Encounters between East and West: Intercultural Perspectives

Xianlin Song
Youzhong Sun *Editors*

Transcultural Encounters in Knowledge Production and Consumption

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Transcultural Encounters in Knowledge Production and Consumption

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In memory of our colleague Regis Machart (1968–2016)

Foreword

What is the antidote to a world where increasingly it is professed as acceptable to deal with difference by building walls, making simplistic vulgar threats, and shouting without discrimination in 140 characters? A book about the challenges of understanding and comprehension explored through the lens of dialogue, indeed *transcultural* dialogue, between people who are passionate to understand and willing to admit their inherent structural biases. *East Meets West: Transcultural Encounters in Knowledge Production and Consumption* is unapologetically challenging. It needs to be read carefully and often the reader has to go back and reread a paragraph, page, and chapter. This is because deep understanding is not simple. Reductions to base dichotomies—east versus west, us versus them, red versus blue, good versus evil—fail our lived experience when we try to expand beyond the 140 characters and when we try to explain our situation to others.

What the book does contribute is to a process through which greater insight and subtlety is exposed. The process is the dialog of sustained transcultural engagement; that is, seeking out the superficially different and exploring its meaning, and thereby our own meaning, through a Socratic-like conversation. Through that *process* the falsity of simple antagonistic dichotomies is exposed and the more nuanced interconnectedness, interdependence, and simply incomparable are appreciated. This is transcultural knowledge.

In this book, the contributors are dealing with a specific kind of transcultural knowledge: how China is understood by the Anglosphere. It is not, however, a book about China for the English-speaking world. Rather, it is a book about what edification happens when the sparks of conversation are fired by thinkers observing, reflecting, and interpreting dynamically, and to hold it together the subject of China provides the primary focal point.

The book is organised into three themes: media, the creative arts, foreign relations. These are quintessential fields to test the process of transcultural view and indeed they produce exceptionally interesting individual insights (for example, Ma Huijuan's fascinating history of the reception of Peking Opera to England in the 1930s). The themes are less important for me, however, than the complex—even messy—picture that is painted by the whole. It is the insight that emerges slowly as

one works through the chapters and adds more points to the comprehensive landscape. As such, this is a book that can be read in linear fashion through the three sections, but it is equally satisfying to jump in and out randomly.

Each of the contributors interprets the remit of transcultural method subtly in one's own way, but I am particularly attracted to Wittington's approach that interacts with music composition, Chinese poetry, and diasporic furniture design. I appreciate that he rejects hybridisation, which suggests some Frankensteinian bolting together of different bodies, for a more reflective and organic creation of a new transcultural knowledge. One wishes one's own endeavours can be as fruitfully creative, honest and unique. In the increasingly globalised world brought about by hyper mobility and convenient access to non-mainstream knowledges we should expect more of this form of transculturalism and creativity in the future.

In reflecting on the book, I cannot resist a comment about language and how that impacts the transcultural approach and conclusions. Unfortunately given the dominance of monolingualism or asymmetric linguistic ability worldwide, choices have to be made about the language in which to have a transcultural dialogue and in what language the resulting knowledge is recorded. In this case, the language is English which probably remains the global lingua franca at the moment. The insurmountable problem with limiting to one language, however, is that language becomes a framework that influences the ideas. It begins with the language of publication assuming something about what background references the reader will bring, but it goes beyond this to restrict contribution to those who have fluency, familiarity or translation access with the medium. Jose's chapter touches on this when he explores translation and the untranslatability. My own hope is not for a future where we each wear a Bable fish homogenising the aural diversity into a unified language or we allow an English, Mandarin or Spanish to become a dominate language. Rather, my own hope is that we continue to promote second language acquisition so that more individuals are forced to go through their own transcultural experience and our future books reflect that by allowing for a plethora of published vocabularies understood by readers widely. That sounds complex and messy but sometimes truth is.

In a world where people are craving simplistic insight given the overload of social interaction from the ubiquity of knowledge available through the internet, this book resists. And, I celebrate that. The world is complex, messy, dynamic, and constantly evolving. It is okay for our interpretations to reflect that, yet the device of the transcultural lens presents a delightful frame to not abandon the exercise of trying to seek insight from order but to embrace an approach that etches clarity among the blurred nuance. I leave the book with a better understanding of China as well as my own lookout from the Anglosphere.

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About the Editors

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Introduction

East Meets West: Transcultural Knowledge in Production

This book has grown out of a sustained transcultural engagement between scholars from Australia and China. The intellectual exchange has brought into focus the need to go beyond the imaginary construction of East versus West that had its origins in what Edward Said (1992) refers to as the façade of Orientalism, a façade under which people from the East were routinely positioned as inferior to the West in their attainment of the levels of civilisation of the white race (p. 184). At one level, it is a historic puzzle as to how European intellectuals could perceive of the West on a developmentalist continuum in which the East was but the West's past. Moreover, what seems amazing is that even now such a teleology dominates knowledge production, and is by no means erased from East–West discourse (Chakrabarty 2000; Bhabha 1994). Even after 20 years, Huntington's thesis on the clash of civilisations between East and West, which has been discredited in academic circles as a metaphysical myth (Said 2001), continues to capture the imagination of Western media and exist in Western political postulations. In its totalising tendencies, the clash of civilisations seems impervious to both empirical and theoretical criticisms. Nevertheless, the false logic of superior versus inferior must be continuously challenged by new dialogues and new concepts that transcend the *Us* and *Them* trope. The East–West dichotomy, as Rizvi (2011) argues, still needs to be contested by conceiving cultural formations "as neither absolute nor necessarily antagonistic, but deeply interconnected and interdependent, so much so that they reveal how the tensions between cultures indeed can be comprehended and transcended" (p. 234).

This book brings together scholars, who problematised thinking which seeks to reaffirm "the West's" view of itself as the philosophical apex of knowledge, and the arbiter of what counts as "civilised" epistemology (Dutton 2002; Connell 2007; de Sousa Santos 2007; and Smith 2012). Collectively, the chapters challenge such a hierarchy of knowledge production and demonstrate that the pursuit of knowledge, whether it be in the West or in the East, has been at the centre of human pursuits for

thousands of years. Globalisation, especially the time–space compression (Harvey 2014), has accelerated cultural interactions and heightened the necessity to acknowledge the plurality of epistemologies developed by humankind. Influenced by recent theoretical advancement in knowledge domains led by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Raewyn Connell, and Wang Hui, more research has focused on contesting the "global pattern of centrality" of knowledge which has so far been dominated by a single version of history (Chakrabarty 2000). This book follows that lead by presenting a distinctive collection of chapters on transcultural encounters in knowledge production and consumption, which are situated within cognitive justice framework. The book uniquely represents transcultural dialogues between academics located on the borders of different knowledge systems, seeking to advance scholarship for universal benefit. The rigorous research evidenced in this volume collectively challenges the developmentalist paradigm, which homogenises Asian Studies research in Western universities and interprets divergent knowledge using the Western style of reason which has "lost its balance" (Toulmin 2007). Through explorations of cross-cultural encounters, the chapters engage with "Chinese" and "Western" thought on transcultural subjects that are based on self-reflection and genuine open respect for alternative ideas. Together, they articulate a new politics of difference which aims to decentre the dominant epistemologies and research paradigms in global academia. Refracted through transcultural theories and practices, adapted to diverse traditions, histories, and regional affiliations, and directed towards an international transcultural audience, the collection demonstrates expansive possibilities in knowledge production.

The coherence of this volume lies in the convergence of transcultural perspectives which bring together diverse disciplines including cultural studies, education, media, translation theory and practice, musicology, political science, and literature. Each chapter embraces a global perspective, which goes beyond the "Northern Epistemologies" (de Sousa Santos 2007), and explores the possibility of decolonising the knowledge production space, as well as research methodologies, from a consciously dialogical angle. Scholars of this collection all work within the transcultural frontiers in global higher education. Transcultural adaptations happen in multiple forms, whether it is musical transpositions, literary transplantations, educational transformations, multimedia transmissions and place making, or cultural, political, and social representations.

The book's structure divides the exploration of what Nick Jose terms transculturation into three thematic sections. Section one deals with the papers of Mary Griffith, Zhang Weimin and Peter Pugsley, and Wu Minghua in exploring physical, virtual, and social media spaces of knowledge production and contestation. Section two takes the transcultural in a cultural direction with Nick Jose's transcultural appraisal of literature, followed by Ma Huijuan's reading of Hsiung's cultural translation of the Peking Opera, *Wang Baochuan.* Zhang Jian's paper then provides a transcultural analysis of William Empson's Chinese writings, followed by Stephen Whittington's reflections on his transcultural composing practice. The final section turns to a transcultural appraisal of educational knowledge production and foreign policy ontology, with Regis Marchant exploring East and West

adaptation theory, and Greg McCarthy and Xianlin Song analysing the ontological construction of West versus East in foreign policy, using Australia as a case study. The three sections are integrated through their dialogue with transcultural knowledge in production. What follows here is an explanation of each chapter's part in addressing the book's theme.

In her chapter, Mary Griffith commences with the social justice question of how minorities and majorities can equally experience cityscapes. She analyses the potential of the "Internet of Everything" to create the possibility for "smart cities", whereby technology allows for interdisciplinary knowledge and hands-on democracy to become user-friendly. Griffiths argues that "mobile locative" technologies can open new knowledge to millions of people, creating a democratic knowledge space to challenge the commercial and conservative media's capture of knowledge in the public sphere. Using examples from Berlin and Australian cities, Griffiths shows how technology now offers interactive ways in which information can be produced and disseminated to enrich people's understanding of the past, present, and future. She argues that, as mobile media is personalised, it can enhance one's experience of a city, in which an individual is as much a producer as a receiver of knowledge of their lived spaces. Such an interactive experience is built on an interdisciplinary knowledge exchange and transcultural sensitivity in which urban planners, historians, and media experts can work together to develop rich intercultural heritages, to allow for multiple entries to city space, enriching the user's experience. The use of such mobile information democratises knowledge through its accessibility and adaptability for the end user.

In their chapter, Zhang and Pugsley use a discursive historic approach to analysing the changing parameters of disaster reporting in China. By analysing how media discourse on natural disasters in China is constructed in differing conjunctures, Zhang and Pugsley relate the shifting subject form but also the shift in knowledge production from dynastic to Maoist to contemporary truth discourses. Beginning with Foucault's notion of discourse, Zhang and Pugsley draw on Chinese reporting of natural disasters, which initially saw them as moral omens sent from heaven. During the conjuncture 1949–1978, natural disasters were represented in the media as evidence of the heroic soldier and peasant worker, rescuing nameless victims. The heroic alliance was given sustenance by the imagery of Mao as leading the people against nature. However, the post-Mao conjuncture saw a fundamental discursive shift to social realism, in which disasters were reported more factually than ideologically. The discursive concentration was less on the rescuers and more on the resilient victims of floods, earthquakes, and the like. Zhang and Pugsley argue that the shift in discourse was needed to legitimise the media as reporting realities rather than engaged in obfuscation. Again, in an era where "fake news" in the West is a legitimization strategy used by distrusted leaders, contemporary Chinese media must, in contrast, construct national disasters accurately to legitimise the media itself. Such a change in media discourse means that the victims of natural disaster are portrayed sympathetically, evoking public empathy, rather than seen as mere objects of heroic comrades. Chinese reports of natural disaster recovery operations need to show both sympathy and leadership.

Following on from the issue of legitimacy, Wu Minghua explores how netizens use a variety of techniques to destabilise mainstream media, leadership, and social norms. Again, there are echoes here of how social media in both West and East voices civic participation. Wu, drawing on Bakhtin's (1984) notion of the Carnivalesque as a participatory discourse, contextualises how Chinese netizens mask up to protect their identities and seek to humiliate those in authority, who are designated as abusing their power. Wu argues that the micro-blogging sphere in China has enabled ordinary Internet users to produce alternative perspectives and increasingly drive the authorities to respond to them. Linking the theory of the Carnivalesque with Foucault's idea of multiple sites of power and Habermas's idea of the lifeworld of civil society, Wu contends that these Western theories are a necessary but insufficient base from which to explain the netizen masking strategy as a way to demean public figures. Her call for a more Chinese theoretical approach echoes that of Dutton's (2016) notion of China as theory, where authority seeks to contain flows of affect, including on the Internet. For Wu, within this flow of affect, online citizens are noted for how, Carnival-like, they pock fun at officialdom. In Wu's account, what is notable about citizen dialogue is its wittiness, with Chinese characteristics, that employs "gags" to challenge the authoritarian "gag" on information.

In section two on the arts, Nicholas Jose begins the analysis by exploring the etymology of the word transcultural. Starting from Song and Cadman's use of the term to postulate a new way of advancing educational justice, Jose traces its origins to the Caribbean in the creole character of language. According to Jose, transculturation is fundamental and indispensable for an understanding of the history of Cuba and, for analogous reasons, of that of America. Jose takes us on a literary journey of discovery of how transcultural language, and with it literature, flows from Cuba to America, from indigenous languages to Mandarin, from East to West. As literature becomes transcultural, so does literary understanding, and appreciation of and respect for difference. The transcultural now seems to take us beyond cross-cultural, multicultural, and intercultural to a new level of merging of knowledge of ourselves and others: a knowledge shared in writing and reading literature. Having taken the reader on the journey of the term transcultural, we arrive at the point where the most acclaimed literature is now transcultural, including that of the Nobel Laurate J.M. Coetzee. According to Jose, Coetze's transculturalism is expressed to the reader in his use of "perplexing, provoking, and teasing" language, while simultaneously expressing a global social justice philosophy. Likewise, Alexis Wright's indigenous literature brings us multiple voices of the First Peoples and injustices acted upon them. As Jose notes in the indigenous context, "the transculturation, as in the early Cuban usages, includes the transformative interchange between cultures and communities within a society. The term 'intercommunal' has a specific application here. Even within a community there will be communities". Jose leaves us with a transcultural puzzle as there are certain words that seem untranslatable and yet have transcultural meaning across cultures. Such a word is "bamboozle" which has a long distant etymology and in contemporary Chinese is akin to the cultural phenomenon of *huyou*. In short, Jose notes,

"the transcultural move here is to leave the untranslatable as if untranslated, a hole in the text". In summing up, Jose views the transcultural as a practice that conforms to a globalised era of cultural understanding and inquiry for writers, readers, and teachers.

In her contribution, Ma Huijuan tells the instructive story of how the first English version of the Peking Opera *Wang Baochuan* was translated by Chinese playwright S.I. Hsiung in 1934. The opera was then translated into an English version called *Lady Precious Stream* to worldwide appreciation, being performed in 40 countries. For such a success to have occurred in the high art form of Chinese Opera is remarkable and raises a question as to how the translation led to this transcultural adaptation and appreciation. Ma provides a biographical note on S.I. Hsiung noting his prominence as a diasporic writer in the 1930s. She notes that Hsuing's translation of *Lady Precious Stream* was performed at the Little Theatre in London by the People's National Theatre and ran for about 1000 nights between 1934 and 1936. This success was notable not just for the skill of the translator but also as it was in an era when China was little known in the West and its sophisticated operatic form and content was little appreciated outside the country. Having been the first translator and playwright in the West End of London, Hsuing took the *Lady Precious Stream* to New York to great success and it was adapted for television in 1950.

Given the success of the translation and its adaption, the question that puzzles Ma is what translation strategies account for the play's triumph. To answer this question, Ma uses both textual and extra-textual analysis to uncover the secrets of its transcultural adaptation, performance, and global reception. She argues that the success of the translation of the play was firstly in the skill of the translator. Secondly, the opera was shown at the contextual conjuncture in which China was emerging from dynastic rule and embracing a different modernity. The ability of the translator to contextualise the play as a cultural whole was not merely a reflection of his artistry but of what Said calls "wordliness" (1992): his ability to grasp the dialectic of a world in turmoil. In addition, the success of the play was linked to its marketing and the financial support of patrons. Overall, in this chapter, Ma gives an important case study of how, to be globally effective, translation needs to be transcultural.

Zhang Jian's analysis of the cultural encounters of the renowned poet William Empson with Chinese culture, also mentioned in Nick Jose's chapter, captures the 1930s conjuncture in China. Jiang weaves a transcultural story of a unique Westerner living in the East, in fact living in China during the horrors of the Japanese invasion. Empson's Chinese experience is captured in his poetry and gives shape to his unique form of critical theory. Zhang captures how Empson's poems are multilayered, semantically playful, and inspired by his new cultural environment. According to Zhang, the poem "Autumn on Nan-Yeuh" can be read as

expressing a sense of personal and cultural ambiguity in suggesting flight from UK culture and flight from the invaders, flying to a safer haven outside Peking, as well as personal flight; poetry as an escape from war and the vicissitudes of one's life. By providing a glimpse of Empson's life in Hunan, Empson revealed great resilience and a remarkable power of recollection. With his trusty typewriter, Empson typed out English poetry and Shakespeare sonnets and plays from memory for his students' appreciation. His renown for critical reading was evident in his transcultural interpretation of Othello, and his dialogue with students dealing with differing cultural appraisals of Desdemona. Zhang sees Empson's critical theory approach, as developing from this very cross-cultural contextualisation of race and gender he experienced teaching in China. Zhang notes that Empson‘s teaching in China played a significant part in his conceptualisation of personal and cultural alterity. Likewise, having taught in Japan and China, Epsom was able to reflect on cultural specificities and he dutifully respected the cultural differences that shaped student's views. This is not to say that Epsom was fully aware of his own cultural prejudices, but he was able to appreciate the different intellectual traditions he encountered in Japan and China, as compared to UK. Zhang places this understanding on the notion of imagined community, where Epsom as an outsider could see the particle Han national imagination in his students as compared to the ethnic minorities they somewhat disdainfully encountered. In reflecting on the East versus the West, Epsom developed what can be called a Said-like orientalist perspective that the West misconstrued the Other as inferior and irrational. Zhang concludes that reading Epsom's collective works was a seminal experience, in his appreciation and acceptance of the equality of West and East cultures.

In a unique chapter, Stephen Wittington explains how his musical compositions may be considered transcultural rather than hybridisation. Whittington notes that his musical craft began with his own Western training as a pianist and composer. His developing interest in Eastern music took him to a consideration of how to blend Chinese poetry and sensibilities into his composition. Whittington noted that the art of music is deeply hybrid but that transcultural music is something different: not merely a grafting of Eastern musical art forms onto Western ones. Rather, it requires a deep immersion in techniques, musical sounds, and compositions to move from exotic influences to a transformation of art in composing, performance, and reception. It is only then that the music goes beyond exoticism to reach transculturalism. Whittington notes that the history of Western and Eastern music is one of asymmetry; for example, Western music has had a far greater influence on Chinese music than is true of the reverse. Moreover, instances of Chinese representation in Western opera tend towards Orientalism, where the exotic East is a fairyland of naïve people, basking in the infancy of civilisation. Nevertheless, despite the overall neglect of Chinese music in the West, Whittington comments that Gustav Mahler's 1909 symphonic song cycle *Das Lied von der Erde (The Song of the Earth)* does show conscious Chinese musical influence.

Having provided a comprehensive overview of Eastern and Western musical influences, Whittington turns towards his own appreciation and adaptation of Chinese culture in his own compositions. He notes that his interests developed due

to an early appreciation of Chinese opera, his marriage, and then association with the Chinese composer and long-time director of the Shanghai Conservatory, He Luting. This led Whittington to appreciate the breadth of Chinese musical styles and to seek to incorporate his appreciation of Chinese poetry in his compositions. This direction soon became one of to the composition, as illustrated in the composition *... from a thatched roof*. This composition also reflects his association with the diasporic Chinese furniture designer Khai Liew, whose philosophy is that the natural and human nature should be bridged by art, but it should be an art that conceals art. Whittington then explains how he blended these views on art and nature, along with classical Chinese poetry and Chinese philosophy, into this Western seven movement quartet, which also embraces Whittington's interest in the musical style of French composer Erik Satie (1866–1925), as well as minimalist Western musical tropes. The composition *…from a thatched roof* can be now appreciated as a truly transcultural art work from East to West as the two are inseparable in its composition and performance. Whittington hopes that by explaining his hidden art of composition, this may assist in challenging the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between Western and Chinese music.

Opening the third section on East and West sensitivities in education and foreign policy, Regis Marchart returns the reader to the trope of *Us* and *Them* as a dividing line in educational differentiation. Even through the binary has been severely critiqued in academic circles, its persistence in educational discourse is, he argues, driven firstly by the global commodification of Asian international students and secondly by the continuation of solid stereotypes of cultural difference, which seem impervious to criticism. Marchart explores these two phenomena by firstly analysing Western university Websites, showing how they advertise essentialised differences, to market an alleged superior educational and cultural experience for international students to partake in. His demonstration shows how even seemingly progressive universities do not escape from the orientalist call for the *Them* to adapt to *Us* and our superior educational and cultural environment. Marchart relates this marketing to a more pernicious discourse than that of the international student confronting an inevitable "cultural clash", coming from a less culturally developed culture to a higher-level culture. These perceptions, he argues, are devoid of critical discursive analysis, which assumes a clash and then sets out to find evidence, thereby ignoring evidence to the contrary. The result is to assume the clash is due to deficiencies of the students in not having the necessary adaptation skills to adjust to their host countries' culture. Marchart's evidence shows how this cultural clash syndrome is based on solid stereotypes and demonstrates little appreciation of the liquid character of international student identity or of the heterogeneity of the educational institution or its social setting. What Marchart's research exposes is how the commodification of education exacerbates the essentialising cultural tendencies, and in doing so aggravates the failings of the cultural clash discourse.

The second aspect of Marchart's analysis is to open our eyes to the substantial movement of students from East to East or South to South, which presents a corrective to the assumption that student mobility is but a one-way flow from the East to the alleged superior Western education system. Building on his critique of

essentialism, he notes that the idea of a unified Asian Confucius educational model is itself a vulgarisation of multiple Asian country models and teaching practices, where the pursuit of truth takes many forms. He debunks this notion of student uniformity in extensive surveys showing that internationals students come with many differing educational models and appreciations, which shape their respective adaptation to different teaching and research models in the East and the West. Despite the evidence of adaptation and the success of international students, the dominant discourse remains fixed, even ignorant of the heterogeneous nature of countries such as France, Australia, USA, or Malaysia. To drive home his point, Marchart conducts research on Chinese students studying in Malaysia to show how they have a fluid identity and reflect on their host country's culture, seeking to respond to that culture and adapt to it, therein having the potential to enhance their own sense of global identity. However, there is no single experience of a Chinese student studying in Malaysia; they come with differing backgrounds, skills, knowledge, and expectations. This should be the starting point for exploring international student adaptation rather than fixed categorisation.

As the above analysis gives testimony, Regis Marchart was a leading global educational researcher. Trained in Paris and writing from his academic base in Kuala Lumpur, he was in a unique position to critique the orientalisation of educational discourse from both an Eastern and a Western critical perspective. For this reason alone, his sudden death was a great blow to global educational theory. Nevertheless, Regis leaves us with a transcultural appreciation of how one must challenge educational essentialisation in the name of social justice.

In their chapter on East–West foreign policy ontology, McCarthy and Song develop the theme of West versus East to examine Australian foreign policy via three Australian governments, those of John Howard (1996–2007), Kevin Rudd (2007–2010), and Tony Abbott (2013–2015). The analysis explores how the three administrations fundamentally misunderstood China, because of an ontological assumption of Westerns superiority and a (neo)orientalist framing of China. The authors explore the paradox that China became Australia's major trading partner in 2007 and yet Australian knowledge of and understanding of China never matched their deeper economic ties. McCarthy and Song argue that this is due to a developmentalist logic, with Australian political leaders regarding Australia as the philosophical and social yardstick against which to measure China. Moreover, the misunderstanding of China is in no small part due to relegating China's revolutionary past to "dead" history. The chapter probes into the transcultural dimensions of this misunderstood relationship from a conscious position that reflects on the West as well as the East. Through an analysis of Howard's human rights dialogue, Rudd's misreading of China–Australia via the trope of friendship, and Abbott's insensitivity towards Chinese history in relation to Japan, this chapter offers a transcultural reading of Australia–China relations over the past two decades. McCarthy and Song argue that such relations are underpinned by what Pan has identified as an unreflective form of social knowledge (Pan 2012).

McCarthy and Song use as evidence to support this East versus West (un)reflectiveness by examining human rights dialogues between Australia and

China commencing with the Howard government. The chapter shows that Australia developed a Western conception of human rights as legal and political but was ready to sublimate this to expanding trade relations. Nevertheless, Australia did not accept the Chinese version of human rights as prioritising economic rights. Further, Australia was unable to appreciate the complex and variegated debates in China on human rights and how they emerged from the 1949 revolution and were amended after the death of Mao. Notwithstanding the differing conjunctures, there has been a certain continuity in the understanding of rights in China that is little appreciated in the West. Moreover, Dutton (2016) has argued that the notion of rights in China is tied to the politics of affect, where its acceptance is related to the flows of power and political legitimacy, across conjunctures.

The chapter then explores how despite Prime Minister Rudd speaking Mandarin and having a diplomatic knowledge of China, he ardently espoused the Western values system of his predecessor. This is evident in Rudd's "*zhengyou*" speech at Peking University where he chastised China over human rights violations in Tibet. Rudd's speech was well received in the West but officially in China, it was read as a Western attack on China's sovereignty. As Wang Hui (2011) explains, in China the Tibetan question must be traced back to 1949 and the vicissitudes in policies that have dealt with the region now made more complex by the overlaying of a market economy in Tibet. It is not just a sovereignty question but also one of a separation of religion and state and one of marketisation. Rudd's lack of reflection built up a greater distrust in China as the expectation was that his language skills were going to be matched by his level of cultural awareness.

Rudd's successor Julia Gillard followed the Howard formulae in prioritising the US alliance and espousing the view that the USA was the inspirational model of Western values. In contrast to Rudd, her attitude to China was diplomacy over Australia's values agenda. In contrast, the next conservative Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, was an avowed Anglophile, arguing Australia had to always choose the West over the East. Abbott saw Japan as a democratic non-Eastern country and consequently as the "best friend" and "ally" of Australia. Abbott's predilection for values diplomacy was seen in his siding with Japan in the South China Seas dispute between China and Japan, symbolised by contestation over Senkaku–Diaoyu islands. Going beyond Australia's neutral stance in the dispute, Abbott emphasised that China was at fault. He stressed that in terms of understanding Australia's position, it was important to note that for Australia, China was but a trading partner, whereas Japan was a democracy.

Abbott articulates the most extreme version of a developmentalism in which democracy is the end of history to which China must aspire. In this teleology, Japan is accepted as being both anti-communist and part of the Western development agenda due to its democracy. Concomitantly, there is the assumption that China's economic rise will follow a Eurocentric path and lead to pluralist democracy. In this ontology of West versus East, there is an overt Eurocentric postulation that China is reliving the Western path from feudalism to capitalism. However, China's economic liberalisation is better understood in terms of uneven and combined development between first tier cities, other cities, and the countryside.

Rather than understanding China in this uneven complexity, Australian governments appear to accept a clash of cultures and espouse a certain Western triumphalism. However, as Derrida (1994) argues, the spectre of Marxism is always with us, even if it is declared dead and the differing paths to capitalism are well illustrated by China. The point at issue here is that the irrevocable obligation of the West is to rethink China not in terms of its own sense of ontology but in terms of a different ontology, therein furthering the nation's sense of being. Australia looks at China without self-reflection so it imposes an idealised ontology onto the other and finds it wanting, whereas with the rise of China, it is Australia's own identity that requires reflection. It is, as Hamlet proclaims, the West that is "out of joint" with the East.

In short, the book's chapters respectively address a transcultural reflection on the East versus West paradigm. They adopt a mode of thinking that interconnects critical theory with case studies on media spaces, transcultural literature, cultural translation, poetic and musical inspirations and transplantations, East and West student identity, and West versus East foreign policy ontologies. The chapters have framed knowledge in a manner that destabilises the developmentalist logic so prevalent in the teleology of the East comes West discourse and contests the hierarchy of knowledge production. Moreover, the collection demonstrates that globalisation has heightened awareness of the multiple forms of knowledge productions in the current conjuncture of high academic, cultural, people, and knowledge mobility. Collectively, the volume contributes to critical dialogues between culturally divergent researchers questioning existing cultural frameworks and enhances our understanding of and between research scholarship which deals with collective societal and cultural challenges in the globalised world in which we live.

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Part I
Encounters in Media: Placemaking and Meaning-Making

Civic Pluralism: Designing for Enriched Intercultural Experiences of Place

Mary Griffiths

Abstract This chapter addresses placemaking as a technique for developing civic pluralism. Municipal authorities face increased governance challenges when diverse groups flow into cities with established populations. The new groups, treated as 'other', may not be seen as part of the unfolding heritage in the life of a city. Physical segmentation and alienation can cause differences to be violently expressed on the grounds of religion, ethnicity, and perceptions of the right of possession. The Internet of Things (IoT) can create enriched experiences of urban heritage through its capacity to connect people and material objects in multiple, interactive ways. The chapter argues through illustrations, and an account of the design of research, that open, purposeful and technologically-enabled placemaking can facilitate a civic pluralism which is experiential, interactive and free from authoritatively monocultural majoritarianism in both assumptions and values. Designing pluralist heritage informatics and civic memorialization practices means re-purposing existing in situ heritage experiences, creating new ones available for self-curation, and collective production through free municipal wifi and high mobile connectivity. The IoT, in connecting unique urban waypoints and access to public resources, can contribute to multi-layered, individuated narratives of the city, which are designed to assist in the governance of differences.

Keywords Place · Place-making · Diversity · Intercultural locatedness · Smart technologies

Introduction

> Every place tells a story. Stories of events, changes, impressions. And people. People shape places. (Kulturprojekte Berlin 2013, p. 208)

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> The IoT is marching sensors and machine learning into every corner of our lives. Like all technology, these neutral tools are only as good or bad as the designers approaching them. We're afforded the opportunity to pioneer this emerging space. Let's use creativity to unlock IoTs' full potential for enriching lives and creating meaningful connections. (Gray 2015, n.p.)

The effective governance of diverse urban populations is complex and delicate. For individuals of majority and minority groups, multiple ways of experiencing and belonging to cities exist in parallel and intersect routinely, even though each city's authoritative representational and relational practices tend to prioritise the truths, lives, values and histories of its majority population. The exclusive privileging of majoritarian interests and values costs a city dearly. Minorities may develop a different sense of personal security on the streets, and activities undertaken to maintain ethnic, cultural or religious traditions require sustained and visible public efforts, reinforcing otherness even as interfaith or multicultural festivals are held. Municipalities necessarily prioritise resource, economic, material mobility, sustainability, and service matters over individual experience of the city. Nevertheless what is called 'place-making', especially as it is supported by smart technologies, is becoming an important feature of urban planning. A city's liveability status, of which openness to diversity is an important characteristic, now impacts on its sustainability in global competition for capital and skilled labour. The design of intercultural heritage informatics and civic experiences can move end-users, whether citizens, residents or tourists, between the physical and virtual spaces which together construct an enriched, inclusive sense of place and belonging.

In this chapter I argue that the affordances of mobile locative technologies and developments in heritage informatics offer productive ways for cities to reduce the unwanted aspects of majoritarianism, allowing them to promote a broader, more meaningful acceptance of their own specific kinds of diversity. This chapter discusses an artistic representation of the city as a model of governance, to begin its argument about cities as the guardians and drivers of democratic governance, before detailing a number of international and national events which suggest that a purposeful revivification of civil egalitarian discourse is needed in nations and cities with majoritarian and minority populations. It then canvasses civic ideals and connectedness in a discussion of place-making (and place-faking). An example of a memorialisation project in Berlin is offered to illustrate the empowering civic techniques displayed in a collective re-imagining of the German capital's past and future. The next section includes a discussion of the fast arrival of smart technologies, how they can be deployed, and the risks to populations in adopting machine-to-machine connectivity. In its penultimate section, the chapter scopes the possibilities of local interdisciplinary informatics projects, still in design stages, which will test the concept of urban place-making as an important feature of participatory intercultural governance. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the value of such egalitarian activities.

Models of Good Governance

The city, as an embodiment of human potential, has been the object of sustained philosophical, political, secular, technological and artistic attention over the centuries. Occasionally an artist's allegorical work combines all these interests and crosses the centuries to speak to successive generations. Ambiglio Lorenzetti's allegorical frescoes are frequently cited examples, for good reasons. They explicitly link the concept of a 'peaceful city' to good governance and they still act as a point of reference for scholarly interests in the relations between urban rulers and the governed. The mid-fourteenth-century frescoes depict a world of complex power relationships; of visible rulers who shared the streets in close proximity to those they governed; of populations who were stratified and classed as belonging to the city, or were regarded as outsiders, with different rights. Harris and Butler, in an online lecture, point out that the frescoes were hung around one of the Council meeting rooms in Siena's Palazzo Pubblico, as quotidian reminders of city governors' duties. The city council, composed of aristocratic citizens, served short terms of two months before returning to the general polity and becoming, in their turn, subject to their replacements' decisions. In describing 'The Allegory of Good Government', the presenters show that the ropes originating in the hands of the central figure of 'Justice' went through, and bound together, a line of citizens. The 'Effects of Good Government', Butler suggests, is the first secular painting showing the material building of the peaceful city (Harris and Butler, n.d.). The number of downloads on the video indicates the scale of interest in massified online audiences for art, heritage and storytelling. Individual acts of self-cultivation are made possible by the technologies of connection and distribution on which this chapter focuses. The frescoes are most often read as a persuasive tutelary vision of organic civic life, and represent a set of governmental arrangements and techniques still evidenced, although in new forms, in municipalities in developed democracies. They show how to achieve a contemporaneously acceptable balance between the disparate needs of the governed. The allegories show that municipal governments must be resourceful, accountable, deliberative and thoughtfully innovative where the inclusion of new arrivals is concerned, all the while respecting the place-based identities developed by longer-standing occupants of a city.

The significant contemporary points of difference from Lorenzetti's Siena are that municipalities now face the growth of current urbanisation: the competitive dynamics of swift change; increased global flows of people; and the impact of disruptive technological mediatization on existing relations of power. Governance, human connectedness and technological connectivity are now closely related in the age of digital: connectedness measures how people come together and interact; and connectivity refers to the operations and effectiveness of communication infrastructures and to the robustness of the invisible material elements which make up contemporary telecommunications networks. Today's communication technologies fragment and network simultaneously. They make visible the distanced. Ubiquitous mobile telephony, wireless Internet communications, and one-to-many and

many-to-many distribution platforms have helped make everyday life a hyper-mediated one, and the city a place where, through public participation, governance can be shared in new ways.

Routine areas of governance of people and resources are now being conceived of as ‘smart’, future-oriented, automated and invisibly implemented by sensor technologies. ‘Smart cities’ are proliferating across the world, as automation and big data take hold. The process is uneven, as The Internet of Things, (IoT), the network of unique locative identifiers linking machine-to-machine receptor/transmitters within the existing Internet, is still a challenging new domain for governments. The IoT produces a range of smart phenomena—wearable devices, consumer goods trackers, driverless cars—making it set to become an integral part of everyone’s life, increasingly used wherever large scale interconnections between devices produce apparently desirable outcomes for people. Big data collection accelerates the rapidity of changes in governance, as unimaginably massive amounts of data are harvested, archived, modified and re-used. Automated processes, based on invisible algorithms, can conserve urban resources more efficiently. Their impact will be felt as they streamline or eliminate routine activities or take away the inconvenience of mundane tasks. The future which can be designed is limited only by human imagination—and the cooperation of the technology giants who operate the platforms and steward big data. For city governments, the challenge is to design automated developments in which civic values and the preservation of the public good are priorities. Each city can gain benefits. Babar summarises concisely:

> a *real* Smart City should be focused on socio-technical innovation for empowering citizens to improve liveability, renew economic well-being, and increasing sustainability (Babar 2016, p. 21).

Intercultural Struggles and Street-Level Civility

Contemporary challenges to a ‘peaceful city’ exist in the renewed rhetorical struggles over the impact of the increase in global mobilities, and subsequent reactive expressions by majorities to the preservation of culture and the right to belong. Walls and borders shape political discourse about global flows. This section examines the tensions in intercultural relations. The ‘people’ element is more significant in constructing the peaceful city than the impact of urban technologies or the material build of a city, though each element influences the other. Defining ‘the people’ and ‘the new people’ is a complex but everyday task in cosmopolitan cities, and multicultural societies more generally. Arrivals risk being treated as ‘other’ for long periods, and certain groups may gain acceptance or be seen as belonging. Distinct urban segmentations can take place, resulting in minorities’ exclusion and alienation from a sense of shared place. Cultural alienation is violently expressed amongst and between groups on a host of religious, racial, ethnic, and economic grounds. The wearing of religious or ethnic dress has become a defining factor for

individual safety in some cities. Being recognisably different from the majority can be a negative experience on the streets.

The capacity to share public space and accept cultural differences is an important feature of an urban civility currently under attack across the world, as international events can shape social practices at national and local levels elsewhere. What happens in the global theatre matters at the local level. The vituperative tenor of the 2016 US presidential election process echoes the divisive negativity in the UK's 'Brexit' referendum. The latter campaigns were characterised by the British party UKIP's representation of local minorities as other. Frequently the targets in London were the Polish community charged with 'taking jobs' from the 'English', or those whose appearance was deemed Muslim, and thus suspect. Well before the US President-elect Donald Trump targeted particular minorities (thus normalising racial slurring), public speakers and political parties in Britain were reflecting the hostile public discourse about minority, migrant and refugee populations which had already been effective in dislodging public civility in Europe. When questions of belonging emerged in both US and UK campaigns, public civility quickly deteriorated. Additionally, having political allegiances proved nationally divisive. Outgoing President Obama spoke immediately after Donald Trump's win to remind Americans of their national interests and of the importance of putting partisanship aside and pulling together on the 'same team.' His final public speech in office highlighted the diversity of America, the importance of the civic virtues of citizenship. Others have also acted to reaffirm democratic discourse. Days after the US election, the University of Arizona's National Institute for Civil Discourse put out a bipartisan statement by congressmen and other public figures, calling for a national restoration of civility. Similarly, immediately after the Brexit vote, the UK's Catholic bishops called for a return to civility (*Catholic Herald* website, June 24 2016). These are a few examples, among many, of public statements about the need for public and private civility to animate democracy, caused by a proliferation of incidents in which violent words and physical assaults between political opponents were exchanged, and after individuals from perceived ethnic minorities became random targets on city streets. Respect for difference is both the strength of an open society, and its Achilles' heel.

These narratives of lost civility—or the freedom to speak without respect for another's difference—were amplified by the flow of news reports, and their re-mediation, in widely different societies, striking divisive chords in cities across the world. Cities are a microcosm of national life but they are individual, so when a city's cultural differences seem to be brought into sharp focus by news from elsewhere, a number of consequences can be felt: majoritarian intolerance of differences can be unleashed; minorities become targets. Civility and the civic contract are endangered.

These are not new or isolated occurrences. The city of Sydney's Cronulla beach riots in 2005 illustrate long-lasting outcomes for the populations affected by culturally-motivated tensions. An Australian political party news site reporting on the race riots is masterly in dividing two sets of participating citizens, one named as 'gangs of Lebanese' (later shortened dismissively to 'Lebs') and the other 'Australian lifesavers'

> Tension had been building for months as gangs of Lebanese swarmed on to Sydney's Cronulla beach, jostling elderly patrons, abusing Australian families and threatening to 'rape Aussie sluts' for wearing bikinis. They did not come to enjoy the beach in the Australian tradition. They came to flout their disrespect for Australian culture and for Australian law and order.
>
> Matters came to a head the previous weekend when two young Australian lifesavers were bashed by a Lebanese gang. Following a series of text messages, 5,000 Australians turned up on Sunday December 11, 2005 at Cronulla determined to 'reclaim the beach'. (Australia First Party 2015)

Perpetrators were brought to justice but the 'reclaim the beach' incidents anchored the return of 1990s expressions of majoritarian anxieties in Australia over multiculturalism, exacerbated by successive governments' treatment of unsanctioned arrivals by boat from the geo-political region and the middle east. A decade after Cronulla, several conservative members of the Australian Parliament (Senators David Leyonhjelm, Pauline Hanson and Cory Bernardi) as well as far-right and conservative association websites, routinely deploy Cicero's warning about 'the traitor within' infecting the body politic to justify their versions of an outspoken xenophobia. The subsequent media-fanned controversies over 'stopping the boats', the offshore holding camps, border security and 'homegrown terrorism' fuelled broader anti-Islamist sentiments; and initiated a range of national movements, such as a renewed Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, Rise Up Australia, Blood and Honour, and the 'Reclaim Australia' grassroots affiliation which vocally represented their protectionist agenda on the streets of most Australian cities in 2015. The last organisation, according to new study of the extremist right wing in Australia, has over 63,000 Facebook followers (Dean et al. 2016). The new research follows the online presence and overlapping ideological spaces occupied by eight parties or associations which share antipathy to groups perceived as a threat to Australian culture and values. Researchers conclude that these groups are not homogenous but the most heavily subscribed group mounts a political challenge by using 'the language of concerned citizens' to conceal racist, anti-establishment and anti-immigrant beliefs, and 'fracturing the unwritten social contract of egalitarianism where everyone is entitled to an equal opportunity, which is embedded deep in the Australian psyche' (2016, p. 138).

Since the 2015 Sydney siege, when a lone gunman held several hostages in the Lindt Cafe in Martin Place, supporters of these positions have increased. As the siege unfolded beneath the newsroom gaze of the Channel 7 reporters opposite, it became a participatory media event to which ubiquitous txt and twitter feeds contributed. Authorities having previous knowledge of the gunman's political and criminal activities and his mental health, the overall management of the siege, the final police assault, and the resulting deaths of two hostages are still subjects of on-going enquiry. The 'Be the Bridge' campaign was initiated quickly to counter negative post-siege public reactions to individual encounters with Muslims. It was a social media campaign in which Sydneysiders offered to travel alongside Muslim women on public transport to show solidarity. As a gesture it gained quick traction internationally on social media but, at street level, it has done little to eradicate the random, casual expressions of venom in public towards those who express their

Muslim faith through dress. In Victoria, Melbourne's broadsheet *The Age* reported on May 29, 2015, that a man was struck in the face by one of two men on a Melbourne train, after mildly intervening to prevent their abuse of three Muslim women. The vitriol was specifically directed at the women who were not meeting Australian norms in dress and language, and it was therefore about Muslims not conforming to the Australian imaginary shared by abusers. Yet, during the same event, an equally powerful narrative of a tradition of egalitarianism and rough gallantry was re-inscribed by the man who intervened with the comment: 'Mate, they're women.' (Calligeros 2015), thus reclaiming public space as civil space.

Further afield, a large-scale illustration of majoritarian values of a different kind took place in France after the *Charlie Hebdo* assassinations in 2015. The attacks had been planned as a silencing, terrorising strategy by radical Muslims against a small-circulation satirical magazine. The gunmen failed in their broader objectives because the tragedy became the spark which made visible the deeply-felt, civic bond of republicanism in the capital, and it was echoed in other cities across the world. Despite the fear of further terrorist atrocities—which later events in the south of France proved to be legitimate—the *Hebdo* attack brought French citizens onto the streets to protest. There they were joined by a number of world leaders from similar polities, in a demonstration of liberal and democratic solidarity. The tragedy revealed, also, the civic confidence and fortitude of French citizens who, by reason of their Muslim faith and respect for the Koran, could not identify with the *Je suis Charlie* campaign. The citizens who walked in the biggest peacetime rallies, including those who stood together in the symbolic Place de la Republique, reportedly numbered millions.

The events in Paris became the opportunistic prism through which partisan ultra-conservative media in the United States put the argument that Muslims should not be living in western democracies. In the aftermath of the French cartoonists' deaths, they identified particular districts of Paris as exclusively Muslim. Fox News even provided helpful infographics of the Parisian districts which apparently were 'no-go zones' for police and non-Muslims, and 'enclaves' where only sharia law was obeyed. It was an early example of the 'post-truth' reporting later to sully the 2016 U. S. presidential election. Fox's Paris coverage was inflammatory, diverting attention away from the thoughtful civil society debates which had begun internationally about freedom of speech, freedom of belief, and the clash of fundamentalist and democratic values, while at the same time demonstrating commentators' ignorance about sharia law. Residents of the districts identified—for example, Quartier Barbes or Belleville —recorded their astonishment at the coverage direct to camera in a Youtube video (Young Turks 2015). The unsubstantiated Fox News hysteria, ironically from an ally of France, was dismissed as ridiculous by Parisians anchored by the three rational, civic republican principles underpinning French citizenship.

Fox News, in attempting to export a home-grown moral panic, had nevertheless given the governors of Paris an external public relations and branding issue to tackle. The Mayor, Anne Hidalgo, was given permission by city lawmakers to sue the influential media organisation in an attempt to restore the good reputation of Paris as a law-abiding city. Fox News subsequently defended its right to

untrammelled free speech—a lame excuse for journalistic errors in fact-checking, and an ironic one given that the channel rarely accords its interlocutors the same rights. As in the previous instances, this example of intercultural clash illustrates the contradictions in principled democratic practice. Mass movements of peoples with conflicting beliefs now live closely together in contemporary cities. There was shown to be exemplary strength in French civic values under the most testing of pressures. If the terrorist event, and the erroneous Fox reporting of violent racial and religious segmentations in Paris, had both been allowed to stand unopposed by the French leaders and citizens, the outcomes for peaceable sharing of public space would have been irretrievably damaged. The negative impact on perceptions of personal safety in a country with over five million citizens of the Muslim faith, and millions of tourists per annum, would have been catastrophic. After the event, a stronger narrative of ownership of public space prevailed, in this case an overarching one which rose above local or individual differences to mobilise the civic discourse of inclusive citizenship.

More commonly, as the Australian intercultural exchanges demonstrate, the contemporary forms of Foucault's 'dividing practices' (Foucault 1982) involved in a city's normative expressions of majoritarian interests are on a smaller scale, and lower-key. They are quotidian, at street level, so mundane as to be unnoticed by the wider group.

Diversity Destroyed …and Remade: Kulturprojekte, Berlin

Here I turn to my example of a city-wide response to the governance of intercultural relations: the deployment of rhetorical strategies and practical demonstrations of civic values. In 2013 Berliners attempted an ambitious reconciliation with the violent C20th history of their city. The past was revisited, in order to be contested, when the city organised a set of exhibitions, archives, collections and installations which memorialised the diverse, rich, liberal, complicated and controversial culture that was swept away along with the Weimar Republic. The exercise documented the events, and the techniques used in the progressive repression of difference. Berlin's unique collective acts of memorialisation returned to the different ways of being, living and creating in the city, from pre-1933 when events still seemed extraordinary, to 1938, when normative behaviour included the previously unthinkable. Over the course of a year, the contemporary museums and streets of Berlin were embedded with physical and digital reminders of the activities and people that Germany had lost, disparaged or destroyed in the National Socialist period.

The Themenjahre project *Diversity Destroyed*, auspiced by its main sponsor Kulturprojekte Berlin, began the year with 120 supporting partners and 40 affiliated projects, and ended it with over 170 projects. Unusually, therefore, for a

memorialisation of a period of history, it was a widely distributed set of individual exhibitions, both in large and small museums and in the open air across the greater urban landscape. Civil society, rather than government, became the key driver behind the choice of the theme, and its design and execution. WALL AG was a major Themenjahre sponsor and, as an advertising company, its communications' architecture ensured that the city was 'informated' by 'street furniture', such as digital signage. Its corporate motto is 'For cities, for people' and its primary social engagement is in two areas: children and cultural activities.

With the assembled capacities provided by spontaneous, unconventional partnerships, the design of a city-wide experience allowed smaller associations or suburban districts autonomously to stage their own special interest memorialisations. The effect was of many voices, a renewal of diversity routinely accepted and practised in the public sphere.

Source Screenshot, WALL AG website, 2012.

Wherever people walked, reminders were encountered; the relevance to contemporary times explored. In addition, existing monuments commemorating significant related events, such as the Holocaust Memorial, Kathe Kollwiz Platz and the Stoplersteine Project stones, could be viewed through the new lens provided by a syncretic act of reclamation and challenge. Berlin remembered and, through remembering, reclaimed its lost citizens; and in so doing reconfigured itself imaginatively for its future in Europe. Themenjahren advertising materials explicitly noted the strategic intervention,

> The project has also focused public attention on some historical sites for the first time, such as the Nazi history of Schwanenwerder island, the former labour and correctional facility in Rummelsburg, the forced labour camp in Kaulsdorf, the torture chamber in Papestraße and the Köpenicker Blutwoche Memorial Site (Kulturprojekte 2012, n.p.)

Outdoor Portrait Exhibition of Poets and Writers. *Source* Griffiths (2013)

Across the city, the theme of *Diversity Destroyed* was played out in the mainstream archival repositories, such as the Deutsches Historische Museum, on the streets, in the U-Bahnhof Alexanderplatz, the Neue Synagoge, the Schules Museum and in local government exhibitions in suburbs peopled by recent immigrants. The Hackescher Markt, Lustgarten and Potsdamer Platz, as public places associated with Weimar and the era of national socialism, were re-narrativised within a critique of divisive governance. The scale and unity of the collective act of remembrance are not the only features which make this remarkable memorialisation uniquely forward-looking. It was a courageous, strategic undertaking for the German capital, in the political aftermath of recurring crises for Europe, when the country had controversial economic dominance and governance of smaller nations' debts in the European Union.

Incorporating the Holocaust Memorial *Source* Griffiths (2013)

Themenjahre in 2013 is key to understanding the power of tackling difficult memories. and through them refreshing the narratives which promote civic awareness of the fragility of the democratic contract. Acceptance of difference is critical in any demos which relies on citizens' self-governance. Themenjahre curated the city, setting in train reflections, conversations, disputes, and the cultivation of the self. Its success rests on an imaginative return to a defining period as a lost opportunity when a different path could have been chosen. Berliners persuasively proposed the adoption of civic pluralism to anyone who walked the city in 2013.

Historians have two tasks when they construct the past: to ascertain the facts about the events and to assess the way that events are remembered. These activities seem to complement each other. James Young, a historian of Holocaust monuments, speaking on memoriography and historiography, still finds it necessary to appeal to historians to consider both 'what happened and the how it is remembered.' As a judge on the Berlin Holocaust Memorial committee, he is aware of the complex interpretative work in which visitors are engaged on memorial visits (Young 2010). He sees remembering as an ongoing, unfinished process. These distinctions between facts, memorialisation places, and the generations of visitor practices help to renew rituals. Many seem inflexible, underpinning the argument that built heritage and customary usage so fixes an historical set of relations (in symbolic stone, image, prayer or song) that telling alternative stories, however compelling and necessary, can seem impossible. Yet acts of participation are often about renewing allegiances, and seeking or taking on new ones. A small illustration from personal participation at such events: The Australian War Memorial in Canberra is regarded a sacred site by many Australians. Its rituals, which honour the sacrifices made by the armed forces since the first world war, cultivate a mystical sense of belonging to the nation. At an Anzac Day dawn service in 2016 at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, an indigenous ceremony honouring Aboriginal servicemen was about to begin elsewhere on site, as over 100,000 attending the cross-cultural 'main event' were leaving to return to the city. Later the same week in one of the Memorial's galleries, a young Waradjiri man asked me, 'where's my mob? I can't find them.' Decisions to include or individuate are subject to externalities, and open multiple interpretations. How history is remembered, and people's diverse modes of participation, breathe life and meaning into places.

Place-Making and Place-Faking

As a representational practice, place-making is about relationships, and power. It is a fluid, participatory, iterative, experiential, technology-enabled and culturally-mediated process, in which governance imperatives, the need to engage with diverse communities, and the contributions of individuals can be incorporated in a purposefully civic approach, democratic in intention. Urban place-making in Australian cities rarely produces such large-scale, ambitious experiences as those

offered in the Berlin example. It tends to be confined to the renewal of districts or neighbourhoods, and often has commercial drivers. Thus, as a term, 'place-making' is used by contemporary practitioners in different ways. Originally, it emerges as a sociological concept from the C20th study and practice of architecture; so it is associated with historical criticisms of the design of the built environment. Guiding principles are shaped in part by the urban planning philosophy of the American architect and philosopher of cities and technology, Lewis Mumford. The theorists who follow Mumford's lead in seeing 'a city as a community' continue to explore the idea that places shape people's possibilities. Thus they conclude that the design of places should be authentic, and meet the social needs of residents. The two factors are also important for Legge, a contemporary Australian consultant on place-making, for whom the activity is also not simply about design, but about relationships. Listing the concepts of 'master planning', 'architecture', 'landscape design', 'big ideas like fractal geometry' and the provision of 'public art', she demonstrates that none of these factors in themselves make good places for people to inhabit (Legge 2010, p. 4). Editors of a special issue of *Edgecondition* concur, noting that place-making is a fashionable term, and a discursive construct put to diverse and sometimes contradictory uses. Contributing authors to the issue discuss the multiple professions involved in collectively constructing place; and the instrumental nature of many place-making exercises which tend to blur the concepts of space and place. The appropriation of the term by marketers, and its subsequent emptying out of meaning is noted as a professional trap: the suborning of architects as 'propagators of the fake' in inauthentic city branding exercises is named 'place-faking' (Miles 2015). Critical architects and theorists' discussions seem to share an anxiety both about the contemporary significance of architecture *and* a belief that place-making is the outcome of sets of professional capabilities: one of which is the ability to position things in exact relationship to each other; and the other the capacity to meet deeper needs for social meaning, authenticity and truth to contemporary life. Place-faking practices can be explained by the multiplying economic needs of city governments which turn to the market, and use market techniques, for solutions to the recurring resource issues they face.

Cities compete globally and nationally for the means to survive and sustain a population's well-being and economic progress. This is particularly true in the case of Australia, a continent nation with a handful of far-flung coastal metropolitan cities, and a bush capital. Every state metropolis contends for venture capital, infrastructure, jobs for its citizens, and improved business opportunities and services. Thus, place-making has moved up in Australian city priorities. In planning documents, encountering concepts such as 'the development of strong partnerships' is likely, along with 'the preservation of unique districts', and the inclusion of terms such as 'participation of citizens', 'better governance', 'inclusivity', and 'the relationships between neighbourhoods.' These dual preoccupations of serving economic and civic needs lead to a demonstration of strong municipal interest in both developing places for residents, and also achieving high global 'liveability' rankings. Obvious potential benefits accrue from the scale of tourist visits, the flows of migratory workforces leading to increased occupancy and economic growth, and

the income derived and cultural diversity gained from shorter term student populations. Increased global accessibility to travel and, in certain cases, employment mobility amongst particular groups also places new populations into contemporary cities. Australia, a country of migrants since colonisation, can provide many such demographic examples in its urban and regional districts. These can be the sources used for imaginative place-making.

Smart, Civic Technologies

When designing heritage informatics and memorialisation practices, much can be done by assembling existing urban resources in different ways through public goods such as free municipal wifi, high mobile connectivity, through re-narrativising the historical archive, and uses of built heritage. Mobile apps and the emerging Internet of Things (IoT) are capable of connecting people at unique urban waypoints and offering access to multi-layered, individuated narratives of the city. With smart phones, the potential exists to create the 'enriched encounters' that proponents of the IoT promise. As an ever-expanding set of networked sensors embedded in infrastructure, electronic devices and built environment the IoT is capable of changing the experience of users. As the possibly most far-reaching disruptive technology after the Internet itself, the IoT has been hyped as the 'network of networks', offering a kind of techno-nirvana, a meta-infrastructure of human life to rival the fictional 'Matrix'. An e-Week analysis of a 2013 Gartner Report on the predicted rapid scaling up of machine-to-machine interactions (Eddy 2013) points to the 'invisible market' of as yet unknown opportunities offered by the need for sophisticated infrastructure to cope with the rapid uptake and increased traffic of mobile technology. There will continue to be a race between technology giants to provide a global operating system and access to new modes of consumption, more efficient businesses and, more obscurely, 'value' in packaged or curated information. At the first Consumer Electronics Show (CES) to be held outside the United States, the keynote speaker from Intel, Kirk Skaugen, CEO of client services, described the IoT world 'where everything that consumes electricity computes and communicates.' He went on,

> The future really is hurtling towards us…. Intel expects that within the next decade there will be around 50 billion connected devices in the world. [The internet of things] will improve our lives, our health, save time, make us safer, as well as [have] many unimagined benefits. (Griffiths and Chen 2015).

In 2015, this would have seemed a familiar technocratic framing of future life with 'enchanted' disruptive devices. As yet unknown challenges will emerge for a civic deployment of the IoT. Global technology giants responsible for facilitating and promoting IoT research and design frame its advantages as primarily economic, and see it in almost exclusively commercial and corporate terms. Indeed, concerns about the technical, access, security, interoperability and user issues are now proliferating in 2016, as IoT uptake accelerates. Concerns about, for example, the

surveillance opportunities of joined-up data bases, and the potential personal impact of a loss of privacy or control are not canvassed in detail by technology corporations, in the business of accumulating as much information about populations as possible though they cannot make use of even a small percentage of it at present. For example, London Transport operates vast embedded networks to manage traffic, having introduced the rechargeable Oyster cards in 2003. Since then, a Forbes data analysis commentator reports, the IoT provides the city with the opportunity to attain 'fine granularity' in anonymised data-tracking of individual journeys through the various forms of transport used over a single trip. The head of analytics, Lauren Sager-Weinstein, is quoted, noting London's phenomenal growth and the expectations of travellers that their transport needs will be managed by 'smart' planning:

> The population is currently 8.6 million and is expected to grow to 10 m very quickly. We have to understand how they behave and how to manage their transport needs. Passengers want good services and value for money from us, and they want to see us being innovative and progressive in order to meet those needs. (Marr 2015).

Efficiency in the use of resources is a public good, but the IoT, along with the invisible scenography, applications and data collection practices that it could in theory support, could have a more sinister feature: the tracking of individuals through their uses of locative technology. The use of predictive profiling are fresh techniques for potential exclusion or inclusion. The arguments about surveillance and profiling take place in set venues, amongst IT or terrorism experts, and have not migrated to municipal planning levels.

Popular uptake of rich connectivity (GPS navigation and Web 3.0 social apps) and the adoption of personalised devices (mobiles with increased locative capabilities) are predicted to result in integrated, personalised, experiential applications, making more integrated projects possible. Ethical and legal issues require careful consideration, and continuing human oversight. 'Most but not all' expert respondents canvassed by the Pew Internet Project thought that the IoT and embedded devices would have beneficial outcomes by 2025, believing that gigabit connectivity 'will enrich personal encounters, create new kinds of personalised media experiences, and pack even more information into people's lives, merging it with their surroundings and basing their individual experiences upon algorithms that estimate their personal preferences' (Pew 2014). This phenomenon has been called the 'livingness of information' (Chudakov, in Pew), and it is an attractively fluid concept for the kind of place-making that has been outlined above, and in the next section of this chapter.

Exciting place-making has been trialled, resulting in a re-imagination of a city. Reiser and Clark (2013) reporting on mobile educational games in Mobile Bristol, describe the city as 'an electronically layered hybrid space where information can be seen in its vital relationship to place' (209). Examples of city informatics projects have already been created and enabled by policy initiatives, mobile locative technology uses and social dynamics of creative collectivity. The National Trust of South Australia and Adelaide City Council have collaborated to design heritage

informatics in the Adelaide City Explorer mobile app and website, making information about heritage places available in situ, with facilities for sharing, comment and contribution. The service operates through *Curatescape*, a low cost platform initiated by digital humanities researchers from Cleveland State University, and already used by more than twenty American cultural organisations to informate the urban heritage experience (Tebeau 2013). Apart from Berlin's *Kulturprojekte*, other innovative, playful civic informatics projects have been created internationally, such as the multi-touch screens of Copenhagen's The Wall (2010), and the networked exploration of the 'phantom public' in Karlruhe's ZKM's 'Atmospheres of Democracy,' curated by Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (2005).

Proposing and Designing Street Activations: A Local Story in Progress

Here I outline the context, and resources used, for the design of intercultural street activation projects. Australia is the world's sixth largest country: the state of South Australia has over 12% of continental landmass, yet Adelaide as the capital city has an urban population of over one million, and abuts a sparsely populated hinterland larger than many European countries. It is relatively small as modern cities go, only one fifth the size of Sydney or Melbourne, and many times smaller than metropolitan cities in the Asian region. A 2013 study demonstrates that it retains the relational markers of a country town with a small central business district and close relationships between its long-established elites (Landry 2014). A distinctive inner city built heritage still reflects the preferred colonial grid lines of its British military planner, Colonel Light, and, from 1836 onwards, the architectural tastes of the free European settlers. These tastes included copying the towers of neo-classical, Italianate and gothic architecture for public buildings and for larger-scale domestic dwellings. Despite 1970s developments, the built environment has retained this C19th European ambience, including the eye-catching new builds. Like cities worldwide, Adelaide has complicated and diverse layers of occupation, ownership and experience to mine: its own palimpsests of place-making. The city is built on the traditional lands of the first owners, the Kaurna people of the Adelaide plains, and the river was once their 'red kangaroo place.' What is known of them and their language, recorded by German Lutheran missionaries, is on display in the state museum. The Kaurna language is used for naming: the main square and the hospital medical research centre. Contemporary Adelaide has a 'Chinatown.' Street signs in Mandarin are being placed along the North Terrace Cultural Precinct. Chinese news media publish in Mandarin and English for new businesses.

The top South Australian population birthplaces are Australia and England, followed by Italy, India, and China. The state has given a home to successive waves of 'humanitarian' entrants and migrants. The 2011 census and government arrivals data shows that the largest humanitarian groups by country of origin were from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma and Iran. The main birthplaces of new arrivals in the

2006–2010 period covered by the last census were India (12,533) with England and China coming close seconds with over 9000. It is still a favoured destination for British migrants. At home, in addition to English, 15 main language are spoken from Italian (14.5%) to Greek (11.0%), Arabic (3.3%), and Pitjanjara (0.9%). Politically, the city has inherited progressive traditions in egalitarian electoral reform, protection of unions and working conditions, and in social policy.

Following economic downturns, in 2016 the city of Adelaide released plans to redevelop its city laneways, the main cultural thoroughfare, North Terrace, and the Riverside precinct. The Premier announced a renewal project, The city is thus embarking on an unprecedented and extensive place-making exercise. This is an opportunity to represent intercultural relations using technology imaginatively.

To date, there appears to have been no large-scale research on users of an integrated city-wide intercultural civic project deploying the resources of publicly-owned data sets, the capabilities of wifi, and high bandwidth connectivity to create layered mobile narratives about built heritage, new ways to integrate digital content and physical experience and including opportunities for users to co-produce a living archive of city life, with the aim of modelling civic pluralism. In 2014 a mobile informatics project proposed the creation of layered narratives or 'streetscapes' to enhance residents' and visitors' intercultural experiences, to tell the unknown stories of the city, and conduct user research to understand preferences. 'Playing the city: Mobile heritage informatics' (Griffiths and Peacock 2014) aimed to address this significant knowledge gap but lack of funding stalled the research experiments. The next stage in an ongoing research process was to conduct two pilot studies on visitors to cultural heritage icons in Adelaide and Canberra, to ascertain their preferred modes of information prior to a visit. The pilot, 'Smart technologies and cultural heritage' (Griffiths 2016a, b) canvassed participants' interest in cultural heritage; their knowledge, use of and problems with city wifi; their knowledge of smart technologies; and general readiness to accept smart enhancements in their cultural experiences of a city's heritage. People were asked about their attitudes to embedded locative devices which, when alerted to the presence of walkers, would initiate the delivery of location- or object-specific information. In both cities the majority of participants expressed broad agreement that they would be interested in such developments; many preferred the concept of pre-customisation of content. Fewer participants in each city agreed that they would be likely actively to participate in uploading relevant content to contribute to a shareable public archive. A minority expressed negative views of such uses of technology, preferring to discover a city's places of interest without in situ smart help.

The new knowledge gained from these preliminary studies generated a new interdisciplinary group, interested in designing enhanced experiences, aiming to get 'what happened' and 'how it is remembered' right, so that projects are culturally inclusive from the start, and egalitarian in ease of accessibility for walkers. The plan is to design and undertake a series of applied research experiments, extending the existing concept of walking trails in the city which use stories about built heritage as their impetus. The National Trust of South Australia and Adelaide City Council collaboration has the Adelaide City Explorer mobile app and website, creating twelve

walking trails (Peacock and MacKenzie 2014, p. 201). Adelaide's CBD wifi network, the most heavily utilised in Australia, provides an ideal test-bed for civic informatics projects at scale. A significant way in which smart technologies can animate the city is by facilitating the layering of diverse perspectives which narrativise and re-narrativise the same places according to, for example, cultures, themes, time periods or the perspectives of past and present occupants. The diverse stories of arrival or women's as opposed to men's lives over the generations can be told. Designing the upload facility to dislodge normative or majoritarian assumptions of place-making is the first step in collecting memories of a city to add to the palimpsests of place.

Smart technologies produce, by turns, troubling and exciting prospects for scholars and designers of mediated communication. Advocates have argued that they will produce 'enriched encounters' between people, and between technology and people. Detractors argue about the negative effects on privacy of endless surveillance and individuals becoming less powerful in a networked world of things and people. The fact that streets are experienced differently by different groups, and that mobile phones identify and locate their users is of particular concern for particular users and for researchers. The first planned activation project is therefore a pilot, investigating the full range of instrumental, uptake, ethical and data stewardship challenges which are faced when using proximity technology to provide real-time information to walkers in a geofenced downtown area. The second project will work from the pilot and is more ambitious. It seeks to design proximity experiences in intercultural awareness for a future pedestrian way.

Concluding Thoughts

The chapter has addressed the reasons for, and the means by which, a stronger civic pluralism can be anchored in diverse urban populations. Place-making has the potential to make meaningful connections between people in wifi-connected cities, and build awareness of the flows of peoples that every modern city encounters. The deliberate choice to emphasise a population's differences in 'enriched encounters' with built environment produces an openness to inclusivity at street level. Popular uptake of rich connectivity and the adoption of devices with increased locative capabilities are predicted to result in more personalized, experiential applications being designed, eventually making more integrated and larger scale projects possible, for high-density urban populations. Mobile media is individuated, wearable, hail-able, and capable of changing social practices and relations. A city is the nucleus of flows (people, material, objects, information), and communication technology seems to be responsible for the inconsequential and self-absorbed nature of many interactions. The 'Internet of Things', or its even more Panglossian alternative, the 'Internet of Everything', has both the situatedness, and the fluid informational capacities to be of use in framing and providing intercultural spaces and experiences. Busy urban areas encompass hyper-information flows, shared activities and apparent connectedness between inhabitants. They are the location of

many-faceted, ordinary, quotidian, and inconsequential relations between individuals, demographic groupings and divisions.

I have outlined the reasons for finding new ways of revivifying public civility and foregrounding civic values in any municipal adoption of smart technologies and the IoT. The developing interdisciplinary projects, still in their infancy, are designed to test the tutelary, civic concept of place-making in a small city. They depend on the practice of walking the city, a possession of place on its own. They also depend on locating, accessing and re-purposing content, and making new content and new journeys for diverse users. Urban planners and researchers together can construct rich intercultural, individualised experiences of the built, environmental and cultural heritage. Users can be offered multiple points of entry to the story of places, and through their digital participation and reflection, activate a new, safer, and more dynamic city landscape.

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Taming the Paradox Between Facts and Control: Media Discourses on Natural Disasters in Chinese Media

Weimin Zhang and Peter C. Pugsley

Abstract Using discourse-historical approach, this study examines how the natural disaster information is framed in Chinese media. It presents a cross-section on how the diachronically transforming Chinese culture both produces the paradox concerned with the representation of the facts about the natural disasters and the intentionality to control it as demanded in the discursive power relations. Setting in the framework of discursive power and the control of the meaning production, this study explores the nuanced process whereby disaster information, dominant culture and the social power negotiate in representing the negative facts in natural disaster events. The findings indicate that the paradox between information transparency and the control of it is discursively balanced by closely engaging with cultural resources and finally dissolved in the transformed cultural context in contemporary China.

Keywords Chinese media · Foucault · Discursive power · Natural disaster · Tiandao

Introduction

The way a natural occurrence is constructed in the public media reflects the temporal importance of social meaning. This projection of meaning becomes overt when the relation between nature and society enters the public agenda, especially when a large-scale natural disaster occurs. It provides a cross-section where the latent socio-cultural structure becomes manifest in the political discourse (Xu 2014). This structure can be observed through the way the event is presented in the media, an institution that is situated within a politico-cultural system and embedded in specific historical contexts. In China, scholars have tended to examine how the

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dominant culture has impacted on the presentation of natural disaster news in its media at specific times. Natural disaster occurrences are culturally sensitive and therefore highly politicised once they are publically communicated (Dong and Cai 2010), which has led to an ongoing paradox between the reporting of disaster facts, and the maintenance of political and social control. Sun, for instance, claims that a discourse of revolutionary mobilisation was emphatically used between 1949 and the 1980s, while from the 1980s there has been a trend towards greater transparency in communicating disaster information (2001, p. 33). Wang adds that from 2002 to 2008, as exemplified by accounts of the SARS outbreak in 2003 and the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008, the Chinese media gained unprecedented access to disaster information (2008).

In this chapter, our research investigates the fundamental cultural reasons that have generated historically contingent variances (as well as commonalities) in representations of natural disasters in China's media. Arguably, the distinctive media discourses used in natural disaster communication are determined by the dominant national culture and formulated to enhance crisis control. By illustrating discursive changes over many decades, we examine the relation between Chinese culture and natural disaster communications. Rather than summarizing the characteristics of how natural disaster information has been released in China's media at different historic phases (as shown in existing studies), we explore how the broadcast of sensitive news events is controlled by engaging with broader cultural beliefs that incorporate natural disaster communication into the dominating ideologies found in Chinese media.

In addressing questions concerning ideological control in the media, this chapter adopts theories of discursive control of meaning as a framework. The production of meaning has long been seen as a discursive practice that reflects, and is controlled by, social power relations (Foucault 2010; Sigley 1996). In different cultural contexts, however, the discourses constructed by social powers will vary, although the way social powers control discursive formations remains remarkably similar in both Western and "non-Western" settings (Sigley 2006, p. 491). Our analysis of discourse investigates the patterns of meanings formulated through textual units, such as the words, phrases, rhetoric and sentences (Edgar and Sedgwick 2008, p. 96) found in disaster reporting in China's media. Michel Foucault argues that discourse is "a means of both producing and organizing meaning" (Edgar and Sedgwick 2008, p. 96), so for Foucault, discourse contains both the active process of meaning production and a notion about the result of this process. The process of meaning production is therefore a "discursive process", where social realities are given meanings and communicated through commonly shared signs (Cavallaro 2001, p. 90; Edgar and Sedgwick 2008, p. 96). The result of this discursive process, where certain meanings are "brought into view", is determined by how signs are organized for producing a set of meanings while excluding alternative meanings. The result is that there are multiple ways to interpret meanings about social realities and social practice (Edgar and Sedgwick 2008, p. 96). That is, there is a deeper determinant behind the use of language tools for formulating meaning. The formulation of discourse is said to be driven by the pursuit of power which latently governs

meaning production "at a distance", differing from the manifest coercion that can occur through administrative measures (Sigley 1996, p. 477). The meanings constructed for material objects are therefore seen as embedded in "regulated maps of meaning" within a discourse (Barker 2012, p. 91), and often the media plays a central role in broadcasting these "maps".

In examining how natural disaster communication is discursively shaped in Chinese media, this chapter draws on a discourse-historical approach as the analytical perspective in order to bridge the study of media discourse formation and its historical-cultural contexts. In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis: the discourse-historical approach* (1994), Wodak proposed and justified the discourse-historical approach for investigating the mechanisms impacting on the formation and the meaning production of a discourse. Its grounding premise considers that discourses should be interpreted closely by drawing on historical information and cultural background. This approach also points out the necessity for examining the "particular genres of discourse [which] are subject to diachronic change", indicating a historical-comparative perspective aiming to examine the interactions between the discourse formation associated with a particular activity and its historical, cultural and political determinants (p. 65).

Deploying this approach in analysing specific discourses, Wodak stresses the concepts of "historical sources" (p. 65), "genre" (p. 66), and "fields of action" (p. 66) that constitute an operational paradigm for investigating discursive formation. The historical sources indicate the analytical perspective, and the major site for data collection in analysing the discourse; the genre refers to the "schematically fixed use" (p. 66) of a distinctive structure of discourse concerned with certain kind of event which is otherwise unclear in the knowledge of communication unless systematic analysis is performed. The ultimate aim of this approach assists in summarizing these structures and addressing the theoretical and contextual concerns of individual discourses. In the detailed analysis, this approach looks beyond representations to trace the "fields of action" which are "understood as segments of the respective societal 'reality'", and assist in forming the "frames of discourse" that include institutional directives, social power relations and ideologies (p. 66). In this chapter, the analytical paradigm proposed in the discourse-historical approach is applied to deconstruct media discourses on natural disaster reporting in Chinese media.

By setting the media discourse in natural disaster coverage in Chinese media in different political, historical and cultural contexts, this chapter proposes that media discourses on natural disasters in Chinese media fall into two categories: disaster facts and human actions. These are the key constituents in the discursive formation around these events and are weighted differently according to circumstances. The unbalanced representation of these two aspects in media texts "reminds us that reporting frames can in fact change through time and make different claims on audiences in terms of how they become invited to respond to major disasters" (Pantti et al. 2012, p. 28). Even though in distinctive historical periods disaster facts and human actions are constructed differently, one common factor in terms of news making is the balance between providing facts and exerting discursive control. As Lévi-Strauss argues, "the type of event is the same, but not exactly the details"

(1977, p. 39). This paradox, shared in different frames, is an embodiment of the incessant negotiations in communication and power (Castells 2009, p. 50), that have undergone manifest changes through the many historical transformations of Chinese culture.

Excluding Disaster Facts and Discursive Control

Before the 1980s, natural disaster coverage in the Chinese media was characterized by restrictions on the release of information about the damage. Any media reports covering natural disasters at this time centred on rescue works and mobilization activities and was placed within a discourse strictly governed by the dominant political guidelines. This is exemplified in the media coverage of the Tonghai and Tangshan earthquakes in the 1970s. On January 5, 1970, an earthquake rated at 7.7° on the Richter scale struck Tonghai County in the Yunnan province of China. Its startling severity made it one of the hundred most catastrophic disasters in Chinese history (Yin 2000). Before the end of that year, the seismically damaged areas were acknowledged as expanding to another six counties in the vicinity, the death toll estimated as reaching as high as 15,621, with 26,783 injured and 338,456 buildings demolished (Li and Xiong 2009).

In media texts covering this event at the time, the description of the earthquake was indistinct. There was no information about the number of deaths, property loss or other damage. The reporting was weighted with ideological teaching, as shown in the following news text extracted from *Yunnan Daily*, the official mouthpiece of the CCP's (Chinese Communist Party) Yunnan Provincial Committee, released several days after the tragedy:

> Among thousands of solutions, the first one is to use invincible Mao Zedong thoughts to arm the minds of people in the disaster area. After the earthquake, the provincial committee of revolution assigned special vehicles and special cadres to hand out Quotations of Chairman Mao and a glittery portrait of Chairman Mao. Lots of Maoist propaganda groups were organised, helping masses' rescue work. After seeing the booklets and pictures, the masses can't help shedding tears (Wang 2008, p. 30).

Similar reports appeared from the Xinhua News Agency, the mouthpiece of the central government:

> Xinhua News Agency, 1 AM, January 5, 1970. A 7 degree earthquake occurred in areas south of Kunming, Yunnan province of our country. Led by revolutionary committees of all ranks in local and Yunnan province government, supported by the People's Liberation Army, people in the disaster areas are successfully resisting the earthquake and undertaking rescue work, glorifying the spirit of fearing neither bitterness nor death […]. Hearty care from Chairman Mao and the Party Centre enormously inspired Party members, revolutionary masses of different ethnicities and army soldiers. All of them hinged on proletarian politics, wisely learning and applying Chairman Mao's works. The leadership and the rank and file are of one mind, attacking the temporary difficulties caused by the earthquake cohesively and in an extremely confident way. Extensive masses say heroically that as long as directed by the Chairman's prescience, we fear nothing at all […] (Yin 2000).

It can be seen that the heroic descriptions of rescue actions appear in place of factual information about the damage caused by the disaster. In this period the news details were obscured under extreme leftist thoughts highlighting Chairman Mao Zedong's charisma (Ding 2010, p. 34). Numerous "fields of action", such as dominant ideologies and stipulations from social institutions regulate the discourse formation (Wodak 1994, p. 66), and in the face of this earthquake, the government drew on previous instances where it had issued special directives to guide specific reporting work. For instance, on 2 April, 1950, the central government's Bureau of Journalism directed that the success of rescue work should be highlighted and disaster damage generally omitted (Shen 2002, p. 45). In the same way, in 1954, a list of directives was issued by the southern central branch of the Xinhua News Agency to regulate reporting on a flood of the Yangtze River in that year. It reads:

1. The coverage of the disaster in itself shouldn't exceed agricultural production activities;
2. Stress the success of active combat against natural disasters and the actions of regaining good harvest;
3. The scope of coverage should fix temporarily on areas where the rescue success can be ensured and where disaster aftermath is less severe and agricultural production can be swiftly restored;
4. No panoramic reporting, no detailed reports of disaster situation.

(Dai 1983, p. 233, in Wang 2008, p. 30)

According to these directives only positive messages could be reported, and disaster facts became a "restricted area" (Wang 2008, p. 30). Such restrictions are produced within broader social understandings about natural disasters in the cultural context, which limit what can be known about certain social realities and what cannot be known (or what the state wishes to suppress) in a society. This is a discursive process in which selected aspects of the disaster situation are "brought into view" while other facts are textually excluded (Edgar and Sedgwick 2008, p. 96). As Foucault argues, there are "multiple constraints" determining what is knowable and what is anathema to the visions of the state (cited in Mills 2004, p. 16). In the case shown in the exclusion of disaster information in the Chinese media before the 1980s, the reason for prohibiting facts about disaster damages in the media is closely related to traditional Chinese epistemologies.

Disaster Facts as Anathema in Chinese Tradition

In traditional Chinese culture a natural disaster was believed to presage ill-fortune for the ruling powers. Traditional Chinese thought was characterized by shifts between knowledge and religion, reason and mystery (Wu 2010, p. 239). It is contended that understanding ancient China as a "cultural entity" underpins an insightful comprehension about its social system (Sigley 1996, p. 468), in such a way that:

> The point here is that, while there was an extensive code for governing ritual conduct in traditional China, these practices were caught up in a cosmologically based sovereignty that placed the individual within a continuous social hierarchy which was the expression of the universal 'Way of Heaven' and not in terms of a self-reflective state entity.
>
> (Sigley 1996, p. 465).

As Sigley claims, in ancient China the ruling legitimacy of Chinese dynasties was rooted in an assumption that political power was endowed upon the dynasty by "Tian" (heaven), an eternal deity ruling the universe. The anger of heaven was indicated by portents in the form of natural occurrences. It was believed that human beings and nature shared the same driving energy from the cosmos, and social activities could stimulate natural phenomena in other parts of the universe (Bary and Bloom 1999, p. 305). By connecting heaven, nature and the existing social power relations, the *Tiandao* interpretation of natural disasters appeared in traditional Chinese culture. It maintains that a normally peaceful natural order indicates the equilibrium of social orders, while natural disasters are admonitions, questioning the legitimacy of ruling powers (Jin and Liu 2000, p. 30). According to this outlook, any signs of natural unrest would cause anxieties about the social power structure. As it may be explained:

> Like the Greeks and Romans, the early Chinese firmly believed in the portentous significance of unusual or freakish occurrences in the natural world. This belief formed the basis for the Han theory that evil actions or misgovernment in high places incited dislocations in the natural order, causing the appearance of comets, eclipses, drought, and locusts, weird animals, etc. In more primitive ages, and still at times in the Han, such phenomena were interpreted as direct manifestations of the wrath of an anthropomorphic heaven and warnings to mankind to reform. At other times they were explained mechanistically as the result of occurrences in the human world which must inevitably produce effects in the interlocking worlds of heaven and earth.
>
> (Bary et al. 1963, p. 186).

The philosophy that human beings and social systems resonate with the divine heaven exerted a profound influence on traditional Chinese epistemology. Accordingly unrest in the natural world was not just believed to be natural phenomena but also referred to social power relations. Dong Zhongshu, an influential Confucian scholar whose views were canonized as one of the authoritative interpretations of the cultural outlooks of traditional China, argues that "[t]he genesis of all such portents and wonders is a direct result of errors in the state" (Bary et al. 1963, p. 187); he also believes that "fair deeds summon all things of fair nature, evil deeds summon all things of an evil nature, as like answers like" (p. 186).

These interpretations constituted a particular mode of thought and included a method of deduction called "sign-observing methodology" in traditional Chinese culture (Wu 2010, p. 129). Accordingly, natural catastrophes were regarded as evil signs foreshadowing disruption (Wu 2010, p. 230). The Chinese monarch's position was threatened as soon as drought, floods, military failure or other misfortunes occurred, making it appear questionable whether the dynastic leader stood in the grace of heaven (Weber 1980, p. 10). According to records in *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, the increase in the number of natural omens proportionately

caused a deeper and greater dissatisfaction within the bureaucracy about the contemporaneous administration (Bary et al. 1963, p. 187).

The "*Tiandao*" interpretation about ruling powers was eventually replaced after dynastic legitimacy collapsed in 1911, but its influence on cultural beliefs did not immediately disappear. The early government of the People's Republic of China reconciled official proletarian thought with traditional ideologies. In doing so, the accounts of disasters were instantly transformed into messages that required mass mobilization and victorious rescue discourses by which the meaning of the event is organised and controlled (Edgar and Sedgwick 2008, p. 96). In the case of the Tonghai earthquake in 1970, The official discourse states that "[p]eople in the disaster areas are successfully resisting earthquake and undertaking rescue work, glorifying the spirit of fearing neither bitterness nor death" (Yin 2000). But the exact location of the earthquake was concealed, only vaguely described as happening in areas south of the provincial capital city of Kunming; and information about the death toll and property damage was concealed (Yin 2000).

In the period 1949–1978, information control was utilized to avoid threats to social equilibrium, and media discourses inculcating the invincibility of Mao's class-struggle theory were formulated to represent the leader's charisma. Discourse formation is driven by the intentionality of power which latently governs meaning production "at a distance" (Sigley 1996, p. 477). In this case, the pursuit of discursive power was twofold: both framing a coherent meaning in a time of crisis that reduced the degree of uncertainty and panic in the public, and scaffolding the dominant episteme of the time to center on Mao's leadership image. Charismatic authority seeks its legitimacy from grace, heroism, dignity and non-routine qualities and is reinforced by evidence of faith and success (Weber 1980, pp. 8–9), therefore, representation of the mass mobilization and victorious rescue actions were constructed to shape a positive media story in a factually tragic disaster situation. This guiding theme is particularly constructed in the discourse named "*ren ding sheng tian*" (together, mankind can defeat Heaven) which bridged the historical heritage and the contingency of the natural disaster representation.

Reshaping the Facts: Maoist *ren ding sheng tian* Discourse

Chinese journalism is deeply influenced by Mao's theories on arts production that took shape in the Yan'an period (especially those formulated and delivered in 1942), which created a historical source for data collection and an analytical perspective for deconstructing the discourse formation (Wodak 1994, p. 65). In 1942, the mouthpiece of the CCP, *Jiefang Daily*, was restructured according to Mao's directive that media is one of the revolutionary frontlines forming a political battlefield for carrying out class struggles. Mao states that arts production (in which he includes journalistic propaganda), is subject to political imperatives, and should serve as the gears and screws in the machinery of class struggles (Mao 1975, p. 27). In this perspective, the media is only a tool to achieve political ends and should be

used to unify the masses, shape social opinions and ensure consistent progress in the revolution. Mao demands that arts production should comply with a "political standard" and should be constructive in uniting the masses and encouraging their morale; otherwise it will merely be reactionary (1975, p. 30). He continues to explain in more detail that in representing the "brightness" and "darkness" of a social issue, arts production should highlight bright aspects and treat demoralizing points only as a backdrop for "saluting achievements of revolutionary people, adding to their bravery and faith in struggles" (1975, p. 37).

This principle was stipulated to suit revolutionary movements but had a long-lasting impact on Chinese journalistic practices even after the Chinese Communist Party won the war and the government was founded in 1949. Mao's theories were formed during the war against the Japanese invasion, when the literary frontline was a "culture troop" among others (Mao 1975, p. 1). His theory on news production forms a substantive part in guiding the field of media in China, especially so in the reportage of the culturally sensitive disasters (Tian 2005, p. 44). In the 1950s, Maoist propaganda theory was further strengthened by introducing the Soviet Union's propaganda model which deemed that media is a collective propagandist, agitator and organizer in class struggles, and its function is mobilizing the masses for revolutionary causes.

Under the influence of traditional *Tiandao* epistemology and Maoist propaganda theories, the *ren ding sheng tian* discourse was constructed in the representation of natural disasters (see Fig. 1). For Wodak, this is a genre of discourse referring to the "schematically fixed use" of a distinctive structure of discourse shaped through the negotiations of power relations (1994, p. 66). The themes of the constituting segments and the coherent meanings of this discourse indicate how power bridges the paradox of the subversive signs found in natural disasters, and the intention to control the meaning in accordance with Maoist theories. The four segments—"*ren*" ('people', meaning the victims and rescuers), "*ding*" (determination), "*sheng*" (win the struggle), and "*tian*" (heaven)—structured media stories about natural disasters in this historio-cultural context. For example, on 29 July, 1976, one day after the Tangshan earthquake, Xinhua News Agency released an official news report: "*A Strong Earthquake Happened in Areas around Tangshan, Fengnan of Hebei Province, Led by Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Line, People in Earthquake Areas Carry out Rescue Works with the Spirit of 'ren ding sheng tian'*" (Shi and Li 2008, p. 653).

As a counterposing discourse to the "heavenly omen", "*ren ding sheng tian*" was based on arguments put forward by Xuncius, the renowned Chinese philosopher (313 B.C.–238 B.C.). Taking a discourse-historical perspective in analysing discourse can contextualise the interpretation of it by drawing on historical information and cultural background (Wodak 1994, p. 65). The concept of "*ren ding sheng tian*" had less influence than the *Tiandao* propositions in the history of the Chinese imperial dynasties as this cultural outlook contradicted the hegemonic dynastic ideology that an emperor's (the son of "*tian*") power is endowed by "*tian*". Although Xuncius' philosophical propositions were not applied as widely as *Tiandao* interpretations, they were still regarded as an influential school of thought

Fig. 1 A poster used in the event of Tangshan earthquake. Translation: "*ren ding sheng tian*": [We] don't fear the Heaven rends asunder and the earth cracks. [We] use both of our hands to portray the new world (www.Ekoooo.com, Retrieved 2014 Jan. 18)

in traditional Chinese society. This body of ideas suggested a warfare-like mobilization against disaster based on rationality. The adoption of this tradition is due to a consideration that people obey what is hallowed by tradition, and that the simple creation of new rules would endanger the organizing legitimacy (Weber 1980, p. 6).

The notion of "*ren ding sheng tian*" served epistemologically to exclude the apocalyptic "*Tiandao*" notion. For Xuncius, heaven and human society have their own separate ways, and human actions, such as customs, rites and norms, are just products of human invention (Nivison 1991, p. 141). This "artificiality" has double connotations (p. 141). On the one hand, what happens to people is not divinely arranged; on the other hand, human actions could surpass nature by "*ding*", meaning collective determination. Severing the mysterious link between social issues and heaven, Xuncius contends that people should focus on the real world, instead of pious actions devoted to a divinity (Zhao 2002, p. 16). This school of thought displaces divine determinism and demands the application of human acumen, encouraging human knowledge, acting against nature to enhance social progress (p. 16).

Drawing on this cultural heritage, "*ren ding sheng tian*" formed a mobilising genre where statements were therefore constituted according to their discursive

intentions, targeting the "persistence of themes" (Foucault 1972, p. 35). In this mobilizing discourse, "*ren*", for example, implying "people", refers to the masses in disaster areas, escorted by People's Liberation Army soldiers and guided by local Party members. For instance, in the Tonghai earthquake, the media texts described:

> Lead by revolutionary committees of all ranks in local and Yunnan province government, supported by People's Liberation Army, people in the disaster areas are successfully resisting earthquake […] (Yin 2000).

The respective roles and actions taken by these actors in this discourse construct "*ding*" (collective determination) by extolling the revolutionary spirit, showcasing the leader's care and stressing the strength of the collective faith. The cohesion-building spirit centred on joint efforts under the guidance of Maoist thought. In this narration, "*sheng*" and "*tian*", stood for "conquer and victory" (*sheng*) over natural threat (*tian*). The formulation of this discourse before the 1980s, stressed human victory through collective mobilization and the central importance of the leaders' charisma. However, this discourse excluded "*tian*" (as a threat in this case) because of its association with the apocalyptic cultural imaginations in *Tiandao* thinking.

This discourse also allows for information control that results in the exclusion of an "imagined enemy". This narrative omission is created either by sealing off information about the damage caused by disasters, like the Tangshan earthquake in 1976, or by depicting it as a "temporary difficulty" (Yin 2000). It is then closely followed by a mobilising discourse, rather than providing essential information about damage, the death toll or the degree of severity of the earthquake. In these texts, the victory was constructed by privileging the mobilising discourse over the disaster facts. It indicates how the meanings of realities are constructed by the ideologically-driven discourse (Mills 2004, p. 16). In this discursive process, the traditional notions about relations between natural phenomena and human society are textually expelled. However, as the Chinese social system underwent historical transformations in the 1980s, this paradox is gradually resolved. In next section, our analysis examines the interactions between the discourse of natural disaster and the historical, cultural and political determinants, which produced the "diachronic change" of the discourse in the post-Mao period (Wodak 1994, p. 65).

Seeking Facts in Social Reform

Detailed facts about disaster damages were first represented in Chinese media from the early 1980s when China initiated its major social reforms. In this period, a balanced representation of both damages and rescue actions appeared and it began to be recognized that the natural disaster *per se* was an indispensable part of the coverage (Sun 2001, p. 37). The objective coverage of disaster facts, timely reporting and free access to disaster sites for various media organisations (only Xinhua News Agency could get access before this period) brought about a new era

in natural disaster reporting (Sun 2001, p. 36). This transformation was shown in the case of severe rainstorms that swamped Sichuan and Guangzhou in the early 1980s, the large-scale floods in 1998, and the extremely devastating Wenchuan earthquake in 2008.

In the reform, demand for objective coverage of disaster facts began to be officially stipulated in government policies. By 1987, the *Suggestions for Improving News Reporting*, a decree jointly issued by the Party Propaganda Ministry, the Committee for Overseas Propaganda and the Xinhua News Agency, explicitly called for continuous, timely and publicised coverage of disaster facts once regarded to be ideologically sensitive. Government guidelines require media to provide timely releases of disaster information in order to attain an active position to report the event. In 1989 the General Office of the State Council and the Party Propaganda Ministry further stressed, in *The Notification of News Work for Improving Emergency Events*, that fatalities should be covered immediately.

With these regulations, objectively covering the facts of natural disasters was no longer an anathema. For instance, in 1998 He Yanguang, a journalist with *Beijing Youth Daily*, was honoured with an "exceptional award" in yearly state-level news awards, for his instant, detailed and objective coverage of floods on 7 August in Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province of China in that year. In 2009, an editorial on the Wenchuan earthquake gained one of two exceptional awards in the 19th State News Awards. Eight out of 44 news pieces winning first class awards in the field of Chinese media in that year were about the earthquakes and other meteorological disasters. These demonstrate manifest policy changes in covering natural disasters. In the meantime, social reform changed the orientation of the media from unilateral "political-ideological propaganda tools" to playing more diversified roles in providing information (Huang 2003, p. 448). This shift is also attributed to deeper alterations in the "fields of actions" (Wodak 1994, p. 66) of cultural mentality in social movements and legalization in the reforms.

Retreat of the "*Tiandao*" View

The influence of traditional *Tiandao* epistemology had begun to wane during the Cultural Revolution. Like other types of traditional thought it was dispelled in the name of purging feudal heritage. The cultural thinking about the relationship between natural phenomena and social practices was reframed by the hegemony of class struggle theory, a drastic change caused by the "revolution" in Chinese culture and the suppression of alternative information sources during the Cultural Revolution. The indoctrination of exclusive class struggle thoughts was accomplished through Mao Zedong mobilizing the Party hierarchy and its propaganda apparatus (Renwick and Cao 2003, p. 72). Class struggle as a "supposed national truth" defined all social relations causing a "politicisation of social life" (Renwick and Cao 2003, p. 72). It ruled out traditional Chinese thought that had been serving as a framework for interpreting the meaning of the relations between the nature and

the human world and other social practices. In this context the *Tiandao* tradition, with its subversive implications in understanding natural disasters, could hardly be exempted from the “absolute oppression” (Renwick and Cao 2003, p. 72).

The domination of class struggle was embodied in the phrases “*Zhuti Xianxing*” (argument comes first) and “*Cong Lucian Chufa*” (adhere to the political line) in news production, both setting class-struggle theory as the base and goal for explaining social practices (Shi and Li 2008, p. 433). Examples of these could be found in the new discourses of social practices that had to prove the correctness and invincibility of class struggle. Intellectuals had to address social issues within this frame (Todd 2008, p. 97). The ten years of cultural hegemony uprooted any alternative interpretations of news facts and eradicated any association of natural disaster with ruling legitimacy.

Tiandao thinking was also wound back in a series of anti-tradition movements during the Cultural Revolution where traditional understandings about social practices were labelled as capitalistic or feudalistic dregs, and seen as pernicious at the superstructural level (Benewick 2008, p. 260). Meaning production as a discursive practice is accompanied by excluding alternative meanings (Edgar and Sedgwick 2008, p. 96). For instance, an anti-Confucian campaign was initiated to exclude Confucian canons and to consolidate the hegemonic status of class-struggle theory. The *Tiandao* view, as an aprioristic cosmology, like the views of Mo-tse and Wang Yangming that had flourished in ancient China, were repudiated as “old and feudal thoughts” (Shi and Li 2008, p. 337). Another campaign called “Smash the Four Olds” was launched to purge traditional culture, most specifically the “old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits of the exploiting class” (Benewick 2008, p. 288).

The anti-tradition campaign turned out to be effective as a means to “discover and promote the revolutionary consciousness” (Benewick 2008, p. 289). It was maintained that different societies had correspondingly different cultures of class relations. Culture was seen as providing representations of class relationships in a society, so it had to be reformed when class relations changed. Therefore, when a socialist state demolished a feudal empire, a new socialist culture was required to replace the feudal one under “the slogan of anti-feudalism” (Wang 1998, p. 19). Schools of thought, such as those of Confucius, Mencius, Tung Chung-shu, Wang Yangming and other thinkers in ancient Chinese history were seen as representing reactionary memes and as “poisonous weeds” negatively impacting on the carrying out of class struggles (Benewick 2008, pp. 259–259). The exclusion of *Tiandao* cosmology kept the masses from relating natural disasters to social power relations. Any notions connecting natural disasters with divinity were regarded as superstitious, or in Chinese as *mixin* meaning an unjustifiable belief. Thus, *Tiandao* thought appeared to have limited influence on Chinese cultural imaginations from then on. The impact of this trend on the representation of natural disasters was further enhanced in the thought emancipation which called for coverage of damage and victims from different disaster events.

Thought Emancipation

The Chinese thought emancipation movement started at the end of Mao's era. In 1978 official organs of the CCP released articles on the re-examination of the epistemological foundations for judging the truth. The new challenging argument in these articles signalled a drastic shift from the over-politicised "class struggle" to new orientations for structuring social practices. On 10 May, *Theory Trends*, the most influential internal periodical of the Central Party School, published "*Practice is the Sole Criterion of Truth*" in its sixtieth issue. On the next day this theme was also discussed in *Guangming Daily*, a broadsheet newspaper with a broad readership among the intelligentsia and Party cadres. The *People's Daily*, as the official media organ of CCP Central Committee, and China News Service also published this article.

The truth criterion debated in these high-ranking official mouthpieces showcased a challenge to the "two whatevers", which maintained that in the new post-Mao era social activities still had to adhere to Mao's class-struggle revolutionary line. The "two whatevers" claimed to "resolutely defend whatever policy decisions Chairman Mao made, [and] steadfastly abide by whatever instructions Chairman Mao gave" (Schoenhals 1991, p. 249). Hu Yaobang, then vice president of the Central Party School, called for "emancipating the mentality" across the nation, and contended that any thoughts neglecting practices restricted their views by "obscurantism, idealism and cultural despotism" (Schoenhals 1991, p. 259). On 2 June, 1978, Deng Xiaoping and Li Xiannian spoke up in support of the alteration of truth criterion. The *People's Daily*, *Xinhua News Agency*, *the Liberation Army Daily*, *China Youth Daily* and all the other Party mouthpieces at different levels followed these new arguments on mental emancipation, which "provided sharp mentality weapons" in repudiating the "two whatevers" (Fang et al. 1999, p. 431).

The new criterion for testing truth hinged on adhering to facts and practices, rather than applying enshrined doctrines to comprehend social realities. Hu Yaobang and Deng Xiaoping urged the Party cadres to accurately and comprehensively interpret Mao's thoughts of class struggle and to "seek the truth from facts" (Ruan, p. 76, in Schoenhals 1991, p. 253). Not long after, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party succinctly established this thesis as the fundamental way for guiding social practices in the post-Mao era. The authority of this principle was formally strengthened by the Plenum in "banning the practice of referring to the pronouncements of individual leaders as 'instructions'" (Schoenhals 1991, p. 266).

The guideline of "seeking the truth from facts" fundamentally enforced the "scientific spirit" (Wang 1998, p. 20), which created an epistemological premise on which media representation of natural disaster facts became politically justifiable. Ten years of Cultural Revolution had inflicted incisive wounds on the Chinese people. The nation's intellectuals began to thoroughly re-examine the way political decisions were being made and social practices positioned. Debates on thought emancipation in a spate of media articles manifested consensual support to "break

with the lingering legacy of the Cultural Revolution" (Schoenhals 1991, p. 265). This facts-oriented epistemology called for objective and empirical descriptions of social issues. It stressed perceiving and analysing phenomena as they exist, and forming judgements by firmly adhering to the facts, rather than from predetermined doctrines. This empirical and scientific orientation established the basis for reporting the facts of natural disasters, and providing timely information about news events became a basic requirement for all facets of the media in this context.

This movement also brought about the prevalence of a more overt humanitarianism in Chinese society. In the early 1980s Chinese intellectuals launched debates concerning the value of individual persons. It started in the literature field where Chinese intellectuals critically reflected on the Cultural Revolution to placate the national spirit. Finally, it was upgraded to the overall theoretic level, reflected in the *People's Daily* editorial of 25th March, 1981, that concluded that "society should be highly concerned with the human worth, and the group should respect personal worth" (Xiao 2008, p. 454). Similar discussions on humanitarianism also appeared in the fields of philosophy, arts, economics and law, which led to debates on the ultimate goals of economic development, human rights and citizens' benefits in jurisprudence (p. 454). This liberal discourse had an immense impact on Chinese culture. As Huang and Lee point out:

> We do not wish to suggest that liberal thought had a linear or smooth path in China, because official dogma and other forces constantly contested it. But despite this contestation, Western liberalism was obviously gaining the ascendancy in intellectual and media discourses (2003, p. 44).

Humanitarian attitudes flourished as the esteem of individuals became ethically respected and legally protected. As Wang maintains, this "New Enlightenment thought" insisted that authentic socialism was humanistic Marxism, which supported individual freedoms and rights (1998, p. 16). Inhuman "alienation", viewing individuals through political attributes, rather than through individuals' merits, was criticised and seen as contradictory to orthodox socialism (p. 17). Therefore the "existential significance of the individual" was placed at the core of social thinking, constituting one of the "hallmarks of the modern attitude" in contemporary China (Wang 1998, p. 19).

Like empirical scientism, humanitarianism reshaped media discourses with a focus on disaster news. It led the media to represent victims as being in need of concern and protection from the public, rather than being constructed as lifeless political symbols. The people involved in natural disasters were portrayed as individuals worthy of being represented and therefore needing help. As a result, a major goal of reporting became the realistic, personal accounts of the victims. The endorsement of individuals' rights in natural disaster representation also became embodied in the protection of audience's rights to access information.

Dissolving the Paradox by Legalising Rights to Information

The appearance of accounts of disaster facts in the Chinese media took place against a background of a raft of new legislations aimed at reforming Chinese society. The institutional directives, stipulations and state laws began to shape new discourse formations (Wodak 1994, p. 66). After the Third Plenary Session of the CCP's 11th Central Committee in December 1978 the Chinese government initiated the social reform project. Ten years later, a preliminary legal system had been established: approximately 80 pieces of legislation enacted by the National People's Congress and its standing committee; 1000 statutes and regulations laid down by the State Council, and thousands of provincial laws and regulations promulgated (Yu 1989, p. 27). Over this period, on average 60 pieces of law and regulation were promulgated annually (p. 28). In the following 20-plus years, the project "to construct a legalised society" produced a substantial impact across the nation. On 10 March, 2011, Wu Bangguo, director of the standing committee of the National Congress, declared that a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics has been formed (Xinhua News Agency 3 October, 2013). This comprehensive legal system started to serve individuals in Chinese society more effectively than ever before and to protect citizens' legal rights.

One significant impact of this legalization within Chinese media concerned the securing of people's right to access information. In July, 1987, the Chinese government promulgated "*Some Suggestions on Improving some Issues in News Reporting*". It stipulated that state media should actively broadcast emergency issues and important events before Western media made them an issue. This reporting guideline was released because of the pressures of Western competitors' control of international public discourse. Later in that year the official report of the 13th Conference of the National People's Congress declared national guidelines for validating people's right to access information, whereby the citizen's information right was ratified by the highest legislative institution of the nation.

In addition, a series of legal provisions were stipulated providing specific directives about the management of information in natural disaster circumstances. These included the "*Law on Environmental Protection*" (1989), that specifies that the administrative agencies responsible for environmental protection in the State Council and the provincial governments should release public reports on environmental conditions at regular intervals. "*The Law on Meteorology*" (1999) demands that it is obligatory for state meteorology stations to publicise forecasts of impending weather events. Other directives included, "*The Law on Preventing Earthquakes and Reducing Disasters*" (1997), "*Regulation of Managing Earthquake Forecasts*" (1998) and "*Statutes on Floods Prevention*" (1991) that all stipulated concrete provisions, demanding that administrative departments release disaster information in a timely fashion. These statutes protected citizens' rights to obtain public information. As Wei adds:

> If it is not banned in the law, the citizens have the freedom to get it. In accordance to this principle, citizens have the freedom and legal right to seek and communicate the

information not prescribed as confidential. This clear identification is important for protecting the right to know (2001, p. 22).

In the middle of the reform era in the 1980s, the concept of freely available "information" was introduced to mainland China and induced much discussion in the field of Chinese media. Not long after, natural disaster coverage began to be seen as providing information, rather than being limited to delivering doctrines for propaganda (Tian 2005, p. 90). This was a manifest change of mentality in viewing and reporting on disasters, compared with the periods when either "*Tiandao*" epistemology or class-struggle ideology prevailed. Combined with the cultural transformation, the legalisation of the information right enhanced the objective representation of natural disaster facts in the media, a direct outcome of the transformed social power relations in terms of the right of access to information.

Conclusion

This chapter has taken a discourse-historical approach to examine the political and cultural reasons that produced a paradox between the presentation of facts and the need for control in representations of disasters in China's media. The diachronic changes in the way information about disasters has been reported manifests the country's on-going transformation around rights to information. This is an embodiment of China's modernisation process where gradual discursive shifts have been closely associated with changes in the dominant ideologies, particularly those beliefs (or superstitions) concerning the relations between nature and the human world. They show a transition of power in social communication from centrality to popularity, from mystery to public disclosure, and from stern control to increased transparency. It is found that the more that disaster facts are subverted, the more the representation of the disaster is debated, negotiated and controlled. From the "anger of the deity" to providing essential rescue information through media communications, the paradox between providing disaster facts and authoritarian control is tamed.

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Public Humiliation: Carnival Marketplace and Discourse Power Shifting in Chinese Social Media

Minghua Wu

Abstract This article aims to explore the Chinese mechanisms for civic participation and how power shifts take place in Chinese social media today. This article proposes a framework of "Carnivalesque participatory discourse" to provide a deeper, more contextually-valid understanding of Internet culture and behaviour in Chinese online communities. This is illustrated through media events of the *Smiling Face of Yang Dacai* and *7.21 Beijing Flood* in which one smile or one sentence lead to public humiliation and fire. This research looks at the carnival marketplace features of the Chinese public sphere that defeat other ways for disciplining officials, and those features of Sina Weibo that allowed for these cases to unfold and discourse power to shift.

Keywords Carnivalesque participatory discourse (CPD) · Civic participatory culture · Chinese social media · Discourse power · Networked public sphere · Carnival marketplace

Introduction

The recent rise of "mass self-communication" has been shown to create new opportunities for challenging the centralised control of information (Castells 2007; 2008), and nowhere more so than in China, where an explosion of "discourse online" is now being observed. Of the 649 million Chinese Internet users in January 2015 (CNNIC 2015), more than half utilize social media, and because the international social media sites Twitter and Facebook have been blocked in China, many Chinese have chosen to communicate as micro-bloggers. *Weibo*, the Chinese micro-blog, which is a unique hybrid of Twitter and Facebook, has increased its number of users in less than two years, by 300% from 630,000 at the end of 2011 to 2.74 million in June, 2012 (CNNIC 2012). The data collected in this study come

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from *Sina* which is the dominant platform for Weibo and is the leading online media company in China. Although recently WeChat as a messaging app rival rises, Weibo cannot be replaced or surpassed in terms of its media features and public opinion experience. *Weibo* provides a platform that encourages the silent majority to express their opinions and it facilitates communication between government officials and the public (China.org.cn 2011). The micro-blogging sphere in China has enabled ordinary Internet users to produce alternative perspectives and increasingly drive the authorities to respond to them. Weibo is an unprecedented tool of empowerment for the Chinese public to have their say. Official narratives framed by state media (Zhang 2015) are resisted and negotiated in Chinese social media today. Clearly, to understand the appeal and the power of this micro-blogging trend is a pressing concern for media scholars. This article addresses the following key questions that arise out of this exploding trend: What are Chinese mechanisms for civic participation? How do power shifts take place in Chinese social media today?

In order to understand the interrelationships among the media, culture, and society in general, media researchers draw on social theories as tools. The first and most influential of the theoretical approaches that have been applied to analyse what is happening there is based on Foucault's concept of power, which holds that power is wielded through language in use and that is how it achieves meaning. A second analytical approach to power relations is taken by those who argue for the role of playfulness in discourse, the quality of which Bakhtin called "Carnivalesque" (2006). Bakhtin scholars argue that the concept of Carnival is, in fact, crucial for an understanding of popular cultural practices and the dynamics and patterns of social and cultural change (Hirschkop and Shepherd 2001). A third approach is based on Habermas's "public sphere", which is conceived as a forum for communicating information and points of view which are "rooted in the lifeworld through the associational networks of civil society" (Habermas 1996: 359). This article aims to explore Chinese characteristics of civic participation. These three conceptual frameworks each offer significant insights into the nature of civic social interaction and how it operates. However, this study argues that none of them is adequate alone to characterize and explain the new rise of public participation online, which exhibits the distinctive features of noisy, emotional and highly interactive communication. Rather, it is necessary to conceptualize a new theory or model, drawing on features of each of these three frameworks to capture the phenomenon of escalating online participatory discourse. My goal here is both to identify complementary features of discourse, the public sphere and Carnival, and show the uniqueness of their interaction in online social media in contemporary China. The analysis has led me to propose a new theoretical framework of Carnivalesque Participatory Discourse (CPD) specifically to facilitate the analysis of Chinese social media. Then, I will use case studies of the "*Smiling Official Face Yang Dacai*" and "*7.21 Beijing Flood*" to illustrate how CPD analysis can have practical implications in China today.

Mapping the Networked Public Sphere in China

Popular communication in Weibo is a Carnival marketplace, but this is not its only mode of operation: it also empowers the new media public sphere in other ways. In order to explain how public spheres are seen to evolve in recent major debates, I will first critique how Habermas defines their structural evolution within broad socio-cultural context and then revisit the concept in relation to the rise of mass self-communication.

According to Jurgen Habermas, a public sphere is a place "where critical, rational discussion" is conducted (1992). Habermas views a public sphere as a communicative structure which has a political function as "a sounding board for problems that must be processed by the political system" (1996). Habermas identifies three conditions for the emergence of a new public sphere. First, there is a shared discourse to which everyone can contribute; second, there is a shared concern; and third, the culture of the state has become a public commodity (Habermas 1991, pp. 36–37).

Inevitably, Habermas's definition of a public sphere has been subject to a wide range of critiques and has extended analytic thinking. Roberts and Crossley (2004) argue that the increasing prominence of public spheres of action has been made possible owing to a decentralization in society, "particularly a separation of political authority from the sphere of everyday and domestic life" (p. 2). There are varieties of public spheres of "discourse, action, representation, and criticism" which follow "a different logic and orient themselves toward different questions, missions, problems, and forms of interaction" (Breese 2011). Fraser (1995) proposes "a postmodern public sphere" which would work towards the "elimination of systemic social inequalities" and argues that multiple forms of contestation are "preferable to a single modern public sphere", which may limit diversity (p. 295). In any case, when people are excluded from public activities because they do not share the common view, they are likely to seek alternative, subversive avenues (p. 67), which may ultimately extend the range of public debate less discriminatingly. Meanwhile, Nicholas Garnham, takes the critiques of Habermas's theory on board and accepts, develops and refines the original thrust of Habermas' ideas. Garnham (1992) asserts the interdependence of institutions, mass public discourse and democratic governance, and it is this interdependence which gives public spheres a material resource base. He (1992) argues that Habermas recognized that the modern world was not one in which a "simple dichotomy of free market versus state control" operated, but one which enables public spheres to mediate between the civil society and the state.

Evidently, then, to be an effective force for change, public spheres of communication depend on media and the relationships they can form between a state and its citizens, particularly since the coming of the electronic age (Boeder 2005). In the new media environment of a networked society, public space functions as a "multitude of online and offline spaces" which go beyond any particular given territory, enabling the construction of "a mosaic of different, but overlapping public

spaces", which blurs the "public-private distinction … by individualization" (Van Dijk 2012).

For any public sphere to be an effective force for change, that is one which enables "divergent interests to be fully represented in the public domain", Curran (1991) suggests that it must combine "a collectivist approach with market processes" so that media can operate as "relatively autonomous from both the government and the market". Castells (2008) describes collectivity in the marketplace as "the space where people come together as citizens and articulate their autonomous views to influence the political institutions of society". How interactivity works in public spheres today is important to consider, since investigating it yields "a more powerful sense of user engagement with media texts, a more independent relation to sources of knowledge, individualised media use, and greater user choice" (Lister 2009).

Convergence is a specific form of interactivity. It is much more than a technological process bringing together multiple media functions in the same devices. Jenkins (2006) interprets convergence as a cultural shift, where grassroots and corporate media strike and intersect in unpredictable ways. Consumers consciously seek out new information and connections, which demand of them, new levels of engagement with media. In a convergence culture, everyone is a participant, though they may have different status or skills in the creation and circulation of information (Jenkins 2006). Thus, the interactive and convergence features of new media enable netizens to be socially active and to participate in civic debate and events. Such participation is "more open-ended" than was previously possible and so less under the control of the media outlets themselves and thus "more under the control of media consumers" (Jenkins 2006). In fact, only with widespread netizen participation can online media and other forms of media be effective sources and organizers of information.

Despite the widespread interest and respect that Habermas's public sphere theory has attracted, its application to political analysis of online communities, however, is considered problematic. This is because it ignores the imbalance of power relations and inequality of capacity in life, which inescapably influence the extent to which individuals can or do participate in public discussion (Shaw 2012). In the past, the silenced majority has not had civic power. However, the phenomenon of mass self-communication, that is, the mass of individuals who now communicate with each other in public forums foregrounds the previously silenced majority in civic discourse.

Shirky (2011) argues that, in the long-term, tools such as social media can "strengthen civil society and the public sphere". The current rise of civic insurgence in nations like China cannot be separated from the emergence of online interactive media that foster "mass self-communication" (Castells 2007). In a networked society, the constant exercising and counteracting of power stimulate thinking and creativity (Castells 2011). Nevertheless, cyberspace rarely offers balanced, egalitarian exchanges of view. Habermas's theorization of public spheres certainly fails to account for them. Shaw (2012) believes that because power and social relations are always unequal, the inevitable imbalances in general communication tend to be

neglected in critiques of online discourse and its potential for the construction of democracy. But it is these imbalances which cause confrontation and noisy discourse online, what Hu (2009) has defined as a "cacophony". As a result, it has been said that "the Chinese Internet is filled with a cacophony of conflicting opinions, irrelevant or emotional outbursts, images stretching from the beautiful to the grotesques and beyond" (Chu and Cheng 2011). All these characteristics have to be accommodated in any models of how it operates with the purpose of transforming the society (Shaw 2012).

Thus, while many theorists have benefited from Habermas's theorization of the public sphere, they have also shown what else needs to be incorporated in order to achieve a sound understanding of the functioning of public online civic discourse. Notably there is a "counter power" that occurs when people have opportunities to challenge and eventually change the power relations established in society. This is usually "self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception" (Castells 2007) and it becomes a form of mass communication among a mass of individuals. Many people communicating with many people forms an effective, novel medium–a platform, a sphere for rebellious individuals to "build their autonomy and confront the institutions of society in their own terms and around their own projects" (Castells 2007). Of profound significance is that, through the mass self-communication that characterises this sphere, it is very difficult for government or institutions to control it (Castells 2012, p. 7). This is the way *Weibo*, as Internet-based public sphere, empower the majority of ordinary Chinese.

Playful interactions among netizens are certainly abundant in Chinese social media and many political struggles have been fought through playful, online activities (Yang 2011, p. 1046). Chinese people have created "a world of carnival, community, and contention" in cyberspace and in so doing "have transformed personhood, society and politics" (Yang 2009). In particular, Chinese netizens regularly engage in parody and criticism and unite behind the regenerating force of laughter on the Internet (Li 2011).

Overall, the networked public sphere in China has three features, namely, playfulness subversiveness, networked participation and micro-level discourse negotiation. Those counter power described as Castells has its own performing form in Chinese socio-cultural context.

The Social Cultural Context of Public Humiliation in China

In aiming to probe public humiliation taking place in media events that flow out of the postings, specific cultural tradition, stoning the drowning dog, is called into play in the discourses that emerged. The Chinese saying of "Stoning the drowning dog" conveys the punishing of wrongdoers when they are already suffering; "Being stoned with verbal rocks" means that persons are very heavily criticised for what

they said or did. This tradition further defines the characteristics of how discourses exercise power, and engage a whole range of ways of negotiating power.

"Stoning the Drowning Dog"

There exist different figurative uses of "dog" in Chinese, together with their emotional attachments, varied semantic representations, and cultural implications. According to western culture, dogs are most often portrayed as loyal in nature and treated as a family member. However, in Chinese culture, dogs are also connected with betrayal and traits of grovelling, similar to the English use of the word "cur". For instance, if somebody describes another person as "a running dog" (*zǒu gǒu* 走狗) that means the person described is a fawning lackey: a person who follows his master no matter what his master does as long as the master looks after him. The "running dog" label was widely used during the Sino-Japanese war (1937–1945), and the Chinese civil war between the Communist Party and Guomintang (1927–1950) to refer to people who betrayed their friends or the nation for their own personal interest.

"Stoning the drowning dog" is a Chinese proverb *Tong Da Luo Shui Gou* (*tòng dǎ luò shuǐ gǒu* 痛打落水狗) which literally means collectively "stoning the dog in the water in order to beat it". It analogically represents the public getting together to punish a person who has a bad record. The saying originates from Lu (1980), referring to completely crushing one's defeated enemies. *Fa Bu Ze Zhong*(*fǎ bù zé zhòng* 法不责众)is an additional social basis for "Stoning the drowning dog"; it refers to when a group crime (for example civic violence) goes unpunished. That is to say, the law will not punish the masses if many people do the same thing. It is similar to the English expression of "safety in numbers". Furthermore, according to Zhu Huaxin, the Secretary of the *People's Daily* Online Public Opinion Monitoring Centre,

> Many netizens have the spirit of Robin Hood. They play the role of protecting the weak and constraining the strong. As long as you belong to the subordinate group, they support you. They are holding sceptical and resentful attitudes towards government officials, the rich and experts, etc. (Tian 2011).

Group judgement or public humiliation is enforced through using the Human Flesh Search Engine. The Human Flesh Search Engine is a recent phenomenon of cyber-vigilantism in China which involves mediated search processes whereby crowd-powered expand demographic and geographic information about deviant individuals with the shared intention to "expose, shame, and punish them to reinstate legal justice or public morality" (Cheong and Gong 2010). In China's restricted media landscape, the Human Flesh Search Engine is one tool which can successfully enforce "Stoning the drowning dog" in a form of Carnival democracy (Herold 2011a), providing a snapshot of emerging media's empowering potential to enhance collective intelligence for critical civic participation.

Indeed, the search engine acts as a form of street democracy, enabling public juries to spontaneously declare "their binding verdicts on how civic disputes should be resolved", refusing to let "the antagonists leave until the group's judgment is enforced" (Wang and Savitt 2011). In this group judgement, everything is judged based on a simple principle of good or evil, despite the complex fact or situation behind it. In the process, everybody tends to pay attention to their rights and to neglect their social responsibilities or obligations in the Chinese online civil society, since the judgements are subject to the rule of law at the individual level, but not to a group of people.

"Being Stoned with Verbal Rocks"

"Being stoned with verbal rocks" (被拍砖) is the latest catchphrase or Internet slang used by hundreds of millions of Chinese netizens. Literally, when netizens are "being stoned with verbal rocks", they are being harshly criticized or verbally attacked for what they post or what they have done which has been exposed by other active netizens. For example, netizens might say, "Please smack me with a rock" meaning "Tell me what you think about it". However, the narrative context can totally undermine or question or purposely misunderstand the meaning intended by the speaker. The metaphorical concept of "verbal rocks" shares features with the literary mode of Carnival: it can be ambiguous, combining "praise and abuse" and merging "glorified and humiliated" (Bakhtin 1984).

These proverbial expressions represent deeply held values which are easily performed in networked communities and here clearly contribute to showing the empirical process of Carnivalesque public discourse.

Case Studies and Analytic Framework

In order to gain an authentic sense of the liberation potential of online dialogues, Jenkins has called for the need to "distinguish between different models of participation and to evaluate where and how power shifts may be taking place" (Jenkins 2013). In respect to Chinese social media interactions, this study proposes civic Carnivalesque Participatory Discourse (CPD) as a dynamic framework for throwing light on the complex characteristic features of this context.

Carnival Marketplace: Smiling Official Face Yang Dacai

On 26 August, 2012 in China, one local official, Yang Dacai, Head of the Shanxi Provincial Work Safety Administration, was pictured smiling in front of vehicle

Fig. 1 "Smiling official Yang Dacai" at the accident scene and his post. *Source* http://www.weibo.com/2975212160/yzrua4h3M (Retrieved 12 September, 2012)

wreckage during his inspection of a fatal truck crash which killed 36 passengers in Yan'an, Shaanxi province (see Fig. 1). The photo was posted on Weibo and suddenly he became famous. Quickly, media exposure of this incident escalated, leading to a public outcry against official corruption.

On 29, August 2012, in order to cope with the crisis he found himself in, Yang Dacai, the smiling official became the first government official who tried to deal with a personal public crisis by opening a Weibo account to explain that he smiled in order to settle the nerves of his colleagues (see Fig. 1). He posted:

> When we came to the scene, we felt deep sorrow. Because the accident was so terrible, our comrades in the lower level of the public service were extremely nervous. Some of them have such a strong accent, that I could not understand them. I was helping them to relax and perhaps was too careless with my facial expression. In fact, I feel deeply guilty.

However, micro-bloggers were not satisfied by his explanation. Through the Human Flesh Search Engine, Yang was also shown wearing a classic collection of five luxury watches in different photos and later was proved to own thirteen ones. Despite his claim that he bought the watches with his legitimate income, Shaanxi

provincial discipline started an investigation into Yang's affairs. Later on, micro-blogger @ Wu Qilun posted:

> Yang Dacai, the watch brother (表哥), has been removed from his official position and accused of disciplinary violations (*Shuanggui)* this morning! Probably, officials will now be cautious of smiling at the wrong time; they will hesitant to wear luxury watches; probably, officials now hate Weibo deeply.

Consequently, this media event became one of most popular topics on *Sina Weibo*. On 21, September 2013, Yang Dacai has become the most well-known "watch brother" and his name has been mentioned around 2,315,923 times when he was claimed to be dismissed[1].

The whole process of the Yang Dacai event, from the initial exposure of the smiling photo to the latest responses on it, worked well through the netizens' fun network. "Biao" is an example of polysemy in Chinese, which refers to watch and also means the relationship between the children or grandchildren of a brother or a sister (in English, they are all called cousin). "Ge" in Chinese is brother. Together the Chinese words "Biaoge" (watch brother) refer to an elder male cousin. Here Chinese netizens call Yang a "watch brother" (表哥), reflecting the discursive mode of playfulness and subversion in this media representation.

So, what can we say are the power dynamics of Chinese social media communications, since here they happen in the informational space which is the carnival marketplace? The concept of Carnival is still evidently problematic and in needed of further definition within the large range of socio-historical contexts in which it is now being employed. In China context, the Carnival effect is achieved through Chinese humour and laughter. In fact, more generally, today's consumer culture in China favours playfulness (Yang 2009). Bakhtin demonstrates that play complements the language of the common people when it is.

Yang's smiling face is the "grotesque body" or the "drowning dog" which leads Chinese netizens together in hatred of corruption. Unfortunately he was stoned heavily by "verbal bricks". All the media practices enacted through networked civic participation exercise discourse power at the micro-level and enhance the convergence online discussion as a new public sphere. However, gradually, the public will feel bored with these "grotesque bodies". As @ hua zong liu le jin gu bang, as a well-known for collecting photos of officials who wear luxury watches in public and said:

> He undercover dozens of officials who wear a lot of luxury watches and Yang Dacai is the only official being dismissed among them. Thus, he considers Yang's case is an exception and cannot be replicated[2]

In general, *Weibo* surveillance is colourful and very entertaining. Obviously, incidental occurrences, such as this process alone, cannot solve corruption or exert

[1] http://www.cnnic.net.cn/hlwfzyj/hlwxzbg/201502/P020150203551802054676.pdf

[2] South Reviews (2013), hua zong, wo bu jian biao hen jiu le, 30 July http://www.nfcmag.com/article/4179-2.html

rigorous monitoring in the long term, but the capacity of the Human Flesh Search Engine to respond to corruption is clearly demonstrated in this case. Although, individually, the social force of netizens' responses to each incident and the media exposure these responses attract can escalate rapidly, their attraction may then fade quickly. Nevertheless, it is reasonably to argue that their impact may lie in the longer-lasting power of the social-political process, and that social accountability without election is always active in Chinese civil society (Ma 2012).

Resisting Official Narratives: 7.21 Beijing Flood

Most of the time, the targets being stoned are persons, but this is not always the case. For example, the official narrative itself, or the traditional, positive reporting styles of the state can be the target of verbal attacks. One good example is seen in response to the Beijing floods that occurred on 21 July 2012 in which official language and ideology are consciously opposed.

The spokesperson Liu Hongwei, Chief Engineer of Beijing Flood Control Headquarters, commented on the government's response to the flood on CCTV as three "well done jobs" (*dào wèi* 到位), namely, well forecast, a timely early warning, and good pre-arranged planning. This comment triggered massive numbers of angry responses in the micro-blog sphere (see Fig. 2).

The comments on the post included: "Could you be more shameless than this?" "No shame and no moral boundaries" and "well done jobs (*dào wèi* 到位), disgusting (*dǎo wèi* 倒胃)". The pun of "*dào wèi*" has similar pronunciation with "*dǎo wèi*" (disgusting). Hence, it can be seen that the sarcastic humour permeates into the comments on government response to the flood. Such comments with obvious carnivalesque nature are seen as verbal rocks, used by the mass to stone the person or object caught in the target range.

Another example of this is the online commentary on the "Say Good News" reportage style on the CCTV News (see Fig. 3).

The overall post, especially the last sentence parodies the lyrics of the Beijing popular star Wang Feng's song, "In the Spring":

> If one day, I am old and having nothing to depend on
>
> Please leave me, at that time
>
> If one day, I've quietly departed
>
> Please bury me, in this Spring day
>
> Source: http://www.chinasmack.com/2011/videos/in-coal-pile-chinese-miners-child-version-of-in-spring.html (Viewed 10 May, 2011)

In this case, people who watch "Say Good News" on CCTV news are described as "always living in Spring", which is equivalent to the idea of looking at life through rose-coloured glasses. Interaction on the Chinese social media, about the

Fig. 2 Beijing flood comments. *Source* http://weibo.com/1855011874/ytJot9h8m (Viewed 23 July, 2012)

CCTV news style and public resistance to it, has undermined the Party style of news reportage and triggered an alternative style of news delivery.

Thus it is apparent that, in the last two decades, China's digital information regime change has brought potentially significant opportunities for citizens to challenge the state statement in online communities. Discourse is not just linguistic signs but is the practices and ideas that constitute lived reality (Foucault 1972/2010: 49). Foucault's conception of discourse as central in the construction and understanding of reality cannot be separated from the role of "power" in the production of "knowledge", which he understood to mean "the social, historical and political conditions under which, for example, statements come to count as true or false" (McHoul and Grace 1997). One can only talk about truth from a specific social context according to "the rules of some discursive "police" (Foucault 1972/2010: 224). Evidently, Foucault's discourse framework is "regulated by institutional processes" which seek to order and, if necessary, exclude. In such processes, knowledge is sorted into that "which is perceived to be true and that which is considered to be false" (Mills 1997: 57–59). In this way, discourse can be

政经观察员范利祥 ✓已关注 | 取消

我有一个梦想，永远生活在新闻联播里：那里的孩子都能上起学，穷人都能看起病，百姓住每月77元的廉租房，工资增长11%，大学生就业率达到99%，物价不涨，交通不堵，大水淹不死人，没有地沟油，没有杀人奶粉，环境宜人，罪犯统统落马，言论自由。如果有一天，我老无所依，请把我埋在，新闻联播里。

8月13日 22:24 来自新浪微博 | 举报 转发(99) | 收藏 | 评论(27)

Translation:

I wish I could live in the world depicted by *xin wen lian bo* (CCTV News)
where, all children can afford education;
Poor people can see a doctor without worrying about the cost.
Ordinary people can live in cheap housing with just 77 RMB rent per month.
The salary increase rate is 11%
And the employment rate of new graduates reaches 99%.
The prices of all kinds of goods stay stable and traffic is always good.
Floods will not kill people.
There is no “gutter” cooking oil, no poisoned milk powder and no pollution.
The environment has been improved.
Criminals are always caught.
People enjoy freedom of speech.
If one day, I am old and have no resources to depend on,
Please bury me in the news of CCTV.

Fig. 3 Online commentaries on the CCTV “Say Good News”. *Source* http://weibo.com/1674758845/yx15Ms1Dc (Viewed 31 August, 2012)

characterized as central to social systems. Within this in mind, it is not hard to understand how through participating in social networking sites, which depend on discourse, ordinary Chinese people can and do exercise power.

Discourse Power Shifting Within Carnivalesque Participatory Discourse

This article examines how social media discourses in China may lead to the establishment of various held truths and beliefs. Using a Foucauldian discourse framework to analyse the online practices of Chinese micro-bloggers, for example, can foreground the interplay of language, ideas and practices in China, where power is exercised simultaneously in both overt and covert ways. Foucault’s notion of the discourse offers a fundamentally helpful explanatory bridge between language in use and social systems. For example, analysing the relationship between discourse and power allows us to understand how power operates in society; it especially helps us to capture how netizens negotiate and claim power discursively.

Foucault’s interpretation of discourse and social systems depends on his understanding of power as a mode of exclusion or inclusion. His emphasis on the dynamics of power is crucial in any analysis of how ordinary Chinese people can

wield influence on the state. Further, he claims that discourse is the medium through which power can be achieved by the majority of ordinary people.

Understanding the role of power in the production of knowledge is a crucial element of Foucault's discourse theory, in that it proposes a non-economic analysis of power. Foucault suggests that "Power is neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised, and that it only exists in action" (Foucault 1980: 89). It is "at this vulgar, pragmatic, quotidian and minor level" where language is constantly being used and reinvented that we can learn more about the assumptions on which governments and societies operate (Rose 1999). This microanalysis of power look at how particular participatory practices are characterized by "specific power balances and struggles at different levels, moments, and locations" (Jenkins and Carpentier 2013: 267).

Power as exercise rather than process and it can work from the bottom up because it is enmeshed in numerous social and government practices. Foucault uses the notion of capillary to describe how power operates at the micro-level. Indeed, Foucauldian discourse studies conceives individuals as central to how everyday life functions. For an understanding of the everyday modes of power, a new technology is required, one which examines "their concrete and precise character, their grasp of a multiple and differentiated reality" (Foucault 1984: 66). For all these reasons, it is clear how useful a Foucauldian perspective is in analysing how a centralised, controlling state engages in discourse practices which themselves have the potential to challenge social structures.

Discourses do not exist in isolation. They are in constant conflict with other discourses and other social practices over questions of truth and authority (Mills 1997). To understand how meaning is negotiated in discourse, researchers have had to shift their attention from the individual to the systems of social practice in which the individuals participate, because discourse does more than represent reality, it signifies it, "constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (Fairclough 1992). However, from Fairclough's perspective, Foucault doesn't go far enough because he fails to engage with the crucial, linguistic aspects of discourse, that is, how meaning is realized in specific texts. Lemke (1995) emphasizes, as both Foucault and Fairclough do, the active role of discourse in society, suggesting that discourse does not just reconfirm "existing social relationships and patterns of behaviour"… [But also] "renegotiates social relationships and introduces new meanings and new behaviours.

In effect, individuals construct and interpret people's identities, viewpoints and values (Thibault 1998), and they do so in ways that demonstrate that language can be used differently, even in contradictory ways, because, "Every use of discourse is at once a judgement about its relation to dominant forms of power and either an assent or a resistance to this relation" (Frow 1985). In fact, "meaning arises through the "difference" between the participants in any dialogue (Hall 1997). Nowadays, social networking opportunities (such as those online) encourage dialogue in the public domain, and meaning is actively and socially "constructed in society through the process of communicative action" (Castells 2009). Such discourse opportunities

are powerful. Suddenly, individual citizens can have an immediate role in civic discourse.

In online communication, civic power is employed and exercised through "a net-like organisation" with individuals as its agents (Foucault 1980, p. [98]). However, in this process of negotiating meaning and power in Chinese social media, citizens' contributions to national debate and discourses of power may not be direct or overt; they tend to depend on ironic, playful language use. In China today, the micro-blogging sphere is more a place for catharsis where people vent their frustrations, complaints and anger. This phenomenon is not neglected in this study and Bakhtin's notion of Carnival and Carnivalesque provide invaluable entry into this domain.

However, Foucault's framework is not fully explanatory, for this context because it does not accommodate the playfully entertaining elements of online discourse among Chinese netizens. Specifically, it does not capture its distinctive features of noisy, emotional self-expression and interaction. Carnival theory is especially illuminating in this context. It acknowledges diversity and multiple voices as potentially democratic and powerful (Gardiner 2004; Hirschkop 2004; Roberts and Crossley 2004). In contrast with Habermas' desire for an ideal, rational world speaking with one, shared voice, Carnival accepts the reality of public pluralism and the power of contestation (Gardiner 2004). Moreover, Carnivalesque discourse as it exists today in China does empower ordinary people with public voices. Carnival enables people to have fun as well as mock themselves and the state. But Carnival in itself does not bring power. It is how Carnivalesque discourse is used and interpreted, in particular, in online social media, that can inform about the nature of power and forces for change in China.

According to Bakhtin (1984), in the contexts he was critiquing feasts had roles other than their official, religious function; they also performed a folk Carnival role, employing "laughter" as well as providing "material sustenance". Bakhtin employed Carnivalesque in two ways: to represent the transgressive, resistant impact of laughter and to symbolize what he called "grotesque realism" (1984). He saw Carnivalesque as a liberating, energizing force which engages both these elements. This section examines these two uses of Carnivalesque, they might be applied to online communication in social media in China. Despite continuing controversy over Bakhtin's notion of Carnival, the Carnivalesque and the liberating potential he ascribed to them, the concept of Carnival has proved invaluable in building an analytic framework resource for interpreting citizens' interactions online in the public domains of social media.

Laughter offers one view of the world. Sometimes, it reveals a new stance on truth or knowledge. Carnival laughter, for example, offers ordinary people a form of transgression and resistance that resonates with truth for them. The Renaissance conception of laughter was deeply philosophical; laughter then was viewed as "one of the essential forms of the truth concerning the world as a whole", and even, as the only way that "certain essential aspects of the world [were] accessible" (Bakhtin 1984). Its meaning was determined by the medieval culture of folk humour. For example, medieval communities may have become involved church rituals by

translating them into "gluttony and drunken orgies on the altar table, indecent gestures, disrobing", so that the feast actually became "a parody and travesty of the official cult, with masquerades and improper dances" (Bakhtin 1984). For example, at least once a year, the Feast of Fools became an occasion of laughter, expressly for releasing emotion and personal freedom (Bakhtin 1984).

However, it is necessary to rethink the liberation potential of Carnival laughter. There is a substantial body of discussion on its so-called liberating energies. Some have argued that laughter is serious and that it is a historical force (Morson and Emerson 1990). Others have suggested that the regenerative power of Carnival laughter is hypothetical. In particular, Bernstein (1986) argues that the laughter does not challenge social conventions since ruling institutions "permit themselves to be mocked, due to full confidence in their own power to emerge still more firmly entrenched the following morning". Patently, festival laughter occurs on specific occasions and only within recognized limits. The general consensus among scholars is that Carnival serves merely as a "safety-valve for social tensions" (Dentith 1995), which clearly differs from Bakhtin's view of Carnival as "an anti-authoritarian force that can be mobilized" (Dentith 1995).

Therefore, the application of the Bakhtinian notion of Carnival and Carnivalesque provides a good standing-point for Internet research in general and is especially pertinent to the study of "online China and its relationship to offline society and politics" (Herold 2011b). In this way, the relationship between online and offline lives for Chinese netizens resonates with Bakhtin's concept of Carnival. A person of the Middle Ages lived, as it were, two lives:

> One was the official life, monolithically serious and gloomy, subjugated to a strict hierarchical order, full of terror, dogmatism, reverence, and piety; the other was the life of the carnival square, free and unrestricted, full of ambivalent laughter, blasphemy, the profanation of everything sacred, full of debasing and obscenities, familiar contact with everyone and everything (Bakhtin 1973).

The Internet in China enables "a digital version of medieval marketplaces", where diverse forms of interactivity are generated (Meng 2011). Carnival as an analytic tool may therefore be vital to understanding the dynamics and patterns of social and cultural changes in China's online sphere (Chu and Cheng 2011; Humphrey 2000; Yang 2009).

Since online participation in China clearly has Carnivalesque features, in this study, I draw on Bakhtin's Carnival to capture those features. Carnival is defined as a specific event which is temporary, so, its potential for social transformation in a specific culture may be have to be pinned down. But as it is built up Carnival gradually establishes a mode of public participation and collaboration. Understanding how Carnival operates in China, therefore, may be a key to determining how ordinary Chinese people can exercise group power. The cumulative effects of Carnival may increase public awareness and develop individual citizens' sense of social entitlement. Consequently, a new form of civic participation and public opinion may be formed which can impact public policy and

decision-making. In China, as in the Middle Ages in the West, Carnival can work to redistribute power negotiations through humour.

Conclusion

This study presents this new framework, based on the notions of Carnival and discourse, as a methodological approach for capturing and interpreting features of public interaction online in China. This framework is consistent with the cultural traditions, the media landscape, and the current context for social transformation in contemporary China. Here I argue that this framework explicates the playful nature of discourse among ordinary Chinese people who micro-blog and in so doing captures the ways in which they redistribute the balance of civic power and attain a measure of influence in public activity.

In sum, Carnivalesque Participatory Discourse as proposed in this article describes a new form of analytical framework for understanding the potentials of civic participation in Chinese social media, the largest Internet base in the world. For the first time, ordinary Chinese people have an alternative media platform on which to present the everyday realities of their lives and increasingly drive the authorities to respond to them. Whether it can prepare active citizenship for rational discussion and democracy development, further observation is still needed.

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Part II
Creative Encounters: Literature, Music and Arts

Transcultural Affinities: In Praise of Wang Zuoliang

Nicholas Jose

Abstract The paper investigates the meaning of the term 'transcultural' as its use widens, exploring its relationship with alternative terms, some of which it promises to replace: 'transnational', 'intercultural', 'translational', among other examples. The paper focuses on the application of 'transcultural' to literature (reading, writing and interpretation) and creative writing, and also considers what it can mean in relation to pedagogical practice in these fields. It makes specific reference to translation in an interpretative and pedagogical context, on the basis that transcultural inquiry will often be accompanied by movement between languages, cultures and societies. The question is asked: is 'transcultural' a description of an attribute of a text, or a framework or perspective for interpretation, experiment and creative practice and inquiry? Is 'transcultural' then an agentive position, a way of proceeding that creates new knowledge, partly through reflection and scrutiny into its own processes: hence 'transculturalism' as alternative pedagogy with radical implications. Examples will be taken from a range of contemporary literary texts including *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* by Haruki Murakami, *Elizabeth Costello* by J. M. Coetzee, *Carpentaria* by Alexis Wright and *China in Ten Words* by Yu Hua—all texts that are marked by transcultural moves and that succeed in communicating transculturally (across different audiences/communities and/or in translation).

Language changes with our needs. In order to describe and inquire into contemporary experience, and the problems and possibilities it presents to people across the world, old terms have gained new currency and new terms have come into circulation. Among these is 'transcultural'. In this essay I consider the valency of the term in literary studies and with regard to creative writing, weighed against related terms, in an argument for its usefulness. I follow here in the footsteps of Xianlin Song and Kate Cadman in the opening chapter of their edited collection *Bridging Transcultural Divides* (2012) where they trace 'the notion of the

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"transcultural"' back to the use of the term 'transculturation' by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1881–1969) in his book *Cuban Counterpoint* (1940) (Song and Cadman, 2012 11–12).

Ortiz wrote:

> The real history of Cuba is the history of its intermeshed transculturations…. [From Paleolithic Indian to Spanish and African, and later] Indians from the mainland, Jews, Portuguese, Anglo-Saxons, French, North Americans, even yellow Mongoloids from Macao, Canton, and other regions of the sometime Celestial Kingdom. And each of them torn from his native moorings, faced with the problem of disadjustment and readjustment, of deculturation and acculturation—in a word, of transculturation….
>
> The concept of transculturation is fundamental and indispensable for an understanding of the history of Cuba, and, for analogous reasons, of that of America in general.[1]

By extension it might also be true for other parts of the world, including Australia, from where I write, and for the mobile, globalising world at large.

The idea of transculturation was taken up by Ortiz's fellow Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier (1904–80) a few years later in *Music in Cuba* (1949), where he describes 'a process of transculturation destined to amalgamate meters, melodies, Hispanic instruments, with clear traces of old African oral traditions', occurring from the sixteenth century on (88). 'Transculturation' aligns with the formulation of 'the marvellous real [*lo real maravilloso*]' that Carpentier proposed at the same time in the preface to his astonishing first novel, *The Kingdom of This World* (1949), inspired, like *Music in Cuba*, by his visit to Haiti, site of the first slave revolution in the Americas.[2] Thus we see that the 'transcultural' concept itself developed from a transcultural situation: the colonial Latin American New World. This makes it one of the few non-Western ideas, as it were, to (belatedly) enter dominant Western discourse, with appropriately interrogative intent. It is comparable in this respect to Gayatri Spivak's use of 'subaltern' or Edward Said's 'contrapuntal', or indeed the well-travelled concept of 'magic realism', which is how Carpentier's idea came to be known in English. In his reading of Ortiz's work, Enrico Mario Santí explains that 'transculturation' responds to a specific sense of 'counterpoint' or *controversia*, meaning musical dispute or debate, in the original Cuban context, where the dialogue is on the surface. By contrast, transculturation is deep, revelatory, dialectical and transformative.[3] To quote Ortiz once more: 'The result of every union of cultures is similar to that of the reproductive process between individuals:

[1]Ortiz, Fernando, '"Transculturation" and Cuba', translated by Harriet de Onis, in Chomsky, Aviva, Carr, Barry, and Smorkaloff, Pamela Maria (eds.). *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 2003. 27.

[2]Carpentier, Alejo. 'On the Marvelous Real in America', translated by Tanya Huntington and Lois Parkinson Zamora, in Zamora, Lois Parkinson and Faris, Wendy B. (eds.) *Magical Realism*: *Theory*, *History, Community.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995. 75–88. The editors' introduction and note discusses the relationship between the various early versions of the term.

[3]Enrico Mario Santí. 'Towards a Reading of Fernando Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint*', *Review*: *Literature and Arts of the Americas*, 37:1, 17. 2004.

The offspring always have something of both parents but are always different from each other.' (Santí, 17)

If 'transculturated' is the adjectival form of the noun, indicating the result of a union of cultures, 'transcultural' refers to process. Like Said's 'contrapuntal', which differs from the Cuban 'counterpoint' by introducing an oppositional force that has political and theoretical agency, and like Carpentier's 'marvellous real', 'the heritage of all of America, where we have not yet begun to establish an inventory of our cosmogonies', in a world where cultures contend and converge openly and dynamically, the 'transcultural' reflects and inflects the flows of historical reality. (Zamora, 87) Timothy Brennan takes this further when he describes the concept of transculturation as 'a subtle, undisciplined exchange of values in which an entirely new culture is produced', a story 'not so much of mutuality as of reversal' that gives 'the formerly assimilated a conspicuous, almost dominant power'. In the process, he says, following Carpentier, New World intellectuals can see what Europeans cannot, which may explain why they are 'for the most part curiously ignored' in discussions of globalisation, where 'older, often high-German or poststructuralist French, intellectual traditions remain centre stage'.[4]

Other terms that cluster around 'transcultural' in a comparable or related space of meaning include 'multicultural', 'cross-cultural' and 'intercultural'; 'transnational', 'translingual', 'translational'; and more, such as 'intercommunal', 'in-between', 'diasporic', 'migrant', 'cosmopolitan', 'international'; and, sometimes, 'global' and even 'world' itself. Each of these words can be more or less useful and precise in definition, nuance and applicability. All have gained currency with the discourse of globalisation over the last quarter-century, where globalisation refers loosely to the phenomena of flows, exchanges and connectedness that have come with late capitalism and new communications technology in combination: new and unprecedented in so many ways, but also not totally new. My intention here is not to fill a paper with fine-grained semantic distinctions, since the meanings of all these terms overlap and blur, but rather to identify aspects or qualities that might enable a more informed and more complex discussion, perhaps with the potential to change habits and practice. I do this by considering 'transcultural' approaches to the practice of reading and writing.

'Transculturation' occurs in the title of an influential book on travel writing, *Imperial Eyes*: *Travel Writing and Transculturation* by Mary Louise Pratt (1992; second edition 2008), which treats 'transculturation [as] a phenomenon of the contact zone', with particular reference to writing.[5] With the popularity of new kinds of travel writing, informed by the insights of cultural studies and post-colonialism, in recent decades, 'transcultural' has acquired a particular application and Pratt's book

[4]Brennan, Timothy. 'Introduction to the English Edition', Carpentier, Alejo. *Music in Cuba*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2001. 41–44.

[5]Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes*: *Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992; second edition 2008), 7–9.

and the term itself are frequently cited in research on travel writing as a form of creative non-fiction.

But first let's take the word apart. '*Trans-*' plus '*cultural*'. '*Cultural*', of course, has become too large and general to talk about very meaningfully, an umbrella word that includes peoples, languages, communities and traditions, yet stands apart, importantly, from the idea of nation or the notion of race. 'Transcultural', then, is a distinctively different term from 'transnational'. '*Trans-*', in any case, is ambiguous. From its Latin etymology it means 'across', 'to the other side', and so approximates to 'cross-' or 'inter-' as prefixes. But 'to the other side' also suggests going 'beyond', as in 'transcend', to pass above or outside the limits. The ambiguity occurs in 'transnational', as in the recent 'transnational turn' in historical and cultural studies, where it means both identifying transactions *between* national entities and looking *beyond* those boundaries to the formation of something new and larger. So, for example, 'world literature' exists beyond the nation, transnationally, but is arguably also comprised of 'national literatures', or versions thereof, often in hierarchically ordered relationship. '*Trans-*' combined with '*cultural*' suggests a more fluid, less structured process that encompasses adaptive re-interpretation and contestation. By contrast 'intercultural', in my usage at least, describes a reciprocal encounter between equivalent existing cultures that leaves both largely unaltered. 'Transcultural' allows for imbalance, disparity and transformation.

Since my interests are in literature I hope to define by demonstration in support of two related claims: first, that much of the best, most acclaimed literary writing today is transcultural, and second, that such writing encourages us to develop transcultural awareness in our reading, interpretation and critical or writerly response. It is an invitation to join an ongoing conversation.

Here is one example of writing that travels well:

> When the phone rang I was in the kitchen, boiling a potful of spaghetti and whistling along to an FM broadcast of the overture to Rossini's *The Thieving Magpie*, which has to be the perfect music for cooking pasta.
>
> I wanted to ignore the phone, not only because the spaghetti was nearly done but because Claudio Abbado was bringing the London Symphony to its musical climax. Finally, though, I had to give in. It could have been someone with news of a job. I turned down the gas, went to the living room, and picked up the receiver.
>
> 'Ten minutes, please,' said a woman on the other end.
>
> I'm good at recognizing people's voices, but this was not one I knew.
>
> 'Excuse me? To whom did you wish to speak.'
>
> 'To *you*, of course. Ten minutes, please. That's all we need to understand each other….'
>
> … 'Sorry, but you caught me in the middle of cooking spaghetti. Could you call back later?'
>
> 'Spaghetti? What are you doing cooking spaghetti at 10.30 in the morning?'
>
> 'That's none of your business,' I said. '*I* decide what I eat and when I eat it.' (Murakami 2003, 5–6)

Can you recognise it? Do you know where you are, which culture or language you're in? Yes, it's in English, but is that its original language? Where is it set? We could be anywhere doing the things that many people in today's world can do wherever they happen to be. Cook noodles, listen to music. But that anywhere is built up from quite specific details, references and language. Italian? American? Wherever? Not quite. It is now, or rather yesterday, when the radio was on the bench and the phone had a receiver.

Once we have even quite basic information about the text, we can start to read it differently. Here is a note from the imprint page of this particular edition of *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* by Haruki Murakami (or Murakami Haruki in Japanese): 'translated and adapted from the Japanese by Jay Rubin with the participation of the author'. The wording is interesting. Here's some more of what appears on the imprint page of my 2003 UK Vintage edition:

> First published in three volumes in 1994 and 1995 with the title *Nejimaki-dori kuronikuru* by Shinchosa Ltd., Tokyo.
>
> English translation © Haruki Murakami 1997, 1998.
>
> Alfred Birnbaum coined the term 'wind-up bird' in his translation of 'The Wind-up Bird and Tuesday's Women' included in the collection, *The Elephant Vanishes.*
>
> Haruki Murakami has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as the author of this work. (Murakami, iv)

This English text, then, is no simple translation from Japanese. It is another authorised version, produced with the author's involvement, in English. With this information we can seek out biographical knowledge about the author which makes our reading different again. Haruki Murakami, leading Japanese and world novelist, is highly proficient in English and has translated American literary classics such as *The Great Gatsby* and the stories of Raymond Carver into Japanese … and he wrote parts of *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, in Japanese, while living in Medford, Massachusetts, where cooking spaghetti while listening to Rossini on FM radio was probably a less remarkable thing to do at that time than almost anywhere else in the world, even at 10.30 am. Further, Rossini's thieving magpie (and if you know the piece, it goes like a clock wound up too fast) prepares the way, in the very first sentence of the novel, for the mysterious 'wind-up bird' of the title—of a work that turns out to be enormous, dark and far-reaching. It goes to the heart of what Japan did in and to China in the Sino-Japanese and 'world' war (1936–45), and the continuing consequences. The invitation to what seems like a recognisable, comfortable global space on page one becomes an entry point into a probing, imaginative reflection of the fate of a nation and its culture, a labyrinthine rabbit hole to go down. To appreciate what Murakami does and how he does it, and to engage with and respond to it, is, for the reader in English, a transcultural education. For the reader in Japanese this will also be the case, but differently, where issues of national history and culture are cast in terms of fiction that pointedly departs from Japanese tradition into a contemporary global style that draws freely on American popular cultural styles. That ability to travel makes Murakami no less popular in Chinese

translation. He lagged behind only J.K. Rowling and Gabriel Garcia Marquez among foreign authors in the millions of yuan he earned in royalties in China in 2012.[6]

My next example comes from the opening of *Elizabeth Costello*: *Eight Lessons* by J.M. Coetzee, published in 2003, the year the author was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature:

Realism

> There is first of all the problem of the opening, namely, how to get us from where we are, which is, as yet, nowhere, to the far bank. It is a simple bridging problem, a problem of knocking together a bridge. People solve such problems every day. They solve them, and having solved them push on.
>
> Let us assume that, however it may have been done, it is done. Let us take it that the bridge is built and crossed, that we can put it out of our mind. We have left behind the territory in which we were. We are in the far territory, where we want to be.
>
> Elizabeth Costello is a writer, born in 1928, which makes her sixty-six years old, going on sixty-seven. She has written nine novels, two books of poems, a book on bird life, and a body of journalism. By birth she is Australian. (Coetzee 2003, 1)

What should we notice first? Perhaps the plainness of the language, in a writer whose work circulates, and is translated, as widely as any living author's. Are those things unconnected? It is not, perhaps, ordinary everyday plainness so much as the exemplary compact clarity of a certain deceptive kind of plain-speaking philosophy. It might not surprise us then to discover, in an acknowledgement at the back of the book, that this chapter, Lesson 1, has had an earlier existence in a high-toned journal of the humanities and social sciences under the inquiring title 'What is Realism?' The opening is designed to tease, perplex, provoke and invite. It is not as simple as it might have seemed, this matter of creating a fictional world for us to inhabit, according to the conventions of realism, and yet the problem is dispatched expeditiously: 'People solve such problems every day.'

Who is this 'we' who want to be 'in the far territory'? The novel begins with the crossing of borders, a transaction given conceptual complexity by the fact that a self-conscious bridge of words is required for it to happen, and re-inforced by the third-person introduction in the third paragraph of a writer, Elizabeth Costello, who is not this writer, and is an Australian, where J.M. Coetzee would be described as 'by birth South African', though at the time of the novel's publication he was living in Adelaide, where he continues to be my distinguished colleague at the University of Adelaide. These signs and moves reveal Coetzee as a transcultural writer in a comparable way to Murakami, within English. Sometimes he turns South African material to transcendent fictions, as in *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980). At other times he acts as translator himself (from Dutch) or interprets and inquires into South African (including Afrikaans) writing, or Australian writing, or the work of other

[6] *China Story Yearboook* 2013: *Civilising China*. 415. http://ciw.anu.edu.au/publications/ChinaStory2013.pdf.

writers in translation (from German, from Russian), often in the *New York Review of Books* for a wide and dispersed audience. For Coetzee as a writer of fiction, *Elizabeth Costello* ushers in a phase in which linguistic and cultural settings and registers are shuffled, as in *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007). Sometimes it is as if it has been translated, from Spanish, for example, in *The Childhood of Jesus* (2013). This effect of the distilled clarity of expression accords with the fugal experience, the successive displacement, that the novel evokes. Coetzee's work reads like a translation for some readers, and although this doesn't make an actual translator's work any easier (witness the critical online commentary on the Chinese translations on *Douban*), it prompts the creation of transcultural imaginaries in response, which are sometimes a means of bringing the work back home.[7] Nor is this literary transculturation random, but, whether with Kleist or Defoe or Dostoevsky, or with an Australian or Hispanic figure, always reaching with urgency for what is new (novel) and yet joined to what has been. A transcultural reading brings these strategies to light.

Let me give a different kind of Australian example, from the award-winning novel *Carpentaria* (2006a) by Alexis Wright. Wright, an Indigenous woman, is a member of the Waanyi nation of the Gulf of Carpentaria (in northern Australia) and has worked for Aboriginal concerns and rights over many years, as well as publishing three novels, short stories and non-fiction. In *Carpentaria* the author's multi-layered language has a special strength in incorporating the oral storytelling of her people. As we read, we hear more voices than one. We are always aware of the spoken Aboriginal presence, which is also an ancestral presence, pushing back against the uniform English of the mainstream. The narrator's voice is the voice that encompasses this world as it gives it being, '*from time immemorial*', the title of Chap. 1. That legal-sounding phrase has political and historical import. It overcomes the British colonisers' convenient fiction that Australia was unoccupied when they arrived, *terra nullius* according to their legal doctrine, no man's land, even when it undeniably belonged to the Aboriginal people. Here the transculturation occurs with the placement of the ancient creation story at the opening of a contemporary novel that tells of a fight over country: 'The ancestral serpent, a creature larger than storm clouds, came down from the stars, laden with its own creative enormity. It moved graciously—if you had been watching with the eyes of a bird hovering in the sky far above the ground.' (Wright 2006a, 1) From the outset perspectives are changing grandly and in ways that draw us in. This language, a new creation, resists the single voice in favour of polyphony and dynamic interplay. 'The helix of divided strands is forever moving, entwining all stories together, just like a lyrebird is capable of singing several tunes at once,' as Wright puts it in her essay 'On Writing *Carpentaria*' (84).

[7]See, for example, Rebecca L. Walkowitz. *Born Translated*: *The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

> 'I says,' [Mozzie Fishman] says like he is singing, 'we mobs got to start acting locally. Show whose got the Dreaming. The Laaaw.' He liked to empathise. 'The Laaaaw' whenever he was heating up around the ears on the subject of globalization…. All satiny voice, he said it was time now to end our cowtailing after the white people. It was finale time. Hands up. Who we got to follow? The white man, or the Fishman? This was the ultimatum. Well! He made us that wild. Of course, we got no choice - we got to go with culture every time….
>
> The soundwaves coming off the explosion in the aeroplane hangars at the biggest mine of its type in the world, Gurfurritt, were just about as tremendous a sound you could ever expect to hear on this earth. Like guyfork night. Booom! Booom! Over and over. But one hundred times more louder than that. Ripped the lot….
>
> A whirly wind … swirled straight through… it picked up all the trash. All the cardboard boxes, newspapers lying about and oily rags, spirited the whole lot across the flat towards the line of hangars on fire.
>
> It happened so fast when the fiery whirlwind shot into the bowsers and momentarily, lit them up like candles. Well! It might even have been the old Pizza Hut box someone had left on top of one of those bowsers that added that little bit of extra fuel, you never know, for the extra spark, or it would have happened anyway, but the wick was truly lit.
>
> The finale was majestical. Dearo, dearie, the explosion was holy in its glory. All of it was gone. The whole mine, pride of the banana state, ended up looking like a big panorama of burnt chop suey. On a grand scale of course because our country is a very big story. (*Carpentaria*, 409, 411)

This climactic passage, as local Indigenous activists blow up the multinational mine site, demands a close look. The vernacular, warmly rhythmical and marked by oral exclamations such as 'Well!' and 'Dearo, dearie', carries the account. It is grandmotherly in its knowing at Mozzie Fishman's expense as it mimics his inflammatory speech ('The Laaaaw!'), and equally humorous in its expression of collective feeling ('we got to go with culture every time'). But whose vernacular? Australian, yes. Aboriginal Australian, yes. Northern Kriol, in part. Inventive and idiosyncratic, with pun-like caulks, such as 'cowtailing' layered over 'kowtowing' or 'guyfork' in lieu of 'Guy Fawkes', revealing local understandings. There are the intensifiers of spoken language ('one hundred times more louder than that') which overflow standard English, and a related biblical rhetoric ('majestical', 'holy in its glory'), as the event becomes mythic and spiritual, pitting 'country' against 'state': 'our country is a very big story'.

But whose country? There's a central ambiguity here as Indigenous belonging demands precedence over mainstream claims to ownership, where Indigenous belonging is founded on the 'big' continuity and meaning of 'story'. The narrative in *Carpentaria* moves transculturally, giving presence to Aboriginal experience in Australian cultural space. The transculturation here, as in the early Cuban usages, includes the transformative interchange between cultures and communities within a society.[8] The term 'intercommunal' has a specific application here.[9] Even within a

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[8]Wright has acknowledged her debt to Latin American writers, including Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Eduardo Galeano.

[9]See for example Lo, Jacqueline. 'Disciplining Asian Australian Studies: Projections and Introjections', *Journal of Intercultural Studies* Volume 27, Issue 1–2, 2006. 23.

community there will be communities asking to be recognised, represented and given the power of their own expression.

Wright's vision is universal in its transcultural imagination. The passage from 'On Writing *Carpentaria*' quoted above goes on:

> …Where the characters are Indigenous people in this novel, they might easily have been any scattered people from any part of the world who share a relationship with their spiritual ancestors and heritage, or for that matter, any Australian–old or new. (84)

This is at once generous and demanding: a reconceptualization. It grows in Wright's next novel, *The Swan Book* (2013), where swan stories from near and far, black and white, converge in a sacred, sovereign homeland. 'What happens when there are conflicting stories,' Wright asks, 'or no story to be found for particular events, or how stories that do not belong can be accommodated….' Her creation challenges the narratives that 'have a stranglehold in the mindset of colonial domination' in an attempt to free readers from prejudice, but that takes work.[10] It requires a transforming imaginative engagement, an act of translation on a grand scale, not into another language but into our own.

Wright's work has been widely translated, including, appropriately, into Chinese, since she acknowledges her Chinese ancestry. Chinese Nobel literature laureate Mo Yan launched the Chinese translation of *Carpentaria* by Li Yao in Beijing in 2012. In finding equivalences for Wright's verbal pyrotechnics the translator transculturates to bring the text home. In the passage quoted above 'chop suey' ('a big panorama of burnt chop suey') recovers its Chinese original, *chao zasui*, while 'cowtailing' loses its suggestion of 'kowtow' in favour of a different animal saying that anticipates the reference to dogs a few lines later: *zai bairen pigu houtou yaoweiqilian*, 'wagging the tail fawningly after the backsides of white people'.[11] The amusing reference to 'chop suey' is a reminder of the exchanges between Chinese cooks and Aboriginal people in northern Australia, almost from time immemorial.

The new formulation that lies outside or beyond normative literary form and style comes into being through transcultural moves. Sometimes it's a word that's untranslatable, as in my final example, from a contemporary writer whose work circulates widely both in Chinese through the Chinese world and in translation through much of the rest, Yu Hua. Here's a sample from the last essay in his recent book, *China in Ten Words* (2012), translated by Allan H. Barr:

[10]Wright, Alexis. *Proceedings of the Third China Australia Literary Forum*, Western Sydney University, 28–29 August 2015. 15.

[11]Wright, Alexis. *Kapengtaliyawan* [*Carpentaria*]. Translated by Li Yao. Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House. 2012. 332, 334.

忽悠
bamboozle

What is 忽悠?* Originally it meant "to sway unsteadily"—like fishing boats bobbing on the waves, for example, or leaves shaking in the wind. Later it developed a new life as an idiom particularly popular in northeast China, derived from another phrase that sounds almost the same: 胡诱—"to mislead." Just as variant strains of the flu virus keep constantly appearing, 忽悠 has in its lexical career diversified itself into a dazzling range of meanings. Hyping things up and laying it on thick—that's 忽悠. Playing a con trick and ripping somebody off—that's 忽悠, too. In the first sense, the word has connotations of bragging, as well as enticement and entrapment; in the second sense, it carries shades of dishonesty, misrepresentation, and fraud. "Bamboozle," perhaps, is the closest English equivalent.

*hūyōu

Here the translator acknowledges the challenge of such Chinese wordplay by leaving the Chinese *hūyōu* in untransliterated character form, partly on the assumption that some of his readers will know or want to know it that way, but also to highlight the inadequacy of translation of words that acquire an intense but transient signification in a contemporary context. He brilliantly enacts this provisionality in the sentence: '"Bamboozle," perhaps, is the closest English equivalent.' (203) That's debatable, but in any case 'bamboozle' is such an odd English word. Its origin is unknown according to Webster's Dictionary. It has no cognates. It is probably unfamiliar to many people with a high level of English competency. And here it operates almost as a new, even Chinese, coinage for the unique contemporary cultural phenomenon of *huyou*. Something that relates etymologically to the essentially Chinese 'bamboo'? Which it doesn't. And if we can't understand *huyou*, via 'bamboozle', Yu Hua/Allan Barr would suggest, how can we understand the Chinese people who have made this word a new star? By speaking of *huyou* in an English-language context, we show we know. The transcultural move here is to leave the untranslatable as if untranslated, a hole in the text.

My examples are from books I've come across, books I've connected with and like. That raises a question about transcultural reading and writing. How random is it? Or, more formally, what are the processes by which, and the reasons why, some works actively enter the larger conversation and others may not. It seems to involve a mixture of qualities intrinsic to the work and qualities outside it, chiefly the larger need of the times, the historical moment or, more exactly, the moment of what is coming, potentially at least. A word for that is 'affinity'. It occurs, as a term derived

from chemistry and applied to human behaviour, in the translated title of Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities* (*Die Wahlverwandtshaften*, 1809). Since Goethe is generally credited with the term 'world literature' (*Welt-literatur*), it makes sense to insert his use of 'elective affinity' into the way it comes about. 'The epoch of World-literature is at hand', he told Eckermann in 1827, 'and everyone must strive to hasten its approach'. In this understanding—and behind Goethe lies Herder, who really deserves the credit here, the formation of world literature is at once elective and dialectical, as successive generations in their various societies go about selectively and self-referentially 'appropriating to ourselves what is good, so far as it goes.'[12]

That is the great insight explored by Wang Zuoliang in the essays gathered in *Degrees of Affinity* in 1985 and reprinted this year with additional material by Springer. Some written in the 1940s, most written in the newly opened window of the early 1980s, they offer a profound and varied set of reflections on the workings of affinity between authors and between literatures—we might say, between cultures, or cultural moments—across time and across space. 'Affinity works in all sorts of ways. It is not restricted to any one period, but can cut across centuries.' (Wang, 1)

Wang makes two main points, first that there developed an active, unprecedented, seemingly unlikely affinity between Chinese and European literature in the twentieth century, which he explores from the Chinese side, in terms of China's attraction to 'those elements in Western culture that answered to her needs and aspiration at a particular point of time', when 'confronted with an acute problem of survival' (4–5), a revolutionary moment in which 'even in repulsion there was an attraction of opposites' (5). Second, that Chinese authors brought 'a rare critical sense' to the interaction, grounded in the resilience of China's own long tradition and its resistance to change (5), that was continuous with the critical creativity of the Western authors to whom they were responding, such as the English Romantic poets, the French symbolists, and modernists such as Eliot and Auden, Lorca, Rilke, and Hugh MacDiarmid (1882–1978). MacDiarmid, a communist and Scottish nationalist, wrote in Scots and English. Wang translated his poetry into Chinese. In a poem entitled 'In Memoriam James Joyce' (1955) MacDiarmid wrote 'World-history and world-philosophy/Are only now beginning to dawn', a sentiment that must have chimed with Wang's hopes at the time.

But Wang's prime example is Charles Lamb (1775–1834), whose affinity with dramatist John Webster (1580–1634), demonstrated in his compilation *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare* (1808), recovered Webster from two centuries of near-oblivion, making him available to further revaluation and appropriation by T.S. Eliot, whose phrase 'Webster … saw the skull beneath the skin' ('Whispers of Immortality', 1–2) became a touchstone for modernism. In Wang's words, in 1949, 'with Charles Lamb, Webster came into

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[12]Eckermann, J.P. *Conversations with Goethe*. Translated by John Oxenford. London: J.M. Dent. 1930. 165–6.

his own. … [N]earest to Shakespeare in tragic intensity … his name is now firmly put back on the map of literature, the name of a major city with its myriad lighted windows and its dark, vicious archways.' (136, 154). The passage derives from Wang Zuoliang's graduate work on Webster at Oxford, which was published in book form in Salzburg in 1975. The city might be either of those, or a Chinese city such as Peking as it was when Wang was a lecturer at Tsing Hua (Qinghua) in the late 1940s, when China's civil war still raged.

In 1937, as the Japanese advanced on Peking, the universities had fled south where, in Kunming, the Southwest Associated University, or Lianda, was set up. 'Conditions were appalling,' Wang recalls of his time there as student and teacher, 'cramped quarters, no proper equipment and, what hurt most, almost no books. But people, particularly the young, didn't mind the hardships too much in the first flush of a national war. There was a wartime camaraderie and a sharpened sense of intellectual quest. The faculty had many noted writers…. The Englishman William Empson gave a course on contemporary English poetry.' (73. Empson is famously said to have transcribed *Othello* from memory.[13]) Wang's Empsonian lineage—another affinity, if you like—continues through the decades that follow, turbulent for both men. The complex energies of the degrees of affinity about which Wang writes flow together with the oppositional energies Empson finds in ambiguity, pastoral and complex words (to allude to the titles of three of his books). Using biography, another Empson title, as I'm doing here, it's possible to see how fugitive yet tenacious affinity can be. 'The first book I translated was written by James Joyce,' Wang recalls in another essay. 'It was *Dubliners*, a collection of his short stories. I did that in the early forties, when I was a young instructor at the Southwest Associated University in Kunming…. I sent the manuscript to a publisher in Guilin. Guilin is the resort city in Guangxi where you see all those strange-shaped hills. One day the Japanese sent their bombers over the city. Parts of the city went up in flames, my manuscript with them.' (129). It was never published.

Wang notes that 'literary traffic is rarely one-way' (8). We are reasonably familiar with the extraordinary influence of classical Chinese poetry on Western modernist poetics. But Wang's concern is in the other direction, the development of modern Chinese creative writing, in which translation of foreign literature acted as a powerful tool. Writing in 1949, he observes that the great Chinese writer Lu Xun (1881–1936) 'consciously and deliberately … tries to make the Chinese he employs in the translations read like a foreign language' (32), when he is translating from Russian for example. The foreign influence meets resistance, and a creative fusion can result, as Wang finds in the case of Dai Wangshu (1905–50), the great translator of Lorca:

[13]Haffenden, John. *William Empson*: *Volume 1*: *Among the Mandarins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). 463, 658 note 84.

> The Chinese language was in a particularly open state when Dai started to translate; there had just occurred a literary revolution of the first magnitude. No revolution, however, could have wiped out at a stroke the classical heritage of a country like China, and that too helped matters…. Thus tradition and innovation meet in a good translation. (127)

Wang finds such happy results in the work of the Chinese modernist poets whom he knew and felt affinity with at Lianda, such as Feng Zhi and Mu Dan, and others such as Ai Qing (father of artist activist Ai Weiwei) and Bian Zhilin, who translated some of Auden's *Journey to a War* sonnets on his own journey towards 'filling a compact literary form of the West with the floodtide of emotion surging on the China front' in 1938–9 (Wang, 72). Transcultural practice is at once the means of renewal and part of what is expressed as a result. The nature of that practice changes, then, according to changing perceptions and positions, as we see today in China's own research in this area. Peng Ping explains in an essay called 'Transmutation of Modern China's Attitude to Western Culture from the Perspective of Translation' how approaches to translation have differed markedly according to changing needs across the 19th and 20th centuries, noting that 'translation tends to play a central role when there are turning points, crises, or literary vacuums in a literature'.[14] The implication, by way of conclusion, is that Chinese ideas about translation are due to change again, as China recalibrates its attitude to the West, and the West changes in response.

I met Wang Zuoliang when I taught at Beijing Foreign Studies University in 1986. He was the head of the English department and had produced the anthology of English literature from which I was to teach the introductory survey course. It was, to my relief, a familiar version of English literature, not so different to the Norton anthology I had been using in faraway Canberra. The selection, progressive in several senses and designed for close reading and linguistic analysis, showed Prof Wang's lineage, from Empson and I.A. Richards, founder of 'practical criticism', both of whom had worked in Beijing, and from his Oxford training. He gave me copies of his books, *Degrees of Affinity* and, later, *Translation*: *Experiments and Reflections* (1989). I carried those books around, trusting that their time would come, for me, which has happened thirty years later, as the degree of affinity between my own interests and Wang Zuoliang's understanding of the workings of literary affinity has intensified. I pay tribute to his great and lasting contribution here.

To speak from a local perspective for a moment, Wang Zuoliang had visited Australia before I met him, to attend Writers' Week at the Adelaide Festival of Arts in 1980. In an essay he published afterwards he wrote:

[14]Peng Ping. 'Transmutation of Modern China's Attitude to Western Culture from the Perspective of Translation'. *Intercultural Studies*: *New Frontiers.* Ed. Sun Youzhong. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. 2010. 329.

> Adelaide is a garden city facing the Indian Ocean. It has a river in the centre and green space on all sides. There are extensive vineyards nearby. In early March the summer heat is turning to autumn. The days are bright but not hot, the evenings are cool and fresh, encouraging people to stroll in the leafy streets and enjoy the festival atmosphere.
>
> We—the first delegation from the Chinese Writers' Association to visit Australia—arrived in this beautiful place, known as the 'Athens of the South', in festival season.[15] [translated by Suqin Qian]

In Adelaide Wang met Christina Stead, whom he remembered as 'cultivated, calm, unpretentious and quiet'. She was introduced as 'Australia's greatest living novelist', but said that, living abroad for long periods, she wrote on universal themes and had written too little about Australia itself. On the same trip Wang met poets A.D. Hope and Judith Wright, and many other notable Australian writers, including Tom Keneally and David Williamson. He was looking for the defining characteristics of Australian literary culture.

From the early years of the Peoples' Republic of China (1949-), literary scholars in China had sought a comradely affinity in Australian literature. Both states had newness in common, from a long historical perspective. When academic life resumed after the Cultural Revolution, literary research was allocated by geographical region to Chinese universities and Australia was placed with other South Pacific countries as part of Oceanian literature. This separated it off from Britain and North America. Over time this focus produced a particular understanding of Australian literature as shaped by geographical and historical circumstances with its own distinctive pattern of development. In the essay he produced on his return from Australia, Wang Zuoliang wrote:

> Australian literature is an ideal subject for a literary historian. Its history is both long and not long. The literature of the Indigenous people has a long history, especially the oral literature, and is not well known. The literature in English produced since white people arrived in the 18th century, a period of two centuries, has a short history, perhaps one hundred years. But in that short period there has been a clear development out of the literature of the mother country, England, to a literature of the people with Australian characteristics and features. (1)

This was relevant to the People's Republic in the 1980s, an even younger state than Australia, as it sought to create a new literature from the old. When he discusses world literature, Wang, unlike most other commentators, generally allocates a place for Australia. Perhaps his work on Burns and MacDiarmid gave him an affinity with different dialect locations and different accents.

He met the American poet Robert Bly in Adelaide, and again when he visited the University of Minnesota. Through Bly he was introduced to the poetry of James Wright, with which he felt an affinity. He translated some into Chinese.

At the Adelaide Festival of Arts, Wang saw a modern dress version of John Webster's play *The White Devil* on which he doesn't comment. He is more excited

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[15] Wang Zuoliang, 'Experiencing Australia's Festival Atmosphere' [*Aozhou shengjie dangchangguan*], Foreign Literature [*Waiguo Wenxue*], 4, 1980, 1.

by the performance of Brecht songs by Gisela May from the Berliner Ensemble. Through his essay on Australia, and in all his writing, the same intelligent sifting is evident, as he connects with what works for him. Asked about translating Webster in an interview in Australia, he acknowledges that Webster's plays would be difficult to translate, but not as difficult as poems where the language is extremely simple, like some of Wordsworth's: 'the really difficult thing is to translate a folk tale from its original very simple language to the language of a folk tale in Chinese, for instance'. That is the deepest kind of transcultural transaction.

'If you were to ask me, today, what I think "world literature" is,' says award-winning debut novelist Fiona McFarlane, 'I would say that it's a way of reading'.[16] This might convert into Said's 'aesthetic of resistance', where that way of reading becomes a critical, theoretical or creative engagement, as glossed by Marina Warner in *Stranger Magic*, her wide-ranging study of *Arabian Nights*, one of the most potently transcultural of texts:

> Said asks, 'how knowledge that is non-dominative and non-coercive can be produced in a setting that is deeply inscribed with the politics, the considerations, the positions, and the strategies of power.' His answer was to participate and engage. The word *theoria*, he liked to remind us, means 'the action of observing'; for him, theory was a dynamic activity, not a matter of passive reception. The theorist-critic affects the works he observes, and the works themselves are not self-created or autonomous but precipitated in the crucible of society and history. (322)

Reading transcultural writing is part of our moment in time, part of the social and historical precipitate we are presented with now. One reason why I am attracted to a transcultural pedagogy in literary studies and creative writing is in response to the internationalisation of education at tertiary level, including in the humanities, especially with reference to China's growing participation. This is a substantial case of transculturation in action. As can be seen from the writing samples I've looked at, to communicate transculturally is part of the practice of some important contemporary authors, part of what they do. By experiencing and understanding that, we can discover the possibilities of transcultural inquiry for ourselves as teachers, researchers, and writers.

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Author Biography

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Hsiung's Cultural Translation of the Peking Opera *Wang Baochuan*

Huijuan Ma

Abstract In modern history, the first English version of the Peking Opera *Wang Baochuan* was translated by Chinese playwright S.I. Hsiung in 1934. When it was performed on stage in London in the 1930s, it won huge success. Later on, the English version *Lady Precious Stream* was adapted into different languages and performed on stage in more than 40 countries around the world. This paper explores Hsiung's translation of the Peking Opera *Wang Baochuan* from a cultural perspective. The transcultural adaptation and rewriting of the Chinese story are examined with examples to analyze Hsiung's translation strategies from the textual and extra-textual levels. The study reveals that if a translated text intends to be smoothly accepted in a target culture, the translator should reproduce the text on the level of culture as a whole rather than of the word or sentence of the source text, and take into account the poetics in the receiving culture when the translation is made.

Keywords Shih - I Hsiung · *Lady Precious Stream* · Cultural translation strategy · Patronage

Introduction

Shih-I Hsiung (熊式一) was one of the three most successful Chinese diaspora writers in the West in the 1930s. As a successful translator and bilingual writer, Hsiung enjoyed a great reputation in the world of English. He was best known for his play *Lady Precious Stream* (1936) and the novel *The Bridge of Heaven* (1943). His translation *Lady Precious Stream* based on a classical Peking opera *Wang Baochuan* was performed at the Little Theatre in London by the People's National Theatre and ran for about 1000 nights between 1934 and 1936, when Chinese culture was little known to the Western world. It was the first European production of a traditional

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Chinese play in four acts rendered by a Chinese playwright. The play was restaged several times in the 1940s and became “a staple of repertory and school productions.” Its significance lies in the fact that “it was the first to be written and directed by a Chinese immigrant and staged in London’s West End” (Thorpe 2014).

Hsiung was also the first playwright from China on Broadway. After the successful production of the play in London, Hsiung was invited to present *Lady Precious Stream* at the Booth Theatre in New York, and it ran for about 400 nights in the USA.

Later on, the English version of the play was used as a textbook in the UK to help students to understand Chinese culture, and it has been translated into different languages (Yeh 2014: 18). It was staged in many other parts of the world and even adapted for television in 1950.

Given that few English-speaking people knew China in the 1930s, Hsiung’s successful representation and production of the Peking opera *Wang Baochuan* in the world of English deserves our special attention. How could the translator make his translation *Lady Precious Stream* so successful in the UK and USA in the 1930s? What translation strategies did he use to deal with the culture-related problems of the play? What factors contributed to the success of his play production on stage? In this paper, I will attempt to answer the above questions by recontextualizing Hsiung’s translation of the Peking Opera *Wang Baochuan* into English and its production on stage at both the textual and extra-textual levels.

Hsiung the Translator and His Translation of *Lady Precious Stream*

In this section, I will first give a brief introduction of the translator Hsiung and his translation *Lady Precious Stream*, providing the historical contexts of his translation activities in the 1930s.

Hsiung the Translator

S.I. Hsiung (1902–1991), a native of Nanchang in Jiangxi province, graduated from the department of English of Beijing Higher Teacher’s College (Beijing Normal University) in 1923. After his graduation, he worked as a teacher of English and Chinese at several universities in Beijing, Shanghai and Jiangxi province. During the time he was teaching, he translated almost all the plays written by the Scottish playwright J.M. Barrie into Chinese as well as some plays written by George Bernard Shaw, and some were published in some influential magazines such as *Modern Novels* (《小说月报》). It was through translation that Hsiung became

familiar with modern English plays. These translation activities laid a solid foundation for his later translation of Chinese texts into English.

In 1932, due to his failure to be promoted as a professor as he lacked a doctorate degree from a foreign university, Hsiung went to University of London to conduct his Ph.D. research in theatre study. During a talk with his supervisor Prof. Allardyce Nicoll, Hsiung was advised to translate a Peking Opera into English with a view to making some money to support himself in London. He followed the advice and began to select a play which might cater to British theater-goers. After a careful comparative study of some traditional Chinese plays, he finally chose the Peking Opera *Wang Baochuan* and translated it into English. The English version entitled *Lady Precious Stream* was published in 1936 by Methuen & Co. Ltd., a London-based publisher, and was put on the stage in the same year. The production of the play, directed by Nancy Price and Hsiung himself, took place at the Little Theatre in London and was presented by the People's National Theatre. It was the first traditional Peking Opera to be translated into English by a Chinese playwright and performed by Western players in the west.

The performance was a huge success and won Hsiung great acclaim. Congratulations rained in on him from all quarters and the reviews of the book and the performance teemed with praise by such influential newspapers and magazines such as *The Times* and *The Spectator*.

The commercial and critical success of his translation encouraged Hsiung to translate another classic Chinese play *Xixiangji* into English. The translation entitled *The Romance of the Western Chamber*, however, was not well received, though it was recognized as a piece of great work and republished by Columbia University Press in the 1960s. Hsiung later devoted himself to the translation and writing of plays and novels in English, with a view to introducing Chinese culture to the Western world, and helping Westerners have a better understanding of the Chinese people. Among his works, his novel *The Bridge of Heaven* was so popular that it was reprinted four times in 1943, four times in 1944 and twice in 1945. In his later years, while working as a teacher in different universities around the world, he translated most of his own works into Chinese, including *Lady Precious Stream* and *The Bridge of Heaven*.

The Success of Lady Precious Stream *on the London Stage*

It took Hsiung only six weeks to complete his translation of *Lady Precious Stream* since he accepted Prof. Nicoll's advice in 1932. After it was published in 1934 by Methuen, a London-based publisher, the English version was reprinted three times successively in three years for its success on stage. The play ran for nearly 1000 performances in London for fourteen months. It had more than 400 performances in

the USA, with three seasons separately performed in New York, Chicago, the mid-west and east, and the west coast. What's more, "the play has been translated into nearly all the languages and produced in nearly all the capitals of the world" (Hsiung 1939: 176). It is said that in Holland, the title of the play was changed to *The Embroidered Ball*, with the heroine's name being Lady Pearl Stream. In Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the heroine's name was transferred to Lady Spring Water and Lady Diamond Stream separately. Newspapers and magazines reported the success of the performance and literary critics praised the play. The play was compared to "almond blossoms', "the feathers on a butterfly's wing", "last nights' sunset", "the dew on the grass" and "hoar-frost in the sun" (Hsiung 1939: 165). The newspaper *Apollo* even described the play as "a gem of the first water in a charming setting". *The National Review* complimented the author for "having done what Fitzgerald had done to enrich English literature." The *Sunday Times* considered the author to be "an enchanter of a rare type", and G.K. Chesterton's Weekly regarded the play "a little masterpiece", and the Spectator said "It has the marks of a fine culture" (Hsiung 1939: 165).

We can safely conclude that Hsiung's translation *Lady Precious Stream* was a huge success when it was performed in the West in the 1930s. As a matter of fact, it is owing to the great popularity of the performance of Hsiung's play in London from 1934 to 1936 that 1935 was termed "China Year" by the then Chinese Ambassador Quo Tai-chi (Lin 1935: 106).

Hsiung's Cultural Translation Strategy of the Traditional Chinese Play

During his stay in London, Hsiung once observed that "the most unfortunate fact about China was that the West got to know China and her people at a very undesirable time" (Hsiung 1939: 187). In the 1930s, few Westerners were familiar with the Chinese culture, and the Chinese people was termed as "Chinaman", who could perform all kinds of inhuman black magic like Fu Manchu in books and films made by Western writers and film producers. There existed great cultural gaps between China and the Western world when Hsiung undertook his translation project to translate a traditional Chinese play into English and stage it in London. One may wonder what elements had contributed to the success of his translation and production of the play in a society where people knew little about Chinese traditional theatre?

The paper attempts to explore Hsiung's translation of the Peking Opera *Wang Baochuan* from a cultural perspective. Transcultural adaptation and rewriting of the Chinese story are examined to analyze Hsiung's translation strategies at the textual and extra-textual levels.

Textual Level: Cultural Rewriting of the Original Text

This section discusses the cultural rewriting of the original made by Hsiung in the process of his translation of *Lady Precious Stream* at the textual level. It includes three parts: (1) adapting the Chinese play from Peking Opera to English drama; (2) rewriting the content; and (3) recreating the comic effects.

Adaption of the Chinese Play: From Peking Opera to English Drama

There are two kinds of translation attitudes that a translator has when he/she is facing a source text. When the text enjoys a high status in the source culture, the translator usually strictly follows the principle of faithfulness. On the contrary, when the text is considered low status in the source culture, the translator often takes liberties with the original, rewriting it according to his purpose of translation. The latter situation aptly applies to Hsiung's attitude towards his translation of the Peking Opera *Wang Baochuan*. Hsiung expressed his views more than once that the traditional Chinese play was merely a popular commercial melodrama: "…from the very beginning I have never tried to disguise the fact that *Lady Precious Stream* is a commonplace melodrama" (1939: 177). And fifty years later, he still insisted

> I didn't translate it (*Lady Precious Stream*) faithfully from the original text, which is only a commercial play in Chinese. Despite my statement in the introduction that the English version was translated from a traditional Chinese play, I only borrowed the general framework of the original story. In fact, I used all kinds of rewriting techniques such as addition, omission, alteration, etc. in the process of my translation (Hsiung 2010: 30).

Since Hsiung did not regard the source text as a typically representative traditional Chinese play, he enjoyed freedom to recreate his own version, though it was based on several versions of the Chinese story. In his autobiography he even used the title of "Writing *Wang Baochuan*" (*Lady Precious Stream*) referring to his translation activity in the 1930s in London.

Regarding Hsiung's adaption of the Chinese play into English, obvious changes can be observed. First, the Chinese play lasts five or six hours in performance, whereas Hsiung's version is much shortened to be in accordance with the time requirement of the English play's performance. Second, the plot of the story has been changed to some extent. In the original play, the general Hsieh Ping-kuei had two ladies as his wives. In the translation, the general fled before his marriage to the princess and reunited with his wife Lady Precious Stream, while the princess was left to the foreign minister who was absent from the original story. What's more, Hsiung adapted the Chinese play into a spoken drama in four acts. It was necessary for the translator to do so if he wanted to make his translation a success on the London stage. When commenting on the differences between the Chinese and English plays, the English scholar Gordon Bottomley pointed out that there are many beautiful literary passages in classic Chinese plays, which are difficult to perform on a Western stage. The Western players believed that performance of

Chinese plays would be impossible without a great amount of deletion of these passages (1935). A French dramatist shared this view. He stated that a great amount of rewriting is needed if a Chinese play is to be put on the French stage. Since the Chinese plays have many songs but few scenes, it is of a great necessity for the translator to revise the dialogue of the Chinese play by reducing the songs and making the play coherent (Du 2002: 152). As Hsiung was familiar with English plays by reading and translating them or going to theatre in person, his translation of the Peking opera *Wang Baochuan* is in essence a kind of adaptation. Moreover, Hsiung's adaption from Peking opera to Western drama was cleverly done. As Lin Yutang said favorably,

> ……the original exits in separate operatic scenes (for I wish to emphasize the point that the Chinese drama is essentially operatic), these different scenes being seldom acted on the one hand on the same night, but are chosen according to the spirit of the occasion, and very often according to the whims and moods of the host, when the performance is privately given at a gentleman's home. This being so, it is easy to understand why there is less demand for dramatic unity and a logical evolution of the plot, with climax and denouement in the western sense…As it is presented on the English stage, certain adaptations to ensure continuity are inevitable.

It can be seen that by adapting the Chinese play into an English drama, Hsiung makes it performable on the English stage. It also ensures the coherence and cohesion of the play within a limited and acceptable time which English audiences get used to.

Rewriting of the Content

Andre Lefevere in his work *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* argues that translation is a form of rewriting. In other words, when transferring a text from one language into another, a literary translator could use all kinds of manipulative techniques, which include omission, addition, paraphrase, alteration, etc. He further states that all the forms of rewriting are determined by two factors: the translator's ideology and the poetics dominant in the receiving literature at the time the translation is made (2004: 41–58). Examining the English version *Lady Precious Stream*, we can safely say that it is a rewriting of the Chinese play rather than a proper translation because of the translator's ideology imposed on him by the source culture and the poetics dominant in the receiving literature. However, this type of rewriting is justified because it takes into account different traditions of stage performances between China and the West. In the following we will examine two rewriting techniques Hsiung has employed in his English version: addition and omission.

Addition of Content

For the convenience of the understanding of English audiences who knew little about Chinese culture, lengthy and informative descriptions of situation and characters, which are absent from the Chinese plays, are added before each scene and before the entrance of each character. And they are delivered by an "Honourable Reader" on the stage. For example, an extra introductory scene of more than 400 words is added at the beginning of the story, which introduces the arrangements of the traditional Chinese theatre and the descriptions of the character of the Prime Minister. On the one hand, these introductions help Westerners better understand the traditional Chinese story; on the other hand, they could arouse readers'/audiences' interests in the Oriental flavor of the stage. As Lascelles Abercrombie, a professor from Bedford College, stated in his introduction to the English version of the play, the technique of Hsiung's imaginary theatre is a delight for English readers when they read that the Prime Minister wears a long black beard "indicating that he is not the villain of the piece" (1934: viii).

Another addition is the scene of the family party in the garden at the beginning of the story. The original play is a love story between the Prime Minister's third daughter Lady Precious Stream and the beggar Hsieh Ping-kuei. Although there are different versions of the story in Chinese, they all start with Lady Precious Stream throwing the embroidered ball. It was the will of God that the ball was received by the beggar Hsieh Ping-kuei so that Lady Precious Stream had no choice but to marry him. In order to make the story more reasonable and acceptable to English readers, the translator decided "to take the matter away from God and to put it, first, tantalizingly into the hands of the Prime Minister, her father, and finally into those of the lady herself" (1939: 173). As a result, the family party of the Prime Minister with his three daughters and two son-in-laws is held in Act I to celebrate the Chinese New Year, enjoying the snow. It is here that the gardener Hsieh Ping-kuei, who, however, is a beggar in the street in the original story, has the opportunity to show his talents both in physical strength and poetry writing. Thus, it is reasonable for Lady Precious Stream to fall in love with him, and later instruct him secretly to receive her embroidered ball when she is selecting her future husband.

In addition, an extra character of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is absent in the Chinese story, is brought into the English version. Hsiung explained the reason for the introduction of this character as follows:

> In ancient China, men were polygamous, so the King of the Western Regions could have Lady Precious Stream as his Queen-proper and the Princess as his Vice-Queen. Since the revolution in 1911, the law of my country forbids a man to have more than one wife, and my solution to the difficulty is the introduction of this man of the world whose sole duty is to help me to get an extra lady off my hands (1939: 173–174).

Despite the translator's careful handling of this matter in his English version, Hsiung was accused of introducing to foreign readers/audiences a play which contained a deplorable and obsolete custom (Hsiung 1939: 174). The above

example reveals clearly the great pressure the ideology of the source culture had imposed on the translator even though he was far away from his motherland.

There are also quite a few interesting additions in the English play. Some characters' words were inserted by the translator in order to express his view that women's status should be high both at home and in society. Here are some examples:

(1) "I am sure you will make a very good, henpecked husband".
(2) "You must kneel down to her, to show that you hold the female sex in higher esteem".
(3) "All the best families of this and every other kingdom are ruled by the wife".

It is evident that when handling the relationship between men and women, and husband and wife in the play, the translator takes into consideration the women's liberation movement around the world after the First World War, which advocated equality between men and women. Additions of this kind into the English play reveal that the translator took into account the social issues which people were concerned with, and could arouse their interest in the play.

Omission of Content

It seems true that where there are additions in the translation there are omissions from the original. Omissions can be easily spotted in *Lady Precious Stream*. The translator intended to delete those parts which he thought were superstitious and advocate the old moral lessons of ancient China. Hsiung stated in the preface of his Chinese version *Lady Precious Stream* what should be omitted from his translation: "my opinion is that such Chinese customs as superstition, polygamy and the death penalty should not be introduced to foreign readers/audiences. As a result, I greatly changed the plot of the original text in my translation" (2006: 192). In what follows, let us look at some omissions in Hsiung's translation.

All the Chinese versions of the play start with some descriptions of the supernatural phenomena, which predict that when Lady Precious Stream threw the embroidered ball to select her would-be husband, it was the will of God that it was received by the beggar Hsieh Ping-kuei in the street. Since the translator regarded these descriptions of supernatural phenomena as superstition, he deleted them from his English version. Instead, he added the scene of a family get-together enjoying the snow and introducing the gardener Hsieh Ping-kuei to the party.

Another example also well illustrates Hsiung's principle of omission. When the general Hsieh Ping-kuei returned to China, and the princess of the western regions followed him and arrived at the border, the old Chinese general Mu in the tower of the Pass addressed her impudently as follows:

The original text:

莫老将军: 丫头吓,丫头!我国先行平贵, 精精壮壮, 被你们掠了去, 不教他好事, 尽教他吃鸦片烟, 弄的面孔饥瘦。我这里有钩镰枪, 把你钩上来, 把你浑身衣服剥掉, 看看你是男是女。

Hsiung's version:

Mu (pointing to her). You bewitching little minx! Captain Hsieh Ping-Kuei of our country used to be a robust young giant, and now, after eighteen years' adventure in your country he comes back **the wreck of a man**! How can I allow him to see you again, you little minx!

In comparison with the Chinese text, it can be seen that two key facts uttered by general Mu are omitted from Hsiung's version because 吃鸦片烟 (smoke opium) is regarded as evil, and 把你浑身衣服剥掉 (take off your clothes with my big iron hook to see whether you are a woman or not) is offensive to a lady.

In the summary of Section "Rewriting of the Content", by using the strategies of rewriting the content of the Chinese play, Hsiung makes it acceptable to the target readers/audiences. It is true that the play is a traditional Chinese story but at the same time it is "modern" in the sense that Chinese superstitions and the outdated customs of ancient China are not represented in the story; while new ideas such as equality between men and women are advocated in accordance with the modern spirit of society.

Recreating the Comic Effects

Wang Baochuan is a traditional Chinese comedy, full of witty dialogue and humorous elements. However, because of differences between the Chinese and English languages, it is not an easy task for the translator to retain the comic effects of the original play while making a faithful translation. As an experienced translator and theatergoer, Hsiung knew the importance and power of the comic effects in the play. While trying his best to represent the humorous elements of the original, he did not translate them literally when it was impossible for him to do so. He sometimes even "recreates" the humorous effects by using wordplay in English. Take the following excerpt for example:

The original text:

(代战公主: ……到了他国地面, 说话要和气点。)

马达、江海:是。老头请呢。

莫将:老头不玩火球。

马达、江海:**老将**!

莫将:**老姜**到菜市买去。

马达、江海:**皇上**!

莫将:黄鳝上鱼店里买去。

马达、江海:**主子**!

莫将:**肘子**要到肉店里买去。 你们两个人, 长得人不人, 鬼不鬼, 也配长了两条仙鹤腿!快回去, 换一个好看一点儿的来说话罢!

The faithful translation:
Ma & Kiang: Hey, old man on the rampart!
Mu: The old man does not play a fireball.
Ma & Kiang: My **old General**!
Mu: **Old ginger**? But it at the shop for selling salt and oils.
Ma & Kiang: My **Emperor**!
Mu: You want **yellow eel**? (here the Chinese pun is lost in the translation). Go and buy it at the fish market.
Ma & Kiang: My **Lord**!
Mu: You want **pig's tripe**? Go and buy it at the butcher's. Look here, you two fellows! You look neither like human beings nor like devils, with you pairs of shaky legs looking like those of stork. Go and get someone more presentable to talk with me.

Hsiung's version
Ma (calling aloud). Hey, my **old man**!
Mu. Old moon? We can't see the **old moon** until midnight.
Kiang. My **old Genera**l!
Mu. **Old ginger**? Buy it at the market where vegetables are for sale.
Ma. **My king**!
Mu. There is **no kinsman** of yours in China.
Kiang. **My master**!
Mu. **Mustard**? Go to the grocery for it!
Ma. **My Lord**!
Mu. **He is in heaven**.
Kiang. **My Emperor**.
Mu. **You are empty**? This is not an eating house! What are you two doing here? You are too ugly to be called human beings and certainly too ordinary to be called devils; and the most peculiar thing about you is how did you get a pair of legs like those of a stork? Go back and get some one more presentable to talk with me!

The dialogue above is between the two officers of the western regions and the old general in the tower on the pass. When responding to their greetings the old man pretended to be deaf in order to make his answers witty and humorous. The translator did not translate all these humorous elements literally, which would be an impossible task, due to differences of wordplay in two languages. Rather, except those phrases such as "old general" versus "old ginger", he created English humor by using terms in the target language such as pairs of "old man" versus "old moon", "king" versus "kinsman", "master" versus "mustard", and "emperor" versus "empty". By recreating the comic effects of the original play, the translator vividly represents the wit and humor of the dialogue.

Moreover, Hsiung's "recreation" of the humor goes a little bit further. Since it is difficult for a translator to translate humor from one language into another, Hsiung

sometimes is found to "create" humor which however was not present in the original as compensation. Here is a case in point.

> WEI. …I remember some poet said: 'To write good poems, one needs perspiration!' It is very cold now, you see, you see. We can't expect any perspiration until the summer comes.
> WANG. Perspiration? You mean inspiration!
> WEI. Oh, yes! Inspiration! (He wipes his forehead with his sleeve.) Not perspiration! Of course not perspiration!
> SILVER S. I know you don't mean perspiration.
> PRECIOUS S. If it is only perspiration that you need, then you must be the greatest poet of the age!

The dialogue above is between Lady Precious Stream and her brother-in-law General Wei, who has no literary talents but is always eager to show off. When he quoted an ancient saying, he mistook "inspiration" for "perspiration" in the saying, making himself a laughing stock in front of the family. This funny incident, however, does not occur in the original play. It is Hsiung's own creation. In fact, there are many funny scenes like the quoted one above in the English version. It is no wonder that Lin Yu Tang makes the following comments:

> Mr. Hsiung is no servile translator, but is partly a creator himself, with the first, fine frenzy of light-hearted youth, which does not know what literal accuracy means…….The wit and humor are all there in the Chinese original, being essentially creations of the Chinese people, but Mr. Hsiung has taken this material and handled it masterfully and courageously. As a rough estimate, I would describe the play as fifteen percent Mr. Hsiung, and eighty-five percent literal translation (Lin 1935: 107).

Extra-Textual Level: Promotion Strategy and Patronage

It would be very naïve for us to believe that the successful story of *Lady Precious Stream* in London in the 1930s is only due to Hsiung's masterful translation skills in the traditional Chinese play. We should bear in mind that at that time the translator Hsiung was only a foreign student from a remote country known as China. Actually two factors in connection to the translation and production of *Lady Precious Stream* played an important role in his success, i.e. his promotion strategy of the translated play and the patronage he obtained.

Promotion Strategy by Means of Para-Texts

As mentioned in Section "Adaption of the Chinese Play: From Peking Opera to English Drama", Hsiung did not faithfully translate the Chinese play. His translation *Lady Precious Stream* is actually a kind of adaption or a form of rewriting both

in terms of content and style. However, in the introduction to the English version of the play, the translator ensures his readers/audiences that the play is “authentic” Chinese. He emphasized that “In the play ***I have not attempted in the least to alter anything***. The following pages present ***a typical play exactly as produced on a Chinese stage. It is every inch a Chinese play except the language***, which, as far as my very limited English allows, I have interpreted as satisfactorily as I can” (1934: xvii).

The italicized phrases and sentences in the quotation repeatedly stress that the English version is authentic Chinese with no alteration. As an important part of the text written by the translator, the introduction definitely misleads/misguides readers/audiences’ expectations of the play. It is evident that Hsiung wrote it in this way for the sake of promotion: selling a traditional Chinese play to English readers/audiences who are unfamiliar with it.

Further evidence of Hsiung’s promotion strategy for his translation is the subtitle of the book. It is “An Old Chinese Play translated into English according to its traditional style”.

Moreover, in his other translation *The Romance of the Western Chamber,* which was published a year later, in 1935, an advertisement for *Lady Precious Stream* was printed with an emphasis on its faithfulness to the Chinese play. It goes as follows,

> *Lady Precious Stream* is a play of some antiquity in the Chinese tradition…Now for the first time it has been translated into English by a Chinese who not only has perfect command of the English language but is himself of the Chinese stage. No attempt has been made to alter anything, so that the play remains definitely Chinese in character, yet despite the considerable differences in the style, there is a curious resemblance between the themes and those to be found in Western drama. There is a preface by Professor Lascelles Abercrombie, and 12 illustrations in monotone.

More importantly, it is the translator who takes the initiative of promotion. Usually, it is supposed that a publisher would do sales promotion for a translated book. But for Hsiung, things are quite different. As he himself stated, when he took the advice of his professor to translate a Chinese play into English, he thought about the possibility of making some profits from this translation project to see whether he could make a living from translation. Therefore, his choice of a common commercial Chinese play, his unfaithful attitude toward the original text, and his adaption and rewriting of the play in both content and style clearly show that the translator has a strong purpose for his translation: that is to sell it to English readers/audiences. He admitted honestly that his translation was commercially driven: “I wrote *Lady Precious Stream* for a solely commercial reason and if it achieved something else, however desirable, that would be purely luck and I must consider myself, as an author, to have completely failed” (Hsiung 1939: 168). Hence, it is understandable that the translator (or rewriter) would spare no efforts to promote his translation, adopting all strategies available to him to win the market.

Patronage: Godfathers and Godmothers of the Play

Patronage from the target culture could play a decisive role in the reception of a translation. Hsiung himself mentioned in the postscript of his play *The Professor from Beijing* (1939) that *Lady Precious Stream* has two godfathers and two godmothers. **Lascelles Abercrombie**, a Professor from Bedford College, who Hsiung called 'the godfather of *Lady Precious Stream*' (1939: 166). Hsiung stated that "the sincere tribute paid by such a famous man of letters to an unknown author means much more than a mere touch of godfatherly kindness". As an influential theater expert and critic, Abercrombie wrote a preface to *Lady Precious Stream*, in which he spoke highly of the play. He said Hsiung was an enchanter, who could cast a spell on "our occidental minds". The translation could be "read as easily as a romance", and it "can be nothing but a piece of literature written (and wonderfully well written) in English". "The ever-present humor of the play" and its imaginary theatre, which "kept artistic convention of the Chinese play" could bring readers pleasures and let them know the special flavors of the Chinese stage. What's more fascinating, when readers read the play, they would experience the life of the Chinese people. He commented enthusiastically:

> The real force of Mr. Hsiung's Chinese magic does not lie in the delightful technique of his imaginary theatre: it is in the lives — the minds, the manners, the speech — of the people he shows us there, enchanted people, who confer their enchantment on us. The moment when the spell is clinched comes, I think, when the Prime Minster Wang says: 'Today is New Year's Day. I want to celebrate it in some way. It looks as if it is going to snow. I propose that we have a feast here in the garden to enjoy the snow.' To enjoy the snow! *There* is the essence of the spell Mr. Hsiung casts on our occidental minds; these charming people of his have a secret, which we have not: it is the secret of how to live (1935: VII–IX).

An anecdote can well illustrate the strong influence of the preface on the literary field. It was said that Hsiung came across a celebrity when *Lady Precious Stream* was gaining popularity. The man said to Hsiung that "he had received a copy and that he thought it was very nicely got up and that the preface by Professor Abercrombie was charming,… [but] he had no time to go further, and furthermore, he wouldn't for the world like to be disillusioned by going further" (1939: 166–167).

According to Hsiung, the godmother of the play was Mrs. Donson-Scott. She read the manuscript of the translation, and believed it could make an instant success. When she was told that Professor Abercrombie admired the play after his reading, she advised Hsiung to ask the professor to do something on the part of the translator. As a result, the complimentary and influential preface was written by the influential literary figure in the target society for the promotion of Hsiung's translation.

Besides patronage for the play in book form, the successful performance of the play on stage should be attributed to another godfather and godmother, Jonathan Field and Nancy Price. It was Jonathan Field, the actor and writer, who recommended Hsiung's play to Nancy Price, the producer of the Little Theater in London.

It was Miss Price with the help of Hsiung who labored on the production of the play for five weeks, including investing money and borrowing costumes. Later on, Hsiung said with gratitude that without their kind help the play wouldn't be performed on the London stage at all (Hsiung 1939: 167–168).

Conclusion

The successful story of Hsiung's *Lady Precious Stream* in the West in the 1930s is a miracle to some extent if we take into consideration the differences between the plays in the West and China and the target readers/audiences' unfamiliarity with the Chinese culture. Though it is true that Hsiung's translation and production of the play catered to the curiosity of an audience who knew almost nothing about China, this study shows convincingly that the following factors contributed to his success: (1) the adaption of the traditional Chinese play into an English drama; (2) the skillful rewriting of the original text; and (3) the use of promotion strategy and patronage which help to attract readers' interests in the translation. Hsiung's cultural translation strategies of the traditional Chinese play also reveal that if a translated text intends to be smoothly accepted in a target culture, the translator should reproduce the text on the level of culture as a whole rather than of the word or sentence of the source text, while at the same time take into account the poetics in the receiving culture when the translation is made. Hsiung's pioneering efforts in introducing Chinese theatrical art to the world and in shaping an objective and favorable perception of the Chinese people deserve our special attention when the Chinese government is taking Chinese culture globally in the new era.

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British-Chinese Cultural Encounters and Negotiations: Issues of Culture and Identity in William Empson's "China Works"

Jian Zhang

Abstract Regarding Empson as an instance of cultural encounter, this essay analyzes his experience as a foreigner living in the East. Through a close reading of his "China works", namely the poems, short story and critical essays he wrote in this period, it aims to analyze culture and identity issues related to his experience, and the way his China experience influenced his academic and critical views, hoping to show some of the ways cultures may achieve mutual understanding or accommodation through negotiations and adjustments.

Keywords William Empson · Orient · Identity · Culture · Negotiation

Introduction: William Empson

William Empson (1906–1984), British critic and poet, author of *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, came to China in 1937, during the Anti-Japanese War, to teach first at the exiled University in Changsha, Hunan Province, and then at the Southwest Associated University in Kunming, Yunnan Province. The courses he taught include "Modern British Poetry" and "Shakespeare". Empson's works include *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935), *Collected Poems* (1948), *The Structure of Complex Words* (1951), *Milton's God* (1961), *Essays on Shakespeare* (1987), *Royal Beasts and Other Works* (1986). Works on Empson include Paul Fry, *William Emspon: Prophet against Sacrifice* (1991), Christopher Norris's *William Empson: Critical Achievement* (1993), John Haffenden, *William Empson: Among the Mandarins* (2005), Matthew Bevis, *Some Versions of Empson* (2007).

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The life and work of the exiled university is described in Ch'ien Chung-shu's novel *The Fortress Besieged* (1947)[1] and in John Israel's book *Lianda: A Chinese University in War and Revolution* (1998). Both books presented in vivid details the dire circumstances of the exiled university's daily life: mud-hut classrooms, repeated bombings by Japanese warplanes, the absence of a library, the lack of textbooks and short-notice removal from place to place to escape the Japanese onslaught. Empson's extraordinary experience has been told in his biography (2005) by John Haffenden and in the memoirs of his students, many of whom later became renowned professors themselves in the English Departments of China's universities. They remember his special and eccentric way of teaching, his extraordinary memory, his love of alcohol and mathematics, and the various funny and amusing episodes as a result of heavy drinking. They were impressed by his profound knowledge, his enthusiastic passion for modern poetry, his profound influence on the young and burgeoning poets among his students, and his positive role in the making of modern Chinese poetry (Li 33; Zhao Ruihong 45; Yang 196).

I find Empson's experience with this exiled university a typical example of a person who finds himself in a community whose way of living and thinking differs significantly from his own, and who feels the urge to readjust himself in relation to the new environment. The works he wrote in this period recorded not just the vicissitudes of his life, but also his meditations on culture and identity issues, and on the way his China experience influenced his academic and critical views. Exploration of these issues, through a close reading of these "China works", helps us understand East-West cultural relations, and the way cultures achieve mutual understanding and accommodation through negotiations and adjustments.

China's Purgatory

The most important poem, and certainly the longest, he wrote in China is **"Autumn on Nan-Yueh"**. It is written in September 1937, after the three universities Beida, Tsinghua & Nankai moved from the North to Hunan Province in the South. The title of the poem takes after the name of place where the humanities faculty of the university is located, some 100 km outside Changsha. The poem, which is already translated into Chinese by his student, the late Prof. Wang Zuoliang

[1]*The Fortress Besieged,* sometimes regarded as the "greatest" Chinese novel of the 20th century, is about a talented but cynical young man who after receiving an overseas education comes back home to teach in an exiled university during the anti-Japanese war. The novel is set against the background of wartime China, featuring the hardships and the predicaments of the staff and students who have to move from place to place during the time of war, and the hero Fang Hong-jian's career parallels that of Empson during 1937–1939, providing vivid details of life in an exiled university, including its far-away campus, repatriated scholars, foreign professors, the ministry of education's promotion of an Oxbridge-style education, occasional news reports of Japanese military operations and Chinese resistance, postal delays because of the war, and concerns over home and family in the occupied areas.

(Wang 207-17), revolves around the key word "fly" and its noun form "flight", exploring the implications of the word's double meaning. Empson does just fly by airplane from Hong Kong to Changsha; the exiled university is a kind of flight, fleeing from the war in the North; his coming to China is also probably a kind of flight in the sense of escape. He was expelled from Madgalene College, Cambridge in the summer of 1929 after some contraceptives were discovered in his dormitory. What he wants to escape is probably the moral and religious rigour of the British education system, which he believed formed an obstacle to his personal and intellectual development. This play on the multiple meanings of the word "fly" is a typical Empsonian play on the ambiguity of poetic meaning.

The poem, set in Nan-Yueh, offers glimpses of the life at the Temporary University. Empson shares a room with the philosopher Jin Yue-lin and, in the freezing weather, he wears a Chinese-style cotton-padded coat but still "shudder at the winter's thrust/In cradles that encouraged the flu" (73). The Humanities Faculty is located in the former American Bible Society Building half way up the mountain, with no library or textbooks. Thus he has to typewrite poems from memory, and distribute them to the students for use in the classroom, leaving the impression of possessing an extraordinary memory. "Let textual variants be discussed; We teach a poem as it grew" (74). The overall tone of the poem, as his student, Prof. Wang Zuoliang later says, "is jovial", though not without "humour, doubt or self-mockery" (Wang 207).

Empson feels that poetry is a way to escape reality, or the war's atrocities, but he also feels that he should not allow his students to fly too high, or too far away on the wings of imagination.[2] On one hand, he wants them to soar with poetry, "on Phoebus' car", but on the other, he also tries to get them to stay "just where [they] are". Empson also likes to drink plain beer and a coarse Chinese spirit called Tiger Bone. In the poem, he says alcohol enables one to fly, like riding on a witch's "large broomstick" (74), but in China people do not drink such heavy stuff to drive away fear or loneliness: "The chaps use drink for getting near": to associate and make friends (75).

Though alcohol and poetry offer an escape from reality, Empson feels that one should not escape, and can not escape even if one tries. The Japanese warplanes often come to bomb the military training camps in the mountain of Nan-Yueh, and the problem is "they [Japanese] cannot take aim". Once, two hundred wedding guests were killed, "hit/Seven times and none left to deplore" (77). Empson says, "Politics are what verse should/Not fly from, or it goes all wrong" (77). The Irish poet W.B. Yeats, whom he teaches in his Modern Poetry class, illustrates his ideas

[2]John Israel has recorded articles published in newspapers after the Fall of Nanjing criticizing university students who remain in their classroom while their country is being invaded and their fellow countrymen are being slaughtered. There was a passionate, patriotic urge of students to take action to defend the motherland, instead of "escaping" to get their diploma which will only enable them to become slave managers in the impending Japan-ruled China (Israel, 26–27).

about the poetry-politics relationship. Yeats was once disappointed at the violent actions of the Irish Nationalist Movement, and he also entertained the desire to escape, but in face of violence and bloodshed, he was not able to stay completely away.

"Autumn on Nan-Yueh" is at once a self-justification and a meditation on China's fate. Empson describes his coming to China as a wish to be "where the important things occur" (78–79). To be "on the spot", he says, is better than to be cheated by the "News", by "conferences that leer", or by "civil traps" (79). As a poet and scholar, he has no desire to flaunt heroism, to "tout/About how blood strokes down my fur", but he is not "good for nowt" either, coming out here to replace men who must get away. He belongs to the Pandarus school of old poets who "hang around battles to purr" (79). He feels that China, having fallen into a purgatory of war and fire, is being crucified, and he wants to know "Are crucifixions what they were" in the old times, as *The Golden Bough* says, foretelling a resurrection. The poem ends with removal again, starting on the road of exile further west to escape the war.

Culture Shock

Empson's experience in China follows the typical stages of cultural encounter: going through the phases of honeymoon, negotiation, adjustment and mastery. In Changsha, he was fascinated by Buddhism, and saw Nan-Yueh as a holy mountain, which he climbed like a Buddhist to visit the temple at the top. "The holy mountain where I live/Has got some bearing on the Yeats" (Collected Poems 73): this is very true, his attitude to the mountain is comparable to that of Yeats in "Lapis Lazuli" (Yeats, 181-82).[3]③ However, excitement soon gives way to unpleasant feelings of frustration as he continues to experience events which he perceives to be strange and offensive to his cultural attitude. He may have experienced a "culture shock", a sense of puzzled disorientation which usually accompanies sudden and total immersion in a completely different culture. Though his ignorance of the Chinese language is sometimes a protection, he also feels like a "deaf old lady" with "embarrassing gaps of intelligence" (Haffenden 458). This is not because he has no time to learn, but because he simply "cannot get interested in the language; it seems such a bad one", he says. He does not know the proceedings of a Chinese dinner and, after giving everybody a lot of fun at a dinner party, he says that the Chinese meal, with "complete indifference to the order of dishes", seems deficient in architecture, rather unlike the Imperial Palace (459). He complains about the

[3]Yeats's "Lapis Lazuli" describes a 17th-century Chinese stone sculpture, with Emperor Kangxi's inscription, which shows a Buddhist ascetic and his two pupils climbing a holy mountain up to the temple at the top. Written just before the start of the Second World War in Europe, the poem shows much appreciation for the Chinese sage's wisdom in keeping that poise of mind while surveying the chaos and tragedy taking place below the mountain.

Chinese distaste against black tea: their mistake, he says, is "the perpetual one of idealism: they allow the notion of a very perfect flavour of green tea to force on them a very actively nasty flavour of dark red tea" (460). He believes that the Chinese can hear no noise: "The school servants quite innocently stand outside the door, and yell to each other at the tops of their voices at any hour of the night. A Chinese yawn can be heard a hundred yards away. They clear their throats (nearly all the time) like rhinoceros about to charge. Ordinary talk is piercing squawl and yowl. You are never out of earshot." (485).

However, the really serious problems occur, not with daily customs and intercourse, but in the teaching of classes in which professor and students confront more difficult issues of literary and moral judgement. During his time in China, Empson wrote a number of essays which were later collected in the book ***The Structure of Complex Words*** (1951), which is also a study of semantic complexity like the earlier *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. In the book, Empson mentions China many times, referring particularly to his experience of teaching. These experiences provide material for his meditations on semantic complexity, as well as on the alterity of his own cultural identity. In marking students' work, he does not just correct grammatical mistakes, but he also pays attention to the students' way of thinking and their points of view. One student's essay comments on the character of Desdemona in Shakespeare's *Othello*, "Her too mild temper is the reason for her death, and her open-mindedness, frankness, and too great generosity are the things inviting criticism, especially for Iago". This gives Empson a great shock, because according to him this is a kind of moralizing based "on what seems to us a wholly immoral basis", and it seems a heavy blow which "smashed … the whole line of moral reflection" since A.C. Bradley[4] (Haffenden 465).

Empson also discovers that Chinese and Japanese students read A.E. Housman in complete different ways: while the Japanese students show much appreciation of Housman's fatalism and strange attitude towards heroism, regarding it as a noble way of suicide, the Chinese students disagree completely with this morbid emphasis on self-sacrifice. Empson understands that the Chinese are at the moment fighting for survival and have no interest in this perverse "death wish". In another place, his student writes, "Housman is neither optimistic nor pessimistic, but rather self-complacent," as the best Chinese poets were. How can Housman's "hideous self-contempt and self-mortification" be like the self-complacency of Chinese poets? Empson cannot understand. But on the other hand, he realizes that such a view is not silly, because "it belongs to a civilization quite separate from our own"

[4]What surprises Empson is, I guess, the insinuation that Desdemona is partially responsible for her own tragedy, because she is obviously the victim of a conspiracy. Both she and her husband Othello have actually fallen into the trap devised by the evil-minded Iago. The student on the other hand, because of the more rigorous Chinese demand on women's chastity, considers Desdemona's friendly relationship with men like Cassio and Iago as at least one of the causes leading to her tragedy. Again this is an example of the difference in point of view arising from different cultural traditions.

(Haffenden 465). In other words, he is not simply regarding students' views as right or wrong, but he is paying greater attention to the cultural implications and differences behind these views.

Another Chinese student wrote an essay on English ballads, saying that "The ballad should be as simple and as vulgar as possible". Empson perceives a sense of snobbery behind the word "vulgar", which to him implies a kind of contempt for the underprivileged classes of society. It looks like an error in choice of words, "a purely verbal error", but actually it is an implied attitude, an "error of taste". Empson says that behind the word "vulgar" hides such a logic: the poor people who produced the ballads had no education, and therefore had no taste, and therefore were vulgar. The word, in Empson's view, "hint at the speaker's aesthetic or even political opinions" (Complex Words 403).

Today, we can probably say that Empson's hair-splitting analysis of semantics probably has complicated the matter more than is necessary. The Chinese student is unlikely to possess the peculiar sense of class which Empson picked up from his particular family background, and therefore he is probably not even aware of such particular connotation behind the word. But, as Empson's biographer John Haffenden points out, "his students both in Japan and China, continually helped him to question his own moral preconceptions, which ultimately derived from the received wisdom of Western liberalism, as well as his critical perceptions; and they crucially helped to validate his analysis of what he called 'compacted doctrines' in *The Structure of Complex Words*" (Haffenden 467). Empson's failure to understand his student's view reflects his own anxiety during his encounter with Chinese culture, and the comparison and contrast with his own Western perspective enables him to realize his student's view as coming from a different intellectual tradition, thus fostering a kind of understanding and a spirit of tolerance, which are essential in cultures' mutual accommodation and acceptance.

Civilization and Cultures

In 1938, the Temporary University moved to Yunnan and it was renamed as Southwest Associated University. In Yunnan, Empson gets to know a number of Chinese ethnic minorities, and becomes aware of the wide regional differences of China. Influenced by Western anthropological researches, especially that of Joseph Rock and C.P. Fitzgerald, Empson admires the ethnic minorities' language, history and cultural traditions. He particularly likes the costume of Miao girls, regarding the combination of silk embroidery and silvery decorations as an embodiment of artistic beauty.

However, the staff and students of Southwest Associated University mostly come from the East and represented the educated, elite section of Chinese society. Compared to the local Yunnan people, they are well-off, better-educated, more cosmopolitan, and more Westernized in thinking and in attitude towards love and life. Some students even regard the Yunnan people as peasants and mountain dwellers.

The influx of outsiders not just causes inflation in the province, but also suspicion among the locals, and even what John Israel calls a "cultural conflict". (Israel 104) Although Empson appreciates his students' patriotism, 300 of them having just completed their Long March from Changsha to Kunming, a distance of 1600 km, strengthening their patriotic solidarity in time of a national crisis,[5] he disapproves their disdainful attitude towards the minorities in Yunnan and their tendency to regard them as primitive tribesmen or bandits, as if "the Miao people would eat them" (Haffenden 488).

As we all know, Western concepts of race and nation are often based on the uniqueness of a people's language, religion and history, which creates the so-called sense of belonging to an "imagined community", together with the geographical sense of boundary and political sense of sovereignty. (Anderson 5-7) Obviously, Empson recognizes the uniqueness of these ethnic minorities' culture and language which are distinct from those of the Han Chinese, and he is greatly disappointed at what he believes to be Han discrimination against these minorities. He even surmises among them a separatist tendency. But on the other hand, he is also puzzled why the ethnic minorities of Yunnan, despite their supposed nationalist feelings, are willing to fight together with the rest of the nation in the war against the Japanese.

During his time in Yunnan, Empson wrote a poem entitled "**China**", which to a large extent is an outsider's view of the war between China and Japan and an attempt to meditate on the difference between these two cultures. At the core of the poem is a complicated metaphor in the style of the 17th-century Metaphysical Poetry. He compares Japan to a liver fluke and China to a liver, and regards Japan's invasion of China as an instance of a liver fluke's attack on a liver. However, if we look at the growth of the liver fluke, we realize that the poem regards the China-Japan conflict as a process of mutual assimilation. A liver fluke is a parasite and uses the snail as its host. At a certain stage of its growth, it leaves the snail, swimming through the water to get onto the grass, and is in turn eaten by a cow or sheep. When the animals eat the grass, they become ill from liver fluke in their body. If Japan is a liver fluke in the years 1937–1938, then China must be the cow or sheep falling ill with an invisible disease inside its body, like a "demonic possession" which it cannot exorcise (Collected Poems 118).

What Empson wants to say, according to Zhao Yiheng, is that the Chinese dragon gave birth to a Japanese serpent (Zhao Yiheng 158). But in fact Empson is suggesting that China and Japan are more like each other than we believe, "They are as like them as two peas". As Empson's conceit suggests, though Japan's

[5]"The Chinese Ballad", the only "China Work" of Empson which I am unable to include in my discussion, is a love story lifted from a traditional Chinese play *Wang Gui and Li Xiang-xiang* (by Li Ji) about a love-struck girl seeing her young man off to battle, hoping to be united with him, and expressing the wish by a metaphysical conceit about making two clay figures and then breaking them down, remixing the clay to make two new figures. The poem is relevant to my discussion because there is a war in the background and the young man is laying aside his personal happiness to offer his service to his country just like the patriotic students.

invasion caused a great deal of damage to China, from a long perspective, they shall be integrated and become indistinguishable from each other, like the liver fluke inside the snail (Norris 281). And China's suffering in the war is understood as an example of the Taoist wisdom of winning by being gentle and resilient, an example of Taoist toughness and tenacity, quietly and stoically bearing the affliction of the natural course of events. Empson says in the Note: "The idea of learning wisdom by not worrying and of getting your way by yielding, as in water, of course go a long way back into Chinese thought" (Collected Poems 115). Despite Japan's invasion of China's territory and slaughter of the Chinese population, the vastness of China's cultural character will finally swallow Japan and assimilate it into its larger existence.

If to Empson and to the West, China and Japan are as like each other as "two peas", then that must be the result of a distant look at the two nations from a distant perspective. To Europe, East Asia is probably of one civilization based on Confucius and Buddha's teachings. This large picture of the Orient shows the countries of the area as sharing many similarities in language, religion, customs and ways of thinking. However, if one zooms in and looks inside East Asia, as Empson looks at the ethnic minorities in Yunnan, one will see the cultural differences even within one country. So the apparent contradiction in Empson's thinking regarding China and Japan is a matter of perspective, which shows the world to be "a small number of large local civilizations and a large number of small local cultures" (Schafer 302).

East and/or West

During his stay in China, Empson wrote a short novel called ***The Royal Beasts***. Though it was left unfinished, its plot and argument have already taken shape. The Royal Beasts is an African tribe whose members, to judge from their appearance, can be either human or nonhuman. They have arms and legs, but their bodies are covered with a thick fur and have grown long tails. They have language and human intelligence, but they also have a breeding season, like some animals. At the beginning of the story, gold mines are discovered in their territory and, because this territory is situated between the British Crown Colony and the independent white African state of Western Rhodesia, the sovereign rights of the territory and the gold mines are in dispute. The tribe itself wants to belong to the British Crown Colony in exchange for British protection, because they know that, if they fall into the hands of Western Rhodesia, they will be forced to become slaves in the gold mines and their fur will make them a target of commercial killing and exploitation.

The crucial question rests on the tribe's identity, i.e. whether they are human or animal. If they are human, then according to a previous agreement Western Rhodesia owns the territory. If they are not human, then Western Rhodesia does not owns the territory. In order to belong to the British Crown Colony and obtain British protection, the tribe under the leadership of its head Wuzzo decides to be

animals, or Royal Beasts, in order to avoid the destruction of their homeland by Western Rhodesia. Though the story discusses, with much irony and humour, fundamental issues of humanity, religion and morality, it does raise questions about whether the African tribe is human or not, whether they have human intelligence and rationality, and whether they are qualified for salvation and paradise.

And through the mouth of a character, Empson relates this debate (held in a law court) with the pro-slavery argument of John Calhoun who, during the American Civil War regarded the black slaves as animals or property. Empson condemns the hypocrisy of the slave-drivers: "They sat there owning thousands of slaves a piece and voted that all men had an inalienable right to liberty. What they can have in their heads people don't so much as think of asking" (*Royal Beasts* 147). The fact that the story is set in Africa, and indirectly shows the colonial activities of Europeans, suggests some kind of tension between civilizations, and at the same time reflects the otherized situation of Empson himself in China: his friends in Beijing sometimes called him Wuzzo (Haffenden 472, 477).

In a sense, the West's view of China is similar to its view of Africa, in that the Euro-centric view regarded all territories outside Europe as the East or Orient. It suggests a way of thinking which places the West on one side and the rest of the world on the other, so that the East becomes the reverse mirror image of the West. In other words, if the West is rational, progressive and democratic, then the East must be irrational, backward and despotic: the East is all of what the West is not.[6] Whether this East is an Orientalist construction, or the West's deliberate projection of negative values onto a despised Other does not concern me here, what I want to demonstrate is that, perhaps in the eyes of the West, China is not much different from Africa in that it offers a chance for the West to reflect upon itself and upon its perceived role as upholder of civilization in relation to the rest of the World.

Conclusion: Negotiations and Adjustments

Rudyard Kipling wrote in the 1890s: "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet/Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgement Seat." This poem entitled "The Ballad of East and West" was understood as a rationalization of the East-West dichotomy and a justification of British colonial rule in India. In fact the poem is a story about the rivalry and confrontation of a

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[6]It is well-known in 20th century critical theory that self-knowledge is gained through a contrast with an Other. For example, Jean-Paul Sartre thinks that the subject's gaze helps it gain a sense of control by understanding the outside world and assimilating it into knowledge. On the other hand, the gaze of the Other forces the subject to ask who they are and where they come from, thus precipitating a sense of self or self-consciousness. This understanding of the self-other relationship is elaborated in later philosophers like Michelle Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Emmanuel Levinas, Julia Kristeva and Jacques Derrida. As Zhang Longxi says, China is a magic mirror in which Europe recognizes its negative opposite (Zhang 11).

British colonial colonel and a local Indian thief, but in the end through negotiation and dialogue the two men's sons have taken an oath to become blood brothers, and stand shoulder-to-shoulder as friends. Kipling comments, "But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed nor Birth/When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth". Kipling's emphasis is actually not on the incompatible difference of the East and the West, but on friendship and solidarity between individuals despite their racial, geographical or social background.

Traditionally, East and West have been understood as direct opposites. The two sides are unable to establish a dialogue because of their different ways of thinking. Specifically it is believed that there is no interface between the categories and concepts which the two sides use to understand the world and make sense of reality. Certain categories and concepts are believed to be specific to the West and are not shared by cultures in the East. For example China is believed to have no concept of truth, which on the other hand has been a fundamental concept in the West since the ancient Greek period. However, this is a gross misunderstanding of Chinese culture and Chinese thought.(Zhang, 9-13) According to Prof. Zhang Longxi, not only has the ancient Chinese invented the concept of truth, wholly on their own, but this concept of truth is very similar to that of the ancient Greeks and therefore is the same concept which the contemporary Western philosophy inherited from ancient Greece. The new trend in comparative study is to see East-West "commensurability", or the common basis on which the two sides understand and communicate with each other. Those who insist on cultural relativism may have only noticed the first half of Kipling's poem and it is time that we emphasized the second half.

Kipling is unable to predict what would happen during the hundred years following the publication of his poem, especially after the two world wars when nations realized that humanity have to regulate behaviour with international laws and solve differences by various dispute- settlement mechanisms. He is unable to foresee international cooperation on various fronts including health, environment, poverty-relief, and anti-terrorism. The age of information technology has brought nations closer together with much improved inter-cultural understanding. Though in some areas of the world, East and West still remain suspicious of each other, the major trend now is to accept each other's differences or even welcome them as feature of cultural diversity. Multiculturalism is a result of this new willingness to accept the rights of the Other, and respect the integrity of different value systems. Philosophy has defined alterity as healthy and dignified, and has helped marginalized beliefs become more visible or move to the center as alternatives to dominant systems. Different cultures have come to regard each other as complementary parts of a whole. This new spirit of tolerance and peaceful coexistence has been achieved not only after the painful lessons of wars and conflicts of last two centuries, but also through long history of the cultures' encounters and negotiations which teaches the world the importance of mutual understanding and mutual acceptance.

I feel that William Empson is an example of this kind of cultural negotiation and exchange. The four works of his which we have read, "Autumn on Nan-Yueh", The *Structure of Complex Words*, "China" and *The Royal Beasts*, have shown us that he

was preoccupied with issues of culture, identity and race. Cultural difference is an important aspect of his writings in China, which on the one hand increases his awareness of cultural difference, and on the other compels him to reconsider or revaluate his Western humanistic inheritance in relation to the East. His China experience does not strengthen his Western perspective; on the contrary it enables him to recognize that the Western way of thinking is not the only or universal way of thinking, thus preparing him to compare and modify, to negotiate and accept.

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…*from a thatched hut*: Exploring Transcultural Composition

Stephen Whittington

Abstract The author's composition for string quartet, *...from a thatched hut* (2010) was written in response to an exhibition of furniture designed by Khai Liew, and was premiered in the exhibition space. The designer's Chinese heritage and the nature of his work, which fuses modern Western design principles with techniques and aesthetics of Ming dynasty furniture, influenced the form and content of the music. The author's own long engagement with Chinese culture led to the composition of a seven-movement work that fused techniques of contemporary Western music and Chinese traditional music. The work also drew inspiration from Chinese philosophy and poetry, in particular the work of Li Bai and Du Fu. There are many Chinese composers who have assimilated Western techniques—it is standard practice in China, where students are taught Western composition. However, examples of Western composers drawing on Chinese musical elements are rare in comparison, while other Asian musical traditions—from Indonesia, Japan and India—have exerted widespread influence in the West. In this paper the author examines the challenges of a transcultural approach to composition, and considers questions of influence and authenticity.

Keywords Transcultural studies · Music · Composition

Introduction

In this paper I will discuss the genesis and form of my composition*...from a thatched hut* for string quartet (2010). This work was a response to a commission that allowed me to draw upon my long-standing interest in Chinese culture and address it directly in music. In the process of composition I felt obliged to consider what transcultural composition is, and indeed whether it is possible. The pitfalls of orientalism, exoticism and cultural appropriation are all too apparent in the post-colonial world. Yet all of the world's great classical musical traditions are

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hybrids that have borrowed extensively from other cultures (as well as their own folk traditions) as a result of contacts across centuries or millennia. Hybridisation is not an exception, but rather the rule in the evolution of art music.

Transcultural composition is not quite the same as hybridisation. If it exists, it must mean something more than grafting the characteristics of one musical tradition onto another. Except for rare individuals who are thoroughly immersed in more than one culture, composers must begin from the foundation of the particular musical tradition in which they have been raised and educated. Building on that foundation they may absorb ideas, techniques and sounds from other cultures. To borrow scales, apply particular techniques, or use 'exotic' instruments may indicate a degree of influence, but it is the nature and degree of influence that is at issue. It is not easy to say at what point composition passes from superficial exoticism to meaningful influence and thence, perhaps, to transcultural composition. Furthermore, cultural influence may be expressed in ways that are not audible, or at least not readily so—they may lie at some deeper level of structure or technique. To put it another way, hybridisation is a cultural phenomenon; transcultural composition is an individual activity that grows out of personal experience.

A consideration of the historical relationship between Western classical music and Chinese music leads to the conclusion that it has been asymmetrical: Over the past century or so, Western music has had a far-reaching impact on Chinese composition, but Chinese music (and Chinese culture generally) has had a relatively small influence on Western composition, especially when compared to other non-Western musical traditions. Discussions of the 'hybridisation' of Western and Chinese music focus largely on Chinese composers—both those born in China, and those born elsewhere of Chinese descent—whose music displays some of the signifiers of both musical traditions. Not much attention is given to non-Chinese composers who seek to incorporate aspects of Chinese music into their work.

Encounters Between Chinese and Western Music

Western classical music has absorbed numerous cultural influences, particularly over the past two centuries, as contact between cultures accelerated during the colonial era and thereafter. European nationalist schools of composition in the 19th and early 20th centuries incorporated elements of folk music into classical forms and quickly found their place in the mainstream of Western classical music, as evidenced by the continuing popularity of composers such as Grieg, Dvorak, Sibelius and Bartók. Influence from outside the European tradition is most famously represented by the fad for Turkish music in the 18th century; for a time 'Turkish' and 'exotic' were virtually synonymous. In retrospect, European attempts to incorporate Turkish features into the classical style may appear naïve; however it seems pointless to object to a familiar work such as Mozart's *Rondo alla turca* on the grounds that it is a mere caricature of real Turkish music. Even Turkish concert pianists include it unapologetically in their repertoire.

Representations of China are found in Western opera from the late 17th century onwards, notable early examples being found in Purcell's *The Fairy-Queen* (1692), Vivaldi's *Teuzzone* (1719) and Gluck's *Le Cinesi* (1754). Chinese settings recur sporadically in opera through the 18th and 19th centuries, culminating in the best known example, Puccini's *Turandot* (1924). Whatever their musical and dramatic merits, these works were written under the spell of the particular form of *chinoiserie*, exoticism or orientalism fashionable at the time of composition. Operas set in China invoked all the familiar stereotypes: China as a fairy-tale land inhabited by naïve, child-like people; China as an alluring but frightening land of sensuality and cruelty; and so forth. Curiously, historical inaccuracy and cultural stereotyping have not prevented *Turandot* from becoming extremely popular in contemporary China. Most these works make little or no attempt to incorporate Chinese musical characteristics into the score, the Chinese element (such as it is) being largely confined to the dramatic action. In the late 19th century, though, a more nuanced appreciation of Chinese culture and music began to appear. For example, Gustav Mahler's symphonic song-cycle *Das Lied von der Erde (The Song of the Earth)* (1909) set six poems by Tang dynasty poets, four of them by Li Bai. Mahler's score does show some musical evidence of conscious Chinese influence: use of the pentatonic scale, heterophonic orchestral textures, and a high tessitura for the tenor voice, possibly suggested by the vocal style of Chinese opera. The philosophical and poetic content reflects a serious interest in Chinese culture in intellectual and artistic circles in Vienna at that time.

Generally, however, Chinese music was little known and even less appreciated in the West; it often was regarded as a cacophonous din, and was invoked as a term of critical abuse. A critic wanting to attack the leaders of the avant-garde, whether Debussy, Richard Strauss, or Stravinsky, could (and did) compare their works to Chinese music, confident that the reader would grasp the implication that it was essentially incomprehensible noise.

Chinese music has had relatively little influence in the West compared to other major non-Western musical traditions. Classical Indian music, Indonesian *gamelan*, West African and Japanese music have all had well-documented impacts on Western music in the 20th century. Claude Debussy's encounter with *gamelan* music at the great Paris World Fair (Exposition Universelle) in 1889, at the high-water mark of European colonialism, is probably the most famous. There are many other examples—the use of Indian rhythmic structures in the music of Olivier Messiaen, the influence of West African drumming on Steve Reich, the adaptation of Japanese *Noh* theatre by Benjamin Britten, to name a few. Chinese influence on Australian composition also appears to be relatively small compared to the well-documented impact of Japanese and Indonesian culture that began in the 1960s with the work of Peter Sculthorpe and Richard Meale. In recent decades the emergence of composers of Chinese birth or descent active in Australia and other Western countries has changed this to some extent. Nonetheless, Chinese music appears to be less present in the West than other traditions: in the United States there are more than one hundred *gamelan* ensembles, mostly located in colleges and

universities; more than twenty American universities offer degrees in African drumming; many colleges offer instruction in classical Indian music. In comparison, the number of courses and ensembles in Chinese traditional music is quite small. The situation is similar in Australia. Geographical proximity to Indonesia may account for the relatively large number of *gamelan* ensembles in Australia, but it is surely not the only, nor the principal reason, which lies in the history of the West's engagement with China and Chinese culture in general.

The asymmetry of the relationship between Western and Chinese music can be best grasped by considering the impact of Western music on the development of Chinese composition, beginning in the early years of the 20th century. Intense debates developed amongst Chinese composers—paralleling those taking place in the other arts—about how to learn from Western music without surrendering essential 'Chineseness'. The desire of Chinese composers to learn from the achievements of the West in fields such as orchestration and harmony was potentially in conflict with the retention of a distinctive national character. This debate continued and at certain times became highly politicised. But Western music, with its technical complexity, sophisticated instrumental technology, extensive theoretical literature, and cultural prestige accumulated over several centuries, was a seemingly irresistible force. Even at the height of the Cultural Revolution, the small number of approved 'model works' (*yangbanxi*) that were allowed to be performed continued to use Western harmony and instrumentation. Composition and music theory, as taught in Chinese universities and conservatories today, is primarily Western composition and theory.

There are many composers active in the West drawing on Chinese culture and music; these are mainly either expatriate Chinese (Tan Dun, Zhou Long, Chen Yi, Bright Sheng, Julian Yu, Gao Ping) or of Chinese descent (Liza Lim, Annie Hsia, Huang Ruo). In addition, a significant number of composers resident in China (Guo Wenjing, Jia Guoping, Ye Xiaogang) have established international reputations. Signifiers of cultural identity—indicated by titles, musical material, instrumentation, dramatic content, or other means—may be present or absent, and more or less overt, in the works of these composers, and may vary from one work to another in the case of individual composers. Perhaps it is unreasonable to expect that composers should write music that expresses their ethnicity in an overt way. There is, for example, very little discussion amongst Australian composers about how to express their Australianness, or whether it is desirable to do so. However, much of the writing about contemporary Chinese music does appear to focus on the presence of distinctive signifiers of Chineseness.

But the asymmetry remains. Compared to the large number of Chinese composers who use Western compositional techniques and materials, the number of non-Chinese composers incorporating Chinese musical ideas or material in their work is extremely small. It was therefore with some trepidation that I embarked on the composition of a work that derives a great amount of its inspiration and content from Chinese culture and music.

The Genesis of *…from a thatched hut*

My own interest in Chinese culture began as a teenager in the late 1960s, tuning into Radio Peking on my short-wave radio. Musically it was not a particularly rich experience, notable mainly for repeated playing of *The East is Red*, and occasional excerpts from officially approved works like *The White-Haired Girl* and *The Red Detachment of Women*: it was the height of the Cultural Revolution. As a teenager in suburban Australia, the rhetoric of the times, with its constant talk of 'imperialist running dogs' and 'paper tigers' was both intriguing and exotic.

Further engagement with Chinese culture began in the mid-1970s, with my marriage to my Malaysian-born Chinese wife. Development of a deeper interest in Chinese music began with meeting the Chinese composer and long-time director of the Shanghai Conservatory, He Luting, during his visit to Australia in 1979. His own role in the reception of Western music in China was significant, and his advocacy of Western music, notably that of Debussy, had serious personal consequences during the Cultural Revolution. He was also, coincidentally, the arranger of *The East is Red*—not without a bitter irony, given his public humiliation during the Cultural Revolution. Around the dinner table at my house, he gave a guarded but nonetheless moving account of his experience during this tumultuous period. He also carefully explained his ideas about Chinese music, illustrating them at the piano. Contrary to what most Westerners thought, Chinese music was not exclusively pentatonic, but used a wide variety of different, flexible scale systems; and there were various patterns and structures that were particular to different Chinese musical forms. At the time I was twenty-six years old, and He Luting was seventy-six; unlikely as it may seem, we managed to discover a rapport (Figs. 1 and 2).

Despite my interest in Chinese culture and music, I never considered the possibility of directly addressing this interest in a composition until 2010, when a commission for a string quartet came from the internationally renowned Adelaide-based furniture designer Khai Liew, a long-time resident of Australia, who is Malaysian-born Chinese. The commission was for a work for string quartet to accompany the exhibition of a new collection of furniture. The exhibition, entitled 'Collec+tors', consisted of an ensemble of six pieces of furniture designed by Liew, each of which incorporates the work of a prominent Australian artist—ceramic artists Gwyn Hanssen Pigott, Kirsten Coelho, Bruce Nuske and Prue Venables, glass artist Jessica Loughlin, and jeweller Julie Blyfield. The premiere of the quartet, performed by the Zephyr Quartet, took place in the exhibition space to coincide with the opening. The entire ensemble was subsequently (2012) acquired by the Art Gallery of South Australia for its permanent collection (Fig. 3).

Given Khai Liew's Chinese heritage, it seemed appropriate to draw on my interest in Chinese culture in this work. The furniture of Khai Liew reminds me of the simple elegance and beauty of Chinese furniture from the Ming dynasty, combined with a distinctly contemporary Western influence—notably that of Danish furniture of the mid-20th century. I also admired the apparent simplicity of his designs—which

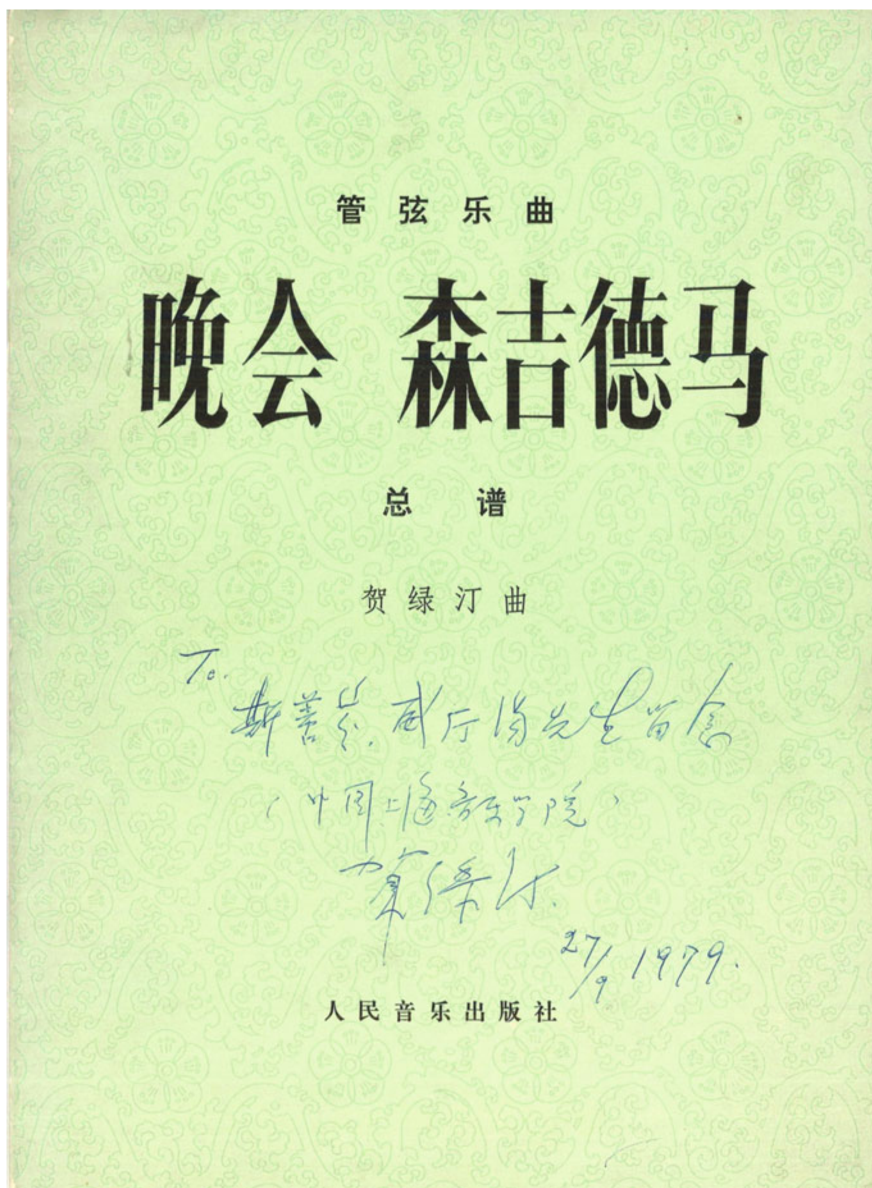

Fig. 1 Score inscribed to Stephen Whittington by He Luting

conceals the complex joinery used in its construction. Temperamentally I have always been drawn to 'art that conceals art.' A blend of Chinese and Western influences can be found in my quartet—although coming, so to speak, from the

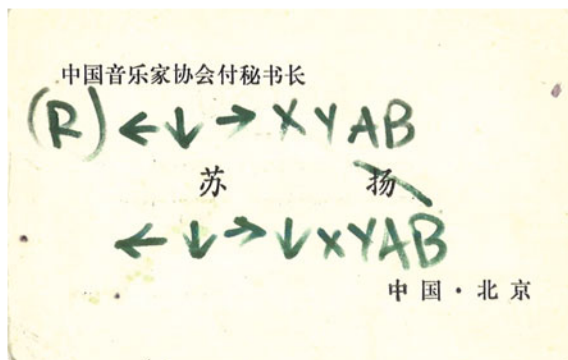

Fig. 2 Explanation of Chinese musical form written by He Luting on the name card of Mr. Su Yang

Fig. 3 Furniture by Khai Liew: *Collec + ors* exhibition, Khai Liew Gallery, Adelaide, 2010. (Photograph by Grant Hancock, reproduced by permission.)

opposite direction to Khai Liew, as a composer working in the Western modernist tradition but drawing on Chinese culture. In so doing I wanted to avoid the pitfalls of such a venture—of using cultural references as local colour or superficial exoticism. I wanted to delve deeper into my own understanding of Chinese culture and represent it in a way that, while still from an outsider's viewpoint, was recognisable to a Chinese audience and meaningful to a Western one. It was a very personal venture, one that, I believe, could be called transcultural composition.

Gwyn serving table: Furniture by Khai Liew, ceramics by Gwyn Hanssen Pigott. (Photograph by Grant Hancock, reproduced by permission.)

The string quartet work that eventuated from this commission (to which I eventually gave the elliptical title *...from a thatched hut)*, draws upon a particular theme in Chinese culture: the scholar who retires, temporarily or permanently, from society. A thatched hut was the place where the great Tang dynasty poet Du Fu (Tu Fu) withdrew from the world. His example was followed by many others, including the poet Bai Juyi (Po Chu-I), author of the *Record of the Thatched Hut on Mount Lu*, and Xia Gui, the Song dynasty painter of *Twelve Views from a Thatched Hut.* The scholarly recluse cultivated poetry, calligraphy, painting, chess and music—all of them arts in which the hand is directed by the mind, thereby revealing the true character of the individual. It occurred to me that making furniture is another such art: the hand that draws a design, the hand that holds the chisel, the hammer or the saw, might produce results that are just as character revealing.

For the retired scholar or recluse, principled withdrawal is not a result of weakness, self-indulgence or irresponsibility: Like the 'hidden dragon' referred to in the *Yijing* (*I Ching*), such a person does not alter his own nature to accommodate the expectations of the outside world. Adherence to principle is more important than

fame or recognition; no regret is felt about what must be given up in order to pursue this course. While I have no intention personally of becoming a recluse, I find that there is something very powerful in the moral example that it sets, especially in an era such as the present, when relentless self-promotion though all forms of media has become the norm. Isolation is also an attractive prospect for the creative artist: a time for quiet reflection and uninterrupted work that is frequently necessary in order complete a substantial piece, be it a novel or a string quartet.

So my interest in the classical Chinese scholarly arts is not purely historical: it is also an interest in the way they express ideas and sentiments and embody principles that are still relevant today. "Though times and happenings alter and differ, may men in what moves them be brought together." Wang Xizhi (303–361), *Lantingxu (Orchid Pavilion Preface.)* (McNair 1998, p.32)

Form, Structure and Material in *…from a thatched hut*

There is one short quotation in this quartet (at the start of the fifth movement) from a Chinese musical source. For the rest, the musical language of the quartet owes as much to Western music as it does to Chinese musical traditions. In my search for the musical means to create this quartet, I was influenced by the forms and sentiments of classical Chinese poetry (particularly Li Bai and Du Fu), which attempts to express the inexpressible through words; and by Chinese philosophy, which holds that the extremely diverse and constantly changing appearances of the world are all emanations of a single ordering principle—the *Dao* (*Tao*). 'Looking at the objective world' and 'looking within' are the twin foundations of Chinese art; this closely corresponds to my own approach to music. The seven movements are conceived as a cycle, like seven poems on related themes. There are significant apparent differences in character between movements, but over the cycle there are parallelisms that emerge between movements and parts of movements. The duration of the work as a whole is approximately twenty-eight minutes.

The seven movements of the quartet are arranged thus:

1. The Unnameable
2. Gazing at the moon while drunk
3. Straw Dogs
4. Scratch head, appeal to heaven
5. Journey of an Immortal
6. Gazing at the moon while drunk, again
7. Scratch head, appeal to heaven again

The first movement, *The Unnameable*, takes its name from the Daoist classic, *Daodejing*, where the 'Unnameable' is the *Dao.* Reflecting the idea that emptiness is the origin of all things, the movement begins with inaudible sounds that gradually increase in loudness. Pitched ('nameable') sound emerges from ('unnameable')

noise; initially unified, it gradually splits apart. One of the principal thematic ideas of the quartet emerges, before quickly dissolving into flurries of harmonics. On a more concrete level, the initial sound, made by all four players scraping their bows in a circular motion across a single string with minimal pressure, resembles the sound of wind in a bamboo grove—recalling an image in the *Daodejing* that contrasts the brittleness of brute force with the strength that comes from flexibility, a principle that is perfectly exemplified by bamboo.

Drunken Moon-Gazing Music

Movements 2 and 6, *Gazing at the moon while drunk*, and *Gazing at the moon while drunk, again*, are parallel movements. They are the most overtly Chinese in sound, even though they do not contain any direct quotations from chinese source material. They are both inspired by the Tang dynasty poet Li Bai (701–762), whose literary name was 'The Blue Lotus Recluse'. Li Bai was one of the Eight Wine Immortals (celebrated in the poem of that name by Du Fu), a group of poets notorious for their frequent intoxication. Drunkenness, however, was not an end in itself, but a means to experience an ecstatic union with the *Dao*. Li Bai's poems *Drinking Alone by Moonlight* and *Amusing Myself* served as models for these two movements.

I have always been interested in composition where the product is a recognisable class of works, rather than highly individual, single works. A model for this is the work of French composer Erik Satie (1866–1925), whose well-known set of three *Gymnopédies* for piano (1888) has precisely this quality—they are very similar in sound, structure and mood, and instantly recognisable as examples of the same 'class' of piece, even though they are different in many ways. Equally importantly, the *Gymnopédies* are a new class of piece, quite distinctive and different from any pre-existing musical form—and, incidentally, have been widely imitated in the century or so following their composition. It seems to me that creating a new class of composition is a considerable challenge—requiring the assembly of a complex of features (such as rhythm, harmony, melody, structure, and sonority) into a coherent and distinctive whole—but one that I undertook in these two movements: the creation of the class of "drunken moon-gazing" music.

Like Erik Satie's self-similar set of three *Gymnopédies*, the second gazing-at-the-moon movement (*Gazing at the moon while drunk, again*) closely resembles the first, while being completely different—in this case, in the extreme sense that the two movements do not have a single note in common. Across the quartet as a whole the chromatic scale of twelve notes is divided into two groups of six that form a kind of dualistic universe of notes analogous to *yin* and *yang*. But like *yin* and *yang*, they can only be understood in relationship to one another. Most of the movements are concerned with the transition between these two poles, but in the moon-gazing pair they are presented in their pure state. In the early stages of planning this quartet I searched for a technical basis that could reflect a dualistic world-view, and began thinking about the theories of the Viennese composer Josef

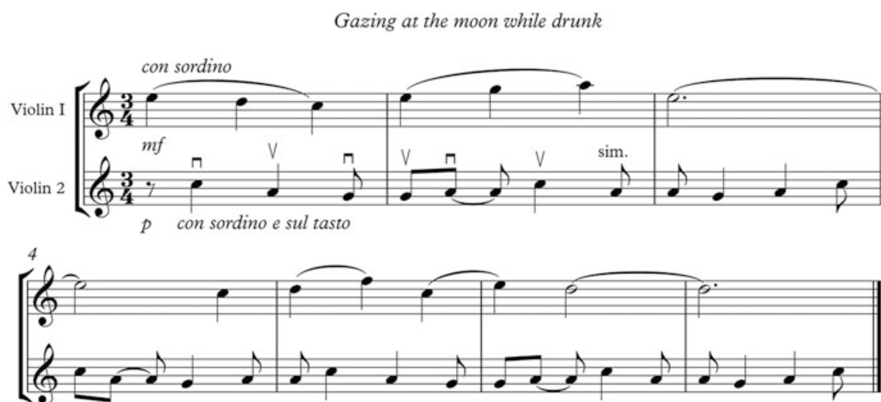

Fig. 4 The opening of *Gazing at the moon while drunk*

Matthias Hauer (1883–1959), whose work I had known for a long time, but had never attempted to put into practice. Hauer invented a twelve-tone method of composition independently of the better-known work of his Viennese contemporary Arnold Schoenberg (Hauer 1926). Hauer's approach was to divide the twelve notes of the chromatic scale (the 'chromatic universe' of Western music) into what he called tropes—the set of all possible arrangements of the twelve-note set divided into two groups of six. One of Hauer's tropes (from his ordered list of forty-four) allows for the creation of two sets of six notes, each of which contains two closely related pentatonic scales. Use of this theoretical framework permitted the creation of music that reflected philosophical dualism, and also allowed me to invoke one the most familiar signifiers of Chinese music—the pentatonic scale. Modulation between the two possible pentatonic scales in each six-note set can be achieved by substitution of a single note, a procedure known in Chinese music as *bian-fan.* It was only after work on the quartet had advanced some way that I discovered, much to my surprise, that Hauer had been interested in Chinese philosophy and Daoism in particular, which was fashionable in Vienna in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* is another manifestation of this fashion) (Figs. 4 and 5).

The form of the moon-gazing movements is symmetrical, each beginning with a duet for two violins, followed by an interlude for solo viola, and concluding with a recapitulation of the material of the duet using all four instruments. The structure of outer parts of each movement, with phrases of irregular length, resembles the Chinese poetic form called *ci* (song), notable for varied line lengths. The song is interrupted by the inebriated poet (impersonated by the viola) who utters some couplets in slurred speech. After this interruption, the song resumes. As drunkenness is both a means and a metaphor for dissolving of the self in union with the Dao, the third section of this movement is intended to convey the calm, radiant ecstasy of this union.

Fig. 5 The opening of *Gazing at the moon while drunk, again*

Head-Scratching Music

Another pair of movements also form a ‘class’ of compositions: movements 4 and 7, *Scratch head, appeal to heaven*, and *Scratch head, appeal to heaven again*, both conceived as meditations on the frustration and despair that are often encountered in life. The title (but not the music) of this movement comes from a composition for the *guqin* (the 7-stringed zither favoured by Chinese scholars) attributed to Qu Yuan (340 BC–278 BC), China’s first poet known by name, and loyal advisor to the kingdom of Chu. Following his unjust dismissal, he committed suicide by drowning, in protest at the corruption of his time. His death is still commemorated today in the Dragon Boat Festival. The *guqin* served as a source of ideas in my quartet because it was the instrument of choice of scholars—a recluse playing the *guqin* in the midst of nature is a popular subject for paintings. There was also another reason—the repertory of this instrument is a perfect example of ‘art concealing art’. On the surface the music appears simple; it is only when the numerous possible techniques of playing each note are considered, with the resulting subtle changes of sound colour, that the complexity of the music becomes apparent—like pulling apart a piece of Khai Liew’s furniture and discovering an intricately fashioned, multi-facetted mortice joint. Surface complexity is easily noticed; in music, obvious virtuosity is a sure way to impress an audience. Hidden depths are much harder to fathom.

The two ‘head-scratching’ movements are closely related in structure: they are both strict canons. The choice of this traditional form, the strictest of all musical forms in Western composition, was closely connected with the sentiments that it seeks to express: confronted with the tragedy and absurdity of life and the injustices of the world, sometimes all one can do is scratch one’s head and appeal to Heaven. Heaven’s will is immutable, but appealing at least makes us feel better. The rigorous musical form of the canon (the word itself means rule or law) was a way for

me to represent the immutable will of heaven. My own activity as a musician and composer has included work in forms that are at the very antithesis of the strict canon, such as free improvisation, but I have always had a fascination for strict forms which often throw up problems—in solving those problems, solutions may be found that could never have been discovered when composing in a state of unrestricted freedom. I believe that this experience is shared by poets writing in strict poetic forms, like the regulated verse (*jintishi*) of classical Chinese poetry. Movement 7 also enters into a symmetrical relationship with movement 1, *The Unnameable*. The first movement had noise emerging out of silence and slowly becoming an identifiable pitch; this last movement commences with pitched sounds which slowly dissolve into noise and finally end in silence.

Two *Scherzi*

Movements 3 and 5, *Straw Dogs* and *Journey of an Immortal*, which form a pair of interludes like classical *scherzi*, are rather different from one another and from the rest of the quartet, although the underlying source material is the same. The title of *Straw Dogs* comes from the *Daodejing*: heaven and earth—and the sage—are without compassion, and all things, including us, are viewed merely as straw dogs. If this is taken seriously, it provides a powerful moral lesson, or at the very least a necessary corrective to human self-importance. This movement is again in the form of a strict canon; the inexorable law of canonic composition reflects Heaven's imperviousness to human desires. On another level, like the other canonic movements of the quartet, it corresponds to the complex, strictly regulated forms of some Chinese poetry. In spite of its rather sombre theme, this movement displays a kind of ironic humour, a deliberate mocking of human pretentions.

Journey of an Immortal, on the other hand, is a more relaxed movement. Mystic journeys were a favourite poetic subject. Part of a *guqin* composition entitled *Journey of an Immortal* is quoted at the beginning of this movement, the only appearance of actual Chinese source material in the entire quartet. A frequent destination of the mystic journeys is the Mystic Capital in the seven-star constellation of the Big Dipper (*beidou*), location of the mysterious Palace of Purple Tenuity. The most famous mystic journey is that of the Yellow Emperor, related in the Taoist classic *Liezi*: "It is a place you cannot reach by boat or carriage or on foot, only by a journey of the spirit… Now I know that the ultimate Way cannot be found through the passions. I know it, I have found it, but I cannot tell it to you." (Wang and Lieberman 1983, p.125) Many compositions for *guqin* conclude with a passage in harmonics, as does this movement: this might be thought of as representing the ethereal destination of the mystic journey.

Transcultural Composition

Whether …*from a thatched hut* is a successful example of transcultural composition is for others to judge. It was the product of the particular circumstances of its composition—a response to the furniture of Khai Liew and his Chinese heritage—and the outcome of my decades-long engagement with Chinese culture. Chinese influence is easily recognisable in the sound of certain movements, but I was more interested in the deeper significance of the ideas that underpin the piece, which derive from Chinese culture and also find their expression in Chinese music. The process of writing this piece led to further consideration of the things that Chinese music has to offer the non-Chinese composer beyond the local colour of pentatonic melodies and the sound of traditional instruments. The centrality of music to Chinese culture and society, the belief that music is deeply rooted both in the natural world and in human nature and forms a bridge between the two, the emphasis on the role that music plays in the self-cultivation of the individual, the attention to the subtleties of sound colour and melodic inflection—these are just a few of the wealth of ideas that Chinese music has to offer. A better understanding of these things in the West through ongoing dialogue between Chinese and Western composers would be mutually enriching, and needs to be actively developed. Perhaps then the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between Western and Chinese music will begin to be corrected.

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Author Biography

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Part III
Encounters in the Globalized Space: Education and International Relations

Asian Students Abroad: Missing the Boat of Adaptation?

Regis Machart

Abstract Asian international students in the 'West' are often represented as deficient Others whose adaptation to the new environment is problematic. Framed within a Confucian heritage culture, some participants who are reported to lack interaction with locals become representatives of a whole community. On the other hand, institutional bodies and universities in the 'West' who rely heavily on Asian international students to maintain a wide range of courses reinforce notions of a difficult adaptation and insist on the imminence of a culture shock. They also spread the idea of the necessity to 'meet the [Western] locals' who, in turn, are framed within a stereotypical representation of 'diversity', openness and tolerance. An analysis of the narratives of a few Asian international students reveals that their expectations reiterate a widespread essentialising discourse in the field of academic mobility. Faced with representations of a solid culture in relation to the host population, the discourses of these students lack clarity in the meaning-making of their experience abroad, particularly when adaptation is concerned. They both maintain clear-cut boundaries and express the desire to become the idealised Others that only exist in their imagination. Even when the process can be deemed successful, participants express failure. The adaptation of mobile students to the 'West' is presented as an idealistic, utopian goal which can only lead to disillusionment. Thus, there is a need to relativise hegemonic discourses which insist on an encounter between two culturally opposed environments in order to integrate more individual fluidity.

Keywords Student mobility · Culture shock · Student adaptation · Essentialising discourses

On its website, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (n.d.) mentions the top five destinations for international students in 2012 which were all located in the 'West': USA attracted 21.1% of all outbound students worldwide, UK 12.2%, France 7.7%, Australia 7.1% and Germany 5.9%. If most inbound students in France come from

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Table 1 Rank of Asian countries in the general international intake of international students in the top five destinations in 2014 (adapted from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, n.d.)

	USA	UK	France	Australia	Germany
China	1	1	2	1	1
India	2	2		3	
Korea	3			8	
Japan	6				
Vietnam	7		9	4	
Nepal	10			9	
Singapore				7	
Malaysia		7		2	
China, Hong Kong				5	
Indonesia				6	

former French colonies (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal) and inbound students in Germany from Turkey and the rest of Europe, China alone represents in both cases a major provider of incoming students (9.8% of the international enrolment in France, 8.9% in Germany respectively). English-speaking countries attract an even larger number of Asian students, with six Asian countries listed in the top ten for the USA, three for the UK, and nine for Australia. Australia, which has included the internationalisation of its universities as a key factor of its balance of trade (Marginson 2009; Cadman and Song 2012), relies greatly on Asian countries. Not surprisingly, many academic research projects on Asian students have originated from this part of the world (e.g. Smith 2001; Wong 2004). Nevertheless, Asian student mobility has generated important scientific literature in other Western countries as well (see Henze and Zu 2012; Machart et al. 2014). Chinese students in particular have become the “reference group” for international students (Henze and Zu 2012, p. 91) (Table 1).

On the other hand, few articles deal with the adaptation of Asian students in a non-Western context (e.g. Jou and Fukada 1995; Lam 2006; Yang 2014; Machart et al. 2014), though their number in the region has always been important. Moreover, intra-Asian mobility is on the rise in the new Asian EduHubs, i.e. Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore (Knight 2011). Their adaptation in an Asian environment is expected to be ‘more natural’ or at least ‘less problematic’, and not emblematic of an expected “culture shock” (Oberg 1954, 1960) because of a supposed similarity between home and host cultures. Their presence in Asia does not stimulate the discourse on Otherness that the presence of Asian/Chinese students triggers in some other parts of the world.

By contrasting Asian students with local (white?) populations, researchers tend to demonstrate that Asian mobile students’ adaptation in the West is particularly difficult, even out of reach. However, the top five destinations have witnessed numerous immigrations for many years. Hence, the population of the host country is never homogeneous. By analysing the discourse of official bodies, I will highlight how the concept of adaptation is ambiguously endorsed by educational and institutional bodies to generate a feeling of deficiency among international students.

I will then illustrate how the lack of clarity in the concept echoes Asian mobile students' own narratives on their adaptation during periods of sojourn abroad.

A Deficient Asian Student?

The seeming absence of studies on Asian students in Asia is emblematic of the desire to stage an Us/Them opposition which is widely spread in research and leads to discrimination. Lacassagne et al. (2001) have shown how the different biases associated with the identification of a particular ethnic group interfere with each other. For instance, the contrast bias (*Us*/*Them* opposition) is related to the assimilation bias (*They* appear more similar to each other), and leads to subsequent discrimination (one group appears as superior to another).

Instead of analysing the 'real' interaction between two individuals who come from different backgrounds, international students are often assigned a cultural identity (they become *Them*) which frames them into a box. This identity will serve as a guideline for interpreting their actions. Therefore, the members of the group are expected to behave in a similar manner, and their behaviour will be analysed using "cultural lenses" (Bayart 2005), even when collected data obviously conflict with cultural assumptions.

In an article which analyses discourses on Asian students in four academic contributions, Dervin (2011) notes that most articles are "emblematic of the current interests in 'otherness' but also of the (over)emphasis on difference and culture in education" (p. 42). Chinese students are perceived as the radically different Other, and authors explicitly or implicitly insist on the Confucius Heritage Culture (CHC) of the students in opposition to the host country culture. Earlier, Clark and Gieve (2006) had reached the same conclusion, stating that a "shared Confucian cultural heritage" is used to explain "consistent Chinese behaviours in Western classrooms" (p. 54). This may explain why Asians in Asia are not so popular in research.

The use of the characteristics of this CHC is derogatory. Confucianism is presented as generating passivity, lacking critical thinking, mere memorisation strategies and an unwillingness to participate in classroom talk, etc. Outside the classroom, the Confucian student is perceived as collectivist, remaining within her/his community/ethnic group and has few interactions with 'other groups' (i.e. Chinese don't mix with non-Chinese individuals), etc. The only positive aspect seems to be a thrust to preserve harmony (Wei and Li 2013) which seems rather condescending as it reiterates the lack of active engagement of so-called Confucian students.

However, Anne Cheng and Lijing Shi question this interpretation of *The Annalects*. Shi (2006) asserts that certain researchers' "understanding of Confucianism may be partial or inaccurate" (p. 124). Cheng (1999) insists on the need to exchange with others, i.e. to discuss and not being passive in order to become a human being, a *ren* (p. 68). Finally, in 1949, China adopted a Western ideology even if Mao Zedong claimed that he adapted it. As China has discarded

the traditional way of thinking (pp. 643–644), we begin to wonder how Chinese students nowadays can still be considered as the product of a Confucian education.

To see Asian students as Confucian is basically to essentialise them by assigning cultural traits to them because of their supposed community membership (Spencer 2006, pp. 239–240). This ‘cultural baggage’ contributes to the perpetuating of a sheer opposition between a collective East and an individualistic West. A cultural assignment finally leads to an imbalance in power relations whereby Asia/China appears as the loser, as “[…] this perception of difference is a Centre, Western, chauvinistic ideology of superiority” (Holliday 2011).

Consequently, the ‘West’ endorses a position of superiority and claims a desire to give these students the ‘better’ (i.e. ‘Western’) education ‘they are looking for.’ As Cadman and Song (2012) note in the case of Australia, “‘We’ are the good people who research and teach in a typical research-intensive Australian university, ‘they’ are the diverse, multi-ethnic students we are now, literally, in the business of educating” (p. 3). Regardless of whether or not the “centre of the world [is] shift [ing] towards Asia” (Gao 2012), Australian, European and American universities are perpetuating the myth of the ‘Civilising Mission” of the West during colonial times, e.g. by France (Chafer 2001) or the UK (Fischer-Tiné and Mann 2004).

This discourse may have been tempered, but university websites rarely highlight another reason as to why international students have become so crucial for them: their presence improves on the ranking of the university, a goal which has become central in university policies (Marginson and Van der Wende 2007). This enables the continuation of certain cursus which would otherwise be closed due to a lack of local students (Mahroum 2007, p. 224), and/or the re-channelling of subsidies to less lucrative programmes through a redistribution of tuition fees (Hartmann 2014, p. 3). Student mobility attracts a younger generation of migrants in countries with a declining birth rate such as Germany, Austria but also Singapore (Yang 2014) and Japan (Shao 2008). Finally, an increasing number of full-paying students can counterbalance the deficit of trade of the country. Australia, for instance, has assumed this stand (Marginson 2009, p. 9). These practices demonstrate that institutional bodies develop a *Let's-Help-Them* discourse, rather than a recognition of the actual needs of international students.

Planning for the “Culture Shock”

University websites and institutions that promote Higher Education often resort to an apocalyptic rhetoric. With no mention of their origin, international students are portrayed as facing ‘extremely difficult challenges’ for which they need to ‘be prepared’ in order to overcome ‘the crisis’. The representations of these difficulties, in words or in graphs, have borrowed greatly from the idea of “culture shock” (Oberg 1954, 1960), a concept which has been criticised in the tourism industry (Hottola 2004) or in cases of academic mobility (e.g. Machart and Lim 2014). I do not pretend that culture shock does not exist, but I agree with Hottola (2004) that the use of the concept has to be limited to certain extreme cases. A systematic

Home ›

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Berkeley is one of the more culturally diverse cities in the U.S. Here you will find students and visitors alike from different origins, ethnicities, and cultures. Despite this cosmopolitan orientation, if you are new in town, you may still feel like a stranger in a strange land, whether you come from a different country or a different American city.

Cultural Adaptation

Adapting to a new environment takes time and the pace of transition varies from person to person. The typical pattern of cultural adjustment often consists of distinct phases: Honeymoon, Crisis, Recovery, and Adjustment. Notice that this cycle is then repeated upon re-entry to one's home country or culture of origin. The effect these phases have on one's mood is illustrated in this "w-curve" figure:

Fig. 1 Print-screen of the webpage of the International Office, University of California-Berkeley, USA

reference to culture shock to explain local adjustments is an evidence of culture-shock-speak, which masks the diversity of individual experiences in very different contexts. Hannerz (1992) coined the term "culture speak" to highlight the fact that culture is omnipresent and used to explain almost anything, an idea that Breidenbach and Nyiri (2009) synthetise as "seeing culture everywhere".

To illustrate my point, I have chosen the website of three USA universities and one Canadian body in charge of the promotion of internationalisation of Higher Education. The USA attracts the highest number of students in the world: 740,482 in 2014 representing 21.1% of all international students globally. I argue that this represents the point of view of only one country in the world, but an on-going research I am currently conducting with Ee Wen Chin on German and Austrian university websites tends to show that cultural essentialism and differentialism is the norm when promoting student mobility.

The first example is taken from the website of the University of California-Berkeley, USA. The prestigious University of California-Berkeley is ranked 4th in the 2014 Shanghai university ranking. In 2014, the first three countries of origin of international students were China (31.92%), Korea (13.53%) and India (8.95%).[1] These three nations accounted for more than half of all inbound students with an increase of Chinese nationals registering for the different programmes. Note that Hong Kong (2.86%) and Taiwan (2.92%) appear at the 5th and 6th position respectively. East Asia and the Pacific represent 61% of the total international enrolment, including 79 Australians and 38 New Zealanders out of a total of 3612. Even if the disclaimer posted on their website (Fig. 1) does not

[1]http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/shared/docs/student-stats-fall14.pdf.

mention the particular origins of international students, it is reasonable to surmise that the university also addresses its main clients: Asians.[2]

Berkeley is first presented as "cosmopolitan" and "diverse." Here, diversity obviously means different "origins, ethnicities and cultures," as if these were homogeneous entities. The website of the City of Berkeley in the page *Who we are*[3] confirms this racial diversity by giving the breakdown of the local population. It then provides a link to a broader description of the population[4] in which diversity goes beyond racial categories and includes age distribution, type of households, ethnicity, education, employment, housing and community engagement (as of political affiliation). Interestingly, from this vast array of categories, the University only picked ethnic/cultural differences.

The Asian community represents 21,690 persons out of a total 112,580 inhabitants of Berkeley. We can reasonably assume that with 1 out of 5 inhabitants of Berkeley being ethnically Asian, an Asian international student who wishes to maintain some Asian connection would have no difficulty in doing so. I am deliberately using the conditional here, as I did not interview any Asian student in Berkeley. Moreover, I am not assuming that they would like to maintain such connections because of their national or ethnic identification. As I will demonstrate later, mobile students sometimes prefer to avoid this kind of ethnic categorisation and behavioural essentialism.

However, despite the "cosmopolitan orientation", one is expected to face a necessary adjustment whether one comes from a different country or a different American city (but the disclaimer was posted on the webpage of the International Office). The idea is not that of a "confusion" (Hottola 2004) whereby an individual faces an evident lack of familiarity with the appropriation of a new environment (Calinon 2014), but that of "culture shock" (Oberg 1960) which leads to a "crisis" and a "recovery". This implies that a newcomer is unable to appreciate the surrounding diversity, a concept that would be foreign to him/her for which he/she would need a necessary "adjustment" because he/she is inscribed in a particular monocultural background. The message is here: *We*, people from Berkeley, enjoy living with *all* cultures around *us* whereas *you*, as a foreigner, will have to learn to deal with it. Inhabitants of Berkeley are presented as 'open' and 'diverse', a quality which is denied to guest students who are statically framed in *their* 'cultural identity of origin', and who will have to learn to be 'open'. Of course, this is an "idealistic" and "utopian" statement which essentilise local inhabitants, and both terms can be found on the website of the City of Berkeley.[5]

The components of identity, such as origin, ethnicity, culture, national or regional belonging, are seen as static components of a solid anthropological culture

[2]http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/cultural_adjustment.

[3]http://www.cityofberkeley.info/City_Manager/Home/AB__Who_We_Are.aspx.

[4]http://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/City_Manager/Level_3_-_General/2011%20Community%20Profile%20FINAL.pdf.

[5]http://www.cityofberkeley.info/City_Manager/Home/AB__Character_Sketch.aspx.

(Dervin 2012). The emphasis is placed on differences between cultures which are seen as clear-cut entities in the Herderian tradition of the 18th Century, tracing boundaries around ethnic groups (Wimmer 2013, pp. 20–43). The obvious reference to 'culture shock' and 'reverse culture shock' (W-Shaped process, "Reentry Shock") aims at warning students. Individual experiences are silenced and it is only one's cultural/ethnic/regional belonging which seems to make sense in one's adaptation process. The international trajectory of mobile students is perceived as a conflicting encounter between cultures which is in direct line with the "clash of civilisations" (Huttington 1996), and which leaves no space for individual experiences.

The rhetoric of expected culture shock is explicitly or implicitly present on many university websites. The following example of 'warning' which provides advice to international students on how to overcome culture shock is particularly popular. I first discovered an example on the website of the University of Illinois (Machart and Lim 2014, p. 158) which disappeared soon after. The exact same wording can now be spotted on the website of at least two different institutions: the Northwest Arkansas Community College[6] and Concordia University Irvine (USA)[7]:

> The various phases that you may experience include:
>
> Being fascinated with all the new things you are experiencing.
>
> Feeling uncomfortable because you feel as if you don't belong.
>
> Rejecting and labeling **the foreign culture** and people as being strange.
>
> Learning to decipher **foreign behavior and customs**.
>
> Accepting and enjoying **the foreign culture**.

Instead of opting for the W-Shaped line, these universities prefer to formulate the different stages of 'culture shock' in plain English: "being fascinated", "rejecting", "learning to decipher", etc. Interestingly, the singular is used to speak of "the foreign culture" and no mention is made of a diverse environment including multiple forms of diversities (age, gender, social class, etc.) (Dervin et al. 2013). American campuses are even more diverse, even if we only take into consideration the students' nationality. These campuses host 21.1% on all international students who come from more than 150 countries (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, n.d.). The leitmotiv of the international office websites seems to be 'Come and meet the foreigner' (i.e. the American), an imagined individual who is impossible to be concretely described.

Finally, the last line of the excerpt seems somehow problematic. The use of two appreciative verbs ('accept' and 'enjoy')—which would be difficult to quantify—appears as a sermon: as a foreigner, *You* have to like *Us*. The same feelings which are not expected from locals, and which admonish mobile students in this regard set an unrealistic goal in which realisation is left entirely to the international student.

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[6]http://www.nwacc.edu/web/studyabroad/culture-shock.

[7]http://www.cui.edu/AcademicPrograms/Global-Programs/Study-Abroad/index.aspx?id=21209.

Similarly, governmental bodies in charge of the promotion of Higher Education appear as inclined towards advising foreign students on how to avoid culture shock. *Education au/in Canada* is one of these institutional bodies whose role is to promote local education and to attract international students to Canadian shores:

Education au/in Canada[8]:

Tips for Managing **Culture Shock**:

Learn about **Canadian culture** prior to leaving home.

Pack some mementos from home that will comfort you when you're missing your family and friends.

Ask questions if you are unsure of something.

Get involved and participate **in group events**.

Be open to new experiences and ideas.

Talk to other international students about their experiences in Canada.

Use the **professional support services available to you at your institution**.

Try to relax and not take everything too seriously or worry unnecessarily.

This posting from a multicultural and officially bilingual country is very ambiguous as culture is once again used in the singular form. Multiculturalism implies the recognition of different cultural backgrounds. What is thus meant by "Canadian culture"? How far does it include minorities? Is "being open to new experiences and ideas" a requirement among local Canadian citizens? In her work on the widely spread reference to multiculturalism in the Canadian province of Quebec, Eliantana Razafimandimbimanana has shown that references to multiculturalism was a mere façade to mask a monolingual and monocultural ideology. National bodies seem to be uncomfortable in moving from a methodological nationalism to 'fluid interculturality' (Dervin 2013) where culture is endorsed within the boundaries of a state and often forgets to integrate a real diversity beyond cultural membership. Such bodies include EduHub Malaysia (Machart and Dervin 2014, p. 63) or CampusFrance[9] which promotes "the vibrancy of contemporary French culture", in which the term "culture" once again appears in the singular form.

International students are seen as representatives of their country of origin and consigned to cultural boxes, independent of their motivation to study abroad. One such example lies in the case of a Malaysian student who, prior his departure to the UK, was reminded by a staff of his future university to join the Malaysian Association of the host university. In reality, the man had simply wanted to be reunited with his British partner.

[8]http://www.educationau-incanada.ca/educationau-incanada/canada/leave-partir.aspx?lang=eng.

[9]http://www.campusfrance.org/en/page/vibrancy-contemporary-french-culture.

Meet the Locals: Revisiting Students' Expectations

This cultural essentialism of mobile students is accompanied by an idealisation of the culture of the host country, wherein the 'locals' become the essentialised Other for the newcomers. In analysing the motivation letters of Finnish prospective mobile students, Härkönen and Dervin (2015) note that participants were largely referring to "meeting another culture" without always being clear with what they meant by that. 'Meet the locals' is more than a motto. For example, the University of Stockholm dedicates an entire page on its website to the theme.[10] The theme appears as an imperative to study abroad,[11] something which is absolutely desirable (Skinner 2010). I chanced upon a website on the promotion of student mobility which even suggests that you could potentially meet your future wife while studying abroad.[12] The following excerpts, in which international students refer to 'locals' as cultural Others are taken from focus group discussions (FGD) involving Asian students who were studying in Malaysia and interviews conducted with Malaysians who studied abroad.

Meng and Emily are two PRC Chinese students who are registered in a Malaysian university. They did not qualify for Tier A universities in China due to unsatisfactory results. Instead of joining a Tier B university, they decided that having a 'foreign degree' would provide them with better opportunities in the job market once they returned home, a fact which was echoed by PRC Chinese students who participated in other FGD. For these students, studying abroad is not a goal in itself, and it appears as largely unplanned. We have to bear in mind that we are dealing with undergraduate students who are quite young (19–20 years old), and some of whom may not have clear ideas about their future as yet.

Previously, Meng mentioned that he only applied to Malaysia because studying in that country was quite cheap, although he did not know anything about the country before going there.

Excerpt 1

Interviewer: So how did you feel about going to a place of you didn't know anything at all?

Meng: Try to know it, **try to know the culture**, try to… **deep in the culture**… is life, and everything for you… for us and you, totally new. Then, everything you have to learn it, start it just like you like… **new begin**, it is really different from China, a lot of different.

Emily: Yes, I think I try **to fit**, fit in and make, mix… self, comfortable to start a new life here. It is ok.

Both of them feel the urge to 'meet the locals,' but the difference between Meng and Emily resides in the goal of 'exploring the new culture'. While Meng has an external approach ("try to know"), Emily would like to "fit" in the host society and

[10] http://www.ling.su.se/english/international-summer-school-in-language-documentation-and-linguistic-diversity/meet-the-locals.

[11] http://www.globalinksabroad.org/Featured_Student_Carolyn_Goebel/.

[12] http://www.studentuniverse.com/student-blog/study-abroad/reasons-to-study-abroad.

become part of it ("to fit", "mix", "start a new life here"). Her representation of adaptation is more extreme. Meng is at the stage of "learning to decipher foreign behavior and customs," while Emily's goal is to be "accepting and enjoying the foreign culture" as mentioned on American websites and cited earlier.

This desire to be part of the host culture is even stronger in the following excerpt. Wan is a Malaysian who studied for three years in France. He had just returned from his studies when he was interviewed by a French researcher:

Excerpt 2

Wan: I really wanted to integrate the French society, to feel one of them…

Interviewer: What does it mean integrate for you?

Wan: Hum… it mean do like they do, talk like them, get used to do like them, try to forget for a while where we come from, who we are, etc.

For Wan, the adaptation process implies that one ought to "do like" the local population. Wan's articulation of a stereotype that French people behave in a particular way calls to mind the three biases highlighted by Lacassagne and colleagues. First, individuals are put in contrast with national boundaries (France vs. Malaysia). Second, the behaviours of French people appear in Wan's discourse as homogeneous ("do like **they do**, talk **like them**, get used to do **like them**…"). Third, discrimination appears as a disfavouring of his own national identity, which he wishes to forget ("**forget** for a while *where we come from*, *who we are*…").

The interviewer is never included in Wan's discourse, although other participants in this particular research systematically identified the interviewer as a Frenchman, as related in Machart and Lim (2014). Wan's representation of the French culture is situated in an environment that is different from the context of the interaction (including a French interlocutor), a place where *they* live and where *they* behave in a particular way. This *art de vivre* represents an idealised "French society" which Wan strives to be a part of. This echoes another recurring idea found in the Finnish motivation letters as postulated by Härkönen and Dervin (2015): the desire to become another Self. Wan studies French and he expresses a strong desire to identify with the 'culture' of the language he learns. Unlike Kordes (1991) who analysed this kind of identification with the culture of the target language as a desirable asset, I prefer to contextualise this expression in terms of becoming the Other.

In Wan's discourse, there are expressions of Othering ("they", "them") but also of Self-identification: a "I want to be like this" or idealised representation of *Them*. The fact that he does not include the interviewer in this representation may mean that this represented *Them* is not the French, but rather a group of individuals he feels closer to. Wan created an imagined community with which he could identify during his sojourn abroad, at least during certain moments. This imagined community represents one of the cocoon communities (Korpela and Dervin 2013) in which Wan could participate for a certain time, before switching over to another one (Malaysian students), and to yet another (he participated in an artistic group), and so on. Wan was constantly redefining his own identification in a fluid process that is characteristic of liquid identities (Baumann 2001).

The next excerpt has been analysed in detail in a book chapter in French which is dedicated to Malaysian students' French experience (Machart and Lim 2014). I decided to translate it into English and integrate it into this chapter because it perfectly illustrates the ambiguity of the concept of adaptation. June is a Chinese Malaysian who studied for three years in France. For approximately half an hour during my interview with her, she expressed how difficult it was to interact with French people (a problem that researchers often mention in relation to Asian students in Western countries). However, when June narrates her activities during her holidays in France, individuals from various backgrounds come forth:

Excerpt 3

June: The group was large, we were not close to the French people…

Interviewer: Any particular reason why you were not close?

June: I am shy… I need time to get close to someone… maybe also the language – with Taiwanese – I can speak in Chinese, Japanese, and a little bit of French… […]

Interviewer: And how did you spend your free time, for example during holidays?

June: And for Hari Raya [festivities at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan], I celebrated with Malaysians. Thanks to Cynthia's contact from the church, we spent the first Christmas with 2 French families and on Sundays, I went to church with Liz and we met French people… a family we met through Joanne [a French girl]…

June's social life is incredibly rich, although she claims that it is the opposite. Her experiences involve fellow Malaysians of other faiths, showing some national connections (for Hari Raya, although she is not a Muslim), members of the same linguistic community (Liz who is Chinese Malaysian), and locals (from the church, although June is not a Christian). June was interacting with many different individuals and moving between different groups and communities. Yet, she felt that her social life was deficient (she was lacking interactions with the French with whom "they [Malaysians] were not close"). Being invited by locals for her first Christmas in France (approximately three months after her arrival) seems to indicate an advanced adaptation process. An observation of June's life in Malaysia reveals that she has the same rich, diverse, transient and ever changing forms of social networking. It would be difficult to say that June's adaptation is a failure. However, she perceives it as one, blaming it on her shyness. It seems that June's aims were of another dimension, in that she had higher expectations. Although she weaves in and out of different communities, she expects more without expressing at any time where these expectations come from. The *vox populi* that pushes mobile students to 'meet the locals' without being clear about what it means leads June to some kind of disillusionment, when many international students would be more than happy in her situation. More than a lack of adaptation, international students seem to lack clarity about their goals and how to achieve them. Wedged between a hegemonic discourse that pushes them to meet the locals and a context where they are accommodated in hostels with fellow nationals (Korpela and Dervin 2013; Calinon 2014) for the most part, student mobility generates high hopes which are difficultly met or are disconnected from reality.

Conclusion

Song and Cadman (2012) entitled the first part of their book as "Another pedagogy is possible". Dervin (2011) pleaded for "for change in research on intercultural discourses." Both titles express the discomfort educators face when they deal with trans-cultural (Song and Cadman 2012) or inter-cultural (Dervin 2011, 2012) approaches. Even when using different terms, these researchers express the need to move away from stereotyping discourses, and to be more respectful of diversities (Dervin et al. 2013). The various discourses on adaptation of Asian students definitely need to take that turn.

Asian international students are depicted as deficient, even if they are obviously not. The systematic association of individuals with a cultural identity forces them into boxes (Machart and Lim 2013) and serves as a grid to interpret their behaviour. The discourses of institutional bodies reproduce these kinds of differentialising, culture-opposing discourses. University websites, Embassies or organisations in charge of the promotion of student mobility give a great emphasis on the difficulties that prospective students would encounter, and furnish them with complete 'sets' of advice on how to overcome such difficulties. This provides them with a sense of comfort in their role as better-education-providers and reinforces the impression that 'we' [the 'west'] can educate 'them' [Asians], and that the 'West' will add value to the education of these Others. Not only are these discourses discriminatory, they also are based on the pre-requisite that international students are absolutely different based on an essentialising approach.

In line with Morawska (1994) and Conzen (1996), Wimmer (2013) warns us in *Ethnic Boundaries Making* against the tendency in research to ignore individuals who are "lost to the group" (p. 42), i.e. individuals whose main socialisations do not occur within an ethnic framework. These people do not join clubs or associations, or mingle primarily with other individuals from the same ethnic background, etc. (p. 42) because they have chosen a successful adaptive path. In other words, they have become invisible for researchers, for journalists or for other outsiders as they cannot be easily contacted through 'ethnic snowball sampling' or by word of mouth between peers of the same ethnic origin.

Even if I agree with this major omission, I would also add these individuals become invisible because of a stand which has more to do with a research positioning. They are no longer perceived as a representative from the ethnicity/culture which is under scrutiny because they have adopted 'cultural traits' which do not match commonly spread representations about their group of origin (if they ever matched these imagined representations in the first place), and have become bilingual (Machart, forth.) at a time when bilingualism is often considered as "seditious", including in academia.

Studies on academic mobility are no exception to this trend. In a desire to be able to generalise collected data, researchers focus on national groups which are significant in number, e.g. Erasmus students in Europe, Northern Africans in France, or more recently, Chinese student (Henze and Zhu 2012) who have become an

"euphemism for Asian" students abroad (Machart et al. 2014). When analysing the answers given by participants, researchers sometimes force them to play the cultural card. For example, Xie (2008) was questioning an individual of Chinese origin living in France who explained that he used both negotiation and fighting to get promoted, to which she added: "[But] Chinese people are quite resigned [*résignés*], aren't they?" Her participants could not but agree with her and say: "Exactly, but with French people, we have to explain them the reasons. We cannot abandon all the time, any time. We have to say No when needed" (pp. 138–139). There is a real need to be more open to what our participants have to say.

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Understanding China: Challenges to Australian Governments

Gregory McCarthy and Xianlin Song

Abstract In the 21st Century world of politics, the importance of China as a strategic partner to Australia is arguably indisputable. However, many scholars have noted that successive Australian governments appear to demonstrate very limited understanding of China itself, reading China through a Western lens coloured by the racial and ideological past, to the detriment of national interest (Pan and Walker in New perspectives on cross-cultural engagement. Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, 2015; Fitzgerald 2013; McCarthy and Gao in Australia and China in the 21st century: Challenges and ideas in cross-cultural engagement, Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, 2015). This chapter probes into the Australia-China relationship from 'a consciously dialogical angle', which reflects on itself as well as the other (Pan and Walker in New perspectives on cross-cultural engagement. Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, 2015, p. 4). Through an analysis of Howard's Human Rights dialogue, Rudd's misreading of China-Australia via the trope of friendship, and Abbott's insensitivity towards Chinese history in relation to Japan, it offers a transcultural reading of Australia-China relations of the past two decades. It argues that underpinned by 'an unreflective form of social knowledge' (Pan in New perspectives on cross-cultural engagement. Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, 2015, p. 310) successive Australian governments have shared a similar policy framework in their approaches to China because they read the Chinese present as but the Western past in an economic disguise, where communism is akin to feudalism and will come asunder due to market forces (He in J Asian Surv 54:247–272, 2014, p. 253). Within such framework lies the dichotomy of the rising China as 'opportunity' or 'threat' (White in Quarterly Essay. Black Inc., Collingwood, 2010; Wesley in There goes the neighbourhood. UNSW Press, Sydney, 2011), and a certain unthinkability that China can be read on its own terms not through a Western superiority framing (Seth in Postcolonial theory and the critique of international relations, Routledge,

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London, pp. 1–13, 2013, p. 2), where an idealised democratic West is assumed against the Chinese 'authoritarian' other (Vukovich in China and orientalism: Western knowledge production and the P.R.C. Routledge, New York, 2012, p. 149), in which China's complex civilisations and its distinctive civility is imagined 'as yet' modern (Chakrabarty in Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000).

In the 21st Century world of politics, the importance of China as a strategic partner to Australia is arguably indisputable. However, many scholars have noted that there is an absence of deep cultural understanding of China by current Australian governments (Pan and Walker 2015; Fitzgerald 2013; McCarthy and Gao 2015). This misunderstanding, it is argued, has long historic roots in Australia's racially tuned past that remain ever present today (Walker 1999). Linked to this racialised perspective is the manner by which China was constructed by Australian governments in the Cold War discourse as an ideological and military threat against the 'free world', to which Australia was in active alliance with the US. This Cold War logic remains and has shaped Australia's foreign policy, as this chapter notes not just that of Prime Minister John Howard (as he followed his mentor Robert Menzies), but also Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's China perspective, whose intellectual training in Australia was profoundly influenced by anti-communism and anti-Maoism as it developed in the 1960s and conveyed to him as a student (Gao 2015). This logic, the chapter will argue, relegates China's revolutionary past to 'dead' history, however, the 'specter' of Marx hangs over China as it does Australia (Derrida 1994).

The challenge confronting Howard, Rudd and Abbott when they respectively became prime ministers was how to respond to the rise of China and its economic significance for Australia, whilst retaining both their belief in the cultural superiority of Australia and a lingering fear of communism. This challenge can be seen in the paradox that on the one hand, there is an abundance of two-way exchange between China and Australia: China is Australia's largest trading partner; the resources industry that drove the Australian economy for two decades was dependent on the Chinese market; 150,000 Chinese students annually attend Australian higher education institutions supporting their viability; immigration from China is growing; corporate business ties are extensive; the literature and debates on China is ever present (White 2010; Wesley 2011); and diplomats fly between the countries on regular basis. On the other hand, successive Australian governments appear to demonstrate very limited understanding of China itself, reading China through a Western lens coloured by the racial and ideological past, to the detriment of national interest.

This chapter probes into the transcultural dimensions of this relationship from 'a consciously dialogical angle', which reflects on itself as well as the other (Pan and Walker 2015, p. 4). Through an analysis of Howard's Human Rights dialogue, Rudd's misreading of China-Australia via the trope of friendship, and Abbott's insensitivity towards Chinese history in relation to Japan, this chapter offers a

transcultural reading of Australia-China relations of the past two decades. We argue that underpinned by 'an unreflective form of social knowledge' (Pan 2015, p. 310) successive Australian governments have shared a similar policy framework in their approaches to China because they read the Chinese present as the Western past in an economic disguise, where communism is akin to feudalism and will come asunder due to market forces (He 2014, p. 253). Within such framework lies the dichotomy of the rising China as 'opportunity' or 'threat' (White 2010; Wesley 2011), and a certain unthinkability that China can be read on its own terms not through a Western superiority framing (Seth 2013, p. 2), where an idealised democratic West is assumed against the Chinese 'authoritarian' other (Vukovich 2012, p. 149), in which China's complex civilisations and its distinctive civility is imagined 'as yet' modern (Chakrabarty 2000).

The Human Rights Issue and Howard

The reform process in China created the most remarkable transformation of the country, the biggest revolution of the 20th Century (Carr 2014) and propelled it to a prominent place in the global order. Australia was a major beneficiary of China's rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, notably in mineral exports (Wang 2012; Uren 2012) prompting an ontological challenge for the Australian major political parties in how to support corporate trade with China and yet assert the superiority of Western values and sublimate the racial and ideological past. This became most evident in the pressure between trade and the demand to castigate China for not accepting the ideals of political and civil human rights, as defined by the West. In this tension there was firstly a supposition that Australia's human rights values were the quintessential embodiment of Western civilisation, even if pliable; secondly, that China is the antithesis of a civilised modern society.

In preparation for the 1996 election, John Howard in a series of Headland speeches aimed at positioning his values for government drew a stark distinction between his views and that of the Hawke and Keating governments. In doing so he developed coded words to disguise values that had created political setbacks for him whilst in Opposition. He coined the phrase the 'mainstream' to promote Anglo-Saxon cultural norms against the supposedly multicultural vested interests promoted by Labor. These interests were those which he had confronted when claiming the rise in Asian immigration was destabilising Australian society (Howard 1995). Howard introduced the concept of 'realism and mutual respect' to argue that Australian Anglo-Saxon values were immutable and that Australia would respect Asian countries differences and they must do the same. Howard said

> Building a lasting and fruitful relationship with the region involves achieving a unique synthesis between a comfortable acceptance of Australia's past, a confident assertion of its on-going values and traditions, and a positive readiness to understand, accept and embrace new associations. Our association with the nations of the region must be built on both realism and mutual respect (Howard 1995).

The ‘mutual respect’ formulae were to become a standard Howard trope in dealing with Asian nations. It was most evident in his shift in Australia’s policy when he travelled to China in 1997 where the issue of human rights was respectfully relegated to second order discussion behind closed doors with trade being made the basis of the positive relationship.

On coming to office, Howard had limited foreign policy experience and his political instinct was formed by his admiration of Menzies’s anti-communist attitude towards China and his pro-US dispositions. Once elected in March 1996, Howard immediately sided with the US over the Taiwan Straits dispute, when the US sent two carriers into the region in response to China’s missile tests, which were a symbolic and failed effort to influence the Taiwanese election. In response to China’s actions Australia called in the Chinese ambassador to castigate China (Jacobs 2004, p. 42). Nevertheless, by 1997 Howard was obliged to engage with China due to the growing trade ties in a more diplomatic way, whilst retaining a ‘fear’ of China (McDowall 2006). This created a dilemma for Howard as it required dealing with the human rights issue to which China considered was a barrier to diplomatic relations with Australia. In the foreground of this concern was the fact that the US Congress had systematically used human rights as a diplomatic weapon against China (Gao 2015, p. 223). In addition, there remained the lingering memory of June 1989 when Prime Minister Hawke had responded both emotionally and forcibly over the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989, joining other western countries in imposing trade sanctions on China. This was a major shift by Hawke as he had a long affinity with China and wanted a ‘special relationship’ with China.

Howard’s room to manoeuvre on China was created by changing global responses to the rise of Chinese international power. China was seeking to repair the damage caused by 1989 by differentiating between internal values and economic trade. In 1995 China and the European Union had signed an agreement to conduct human rights dialogues via closed-door arrangements; and in 1996 Hawke’s Foreign Minister Gareth Evans argued Australia should adopt the same approach. Strategically, Howard adapted the Evans’ position which then was to become known as ‘Human Rights Dialogues’ to be held annually, combined with a technical human rights framework of exchanges and training between the two countries, as agreed between the two governments (2004, p. 154). From then onward this bipartisan human rights dialogue basically replaced the previous Hawke goernment’s economic sanction with moral persuasion. Howard thereafter adopted the phrase ‘mutual respect’ in responding to any criticisms over his failure to raise human rights openly with China. Australia’s shift in policy was made apparent to China when in 1997 Australia rejected the regular UN motion to condemn China’s human rights record (Kent 2004).

In response to this change in Australian foreign policy, China’s new premier Li Peng came to Australia on an official visit. Following the warming of the relationship, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer gave a new emphasis to the human rights debate between Australia and China by noting that this was to be no longer a public issue but would be via a closed-door ‘bilateral human rights dialogue’ with China. Downer added that

> the dialogue agreed between Justice Minister Xiao Yang and myself in April marks a substantial and very welcome new development in our relationship with China. The inaugural human rights talks were held in Beijing a little over a week ago and went very well, reflecting the evident commitment of both sides to move the relationship forward. The dialogue will continue on a regular basis (Downer 1997).

When Howard met with Jiang Zemin in 1997 this new positive policy was evident in practice as the public discussion concentrated solely on trade (Hou 2007, p. 355) and it was stressed that annual human rights dialogue between Australia and China were to be held in private (Kent 2004, p. 153). Once this policy direction was made Howard diligently stuck to it, even when he was pressured by the US to follow its lead to use Human Rights discourse as a diplomatic tool. For example, in 2005 when President George W. Bush and John Howard held a White House press conference Bush praised Australia's support in the Iraq War but pressured Howard to take a tougher stance on China's human rights record. Howard begged to differ saying that Australia would put economic priorities first, commenting that 'I think that Australia, first of all, has got to act in her own interests'. He was quick to add, however, that Australia upheld Western human rights values as universal, saying, 'Secondly, though, that we can work together to reinforce the need for China to accept certain values as universal: the value of minority rights, the value of freedom for people to speak, the value of freedom of religion, the same values we share' (Howard 2005).

The Australian media and minority political parties, however, continued to criticise China's civil and political human rights record, especially whenever a prime minister went to China, or a Chinese leader came to Australia. As well, notably when the Dalai Lama made his regular visits to Australia, to which prime minister tactically avoided meeting, there were criticism of China over religious rights. The awkwardness over Howard's ambivalence towards China and his tactic of using practical means to obscure his values re-emerged when in October 2003, following an APEC meeting, President Bush was invited by Howard to address the Australian Parliament, at the same time, President Hu Jintao was also invited to address the parliament the next day when he was due to visit Australia. In the lead-up to the Chinese President's speech, the advocates of civil and political rights in China and Tibetan independence voiced their opposition to President Hu addressing the parliament. For example, the leader of the Australian Greens, Bob Brown said Hu was a 'dictator with blood on his hands', especially in Tibet (Brown 2003). In response, the government leader in the Senate, Robert Hill, repeated the teleology that economic development was the first stage in Westernisation, saying, 'as China continues to develop economically there will be continued improvements in human rights' (Hill 2003, 16293). Likewise, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, asserted that the practical Australia's Human Rights dialogue with China was the best means to address civic and political rights in China. The Labor Opposition agreed with the government's position, saying it opposed any move to raise these matters publically whilst President Hu was to speak in the parliament (Faulkner 2003). Howard in his speech introducing President Hu stressed the mutual respect between the two countries and was keen to emphasise the practical benefits of signing a Trade Agreement with China whilst Hu was in Australia (Howard 2003).

Competing Understandings

In understanding human rights in China it is necessary to recognize four public levels of the debate, the Chinese government, the intellectual and the dissidents and a continuing private perception over rights. The official Chinese governmental position on human rights has developed through the post-1949 revolutionary narrative, where following China's isolation Mao rejected Anglo-American democratic rights instead stressing the socialist right to equality (Qian 2003, p. 203). Nevertheless, the emphasis on equality has altered since the death of Mao and the introduction of market reforms. Moreover, as China has become an international power, there has developed a growing refinement over how to respond to criticisms from outside, whether it be the UN or the US by highlighting certain hypocrisies in those all too ready to raise human rights with China (Svensson 2002; Kent 2008, p. 95). Ann Kent is of the view that external criticisms over China's human rights has tended to be counterproductive, reinforcing China's Mao-Marxist-Leninist notions human rights are reduced to poverty alleviation (Kent 2008, p. 94). At the intellectual level the Chinese debates over the human rights issue are multi-layered, spreading from 'liberal intellectuals' who see market reforms as creating economic citizens leading to civil human rights, to 'left intellectuals' who stress the revival of the social-welfare state for those being exploited by the market as a basic right of economic survival in a socialist country (Wang 2003; Davies 2007).

For Chinese dissidents however, the talk of human rights spreads across a wide field, including legal rights to properties, civil liberties to freedom of artistic expression highlighted by figures lauded in the West, such as artist Ai Weiwei, and the Nobel Laureate Liu Xiaobo. Nevertheless, even figures officially recognized the Party-State such as the Nobel Laureate of literature Mo Yan in his recent writing is equally critical of the CCP over its failure to address economic rights and alleviate peasant disadvantage. What this tolerance implies is that to understand the complexity of human rights issue in China it is essential to recognize that there are more widely held private support for civil, political, economic and social rights across China than assumed in the West and this means the Party-State has to tolerate the flow of these criticisms to circulate, as long as they do not directly challenge the CCP's legitimacy. In turn, this has the effect that dissidents have to become more overt in their attacks on the CCP rule to evoke a response and be noticed in the West (Svensson 2000, p. 207). However, as the West only concentrates on civic and political rights in China this militates against the criticisms of social and economic rights in China by dissidents and 'left intellectuals' (Svensson 2000, p. 221). In addition, to understand the human rights issue in China it is essential to see Chinese political pressures as dynamic and linked to the unfolding of politics at the elite level but also the flow of politics within society, always breaking out from the confines of the State and then flowing back into official discourse, where rights shed their class struggle terminology to become 'socialist human rights' (Deng 2005, p. 181).

On the surface, the framing of Howard's approach to China's human rights issue may appear a significant departure from 'the conventional modes of engagement and critique conducted by many other Western countries in relation to China' (McDowall 2006, p. 18). However, upon closer scrutiny, Howard's ideological position appears much in keeping with the prism of the Cold War, albeit with a pragmatic twist, and Howard's understanding of the issue fails to account for the complexities of the Chinese situation. As a 'cultural warrior' (Kelly 2014, p. 45; Johnson 2007) Howard redefined Australian politics around what he called 'Australian values', basically Anglo-Saxon culture and Westminster heritage. Howard equally was a strong supporter of the US's foreign policy, including the exporting of democracy in Iraq (Howard 2013). Cruz and Steel notes that there is a consistency in Howard's foreign and domestic policy in that Howard obscured his racial 'ambivalence' to people of colour within and outside Australia via coded formulas (D'Cruz and Steele 2003). Beneath the formulaic approach, however, Helliwell and Hindess (2013) contend is a developmentalist thinking where Western lives and values are elevated above Asians. This is evident in Howard's defence of Menzies's decision to commit Australia to the Vietnam War whilst remaining silent on Vietnamese losses (Howard 2014, p. 432). The silence over the victims of the war in Howard's historical reasoning conforms to what Bevernage (2012) calls the absence of the past, of 'dead' history where victim memory is obliterated (2012, p. 4).

There was also a developmentalist consistency in Howard's attitude to common Western values as superior in relationship to China but this was tempered by his economic pragmatism, which was expressed in the formulae of 'mutual respect' (Wesley 2007, p. xvii). Nevertheless, this mutual respect was always tempered by his belief that the values of Britain and the US were of a higher order to the point that it may be necessary to exert them in war, herein justifying Australia involvement in the Iraq War (Wesley 2007, p. xv). What is notable in Howard's formulae is that he stresses the values of democracy, liberty, parliamentary processes, a 'belief in the conduct of international affairs there are right and wrong positions' where the US and Australia have always been on the 'right' side of history (cited in Wesley 2007, p. ix). What is absent from Howard's value set is validation of the existing value system in China. Jayasuriya (2006) critically argues that Howard's approach to China was from a sense of superiority based on a lingering adherence to a civilizing mission, adding that what is absent in Howard's human rights dialogue is any appreciation that China has universal values within its own civilization (Jayasuriya 2006).

Howard's approach to China's 'human rights' demonstrates his limited 'social knowledge' about China and his understanding of the issue reflected more his imagination of Australia itself. Positioning Australia as the cultural superior, ideal type society, Howard failed to take into account the social and cultural complexities of the multiple dimensions of human rights in the Chinese context. According to Gao, Australia's dichotomy between political and civil rights misses the important

equity rights being that of the right to food, education, housing and health care in China (Gao 2015, p. 219). Notwithstanding China's rights preference, the Howard government preferring trade over public criticism of China's liberal rights and was all too silent on the rights of human survival in the behind doors discussions (Fleay 2006).

'*Zhengyou*': Kevin Rudd's Attempt to Understand China

Kevin Rudd in the build-up to the 2007 election wrote a prominent article that stressed his political values and the difference between him and Howard. Rudd claimed that Howard was 'clever' in using coded words to divide Australia and failed to support the internationalisation of Australian society. To achieve this global end, he spoke of speaking truth to State power as exemplified by his hero Dietrich Bonhoeffer,

> The man I admire most in the history of the twentieth century. He was a man of faith. He was a man of reason. He was never a nationalist, always an internationalist. And above all, he was a man of action who wrote prophetically in 1937 that "when Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." There must be a new premium attached to truth in public life. That is why change must occur (Rudd 2006).

Rudd venerated Bonhoeffer because he regards himself as both an internationalist and a conviction politician, stressing that 'we need to be guided by a new principle that encompasses not only what Australia can do for itself, but also what Australia can do for the world' (Rudd 2006). Once elected Rudd illustrated his political conviction by offering a formal apology to the Stolen Generation, of Aboriginal people who were taken from their parents to be brought up to be western by missionaries or white families. In his speech, he declared that his government was resolving the 'unfinished business of the nation, to remove a great stain from the nation's soul' (Rudd 2006).

On his first trip to China as Prime Minister, Rudd was keen to raise human rights to prove he was not soft on China. At home, he was acutely aware of the conservative media and Opposition criticism that he was too pro-China (Sheridan 2008). Equally, Rudd's knowledge of China made him cognisant that any divergence from the Howard government position would be of a high risk, nevertheless, Rudd's moral conviction over-road pragmatism. In April 2008, Rudd gave a lecture at Peking University, where he adopted the persona of a '*zhengyou*', a 'true friend' of China, so as to chastise China over human rights violations in Tibet (Rudd 2008). Rudd's speech was well received in the Australian media but officially in China it was read as a government-to-government attack, merely echoing the standard US line on Tibet (Toy and Grattan 2008). The term '*zhengyou*' can be read, as Rudd intend to mean it, in the sense of criticising China from the position of a true friend, but this word is overlaid with cultural context for it is more often used in a private familial manner and not diplomatically in public, where a person

has earned the respect of those he criticises to make the criticism. It is therefore not surprising that it was taken as a diplomatic offence by China (Gao 2015, p. 22).

Rudd's decision to challenge China's human rights record was endorsed by Geremie Barmé, who wrote that 'as a practised diplomat Rudd could have taken the easy path by speaking in platitude… Instead, with finesse and skill, he chose to address the students on the broad basis for a truly sustainable relationship with the economically booming yet politically autocratic state that is China' (Barmé 2008). There is another reading of Rudd's speech not as playing to domestic politics nor as speaking truth to 'autocracy' but as framing his support for the free market 'liberal internationalists' (Rudd 2012), who see market liberalisation leading to democracy (McCarthy and Gao 2015).

Moreover, Rudd was ever ready to criticise China over human rights when the occasion presents itself. For example, in July 2009 there were ethnic conflicts in the Xinjian capital, Urumqi, involving violence between ethnic minorities and the Han majority population. The cause of the violence was very complicated going beyond ethnicity to economic divisions and personal hardships. Rudd hastily blamed the Chinese government's ethnic policy, without waiting for a full foreign policy assessment. At a G20 meeting in Germany at that time, he said in regard to the Xinjian violence, 'There are human rights problems in China. I have never shied away from that fact' (Mackerras 2015, p. 78). Mackerras argues that Rudd was too quick to judge and did not understand the complexity of the internal dispute within China, ever ready to assert a position of superiority from which to lecture China (Mackerras 2015, p. 78).

It is an accepted view that Australia-China relations under Kevin Rudd fared no better than that under the Howard regime (Fitzgerald 2013; He 2014; Mackerras 2015). There is a certain paradox here in that there had been very high expectation on the relationship in both countries. Kevin Rudd, a Mandarin speaking ex-diplomat, had a far greater engagement with China than Howard or many Western leaders (Johnson et al. 2010, p. 71). His biography sold well in China and at home he had strong personal ties with influential new Sinologists. As anticipated, in campaigning for office, Rudd spoke of an enhanced economic relationship between Australia and China but equally he held strong values on human rights in China (Rudd 2007), which Gao argues were over-determined by his Christian faith (Gao 2015). For Gao, Rudd was a 'conviction politician', brought up as a Catholic and then converted to Anglicanism by his wife, supervised at the Australian National University by an anti-communist 'devout Catholic', Pierre Ryckmans, and he was part of the cross-party Evangelic group in parliament, approaching China as if he was on a Christian mission of conversion from communism to social democratic capitalism (Gao 2015, p. 223). In addition, both Gao and Pan note that Rudd's understanding of China was profoundly influenced by Cold War ideology (Gao 2015; Pan 2015).

While Rudd had competent linguistic skills his moral values and anti-communism gave him a blinkered view of China. As the former Australian Ambassador to China Jeff Raby observed language skills alone are insufficient,

commenting that 'speaking the language is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for being Chinese literate' (Raby quoted in Garnaut 2011). Gao (2015) notes 'there is a difference between speaking the language (a skill) and understanding the country (rigorous intellectual capacity)' (Gao 2015). Similarly, Pan (2015) acutely observes that Rudd's understanding of China exhibited 'unreflective social knowledge' lacked 'above all a deep commitment to intersubjective social knowledge through mutual dialogue', as such, Rudd's dialogical exchange was from an unquestioning belief in the superiority of Western civilisation (Pan 2015, p. 325).

A developmentalist reading of Rudd's speech makes for a compelling case of his commitment to the superiority of Western values, especially over Tibetan religious rights. But the question of Tibet within China cannot be reduced to Western views of religion. To understand the complex Chinese position on Tibet it is essential to see it in historic terms as intricate, multi-dimensional and ever changing, at the same time retaining the narrative of the 1949 Revolution. In this Chinese governmental framing, Tibet became an Autonomous Region of China as per the 1951 agreement. Likewise, as Wang (2011) explains, Chinese governments have incorporated the Tibetan question to the founding principle of the new nation, where ethnic diversity is meant to be respected in all regions, in contrast to the old dynasties and the colonial systems of divide and rule along ethnic lines (Wang 2011, p. 184). The post-1949 policy towards minorities was also one of joint progress where according to the revolutionary narrative the Han majority was obliged to aid the progress of these minorities in line with their own advancement (Wang 2011, p. 187). The conundrum in the pre-1949 Tibetan system was the strong links between the belief system, the economy, the ethnic component and the central religious governing structure, which was vulnerable to both the CCP national principles and to the fundamental economic change that occurred post-1978.

There was therefore the tension between the Chinese revolution, the socialist economic system and the commitment to internationalism so evident in the Mao period, forged in Cold War isolation, and the pressure unleashed by market reforms. This tension between ethnic rights and economic individual rights became exacerbated by the introduction of a state capitalism and market arrangements. Whilst on the one hand the government's political position remains tied to the historic principles of the revolution, on the other hand the economic forces of the market challenged the policy of united ethnic progress. In Marxist terms, the emergence of capitalists, 'petty bourgeois' classes, combined with proletariat and lumpen-proletariat tendencies has divided the region on class terms and class consciousness, which cut across the very nature of the traditional ethnic-political-economic divisions and the relationship between class and religious public officialdom, typified by the old Tibetan order. The economic-political space is now filled by new class-officialdom and the accompanying power relations and economic inequality that are both ethnic and non-ethnic in nature.

As Wang (2011) argues, the Tibetan question is constructed against a 'depoliticised' history, where the colonial legacy and the Cold War are ignored by

the West to de-legitimise the autonomous region agreement, paradoxically from an Enlightenment perspective in favour of a religious rather than secular state (Wang 2011). Compounding this paradox is that the very capitalism that ushered in secular political orders is destabilising the economic conditions and also the old order (Wang 2011). The point Wang Hui makes is that this depoliticisation reduces all regional disputes, whether they be political, economic or social to ethnic-come-religious rights thereby silencing the voice of the people in the Chinese community (Wang 2011, p. 226). What is lost as Wang Hui notes is the dignity of all ethnic peoples in China as such it can be depicted as the 'clash of ignorance' rather than the 'clash of civilisation' (Wang 2011, p. 225).

In the light of the western version of history, the political context of Rudd's speech is that it was delivered a month after the 4 March 2008 riots in Tibet and the Chinese government's claim that the Dalai Lama was seeking to derail the Olympic torch relay which in turn evoked strong nationalist passions in China demanding that the Chinese government protect the torch runners (McDonald 2008). While it is hard to prove or disprove the Chinese government claims there is evidence that the Tibetan discontent in this case was probably economically driven. An independent report by Chinese scholars contends that the riots were inspired not by religious persecution but economics, where the high level of youth unemployment sparked the riots (Ramzy 2009). In the case of Chinese popular opinion, garnished from media reports of the burning of Han Chinese businesses in the riots, there was strong resentment against the Tibetan rioters (Jacques 2009).

Rudd's approach to human rights in China appears a paradox as he was knowledgeable about China but he was driven by a certain civilising imperative and a historic perspective that denied the 1949 Revolution and the principles on which the Chinese national narrative is formed. He failed to acknowledge that his advocacy of political and religious rights in Tibet is integrally linked to economic rights and therein silencing the voices of the disadvantaged. What was at the heart of Rudd's failed policy towards China was his actual inability to self-reflect on his own values and to understand China on its own terms (Pan 2015). There is a paradox here in that Rudd studied Chinese at ANU in 1976 (the end of the Cultural Revolution) and as a consequence, like his teacher Ryckmans, Rudd seeks to praise pre-1949 China and denigrate or deny the 1949–1976 period. This form of ideological a historicism leads Rudd to treat human rights in China as a means to negate both the communist period's narrative and as a means to propel China from 'autocracy' to capitalist-social democracy.

Abbott and China

While successive Australian governments may have appeared to lack a deep understanding of China in general, their 'unreflective form of social knowledge' on China is most evident in the diplomacy where Sino-Japan relations are concerned. Demarcating an arbitrary line in the sand between 'democracies' as friend and

non-democracy as potential enemy, Australian governments, Howard, Rudd, Gillard to Abbott, demonstrate an alarming deficiency in their discourses on China and China-Japan international relations. It is Prime Minister Abbott who has taken this Cold War ideology to an extreme level by elevating Japan to Australia's 'best friend' in Asia and 'ally' status, whilst his predecessors were somewhat circumspect in using Japan against China, overtly supporting 'democracy against communism' as he often expressed it (McCarthy and Song 2015).

When Tony Abbott was elected as prime minister in September 2014 he had limited foreign policy experience or understanding. In his book *Battlelines* (2009) written to position himself for Liberal Party leadership, he expressed a palpable antagonism to China as a communist country (2009, p. 160). He believes the Anglosphere is the end of history to which all other countries must follow, noting that 'Western culture, especially its English speaking version is pervasive. Overwhelmingly, the modern world is one that's been made in English' (Abbott 2009, p. 161). He hypothesis that if the US went to war over Taiwan then Australia would join the US as this is not 'choosing America over China but democracy over dictatorship' (Abbott 2009, p. 160). Equally, he is of the view that English is the global *linguafranka* and this will be a 'problem for China' as unlike India it will not be able to enter the Anglosphere of modern nations (2009, p. 160). He notes: 'although China has had to become less repressive to accommodate more economic freedom, the long-term ability of what's still a communist government to maintain legitimacy and to satisfy popular aspirations is far from clear' (Abbott 2009, p. 160). When in Opposition Tony Abbott advocated political and legal reforms in China, saying: 'In the long term, China should prosper even more if its people enjoyed freedom under the law and the right to choose a government, despite the difficulty of managing this transition in a country with a tumultuous history' (Abbott 2012).

Abbott's pro-Japanese preference in Asia was immediately evident when he met Prime Minister Abe, at the APEC Conference in October 2013. He said that Japan was 'Australia's best friend in Asia and we want to keep it a very strong friendship', emphasizing that Japan was a democracy with 'liberal pluralism at the core of its being' and a strong 'ally' of Australia (Abbott cited in Kenny and Wen 2013). The Abbott government's predilection for Japan was manifested by his Foreign Minister Julie Bishop on her first trip to Japan, in October 2013. Bishop publicly supported the Abe government's 'normal defense posture' and Japan's role in maintaining 'regional and global security', arguing this was in keeping with the close ties between democratic 'friends' (Bishop 2013). In effect, Bishop was signaling to Abe that the Abbott government was fully supporting his political maneuvers for an increased Japanese military presence in Asia and to do so by reinterpreting the Japanese Constitution's Article 9, known as the Peace Clause, which restricted the Japanese military to defence only. Bishop echoed Abbott's claim that as Japan was western it could expand as it would abide by international rules. She said that Australia and Japan 'share a deep commitment to democracy, to the rule of law, to human rights and to peaceful coexistence' (Bishop 2013).

In the most evidential terms, Abbott was taking Japan's side in the South China Seas disputation, where many nations, not just China, have historic claims on a series of islands, most uninhabited. In historical perspective the islands become periodically symbols for Sino-Japanese nationalist tendencies. The recent amplified tension was sparked when on 5 September 2012 Japan broke the orderly *status quo* in regard to the Senkaku/Diaoyu island dispute by declaring that it would buy the island. China saw this as a provocation aimed directly at it (Hook 2014, p. 12). Even the United States 'strongly' advised Japan 'not to go in that direction' but to no avail. Historically, the dispute over the Senkaku-Diaoyu islands are clouded in deep-rooted historical claims, overlaid by colonial law and imperial conquest (McCormack 2013; Hook 2014, p. 6). According to Glen Hook, the islands are a perfect symbol to provoke nationalist sentiments in Japan, as they evoke naval and air force responses as such they act as a means to bolster the remilitarization of the Japanese defense force and by doing so wrote over and wrote out the imperial period of WWII (Hook 2014, p. 18). So that when in September 2013, China decided provocatively to invoke an Air Defence Identification Zone over these islands, this was a tit-for-tat response to Japan. Disregarding the historical intricacies of the claims, Bishop and Abbott openly sided with Japan, in November 2013. Minister Bishop summoned the Chinese Ambassador, Ma Zhaoxu, publicly condemning Beijing's AIDZ manoeuvre (Allard and Wen 2013). Abbott supported Bishop's rebuke of the Chinese ambassador. He stressed that China was challenging universal values, saying, 'where we think Australia's values and interests have been compromised, I think it is important to speak our mind, and we believe in freedom of navigation, navigation of the seas, navigation of the air, and I think there is a significant issue here'. Adding, we 'are a strong ally of the United States, we are a strong ally of Japan. … We have a very strong view that international disputes should be settled peacefully and in accordance with the rule of law and where we think that is not happening, or it is not happening appropriately, we will speak our mind' (Abbott cited in Kenny and Wen 2013). In defending his departure from the previous Australian position of neutrality, Abbott said he regarded China as but a trading relationship, saying China is 'a strong and valuable economic partner… because it is in China's interest' but Japan is a democracy (Abbott cited in Kenny and Wen 2013).

China was so incensed by Australia's strident pro-Japan stance over the Senkaku-Diaoyu and that it publically voiced its displeasure when Foreign Minister Bishop visited China in late November 2013. In addition, in February 2014 China took the opportunity to lecture Australia on its supposed adhering to universal values by noting human rights violations in regard to asylum seekers. In response, the *Australian* newspaper felt provoked to write an editorial castigating China on its human rights record, saying that 'China's attitude in criticizing Australia's handling of refugees is hypocritical and misguided. But it must not be allowed to cast a shadow over our important bilateral relationship' (Australian Editorial 2014).

Abbott's pro-Japan position revealed not only a lack of understanding of China but also equally of Japan's role during World War II and the lingering memory

throughout Asia of Japan's war time atrocities. This is a clear misunderstanding that goes beyond the usual rewriting of Asian history in the 1950s to have Japan restored as a democratic ally so as to contain Maoist China. Whilst the US promoted the revision of Japan from enemy to ally this did not erase Japan's World War II history from US official or veteran's memory. In contrast, Tony Abbott has gone further than any world leader in praising Japan's military heroism. When Prime Minister Abe, visited Australian in July 2014 and addressed the Australian parliament, Abbott said that

> At some times, it's true, Australians have not felt as kindly towards Japan as we now do but we have never, ever underestimated the quality and capacity of the Japanese people. Even at the height of World War II, Australia gave the Japanese submariners killed in the attack on Sydney full military honours. Admiral Muirhead-Gould said of them: "theirs was a courage which is not the property or the tradition or the heritage of any one nation…but was patriotism of a very high order". We admired the skill and the sense of honour that they brought to their task although we disagreed with what they did. Perhaps we grasped, even then, that with a change of heart the fiercest of opponents could be the best of friends (Abbott 2014b).

Abbott's praise of Japanese soldier's 'courage and honour' sparked immediate criticism in Australia and China. The New South Wales RSL President Don Rowe said Japanese soldiers had 'no honour in the way they treated our POWs and civilians. Torture, starvation and forced labour are not honourable' (Rowe cited in McPhedran 2014). The National RSL President Ken Doolan commented that Japanese war atrocities in China included 'the rape of Nanjing where 300,000 Chinese civilians were massacred in six weeks in 1937 and to Australian forces during the war was not honourable' (Doolan cited in McPhedran 2014). The Chinese Xinhua Newsagency said Abbott's comments were 'appalling', adding that 'He [Abbott] probably wasn't aware that the Japanese troops possessed other "skills", skills to loot, to rape, to torture and to kill. All of these had been committed under the name of honour almost 70 years ago' (SBS News 2014). Rana Mitter has documented Japan's 14 year military occupation of China that resulted in as many as 20 million dead and is etched in the memory of China and continues today to evoke strong hostile public responses to Japan, especially as Abe is seeking to deny this history (Mitter 2013, p. 378).

Abbott's lack of understanding of the tension between Japan and China and much of Asia in regard to WWII was evident earlier in his prime ministership. In late December 2013, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited the Yasukuni Shrine, which has fourteen 'A' Class War Criminals. Other Asian countries in the region immediately objected and the Obama government expressed 'disappointment' that Abe's provocative action would 'exacerbate tensions with its Japan's neighbours' (Obama cited in McCormack 2014). Yet Abbott remained silent. As Brown (2014) notes this forgetting of Japan's war crimes by Abbott ignores that China was Australia's ally in that war, whereas Japan was the enemy (Brown, 10 July 2014). Similarly, Morris-Suzuki et al. (2014) expressed concerns that Abbott's ahistorical position on Japan has the potential to create a 'second cold war in East Asia' as countries in the region are 'being pushed into an unenviable choice between being pro-Japan or pro-China' (Morris-Suzuki et al. 2014).

The close ties between Australia and Japan under Abbott's government implied that Australia had made a choice. The Abe trip to Australia in July 2014 saw the signing of a free trade agreement, accompanied by a military security agreement. On the latter, Abbott commented that Prime Minister Abe and himself would sign an agreement 'on the transfer of defence equipment and technology, similar to the agreements that Japan already has with the United States and the United Kingdom. For decades now, Japan has been an exemplary international citizen. So Australia welcomes Japan's recent decision to be a more capable strategic partner in our region'. In an obvious aside to China, Abbott added, 'I stress, ours is not a partnership against anyone; it's a partnership for peace, for prosperity and for the rule of law' (Abbott 2014b).

On his first trip to China in April 2014, Abbott ensured that China was at the tail end of his travel, notably after visiting both Japan and South Korea. The object of the trip was the promotion of free trade agreements in all three countries, having gained agreement in South Korea and Japan there was pressure on both Australia and China to come to a trade accord. On that China visit, Abbott reverted to the Howard formula of human rights being a matter for the annual closed-door talks, whilst promoting economic ties in public. Nevertheless, he imposed on China his Anglosphere view that China's remarkable economic growth was due to it adopting Western individualism, commenting that Chinese 'governments have allowed individuals and families to take more control of their futures'. Abbott was ever conscious that his remarks that Japan was Australia's 'best friend in Asia' had caused disquiet in China, and sought to claim that his term friendship was also applicable to China as a 'new' friend as compared to the US and Japan as 'old' friends. He commented that

> My predecessor John Howard once said of an Australia supposedly torn between Europe and Asia that "we do not need to choose between our history and our geography". My own response to those urging Australia to choose between our economic and our security interests is that you don't make new friends by losing old ones; and you don't make some friendships stronger by weakening others (Abbott 2014a).

Abbott's misunderstanding of China was apparent when President Xi came to Australia to enhance economic ties. At a joint press conference on 17 November 2014, Abbott praised China for signing a free trade agreement, noting it was the first by China with a 'substantial economy', highlighted by tariff reductions on a range of goods and services. In return, Australia would relax foreign investment laws for China (Abbott 2014b). The details remained secret, however, to be released at a later date. Abbott in praising Xi said he was extremely taken by an aside made by the President in his speech. In his address to the parliament President said that 'We have set two goals for China's future development. The first is to double the 2010 GDP and per capita income of urban and rural residents and build a society of initial prosperity in all respects by 2020. The second is to turn China's modern socialist country that is prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious by the middle of the century' (Xi 2014). At a celebratory State dinner that night, Abbott, in reflecting on President Xi's parliamentary speech, misinterpreted

this second goal to mean China would become a liberal rather than remain a socialist democracy. Waxing lyrically, Abbott proposed a toast to Xi saying 'I have never heard a Chinese leader declare that his country will be fully democratic by 2050'. Adding that 'I have never heard a Chinese leader commit so explicitly to a rule-based international order founded on the principle that we should all treat others as we would be treated ourselves' (Abbott 18 Nov. 2014c). Abbott was clearly projecting onto China his own idealized version of western democracy as the end of history rather than addressing China on its own terms.

The Challenges of Understanding China

Underpinned by 'an unreflective form of social knowledge' (Pan 2015, p. 310) successive Australian governments have shared a similar policy framework in their approaches to understand China in the 21st Century, departing from the assumption to read the Chinese present as but the Western past in an economic disguise. In comparison to his predecessors, Abbott articulates the most extreme version of a developmentalism in which democracy is the end point of history to which China must aspire. Equally, Abbott like Howard and Rudd operate from a practice that indicates the Cold War is still alive in Asia (Wang 2011). In this schema, Japan is accepted as being both anti-communist and part of Western development due to its democracy. Concomitantly, there is the assumption that China's economic rise will follow a Eurocentric path and lead to pluralist democracy. John Howard expressed this clearly when he commented 'eventually there will be a collision within China between her economic liberalism and her political authoritarianism' (Howard 2010, p. 502). Whilst Kevin Rudd had a more nuanced view on China, he drew a European analogy, commenting that China's dynamism is 'like the English Industrial Revolution and the global information evolution combusting simultaneously and compressed into not 300 years but 30 years' (Rudd 2012). Rudd decided to lecture China on how this dynamic should be completed by political liberalisation and to this end he championed the free market agenda of the 'liberal internationalist' stream of intellectual thought within China (Rudd 2012). For his part, Tony Abbott articulates a teleological view that China's 'economic liberalisation' would lead to 'political liberalisation' due to the pressures of the capitalist market (Abbott cited in Roggeveen 2014). In his 2009 book *Battlelines*, Abbott commented that 'Although China has had to become less repressive to accommodate more economic freedom, the long-term ability of what's still a communist government to maintain legitimacy and to satisfy popular aspirations is far from clear' (Abbott 2009, p. 160).

For their part both Howard and Rudd, by setting up the binary of human rights versus trade, can be read as supporting pure corporate interest, especially the mining sector (Uren 2012) but it can also be interpreted as assuming trade will further capitalism in China and lead to that country moving up the developmental slope to which the West is at its apex. Likewise, there is a Eurocentric postulation

that China is reliving the Western path from feudalism to capitalism and this will be driven by a middle class who will link their new acquired affluence to political demands for freedom. On this repetition of history, Abbott observes that in 'just over 30 years, hundreds of millions of Chinese have entered the middle class acquiring TVs, motor-cars, extensive wardrobes, and air conditioned homes… For the first time since 1949, Chinese people can more-or-less decide how they work and where they live, even outside the country, although they still can't choose their government' (Abbott 2012).

However, the economic liberalisation associated with Deng Xiaoping was built on a class structure that is distinctly different from that of the West. That is, the 1949 revolution was based on a socialist narrative where the working class were the 'leading class' and the peasantry were the 'semi-leading class' and the elite was selected on a political basis. Post 1978, the elite are both political and economically overlapping to the point where political power and wealth are too often intertwined (He 2003, p. 165). As such, the western notion of an economic (middle) class which will displace an (aristocratic) political class totally misses the point of the inter-relationship between political power and elite affluence, symbolised by President Jiang Zemin allowing entrepreneurs to enter the CCP in 2001. The Chinese middle class are strata below these elite and whilst defined by income and status is highly divided and basically underdeveloped to challenge the elite political and economic power structure tied to State power and the state enterprises (He 2003, p. 171). Not to dwell on this misunderstanding too much, the peasantry, the immigrant workers and the working class who have borne the brunt of the changes are often systematically marginalized or divided by the reforms. Moreover, land is still public property and this shapes the interactions between the government, the party, the collective and the individual by no means to the benefit of the peasantry, nevertheless, there remains no open commodification of land.

The failure of Australian governments to accept China as a complex and unique society that continues to respond to the spectre of the 1949 revolutionary narrative means that there is a lost opportunity to understand China itself (Fitzgerald 2013). Rather the dialogue with China by Howard, Rudd and Abbott assumes but one path of development to which China must follow. This becomes manifest in the human rights dialogue where the potential to promote economic rights that could be the basis for revival of people's democracy is displaced by the call for political and civil rights along a one-dimensional western path (Dreze and Sen 2011). Paradoxically, this approach can be counterproductive as when the Australian party political leaders espoused Western versions of human rights they leave themselves open to criticism of hypocrisy from China in regard to abrogating those very rights in terms of both international agreements (UN Declaration of Human Rights) and domestic rights (Kent 2004, p. 155). In addition, the rhetoric articulated by Howard, Rudd and especially Abbott is that Australia and Japan adhere to international order, whereas China is a maverick state. Nevertheless, this claim that Australia is an ideal international citizenship is open to debate, especially in regard to the Iraq War, which was conducted against UN approval and Australia's refugee policies.

The ideology articulated by Howard, Rudd and Abbott express a triumphalism of capitalism and liberal democracy that permeated the West following the collapse of the USSR in 1989. It is this truimphalism that inspired Jacques Derrida to argue that the specters of Marxism as strong as today as it was when the Manifesto was written (Derrida 1994, p. 14). Derrida draws a distinction between the claims that Marxism is dead and the haunting specter of capitalism remain ever evident today. In short, the past is always with us even if it is declared dead in China and the West. The point at issue here is that the irrevocable obligation to rethink the present and the past, the individual and the collective sense of memory in understanding China. As Bevernage notes, Derrida's theory of spectral time, between a supposed 'dead past' (ala Fukuyma—end of history) and a 'spectral past' offers a 'better insight into history's performativity and its participation in the politics of time' (Bevernage 2012, p. 166).

In China, the official version of Marxism has been adopted as a lexicon but the specter of Marx's communism is in dialectical contradiction with the antagonisms caused by consumerism and commodification. The misunderstanding of this by Australian governments is evident in the unified assumption that China is capitalist and flying towards democracy, with the middle class as the agents of this historic change. Concomitantly, that Maoism and communism is dead, merely the dead past of a 'pre-modern' moment in history. Whereas the Maoist past remains a specter in China haunting the CCP and challenging the unspoken inequity that has emerged under state capitalism. In this spectral present the middle class are not the winds of change but it is the Party-State that propels society towards its own forms of capitalism, whilst haunted by the need for socialist legitimacy.

Simultaneously linked to a dead past is the misunderstanding that Australian governments, especially the Abbott government, have over the Sino-Japanese relationship. It is striking inside and outside Australia that Abbott regards the Japanese war crimes as 'dead past' where it remains a spectral present that haunts the memory of Sino-Japanese relationship and returned soldiers. There is a clear misreading here as the erasure of the past reinforces the Chinese view that Japan's denial of war crimes is supported by the Australian government. The present is defined by what is seen as the naturalization of human history so that the forgetting of the imperial invasion of China by Japan is construed as a necessary part of development to push China onto the development slope, where the West is at the top (Harootunian 2004, p. 83). In China's eyes, this is not a dead past but a spectral past of humiliation that is reproduced as official ideology, text book accounts and popular cultural depictions. Unless this spectral sense of time and the past is fully understood by Australia then this will remain the basis for continual misunderstanding.

Conclusion

The misunderstanding of Australian governments' policy in relation to China comes from deep-seated ideological roots in terms of developmentalist versions of history that locates the West over and above the rest. In performativity, this policy

is two-fold: prioritized trade as a means to benefit Australia but as well to promote Chinese economic growth that would, following a European model, inevitably leading to pluralist democracy in China. In this regard the issue of human rights is relegated to closed door discussions but remained a specter within Australia to be raised to lecture China, especially over Tibet. The lecturing of China and Chinese government response silences the voices of the subaltern Chinese people supposedly being heard. Nevertheless, the specter of inequality is ghostly present in this misspoken dialogue. The second is the relationship with Japan, where the Australian position is to accept Japan as modern and a Cold War ally against China. However, to do so has meant constructing Japan's imperial past and its war crimes as part of the dead past. Compounding this relegation is the use by Japanese leaders, especially Abe, to rewrite the past as means of rekindling nationalism, in response to the rise of China. This was most evident in Abe's official visit to the Yusukuni Shrine but equally in provoking China over the *Senkaku-Diaoyu* island dispute by nationalizing the islands, leading to China's air zone overreaction. Rather than staying neutral in these matters and reminding Japan of its past, Australia has sided with Japan at each turn, either by silence or by criticizing China's actions. In summary, as documented in this chapter, successive Australian governments' foreign policy positions, whether they be in terms of human rights, Australia-China and Sino-Japan relations have become barriers to understanding China as it is not as Australia desires, nor assumes it to be. Moreover, Australia looks at China without self reflection so it imposes an idealised self onto the other and finds it wanting, whereas it is Australia's own identity that requires reflection; it is, as Hamlet proclaims, 'out of joint' with the rise of China.

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