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ORIGINAL PAPER

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Socio-cultural aspects of the relationship between the EU and East Asia, with particular reference to China

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Abstract This paper presents a comparative study about words and about sovereignty; about the ancestry of the words that construct the discourse of sovereignty in the context of China; about the analysis and interpretation of the civic discourse and the rhetoric that construct Chinese sovereignty in the field of international relations and foreign policy, and about the consequences of this analysis and interpretation for the formulation of EU foreign policy with regard to East Asia, especially China, and the United States, as well as the feedback that notions of sovereignty have on the construction of Chinese civic discourse. For many contemporary Chinese thinkers, China should modernise without repeating the process of modernism, should leap over the system of values established by the Enlightenment that seemed to justify imperialism, and develop an economy and institutions that would serve to create wealth and to raise the standard of living of the population, without imposing values that are advantageous to a "West" that is already wealthy. They have identified a cultural dissidence within developed societies that advocates the values of postmodernism as a way of rejecting the values of modernism. In this context, they advocate the possibility of modernising their society without having to accept the imposition of values that originated in societies that have already begun to question them. In this way, China could reach postmodernism in a relatively short period of history without having to pass through the traumas that characterised the development of modernism in the "West" over a period of centuries (it would be difficult not to discern echoes of Mao Zedong's "Great Leap Forward" in these Chinese versions of the postmodernist paradigm). The communicative strategy to be adopted by the EU in the rhetorical construction of its dialogue with China should be fully cognizant of and sensitive to the criteria of China's moral order as outlined in this study and specified in the Five Principles (mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-aggression;

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non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence), the Spirit of Shanghai and the ASEAN Way, with special emphasis on mutual recognition, parity of esteem, and mutual benefit. Any other discourse will be perceived semiotically as unilateralist and exploitative. Respect for diversity is paramount, and the ability to harmonise diversity is a major function of Chinese political and cultural thought. "Harmony" and "peace" are the same word in classical Chinese: 和 hé (和平 hépíng is the modern word for "peace" and 和聲 héshēng is the modern word for "harmony"). As a result, any practice that produced harmony, such as music or cooking, was a form of training for maintaining peace, social cohesion and solidarity in society (or among nations).

Keywords China · Modernisation · Modernity · Postmodernity · Postcolonialism · Culture studies · Cross-cultural transfer · EU-China relations · Comparative sociocultural studies · Critique · Paradigms

言有宗, 事有君 *yányǒuzōng, shìyǒujūn*

Words have an ancestor; affairs have a sovereign.

老子道德經 *Lǎozǐ Dàodéjīng*, 70, 171[1].

This will be a comparative study about words and about sovereignty; about the ancestry of the words that construct the discourse of sovereignty in the context of China; about the analysis and interpretation of the civic discourse and the rhetoric that construct Chinese sovereignty in the field of international relations and foreign policy, and about the consequences of this analysis and interpretation for the formulation of EU foreign policy with regard to East Asia, especially China, and the United States, as well as the feedback that notions of sovereignty have on the construction of Chinese civic discourse.

In the social sciences, as practised in Europe, there is an important tradition of discourse analysis and its relation to power: Antonio Gramsci's concept of "hegemony", or the control of information, as a counterpart to "institutional violence"; Michel Foucault's concepts of the "archaeology" and the "genealogy" of discourse; Louis Althusser's concept of "interpellation"; Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's concepts of dominant and subversive discourses, or Jürgen Habermas' concept of the public sphere and the rules of civic discourse that construct it, among many others. In East Asia, especially in China, there is a new, alternative and developing tradition whose hypotheses and conclusions are waiting to be integrated into the European academic framework of applied discourse analysis and comparative socio-cultural studies.

The Chinese term 君 *jūn* "sovereign" has an interesting etymology in this context: a hand holding a club, combined with a mouth that speaks. The hand and club are a metaphor for "authority", the authoritative role of the "father" in imposing order in the microcosm of the family in the socio-political order in traditional Chinese political and social thought. With the addition of "mouth", authority becomes the authority of that person in Society whose words have the same force as the authority of "institutional violence", that is to say, the "sovereign". So there is a close relationship between words or discourse and sovereignty in traditional Chinese political thought. This idea is reinforced by the fact that such a

[1] Cf. Lao Tzu [Laozi], Tao Te Ching, D.C. Lau (Ed. & Trans.), Penguin Books, 1963, p. 132.

significant term as 道 dào, the "way", also means "discourse", "that which is said", "to dictate", "that which is dictated", "dictation", which is not so far from "dictator" or "dictatorship", which I would prefer to understand, in contemporary terms, as the discourse of power. When traditional Chinese political and social thinkers speak of "the Way" and its applications, they also try to identify the source of this civic discourse, and often attribute it to the "sovereign". In this sense, the "ancestry" of the words that construct discourse and rhetoric is bound up with "sovereignty".

The most famous definition of the relation between political power and social organisation in traditional Chinese political thought is the Confucian affirmation 君君臣臣父父子子 *jūnjūn chénchén fùfù zǐzi*, "that the sovereign [君 *jûn*] act as a [competent] sovereign, the minister [臣 *chén*] as a [competent] minister, the father/subject [父 *fù*] as a [competent] father/subject, and the son [子 *zi*] as a [competent] son", which is the illustration of the Confucian doctrine of 正名 *zhèngmíng*, "the rectification of names", or the need to establish a socio-cultural ideological consensus, at both the macrocosmic level of society in general and the microscosmic level of the individual family (to which we would need to add an extension to international relations and foreign policy).

In traditional Chinese political thought,[2] the establishment of an official discourse that could order society was a major concern of both thinkers and policy-makers alike, and the Chinese imperial examination system created a system that combined intellectual and literary competence with the administration of power, creating a situation of complicity between intellectuals and policy-makers that continues to be important today. The construction of the modern discourse of power at the national and international level is being carried out both in government and in academic circles. In the absence of a highly developed and independent civil society, which is still incipient in China today, modernisation and the translation—or recreation—of "Western" *modernism* in the Chinese context is to a large extent the result of debates among intellectuals who are also advisers, such as Yu Keping, on politics, or Hu Angang, on economics, or Wang Hui, who takes a more philosophical approach to the discourse of *modernism*, both "Western" and Chinese.

Over the last two centuries the discourse of *modernism* that had been developed in "the West"—and its concomitant concept of sovereignty—have confronted the Chinese tradition, with traumatic and unequal results that still play a major role in China's perception of the EU and of the United States (as well as Japan). As a result, an analysis of the genealogy of the discourse of *modernism* that came from the "West" is a necessary first step in the process of making a comparative analysis of contemporary Chinese civic and political discourse.

Shifting paradigms in the current debate on international relations

Modernism in the "Western" context is a product of the historical and cultural forces that produced the Enlightenment, forces of European histories and cultures

[2] Cf. Guo Chengwu: Ancient Chinese political theories. The Commercial, Shanghai, 1975; Kung-chuan Hsiao,. A history of Chinese political thought, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979; He Zhaowu, Bu Jinzhi. An intellectual history of China, Beijing: Foreign Languages, 1998; Mark Edward Lewis, Writing and authority in Early China, Albany: State University of New York, 1999.

that were different from those of China. This European *modernism* was introduced into China's history and culture by the force of arms, provoking a traumatic experience that has lasted for more than a century and half, and it would be impossible to understand the Chinese reaction to modernisation and *modernism* without bearing this fact in mind. Resistance to accepting the paradigms of European *modernism* as being "universal" is one of the consequences of Asia's colonialised past, and of Asia's postcolonial relationship with past imperial powers, that sparked off the debate about "Asian values". From the Asian point of view, the universality bestowed upon Enlightenment values by their authors became a justification of imperialism and its catastrophic consequences. As a result, a critical stance toward Enlightenment values has become a standard component of current Asian thinking.

Current geostrategy is being debated from the point of view of different paradigms in different contexts. Some situate the "new world order" in a post-Cold War framework, others in a postcolonialist or postmodern frameworks. Some "Western" voices speak of "a shock of civilisations" which threatens "the end of history" which they consider to have been achieved by the societies that had inherited the "universal" values of the Enlightenment. Even so, the transatlantic conflict provoked by the war in Iraq has revealed serious discrepancies between Europe and the United States about how to interpret this common heritage.[3]

Things are very different from the point of the view of the rest of the world. What appear to be profound differences between the EU and the US may not seem to be so profound from the point of view of postcolonial societies that see the EU and the US as one large block of shared interests, coordinated by NATO in accordance with the hegemonic interests of the US. A very large proportion of the world's population cannot view these values as "universal" because they have suffered the consequences of an imperialism which justified itself on the basis of these same values and principles, which have acquired semiotic connotations as a result: they have become symbols of a kind of discourse that attempts to justify a geopolitical strategy which defines itself as idealistic, but whose practical consequences contradict that idealism. What is important is not the content of what is being said, but rather the source of what is being said; and what is being judged and responded to are the actions that accompany the words, or their consequences, not the words themselves, or their contents.

It is in this postcolonial context that any analysis of Asian values and their geostrategic implications must be situated, and such an analysis must necessarily deconstruct some of the paradigms that justify the "realist" Cold War/post-Cold War framework, that had been based on the containment of communism—seen to have been a threat to the common heritage of the Enlightenment—at any price. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the USSR, and in view of the current modernisation of China and Vietnam, there is hardly any communism left to contain, and the phantom that stalked the "Western" world has been defeated. But the paradigm based on the containment of a clearly dangerous adversary, easily identified and therefore well-defined, still remains, so much so

[3] Oscar Wilde once said that the English and the Americans were two great peoples separated by a common language; in the current debate on transatlantic relations, it might be said that the EU and the US are two great peoples separated by a common Enlightenment. Cf. Seán Golden, "Valores asiáticos y multilateralismo", in S. Golden, (Ed.), Multilateralismo versus unilateralismo en Asia: el peso internacional de los "valores asiáticos". Barcelona: Edicions CIDOB, 2004, 103-32.

that some neoconservative strategists try to convert China into the future and inevitable rival/enemy of the US, thus provoking a standoff between the two that could convert the interpretations based on this paradigm into self-fulfilling prophecies; despite the fact that international terrorism, which is the actual enemy, is much less easy to identify or to respond to.[4]

The Cold War paradigm represents a vision based on a relatively short period of modern history; it is also a vision that prioritises the interests of the former imperial powers. Postcolonialism is a different paradigm, which forms part of a much longer period of history: the processes of imperialism, from colonisation through decolonisation and its consequences. From the point of view of this paradigm, the Cold War forms part of the colonialist/postcolonialist process. But there is another important distinction as well: postcolonialism prioritises the interests of the former colonies, not the former metropolises. One of the most fundamental consequences of this shift in paradigms is a critical analysis of the values and principles that imperialism used to justify itself in the past, an analysis that includes the deconstruction of the values of the former metropolises and the recuperation of native values.

In the best of cases the nativist recuperation applies critical analysis and deconstruction to the former native values as well; in the worst, it represents a simple rejection of any "alien" value in favour of a simplistic non-critical glorification of any native value, an atavistic retrocreation of "native" values that never really existed.[5] Inevitably, the mere fact of deconstructing the values of the former metropolises intrinsically and radically questions their "universality", and were this deconstruction to be admitted, it would open a relativist breach that would be incompatible with the Cold War paradigm, and therefore unacceptable to defenders of the "universality" of Enlightenment values. This incompatibility could provoke an intolerance of the diversity of values that would become an ethnocentrism inimical to the ethnodiversity defended by the postcolonialist paradigm, aggravating the risks of "a shock of civilisations". In addition to being incompatible, the postcolonialist deconstruction of supposedly universal and justifiable Enlightenment values converts them into the very cause of many of the ills the rest of the world has suffered at the hands of the inheritors of the Enlightenment.

A third paradigm that can be used to situate this debate is the concept of *modernism* as a process of consolidation of capitalist market economy and liberal parliamentary democracy as models for economic, social and political modernisation. In this sense, both *Les Droits de l'Homme* and *laissez-faire* are products of the Enlightenment. As Karl Polanyi said, "The origin of the [World War] catastrophe lay in the utopian endeavour of economic liberalism to set up a self-regulating market."[6] John Gray has elaborated on this idea:

[4] EU-China relations are not exempt from this process, as the rhetoric of the titles of two recent articles by US authors demonstrates: David Shambaugh, "China and Europe: The emerging axis", Current History, Vol. 103, No. 674, September 2004, pp. 243-248; Frank Umbach, "EU's links with China pose new threat to transatlantic relations", European Affairs, Washington, European Institute, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2004.

[5] Cf. Benedict Anderson,. Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. London [etc.]: Verso, 1987.

[6] Karl Polanyi, The great transformation: the political and economic origins of our time, Boston: Beacon, 1944, p. 140.

> The achievement of a similar transformation [to the rupture in England's economic life produced by the free markets that operated independently of social needs] is the overriding objective today of transnational organizations such as the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. In advancing this revolutionary project they are following the lead of the world's last great Enlightenment regime, the United States. The thinkers of the Enlightenment, such as Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx never doubted that the future for every nation in the world was to accept some version of western institutions and values. A diversity of cultures was not a permanent condition of human life. It was a stage on the way to a universal civilization. All such thinkers advocated the creation of a single worldwide civilization, in which the varied traditions and cultures of the past were superseded by a new, universal community founded on reason….
>
> A single global market is the Enlightenment's project of a universal civilization in what is likely to be its final form. It is not the only variant of that project to have been attempted in a century that is littered with false Utopias. The former Soviet Union embodied a rival Enlightenment Utopia, that of a universal civilization in which markets were replaced by central planning….
>
> Even though a global market cannot be reconciled with any kind of planned economy, what these Utopias have in common is more fundamental than their differences. In their cult of reason and efficiency, their ignorance of history and their contempt for the ways of life they consign to poverty or extinction, they embody the same rationalist hubris and cultural imperialism that have marked the central traditions of Enlightenment thinking throughout its history.[7]

If the term *modernism* serves to describe this historical process that appeared to have been consolidated, and therefore terminated, when Francis Fukuyama wrote, "What we are witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or a passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government,"[8] what processes would or should follow? If nothing were to change, the following period would be a simple continuation of *modernism*, but if the coming times were to represent a break with the values and practices of *modernism*, this *postmodernism* would have to represent a model that would be alternative to and different from *modernism*. What Fukuyama had proposed was that the consolidation of the model of *modernism* made it unnecessary to look for any alternative model; what remained to be done was to extend this model to the rest of the world, an idea that accompanied what came to be known as "the Washington consensus". As a result, for *postmodern* theoreticians, *modernism* could not serve as a model for the modernisation of the developing nations of the former colonies, nor should it be maintained in developed societies. *Postmodernism* represents a critical revision of *modernism* from the point of view of the classes that had been disadvantaged by the

[7] John Gray. False dawn. The delusions of global capitalism, New York: The New, 1998, pp. 1–3.
[8] Francis Fukuyama, "The end of history?", The National Interest, Summer 1989.

development of market capitalism in the former metropolises as well as from the point of view of the peoples who had been colonised as a result of the imperialism which was an intrinsic part of the same process.

For many contemporary Chinese thinkers, China should modernise without repeating the process of *modernism*, should leap over the system of values established by the Enlightenment that seemed to justify imperialism, and develop an economy and institutions that would serve to create wealth and to raise the standard of living of the population, without imposing values that are advantageous to a "West" that is already wealthy. They have identified a cultural dissidence within developed societies that advocates the values of *postmodernism* as a way of rejecting the values of *modernism*. In this context, they advocate the possibility of modernising their society without having to accept the imposition of values that originated in societies that have already begun to question them. In this way, China could reach *postmodernism* in a relatively short period of history without having to pass through the traumas that characterised the development of modernism in the "West" over a period of centuries (it would be difficult not to discern echoes of Mao Zedong's "Great Leap Forward" in these Chinese versions of the postmodernist paradigm).

Two new schools of thought have flourished in China since the 1990s: 後現代主義 *hòuxiàndàizhǔyì* "postmodernism" and 後殖民主義 *hòuzhímínzhǔyì* "postcolonialism". Their popularity is such that a new term has been invented that combines both into a single tendency—後學 *hòuxué* "post-studies"—described by Xu Jilin:

> To consider the factors internal to epistemology, [the "anti-Western" theorists of the 1992] all had begun by accepting the mainstream discourse of the Western intellectual genealogy. They believed that Western modernist thought should and could contribute to China's modernization adequate intellectual resources and patterns for action. As a consequence, the deeper their previous commitment, the more they were able to discover that the supposed universals of modernist theory were really nothing more than particular products of Western history/culture and were separated by a great gulf from the discourse of China's contemporary culture and historical tradition. This gap between western theory and Chinese discourse made it impossible for them not to shift their gaze from Western mainstream discourse and toward marginal discourses such as postcolonial cultural theory, analytical Marxism, and so forth. They hoped to find there inspiration for a pattern of modernization that would fit Chinese conditions…. Unlike previous cultural conservatives, these scholars' plan was not to "confront Western learning with native learning", but rather to "use aliens to control the aliens", to use Western marginal discourses to resist Western mainstream discourse.
>
> From the external, sociological perspective, the anti-Western trend is closely connected to a series of changes in the environment at home and aboard. Following the sudden takeoff of the Chinese economy, the national strength of China grew enormously; and the first reaction of a disfavored people that is emerging from its disfavored status is to say "no" to those privileged peoples it has long been attempting to overtake. In the 1980s, China's contacts with the west were limited, conflicts of interest were rare, and intellectuals had a flattering image of the West, so that Westernization had a suitable

> psychological support. But from the beginning of the 1990s China began to enter into the international political-economic system, and conflicts between China and the West became more and more direct: the opposition of the Western countries, particularly the United States, to China's joining the WTO and hosting the Olympic Games, trade frictions, the Yinhua incident, and a series of other events caused Chinese intellectuals to lose a great part of their faith in the West. Behind their beautiful Western discourse, they discovered ugly relationships of power, and an unequal power relationship that the Western countries were determined to force onto China. Thus the nationalistic feeling of Chinese intellectuals was greatly awakened, so that anti-Westernism had a deep psychological foundation.[9]

According to Zhang Yiwu, *hòuxué* thinkers insist on differentiating their approach from that of western postcolonial and postmodern thinkers:

> This exploration tries, first, to find a new position: "the Other of the Other". While seeking to transcend the old condition of "Otherness" and refusing to take either side of the oppositions of universal/particular, classic/modern, it reflects on both in the context of contemporary culture and offers new insights. Second, it implies participation in contemporary culture—it implies the Gramscian role of the "organic intellectual". It neither stands apart from culture, nor tries to transcend culture, but seeks theoretical advances from within the dialectical thought of transformations in society and culture. It maintains a critique of Western cultural hegemony, but this critique does not imply a decisively nativistic conservative perspective. This new perspective allows a new grasp on the "condition" of hybridity in contemporary China. This grasp was made possible by an appropriation of Western theories, but this appropriation does not imply the use of theory to advance interpretations of the Chinese context; rather, it recognizes that the transcendence of theoretical hegemony is dependent on reflection about and critique of theory. This requires the use of theory to critique theory, using contemporary Chinese conditions to reflect on theory, and using theory to match contemporary Chinese conditions, so as to produce a two-sided hermeneutic and gain a new cultural imagination and creativity.[10]

The discourse of political leaders often runs parallel to the intellectual debate on postmodernism in China. Many leaders and "official" intellectuals have co-opted the terminology of the "post" theories. Wang Yizhou, Deputy Director of the Institute of World Politics and Economics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, made the following reply to an Internet debate on the NATO missile attack on the Chinese embassy in Belgrado:

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[9] Xu Jilin. "Wenhua rentong de kunjin-90 niandai Zhongguo zhishijie de fanxihua sichaog" ["Las dificultades de la identidad cultural: la tendencia ant-Occidental en la vida intelectual china de los años 90"]. Zhanlüe yu guanli 18 (1996): 100-101; in Haun Saussy, "Postmodernism in China", Great Walls of Discourse and Other Adventures in Cultural China, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001: 122.

[10] Zhang Yiwu. "Chanshi' Zhongguo' de jiaolü", pp. 134-135. "On 'the Other of the Other'f "; Saussy, op. cit., 135.

> 'What is NATO's Strategy?'
> First, from a defensive military organization it is becoming a tool for expansion, first to all of Europe, then to the whole globe (…). Second, NATO's new concept demands that NATO no longer stay within its traditional geographical bounds: it will expand to wherever it is needed. For example, the first step was a peaceful eastward expansion with the entry of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic; the next step is to press on toward the Mediterranean and North Africa; it may be that step three is to expand to the other nations of the world in order to realize NATO's goal of replacing the U.N.
> Third, in the past NATO was a strictly military alliance, and now it is moving in the direction of military government, so that, for example, it will no longer be concerned with security alone but will take on human rights issues, refugee issues, drug issues, criminal issues, etc. This is NATO's ambition of global expansion.
>
> The speed of China's modernization is sure to disturb the present international political and economic order and insensibly threatens U.S. and Western leadership. So we will certainly become the object of more and more attacks. The rest of the world will come forth with all kinds of excuses and pretexts for limiting or cornering China—human rights, the environment, non-proliferation, guided missile technology, trade deficits, etc. By setting impossible requirements, they hope to limit China's development, confine China to a frame set by themselves (…).
> About the "anatomy of U.S. hegemony" and the United States's use of theory to shore up their hegemony: (…) American hegemony, apart from its military and political aspects, is a cultural or conceptual hegemony. This is a much more complex, much craftier form of hegemony. Think of Hollywood movies or the global position of the English language, or American inventiveness in the field of ideas.
>
> We can point to any number of examples to show how U.S. hegemony gets various kinds of theoretical support. The first and most famous is the "clash of cultures" theory, which is a plan to give the United States the dominant role in determining the value of every people, every culture, every civilization (…). Another aspect is what is called "peace and democracy". Here the plan is to tell every country in the world: if you follow the pattern of the Western "democracies", you'll have peace and security, but if you refuse Western "democracy", you'll meet the same fate as Yugoslavia (…). Another means is the famous principle that "human rights take precedence over national sovereignty".[11]

This kind of deconstruction of "Western" geostrategy has also been extended to "Western" culture by authors such as Zhu Majie, Deputy Director of the Shanghai Institute of International Studies:

[11] Wang Yizhou, People's Daily Online, (20 May 1999): "Wangyou de shengyin: Wang Yizhou boshi da wangyou wen, xia" ("Voices of our Internet community: Dr. Wang Yizhou responds to readers' questions"); http://www.peopledaily.com.cn/item/199905/14/wyz-wy.html; Saussy, op. cit., 140, 141.

Western civilizations rose from the same origin, though, their respective development differs, and the levels of development in different historic periods are not the same. However, they share the following common features:

Firstly, a salvationist spirit and sense of mission. With self-arrogance this runs all through the history of the West, led by the United States. This spirit came from Christianity. …. As a paramount subject for worship, God dominates human being's thought, freedom, customs and ideas. This Christian doctrine engenders a universal spirit among its followers, so that saving the world becomes their mission. In the past, the soldiers of the West marched out to conquer the world "for God"… Today, Western leaders stress the importance of taking the leading role and feel an obligation to defend the free world and to promote and strengthen democratic values in the world as their "Holy Mission". …

Secondly, expansionism. Western civilization constantly expanded outward in the process of modern social development and therefore is labelled the "blue civilization". The color of blue symbolizes the ocean which attracts to adventure, aggressiveness and conquest. In modern history, Netherlands, Spain, Britain and the U.S. successively have dominated the world. At the peak of Western capitalist development, many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America were reduced to being their colonies or semi-colonies. The Western lifestyle, ideology and social system were also spread there. Westerners used gunboats to open up new frontiers, and the Bible to spread God's will. They took new markets with the force of goods and advanced science and technology. Therefore, the history of the Western civilization is also the history of expansion. …

Thirdly, individualism. The most important value of Western civilization is individualism, which is one of its most prominent marks. Individualism was an ideological weapon used by the rising European capitalist class to oppose autocracy and the oppression of the feudal nobles. In the West, people advocated independent struggle and the pursuit of the rights of individual emancipation, individual choice, and individual freedom and happiness.… Western individualism has now become a standard of morality. In the United States, individualism has become a highly evaluated moral virtue: the cowboy who can do whatever he wants is a heroic image. The mentality of self-importance, unrestricted behavior and an aspiration for outlaw conduct have become an important component of the nation's ideology.

Fourthly, liberalism. Individualism and liberalism are the twins of the Western civilization. The concept of freedom is the main ideology and pillar in Western society. One of the flags used by the capitalist class to fight against the feudal nobles was to strive for freedom. They flaunted the freedoms of faith, speech and pursuit of property. … Francis Fukuyama said that the two world wars in the last century and the following revolution and the great turbulence "forced Europe and North America, which are at the forefront position of human civilization, more progressively to carry out their freedom."… In the economic area, the West also stresses the importance of such freedoms as free market, free trade and free competition. Fukuyama believes that the fundamental change that took place in the 20th century was the victory of

> "economic and political liberalism". From now on, liberalism dominates the material world, … and apparently is regarded as its most representative feature of Western civilization.
> *Fifthly, utilitarianism*. The search for effectiveness and self-interest is the ethical concept of Western civilization. In the West, especially in the United States, utilitarianism is presented sometimes as "idealism" and sometimes as "pragmatism". To seek utility and to be bent solely on interests is a typical feature of the Western bourgeoisie. In the West what must be maintained is interest, rather than principle: there are no friends but only interests; these become the paramount object of worship.… Focusing on utility and interest is both a norm of conduct and value orientation in the West. The U.S.-led Western countries' handling of international affairs is a clear demonstration of the ethical concept of utilitarianism. Their "utility" lies in the desire to dominate the world, and their "interest" lies in the desire that their demand for self-interest be met. Whether the human rights issue is linked with the trade issue, or whether sanctions are imposed on other nations, or whether aid is given to other nations, the most fundamental criteria by which they make these judgments is their interest.[12]

Although "post" thinkers in China emphasise the differences between their version of postmodernism and the "Western" version, there are critical voices in the "West" that also deconstruct Enlightenment values by comparing them to Asian values:

> The deeper differences between Asia's capitalisms and those in western countries will not diminish over time. They reflect differences not only in the family structures but also in the religious life of the cultures in which these diverse capitalisms are rooted. The greatest sociologist of capitalism, Max Weber, was right to link the development of capitalism in north-western Europe with Protestantism.
>
> Western social thinkers and economists are mistaken in supposing that capitalism everywhere will come to resemble the highly individual economic culture of England, Scotland and parts of Germany and The Netherlands. It has not done so in France or Italy. In our time, capitalism in post-communist countries whose religious traditions are Orthodox will be unlike that in any 'western', Protestant or Catholic, country: neither the institutions of secular society, nor the limited state of such western countries has developed in any Orthodox culture. Russian capitalism, like capitalism elsewhere in the Orthodox world, will be *sui generis*.
>
> The same goes for the capitalisms of Asia. Indian capitalism will never converge with that of countries whose principal religious inheritance is Confucian, Buddhist or Muslim. Its caste system may be the world's stablest system, having survived challenges from Buddhism, Islam and Fabian

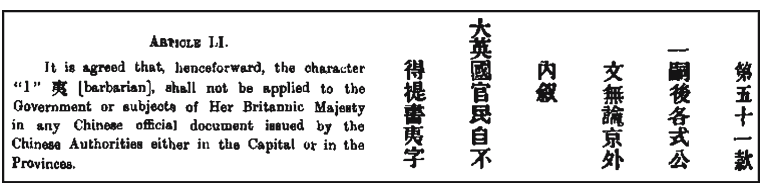
[12] Zhu Majie, "Western civilization: its essence, features, and impact", Cultural Impact on International Relations, Chinese Philosophical Studies, XX, Yu Xintian (Ed.), Chap. 5; Cultural heritage and contemporary change, Series III, Asia, Volume 20, http://www.crvp.org/book/Series03/III-20/contents.htm

> secularism, and it will surely condition profoundly the growth of an indigenous capitalism.
>
> The new capitalisms in eastern Asia do not carry the western burden of doctrinal dispute over the merits of rival economic systems. This is partly because most of the religious traditions of east Asia make no claim to exclusivity. This freedom from sectarian claims to unique truths goes with a pragmatic approach to economic policies….
>
> In Asian cultures market institutions are viewed instrumentally, as means to wealth-creation and social cohesion, not theologically, as ends in themselves. One of the appeals of 'Asian values' is that they avoid the western obsessions that make economic policy an arena of doctrinal conflict. That 'Asian' freedom from economic theology allows market institutions to be judged, and reformed, by reference to how their workings affect the values and stability of society….
>
> A monolithic 'Asia' is as much a chimera as 'western civilization'. The inexorable growth of a world market does not advance a universal civilization. It makes the interpenetration of cultures an irreversible global condition.[13]

One of the consequences of Chinese *postmodernism*, which is a kind of *antimodernism* with reference to the "West", is the growing role of Chinese nationalism. Chinese leaders perceive the unipolar geopolitics of the US to be a threat, and promote the reconstruction of a multipolar world, in which EU–China relations would have to play a major role. This consideration brings us back to the relationship between words and sovereignty that lies behind contemporary Chinese geopolitical discourse.

Sovereign language and sovereignty

Article 51. It is agreed that, henceforward, the character "[yí]" 夷 [barbarian], shall not be applied to the government or subjects of Her Britannic Majesty in any Chinese official document issued by the Chinese authorities either in the Capital or in the Provinces. (Treaty of Tianjin, 1858)[14]



ARTICLE LI.

It is agreed that, henceforward, the character "1" 夷 [barbarian], shall not be applied to the Government or subjects of Her Britannic Majesty in any Chinese official document issued by the Chinese Authorities either in the Capital or in the Provinces.

得提書夷字 大英國官民自不 內叙 文無論京外 一嗣後各式公 第五十一款

The imposition of European modernism on China in the 19th century by force of arms, unequal treaties and extraterritoriality, required Chinese thinkers to import new terms and new ideas by way of translation. The wholesale importation of new

[13] John Gray, op. cit., pp. 191–193.
[14] Cited in Lydia H. Liu, The clash of empires. The invention of China in modern world making, Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: Harvard University Press, 2004, p. 32.

terminologies and new concepts occurred in a historical and cultural context that was quite different from the context that had produced the European Enlightenment. As a result there were very few precedents or cultural equivalents that could serve to foster mutual comprehension. The fact that an international treaty could censor the words that Chinese officials could use in official documents is a blatant example of an asymmetrical relationship between a Chinese society with a millenarian culture and the brave new world (or new world order) of European, American (and shortly thereafter, Japanese) expansionism, which would create difficulties both for translation and for understanding. The construction of modernism under duress in China is now one of the most important topics of research among Chinese scholars, both at home and overseas.[15]

The lack of cultural equivalents has been a difficulty in the dialogue between Europe and China since the late 16th century, when the first Jesuit missionaries, who were the first serious European Sinologists, began working in China,[16] but their attempts to introduce Christian concepts and Catholic doctrine through a policy of accommodation to Chinese cultural values was substituted by gunboat diplomacy in the 19th century, accompanied by a much more aggressive and less tolerant version of Protestant missionary activity, both of which would provoke xenophobic reactions that were the precursors of current Chinese nationalism. When Yan Fu (1854–1921) translated the leading works on Darwinism, Social Darwinism and other branches of the social science into Chinese he had to use Chinese terms that did not have the same connotations as the "Western" terms he was translating. For lack of any native cultural equivalent, the term "Nation" became 群 qún "herd", for instance, while "(political) Party" became 黨 dǎng "faction", neither of which could convey an equivalent sense of what these terms meant in their European context.

Lydia H. Liu has provided many significant examples of the consequences of the imposition of sovereignty on words.

[15] Lydia H. Liu has coined the term "translingual practice" for this process and has dedicated two books to the subject thus far: Translingual practice. Literature, national culture, and translated modernity-China, 1900–1937, California: Stanford University Press, 1995; and The clash of empires, op. cit. Some of Wang Hui's work on the subject has been published in English as China's new order. Society, politics, and economy in transition, Theodore Huters (Ed.), Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: Harvard University Press, 2003; and he is currently working on a four-volume study, The Rise of Modern Chinese Thought (in Chinese), that includes a long chapter on Yan Fu, one of the most important translators of the late 19th century, and his translations (personal communication). Cf. Rey Chow,. Ethics after idealism: theory-culture-ethnicity-reading. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998; Rey Chow, The protestant ethnic and the spirit of capitalism, Columbia University Press, New York, 2002; Rey Chow, Writing diaspora: tactics of intervention in contemporary Chinese cultural studies. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993; Liu Kang & Tang Xiaobing. Politics, ideology and literary discourse in modern China. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1993; Kam Louie, Theorising Chinese masculinity: society and gender in China, Cambridge University Press, 2002; Kam Louie & Bob Hodge, The politics of Chinese language and culture, London: Routledge, 1998; Kam Louie, Inheriting tradition: interpretations of the classical philosophers in communist China 1949–1966, Oxford University Press, 1986.Another important study in this field is Haun Saussy's Great walls of discourse, op. cit. Cf. Joseph Fewsmith, China since Tiananmen. The politics of transition, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

[16] Seán Golden, "From the society of Jesus to the East India Company: a case study in the social history of translation", in Marilyn Gaddis Rose (Ed.), Beyond the western tradition. Translation perspectives XI, Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton, 2000, 199-215. Cf. Saussy, op. cit.

One of the key concepts to emerge in the political discourse of modern China can be traced back to the neologisms invented by [W.A.P] Martin and the Chinese translators of *Elements of International Law.* The concept I have in mind is *quanli* [權利], or "right", which, like *zhuquan* [主权] (sovereignty) and many other nineteenth-century coinages, no longer strikes us as strange or un-Chinese because it has been naturalized in the history of Chinese (and Japanese) political discourse and through repeated usage over nearly a century and a half. The situation was perceived differently, however, by those who lived in the mid-nineteenth century. This was duly documented by the translators themselves 14 years after the fact, as they continued to feel a need to defend their "unwieldly" coinage. In a headnote to the 1878 translation of Woolsey's Introduction to the Study of International Law, known in Chinese as *Gongfa bianlun*, Martin and his Chinese collaborators describe how they had coined the neologism *quanli* to render the meaning of "right". Their tone was clearly apologetic:

International law is a separate field of knowledge and requires special terminology. There were times when we could not find a proper Chinese term to render the original expression, so our choice of words would seem less than satisfactory. Take the character *quan*, for example. In this book the word means not merely the kind of power one has over others, but something every ordinary person is entitled to. Occasionally, we would add the word *li* [to form a compound], as, for example, in the expression *quanli*, meaning the born "rights" of the plebeian, etc. At first encounter, these words and expressions may seem odd and unwieldy, but after seeing them repeatedly, you will come to realize that the translators have really made the best of necessity...

Indeed, as I have suggested, the noun *quan* commands a broad spectrum of meanings associated with "power," "privilege," and "domination" in the Chinese usage, much as the word *li* brings to mind "interest," "profit," and "calculation". Lurking behind the renderings of "rights" and "human rights", these banished meanings can always come back to haunt the super-sign and unwittingly open up the word "right" or "human rights" to its suppressed "other" meanings such as "privilege" and "entitlement." The subtext of "excess" signification thus glosses the self-evident meaning of the English word "right" with something more than it ostensibly says. This is not to say that the translators were incapable of comprehending the true meaning of "right." On the contrary, the "excess" signification seems to heed the historical message of "rights" discourse in the practice of international law only too well, because it registers the fact that the idea had been brought into China by the nineteenth-century representatives of European International law who had asserted their "trade rights" and the "right" to invade, plunder, and attack the country. Their language of "rights" cannot but convey a loud message of threat, violence, and military aggression to the Qing government at the negotiation table and to the Chinese population at large.[17]

[17] Liu, The clash of empires, op. cit., pp. 124–131.

Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometries of values

> The importance of Euclidean geometry lies not so much in the actual mathematics that it contains as in the systematic method used by Euclid to present and develop that mathematics … the power of the axiomatic method, in which the truth of the derived theorems follows from the truth of the axioms and postulates. Because the latter were offered as self-evidently true, Euclid's contemporaries felt that the derived theorems constituted accurate descriptions of the world and valid tools for studying it. Euclid's parallel postulate attracted interest almost as soon as the *Elements* appeared, because it seemed less self-evident than the others. Its most popular equivalent is: through a given point *P* not on a line *l,* there is only one line in the plane of *P* and *l* that does not meet *l.* Attempts to derive the parallel postulate from the others, thereby transforming it into a theorem, involved replacing it with its two alternatives—that there is no such line or that there are more than one—and then showing that contradictions ensue. Unexpectedly, no contradictions resulted from either substitution: the outcome was, instead, two new, non-Euclidean geometries that were found to be just as valid and consistent as Euclidean geometry. It soon became clear that it is impossible to tell which, if any, of the three geometries is the most accurate as a mathematical representation of the real world. Thus, mathematicians were forced to abandon the cherished concept of a single correct geometry and to replace it with the concept of equally consistent and valid alternative geometries. They were also forced to realize that mathematical systems are not merely natural phenomena waiting to be discovered; instead, mathematicians create such systems by selecting consistent axioms and postulates and studying the theorems that can be derived from them. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

The Enlightenment notion of "self-evident truths" predates the discovery of non-Euclidean geometry, and bases itself on the assumed universality of Euclidean geometry. The role of Euclidean geometry in the development of Aristotelian logic, and therefore of Western rationalist thinking, is not in the least trivial. Aristotle's syllogism is derived from Euclid's axiomatic method. A.C. Graham, one of the 20th century's greatest Sinologists and a leading expert on ancient Chinese discourse, noted that there "is no evidence … that the [the earliest Chinese logicians] formulated geometrical proofs, the absence of which is one of the crucial gaps in Chinese as compared with Greek thought."[18] The differing conceptual bases of societies with different histories and cultures can lead to alternative ways of constructing social reality. "Western philosophizing in languages with number termination starts from the adding up of particulars, leading at two of its limits to the reduction of cosmos and community to aggregates of atoms and individual persons, while the Chinese operating with generic nouns think in terms of variously divisible Way, pattern, *ch'i*, and kind of thing."[19] The introduction of foreign ideas and ideologies, such as Buddhism or Islam or Christianity, into Chinese thought and culture had to face

[18] A.C. Graham, Disputers of the Tao: philosophical argument in Ancient China, Chicago: Open Court, 1989, p. 160.

[19] Ibid., p. 389. Another important study of ancient Chinese discourse is Xing Lu, Rhetoric in Ancient China, fifth to third century, B.C.E.: a comparison with classical Greek rhetoric. Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1998.

> what might be called a "cultural imperative": no marginal religion penetrating from the outside could expect to take root in China (at least at the social level) unless it conformed to that pattern that in late imperial times was more clearly defined than ever. Confucianism represented what was *zheng*…, "orthodox", in a religious, ritual, social and political sense; in order not to be branded as *xie*…, "heterodox" and to be treated as a subversive sect, a marginal religion had to prove that it was on the side of *zheng*. …Since [the Chinese converts] lacked the intellectual and theological heritage that their Jesuit teachers had carried with them from Europe, they had to accommodate the Jesuit input within their own traditional universe of discourse, just as more than a thousand years before, Kumarajiva's [fl. 385–409] Chinese disciples had eagerly absorbed the master's teachings, and yet created their own brands of Mahayana philosophy, simply because they lacked Kumarajiva's Indian scholastic frame of reference.[20]

What can be said of the introduction of new and foreign systems of religious thought into traditional Chinese culture would also be true of the introduction of new and foreign modern ideologies into Chinese culture in the 19th and 20th centuries, although it must also be pointed out that the balance of power had been inverted in the latter case. In the current situation, power has begun to swing back the other way, but the analysis of current Chinese geopolitical discourse must still respect the ancestry of the words involved and their implications for sovereignty.

A pregnant woman boarding a bus

> A developing country is like a pregnant woman, whose body is going through a delicate creative process that requires special attention and care. The transition toward a society that is predominantly urban implies veritable "hormonal transformations" of a traditional agrarian society. It is a shedding of skins, of values and of norms. For the population involved it is a journey into the unknown. For the policy-makers who try to govern the process, it constitutes endless risks and threats. … There are certain levels of performance, responsibilities or attitudes that you cannot demand of a pregnant woman or a developing country…. The idea is that, when we see a developing country on a bus, we get up and give it our seat…. Such a gesture should not be confused with paternalism, ingenuity or condescension. … The attitude against yielding a seat to a developing country includes many things: amnesia about one's own history; a very European incapacity to see oneself in the shoes of someone who is different; archaic prejudices and stereotypes left over from the Cold War, now mixed together with new interests deriving from commercial rivalry; and, finally, echoes of an imperialist–colonialist attitude.… Giving up your seat to a pregnant woman does not mean abandoning a critical point of view. To the contrary, it means making it more serious and efficient, setting aside propaganda, and opting for a firm and respectful dialogue on all

[20] Eric Zürcher, "Jesuit accommodation and the Chinese cultural imperative", in D.E. Mungello (Ed.), The Chinese rites controversy. Its history and meaning, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1994, pp. 40–41, 63.

> of these matters. … I am happy to see that EU policy papers have begun to move in this direction. And I am sure that our Chinese friends welcome and appreciate this dialogue. (Rafael Poch)[21]

Wang Minmin's analysis of the Chinese construction of and response to the discourse of world opinion is especially relevant to the discourse analysis of official Chinese discourse with regard to the EU.[22] Six components have been proposed as a prototype of world opinion: moral force, pragmatic value, fear of isolation, power of world opinion, nation's image, and world as a unit.

> The moral component refers to shared value judgements of right and wrong or moral and immoral in nations' expressions of world opinion. The pragmatic component, which points to interests shared by nations in their use of world opinion, makes reference to attitudes, behavior, or policies that would be in all nations' interest. Isolation concerns explicit or implicit behaviour, e.g., boycotts, severing diplomatic ties, by national leaders or nations to distance themselves from or to condemn nations or national leaders who act counter to the dictates of world opinion. Power of world opinion is synonymous with the force of world opinion or influence world opinion is described as having in international affairs. Nations' image refers directly or indirectly to the perceptions that other countries have of a nation due to its past or present behaviour or to the reputation the nation wishes to project to the world. World as a unit includes the many ways in which nations of the world (e.g., "international community", "the civilized world") may be described as a unit conferring the judgement of world opinion.[23]

Coverage of US and Chinese press coverage of two events, the fourth International Women's conference in Beijing and the transfer of Hong Kong from British to Chinese sovereignty, revealed that the major difference between the United States and China is the U.S. emphasis on the first four components, which together strengthen a conception of world opinion as one of restraining power, and the Chinese emphasis on the last two components, which do not reflect to the same degree the binding power of world opinion. "The analysis reveals the rhetorical rules that the United States and China employ in their construction of world opinion. China seems to follow the rhetorical rules of (1) promoting its national image, and (2) maintaining a strong sense of the world as a unit. The United States seems to conform to the power of world opinion as a moral force."[24]

These differences have their origins in historical and cultural circumstances. "Literally meaning the Middle Kingdom, China's name reflects pride and a self-conception as the center of the world. Ancient history … confirmed this Sinocentric view. However the century after the Opium War in 1840 has provided

[21] Rafael Poch, Cuando informamos sobre China [When we report on China], a lecture delivered in the seminar AsiaMedia organised for Spanish journalists based in Asia by Casa Asia, Barcelona, Spain, December 2003.
[22] This section of the study is based on Minmin Wang, "Comparison of Chinese and American views on world opinion: a rhetorical study of media reports," in Xing Lu, Wenshan Jia & D. Ray Heisey (eds.), Chinese communication studies, Westport, Connecticut; London: Ablex, 2002, pp. 213–225.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

more mockery than support for this definition. China's modern history is filled with invasions and defeats: a plethora of humiliations."[25]

The cultural influences on the construction of Chinese political discourse derive from the Five International Principles announced by Zhou Enlai at the Bandung Conference of African and Asian Nations (1955): mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence. "From these principles one can clearly see the Chinese moral order in international relations and the basis for China's rhetoric on world opinion. Of primary importance is national sovereignty, which includes the concepts of mutual respect, equality, independence, non-interference in internal affairs, and nonaggression. In this moral order, world peace naturally flows from (and thus is contingent upon) the acceptance of each nation's sovereignty."[26]

> Arising from this moral order, the Five Principles inform China's rhetoric on world opinion. In addition to advocating self-reliance and independence, another profound historical and cultural influence reflected in China's international relationships is its suspicion of American imperialism … and it is important to see that China views world opinion to be in danger of being compromised by the U.S. political and economic hegemony. This wariness of U.S. dominance explains China's way of dismissing world opinion… negative world opinion toward China is labelled as the opinion of a small (usually American) anti-Sino faction. Since this opinion is seen as violating China's national sovereignty and independence, it is thus not at all world opinion, and thus does not deserve to be heeded.
>
> Since the Chinese concept of national sovereignty contains the concepts of justice, equality, and mutual respect, a violation of national sovereignty is also a violation of all these moral values. Thus, negative world opinion on China [was] seen as damaging China's sovereignty and thereby violating the standards of justice on which a world community could be based. Negative world opinion was presented as purposefully damaging the equality of nations and therefore deserved to be disregarded as the opinion of a small, biased faction. Such single-minded dismissal of negative opinion reflects the immense impact of the national sovereignty concept on China's international outlook, and its suspicion (and defensiveness towards) the (generally Western) countries which it sees as threatening.
> While China identifies the concepts of justice, mutual respect, and equality spontaneously with its concepts of national sovereignty, world peace (the fifth international principle) is no less removed from the security of national sovereignty. …the Chinese moral order in international affairs sees world peace as contingent on national sovereignty…. Since the concept of national sovereignty is of such importance in the international arena, besides securing its own independence and sovereignty China also sees as its responsibility to defend any nation whose sovereignty is threatened. The examples in [official] speeches usually regard creating equality: the responsibility of stronger

[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

> nations towards those that are weaker, of wealthier nations to those that are poorer, and so on. … It is aware of its proud and historical glory, and determined never to undergo the humiliations of modern history. This tripartite awareness—of the glory of its ancient past, of the humiliation of the modern past, and of the urgent responsibility it has to national pride and the ideals of justice and equality in the world arena—make China extremely sensitive to the issue of restricting power. Threats of isolation, of world moral disapproval, are taken more as a threat to China's national sovereignty (and thus disregarded or dismissed), and not as threats which have the power to regulate China…. Once China's (and any country's) identity and sovereignty are achieved, it is assumed that the rest—human rights, economic prosperity, world peace, etc., will follow…. World opinion is thus conceived mainly in terms of self-control and self-imposed responsibility: a strong nation's responsibility to a weaker nation, or a rich nation's responsibility to a poorer one…. Regulation can be conceived of in two ways, as self-regulation and as regulation imposed by an outside force. The Chinese emphasis on the primacy of national sovereignty leads it to favour a view of world opinion that further strengthens this sovereignty. This view of world opinion is in terms of self-regulation, and China conceptualizes world opinion as regulatory in the direction of promoting each country to fulfil its national sovereignty—which includes fulfilling its responsibility to the rest of the world. World opinion is conceived in terms of being as conducive to establishing national sovereignty as possible (self-regulation can be seen as a hallmark of strong national sovereignty).[27]

The US is secure enough in its own sovereignty to regard world opinion in the sense of the term that is more consistent with all six components. "With the major issues concerning sovereignty resolved and in its position as a (if not *the*) superpower today, it is natural for the United States to conceive world opinion as a sort of imposed regulatory power…. As an established global power, the United States identifies with world opinion as an enforcer of global moral norms."[28] Given the historical and cultural influences that have shaped China's rhetorical rules,

> is it ethical to ask China to adapt to an established conception of world opinion which includes all six components?… However, even if it is ethical to expect and even to require China (or any nation) to conform to a more universal code of ethics than it does now… Would it be possible for China to adapt to this more universal code? … [Were it possible to establish] a set of negotiable yet binding communicative rules and values, world opinion would both allow civic discourse *and* act as the binding power of an international norm. [Such] communicative rules [could] also be seen as what Xing Lu refers to as multicultural rhetoric, which is "a system capable of honouring both universal values and cultural insights in the practice and formulation of rhetorical perspectives"[29] … Communicative rules and values would imply that we must first acknowledge the differences in moral orders on both sides, but then also move beyond this to realize the common ground on which both sides stand—

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Lu, op. cit., p. 308.

which is the search for a more complete truth (in such a way that promises world peace).[30]

In this sense, multicultural rhetoric would require a critical capacity to analyse, demystify, reformulate or create new rhetorical and metaphorical structures without privileging received rhetorical and metaphorical structures. Some important work has been done on the analysis of the metaphors we rule (or are ruled by),[31] but much more needs to be done on this aspect of comparative socio-cultural studies.

Mars and Venus, 武 *wǔ* and 文 *wén*, the spirit and the way

When Robert Kagan uses archetypes from Greek mythology to characterise the difference between what he perceives to be a Hobbesian US vision of the need to invest absolute power in the figure of a unipolar sovereign power that will ensure stability in the world order through the implicit or explicit use of force (Mars), versus what he perceives to be a Kantian EU vision of a multipolar worldwide confederation based on the seductive power of rational persuasion and the Enlightenment era categorical imperative (Venus),[32] he is recurring, consciously of not, to a culturally based metaphorical structure that is part and parcel of a "Western" anthropomorphic world view. Chinese political culture conceived of a different pair of concepts—武 *wǔ* "military force" and 文 *wén* "culture"—whose dynamic relationship configured the political sphere since antiquity. The "institutional violence" (武 *wǔ*) made it possible to mobilise society for war or for public works, but the "hegemony" (文 *wén*) exercised by Mandarin technocrats was necessary for their design and administration. The continuity of this concept throughout the history of Chinese political culture is testified to by Mao's famous identification of political power with the barrel of a gun (武 *wǔ*) while warning that it should be the Party (文 *wén*) that aimed the gun and not the gun that aimed at the Party. While Mars and Venus serve as anthropomorphic personifications of alternative visions of the administration of power based on human narratives, 武 *wǔ* and 文 *wén* are processes and relationships, not personifications or narratives. In terms of the discourse of contemporary Chinese foreign policy, 武 *wǔ* would correspond to the "hegemonic" military power exercised by US unilateralism, while 文 *wén* would correspond to "soft power" as an asymmetrical Chinese response. In this paradigm, as opposed to the Mars–Venus paradigm, it remains to be seen how the EU should be characterised.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the substitution of chopsticks for knives at the table reflected the ascendancy of the scholar over the warrior as a cultural hero. This would be an early example of the subtle efficacy of soft power, as would the policy of the tributary state system that served over the millennia to regulate the Chinese empire's relations with its neighbours in terms of both foreign

[30] Ibid.
[31] Cf. George Lakoff, Moral politics. How liberals and conservatives think, Chicago, London: The University of Chicago, 2002; George Lakoff & Mark Johnson, Metaphors we live by, University of Chicago, 2003; George Lakoff & Mark Johnson, Philosophy in the flesh: the embodied mind and its challenge to western thought, New York: Basic Books, 1999.
[32] Robert Kagan, Power and weakness, Policy Review online, http://www.policyreview.org/JUN02/kagan.html

policy and foreign trade, and obviated any need for imperial expansionism (an interesting precedent for the current good neighbourliness policy China is practising in Asia, which gives the lie to the anti-China lobby's advocacy of the "China as threat" scenario).

The continuity of the role of 文 *wén* in Chinese and East Asian foreign policy can be illustrated by the "Spirit of Shanghai", associated with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), whose main purposes are "strengthening mutual trust and good-neighborliness and friendship among member states; developing their effective cooperation in political affairs, the economy and trade, science and technology, culture, education, energy, transportation, environmental protection and other fields; working together to maintain regional peace, security and stability; and promoting the creation of a new international political and economic order featuring democracy, justice and rationality."[33]

The definition of the basic principles of the SCO correspond quite closely to Wang Minmin's abovementioned analysis of the bases of the Chinese rhetoric of world opinion (and are also well-reflected in China's EU Policy Paper): "adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, mutual non-use or threat of use of force; equality among all member states; settlement of all questions through consultations; non-alignment and no directing against any other country or organization; opening to the outside world and willingness to carry out all forms of dialogues, exchanges and cooperation with other countries and relevant international or regional organizations."[34]

This formulation of the principles of the SCO or "the Spirit of Shanghai" have clear implications for comparing and contrasting the Chinese vision of partnership with that of the EU, as well as for understanding the Chinese stance on regionalism and regional cooperation.[35] "The SCO stands for and acts on a new security concept anchored on mutual trust, disarmament and cooperative security; a new state-to-state relationship with partnership instead of alignment at its core, and a new model of regional cooperation featuring concerted efforts of countries of all sizes and mutually beneficial cooperation. In the course of development, a Shanghai spirit gradually took shape, a spirit characterized by mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, cooperation, respect for diversified civilizations and common development."[36]

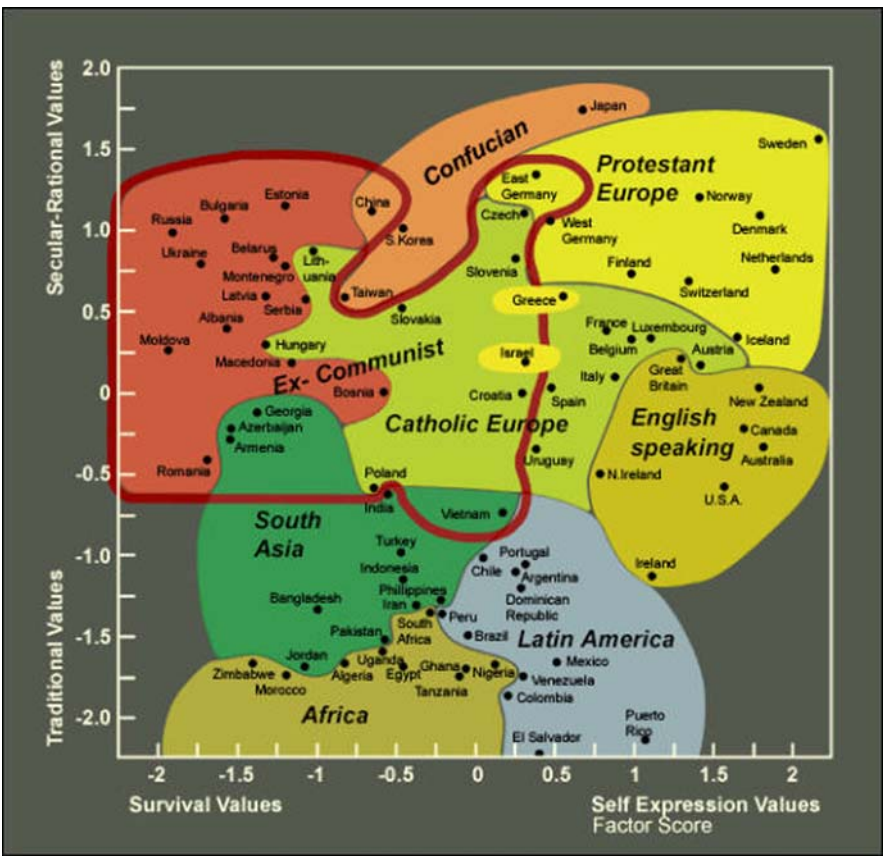
Another example of the continuity of the role of 文*wén* in Chinese and East Asian foreign policy can be illustrated by *musyawarah dan mukafat* [consultation and consensus] "the ASEAN way", founded on indigenous village procedures: important questions should be decided through prolonged deliberations (*musyawarah*) in order to obtain consensus (*mukafat*). These attitudes have led to a diplomatic style of *musyawarah* and *mufakat*, or consultation and consensus, that is different from that of the EU or the US. ASEAN avoids taking stands on issues that exceed the comfort levels of all its members. "Achieving this requires a delicate balancing act, described in one official publication as not moving 'too fast for those

[33] Cf. http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/sco/t57970.htm
[34] Ibid.
[35] Cf. Zainal Mantaha & Seán Golden, (Eds.), Regionalism in Asia and Europe and implications for Asia-Europe relations. 10-24 November 2002, Barcelona, Spain, Singapore: Asia-Europe Foundation, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Fundaciò CIDOB, Casa Asia, 2004.
[36] Ibid.

who want to go slow, and not too slow for those who want to go fast.' The resulting consensus politics may be used to smooth over, obviate, and even occasionally resolve interstate disputes and conflicts among its members, but its two primary functions are to ensure the primacy of national governments and to prevent interference in their internal affairs, especially by governments external to the area."[37]

Before concluding with some specific references to the Chinese understanding of some of the key terms of the EU's China Policy papers, I think it is worth considering some additional socio-cultural aspects of contemporary China and East Asia, as revealed by the *World Values Map*, which Ronald Inglehart presented in the framework of the Dialogue on *Globalisation, identity and diversity* organised by the Universal Forum on Culture held in Barcelona in 2004.[38]

"The Inglehart Values Map visualizes the strong correlation of values in different cultures. Countries are clustered in a remarkably predictable way."



[37] Cf. The ASEAN Regional Forum: A Concept Paper, http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/fs/2002/12052.htm

[38] Cf. http://www.barcelona2004.org/eng/contenidos/

> The World Values Surveys were designed to provide a comprehensive measurement of all major areas of human concern, from religion to politics to economic and social life and two dimensions dominate the picture: (1) Traditional/ Secular–rational and (2) Survival/Self-expression values….
>
> The Traditional/Secular–rational values dimension reflects the contrast between societies in which religion is very important and those in which it is not. A wide range of other orientations are closely linked with this dimension. Societies near the traditional pole emphasize the importance of parent–child ties and deference to authority, along with absolute standards and traditional family values, and reject divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. These societies have high levels of national pride, and a nationalistic outlook. Societies with secular–rational values have the opposite preferences on all of these topics.
>
> The second major dimension of cross-cultural variation is linked with the transition from industrial society to post-industrial societies—which brings a polarization between Survival and Self-expression values. The unprecedented wealth that has accumulated in advanced societies during the past generation means that an increasing share of the population has grown up taking survival for granted. Thus, priorities have shifted from an overwhelming emphasis on economic and physical security toward an increasing emphasis on subjective well-being, self-expression and quality of life. Inglehart and Baker (2000) find evidence that orientations have shifted from Traditional toward Secular–rational values, in almost all industrial societies. But modernization, is not linear—when a society has completed industrialization and starts becoming a knowledge society, it moves in a new direction, from Survival values toward increasing emphasis on Self-expression values.
>
> A central component of this emerging dimension involves the polarization between Materialist and Postmaterialist values, reflecting a cultural shift that is emerging among generations who have grown up taking survival for granted. Self-expression values give high priority to environmental protection, tolerance of diversity and rising demands for participation in decision making in economic and political life. These values also reflect mass polarization over tolerance of outgroups, including foreigners, gays and lesbians and gender equality. The shift from survival values to self-expression values also includes a shift in child-rearing values, from emphasis on hard work toward emphasis on imagination and tolerance as important values to teach a child. And it goes with a rising sense of subjective well-being that is conducive to an atmosphere of tolerance, trust and political moderation. Finally, societies that rank high on self-expression values also tend to rank high on interpersonal trust. This produces a culture of trust and tolerance, in which people place a relatively high value on individual freedom and self-expression, and have activist political orientations. These are precisely the attributes that the political culture literature defines as crucial to democracy.[39]

[39] Cf. http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org

The *World Values Survey* reveals that the cultural values of different countries in the world do not tend to converge, but economic development pushes all countries in a common direction: the reinforcement of values such as gender equality, tolerance, good governance and democracy (the latter two concepts as defined by the World Bank).[40]

East Asia, including China, ranks high on the Secular–rational values dimension (higher than the US and several EU member States), although China is closer to Survival values than to Self-expression values, if compared with Japan. On the other hand, if Inglehart's hypothesis is correct, increasing prosperity should move Chinese collective values further along on the Self-expression dimension, and thus closer to the combined dimensions of most developed EU States, thereby producing a culture still more conducive to good governance and democracy.

Implications for the EU

Any analysis or interpretation of the implications of the current situation in China and in China's international relations must be tentative because the accelerated rate of change in China forces us to apply a variant of "Moore's Law"[41] to any analysis of current discourse or policy.

The stated aims of the EU China Policy are: "to engage China further, both bilaterally and on the world stage, through an upgraded political dialogue; to support China's transition to an open society based upon the rule of law and respect for human rights; to encourage the integration of China in the world economy through bringing it fully into the world trading system, and supporting the process of economic and social reform that is continuing in China; to raise the EU's profile in China."[42]

China's EU Policy Paper affirms that: "China is committed to turning herself into a well-off society in an all-round way and aspires for a favourable international climate. China will continue to pursue its independent foreign policy of peace and work closely with other countries for the establishment of a new international political and economic order that is fair and equitable, and based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. China will, as always, respect diversity in the world and promote democracy in international relations in the interest of world peace and common development."[43]

The Chinese affirmation conforms quite clearly to Wang Minmin's analysis of the Chinese moral order mentioned above. The Chinese side both recognises and accepts diversity: there is no fundamental conflict of interest between China and the EU and neither side poses a threat to the other. However, given their differences

[40] Cf. http://www.barcelona2004.org/eng/banco_del_conocimiento/documentos/ficha.cfm?IdDoc=1676

[41] Moore's law is the empirical observation that at our rate of technological development, the complexity of an integrated circuit, with respect to minimum component cost will double in about 24 months (http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moore's_law

[42] General information and official policy documents about EU-China relations, including the document Stocktaking on China Strategy, can be consulted at http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/china/intro/index.htm, where there is also a link to China's official EU Policy Paper http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/xos/dqzzywt/t27708.htm).

[43] Cf. China's EU Policy Paper, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/xos/dqzzywt/t27708.htm

in historical background, cultural heritage, political system and economic development level, it is natural that the two sides have different views or even disagree on some issues. Nevertheless China–EU relations of mutual trust and mutual benefit cannot and will not be affected if the two sides address their disagreements in a spirit of equality and mutual respect.[44]

The Chinese emphasis on equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit, is a clear result of the felt need to redress the humiliations suffered throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and to make up for lost ground by following an independent path that is expected to receive the same degree of respect as the EU hopes to receive for its priorities. One notable difference between the two discourses is the Chinese insistence on mutuality and reciprocity (ancient Confucian virtues), and mutual and equitable benefits, while the EU discourse speaks only of what China is expected to do. In this sense, the EU attitude is similar to the attitude that Wang Minmin attributes to the US in comparison with China: China seems to follow the rhetorical rules of (1) promoting its national image, and (2) maintaining a strong sense of the world as a unit. The United States seems to conform to the power of world opinion as a moral force.

This would imply a certain insensitivity to the linguistic and rhetorical registers that China expects to encounter in official EU–China policy and documents.[45]

One clear example is the treatment of "culture" in the Chinese document and the latest EU document.[46] The Chinese document refers to culture four times. On two occasions the text pays homage to both cultural traditions, with special emphasis on quality and parity, on the other two occasions the reference is institutional or related to the production of cultural goods:

Both China and the EU member states have a long history and splendid culture each and stand for more cultural exchanges and mutual emulation. The political, economic and cultural common understanding and interaction between China and the EU offer a solid foundation for the continued growth of China–EU relations….

III. The Education, Science-Technology, *Culture*, Health and other Aspects…

China will be more open in cementing and deepening its exchange and cooperation with EU members in the cultural field and work towards a multi-level and all-dimensional framework of cultural exchanges between China and the European Union, EU members and their respective local governments, and between their peoples and business communities so as to make it easier for the people of China and the EU to get to know *each other's fine cultures*.

China will establish Chinese cultural centres in capitals of EU members and the EU headquarters—Brussels. *On the basis of reciprocity and mutual benefit*, China welcomes the set-up of cultural centres in Beijing by the EU side. China will encourage high quality cultural exchange activities and explore new modalities of cooperation in *culture*-related industries. Discussions will be held on the formation of a China–EU cultural cooperation

[44] Ibid.
[45] Cf. the concept of "parity of esteem" enshrined in the Northern Ireland Peace process.
[46] A Maturing Partnership EU-China, http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/china/com_03_533/com_533_en.pdf

consultation mechanism and the idea of jointly holding a China–EU cultural forum. (emphasis added)[47]

The EU policy paper refers to culture twice, once in a purely institutional framework, and once in a pejorative context, and makes no deference to "parity of esteem":

- Promote a continued proactive stance by China in the ASEM (Asia–Europe Meeting) process, in consultations on international and regional security and other challenges within the ASEM political pillar, in building Asia–Europe understanding in the DDA negotiations under the economic pillar, and by fostering China's engagement in people-to-people contacts within the Dialogue on *Cultures* and Civilisations.
- the persistence of a *protectionist culture* favouring local industry

I think that this example is highly indicative of the value of Wang Minmin's analysis of the construction of China's rhetoric of world opinion and of the need for the EU to develop a communicative strategy more suited to Chinese rhetorical and cultural expectations.

EU policy-makers also have their own rhetorical and cultural expectations, with a special anxiety to know how Chinese policy-makers understand key EU terms such as *governance, political reform, democratisation, engagement, security, regionalism and regional cooperation, a maturing partnership*, while having difficulty in understanding the Chinese use of terms such as *political discrimination*.

"Governance" or "good governance" is a concept that has acquired major importance in recent times, with reference both to government and to management (corporate governance). There is no standard Chinese equivalent for this term. Sometimes it is translated as 統治 *tǒngzhì*, which combines the word for "govern" (治 *zhì*) with the term for "system," "order" or "unity" (統 *tǒng*), but which could imply "dominate" or doing things in an interconnected and unifying way. The term 治 *zhì* can mean "to govern" or "to cure", and appears as often in compound words that have to do with governing (not governance) or with medical treatments and remedies. This connection dates back to the ancient holistic vision of society and nature that is part of the China's "long history and splendid culture". Sometimes it is translated as 治理 [*zhìlǐ*], which could be understood to mean the theory or principle (理) of government (治). Yu Keping, perhaps China's leading expert on the subject, and Director of the Institute on Governance at Beijing University, has difficulty in finding an equivalent term in the Chinese texts of his work on the subject, and has to recur to the use of the English term in his Chinese text:

- "治理" [*zhìlǐ*] (governance)
- "统治" [*tǒngzhì*] (government)
- "善治" [*shànzhi*], [well known in English as] good governance [that could also be translated literally as] "良好的治理" *liánghǎo de zhìlǐ*[48]

[47] China's EU Policy Paper, op. cit.
[48] Cf. http://www.gongfa.com/yukpzhili.htm

He uses the term 善治 *shànzhì* for "good governance", where 善 shàn implies "good", "charitable," "kind,", but also "proper", while the alternative 良好 *liánghǎo* "good" or "desirable" is an adjective applied to the theory or principle of government, or political science (良 *liáng* implies "good," "fine", but is also associated with "[good] conscience"). Yu's analysis of the subject of governance as applied to the Chinese context, especially at the local or village level can also be found in English in an EIAS publication, *Toward an Incremental Democracy and Governance: Chinese Theories and Assessment Criteria*.[49] (It is interesting to note that Yu describes the ongoing process of introducing principles of good governance at the local level in China as "incremental democracy" while a leading US expert on the Chinese system of government, Kenneth Lieberthal,[50] describes it as "fragmented authoritarianism": two contrasting examples of the construction of civic discourse.)

Yu Keping distinguishes clearly between governance as related to government and governance as a system of administration or management independent of government, and concludes that Chinese civil society is not yet sufficiently strong to implement or consolidate all aspects of good governance. The implications for EU policy in this regard are similar to the implications of Rafael Poch's metaphor of a developing country being like a pregnant woman boarding a bus mentioned above, or like the implications of one of the conclusions of the *Barcelona Development Agenda*, authored by John Williamson and Joseph Stiglitz, among others in the framework of the Universal Forum on World Culture held in Barcelon in 2004:

> both basic economic reasoning and international experience suggest that institutional quality—such as respect for the rule of law and property rights—plus a market orientation with an appropriate balance between market and state, and attention to the distribution of income, are at the root of successful development strategies. Moreover, the institutions that put these abstract principles into reality matter, and developing countries should work hard to improve their institutional environments. But effective institutional innovations are highly dependent on a country's history, culture and other specific circumstances. Encouraging developing nations to copy mechanically the institutions of rich countries—as international financial institutions tend to do—is not guaranteed to yield results, and can do more harm than good.[51]

Williamson is considered to be the author of the "the Washington consensus", whose subsequent interpretation and application he has repudiated, so his involvement in the "the Barcelona Agenda" is especially interesting. Joshua Cooper Ramo has coined the term "the Beijing consensus" to describe China's evolving economic, political, foreign policy and security model as a viable, and increasingly more attractive development model for many countries in the world that reject the "Washington" model.[52] Perhaps the Barcelona agenda is more appropriate for EU policy in the triangulation of EU–US–China relations. The definition of this triangle presents us with problems of orientation. Are both

[49] Cf. http://www.eias.org/publications/briefing/1999/incdemocracy.pdf.pdf
[50] Kenneth Lieberthal, Governing China. From revolution through reform, New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995.
[51] Cf. http://www.bcn.es/forum2004/english/desenvolupament.htm
[52] Joshua Cooper Ramo, The Beijing consensus, "http://www.fpc.org.uk/fsblob/244.pdf"

Brussels and Beijing looking toward Washington, from opposite sides of the world? Or should Brussels begin looking directly toward Beijing, without have to pass through Washington? The Eurasian landmass situates Brussels and Beijing as two extremes of the same territory, and instead of giving each other the back as they look to Washington, perhaps the EU and China should face each other, and begin developing what many voices now refer to as the "Eurasian arc". In any case, the development of an independent EU stance on governance and development, taking a different stance from the US or China, might be an important element of future EU policy.

It needs to be understood that the recent history of China has invested certain terms that are viewed positively in EU civic discourse with very pejorative connotations in the contemporary Chinese contexts, and one of these terms is "democracy", especially participative democracy, which in the context of China recalls the mass struggle campaigns of the Maoist period, and the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. "Power to the people" does not have the same connotations in China as in post May 1968 Europe. Good governance in the Chinese context means institutional stability, above all else, as a means of avoiding social upheaval and sustaining economic growth. As Lydia H. Liu's aforementioned analysis of the term 權利 *quánlì* reveals, many of the key terms of "Western" political science are considered to be double-edged swords in China.

The contrasting points of view of the EU and the US on the subject of engagement (versus containment) are evident in any rhetorical analysis of the respective documents. The tone of *The National Strategic Policy of the United States* clearly reflects the distinction in point of view identified by Wang Minmin. "With the major issues concerning sovereignty resolved and in its position as a (if not *the*) superpower today, it is natural for the United States to conceive world opinion as a sort of imposed regulatory power…. As an established global power, the United States identifies with world opinion as an enforcer of global moral norms":

> The United States relationship with China is an important part of *our* strategy to promote a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Asia-Pacific region. … *China's leaders have not yet made* the next series of fundamental choices about the character of their state. In pursuing advanced military capabilities that can threaten its neighbors in the Asia-Pacific region, *China is following an outdated path* that, in the end, will hamper its own pursuit of national greatness. In time, *China will find* that social and political freedom is the only source of that greatness. We already cooperate well *where our interests overlap* … Addressing … transnational threats will challenge China to become more open with information, promote the development of civil society, and enhance individual human rights. China has begun to take the road to political openness, … yet remains strongly committed to national one-party rule by the Communist Party. To make that nation truly accountable to its citizen's needs and aspirations, however, *much work remains to be done*. Only by allowing the Chinese people to think, assemble, and worship freely can China reach its full potential. *We expect* China to adhere to its nonproliferation commitments. … [emphasis added][53]

[53] Cf. http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/15538.pdf

There is no parity of esteem in this document, and its contrast with the rhetorical insistence on equality, mutual benefit and reciprocity of the Chinese official texts is noticeable. In many ways, relations with China must be based as much on form as on content. Respectful disagreement is acceptable, as long as China is given equal status in the dialogue. Form, ritual and protocol (禮 *lǐ*) have been a basic element of Chinese social and political thought since antiquity. The contrast between EU and US policy toward China, and of the difference in China's response to both policies, has been illustrated quite clearly by the recent EU–China agreement on the voluntary limitation of the export of Chinese textiles. Both the government and the press in China insisted on praising the EU for not taking any unilateral actions and for sitting down to talk to China on the basis of mutual respect, and pointedly criticised the US for doing the opposite. Reciprocity (恕 *shù*), not doing to another what one wouldn't want done to oneself, has always been the key to achieving the altruism preached by classical Confucianism, and still has value in the sphere of international relations, in accordance with the Shanghai spirit and the ASEAN way. When asked what was the key to his concept of ethics, Confucius replied that 忠恕 *zhōngshù*, acting in accordance with reciprocity, was the thread that ran through all his thinking.

When China does not receive what it perceives to be equal treatment, the term "political discrimination" comes to the fore. A recent article in *China & World Economy* analysed the EU's preliminary assessment of China's "Market Economy Status", one of China's most important foreign policy concerns, along with the lifting of the EU arms embargo, the maintenance of the One China policy, UN reform, and the consolidation of multilateralism in organisations such as the WTO (fomenting the G20 as a counterweight to the G7/8, cultivating the EU as a counterweight to the US) as well as regionalism and regional cooperation (China is promoting the creation of a free trade zone based on the ASEAN +3 framework, and hopes to advance this project at the summit to be held in Kuala Lumpur at the end of the year, with India, Australia and New Zealand present as observers). The lack of EU recognition of Market Economy Status is described as "a utilitarian move". "People may easily come to the conclusion that the EU will only recognize China as a market economy if that recognition is beneficial to it. Politics is becoming more decisive than technical solutions in policy-making, which gives an impression that objective facts are no longer important and only might and power are useful."[54] The perceived lack of reciprocity and mutual respect is singled out for special criticism. "The EU has not questioned the arguments and data provided by China, but only sorted out the shortcomings that China acknowledges in its materials, and those from other sources. Given such an approach, what is the meaning of repeatedly requiring China to provide relevant materials? Since the argument process concerns both China and EU, it is necessary that the EU respond to China's materials."[55] At the same time, however, a generally positive attitude is expressed because the EU response was a postponement of, not a rejection of, any recognition of China's Market Economy Status. When the reasons for rejecting a Chinese petition cannot be seen to be based on objective criteria, "political

[54] Institute of Economic and Resources Management, Beijing Normal University, "Review of the EU's preliminary assessment of China's market economy status," China & World Economy, Vol. 13, No. 2, March-April 2005, pp. 54–63.
[55] Ibid.

discrimination" is alleged. This is also the case with the lifting, or not, of the EU arms embargo. The reasons alleged are not perceived as being objective; therefore they must be political, from the Chinese point of view.

Conclusion: hymn sheets or jam sessions?

The communicative strategy to be adopted by the EU in the rhetorical construction of its dialogue with China should be fully cognizant of and sensitive to the criteria of China's moral order as outlined in this study and specified in the Five Principles (mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence), the Spirit of Shanghai and the ASEAN Way, with special emphasis on mutual recognition, parity of esteem, and mutual benefit. Any other discourse will be perceived semiotically as unilateralist and exploitative. Respect for diversity is paramount, and the ability to harmonise diversity is a major function of Chinese political and cultural thought. "Harmony" and "peace" are the same word in classical Chinese: 和 *hé* (和平 *hépíng* is the modern word for "peace" and 和聲 *héshēng* is the modern word for "harmony"). As a result, any practice that produced harmony, such as music or cooking, was a form of training for maintaining peace, social cohesion and solidarity in society (or among nations).

All singing from the same hymn sheet might permit some harmonising, but a better metaphor for the concert of the world's nations might be that of a jam session, which gives each musician a chance to make a creative and independent contribution to the overall harmony of the group. The ancient Chinese thinker Yanzi (m. 493 BCE) once made a distinction between harmony and uniformity or identity.

> Harmony … may be illustrated by cooking. Water, vinegar, pickles, salt and plums are used to cook fish. From these ingredients there results a new taste which is neither that of the vinegar nor of the pickles. Uniformity, on the other hand, may be likened to the attempt to flavour water with water, or to confine a piece of music to one note. In both cases there is nothing new. Herein lies the distinction between the Chinese words *t'ung* [統 *tǒng*] and *ho* [和 *hé*]. *T'ung* means uniformity or identity, which is incompatible with difference. *Ho* means harmony, which is not incompatible with difference; on the contrary, it results when differences are brought together to form a unity. But in order to achieve harmony, the differences must each be present in precisely their proper proportion, which is *chung* [忠 *zhōng*]. Thus the function of *chung* [忠 *zhōng*] is to achieve harmony.[56]

That is the same 統 *tǒng* as 统治 *tǒngzhì*, government, the same 忠 *zhōng* as 忠恕 *zhōngshù*, acting according to reciprocity, and the same 和 *hé* as peace and harmony.

[56] Fung Yu-lan, A short history of Chinese philosophy, Derek Bodde (Ed.), Macmillan, 1960, p. 174.