu Zhimo's creation of Cambridge poems with the factual evidence discovered at Cambridge, and its discussion on the previously unpublished correspondences between Xu and Charles Kay Ogden complements current studies on the relation between Xu Zhimo and the Bloomsbury Group.

The first chapter looks at the reasons for Xu Zhimo's move to the UK and his enrolment in Cambridge. One significant contribution of this chapter is that it proposes a more profound elucidation of Xu's move to the UK than the one mentioned in "The Cambridge that I know"—it was in order to follow Bertrand Russell that Xu Zhimo gave up the opportunity to pursue PhD studies in the US and moved to the UK (Xu 232). According to Professor Liu, a more credible reason might be that Xu Zhimo wished to study with Harold Joseph Laski, and Professor Liu provides a detailed account of events to rationalize this idea. Speaking of why Xu Zhimo later transferred to Cambridge, Professor Liu points out that this might be the result of his vexing love life. To ask for Lin Huiyin's hand in marriage, Xu had to divorce Zhang Youyi, who had an influential family, and he was greatly distressed by this situation. Therefore, when Dickinson asked him whether he wanted to transfer to Cambridge, Xu Zhimo immediately seized this opportunity,

wishing to dispel his anxiety in a new environment.

In the second chapter, Professor Liu offers a detailed description of Xu Zhimo's favorite places and scenic spots at Cambridge. As an auditing student, Xu was not put under the pressures of tasks and exams, so he had enough time to enjoy the sights of Cambridge. This chapter not only introduces the views around the River Cam, but also provides a vivid account of the way that Xu Zhimo observed the Backs, one of his favorite places at Cambridge. It needs to be highlighted that Professor Liu investigated almost all the Cambridge sights illustrated in Xu Zhimo's "The Cambridge that I know" and "Rainbow after the Rain." The record of Professor Liu's investigation and the pictures provided in this chapter clearly explain what Xu Zhimo saw at Cambridge and what motivated him to compose these two works. Cambridge's charming sights were significant for Xu Zhimo, who firmly believed in the healing and inspiring power of nature. Therefore, Professor Liu's depiction of Cambridge's sights also paves the way for the reader's comprehension of the arousal of Xu Zhimo's affection towards Romantic literature and his creation of Cambridge poems.

Chapter Three investigates the cultivation of Xu Zhimo's interest in English literature at Cambridge. Professor Liu points out that Cambridge's collegiate system and Xu Zhimo's non-utilitarian way of reading played important roles in promoting Xu to search for his own interests and take the literary path, and this argument provides an insight into why Xu Zhimo switched his major to English literature at Cambridge. In Lyons' work, Xu Zhimo's curriculum at Cambridge is offered to show that he developed a strong interest in Romantic and modernist literature (9-14); whereas in this volume, Professor Liu discusses Xu Zhimo's understanding of the works and thoughts of Romantic poets and modernist writers in detail, with special attention directed to Xu's unique view on Thomas Hardy, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf.

Xu Zhimo's fourteen Cambridge poems are the research objects of Chapter Four. Unlike *Xu Zhimo in Cambridge: Life and Poetry*, where Xu's poems are sequenced according to the time of composition (Lyons 34), this volume discusses Xu's Cambridge poems with respect to their themes. Professor Liu argues that the topics of these Cambridge poems can be divided into three major categories— the functions of poems and poets, love, as well as Xu Zhimo's political and social views. Influenced by Romanticism, Xu Zhimo was eager to describe the poets' creative and imaginative power and the ideal of the poetic world in his early attempts at poetry. Professor Liu's analyses on Xu's "Dewdrops on the Grass" and "Night" clearly explain how Xu expresses his ambition of being a poet in his

early works. As for Xu Zhimo's love poems, despite the generally acknowledged supposition that the main subject is Xu's love life, Professor Liu proposes that Xu Zhimo has also tried to examine the kernel of love in works like "Liebstch" and "The Origin of Species," and this discussion lends a fresh perspective on Xu Zhimo's love poems. Among these fourteen works, a small number of poems were written by Xu Zhimo to encourage himself and other youngsters to overcome pessimism and achieve their dreams.

In addition to these fourteen works, Xu Zhimo has also created six poems to illustrate Cambridge's natural landscape. Professor Liu's discussion on Xu Zhimo's domestication of exotic sceneries in these poems stands out as a highlight of this volume, and his analysis of "Saying Goodbye to Cambridge Again" deserves special attention. Based on his exploration of Cambridge's landscape, Professor Liu contrasts the factual details with Xu's depictions and identifies to what extent Xu domesticats exotic elements in his poems. Professor Liu is the first scholar who uncovers Xu's intentional substitution of foreign imagery with imagery frequently employed in classical Chinese poems in "Saying Goodbye to Cambridge Again." According to Professor Liu, Xu's domestication not only enables him to arouse the reader's imagination of the beauty of Cambridge, but also helps the reader to develop a feeling of empathy for Xu's nostalgia for Cambridge while reading a poem set in an exotic environment.

Chapter Five examines Xu Zhimo's social interactions at Cambridge, especially his friendship with Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, Roger Fry, the Russell couple, Eileen Power, and Charles Kay Ogden. Stuart Lyons has also introduced Xu Zhimo's associations at Cambridge in his work, but his introduction mainly focuses on Xu's closeness to Dickinson and Roger Fry (24-26). This chapter gives readers a more detailed account of Xu's social circles at Cambridge, and it explains clearly the various influences that Xu Zhimo was exposed to. One of the key contributions of this chapter is Professor Liu's discovery of the six letters Xu Zhimo wrote to Ogden, as these letters have never been examined before. All these letters and their Chinese translations are provided in this volume, together with an analysis on the contexts of these letters. The discovery of these letters not only confirms the friendship between Xu Zhimo and Ogden, but also reveals Xu Zhimo's role as the medium of intercultural communications, for these letters record Xu Zhimo's introduction of Chinese scholars and their works to British publishers and his plan to bring foreign books into the Songpo library.

This volume ends with a discussion on Cambridge academics' recognition of Xu Zhimo's contribution to bridging British and Chinese culture. According to

Professor Liu, Cambridge scholars like I. A. Richards and Arthur David Waley spoke highly of Xu Zhimo's introduction of Chinese scholars' way of perceiving arts and literature as well as the inspirations Xu Zhimo brought to them. This volume is also the first study to reveal the record of Xu Zhimo's hard work in facilitating the association between the Bloomsbury Group and Chinese writers, poets and intellectuals in *A Literary History of Cambridge*.

Xu Zhimo and the University of Cambridge is a volume characterized by richness in terms of primary texts, namely Xu Zhimo's letters, essays and poems, and penetrating analyses. It begins with the reasons behind Xu Zhimo's transference to Cambridge to his appreciation of Cambridge's landscape. It then moves to the cultivation of Xu Zhimo's literary interest and his poetic creation at Cambridge, before concluding with Xu's contribution to intercultural communications. The examination of Xu Zhimo's letters to Ogden and the discovery of the academic record of Xu Zhimo in *A Literary History of Cambridge* certainly enrich current studies on Xu Zhimo. This volume allows readers to gain a greater insight into how the experience of studying at Cambridge shaped Xu Zhimo and how he facilitated exchanges between British and Chinese scholars after he returned to China.

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Stuart Lyons. *Xu Zhimo in Cambridge: Life and Poetry.* Cambridge: King's College. 2021. ISBN 9781527292314. 334 pp.

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In October 1921, Xu Zhimo came to the University of Cambridge as a postgraduate student and stayed in King's College for a year. In order to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Xu Zhimo's arrival at Cambridge and introduce Xu and his poems to a wider group of international audience, Stuart Lyons published *Xu Zhimo in Cambridge: Life and Poetry* in 2021. In addition to bringing forth unpublished details about Xu Zhimo's life at Cambridge, this volume is one of the first works that brings Xu Zhimo's poems into the English-speaking world. Lyons' beautiful English translations and careful analyses of 24 selected poems by Xu Zhimo not only represent Xu's remarkable ability to unite Western and Chinese poetic styles, but also explicate what influences Xu's poetic creation was exposed to.

The first section of *Xu Zhimo in Cambridge: Life and Poetry* is an informative introduction of Xu Zhimo's life at Cambridge. In this section, Lyons explains how Xu Zhimo's friendship with Lin Changmin and Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson facilitated his admission into Cambridge. One of the major contributions of this section is Lyons' revelation of Xu Zhimo's curriculum and activities at Cambridge, especially Xu's exposure to Romantic and modernist literature and his close association with the Bloomsbury Group and the Heretics Society. Having uncovered these documents from the archives of King's College, Lyons paves the way for the reader's understanding of Xu Zhimo's decision of taking the literary path at Cambridge. In the later part of this section, Xu's fruitless love life, his residential experience at King's College, his friendship with Dickinson and Roger Fry, and his last visit to Cambridge in 1928 are discussed to offer readers certain crucial contexts for Xu Zhimo's poetic creations, especially the context of his creation of Cambridge poems.

The main section of this work is composed of 24 selected poems by Xu Zhimo, which are offered in Chinese characters, Pinyin as well as English. Lyons provides a comprehensive analysis of the context, musicality, imagery and structure of each poem, and in some of the analyses, Lyons also explicates the ways in which he

translated certain expressions and lines. These 24 poems include a back translation of Xu Zhimo's translation of Christina Rossetti's "When I am dead, my dearest," fifteen poems written by Xu at Cambridge, five poems that mark "significant steps in Xu's poetic and personal development after his return to China" (Lyons 35), two poems Xu composed upon leaving Cambridge, and the last poem Xu wrote before the plane crash.

The fifteen poems written by Xu Zhimo at Cambridge are sequenced according to the time of composition, for Lyons wants to display Xu's "progress and mood-changes as an emerging poet" (34). Lyons proposes that among these fifteen poems, "Dewdrops on the Grass," "Night" and "Wild West Cambridge at Dusk" may be considered as significant milestones for Xu's literary progress. According to Lyons, impressive images are created in "Dewdrops on the Grass," the first poem Xu wrote at Cambridge, to represent Xu's "passion, ambition and enthusiasm" (58) for being a poet. However, Lyons argues that as a novice, Xu did not establish his own style at this point, so inconsistencies of structure, musicality, and images can easily be noticed in this work. As for "Night," Lyons suggests that this is one of the first works that shows Xu's attempt to integrate Western poetic elements into a vernacular Chinese poem. Lyons' use of iambic pentameter in the translation is especially noteworthy, for Lyons' translation not only explains why Richards claims that Xu Zhimo is one of the first Chinese poets who "succeeded in carrying our [Western] forms over into China" (110), but also reveals the rhythmic beauty of Xu Zhimo's work. Lyons' close analysis of Xu's frequent references to Romantic literature in "Night" is another highlight of this section, as it clearly elucidates the ways in which Xu's exposure to Romantic literature at Cambridge affected his poetic creation. Speaking of "Wild West Cambridge at Dust," Lyons argues that this work marks the establishment of Xu Zhimo's unique poetic style, and Lyons' translation of this poem is a significant contribution to this volume. Lyons' editing of this poem not only lends a fresh perspective on the musicality of "Wild West Cambridge at Dust," but also enables English-speaking readers to perceive the fluidity of this work and Xu's debt to modernist writers. In addition, Lyons' diction in his translation deserves special attention. In *Xu Zhimo and the University of Cambridge*, Professor Liu points out that one distinguishing feature of Xu Zhimo's poems is Xu's domestication of exotic sceneries (110-116). Lyons' cautious selection of vocabulary plays a key role in conveying those domesticated images into the English translation in a way that can "strike a chord with English readers" (Lyons 211). It has to be noted that Lyons' translation of "Wild West Cambridge at Dust" won the 2020 Stephen Spender Prize for poetry in translation.

Xu Zhimo has visited Cambridge twice in his life, and each time he wrote a poem to express his love for Cambridge. "Cambridge, Farewell!" not only exhibits Xu Zhimo's gratitude to Cambridge, but also contains a detailed account of his autobiography. The inclusion of this poem, its English translation and an analysis of it in Lyons' volume offers readers an opportunity to have a glance at Xu Zhimo's experience of studying abroad and how "his efforts came to fruition" (Lyons 244) at Cambridge. Speaking of "Saying Goodbye to Cambridge Again," this is one of the most renowned of Xu Zhimo's poems and it has been translated several times. In this volume, in addition to offering a new translation of this poem, Lyons also discusses the structure, imagery and musicality of "Saying Goodbye to Cambridge Again" in detail. Lyons' in-depth discussion on the calligraphy of Chinese characters, pronunciations of certain words in Chinese, and the precise meanings of the vocabulary employed by Xu is worthy of mention, for it can help English-speaking readers to gain a clear understanding of how Xu Zhimo created the beauty of images and sounds in "Saying Goodbye to Cambridge Again."

As for the six poems Xu Zhimo wrote after he returned to China, they mark significant stages of the last few years of Xu's life and his maturity in poetic creation. Lyons' identification of Xu Zhimo's employment of Western poetic styles like limerick and Xu's echoing of Western poets and writers like Rossetti and Mansfield in these six poems is a key contribution of this section, as it uncovers how Xu Zhimo successfully brought Western poetic elements into vernacular Chinese poems.

Examining the archives of King's College and the University of Cambridge, *Xu Zhimo in Cambridge: Life and Poetry* complements current studies on the relation between Xu Zhimo and the University of Cambridge with new historical facts. This volume is also the most comprehensive collection of English translations of Xu Zhimo's poems to date, and it successfully introduces Xu Zhimo and his literary progress to English-speaking readers. Lyons' back translation of Xu Zhimo's references to Romantic and modernist literature, his efficient employment of assonance, alliteration and various metric lines, and his careful diction all deserve further attention, for the specific translation strategies used by Lyons enable him to display the beauty of Xu Zhimo's poems in a way that can be understood and appreciated by English-speaking readers. We should call attention to Lyons' analyses on Xu's poems as well, as they explicate the effective assimilation of Western poetic elements into Xu's vernacular Chinese poems and offer a new perspective on Xu Zhimo's attitudes towards Western and modern Chinese literary encounters. In a word, *Xu Zhimo in Cambridge: Life and Poetry* should be

commended for its effort to open a window for the English-speaking world to view the literary sensitivity, wisdom and wit of Xu Zhimo. It will also prove a helpful reference for researchers who are interested in the relation between Xu Zhimo's experience at Cambridge and his literary career as well as the roles that Xu played in bridging Western and modern Chinese literature.

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Eugene Chen Eoyang. *The Transparent Eye: Reflections on Translation, Chinese Literature, and Comparative Poetics.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. 1993. ISBN 9780824814298. 311pp.

Ma Huanhuan

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As a noteworthy Chinese-American scholar and educator of comparative literature, Professor Eugene Chen Eoyang (欧阳桢，1939-2021) passed away on October 13, 2021. In memory of his contribution to comparative literature and translation studies, firstly, please allow me to look back on his academic career. He is Professor Emeritus of English, Translation, Humanities, and General Education at Lingnan University (Hong Kong) as well as Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature and of East Asian Languages & Cultures at Indiana University in the U.S. With a B.A. from Harvard College and an M.A. from Columbia University in English literature, he earned his Ph.D. in comparative literature from Indiana University. He has published several monographs, including *The Transparent Eye: Reflections on Translation, Chinese Literature, and Comparative Poetics* (1993), *Coat of Many Colors: Reflections on Diversity by a Minority of One* (1995), *Two-Way Mirrors: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Glocalization* (2005) and *The Promise and Premise of Creativity: Why Comparative Literature Matters* (2012). He was elected President of the American Comparative Literature Association, Chair of the Intercultural Studies Committee of the International Comparative Literature Association, and Vice President of the Fédération Internationale des Langues et Littératures Modemes. He has also been admitted as a fellow to the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Commerce, and Merchandise.[1] In order to cherish the memory of Professor Eugene Eoyang, I will try to summarize his representative work *The Transparent Eye: Reflections on Translation, Chinese Literature, and Comparative Poetics*, which contains his thoughts and reflections on translation and Chinese literature.

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1   ICL Featured Scholar. *International Comparative Literature*, 2020, 3(04): 598.

The title of this book alludes to an essay from American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Nature*, reminding us that "the object on view is not only the vision we see but also the organ through which that vision is apprehended" (Eugene xv). Obviously, the author's top concern has been laid out: "how our observations of others reflect back on ourselves and the way we see" (Eugene xi). "Transparent" is the key word in this book, since this book is a look at transparencies. Most of the time, readers see another world through translations, but they hardly notice the translator's eyes. The fact is that the better the translator is, the more transparent his eyes are, the more he or she can help the reader to see the original text clearly. However, the notion of "transparent" that Eugene holds is quite different from Lawrence Venuti who doesn't believe the existence of the transparency of translation. For Venuti, "the effect of transparency effaces the work of translation, it contributes to the cultural marginality and economic exploitation that English-language translators have long suffered, their status as seldom recognized" (Venuti 13). For Eugene, "the translator must respectfully render both the transparent (exoteric) and the opaque (esoteric) part of the text. For in the first, the message must be transmitted through words that replace the original, and in the second, a just degree of elusiveness must be preserved" (Eugene 129). To some extent, translation renders the task of being transparent and opaque at the same time, a kind of blending. Nevertheless, the meaning of the translation sometimes can be opaque, but not impenetrable to losing the significance of translation in itself.

The book consists of 13 chapters, with a preface and an epilogue at the beginning and the end, respectively. In the preface, Eugene has made detailed views on some key concepts, such as the attribution of translation studies and clearly explains the purpose of writing this book. Chapters 1 to 5 constitute the first part of the book which include historical surveys of the background for translation in general and Chinese literature in particular. The second part, chapters 6 to 9 fully demonstrates the author's rich connotations in translation theory. The third part, chapters 10 to 13 exemplify some of the cultural conflicts that underlie the complexities of translation, on which the theoretical exposition in the middle part may be tested. Furthermore, reflections on comparative poetics are discussed from polar paradigms. Finally, in "Epilogue: Self As Other in Translation" the author explored what may be called a schizophrenics of reading, where "self" and "other" coexist in responding to the text, where the "deictic" marker of the here and now is decisively compromised, creatively "ambiguated". Generally speaking, with the author's careful consideration, this book is a well-organized one with a combination of theory and practice featuring some previously published material.

1. Historical Background: Surveys on Translation and Chinese Literature in Translation

Eugene has discussed almost all the heated questions in translation like originality, authenticity and fidelity in the opening chapter of this book. The reason why the author used the word "myth" lies in that it can be both true and false. To start with, the author cited the biblical allegory of the Tower of Babel to illustrate the mythology of language. In a pre-Babelian world, all people speak one language, and in the Babelian world, the languages of humankind become confused; one language becomes incomprehensible to each other. There is also another world, called "post-Babelian world," a world different from the Babelian world in that these languages become mutually comprehensible through translation or other means. More importantly, translations of the Bible involved translating from two different languages. That means the translation of the Holy Bible is derived from more than one language tradition. Concerning the myth of language, the author mentions the written language, "for the Babel story does not admit of the possibility that while speech may be confounded among the peoples of the world, writing may not be" (Eugene 6). In the current "post-Babelian world," multilingualism is everywhere, not only in literary creation, as with James Joyce, or even in the "universal language" of science and mathematics. There is no privileged language and translation can no longer be discussed from a single cultural perspective. The importance of Babel in translation is self-evident. Many scholars in translation tend to discuss translation in mentioning Babel, for instance, George Steiner's *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. Steiner holds that "to speak seriously of translation one must first consider the possible meanings of Babel, their inherence in language and mind" (Steiner 52).

Then, Eugene continued to discuss the "myths" of translation. The first myth relating to translation concerns originality. In translation there is an assumption that "historical priority is the same as ontological superiority" (Eugene 13-14). That is to say, the original in time is also more authentic and prior to the imitation. This assumption for modern people is inherited from two notions: romantic notion and capitalist notion. The former believes the one that privileges original composition over imitation since imitation entails some kind of derivativeness. The latter is sanctioned and reinforced by the convention of copyright, which confers on the "original" author all rights to his work, which is now his "property" and derivativeness borders on plagiarism, which is theft of intellectual and artistic "property" (Eugene 14). The second myth concerns identity, involving human identity (the notion of unique individuality), works of art (including literature) and

commodities (tangible objects of value). In all three modes of identity, there is an assumption that the original or the "authorized" version is irreplaceable. In the author's eyes, however, there are no real identities to be had, only types or degrees of equivalence between exemplars. The citation of literary modes of identity reminds us that equivalence lies not in reproducing, however faithfully, but in the approximate correspondence between an author's words to the audience in his lifetime and his words to each succeeding generation of readers. The third myth relates to authenticity. When examining the notion of authenticity, we'll find that the principle of valuation is historical. When one thing or one person pretends to be another thing or one person, inauthenticity occurs. Translations are part of that cultural flux which symbolize the life of a work, since the least distorted originals are those that have never been translated. Therefore, their historical and cultural integrity has never been violated. Additionally, Eugene mentions the myth of fidelity. He states that "the ultimate fidelity may be sought in oblivion" (Eugene 22). In other words, there is no such ultimate fidelity in translation.

After discussing the "myths" of translation, Eugene challenged some "myths" existing in translation theories. The first myth of theory is "translating by divine inspiration," an insight that derives more from faith than from theoretical thinking. Mostly, this field of translation is related to the translation of the Bible. The trouble here is that there is no objective basis on which to judge who is and who is not divinely inspired. Unfortunately, devoutness is no guarantee of accuracy in translation, nor is faith. The second myth of theory the author questions is that "none but a poet can translate a poet." The author argued that the status of poets has not been consistently confirmed, and some poets have been known to pretend to be poets. What's more, not all the effective poetic translations of poetry are done by acknowledged poets. Another theoretical myth stems from communication theory, which sees the process of translation as a one-way exchange of messages. In fact, the process of translation is not that simple in that most of the time it is a dynamic back-and-forth process. Hence, the failures of machine translation reflect limits in our understanding of language, so we should not blame the technology, but rather our inadequate understanding of the communication and discourse. Then, the author cites several examples from the translation of the Bible to challenge the myth of perfect translation. By comparing the Authorized Version of the Bible with the Hebrew text, the author believed that the former is not that perfect as assumed. Of course, the author here is not challenging the authority of the "Authorized Version" of the Bible, but rather exemplifying the complexity of translation as a whole.

Certainly, according to Eugene, the "Barbarians" have made as great a

contribution for the survival of native civilizations. He believed that in history the transmission of important canonical texts has depended heavily on "barbarians." There are some historical instances like Maimonides, the so called "barbarians"— the Jewish theologian and philosopher, who contributed to the rediscovery of Aristotle, thus spurring on the Renaissance. What's more, by challenging the notion of "barbarians," the author argued that the concept of barbarianism may be just another form of unrecognized civilization. Then, the author reconsidered the role of translation. Translation plays an important role in both literary history and global history. It can be said that there would be no world history without translation. Eugene characterized two types of translation: the "endotropic," translations out of a foreign language into a native language; the "exotropic," translations that are translated out of the native language into foreign languages. He concludes that the transition from endotropic to exotropic may be the key to the development of civilizations. In this process, translations not only transmit but also transform. Sometimes, this transformation takes the form of distortion; at other times, the transformation becomes an amalgamation that introduces cultural alloys from other traditions. Actually, to Eugene, translation has a dual function: it not only shows the replaceability and irreplaceability of the original text; it also takes the place of the original, but for those familiar with the original, the translation is undoubtedly a departure from the original. Obviously, by reconsidering the role and function of translation, the author attempts to enhance the importance of translation in human history as well as the status of translation studies as a discipline. In addition, Eugene continued to examine the role the audience has played in the process of translation. Modern translators like actors tend to please the scholars and readers in order to gain a relatively good response. Critics and scholars will act as surrogate authors in the absence of an author and remind the actor-translator of unrealized potential or controverted meanings. Therefore, the critic-scholar needs to bear responsibility to the work, and at the same time, to the audience. Finally, the author explores the opportunities presented by the relationships between translators and their audiences. The author deems that the importance of the audience for translation cannot be too strongly emphasized. The audience is contributing and constructive. The better the audience, the greater the possibility of creative translation. The audience for translation cannot be merely present and passive. The original text belongs to another era and another place, while translation is the common property of the translator and the audience. Translation is a deliberate anachronism: it revitalizes the work of the past and makes it part of the present. Besides, the author illustrates two examples of his own translations to verify his idea of good translation. They

all have the problems of context and form in the process of translation. In each case, he took certain liberties and had departures with no intention to deceive the readers since the readers of his translation are intended to be those who had access to the original. Hence, "faithfulness" is no top concern here. Instead of imitating, the translator is virtually creating a new work of art similar to the original. In a departure from the traditional focus of translation, the central point of his attention is on the audience. The more the translator learns to be better with audiences for translation, the better the translator will become.

When talking about the images of Chinese literature in English translation, Eugene pointed out three major factors that affect the image of Chinese literature in English translation: the conceptual (which includes philosophical notions and ideas), the generic (which includes modal differences between certain forms of discourse in one language with those in another) and the cultural. To be specific, language problems in the translation of Chinese literature inevitably affect foreigners' attitudes towards China and the Chinese. This, in turn, distorts China's image, whether positively or negatively. The author cited examples in English translation for Chinese literature to illustrate that most of the time they fail to convey the variety of Chinese literature. Hence, the image of Chinese in English translation is not adequate. Due to the omission of a subject in poetry and in prose, the author held that the Chinese language belongs to what the Soviet linguist Lev Vygotsky called "inner speech." Inner speech is "to a large extent thinking in pure meanings. It is a dynamic, shifting, unstable thing" (Eugene 95). Most examples Eugene mentions are poems; other types of literature are in the same situation, like novels, especially the contemporary Chinese novels. Due to what the author called "conceptual" and "cultural" factors, which affect the image of Chinese literature, politics also plays an important part in constructing the image of Chinese literature. In addition, "flavor" and humor of Chinese vernacular fiction are often lost or muted in translations. Eugene considered that the examination of the image of China through its literature in translation will reveal as much about ourselves as about the Chinese. The disparities between the image reflected and the image projected must then be differentiated as to whether the differences are those of perception or those inherent in dissimilar objects. In a real sense, the "dim emblazonings" (Eugene 110) of Chinese literature seen in English translation are intimations of a strange object made familiar, as well as of something familiar made uncannily strange.

2. Theoretical Framework: Construction of Translation Theories

Before constructing the theoretical framework of translation, Eugene further

emphasized the importance of translation. He declared that "only in translation, and through the process of transposing a work from one linguistic medium to another, can the nature of a culture as well as its deictic and esoteric emphasis be disclosed" (Eugene 120). Though translators may face the risk of what the author called "excommunication" because of his betrayals of the original, they have to take translation as an "intraworldly poetics." The term "intraworldly poetics" is thought-provoking, but more detailed explanations are needed. For Eugene, whether translated well or not, a study of translations has much to tell about "the nature not only of the work being translated but also the language from which the work emerges" (Eugene 121). In his view, language is "esoteric" in varying degrees and Chinese literary language is undoubtedly more esoteric than other languages, but translation is "exoteric." Translation can both reveal and hide the original text, because of the difference in the translator's ability and factors of translatability. Eugene concluded here that every language is both esoteric and exoteric, but "the exchange of meaning through translation is not equal: translation is communicative but not commutative". In a word, the subject of translation deserves our attention since it provides us with a way to know ourselves as well as the other.

As to the ontology of translation, Eugene held that translation replaces the original work, which can be said to be "the closest continuer of a work in another language" (Eugene 129). He further explained the dual ontology of translation: while it replaces the original, it also shows that the original is irreplaceable. What must be transmuted in the process of translation is not a series of words, but "a context of causes and effects" (Eugene 134). For this reason, the act of translation is to preserve the original work in another cultural context and to make it survive in a new context.

After clarifying the ontological status of translation, Eugene began to discuss the epistemology of translation. He delineated three types of translation, namely, the surrogate translation, contingent translation and coeval translation. Firstly, the surrogate translation has its own literary achievement without an appreciable reference to any other work. It reflects an early stage of cultural exchange, often catering to the target audience's taste for exoticism without regard to fidelity to the culture being depicted. As a reliable introduction to the original, contingent translation does not intend to replace the original. Secondly, occasional translations are a bit stilted, and it makes the original look so strange that readers are often alienated by the presentation. Therefore, the author considered that "its value is conditional, its audience is at least potentially bilingual" (Eugene 145). Finally, coeval translation is considered a correlate to the original, neither a replacement

for it nor an aid for those who wish to approach the original. Through the analysis, the author believed that coeval translation is the most constructive form, because with access to valuable original texts and credible translations, the prospects for profound exploration are greatly enhanced. Furthermore, Eugene demonstrated that the three types of translation are analytic constructs, not arbitrary compartments with mutually exclusive content. For him, some works may serve all three functions at one time or another, while others may start out as a surrogate translation and evolve over time into a coeval translation. The progress of translations from the surrogate to the coeval phase is "a progress toward a true mutuality of cultures, toward a condition of equipoise between source and target language, toward an ultimate cosmopolitanism" (Eugene 146). Thus, translation can be used as an epistemological tool by which we can have a better understanding of our own culture through the culture of other nations.

Regarding the phenomenology of translation, Eugene introduced four important concepts in the reception aesthetics theory of western scholars to illustrate the phenomenology of translation. First, because the translator is the reader of an original text, Hans Robert Jauss' "horizon of literary expectation" (Jauss 13) can be reflected in the translation. The second is Wolfgang Iser's concept of "convergence of text and reader" (Iser 275), which brings the literary work into existence, making the author and the reader partners in literary realization. The translator is a reader of an original text, as well as the author of the translation, so the partnership is self-evident. The last two concepts are still from Iser's, which are the concepts of "uncertainty" and "defamiliarization" (Iser 288). The blanks in the text are not only a source of uncertainty, but also a space for the reader's imagination. In the process of translation, the blank is two-folded: cultural and textual; in this regard, translators should try to eliminate the cultural blank, but avoid removing the textual blank. In other words, the translator can even add notes to help the reader understand the culture without depriving the reader of the sense of participation in the literary work. As for the fourth concept of "defamiliarization" which is about literary works borrowed from Russian formalism, Iser refers to psychological verisimilitude. It emphasizes the novelty or the new position/standpoint formed by the readers from the unfamiliarity of a foreign culture to familiarity when translated into the target language. So far, the author completed his construction of theory in translation which is quite philosophically based. We as readers are amazed that he quoted copiously from such a wide array of sources.

3. Proof of Theory and Reflections on Comparative Poetics

After provoking thinking, Eugene practically analyzed several examples which derived from the Chinese to illustrate the theory of translation as constructed above. Some of the instances mentioned are James Legge's translation of *Analects* (论语), Gustav Mahler's adaptation from Chinese poems, and a comparison between Ezra Pound's and Arthur Waley's translations of *Book of Songs*, the *Shijing* (诗经). Through an analysis of these cases, the author explored the way translations provide insights not only into the original and process of translation, but also into the "horizon of expectations" of each translator. Though far from ideal, each instance provides a textual warrant for "an implied reader" somehow apt and useful for us to acquire knowledge from the texts, whether originals or translations (Eugene 187). Because the translator is a reader of an original, as well as the author of the translation, he provides invaluable testimony on reader response, for he is an implied reader. Therefore, translation provides at least one reader's complete "reader's response" (Eugene 169). By the study of reader interpretation, translation provides a way to uncover the mystery of the Other. As a typical example, Eugene devoted a separate chapter to fully discuss Ezra Pound's and Arthur Waley's translations of *Shijing*. By applying the three categories of translations (surrogate translations, contingent translations, coeval translations) as discussed above, the author further explores the different characteristics of Arthur Waley and Ezra Pound as translators of the *Shijing*. After comparing and analyzing Pound's and Waley's translations, Eugene sometimes provided a translation of his own. To be honest, the author's translation is an attempt at coeval translation, with emphasis on the direct sentiments that were expressed in the poem. Obviously, Pound's version of translation is an attempt at a surrogate version, and Pound makes no effort to accommodate the original meaning, which the student of poetry and the general reader will find more interesting. Waley's version is a serviceable contingent translation that can be relied upon to render at least the sense of the original plaint, which the students of Chinese will find more reliable. Generally, there are three categories of audience in Eugene's eyes: the monolingual, the incipiently bilingual and the bilingual. Finally, the author further pointed out that surrogate translations "accommodate the monolingual, contingent translations appeal to the bilingual and coeval translations attract the bilingual. Most teachers of world literature depend on surrogate translations" (Eugene 209). This kind of comparison truly arouses my interest. Pound and Waley are two representative translators of Chinese classics, and both of them make great contributions to the disseminating of Chinese culture. As a representative of Imagism, Pound absorbed the essence of Chinese classical poetry, which had a great

influence on the American poetry circle. It is quite appropriate to regard Pound's translation as surrogate, to some extent, as his translation is a kind of creation on the basis of the original.

As an interlude, Eugene used a separate chapter to discuss the importance of "flavor" in the history of Chinese literary criticism. In his discussion of literature, students of Chinese literary criticism will notice that they often come across the word "wei"(味) or "flavor." The author thoroughly surveyed the key passages in the history of Chinese literary criticism to see how this notion of *wei* is used—as metaphor, as organic model, as epistemological vehicle, which includes the most representative theorists like Lu Ji (陆机), Liu Xie (刘勰), Sikong Tong (司空图), Yen Yu (严羽), Yuan Mei (袁枚), Yao Nai (姚鼐) and so on. For the Chinese critic, the distinctiveness of a work lies in the quality of "flavor." "The warrant of true savor is in the authenticity with which the writer expresses his feelings. Without this authenticity, the most elaborate and dazzling work turns out to be bland and tasteless" (Eugene 224). However, Eugene acknowledged that deciphering the values enunciated in the critical language of scents and flavors could be a frustratingly difficult task. The author repeatedly emphasized the importance of flavor in Chinese literary criticism. If this discussion does nothing more than arouse the appetite for an extended study of flavor in Chinese aesthetics, that will be enough.

Comparative poetics is another subject addressed by Eugene. The final chapter "Polar Paradigms in Poetics: Chinese and Western Literary Premises," tries to establish a multiple perspective from which biases and distortions can be effectively minimized. The author examined four groups of polar paradigms in Chinese and Western poetics, which are modal, conceptual, generic and philosophical. Many penetrating conclusions have been drawn from the analysis, for instance, there is no division between heart and mind in Chinese poetics; ancient Chinese philosophy endeavors to see the abstract in the concrete, to develop theory in practice, to view the eternal in the diurnal, to regard noumena and phenomena as inseparable; Chinese poetry tends toward the incidental and the commonplace whereas Western poetry aspires to the transcendental and the extraordinary. But in the construction of any lasting theory, in the development of any durable understanding, analysis and intuition must proceed as one: "the paradigms of mimesis must be alloyed with the paradigms of resonance" (Eugene 269). Comparison like this is helpful and fascinating for the beginners to know different cultures. Undoubtedly, as an expert in both Chinese and western culture, Eugene has made a great contribution to the field of comparative literature.

To conclude, part of *The Transparent Eye*'s originality lies in that it identifies

a new audience, one that is knowledgeable in both East as well as West. It is an inspiring and indispensable book for readers with interest in the theory and practice of translation. Hence, this work deserves much attention in the field of comparative literature, translation studies and Chinese literature, though it was published before the 21st century. Holding a multiple perspective, Eugene attempts to minimize biases and distortions in eastern and western cultures. Clearly, the author's research attitude marks him as a multiculturalist. According to Eugene, translation allows the self to see itself increasingly as other and other increasingly to be seen as the self, which is the ultimate form of literary evaluation. Moreover, contrary to the often-debated question of translatability in translation circles, Eugene declared that the objective of translation is not so much to translate but to indicate the areas of untranslatability. His incisive insights further prove the value of this book.

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