

# Italian Association for Chinese Studies

## Selected Papers | 2

2018



ASSOCIAZIONE  
ITALIANA  
STUDI  
CINESI





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a cura di Tommaso Pellin, Giorgio Trentin

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## Preface

At the end of September 2013, the 14<sup>th</sup> conference of the Italian Association of Chinese Studies (AISC) was held in Procida, a little island in the Gulf of Naples. In those very days it happened that the General Secretary of Communist Party of China Xi Jinping mentioned for the first time the project of establishing an economic zone along the ancient Silk Road. It was the beginning of a new, enormous project launched by Chinese government, aimed not only at the further development of the domestic market and industrial production, especially in Western areas of the country, in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) had also the goal to further develop the relationships between China and a vast area of neighboring countries, including even far-away Asian, African and European countries, and to spread a different image of China itself. As it has often happened in the last decades, along the economic and social development of China, the BRI project aroused much interest and awe but also raised much criticism and suspect, with the result that China stepped to an even more central position on the stage of world's political and cultural scene, and the attention to her grew deeper and deeper.

The academic activity of the members of AISC since 2013 may be then called “BRI generation” activity. The first results of the scientific research of this generation of Italian sinologists, which include both scholars of previous generations and several young scholars who started their activity in recent years were exposed at the 15<sup>th</sup> conference of AISC, held in Macerata in September 2015.

The contributions collected in this second issue of Selected Papers represent a small part of those delivered at the 15<sup>th</sup> conference, which underwent a strict peer review. In general, the fields of research of these “BRI generation” essays are multifarious, span different eras and different realms of Chinese culture.

Marco Meccarelli explores the origin of one of the most ancient and powerful icons of China, *long* 龙, the dragon. Meccarelli's article helps to bridge the gap by introducing the reliable theories on the origin of the mythical animal, focusing particularly on issues of typology, classification, and latest debates on the distinction between the long and the dragons of the other cultures.

Antiquity and one of the core theories of ancient Chinese philosophy is dealt with by Luca Vantaggiato, who discusses the problem of the human nature in Xunzi and his understanding of Mencius: Vantaggiato's article offers a grammatical and philosophical analysis of the quotation of the "Xing e" 性恶 chapter of the *Xunzi*.

Victoria Almonte introduces Western scholars to the geographical work *Lingwai Daida* 岭外代答 [Notes from the lands beyond the Passes], written by Zhou Qufei 周去非 in 1178 and encompassing descriptions of geography, history and customs from Guangxi province to Northern African countries during the Southern Song dynasty.

Giulia Falato, in the field of missionaries studies, compares the *Tongyou Jiaoyu* 童幼教育 [On the education of children], written around 1632 by the Jesuit missionary Alfonso Vagnone S.J.'s (1568–1640) with Zhu Xi's *Xiaoxue* 小学, in order to appraise the potential influence of Zhu Xi's approach to the education on Vagnone's pedagogic treatise.

Alessandro Tosco analyses the "tragic" representation of the heroine's exemplary execution in the well-known drama *Dou E yuan* 窦娥冤 [The Injustice to Dou E] by Guan Hanqing 关汉卿 of the Yuan dynasty and discusses the cultural background in which these dramatic representations are set.

Gabriele Tola presents the John Fryer Paper, the archive of the famous English missionary and sinologist, which may be a useful bibliographic instrument for research on missionary linguistics, on the cultural interactions between the West and China and on the *Xixue Dongjian* 西學東漸.

The twentieth century is the period attracting most of the interest of the contributors of these *Selected papers*. Martina Turriziani analyses the *Travel Diary of Italy* (*Yidali youji* 意大利游记) written by Kang Youwei 康有为 during his trip to Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, discusses his views upon the Italian "heroes" of the Risorgimento (Garibaldi, Mazzini and Cavour) and translates a *fu* poem dedicated to the Cavour.

Selusi Ambrogio tries to deconstruct the widely-renowned principle of "exclusion" of Asiatic thought from the realm of philosophy, due to the colonial culture of the 19th century. The point of view he adopts is that of Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, one of the leading thinkers of nineteenth-century Modern New Confucianism, who discussed the correct definition and the chronological collocation of this so called "exclusion".

Literary studies here represented are influenced by the latest "Sinophone studies", the literature in Chinese language written outside China. Luca Pisano takes into account Taiwanese literature, which narrates literary landscapes as background of literary works. The urban space of Taipei is certainly one of the privileged places, and Taipei's "city south" (*chengnan* 城南) is particularly important for the so-called Taipeiology.

Gao Xingjian 高行健, a de-territorialized author with bilingual and a bicultural consciousness, constantly reveals his ability to give his hybrid self the shape of



literary and artistic works which transcend boundaries. Simona Gallo compares Gao's most recent play written in French, *Ballade Nocturne*, and its self-translation *Yejian xingge* 夜間行歌.

Martina Codeluppi's article compares Ha Jin and Ma Jian, two amongst the most important voices in contemporary Chinese diasporic literature: their different voices show different influences of temporal and spatial displacement on the narratological features of the novels and emphasize the role of the individual in the process of reshaping memory through literature.

Chinese modern art is a well studied field of research too. In the last 30 years, China has been experiencing a major development of the museum system and a proliferation of art museums. Ornella De Nigris argues that this growth, which has been labelled "museumification", was fostered by the government's new political agenda and the development of private collections.

In 21st century China, *shanshuihua* 山水画 appears as a changing concept exposed to global issues and art theories. Elena Macrì attempts to identify the diverse ways in which some contemporary artists perceive and depict landscape, by looking at three representative art exhibitions organized outside China as case studies.

The urban phenomenon of graffiti art (*tuya yishu* 涂鸦艺术) since the beginning of the 21st century has quickly acquired a large following among young artists in the major cities of the country. Adriana Iezzi analyses KwanYin Clan's *Shengong yijiang* 神工意匠, and demonstrates how, in China as everywhere, the globalizing tendencies as well as the desire for specificity and particularity can be fulfilled within transculturality.

Immigration from China to Italy in the last years has been a large social phenomenon, so that in 2011 local media created the expression "New Prato" phenomenon, being Prato the Italian city with a very large Chinese community, one of the biggest in Europe. Daniele Massaccesi attempts to explore the identity of the "New Italians" with Chinese origin, as often the national media refer to them.

The minority nationality of the Naxi is the focus of Cristiana Turini's contribution. She aims at developing an anthropological and cross-cultural analysis of the patient-practitioner encounter in Western biomedical context and among the Naxi people today inhabiting the region on the border between Yunnan and Sichuan provinces.

The nearest contemporaneity is dealt with by the last two articles. Tanina Zappone tries to develop the analytic framework delineated in previous studies on PRC government spokesperson system, in order to collocate the evolution of the system in the wider context of China's government communication.

Finally, a contribution on the state of Internet governance is put forward by Gianluigi Negro: he provides an overview on the role of private sector and its co-evolutionary approach in relation to the state government as well as the shift from an approach primarily focused on domestic issues (*duinei*) to a more international oriented one (*duiwai*).

Although the fields of research covered by both the older and the younger generations of Italian scholars within China studies are many more, the second issue of the Selected papers of AISC attempts to put forward the most advanced studies brought about in the last years: they show the depth of the analysis of the authors, the influence of the international community of sinologists and in general the vitality of the research on China and its culture in Italy during the 2010s.

## ZHOU QUFEI'S WORK AND HIS HISTORICAL VALUE

This paper will introduce Western scholars to the geographical work, *Lingwai Daida* [Notes from the lands beyond the Passes], written by Zhou Qufei in 1178 (Park 2012, 46; hereinafter referred to as *Daida*). First, the author will try to define which versions are available nowadays, then you will focus on the work's structure and its main features, in the end, the search will lead us to compare Zhou's work and Fan Chengda's *Guihai yuheng zhi*. The main aim is to underline the importance and the historical value of *Daida*, in the framework of overseas relationships of Chinese empire.

### 1. Versions of *Lingwai Daida*

Zhou Qufei 周去非 was an official with a Jinshi degree, born in Yongjia in Zhejiang province. He neither travelled outside China nor worked in the Office of the Superintendent of Merchant Shipping (*Shibosi*), he accomplished his service in Guangxi, a border province in the southwestern of China, during Southern Song dynasty (Park 2012, 55). As the title implies, Zhou sought to answer the questions he received about the territories beyond the southwestern of China, a region of China he called Ling (for Lingnan). He likely spoke with merchants and interpreters engaged in foreign trade that he encountered during his service and he had the opportunity to gather a very large amount of information about different countries. His work contains 294 sections about various topics organized into ten volumes, in details two volumes (24 sections) exclusively deal with foreign countries, mentioning toponyms never used before and describing customs and products never spread before in China.

*Daida* was never printed; the book was spread as manuscript only (Yang 2009, author's introduction, 13). Among the versions available today, the earliest dated is that of *Yongle Dadian*, of Ming dynasty, copied by the scribes of *Siku Quanshu* in the XVIII century.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The *Siku Quanshu* is the largest collection of Chinese books. Emperor Qianlong commissioned it

More recently, there are other six versions:<sup>2</sup>

1. *Zhibuzu zhai congshu* 知不足齋叢書 containing 10 volumes. It also includes an abstract, copied from *Siku Quanshu*. In this version, *Daida* is divided into 10 volumes, 294 sections, like the version preserved in *Siku Quanshu* and different from that of *Yongle Dadian*, in which the work was divided into 2 volumes only.<sup>3</sup>
2. *Biji xiaoshuo daguan* 筆記小說大觀. It is a paperback lithograph, printed by Shanghai Jinbu Shuju, after 1912. It contains 10 chapters in two volumes. There is neither the quotation of original copy nor the author of introduction. The author Zhou Qufei is introduced by the name Zhifu 直甫, instead of Zhifu 直夫.<sup>4</sup>
3. *Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編. It is a prominent project of the XX century by the editor Wang Yunwu, which also includes Zhou's work, copied by *Zhibuzu zhai congshu* version.<sup>5</sup>
4. *Lidai xiaoshuo bijixuan* 歷代小說筆記選, a selected collection of important works from different periods, published in 1958 in Hong Kong and preserved in Kansai University Library. *Daida* is included in the third volume, with other Song dynasty works. It is not an unabridged version.<sup>6</sup>
5. The first modern annotated version is dated 1996, composed by Tu Youxiang, based on *Zhibuzu Zhai congshu* version.<sup>7</sup>
6. Yang Wuquan, in 1999, has annotated the last version, based on *Zhibuzu Zhai congshu* and compared with *Siku Quanshu* and *Biji xiaoshuo daguan* versions. This seems to be the most detailed and deepened version of Zhou's work until now.<sup>8</sup>

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in 1773 in Beijing. It was concluded in 1782. It contains 3697 works, divided in 79,300 volumes. Scribes copied many copies, placed in specially libraries, as *Wenyuange* in Yuanming yuan and in the Forbidden City in Beijing. The author has consulted the electronic version of Chinese University Press, Digital Heritage Publishing of 1998. *Daida* is placed in section number 11 (*Shibu shiyi* 史部十一), chapter Geography number 8 (*Dili shuba* 地理類八), miscellanea (*Zaji* 雜記). It has a brief abstract and it's divided in 10 volumes and 294 sections.

<sup>2</sup> Those versions are available in the National Library of Beijing.

<sup>3</sup> The *Zhibuzu zhai congshu* was compiled by Bao Tingbo 鮑廷博 (1728-1814) and his son Bao Shigong 鮑士恭. It was divided in 30 chapters, 240 volumes (*ce* 冊). It contains 208 works in Chinese language. *Daida* is in the chapter number 17.

<sup>4</sup> The *Biji Xiaoshuo Daguan* consists of a collectaneum of 220 titles, from Jin to Qing dynasty, divided in 35 volumes. *Daida* is included in the end of 7th volume. See Qian, Huang, Yin and Niu 1983.

<sup>5</sup> The collection *Congshu jicheng chubian* is divided into 10 categories and 541 subcategories, including 4000 volumes and more less 4100 titles. First edition is published in 1935, then in 1985 by *Zhonghua Shuju*.

<sup>6</sup> Jiang 1958, 465-500. In particular, in this collection there are the sections from no. 19 to no. 22, from 30 to 34, from 36 to 43, from 45 to 52, sections no. 80, 96, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103, 109, 114, 115, from 136 to 139, from 147 to 153, 161, 163, 171, 172, from 176 to 205, 208, 209, 211, 212, from 215 to 223, from 235 to 237, from 246 to 248, from 250 to 254, 259, 261, from 263 to 266.

<sup>7</sup> This annotated version is included in the collection *Song Ming Qing xiaopinwen jijizhu* 宋明清小品文集輯注. As title implies, Zhou's work is considered a *Xiaopinwen*, 'essay'.

<sup>8</sup> This version is included in a bigger collection, *Zhongwai jiaotongshi shuji congkan* 中外交通史書籍叢刊, the 16th volume.

## 2. Structure and features

*Daida* is composed from 10 volumes, 21 chapters and 294 sections.<sup>9</sup> As shown in the table below, every chapter has a different amount of sections and provides information about different topics.

Table 1: *Lingwai Daida's* 294 sections.

VOLUMES	CHAPTERS	SECTION AMOUNT
1	Dilimen 地理門 (Geography)	22
	Bianshuaimen 邊帥門 (Commanders to the border)	6
2	Waiguomen shang 外國門上 (Foreign countries 1)	10
3	Waiguomen xia 外國門下 (Foreign countries 2)	14
	Bingmingmen 兵民門 <sup>10</sup> (Soldiers)	12
4	Fengtumen 風土門 (Local customs)	11
	Fazhimen 法制門 (Legal system and institutions)	6
5	Caijimen 財計門 (Wealth)	8
6	Qiyongmen 器用門 (Utensils)	20
	Fuyongmen 服用門 (Clothes)	10
	Shiyongmen 食用門 (Food)	7
7	Xiangmen 香門 (Perfumes)	7
	Yueqimen 樂器門 (Musical instruments)	6
	Baohuomen 寶貨門 (Treasures)	7
	Jinshimen 金石門 (Metals and stones)	13
8	Huamumen 花木門 (Flowers and trees)	45
9	Qinshoumen 禽獸門 (Animals and birds)	38
10	Chongyumen 蟲魚門 (Insects and fishes)	12
	Gujimen 古跡門 (Historic sites)	9
	Mansumen 蠻俗門 (Barbaric Man customs)	16
	Zhiyimen 志異門 (Miscellaneous)	15

The main feature of Zhou's work consists of its "regionalism", referring to its affinity with local gazettes. Comparing *Daida* with local gazettes (*fangzhi* 方志), a very important literary genre in Song dynasty (Hargett 1996, 405-442). It is worth pointing out their analogies. Local gazettes extensively described traditions, customs, foods, military events and administrative affairs, local products and main historic

<sup>9</sup> 'Volume' or 'roll' in Chinese is *juan* 卷, 'chapter' is *men* 門, and 'section' is *tiao* 條, the smallest part. Zhang 1993, 29.

<sup>10</sup> The title of this chapter was lost. Yang Wuquan believes it can be named as "Bingmin men", chapter "Soldiers". Yang 1999, 130.

sites of a particular territory (for a deeper analysis about local gazetteer, see Huang 1993, 267). Their goal was to spread useful information all over the empire. *Daida* and *fangzhi*, therefore, shared the same goal and the high number of subjects.

*Daida*, in particular in the chapter “Geography”, deals with borders, administrative division and rivers of Guangxi. In the chapter “Commander”, it provides many details about public officials and intermediary in the army. The two chapters “Foreign Countries” concern overseas reigns which had trading contacts with Chinese empire, from Annan (Northern Vietnam) to Mulanpi (Northwestern Africa). Chapter “Local customs” deals with weather, diseases and local traditions of Guangxi territories; the chapter “Legal system” concerns the selection of local official, imperial exams and trade regulation. “Wealth” provides details concerning infrastructures, on water transferring, salt law, horses manage and products circulation. In chapters “Utensils”, “Clothes”, “Foods”, “Perfumes”, “Musical Instruments”, “Treasures”, “Metals and stones”, “Flowers and trees”, “Animals and birds” and “Insects and fishes”, Zhou describes natural resources, local products, spices, utensils, Guangxi flora and fauna. In the chapter named “Historic sites”, he gives his readership some information about the most interesting places in Guangxi province; “Barbaric Man customs” deals with strange customs and traditions of non-Han ethnic minorities. The last chapter “Miscellaneous” deals with several religious doctrines and divinations. As the brief description of *Daida* contents shows, it can be considered one of the most detailed work, concerning Guangxi province during Song dynasty and not only (Ling 1998, 55; Yang et al. 1996, 101).

### 3. Lingwai *Daida* and *Guihai yuheng zhi*

Zhou Qufei was influenced by Fan Chengda’s treatise *Guihai yuheng zhi* 桂海虞衡志 [On *Guihai* rural affairs]. This influence concerns both his style and his contents. During his service in Guilin and Qinzhou he gathered several notes and information (that he named *suishi biji* 隨事筆記), concerning Guangxi province and foreign countries, but until he read Fan’s work he did not know how to use them. When he came back to Yongjia, his hometown, friends and colleagues asked him to provide information about his experiences in the border regions. After reading Fan’s work, he realized his notes were a precious source of knowledge regarding overseas countries and Guangxi territories. Therefore, during the winter of 1178 he began to compose his work in order to spread his experiences and to satisfy colleagues and friends curiosity. Let’s see how Fan’s work influenced *Daida*.

Fan Chengda 范成大 (1126-1193) was a poet and a government official of Song dynasty, he was considered an academic authority in geography, especially of southern provinces of China. Older than Zhou, in 1173 he was in Guangxi as *anfushi* (military commissioner), in 1175 moved to Sichuan province as *zhizhishi* (military commissioner; Hucker 1987, 156, note 957). His work (hereinafter referred to as

*Guihai*) was written during the travel from Jingjiangfu (today Guilin district) to Sichuan province. It was a geographical treatise, divided into 13 chapters (*zhi* 志), and focused primarily on topography of the land and commercial products of China's southern provinces.<sup>11</sup>

The first important difference between *Guihai* and *Daida* is their length: the first consists of 10,000 characters and is composed by one volume; *Daida*, instead, consists of 70,000 characters and 10 volumes. Contents, therefore, will be much more detailed in Zhou's work than in *Guihai*.

The search led us to compare these two works on the basis of three criterions: regionalist aspects, structure and contents as well.

*Guihai*, as the title implies, has got a more regionalist overview than Zhou's account. *Guihai* 桂海 during Song dynasty was a synonym for Guilin and his territories; *yuheng* 虞衡, literally 'predictions', 'weigh', refers to the function of government official to manage hydric resources (see Sima Guang in Sima 1956 [1084], vol. 146, 4558). Fan's treatise deals with practical management of rural life and with natural resources dispositions, limited to Guilin territories.

*Daida*, as already explained, enlarges his contents, providing details concerning social, political, military, geographical, religious and commercial aspects of Guangxi provinces, and describing foreign countries, with a substantial treatment of those in the Islamic world too.

Concerning their structure, as shown in the table below, *Daida* reveals a greater completeness and cohesiveness than *Guihai*. 13 chapters with brief introductions compose Fan's work. *Daida*, instead, consists of 21 chapters and 294 sections.

Table 2: Chapters in *Guihai* and *Daida*.

<i>Guihai</i>	13 chapters: 1. Zhi Yandong 志岩洞 2. Zhi Jinshi 志金石 3. Zhi Xiang 志香 4. Zhi Jiu 志酒 5. Zhi Qi 志器 6. Zhi Qin 志禽 7. Zhi Shou 志獸 8. Zhi Chongyu 志蟲魚 9. Zhi Hua 志花 10. Zhi Guo 志果 11. Zhi Caomu 志草木 12. Za Zhi 雜志 13. Zhi Man 志蠻
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<sup>11</sup> For a complete English translation see James M. Hargett, *On the Road in Twelfth Century China: The Travel Diaries of Fan Chengda*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989.

<i>Daida</i>	<p>21 chapters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dilimen 地理門</li> <li>2. Bianshuaimen 邊帥門,</li> <li>3. Waiguomen shang 外國門上</li> <li>4. Waiguomen xia 外國門下</li> <li>5. Bingmingmen 兵民門</li> <li>6. Fengtumen 風土門</li> <li>7. Fazhimen 法制門</li> <li>8. Caijimen 財計門</li> <li>9. Qiyongmen 器用門</li> <li>10. Fuyongmen 服用門</li> <li>11. Shiyongmen 食用門</li> <li>12. Xiangmen 香門</li> <li>13. Yueqimen 樂器門</li> <li>14. Baohuomen 寶貨門</li> <li>15. Jinshimen 金石門</li> <li>16. Huamumen 花木門</li> <li>17. Qinshoumen 禽獸門</li> <li>18. Chongyumen 蟲魚門</li> <li>19. Gujimen 古跡門</li> <li>20. Mansumen 蠻俗門</li> <li>21. Zhiyimen 志異門</li> </ol>
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In eight cases Fan's treatise influenced *Daida* through chapters' titles:

1. "Zhi qi" corresponds to "Qiyong" of Zhou's work
2. "Zhi xiang" with "Xiang"
3. "Zhi jinshi" is "Jinshi"
4. "Zhi hua" in *Daida* becomes "Huamu"
5. "Zhi qin" and "Zhi shou" have been combined in the chapter "Qinshou"
7. "Zhi chongyu" corresponds to "Chongyu" in Zhou
8. "Zhi man" is "Mansu" in *Daida*.

In addition, other chapters reveal some correspondences with Fan's work: for examples, chapter "Zhi jiu" inspired that of "Shiyong" in *Daida*, first concerning his content (Liu 2009, 18).

Remaining chapters, "Bianshuai", "Waiguo", "Fazhi", "Caiji" e "Bingmin", are characterized by their authenticity and attention to details.

Finally, comparing these two geographical works' contents, it is worth pointing out Zhou's survey in many cases provides a richer body of new information about different items than *Guihai*. Chapter "Shiyong" consists of seven sections, the first one deals with several types of wine produced in Guangxi province, titled "Jiu". *Guihai* chapter, "Zhi jiu", has influenced this title. However, except the title, there is nothing else in common between the two chapters. Not only, Zhou has described five kinds of wine, contrary to Fan who considered just three types, but also their descriptions are very different.



In other cases, some sections in *Daida* quote *Guihai* descriptions partially or totally. Section “Pengcaixiang 蓬菜香” (second section of chapter “Xiang”) fully copies *Guihai* treatment. Section “Chenshuixiang” 沉水香 (first section of chapter “Xiang”) consists of 314 characters, 162 of which copied by Fan’s section. In additions, among 94 sections of “Huamu” chapter in *Daida*, no less than 77 descriptions correspond to *Guihai*’s.

In chapters “Jinshi”, “Chongyu” e “Baohuo” contents correspondence is much less remarkable. In detail, although 13 sections of chapter “Jinshi” have got the same title of those of “*Guihai*”, only three of them copy Fan’s descriptions. Chapters “Chongyu” e “Baohuo” have 19 sections (respectively 12 and 7), 8 of which reveal the same title, but only 2 have a similar content.

“Dili”, “Bingmin” e “Fuyong” chapters have a very poor contents correspondence. “Bianshuai”, “Waiguo”, “Fazhi” e “Caiji” do not reveal any similarity with any chapter of Fan’s treatise.

Trying to quantify Fan’s influence on Zhou’s *Daida*, *Guihai* influenced 21% of *Daida* descriptions: 7% including 19 sections with the same title and content, 14% including 41 sections in “Huamu”, “Qinshou”, “Xiang” and “Chongyu” chapters, that have the same title but not similar content.

Historical value of *Daida* has been demonstrated again. Its authenticity and its contents richness should lead more scholars to analyze Zhou’s work and the extent to which Chinese geographical knowledge grew during Southern Song dynasty thanks to his work.

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SELUSI AMBROGIO

DOES CHINESE PHILOSOPHY LACK UNIVERSALITY?  
A PATH FROM EARLY WESTERN INTERPRETATIONS  
TO MOU ZONGSAN

*Introduction*

Though less sharp than in the 19th and early 20th century, the “exclusion” of Chinese thought from the philosophical field is often an assumption for a large part of Western philosophy (i.e. Academic departments)<sup>1</sup> and a “burden” for the Chinese counterpart.<sup>2</sup> In today China, this burden is something no more acceptable, something deeply in contrast with the course of the “charm offensive” started with Hu Jintao and substantially renovated by Xi Jinping. While in this article we are not concerned with the political side of this topic, it is necessary to understand the relevance of this “cultural inferiority”, which is no more acceptable to the Chinese political, economic and cultural superpower.<sup>3</sup>

In order to relieve this long lasting “burden” it is necessary to identify and evaluate the intellectual reasons behind this exclusion. According to our understanding, the researches devoted to Hegelian Orientalism had mostly failed to illustrate the deepness of this “exclusion”, because Hegel’s vision of the “East” is neither univocal nor radical. And what is more, the ascription of the “exclusion” to a vague colonialist cultural contest is wrong, as all the reasons for this rejection already

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<sup>1</sup> See Van Norden 2017, chap. 1.

<sup>2</sup> This burden in recent years is turning upside down, since the academic philosophical discussion is gradually moving from the necessity to prove the “philosophicity” of Chinese thought to the research of an alternative new path for China, which could be out of the boundaries imposed by the Western concept of philosophy and by the term itself that was translated from Japanese into *zhexue* 哲学 in the late 19th century. More and more thinkers are choosing to use a less demanding term, namely *sixiang* 思想 or thought. On this topic see Anne Cheng 2007. The rejection of the term philosophy is a clear revendication of identity that is even clearer when we look at the current political interest for Chinese culture and tradition within the last two Chinese presidencies.

<sup>3</sup> The cultural soft power (*wenhua ruanshili* 文化软实力) behind “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” (*zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi* 中国特色社会主义) needs to claim a “philosophy with Chinese characteristics” that could be named otherwise. This is inserted within the project of a “charm offensive” as advocated by Kurlantzick 2007, Hartig 2015 and Ambrogio 2017.

existed one century before, in a completely different Europe experiencing early Enlightenment.<sup>4</sup> Whether it was only the colonialist cultural arrogance to motivate the exclusion, we would not understand why this evaluation is still very much alive in a post-colonialist world. By focusing our attention on the late 17th and early 18th century, we can penetrate the monocity and strength of this “exclusion”, which is anchored in a cultural and religious process concerned with European identity more than with China.<sup>5</sup> We refer to the complex process of secularisation of culture and consequently of philosophy, which arose mostly within the German Eclecticism and afterwards within German Enlightenment, two intellectual faces of modern Lutheranism.

### *The German eclectic exclusion*

Before the aforementioned “exclusion”, improperly named Hegelian, the two leading historiographic paradigms dealing with Chinese culture were: 1) the inclusion within *philosophia perennis* (perennial philosophy) and 2) the inclusion within the liberal and anti-dogmatic thought of the early Enlightenment.<sup>6</sup> The first paradigm acknowledged ancient Chinese thinkers as direct heirs of the diffusion of God’s wisdom after the deluge. Confucius was a *prisco theologo* (ancient theologian), propagator of a thought compatible with Judeo-Christian monotheism. It is necessary to highlight that only ancient Chinese thinkers – i.e. Confucius – were included, while contemporary thinkers were or excluded or remained unmentioned. The second paradigm instead conceived contemporary China as a place of free thought, rational politics, meritocracy (i.e. imperial exams) and, the most relevant point, an atheistic rational society (i.e. a real Spinozistic Orient). This second theory had its first relevant advocate in Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) and afterwards several French *philosophes* shared these praising opinions. Although both paradigms were inclusive, we need to be aware of the reasons behind this inclusion. On one side, the *philosophia perennis* theory needed to guarantee the universality of Christian thought as God’s holy word (i.e. the *Old and New Testament*) and the feasibility of the conversion of different civilisations (i.e. missionaries in Asia, mostly Jesuits); on the other side, the Enlightened thinkers used China as

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<sup>4</sup> The pivotal argument of the arrogance of the West during Colonialism is raised in the famous book *Orientalism* (1978) by Said, which was followed by an endless scientific debate. Our research devoted to the Chinese image in modern European culture, which is only partially mentioned in this short essay, is not openly contrary to Said’s thesis, except for the fact that we backdate “Orientalism”, necessarily implying our distance from this study, which is likely correct for Arabian “Orientalism” but questionable for Chinese “Orientalism”.

<sup>5</sup> We are referring to the “crisis of the European mind” as described by Hazard 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Regarding these two historiographic paradigms of philosophy, see Bottin 1993, Introduction, sect. 1-2 and Piaia 2011, Part I, chap. 2.

a critical weapon against *ancien régime*, in order to suggest the concreteness of a moral, tolerant and meritocratic enlightened long lasting Empire (i.e. Chinese Empire).

Opposed to these two interpretations – both inclusive, although on completely different grounds – there is another field of thinkers that is completely neglected by the research on Orientalism, and this neglecting is very unfortunate since this was the philosophical ground for both Kantism and Hegelism. We refer to the German Eclectic school that had its heart in the Lutheran University of Halle and its common master in Christian Thomasius (1655-1728). Among those German eclectic thinkers the most relevant for our investigation are Christoph August Heumann (1681-1764) and Jakob Brucker (1696-1770), the second is the author of the most important and diffused history of philosophy of the 18th century, namely the *Historia critica philosophiae* (1742-4).<sup>7</sup>

Heumann, following Thomasius's teaching, defines philosophy as “[...] the research and study of the useful truths on solid grounds and principles”.<sup>8</sup> He advocates that the whole of Oriental texts is “[...] written by unworthy clerics [*Pfaffe*] in paganism and it is called philosophy”,<sup>9</sup> where *Pfaffe* is a derogatory term used by Protestants to name Catholic parish priests and ministers, who oppress their believers kept in complete ignorance and obedience. This idea of Oriental thinkers as belonging to an inherited caste that exploits the people and bases its thinking only on authority's reasons is definitively restated by Brucker:

When we could state the proper meaning of philosophy by means of norms; when a distinction would be made between, [on one side,] the different knowledge and understanding of things of common people, and, [on the other side,] philosophy; when the beginning of philosophy would be distinct from its growing and formal state; and when a distinction would be made in the way philosophy was handed down between, [on one side,] the use of parental and teaching authority, and, [on the other side,] the accurate philosophising method and the investigative reflection that makes use of the cause and effect chain: only then all this controversy will disappear, because it will be disclosed as a linguistic quarrel [*λογομαχίαν*]. [...] Whoever studied the nature of the barbaric philosophy effectively, he would admit that they had reflected only through simple notions instead of scientific analysis. Furthermore, they propagated to posterity an investigation of truth that was obtained through meditation and tradition instead of evidence.<sup>10</sup>

Following the definition of philosophy as pure research of rational principles and as merely a logical instrument instead of wisdom in itself, the “exclusion” of Chinese, Indian and any other thought outside this Western circle was unavoidable.

<sup>7</sup> On this pivotal school see the deep analysis in Piaia 2011, Part II, chap. 5-8.

<sup>8</sup> Heumann 1715-1727, I, 1, 95, our translation.

<sup>9</sup> Heumann 1715-1727, I, 2, 209, our translation.

<sup>10</sup> Brucker 1742-1744, I, 49, our translation.

Furthermore Chinese thought was particularly despicable since it was praised by perennialists, who culminated in Leibniz, and by the French enlightened thinkers,<sup>11</sup> both German Eclectics' philosophical enemies and critical targets. From what we said, the following definition by Brucker is unsurprising: “[...] Chinese philosophy is lime without sand dispersed by a broom; it is ineffective, unable to connect properly its own principles, completely unable to reach effectively firm and definitive conclusions”.<sup>12</sup> The most vigorous denial of the “Philosophical China” was displayed in this short sentence, almost a century before Hegel’s *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1825-6), usually reputed to be the source of the exclusion of China from philosophy.

As we have just argued, the reasons for the exclusion lies on the presumed irrationality, illogicity and lack of universality of Chinese thought. According to the German eclectics, philosophical thought has to detect rational mistakes, to argue only clear and distinct ideas, and finally to reach unequivocal conclusions that have to be universal. They clearly states that in ancient times only Greek thinkers undertook this mission, and in modern times only German Eclecticism was their legitimate heir. Therefore, the reasons for the exclusion of China from philosophy are not connected to any form of racism or colonial superiority, but based simply on logical and rational reasons, mostly disregarding morality and wisdom. That is why we need Mou –a critical estimator of Kant– to reject this point raised by German eclectics and still alive today.

### *Mou Zongsan’s concrete universal*

As we stated, the lacking of universality is the enduring core of the exclusion. In the following paragraphs, we will try to find an answer to this argument within the theory of universals proposed by Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909-95)<sup>13</sup> in his *Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy* (*Zhongguo zhexue jiujiang* 中國哲學十九講),<sup>14</sup> since,

<sup>11</sup> These are the two historiographic paradigms we already mentioned, namely Perennialism and Bayle’s Oriental Spinozism. On Leibniz as a perennialist, among many researches, see the pioneering Schmitt 1966. Clearly within the perennial paradigm we can also include Christian Wolff, who was ousted from his chair at the University of Halle for his comparison of Christianity and Confucianism and his strenuous appraisal of Chinese morality.

<sup>12</sup> “[...] philosophia Sinensem esse calcem sine arena, scopasque dissolutas, nihil cohaerere, nihil apte suis principiis connecti, nihil quod certas et definitas conclusiones efficere valeat afferri.” (Brucker, 1742-1744, V, 879), our translation.

<sup>13</sup> On Mou’s life see Mou 2015. On his philosophical impact on Chinese Contemporary Philosophy see Makeham 2003.

<sup>14</sup> We provide both the references to the complex characters and the simplified character versions. The first one is the well know Mou 2003 published in Taipei (by now Mou 19c), while the PRC edition is Mou 2009 (by now Mou 19s). A translation of the *Lessons* became recently available: Mou 2015 translated by Esther C. Su. We consulted this translation but we don’t always agree with it,

in our opinion, the best defenders of “Philosophical China” are Chinese thinkers themselves. Mou opens his lessons through a discussion on man’s limitedness or finitude (*xianzhi* 限制), which concerns man’s body, his understanding ability, his feelings and therefore his sensitive nature, which according to the New Confucians of the Song dynasty – the two brothers Cheng Hao 程顥 and Cheng Yi 程頤 – comes under the concept of *qi* 氣, or vital energy. This sensitivity is defined as a *xing’ershangde biranxing* 形而上的必然性, a metaphysical necessity. This kind of necessity does not pertain to formal logic, on the contrary it belongs to the vital aspect of reality since matter is made of *qi* 氣 and that could not be otherwise. Man reveals himself and lives *zai yi tongkong zhong* 在一通孔中 (Mou 19c, 7; 19s, 8), “in a through-hole”, an “opening” and thus his perspective on the world is something like a narrow hole. Therefore, it is because of man’s limitedness that he has a unique point of view on the “*dao* that [otherwise] is perfectly complete, a whole” (道是完整的, 它是個全, *ibid.*). Evidently man has also “extrinsic” limitations, namely the environment he lives within, but the most relevant is the “intrinsic” limitation that, as we just reported, Mou names “metaphysical necessity”. The philosopher says:

[...] the meaning we have attributed since the beginning to this limitedness is only negative, it could seem that this finitude prevents us from letting the *dao* [道] and the essence [*li* 理] reveal themselves in their integrity and that would be obviously deleterious. However, it is at the opposite, since when we are able to understand that this finitude is a metaphysical necessity, it achieves a positive meaning. We might say that, in order to reveal itself, truth needs finitude, since without the latter the truth would not exhibit. Therefore, finitude limits us but, at the same time, only since we are in this finitude we can embody [*tixian chulai* 體現出來] the truth. This is the reason why the [New Confucian] School of the Principle [*Lixuejia* 理學家] recognised such a great relevance to the *qi* [氣], that is metaphysical necessity. It entraps and limits us, but, at the same time, in order to exhibit the essence [理], we cannot do without it. To distance ourselves from *qi*, would imply not to exhibit the essence. Accordingly, the nature of the effect of *qi* could be twofold, both positive and negative. Our body is certainly limited, when we hate it we can even decide to commit suicide as we want to destroy it. However, the body has also a positive function, since *dao* and truth need this same life in order to exhibit themselves. This is the tragic nature of humans and the human tragedy actually lies there. *Dao* needs it to reveal itself, since it is a “through-hole” [*tongkong* 通孔]. [However,] since life is a passage and it is finite, because *dao* needs it to exhibit, *dao* cannot find embodiment in its [unlimited] entirety, would not this again limit it? (Mou 19c, 10; Mou 19s, 9-10)

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therefore all translations are ours from Chinese. Su’s translation is readily valuable, however it is sometimes simplistic and loses Mou’s philosophical style. On this translation see the following review: Ambrogio 2016.



Mou proceeds saying that clearly the body limits the manifestation of the *dao* but this is simply the paradox Zhuangzi named *diaogui* 吊詭. Chinese civilisation has always understood the paradoxical nature of humans as “openness”, while this is an arduous concept for Westerners to understand (Mou 19c, 9; 19s, 10). Life being the place for *dao*'s manifestation, Chinese thinkers devoted their attention mostly to its study and to ethics, while in Greece the interest lay in the study of nature and in the definition of theoretical reason, that is connected to abstraction and language.

According to Mou, truth is not necessarily univocal, namely only as verbal truth, we suggest as *Logos*. Instead truth has at least two dimensions: *zuo waiyande* 做外延的 and *zuo neirongde* 做內容的 that the author himself translates into English as “extensional truth” and “intensional truth”.<sup>15</sup> The two terms come from Russell's logic, where “extensional” is what is defined by a clause or definition, the mere conformity to the facts, to the objective components. Meanwhile “intensional” is what the same clause wants to raise in the listener or reader, thus the subjective component of understanding. Mou highlights that extensional truth belongs to sciences, whereas the “intensional” is the object of investigation of such spiritual fields as Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism, namely the Chinese *sanjiao* 三教.<sup>16</sup> This “intensional truth”, which belongs to inner perception and feelings, is undeniable when we look at the human reaction to these teachings and to refined literary works,<sup>17</sup> which provide a shared “feeling of truth” *zhenshigan* 真實感 (Mou 19c, 24; Mou 19s, 22). Only this kind of truth can seize life as a whole for what life is, namely the opening offered to the *dao*. Mou suggests that when we reject the value of this intentional truth, only accepting the validity of the scientific extensional truth, we would be forced to make *ziwo fouding* 自我否定, that he translates into English as “self-denial” (Mou 19c, 24; Mou 19s, 23). In so doing, we would deny our human nature, which provides us with feelings, love, and humanity in addition to our intellectual nature.

When we prevent the denial of our human nature, which is “intensional”, we can achieve the comprehension of the feelings produced in us by a poem, and, above all, by a philosophical teaching such as the teaching provided by the Chinese *sanjiao* 三教. These feelings that arise from this interior understanding are shared by all humans, since all humans are “openings”, therefore they are all endowed with a “moderate universality” (*xiangdang pubianxing* 相當普遍性), where “moderate” means adequate, namely that fits human intentionality and not fixed scientific truth (Mou 19c, 27; Mou 19s, 25). Individual's feeling has no universality in itself, but it becomes universal when it is shared in an adequate form (i.e. fiction

<sup>15</sup> On these two universals see also Tang 2002, 340-2. We follow Mou when he translates with “intensional” instead of “intentional” (Mou 19c, 20; Mou 19s, 20).

<sup>16</sup> On the impact of Buddhism on Mou see Clower 2010.

<sup>17</sup> He obviously mentions *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (紅樓夢).



masterpieces, poems and teachings) and when it achieves the quality of reflection and philosophical reasoning. Chinese philosophy arises when reason is applied to feelings and elevates them to the level of universality, since all men share the same nature of being an opening for *dao* 道.

Mou proceeds trying to find further explanations for these two kinds of truth: for extensional he suggests *guangdude* 廣度的 and for intentional *qiangdude* 強度的. Extensional becomes “extensive”, which has a wide confirmation, while intensional obtains an additional meaning, namely “intensive” or “intense”, we can say deep. Extensive truth is related to quantity and numbers, the generalizability of rational laws. At the opposite side, intensive truth looks for the inner being or man nature. “Extensivity” corresponds to exteriority and the objectification of what is researched, whereas “intensivity” does not reduce the subjectivity of his object of understanding. “Intensivity” examines the subject from inside, therefore it could never make a pure object of it. Only intensive truth, leaving the subject to the role of subject, allows an active research of truth and the reaching of a deep comprehension or enlightenment (*ming* 明), without losing itself in the pure “discursive understanding”<sup>18</sup> of sciences. Mou suggests that the best instance of “intensive understanding” is *liangzhi* 良知, the “innate [good] knowing” of Wang Yangming 王陽明, the most representative New Confucian thinker of Ming dynasty. According to Mou, in the West only Kant came close to this knowing in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, although he was not able to achieve the deepness of this Chinese ontological, epistemological and moral teaching.

The last dialectical turn drives us to the last couple of definitions of truth: 1. Extensional/intensive becomes “abstract” (*chouxiangde* 抽象的), since the logic or scientific universality is abstract being conceptual; 2. On the contrary, intensional/intensive truth is “concrete” (*jutide* 具體的), being a shared universal as all beings have the same nature of “being an opening” (*tongkong* 通孔), but, as we said, this universal is also specific since each “opening” – i.e. each human life – is unique, one of a kind. Following the articulated reasoning of our philosopher, the main character of Chinese thought is that of being a “concrete philosophy” (*jutide zhexue* 具體的哲學):

[...] concrete universal has adaptability (*danxing* 彈性), because it is concrete, we could say that this concreteness suggests the same adaptability. We may add that this truth has both a universal nature (*pubianxing* 普遍性) and a specific nature (*dutexing* 獨特性). However, this specificity does not have the aspect of an event since truth is not an event, having not the nature of the exceptional [i.e. accidental] but instead the characteristic of the universal that in this context we can name the “concrete universal” (*juti de pubian* 具體的普遍). [...] Earlier Chinese men loved to investigate this principle and it is easy to detect, it is only that they didn’t have these [Western philosophical] terms. Whether we had explained these terms to Wang Yangming or to the master Zhizhe, they would

<sup>18</sup> In English without Chinese (Mou 19c, 31; Mou 19s, 28).

understand them as soon as they heard them, since they actually taught this concrete universal.

(Mou 19c, 36; Mou 19s, 32-33)

The more recurring instance of “concrete universal” provided by Mou is the Confucian concept of *ren* 仁, which is not a moral norm, but rather the description of the concrete essence of humanity, the universal shared by all men. Therefore, *ren* 仁 is a “intensional”, “intensive” and “concrete” universal. It is the universal of humanity and, at the same time, it is the concrete display of humanity that is embodied in each unique man, since each man is an “opening” offered to the universal. The character 仁 – usually translated with “benevolence” or “humaneness” – means that human becomes human (*ren* 人) only when in reciprocal relationship with other humans, only if man constantly lives his essence and condition of “opening” to the *dao* and to others (*er* 二), constantly creating and recreating the morality of the normative and living essence (理/道/真/天).

### Conclusion

In conclusion, we can ask ourselves what the German eclectics – i.e. Heumann and Brucker – would think of Mou’s definition of Western philosophy as abstract, or far from humans’ lives. Undoubtedly they would never agree to the appraisal of the concreteness of Chinese philosophy, which is depicted as closer to human life. Nevertheless, we think that this definition of a “concrete universal” is one of the most intriguing intellectual contributions provided by Mou –and in several different ways by the whole Contemporary New Confucian thinkers– to the entire world philosophy. This kind of universality reveals his determination in strenuously supporting a universalistic capacity of Chinese thought due to the presumed concreteness of its teachings. Mou Zongsan’s intellectual journey is extremely complex and articulated: from Western logic – i.e. Russell – to Buddhism and Kantism, for finally turning back to New Confucianism. We suggest that we can figure his intellectual life as a spiral of questions that circularly brought him back to his intellectual identity as a Chinese thinker. Kantian influences on his thought are undeniable, at least as a research for “translating bridges” between different thoughts, however this influence has never been an intellectual submission or veneration. Mou criticises Kant in translating the three *Critics*, he turns the German thinker’s thought upside down and he has the audacity to deal with him as Western thinkers rarely do (likely only Heidegger followed by Mou in his reading of Kant’s philosophy as deeply ontological). Being involved in this dispute with Kant, Mou seems to achieve a useful distance from Chinese culture that helps him to better penetrate the deepness of this thought. This confrontation with the philosopher of Königsberg drives him to advocate that man is able of “intellectual

intuition”, something completely denied by Kant’s first *Critic*. Chinese thought can reach the “*noumenal* understanding” of truth, a ground restricted to God in Kant’s philosophy.<sup>19</sup>

Everybody who has tried to understand Chinese philosophical texts with both a scientific attitude and *xin* 心 (heart-mind) has certainly detected this willingness to rationally prove something that is beyond reason but at the same time that belongs to humans and not to a superior external power. To acknowledge this willingness as rational and valuable when it is scrupulously displayed in texts is a common effort of Chinese, Japanese and Indian thinkers of the 20th and 21st century and this effort has found – aware or unaware – support in Heideggerian and post-modern philosophers, who disagreed with the definition of philosophy first provided by the German eclectics (i.e. a rational item). This is the expression of a new and renovated philosophy that could re-take a place in the philosophical field, possibly a never exclusive field. In our opinion, it is always better to create “room for plurality” in order to provide a meeting place for both Brucker and Mou, where “rational universality” could be placed side by side with the “concrete universality” of life.

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MARTINA CODELUPPI

## HISTORY, MEMORY, EXILE: SHAPING 1989 IN NARRATION

### 1. *Memory and Imagination: Two Syntheses of a Trauma*

The Tian'anmen square protests in 1989 marked a crucial point in contemporary Chinese history and due to the censorship imposed on this critical subject, a significant part of its literary legacy is found in the works by exiled authors, including a variety of writing genres and individual positions (B. Kong 2012, 11-13).

Ha Jin (b. 1956) and Ma Jian (b. 1953) are two of the most representative authors of the so-called “literary diaspora”, who have recounted the events of 1989 in their novels *The Crazy* (Ha Jin 2002) and *Beijing zhiwuren* [Beijing Coma] (Ma Jian 2009). Ha Jin was residing in the United States at the time of the protests, while Ma Jian – who had also already fled China – was temporarily back in Beijing during the student protests, although he was not in the square the night of the military crackdown. Their literary reconstructions are therefore the synthesis of the two poles that Paul Ricœur identifies as the dichotomy characterising the phenomenology of recollection: memory (*souvenir*) and imagination (*image*; Ricœur 2000, 53). In fact, while the memory of those events existing in the authors' mind is real, the description as it appears in their novels is fictional, and directly shaped by their psychological and cultural displacement.

How did Ha Jin's and Ma Jian's exile interfere with their act of literary recollection? As time is the primary dimension of memory, this paper compares *The Crazy* and *Beijing zhiwuren* starting from their temporal structure and moving then to other narratological aspects. Using Genette's categories (Genette 1980), the following analysis will explore the key features of these fictional recounts, proving them symptomatic of the authors' reactions to a trauma filtered through distance in both time and space.

### 2. *Exiled Recollections*

Ha Jin arrived in the United States as a graduate student in 1985. Like many others, he became part of the flow of emigration of intellectuals and students that followed

the opening up policy during the '80s, significantly modifying and enriching the scenario of contemporary Sino-American literature (Zhang 2008, 114). After the Tian'anmen incident, he decided to exile himself in a foreign country and to a foreign language, choosing to write in English and becoming an overseas Chinese for good (Gong 2014, 151). Ma Jian, instead, fled China in 1987. He first moved to Hong Kong, then to Germany and finally to London, where he currently lives. The straightforwardness of his political views has caused the banishment of his works from China since 1987, while it was only after the publication of *Beijing zhiwuren* that he became an exile. His fame as a dissident writer did not prevent him from keeping a physical, psychological and linguistic bond with his motherland (Pesaro 2013, 163). Nevertheless, together with his translator and wife Flora Drew, he decided to devote his works to the foreign readership for the sake of his freedom of expression, pursuing what he defines "the sense of justice" necessary to produce valuable literary works (Ma Jian 2000).

Ha Jin's *The Crazy* and Ma Jian's *Beijing zhiwuren* provide two different points of view on the theme of the Tian'anmen square protests, each of them dealing with this crucial issue in a unique and exquisitely personal way. *The Crazy* narrates the vicissitudes of Jian Wan, a young student who is assigned to look after his mentor and future father-in-law, Professor Yang, after he has a heart attack and starts intertwining reality and delirium in his hospital bed. The story is set in the spring of 1989 and the Tian'anmen protests serve as a background to the protagonist's struggle between the "disintegration and death of intellectualism in post-Mao period" and the challenges of his personal growth, "in classic bildungsroman style" (B. Kong 2012, 92). Although the focus of the novel is mainly on academic life, the story reaches its climax with Jian's decision to join the protests the day before the military crackdown. Ha Jin's approach to the recollection of the massacre provides a significant example of interpretation and personal elaboration, filtering an event he never personally witnessed through the eyes of a young and disenchanted student. On the other hand, *Beijing zhiwuren* is narrated by Dai Wei, a Ph.D. student at Beijing University who was shot in the head during the June Fourth crackdown and has been living in a coma ever since. The story is split into two parallel dimensions: the current life of the comatose patient, ending with his awakening in 1999, and the memories of the student protests that occurred ten years earlier. The author bravely recounts the events of the spring of 1989 in painstaking detail, overcoming the safer choices of allegories and metaphors often used by Chinese writers when dealing with sensible issues, and, at the same time, giving an account of the pressures and controversies animating post-Tian'anmen society (S. Kong 2009). Ma Jian's work is undoubtedly a milestone in Tian'anmen fiction, which skillfully overlaps the account of the students' death with the description of China's ascending economic power in the new millennium (B. Kong 2012, 184).

The peculiar result of Ha Jin's linguistic hybridisation between English and Chinese has been investigated by both Chinese and Western critics (Gong 2014;



Xiang Jiahao 2015; Perrin 2011). Moreover, a number of scholars have focused on the cultural implications of his double identity (Codeluppi 2016; Li 2014) that made him a literary case in the context of migrants' literature (K. K. Cheung 2013; L. K. Cheung 2004). Due to the ban imposed on *The Crazy* by the Chinese government, the publication in China of studies focusing on this work was hampered, resulting in a limited number of contributions that avoid the most delicate issues (Chen Yanqiong 2012). Instead, the novel has been analysed by several scholars in the West (Juncker 2015; Linder 2011; Varsava 2015), although Ha Jin's fiction is yet to be investigated from a proper narratological perspective. As far as Ma Jian is concerned, few academic studies have been devoted to his work, despite the proliferation of interviews on the web. Since his writings are strictly banned in Mainland China, no contributions can be retrieved from Chinese databases. Contrariwise, a few articles have been published in the West, mainly focusing on his novel *Beijing zhiwuren*, while analyses concerning other aspects of his literary production (Codeluppi 2016) are still uncommon. The novel has been studied from the point of view of ideology and translation (Codeluppi 2017; Pesaro 2013), from a socio-cultural perspective (Loh 2013), and as a representation of the author's intellectual nomadism (S. Kong 2014). Finally, both *The Crazy* and *Beijing zhiwuren* has been compared by Belinda Kong (2012) as two of the most representative literary responses to June Fourth. These studies provide the background for the following analysis, which emphasises Ha Jin's and Ma Jian's use of narratological devices shaping their fictional recollection of the Tian'anmen protests.

### 3. *Memory through Time*

In order to reveal the mental mechanisms underlying the narration of memory, the narratological devices concerning the category of time were identified and analysed. Using Genette's terminology, it is possible to distinguish between the time of the "thing told" and the time of the narrative or, in other words, the "time of the signified" (the story time) and the "time of the signifier" (narrative time) (Genette 1980, 33). *The Crazy* and *Beijing zhiwuren* do not share the same story time, however, the description of the last phase of the protests – from Hu Yaobang's death to the military crackdown – refers to the same time frame: April to June, 1989. Although this final phase represents the core moment of the narration in both novels, the authors chose different temporal paths to reach their narrative climaxes. In this context, the analysis of narrative *anachronies* is particularly useful to investigate the authors' use of time as a tool to gradually disclose their memories. This Genettian category comprehends "various types of discordance between the two orderings of story and narrative" (Genette 1980, 33), and allows the reader to detect the intertwining between the Tian'anmen protests and the main characters' vicissitudes.



The temporal structure of Ha Jin's novel is prevalently built on the chronological order of the events, and the narration is carried out at the end of the story it narrates, although the length of the delay is not specified. The novel begins with the news of Professor Yang's stroke and the incipit clearly marks the temporal coordinates of the narration: "Everybody was surprised when Professor Yang suffered a stroke in the spring of 1989" (Ha Jin 2002, 3). This time can be defined as "first narrative", that is "the temporal level of narrative with respect to which anachrony is defined as such" (Genette 1980, 48). Throughout the text, the author often makes use of anachronies to evoke episodes of the past, and particularly interesting are those related to the protests, as they play a central role in shaping the recollection of the events. The initial phase of the students' movement, started after Hu Yaobang's death, is first mentioned in the novel through one of his girlfriend's letters, which the protagonist Jian Wan used to read with several days of delay. This particular form of anachrony is defined as analepsis, namely an "evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment" (Genette 1980, 40):

May 6, 1989

Dear Jian,

I hope my father is getting better. Tell him that I'll be back as soon as I'm done with the exams. Actually at this moment it's unclear whether the exams will be given on time. Things are in chaos here. Hundreds of students from my school have gone to Tiananmen Square a few days in a row to join the students of other colleges already there. Together they demand a dialogue with the premier. I just heard that the exams might be postponed. If so, I'll come home sooner  
(Ha Jin 2002, 157).

The letter contains a supposition about facts which have possibly already happened by the time the information is received, and in this way Ha Jin builds a prolepsis – a "manoeuvre that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later" (Genette 1980, 40) – within the analepsis. In this way, he reproduces a time gap that emphasizes the deferral of information, which is a direct consequence of the protagonist's displacement. Ha Jin himself experienced a similar state of displacement while being in the United States at the time of the protests, and such a reproduction may be regarded as symptomatic of his psychological mind set at that time.

The issue of displacement is further perpetuated in the following references to the Tian'anmen facts, which are brought to the reader through the news broadcasted by "The Voice of America". Once again, the delay in information is inevitable, as it is a consequence of the distance interposed between the events happening in the Square and the foreign media narrating them. It is only in the last phase of the novel, when the protagonist decides to join the protests in

Beijing, that this time gap is eventually neutralized. The penultimate chapter is a reconstruction of Jian Wan's journey towards a square he never reaches, built on a detailed description of the events occurring between June Third and June Fourth. From this point on, the narration proceeds smoothly, shadowing the protagonist's movements and reporting his sensorial impressions as he enters the capital and throws himself into the chaos. The conclusion of the novel anticipates the new life that Jian Wan is about to undertake. After the journey back from Beijing, facing the shock and the disillusion that came with it, the protagonist finds himself forced to escape, in order to avoid being arrested as a counterrevolutionary:

Done with the fruit, I noticed a barbershop at a street corner in the northwest, its signboard displaying a scissors, a hair clipper, and a pot of steaming water. With a black-headed match I burned my student ID, then rose to my feet and went to the shop to get a crew cut. Without my long hair my face would appear narrower, and from now on I would use a different name

(Ha Jin 2002, 323).

This last paragraph marks a new beginning, a future that sounds like a declaration of intent, leaving the reader with the hope that this craziness will finally heal.

In Ma Jian's text, the temporal structure is completely different and the narration proceeds along two different time scales at the same time. The first one follows the memory of the comatose patient Dai Wei, with its first narrative being the spring of 1989, while the second one coincides with the narrative time, ending ten years later, in 1999. The novel switches systematically from one time to the other, describing both Dai Wei's feelings and physical reactions along with his memories of the past, most of which concern the final phase of the student protests. This switch from one dimension to the other is marked by short paragraphs graphically isolated from the main text. The author alternates the portrayal of Dai Wei's psychophysical condition in the form of interior monologue and images from the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*: the protagonist's favorite literary work. The longest of these excerpts describes Dai Wei's awakening and is reported twice, at the beginning and at the end of the novel, inscribing the narration in a memory circle that begins and ends with the recapture of consciousness:

Through the gaping hole where the covered balcony used to be, you see the bulldozed locust tree slowly begin to rise again. This is a clear sign that from now on you're going to have to take your life seriously. [...] Your blood is getting warmer. The muscles of your eye sockets quiver. Your eyes will soon fill with tears. Saliva drips onto the soft palate at the back of your mouth. [...] A bioelectrical signal darts like a spark of light from the neurons in your motor cortex, down the spinal cord to a muscle fibre at the tip of your finger. You will no longer have to rely on your memories to get through the day. This is not a momentary flash of life before death. This is a new beginning (Ma Jian 2014, 1-2 and 665-666).

This extremely accurate description, enriched with medical terms, emphasizes the authenticity and the immediacy of the narration, virtually reaching the perfect temporal correspondence between narrative and story (Genette 1980, 23). Therefore, these sections almost constitute a third temporal dimension, fragmented and scattered through the novel, with the function of either taking the readers back to contemporaneity, or sending them to a remote and fantastic dimension.

This continuous zigzag can be regarded as a symptom of a mental dislocation, the consequence of a perpetual division between several different time frames: an idealized past, a biological contemporaneity, a painful memory, and a sedated present. The author travelled back and forth during the years of the student protests, and the effect he recreated in his novel may reflect his psychological condition of that time. Clearly, every one of these separate time scales contains its own anachronies. Yet, the most remarkable feature of this temporal structure is the mastery of the parallel dimensions, which endows the novel with a unique and multifaceted blend of confusion, tension, inebriation, and contemplation.

Despite the two authors' different approaches to the description of the facts happening in the square, their accounts converge towards a similar stylistic technique in the final part of the story. When describing the night of the military crackdown, Ha Jin's detached eye is brusquely brought to reality, while Ma Jian's meticulous work of reconstruction reaches its peak. This meeting point is particularly evident in the narration of the soldiers' brutality towards the students, an example of which can be found in both novels:

The tall colonel jumped off the jeep and went up to the student who was still talking to the soldiers. [...] Without a word he pulled out his pistol and shot the student in the head, who dropped to the ground kicking his legs, then stopped moving and breathing. Bits of his brain were splattered like crushed tofu on the asphalt. Steam was rising from his smashed skull (Ha Jin 2002, 303).

As the smoke cleared, a scene appeared before me that singed the retinas of my eyes. On the strip of road which the tank had just rolled over, between a few crushed bicycles, lay a mass of silent, flattened bodies. I could see Bai Ling's yellow and white striped T-shirt and red banner drenched in blood. Her face was completely flat. A mess of black hair obscured her elongated mouth. An eyeball was floating in the pool of blood beside her (Ma Jian 2014, 656)

In these excerpts, the narration times coincide, the points of view are comparable, and the actions described are very much alike. The two authors' representations, although different in many respects, find their point of contact in these moving scenes, describing a cruelty able to awaken the reader's deepest sympathies.

#### 4. *Displaced Narrations*

The peculiarity of the authors' position vis-à-vis their narration is not only expressed by means of the temporal structure reproducing the gap between the present and their memories of June Fourth. The features of "mood" (Genette 1980, 161) reveal a connection with Ha Jin's and Ma Jian's exiled identities as well.

Ha Jin's account develops mainly by means of Jian Wan's narration of the "events" (Genette 1980, 164) happening in the capital and of their repercussions on his provincial everyday life. The student protests are therefore evoked in their most diegetic representation, by recounting the news already filtered through the media:

That night my roommates and I listened to the Voice of America again. Martial law had been declared in Beijing. Thousands of hunger-striking students had occupied Tiananmen Square for days; some of them began to collapse and were being shipped to hospitals to be put on IVs. We could hear the sirens of ambulances screaming in the background. It was disturbing to learn that several field armies had assembled on the outskirts of Beijing, ready to implement martial law (Ha Jin 2002, 213).

Together with the temporal gap separating the protagonist from the facts happening in the square, this double narration reproduces the migrant's state of isolation, which is both physical and mental. The multiplicity of factors influencing the flow of information merges with the author's personal memory, resulting in a narrativised reminiscence able to convey the individual's inner response to external upheaval. Contrariwise, Ma Jian chooses to describe the detailed vicissitudes preceding the military crackdown through the extensive use of a "narrative of words" (Genette 1980, 169), by reporting long portions of dialogues between the students:

Ke Xi snatched the microphone from the student's hands and said, 'We will defend Tiananmen Square to the death! We will stay on the Monument to the People's Heroes until the bitter end...' He worked himself up into such a frenzy that he fainted into the arms of his bodyguard. Chen Di took the microphone. 'We need an ambulance and an oxygen canister. Ke Xi has fainted again.' 'Fellow students, you must stay awake and make sure you all have wet towels to hand,' Old Fu announced. 'Don't leave the Monument. Everyone must stay in the centre of the Square' (Ma Jian 2014, 623-4).

The reported speech allows the author to give free rein to the students' voices, creating a mimetic effect that almost projects the reader onto the scene. The hotchpotch of opinions creates a disquieting ambience, transmitting the feeling of confusion and dismay that the author is likely to have experienced during his stay in the capital in the spring of 1989.

Although the two novels develop through different degrees of diegesis, they

show similar features as far as focalisation and perspective are concerned. Both *The Crazyed* and *Beijing zhiwuren* are narrated from an inner point of view, with the narrator being the hero of the story. Consequently, the focalisation is predominantly internal, as though to show the authors' spiritual bond with the object of their fictional recollections. Jian Wan and Dai Wei's eyes provide the most direct means by which Ha Jin and Ma Jian can recount their version of the June Fourth massacre, emphasising the emotional dimension implied in the intellectual effort of remembering (Ricœur 2000, 36). Nevertheless, the focalisation is hardly constant, and the alterations in point of view modulate the subject's personal involvement with the story. This reaches its maximum level with the direct transposition of the hero's thoughts, as in the case of Dai Wei's recollection of the instant in which he was shot:

Inside my parietal lobes, I often rewind to those last moments before I was shot, trying to work out what I saw. But a few seconds before the bullet hits my head, there is a loud gunshot and the image of a girl, in what looks like A-Mei's white skirt, falling to her knees. Then the scene breaks off  
(Ma Jian 2014, 424).

The vividness with which the protagonist recalls the intense moments in the square reflects the author's mental connection with the atmosphere he experienced in those days. By contrast, Ha Jin's description of the protests is left in the background, while his depiction of Jian Wan's thoughts mostly focuses on the people and the events marking his campus life:

Cheap nostalgia, I thought. Yesterday is always better than today, but who in their right minds can buy this kind of sentimental stuff? If he had been in his senses, Mr. Yang would have commented on the poem in more analytical language. Clearly his mind could no longer engage the text penetratingly, and his critical discourse had partly collapsed  
(Ha Jin 2002, 124).

Such a distinction shows the impact on the narrative instance of the space between the heroes' minds and their recollections of 1989, which is a consequence of the real distance separating the authors from their memories. In both cases, the narrator guides the reader's attention towards those aspects that the author regards as the most striking ones. For Ma Jian, being in Beijing at that time meant personally breathing the atmosphere of that mayhem, which marked his memory forever. This caused the need to reproduce, as far as possible, the individual's participation in his fictionalised account. However, the wish to convey the subject's involvement coexists with the desire to denounce the historical incident, carried out by means of a detailed description that recreates a sort of cinematographic effect. In the portions of text devoted to the students' dialogues, the protagonist's feelings

give way to the apparent neutrality of the historical reconstruction. Instead, Ha Jin's strategy is more coherent in its purpose to communicate the detachment separating the narrator from the events taking place in the square. Even when, on arriving in Beijing, the content of Jian Wan's girlfriend's letters is borne out of the actual facts, the protagonist's eyes are only able to describe the scene through a visual depiction that conveys a sense of coldness and estrangement. The Tian'anmen square protests left a stain of blood on Chinese contemporary history, and they also changed the everyday life of students and civilians, in China as well as abroad. Ha Jin's peripheral vision of the political turmoil is generated by his condition of exile. Therefore, the connection between the author and the hero is clear: the Tian'anmen protests affect Jian Wan's personal life, yet without touching him directly, in the same way as they caused the author's banishment from his own country, although he never concretely took part in them.

## 5. Conclusions

This paper has compared the two novels *The Crazy* and *Beijing zhiwuren* from a narratological perspective to reveal the influence of the authors' temporal and spatial displacement on their fictional representations of the Tian'anmen protests. The analysis was first conducted on the temporal structure, which revealed two tendencies, corresponding to two different degrees of remoteness. Ha Jin, who was living in the United States and, therefore, had an inevitably muffled perception of the events, displays spatial distance through temporal anachronies and delays provoked by intermediaries interfering with the communication process. On the other hand, Ma Jian, who was temporarily living in Beijing and could truly experience the tumult of those days, exemplifies his perpetually unstable condition through the intertwining of a variety of narrative times, creating an effect of cyclic disorientation. Secondly, the study has explored the authors' individual relationship with their own memories as it emerges through the narrative discourse. Ma Jian's emotional closeness generates a passionate narration alternating with a detailed account of the historical dynamics. Instead, Ha Jin's distance is represented in the refracted description of the students' vicissitudes, whereas the narrator's focus is kept on the implications of the events for his own personal life. Jian Wan is imprisoned in a metaphorical madness affecting his country, his professor and himself, just as Ha Jin was confined outside China and was only able to witness the madness of his country and its consequences for his own future.

June Fourth's literary legacy has thrived all over the world, mainly fostered by the Chinese communities abroad that took on the challenge of depicting what, due to the government's strict censorship, has been defined an "imaginary massacre" (Berry 2008, 307). According to Ricœur's notion of "ostensive imagination" (Ricœur 2000, 66), Ma Jian's and Ha Jin's fictional responses to the Tian'anmen events are

“imaginary” in the opposite sense. They make use of fiction to place their memory before the readers’ eyes, in order to offer representations that, while refracted and modulated by individual experiences, still come across as acts of denunciation.

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ORNELLA DE NIGRIS

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUMS IN CHINA: A GENERAL FRAMEWORK

### *Introduction*

In the last 30 years, China has been experiencing a major development of the museum system and a proliferation of art museums. This rapid development has seen not only the transformation of public art museums, but also an incredible growth of private collections and the construction of new ones. According to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, by 2011 there were 3,589 museums in China – one for every 380,000 people (Lu 2014, 206), a number that has continued to grow considerably, reaching 4,165 registered museums in 2015 (Li 2014).

This article aims to offer a diachronic description of the evolution of the art museum system in China after Deng Xiaoping's reform launched in 1978, by highlighting key historical facts which led to the proliferation and development of the sector. In the existing literature on this topic, many reports and articles have been recently produced. These studies often analyse a single case study related to the development of private art collections in China, seen as the real great innovation within the art museum realm (Chun 2014; Zeng 2014; Kiovski 2017; Zennaro 2017). Other studies focus on the institutional changes which have led to this development and are keener to take into account the state-owned art museum system (Wang 2007). However, my aim with this article is to consider the development of the Chinese art museum system as a whole and take into account the parallel development of the privately owned and the state-owned art museum. I argue that this growth, which has been labelled “museumification” (Johnson 2012) was fostered by two forces: the government's new political agenda and the development of private collections. My aim is to analyse how they interact. I will also highlight how this reflects on the way contemporary Chinese art is collected and exhibited.

This article is based on my PhD work, and the analysis provided here is partially based on primary data collected in my field research conducted in China between 2012 and 2014, and partially based on recent literature and published interviews. Therefore, this article presents only a few preliminary results of wider research on

the topic. The majority of my field research was held in first tier cities – Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou – where I interviewed museum stakeholders (approximately 50 museum directors, artists, curators and museum professionals) and made observations on a cluster of art museums (about 30). Therefore, the analysis provided here mainly focuses on these four cities.

During the last few years, after my field research, many new art museums have risen all over the country and we have witnessed the founding of dozens of new ones. As art historian Karen Smith stated: “Nothing in China remains the same” (Smith 2017, 8). Therefore, the results presented here are not definitive, nor exhaustive, because while in recent years new museums have opened in large numbers in second and third tier cities, others have closed or have expanded, and further observation still needs to be done. Nevertheless, my contribution to this field of study aims to analyse some manifestations of the phenomenon, and to offer an overall interpretation of the forces which have led to this incredible development.

#### *Chinese official art system by the 1980s and 1990s*

The museum devoted only to art is a relatively novel concept in China, and the first *meishuguan* emerged in the Chinese institutional landscape only in the 20th century, in the 1930s, with the founding of the Jiangsu sheng Meishuguan-Jiangsu Provincial Art Museum in Nanjing (in 1936). The most important *meishuguan* were born thereafter, among them Shanghai Meishuguan-Shanghai Art Museum (1956) in Shanghai and Zhongguo Meishuguan-National Art Museum of China (1963) in Beijing. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, although the government made efforts to provide China with new museums, these were basically dedicated to science and history, the museum having become a “political instrument” (Su 1995, 66) and therefore, the various institutions dealing with art, from production to exhibition, education to circulation, were strictly dependent on the Ministry of Culture, both administratively and economically. In this period, no significant developments in the evolution of the *meishuguan* occurred.

In the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, the official art system had a centralized structure, where official institutions, i.e. *shiye danwei* work units, were organized into an administrative hierarchy and structured into various levels. All these units were non-profit, because they pursued the cultural mission and financially relied on the state, which appointed its officer directors to cover different management roles. Thus, the official art system was, from an internal organizational point of view, divided into levels with a director at the peak of the institutional hierarchy, and with the government and its officials appointing the directors. Above this hierarchy sat the Ministry of Culture, in which the official art institutions, including art galleries and museums, depended on. This centralization

was motivated by the need to control arts and culture, conceived in the socialist way, as instrumental to politics.

Deng Xiaoping's reform launched in 1978 had a very strong impact on this hierarchical structure and in the museum's development itself. In fact, the rapid economic growth of the 1980s provided more financial resources for state museums, and reforms started to change the nature of the *shiye danwei* that moved toward a partial financial autonomy (Zhang 2006, 300). The state reduced funding to the *danwei* which now must seek funding and sponsorships themselves; it inaugurated the process by which the institutional and the commercial functions of the *danwei* begin to clearly separate. By the end of the 1990s, the "cultural industries" came to life, and in 1998 the Ministry of Culture officially established the Culture Industry Bureau, which was in charge of the politics of the cultural market.

The birth of the cultural industries was one of the most important innovations in the political and cultural sphere of contemporary China, because culture (and art) was no longer a franchise of political ideology, but the cultural world become potentially multifaceted. Along with the rapid economic development, capitalist joint ventures and private companies developed so quickly as to put themselves in competition. Among the official intellectual's world, the awareness of this competition in the midst of continuous and extensive social and economic reform was in conflict with official views of culture and art, because the strategic role of culture (and not solely the economy) began to be underlined by competition in the contemporary world, in China and globally.

Following the abovementioned institutional reforms, different typologies of museums have been rising at national, provincial and municipal level, supported directly or indirectly by national and local governments. Indeed, since the early 1980s the development of the museum sector became a key element of the state policy agenda and the foundation of new museums was conceived as a "performance evaluation criteria of government officials", both nationally and locally (Lu 2014, 196). Therefore, I think it is important to highlight that one of the key aspects to consider in understanding the process of growth, which started in the 1980s and has not yet stopped, is the coeval development of state-owned museums and the rapid growth of private collections, as a result of the institutional transformations which gave life to cultural industries.

As Yang Chao, director of the Xi'an meishuguan-Xi'an Art Museum stated in a published interview, the two forces leading the growth of museums are the Chinese government and the development of the private sector (Zheng 2014, 30). The government pushed cultural institutions to assume more of their own financial responsibilities and to answer directly to the demands of the market; as a result, traditional exhibition venues (like public museums) started a renovation process. They were becoming more and more financially independent (or semi-independent) and needed to attract visitors' interest by promoting new kinds of programs and exhibitions to the public. As pointed out by Wu Hung, many public

art spaces traditionally sponsored by the state began to host experimental Chinese art or imported exhibitions of foreign Western art in the 1990s (Wu 2010, 328). This was a great shift in the history of exhibitions in China, which until the mid-1990s saw a sharp separation between official and unofficial art (Wang 2007; Wu 2010).

The National Art Museum of China in Beijing was a forerunner in this respect, by hosting the exhibition *1989 Zhongguo Xiandai Yishuzhan China Avant-Garde exhibition* curated by Gao Minglu. For the first time, the exhibition showed within an official context works from avant-garde artists, and was one of the seminal events in the historical development of contemporary Chinese art. In the early 1990s, exhibitions of experimental art were commonly held in private spaces, and the National Art Museum of China was an innovative place for exhibition at that time. Other national and municipal art museums or galleries were still not ready to directly support this kind of art. A change occurred a few years later, when some of the oldest venues started assigning space for contemporary art to complement their long-running exhibitions. For instance, the First Shanghai Biennale launched in 1996, that was held in the Shanghai Art Museum.

Following the economic development of the coast in the 1990s, state-owned art museums in the south-west regions also started to flourish. Thus, cities like Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen gradually became new cultural hubs, with a number of art museums funded in a short range of time. Some examples in Shanghai are the Liu Haisu Art Museum (opened in 1995) and the Zhu Qizhan Art Museum (opened in 1995) – two monographic museums dedicated to modern artists Liu Haisu and Zhu Qizhan – and the Duolun Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) (opened in 2003). As for Guangzhou we can mention the Guangdong Museum of Art (GDMOA) (opened in 1990) and the Guangzhou Museum of Art (opened in 1995), respectively focussing on modern art and photography, traditional and modern art. Finally, in Shenzhen we can list the Shenzhen Art Museum (in 1987 the former Shenzhen Exhibition Hall, founded in 1976, was renamed such), and the He Xiangning Art Museum (opened in 1997), collecting works by modern artist He Xiangning.

### *Private collections and “museum fever”*

While public museums and the official art system were gradually opening their doors to contemporary works of art, another important institutional change from the 1980s was destined to produce a deep impact on the museum system: the birth of private art museums. Until 1979 private collection of artworks was forbidden, because collecting art was the prerogative of state-owned museums, the only ones in existence. However, a taste for collections had a long history among Chinese amateur collectors, and some had continued to gather objects of minor importance and less artistic value. After 1979 this kind of activity spread rapidly, and many different private collections developed into private museums. Following

the aforementioned reforms, by the 1980s they opened to the public, thus sparking the birth of private museums.

As analysed by the scholar Song Xiangguang, in order to manage this incredible growth and legalize the new private collections, over the years a series of laws was announced by Chinese local and central government, which saw a gradual opening of private collections. In a short span of time we witnessed the “legalization” of private museums, and their recognition by the state (Song 2008, 40-48). In this respect, the museum that paved the way for all private art collections in these years was the Yan Huang Art Gallery (or Yan Huang Art Museum) in Beijing, initiated in 1986 by the artist Huang Zhou, and opened to the public in 1991. This was the first non-governmental art collection to be recognized by the government and to obtain a legal status. Since then, many private art collections followed the example and became public museums.

One important aspect which must not be neglected when analysing the evolution of the art infrastructure system in China is that around the 1990s, in concomitance with the gradual transformation of the official art system, contemporary Chinese art was a growing presence in the international art world. This initially led foreign collectors, and subsequently some Chinese private philanthropists, to collect artworks by emerging Chinese artists. The earliest, and probably the most famous example of a foreign collector, is the Swiss businessman and diplomat Uli Sigg, who since the 1980s had started to put together a vast selection of Chinese artworks. This is the collection that years later, in 2012, he donated to one of the biggest museums of contemporary Chinese art, the museum M+ in Hong Kong (Vigneron 2017). During the same period, the number of galleries selling contemporary Chinese artwork increased, laying foundations for a new art market that would arise in the years following. Some of these galleries were run by non-Chinese curators or owners, for instance, Red Gate Gallery in Beijing, founded in 1991 by Brian Wallace from Australia, and ShangART, in Shanghai, founded by Lorenz Helbling in 1996.

It is in this context of growth that the first contemporary Chinese art museums were born by the end of the 1990s, inaugurating what the Chinese press labelled as “museum fever”. The first ones were the Upriver Gallery in Chengdu, the Dongyu Museum of Art in Chengyang and the Taida Museum of Art in Tianjin, established all in 1998. Even if the history of the three museums is quite short, since they were forced to close after a few years due to bankruptcy, the establishment of the three was an important event because they, in addition to acquiring works, also had large temporary exhibition spaces available to contemporary artists. For example, the Shanghe exhibited artists which today are among the most quoted in the art market, such as Zhang Xiaogang, Zhou Chunya, Fang Lijun and Ye Yongqing.

The second wave of the “fever” took place after the real estate surplus during the years 2001-2004, as highlighted during a personal interview with Wang Nanming, critic, curator and former director of the Himalayas Museum in Shanghai. In those years, big buildings remained unsold and some real estate companies decided to

dedicate those spaces to exhibiting contemporary art. The Today Art Museum in Beijing and the Himalayas Art Museum in Shanghai (formerly the Zendai Museum), for example, were established respectively by two big real estate companies, Anteo Corporation and Zendai Group, respectively, in 2002 and 2005 (Wang 2012). It is worth noting that there is a precise reason why real estate companies are involved in the foundation of new museums, because, as pointed out by Ren Xuefei and Sun Meng, real estate companies, cultural industries and land politics have been strictly connected to the reshaping of urban spaces since the end of the 1990s (Ren and Sun 2012, 508).

The third wave of museum fever can be collocated after 2008 and is characterized by the spread of a new kind of art museum – the *minyong*. The word *minyong* derives from economics, and refers to a new kind of enterprise, which started to spread across China after 2002. To simplify, it can be defined as a public-private partnership in public utilities. This approach of mixing public and private has started to disseminate and extend to other fields, including cultural institutions and naturally, museums were not an exception. Indeed, in 2008, alongside an intense influx of foreign capital for the Olympic games, the museum sector developed more rapidly, reaching its “Golden Age”; *minyong* and private museums saw in this period a booming evolution. Some examples of *minyong*-type museums born around 2008 are Shanghai Yi Art Museum (opened in 2007), Shanghai Rockbund Art Museum (opened in 2010), Beijing Sishang Art Museum (opened in 2010) and Shanghai Minsheng Xiandai Art Museum (opened in 2010). Today, the *minyong* museum, with a mix of state and private management, is the most widespread kind of art museum in China.

These museums generally carry out hybrid activities, halfway between commercial art and non-profit. Being financially independent and having the ability to obtain financing within the private sector, cultural institutions of this type are becoming cultural industries, in which it is difficult to distinguish the commercial purpose from the cultural mission. The nature of non-profit institutions that marked the *shiye danwei* before institutional reforms is greatly weakened by these changes. This situation leads to the observation, already shared by many scholars, that ultimately, many of these new museums, rather than representing the preservation and dissemination of culture, often become a status symbol for the company or private investor which founded them, and an economic and cultural catalyst for local governments. Indeed, if at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the government still seems to be prudent in getting involved with contemporary art, around the mid-2000s both the rise of state-owned and private art museums can be seen as the result of a precise cultural strategy, as will be described later in this article.



*The convergence of art museums and cultural policies*

The encounter between contemporary art and the museum is a rather curious one, and an analysis of the development of the art museum in China would be unthinkable without taking into account the meeting of contemporary art with traditional institutions, which took place around 2000. The works and the artists which until now were excluded from official circuits suddenly began to conquer space in the public culture, and were included in the calendars of major museums, such as the Shanghai Museum of Art. It is a process still working today, where on the one hand, old institutions are renewed and looking for a new place in the contemporary art system, and on the other new institutions are emerging. Museums of contemporary art or the Biennale projects are such examples.

Some of the oldest state-run art museums mentioned above started to open their doors to contemporary artworks in the early 2000s, and in two distinct ways: by acquiring classic works of contemporary art, as will be described later, but more frequently hosting regular, great exhibition projects. As a result, biennales started to flourish in many state-owned *meishuguan*. Great exhibitions organized in that period include the Beijing International Art Biennale, held from 2003 at NAMOC, the Shanghai Biennale held from 2000 at Shanghai Art Museum<sup>1</sup> and the Guangzhou Triennial, held from 2002 at GDMOA. The new openness toward contemporary art can be interpreted as a strategy in response to searching for new opportunities to stay competitive and raising visitors' interest. In a country like China, where public attendance at museums is on average very low, biennales usually attract large audiences, and also stimulate other sectors, like tourism.

As for the artistic contents of these biennale projects, they usually do not closely investigate the controversial debate occurring in contemporary art, but rather function as retrospectives of recent works of art, or surveys on works of art, which have already become classics, or on official orthodox art, as in the abovementioned Beijing Biennale of 2003 (De Nigris 2014, 69-70). The first Guangzhou Triennial, titled *Reinterpretation: A Decade of Experimental Chinese Art*, held in 2003, aimed at creating an historic review as well as an academic interpretation of experimental Chinese art produced since the 1990s. It mainly exhibited works of the experimental art produced in China between 1990 and 2000. This characteristic of being a retrospective of art rather than an exploration of new forms of art seems to be in contrast with the meaning of the biennale, whose role in the contemporary global art world has been to exhibit new trends and to show emerging artists, engaged in a more socially oriented debate. This apparent openness to contemporary art demonstrated by state-owned art museums thus can be interpreted as a strategy

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<sup>1</sup> As already mentioned in this text, the first edition of the Biennale was held in 1996, but here I consider the third Shanghai Biennale of 2000 as a turning point in the evolution of the Chinese art infrastructure. See De Nigris 2016, 60-63.

for cultural competitiveness, adopted in order to involve the visitor in more attractive art projects and to endow Chinese cities with modern touristic appeal.

As for the permanent collection, it must be considered the “Achilles heel” of the Chinese art museum system, and the most evident problem today, is to build a specific thematic collection and research it. According to the interviews and observations made during my field research, the majority of the above-mentioned museums generally are keener to collect and exhibit works that have become classics or that belong to orthodox art. With the exception of the Shanghai Contemporary Art Museum or Power Station of Art (PSA) in Shanghai, none of the state-owned art museums of China are totally dedicated to collecting contemporary art. Generally, the permanent collection of the biggest art galleries focuses on modern and traditional art. Most of the works date from the 20th century to the 1980s or early 1990s (rarely), including great masters of traditional ink painting, calligraphy, sculpture, ceramics, folk art, and modern variations on traditional Chinese painting.

The permanent collection of the National Art Museum of China, for example, houses more than 100,000 works representative of various periods of Chinese art history, ranging from the end of the 19th century to the present day. The contemporary art collection includes just a few works, for example Luo Zongli’s oil painting *Father* (1980). The Shenzhen Art Museum also has a range of works in the collection – almost 4,000 – including classics of the 20th century, some contemporary Chinese art collections, and a section dedicated to Shenzhen local art. The contemporary section focusses on works by the most esteemed contemporary Chinese artists such as Zhang Xiaogang, Fang Lijun, and Wang Guangyi, among others. The permanent collection of the Guangdong Museum of Art also includes more traditional artistic expressions, and in this case, contemporary artworks function as a complement to the main collection; among them are Zhang Dali’s acrylic painting *AK47(P10)* (2009) and Wang Qingsong’s *Follow you* (2013). As for the Shanghai Art Museum collection, there are, again, works by Zhang Xiaogang and Fang Lijun, along with Gu Wenda and Liu Ye.

When it comes to a private art museum’s permanent collection, if one exists, it is generally built according to the personal tastes of the collector, established by domestic business interests, or funded by big corporations investing in art. The Long Museum collection, which has made many acquisitions at international and national art auctions since the 1990s, has put together a wide collection, including works by internationally renowned artists such as Qiu Zhijie, Huang Yongping, and Xu Bing. But Liu Yiqian and his wife Wang Wei’s collection doesn’t seem to be specifically centred on one direction, since it ranges from antiquities, works of art from revolutionary propaganda, as well as contemporary Chinese art. The Long Museum, established in 2012, is “showcasing a meticulously selected version of élite and sovereign Chinese art history” (Chun 2014: 22) and its mission is to acquire and repatriate major historical and contemporary works of art. A mission which



sounds particularly nationalistic, perfectly aligned with the government cultural emphasis on patriotism (Yin 2017: 107). On this issue of re-appropriation, there is another interesting case to note: the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) in Beijing. The art institution founded in 2007 by Guy and Miriam Ullens in the heart of 798 Factory, was sold in 2017 to a group of Chinese investors, among them one of the main media entrepreneurs in China, Jason Nanchu Jiang. The journal *The Art Newspaper* recently announced: “The UCCA will close for renovation and expansion. The museum will reopen in summer 2018 with a Xu Bing exhibition” (Movius 2017).

There is another interesting phenomenon which can testify the recent interest in contemporary art within the official cultural policy: some existing state museums expanded their space or moved from one location to another, in order to dedicate more space to exhibiting art. This is very coherent with the policy of many ambitious local governments that have been making huge efforts to appear as the new patrons of contemporary artistic practice, thus trying to transform large Chinese cities into cultural hubs, comparable to Paris or London.

The aforementioned National Art Museum of China (NAMOC) for instance has planned an expansion of its structure, launching an international call for the creation of a new exhibition area, located at the Olympic Village in Beijing, close to the Beijing National Stadium (best known as Bird’s Nest). According to Fan Di’an, former director of the museum, the government approved a project of 80,000 square meters, which in July 2013 was awarded to French architect Jean Nouvel (Gill 2008). The museum will house part of the modern and contemporary collection of NAMOC and intends to develop cooperation with international partners.

In December 2008 in Sichuan province it inaugurated another impressive museum complex dedicated to the most representative Chinese living artists: Zhang Xiaogang, Wang Guangyi, Fang Lijun, Yue Minjun, Zhou Chunya, He Duoling, Zhang Peili Wu and Shanzhuan. These artists have not had the opportunity to exhibit their work for years, but now the government of Sichuan province decided to dedicate personal museums in Wangpoyan, a town in the western part of the province. The project was developed from an idea by art historian Lü Peng, and provides a unique complex shaped like an oblong ball, with curved walls that resemble the walls of a river gorge.

The common denominator in these cases can be identified by a new national cultural strategy that has seen the government committed to the use of contemporary art and museums in the will to present – at home and abroad – the uniqueness and greatness of Chinese culture. The combination of the two would seem to be a desire to endow the Chinese city as modern and easily identifiable in the global context of institutions, which can create consensus within the nation. It is a strategy very similar to that adopted, for example, in the shaping of Beijing artistic urbanization, specifically the case of 798 Factory. Born as a spontaneous art district where artists moved to in the late 1990s, by around 2005 it was turned

into an official art district by the local Chinese government, thus becoming a place able to attract tourism – national and international – and to intensively promote shopping and entertainment.

The case of the aforementioned Power Station of Art (PSA) may well represent this political and cultural operation. Housed in an industrial building and home to Expo Shanghai 2010, the museum is situated on the east bank of the Huangpu River, just four kilometres from Republic Square, the commercial and political heart of the city. The PSA is the first state museum of contemporary art in mainland China and has an exhibition area of 150,000 square meters. In August 2011 the ambitious local government decided to convert the pavilion into a museum and destined it to become the new home for the Shanghai Biennale – the historical biennale changed location after the previous eight editions were held at the Shanghai Art Museum. The change of venue is justifiable given the great success of the previous editions of large scale exhibitions, registering a high number of visitors, both Chinese and foreign. The biennale surely provides visibility to the city, also stimulating the tourism sector. The marketing component is also very strong; it is a matter of expressing the cultural and economic potential of a city or even a nation.

These new museums are increasingly taking the form of cultural catalysts, because they are designed as open and dynamic structures, and places of mass culture, where in addition to the display of works of art, they can offer many other appealing aspects: libraries, theatres, cinemas, cafes, shops and restaurants. This marks the birth of what the architect Stefania Suma called “museums of hyper-consumerism” or “those museums that, beyond recalling art people with their exceptional architecture with a strong iconic charge, it also attracts them by inserting a series of side events that [...] stand as consumerism-dedicated places, made even more seductive by their architectural configuration” (Purini, Ciorra, Suma 2008, 95).

In this respect, the rise of many private organizations could also be seen as instrumental to politics, and pertinent to the national cultural agenda which aims to endow modern cities with an accurate selection of contemporary artworks and cultural entertainment. Shanghai again represents the most striking example, with the number of new museums, state-owned or private, having more than doubled from 2008 to 2013 (Kiowski 2017), a growth which intensified after Expo Shanghai 2010 (Zennaro 2017: 65-66). The city offers a wide variety of contemporary art museums, and in addition to the abovementioned PSA, we can cite New China Art Museum, Himalayas, K11, Rockbund, and Yuz Museum, among others. In particular, the local government has directly supported the development of the West Bund Cultural Corridor, by approaching “Liu Yiqian, Wang Wei and Budi Tek and invited them to open their museums on the West Bund” (Kiowski 2017, 54) – the Long Museum (with its two branches) and the Yuz Museum. It is an exorbitant art supply that the state alone would not be able to offer, in terms of costs, above all. This would respond to the government mandate to create cultural space in

urban areas, especially visual art related. This is an operation, as stated by Karen Smith, which starts by building a physical space with appealing architecture, without any interest in the cultural aspect or in what the building is going to host (Smith 2017: 5).

### *Final consideration*

In recent decades, the museum sector in China has been experiencing an unprecedented growth phase, and the phenomenon follows an ongoing process of the renewal of art and museum systems. This renewal has seen the emergence of new institutions and development of old ones. One could interpret the current museum boom as driven by two major forces – the state and the private sector – two realities that often overlap and work in unison, making the museum system a very complex one.

The problem with the quality of art and projects exhibited in these museums is a very central topic; this process of growth contrasts sharply with what should be the cultural institution's mission, which is to preserve the past and the present for the future generations. With new places of art consumption, you are tying to the idea of consumption, and the features that it implies: momentary, ephemeral, wear and elimination. From this picture a strong contradiction between boom and crisis emerges: the construction boom of museums and crises of their meaning. The frenzy in recent years has brought collectors, entrepreneurs, real estate companies and big corporations, but also the government to build new art museums. But the problem is, what are they going to host these places? This remains a central question, which pertains to the sustainability and the cultural commitment of these art institutions.

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GIULIA FALATO

THE INFLUENCE OF ZHU XI ON ALFONSO VAGNONE'S  
*TONGYOU JIAOYU*

In 1632 a member of the Shanxi gentry, Han Lin 韩霖 (1596?-1649), composed the preface to the first treatise that introduced European Renaissance pedagogy into late Ming China: Alfonso Vagnone S.J.'s (1568-1640) *Tongyou Jiaoyu* 童幼教育 [On the Education of Children] (hereinafter referred to as *TYJY*). The book, completed before 1630,<sup>1</sup> was the result of 17 years' work, along with the Italian Jesuit's ability to blend precepts from European classical and Renaissance education with Chinese Confucian (and Neo-Confucian) moral philosophy. In his preface, Han Lin not only identified the ethical value of Vagnone's treatise,<sup>2</sup> but was also the first to compare the Jesuit's words to those of the eminent Neo-Confucian thinker Zhu Xi:<sup>3</sup>

The master's [Vagnone] words are similar to Huiweng's [Zhu Xi] writing, sharing his beautiful rhetoric with the translator and seeking the principles which are hidden in the past, not only as an example for the youngsters, but also for the officials of foresight. However, the Westerners' main purpose is to respect and fear Lord of Heaven, which is a step further from Huiweng's books on etiquette [self-reverence] (Vagnone 1996, 287).

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<sup>1</sup> The key dates of the making of *TYJY* are still the subject of ongoing debate. However, a textual analysis proves that the manuscript was completed and handed over to the censors before 1630, considering that in that year one of the reviewers (Johann Schreck S.J.) passed away. For a detailed study on the structure and sources of *TYJY* see Meynard 2014, 121-124. As for the Jesuit's biography, a recent and well-documented account was provided by Jin 2015.

<sup>2</sup> "This is not just a book about children, but it also includes [precepts of] self-cultivation, regulating the family, administrating the country and bringing peace to the world". Vagnone 1996, 287.

<sup>3</sup> Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), courtesy name Zhu Huiweng 朱晦翁, is one of the most representative thinkers of the Neo-Confucian philosophy of the Song dynasty (960-1279) and leading figure of the School of Principle (Lixue 理学). For an overview on his life and thoughts, see Wing Tsit Chan 1989 and Keenan 2011.

*The Jesuits and Neo-Confucianism: a merely conflictual relationship?*

The Jesuits' first encounter with Zhu Xi came at a very early stage of their education in Chinese: it was through Zhang Juzheng's 張居正 (1525-1582) edition of Zhu's *Sishu Jizhu* 四書集註 [Collected Commentaries on the Four Books] that they approached the study of the Confucian *Four Books*, which was the first step of their *iter studiorum*.<sup>4</sup> Chinese classics played a key role in the linguistic and cultural formation of the Jesuits, and proved to be relevant also for their literary production. The Confucian philosophy, which they admired for its moral precepts and value, not only provided them with the main channel of understanding and communicating with the literati, but also with a functional vocabulary to adapt Western philosophical and religious concepts to the Chinese cultural milieu.

Although Zhu Xi's *Commentaries* offered the Jesuits the first interpretation of Confucian thought, as their linguistic competence and cultural involvement became deeper, they began developing a Christian understanding of the Chinese classics, and urged a return to the direct interpretation of Confucian sources (Rule 1986, 29).

From an epistemological standpoint, Ricci and his confrères refused Zhu Xi's metaphysical notions, accepting only his precepts on self-cultivation.<sup>5</sup> The debate revolved around the interpretation of Neo-Confucian key concepts, *li* 理 "principle" and *xing* 性 "human nature", which Ricci, in his *Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實義 [The True Meaning of Lord of Heaven] (1607), placed in the Aristotelian-Thomistic categories of substance and accident, criticizing Zhu Xi for considering *li* 理 part of *xing* 性 (Ching 2000, 195). Another point of discordance between Neo-Confucian and Christian doctrines concerned the idea of *Taiji* 太極 [Great Ultimate]. Zhu Xi considered it the source and origin of all beings and goodness, "the transcendent which is also immanent in the universe and in every human and thing" (Ching 2000, 285). Matteo Ricci instead confuted this point in his *Tianzhu shiyi*, refusing the idea of the "Great Ultimate as the origin of all things" (Ricci 1607, 98). Further allegations of Neo-Confucianism being a *wushen lun* 無神論 (lit. no-God doctrine) were made by Niccolò Longobardo S.J. (1565-1654), who considered the *Commentaries* proof of the atheist and agnostic nature of modern China "with no understanding of spirit as separated from the matter" (Ching 2000, 195).

Despite these opinions, Zhu Xi's influence on the social and cultural system of 17<sup>th</sup> century China was still predominant and his precepts were an essential mean of communication between the Jesuits and late Ming officials. From an educational

<sup>4</sup> According to Rule 1986, 10-11, the standard procedure for the missionaries' education in the Chinese language was to start with basic language primers, and then to move on to the study of the *Four Books* (the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the *Doctrine of Mean* and the *Great Learning*), then the classics and finally the dynastic histories. See also Meynard 2015, 19.

<sup>5</sup> A key concept in Zhu Xi's idea of education, self-cultivation was aimed at people's moral betterment and could only be achieved through "learning for one's own sake" (*wei ren zhi xue* 為人之學). See Menegon 1993, 5.



perspective, the *shuyuan* 書院,<sup>6</sup> the private academies whose establishment Zhu had so favoured during his years as a magistrate during the Song dynasty, were flourishing, while his teaching, based on moral education and on emphasizing literary skills, was still at the core of Ming pedagogy. The curriculum Zhu Xi developed for these institutions still regulated the main stages of the education, including the Jesuits',<sup>7</sup> while his *Bailu dong shuyuan xuegui* 白鹿洞書院學規 [Articles of learning for the White Deer Grotto Academy] (c. 1180) were used as a set of rules for private academies.<sup>8</sup> Such articles, written in simple language to facilitate their memorization, served as a summary of Zhu Xi's approach to education, which was based on the emulation of the ancient sages' deeds and opposed contemporary scholars' trend of devoting themselves to "recording and memorizing ornamental phrases so as to fish for fame and obtain profit and office" (Chaffee 1985, 56). At the core of Neo-Confucian education was in fact the belief that the righteous Way of the ancient sages (*Shengdao* 聖道) had been lost after the fall of the Han, and needed to be restored through a strict educational path which started within the family and culminated in the *shuyuan* 書院. It is not surprising that the edifying example of virtuous sages of the past was seen by Vagnone and his confrères as a functional *trait d'union* between Chinese and European pedagogical traditions.

### *Comparing Xiaoxue 小學 and TYJY: linguistic and pedagogical considerations*

Like Vagnone, Zhu Xi also distinguished himself as an expert in the education of children and as a prolific writer on the subject.<sup>9</sup> His most representative work in the field was *Xiaoxue* 小學 [Elementary Learning] (c. 1187),<sup>10</sup> a collection of quotations from the *Four Books and Five Classics* (*Sishu wujing* 四書五經). Such text was one of

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed dissertation on the *Shuyuan* 書院 development and educational role in Song-Ming dynasties see Ren 2014, 173 and Chaffee 1985, 48.

<sup>7</sup> The order of study proposed by Zhu Xi started with the understanding of the Four Books; at the second stage was the study of the Five Classics and finally the histories, including the *Mirror for Aid in Government*, by Sima Guang, on which he composed a commentary. This very order of education was consistent with the Jesuits' *iter studiorum* of the Chinese language and classics (Menegon 1993, 3-5).

<sup>8</sup> The academy was restored and reopened by Zhu Xi in 1180, to serve as a prototype for the system of institutions he was planning to establish around the country. The articles regulated the main steps of Zhu Xi's learning process – study extensively, inquire accurately, think carefully, sift clearly, practice earnestly – along with indicating scholars' aim: clarify the Way, do not calculate the honors (Ren 2014, 174).

<sup>9</sup> Zhu's great concern for children pedagogy is highlighted in Wing Tsit Chan's study; only in the year 1186 did he compose two works addressed to them: *Study of the Book of Changes for Beginners* and *Corrections of Misprints in the Classic of Filial Piety* (Wing 1989, 385).

<sup>10</sup> For an extensive analysis of the making and the content of this work, see De Bary and Chaffee 1989, Wing 1989, and Keenan 2011.



the primers of the elementary education<sup>11</sup> until the school system reform of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was aimed at developing the five cardinal human relationships (*wulun* 五倫), alongside providing a model for proper etiquette and moral conduct. The book was divided into two parts: “Nei” 內 [Internal], which recorded quotations and passages from “canonical authorities” of the classical tradition. This comprised the following chapters: “1. Establishment of the education” (“Li Jiao” 立教); “2. Explanation of the “Five Cardinal Human Relationships” ” (“Ming Lun” 明倫); “3. Self-reverence” (“Jing Shen” 敬身); “4. Examining the past” (“Ji Gu” 稽古).

As for the second section, “Wai” 外 [External] it aimed at demonstrating the practical application of precepts from the inner section to daily life (De Bary and Chaffee 1989, 238) and included: “5. Fair words” (“Jia Yan” 嘉言) and “6. Virtuous deeds” (“Shan Xing” 善行).<sup>12</sup> A study on the correspondence between Zhu Xi and his fellow scholar and pedagogue Liu Qingzhi 刘清之 (1139 – 1195), who contributed to the compilation of *Xiaoxue*, highlighted that these two chapters were added to the second draft of the work, upon Zhu’s specific request (Wing 1989, 385).

From a structural standpoint, *TYJY* recalled instead the main classical and Renaissance pedagogic treatises, particularly the pseudo-Plutarchian *Peri Paidon Agoges* [On the Education of Children], translated and published by Guarino da Verona in 1411, and Juan De Torres’ *Philosophia moral de Principes* [Moral Philosophy of Princes] (Burgos 1596).<sup>13</sup> Both Zhu Xi and Vagnone dealt with theoretical and practical aspects related to the education of children from two perspectives (*jiao* 教 – *xue* 學), including precepts that strictly concerned the daily etiquette like eating, sleeping, dressing etc.

A comparative analysis on the two pedagogical works highlighted some interesting similarities, especially concerning the beginning and the methodology of the education. Vagnone and Zhu Xi correctly understood that the process of raising a child had to follow key stages, and the role played by the paternal figure and teachers was essential to moulding the youngsters’ natural disposition (*xingzhi* 性質).

As described in the first chapter of *Xiaoxue*, “Li Jiao”, and that of *TYJY*, “Jiaoyu zhi yuan” 教育之原 [The origin of education], such a process started with prenatal education, which Zhu Xi included in the section “Tai Jiao” 胎教. It is noteworthy that, while Vagnone and Renaissance pedagogy stressed the importance of the

<sup>11</sup> The preface to the 1886 edition states that “in the past, children approached elementary learning at the age of eight [...]”. This was the first stage of an education process (either private or scholastic) that was completed by the study of *Daxue* 大學 [Great Learning], at the age of 15. According to Chan, Zhu Xi believed that a text similar to *Xiaoxue* did in fact exist in the past, as an introduction to the Great Learning, and that it was probably lost or destroyed (Wing 1989, 384).

<sup>12</sup> The present paper is based on Zhu Xi 1886. All passages are translated by the author.

<sup>13</sup> A detailed dissertation concerning various sources and the complex structure of Vagnone’s treatise would divert from this paper’s subject. However, such matters were unraveled by a recent study by Meynard 2014, 121-124.

choice of a righteous spouse as a vehicle to transmit virtues to the offspring”,<sup>14</sup> Neo-Confucian prenatal education was mostly concerned with appropriate behaviour pregnant women were supposed to maintain in order to preserve the child’s health.<sup>15</sup> As for women’s contribution in nursing and raising the child, both authors agree that their influence on the early stages of the baby’s life was particularly relevant. Therefore, when European families hired a wet nurse, a careful selection was mandatory. The same applied to traditional Chinese families that entrusted children to the care of a concubine, as recorded in the *Xiaoxue*.<sup>16</sup>

In the second part of both works the authors directly address the pupils, portraying them as the main agents of the education process. Among the set of virtues children were urged to cultivate, Zhu Xi’s pedagogy valued the five cardinal human relationships (*wulun* 五倫) described by Mencius, which regulated human interactions and differentiated men from beasts.<sup>17</sup> Christian etiquette also stressed the concept of relationships, in particular with God through the *pietas Dei* (which Vagnone translated with an expression borrowed from Neo-Confucian vocabulary, *Jingwei Tianzhu* 敬畏天主), and with parents, who needed to be regarded with filial reverence (*xiaojing* 孝敬).<sup>18</sup> These two virtues were considered the foundation of Christian education, and were presented as an integration of the Neo-Confucian precept of self-reverence, *jingshen* 敬身, as suggested in Han Lin’s preface.

From a methodological standpoint, both Zhu Xi and Vagnone emphasized the role of practice over words in the learning process, considering a reticent teacher the most valid example.<sup>19</sup> The use of quotes and anecdotes from the past was a

<sup>14</sup> “[...] Because children are related by blood to the mother and the father, [hence] the parents’ qualities and faults, righteousness and evils are all transmitted to the seeds they leave behind. Therefore, if wise people want to avoid their offspring becoming unworthy, they need to pay attention during the early stage of their marriage”. Vagnone 1996, 248.

<sup>15</sup> “[...] In the past, pregnant women did not sleep on one side, did not sit on the edge, stood upright, did not eat unusual food [...]. In this way, they gave birth to a child with a proper appearance, who could become outstanding”. Zhu 1886, volume 1, folio 23.

<sup>16</sup> Zhu Xi reported that the concubines who were chosen to raise the child, “need[ed] to be full of love, of a gentle and respectful temperament, careful and reticent, in order to act as teachers [...]”, see Zhu 1886, volume 1, folio 24.

<sup>17</sup> Zhu 1886, volume 1, folio 30.

<sup>18</sup> The term embodies the meaning of “showing filial piety [to parents] and respect [to the elders]” (*xiao shun fumu, zunjing qinzhang* 孝顺父母, 尊敬亲长). Vagnone’s lexical choice served to convey the precept of one of the Ten Commandments (translated as *Shitiao mu* 十條目): “Honor your father and your mother”.

<sup>19</sup> The emphasis on silence as a pedagogical mean was a feature that connected European and Confucian traditions alike. In the *Lunyu*, 17/19, the Master himself said: “Zi yu wuyan” 予欲無言 “from now on, I no longer wish to speak”, to stress the importance of virtuous deeds on mere preaching (Legge 1969, 326). Vagnone also touched upon this matter in many passages of his book, making use of anecdotes from Greek and Renaissance pedagogy. “Someone asked a wise man: ‘What’s a good teacher like?’ The answer was: ‘A teacher that doesn’t speak much’. He asked the reason for this: ‘The words he uses, the emptier their meaning’. Vagnone 1996, 280. As for Zhu Xi, he extensively dealt with the pedagogic role of silence in his *Tongmeng xu zhi* 童蒙須知

common feature in Song-Ming primers for elementary education, and served the double purpose of developing the children's language skills while simultaneously fostering the virtue of etiquette, or *li* 禮 (Xiong 2008, 21). Vagnone's rhetorical strategy was instead consistent with Aristotle's precept of using historical examples as a mean of logic persuasion. Metaphors on nature (mostly about animals and agriculture), frequent rhetorical expedients in both Medieval and Renaissance literature, are also widely used in the Jesuit's humanistic works, alongside reference to classical fables, such as Aesop's tales. Such a stylistic feature is instead almost totally missing from Zhu Xi's rhetoric, who evidently did not consider metaphors on animals authoritative examples of virtue.

The Jesuits' strategy of adapting Confucian (and Neo-Confucian) vocabulary to translate concepts of European origin is the subject of many academic studies.<sup>20</sup> Vagnone made no exception in adopting this expedient and, following in the footsteps of his eminent predecessors, he attached a different meaning to already existing terms, as in the case of the concept *jingwei* 敬畏. Moreover, most key concepts from Neo-Confucianism were used to indicate branches of the European *scientia*. For instance, in chapter "Xixue" 西學 [Western learning], Vagnone explained the aim of 'philosophy' as *gewuqiongli zhi xue* 格物窮理之學 (literally: the study of the investigation of things and fathoming of principles; Vagnone 1996, 377), which is also the purpose of Neo-Confucian self-cultivation. A further consideration concerns the use of *li* 理 "principle" and *xing* 性 "human nature" to indicate different branches of ancient philosophy. Most Jesuit authors adopted the term *lixue* 理學, which in Chinese is used to indicate "Neo-Confucianism", as one of the many translations of the European notion of "philosophy", whereas their interpretation of *xingxue* 性學 appears more complex. According to Dong's study, *xingxue* 性學, as the subject that investigated the essence (*benzhi* 本质) of men and things, was associated by most late Ming Jesuits with the European branch of physics, while for Chinese literati it was intended as the "study of the phenomena of nature" (*gewu* 格物; Dong 2008, 262). As indicated in the *Ratio Studiorum* plan, physics featured as part of the course of philosophy (Farrell 1970, 3-4), which in Jesuit texts was frequently indicated as *gewu qiongli zhi xue* 格物窮理之學, hence creating a degree of semantic overlap in the translation of *xingxue* 性學.

Interestingly in *TYJY* the term bears both meanings: it is in fact associated with the Indian sect of the Brahmins (Vagnone 1996, 346), with Epicurus (Vagnone 1996, 300) and Aristotle (Vagnone 1996, 403). If, in the case of the last two thinkers, the use of the term 'physics' is suitable, given their extensive studies on the subject, Brahmanism seems to be more concerned with religious and metaphysical matters, which suggests that Vagnone's translation choice intended to indicate "natural philosophy". However, what these three doctrines had in common was the

[Mandatory knowledge for the education of children]. See Xiong 2008, 21.

<sup>20</sup> The present research is based on Masini 1993 and Luk 1997.

lack of God's reason (the *ratio*, 理), which might suggest a willful use in opposition with Socrates' Rationalism *lixue* 理學 and Aquinas' Scholasticism, or *shixue* 實學.

### Conclusions

The impulse that Song China gave to the field of pedagogy is historically confirmed by the increasing diffusion of teaching materials for children (*tongmeng jiaocai* 童蒙教材) and pedagogical treatises (*ertong jiaoyu lunzhu* 儿童教育论著), which provided theoretical and practical precepts on how to foster the youngsters' moral propriety. These works, like most literary publications, were available at low cost, thanks to the enormous presence of printing factories in the main areas of the country. According to Menegon's research, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the publication of pedagogic materials reached its peak, thanks to the blossoming of firms devoted to printing works such as arithmetic guides, character books, illustrated reading primers, orthodox primers, popular encyclopaedias, and moral books, etc. (Menegon 1993, 3).

The education of children held a relevant position among the missionary goals of the Society of Jesus. Alfonso Vagnone's attempt to introduce European pedagogy to the late-Ming literati confirms this commitment to this goal, while hinting at a broader project of creating a series of textbooks that could provide an alternative to the existing education system. A similar experiment was already in place at St. Paul's College in Macau, where in 1565 the Jesuits had established an elementary school. It was here that Vagnone spent his six years in exile, working on most of his literary endeavours.<sup>21</sup> Despite a lack of specific proof from primary sources, it is not unreasonable to deduce that Song-Ming primers for the education of children (particularly the highly popular *Xiaoxue*) were included in the library collection.

This preliminary analysis of *TYJY* and *Xiaoxue* highlighted some interesting similarities, such as the selection and order of topics, and the use of some semantic loans that connected Renaissance pedagogy to the Neo-Confucian concept of self-cultivation. However, the consistent difference in the structure of the works – one in the form of a collection of quotations, the other recalling the most notable pedagogic treatises of the Renaissance – suggests that they were meant to fulfil a different goal.

One of the Jesuits' key strategies in their writing was to bring out the most relevant similarities between the Chinese and European traditions while avoiding points of fracture. As Zhu Xi had demonstrated, pedagogical treatises appeared to be the perfect tools to shape young minds while reaching out to the older generations.

<sup>21</sup> As recorded by Pfister during his exile in Macau, between 1618 and 1624, Vagnone taught theology, philosophy and Chinese language at the Jesuit St. Paul's College, and started writing most of his works in Chinese, among which was *TYJY* (Pfister 1976, 98).

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SIMONA GALLO

TRANSLATING THE SELF: GAO XINGJIAN'S *BALLADE NOCTURNE*  
AND *YEJIAN XINGGE*

1. *The author*

Born in China, French citizen since 1998, Gao Xingjian 高行健 (Ganzhou, 1940) is one of those authors who experienced exile and decided to live in the “extraterritoriality” (Steiner 2002). Nonetheless, the confrontation with another cultural and linguistic code, which began early in China, resulted in the process of “hybridization” (Bhabha 2003, 58), and does not imply the eradication of the inherent heritage (Todorov 1997, 12). This is demonstrated by his rich and manifold literary oeuvre, marked by transculturality (Coulter 2014; Quah 2004).

With reference to Gao's bilingualism, the author holds his two languages in a binary relationship. It should be underlined that the fact of being an immigrant, and not a colonized subject, opened new path for the relationship with his own language and with the language of the Other (Bouvier-Laffitte 2013; Silvester and Thouroud 2012). Chinese still represents the major language in literary writings, composed by novels, short stories, poems, plays, and essays. As for the theatrical writings, it is most relevant that there are presently five plays, among thirteen, that Gao Xingjian directly wrote in French and later self-translated into Chinese (Conceison 2009), so that he can be considered – according to Rainer Grutman's categories – an “occasional self-translator” (Grutman 2013, 66). In this connection, Gao Xingjian himself disclosed his point of view:

I can write in both languages, especially the theatrical writings. I recently wrote five plays in French. But if I must rewrite them in Chinese I rewrite from the beginning, I do not translate. [...] Even if I am the author I feel confined, because the translation itself sets some limits, there is not such freedom. But since I am the author, I gift myself that freedom.

(Gallo 2018)

Therefore, the author prefers to describe the self-translation as an act of re-creation, distancing himself from “the myth of authenticity” (Eoyang 1993, 20), that conceive any further elaboration of a text as the result of imitation. To Gao

Xingjian, every version is original, a written expression as re-contextualization: musicality, flavor, and meaning are to be transposed in every new creation (Gao 2014).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of self-translation appears problematic and still under discussion among scholars,<sup>1</sup> as a clear-cut and unique definition of the concept has still not been provided (Cordingley 2013). Nonetheless, a fundamental topic of the discussion in the field is whether self-translation is to be considered as re-writing (Eco 2014) or as translation (Tanqueiro 2009). Along with Helena Tanqueiro, self-translation *is* translation, and consequently it must be regarded as a legitimate object of study in Translation Studies. In her words:

L'autotraduction est traduction, et en tant que telle, elle doit être objet d'étude de la théorie de la traduction littéraire. [...] et [...] l'autotraducteur cumule les deux rôles, celui d'auteur et celui de traducteur.

(Tanqueiro 2009, 108)

She therefore brings new light in the debate and on the old dichotomy the creative author and the imitative translator. In addition to that, she – on behalf of the French research group AUTOTRAD – suggests that self-translation, just as any other translation, entails the presence of a bilingual and bicultural author, as well as a re-definition of the collaborative strategy between author-public, since there is a new public (Tanqueiro 2009, 108).

With reference to the material result of self-translation, the idea of the absence of an original version and the existence of two complementary versions seems to represent another solid common ground (Tanqueiro 2009, 108). On this subject, another preliminary consideration is needed. Assuming that, as Grutman argues, languages are symbolical representations charged with values and traces of a specific tradition (Grutman 2005, 7), we would perceive Gao's choice of the language as an act of conscious affirmation, with cultural implications. To this respect, Coulter suggests that Gao's use of language:

is not arbitrary as it reveals a shift not only from his native language to an adopted one, but also it suggests a shift in cultural awareness and perspective.

(Coulter 2007, 85)

<sup>1</sup> Without entering into the merits of the matter, there are scholars considering self-translation properly as a translation. On the other side, and Susan Bassnett, for instance, advocate the idea of self-translation as the process and the result of rewriting, in accordance to the auctorial freedom.



The preliminary hypothesis of this paper is that Gao Xingjian's self-translation stands as a dialogue with his essentially twofold public, inside and outside the Sinophone world (Shih 2004; Shih 2011; Shih, Tsai and Bernards 2013). Therefore, the contribution aims at highlighting potential evidences of the author's collaboration strategies with the Sinophone and the French audience, when re-territorializing his work. In doing so, Tanqueiro's point of view on self-translation is adopted, and the comparative analysis of the French and Chinese versions of his most recent play – *Ballade Nocturne* (Gao 2012a) / *Yejian xingge* 夜間行歌 (Gao 2012b)<sup>2</sup> – is carried out with a translational approach. Specifically, in this analysis, prominence is given to several culture-specific elements, from the micro-textual level, that the author decided to introduce in his play. In the second place, two patterns have been identified: the first pattern typifies the cases in which the two versions are semantically matching, as a result of a lexical translation, and consequently, along with the preliminary assumption, one of the two versions may privilege the dialogue with one audience. The second pattern, portrays the situation where the Chinese and the French do not fully match, due to the author's decision to rephrase – and supposedly to adapt for each public – his use of language. It should be mentioned that we do not intend to fully separate the content from the linguistic level because, as Cesare Segre suggests, the sign function is constituted by the solidarity between form of expression and meaning (Segre 1985, 50).

### 3. An overview of the play

*Ballade nocturne* is a “trans-artistic experimentation”,<sup>3</sup> a kind of theatrical work in which music, poetry, and dance entertain an ongoing dialogue. Moreover, being that the play is Gao's second “dance drama” (*wuju* 舞劇),<sup>4</sup> musicality is intended to represent the most relevant feature of the performance.<sup>5</sup> Another relevant compositional attribute that is worth mentioning here is Gao's unconventional treatment of personal pronouns:<sup>6</sup> the role of She (“Elle”) and the one of The Actress

<sup>2</sup> We assume that the French version was conceived and produced earlier than the Chinese one following the author's declarations: Gao informed Claire Conceison, her English translator for this play, that he completed the French text in 2007 and Chinese text two years later (Conceison 2009, 318-19).

<sup>3</sup> Claire Conceison refers to the play as a “play-poem-dance-libretto” (Conceison 2009, 311).

<sup>4</sup> See Colin Mackerras (1988, 206). *Shengshengman bianzou* 聲聲慢變奏, published in 1987, is the first one.

<sup>5</sup> Since this “dance drama” is a ballade, the rhythm plays a major role in both versions: it is an aspect that requires sharp attention and that, unfortunately, we cannot comprehensively expound upon here.

<sup>6</sup> At the beginning of the French script, Gao introduces the roles adding a suggestion for the public (Gao 2012a, 4). A considerable number of researches on Gao's use of personal pronouns in theatrical writings and in novels have been published.

(“La comedienne”) are performed by the same woman, whose acting leads to the alienation of the self, observed from three perspectives: “I”, “You”, and “She”. A Melancholy Dancer (“La danseuse mélancolique”) and a Lively Dancer (“La danseuse dynamique”) also appear on the stage, moving on the notes played by one male musician. The cast, the roles, and every dramatic feature of *Ballade nocturne* are interpreted in consonance in *Yejian xingge*. As for the overall composition, from a macro-textual point of view, no substantial change between the two versions emerges: the structure of *Yejian xingge*, as well as its scenes consecution, correspond to the French *Ballade nocturne*. As for the thematic profile, the two versions are perfectly comparable. From a micro-textual point of view, instead, it is worth to mention that a considerable discrepancy appears in the rhythm, specifically in the distribution of the verses and the pauses, and in the fact that in the Chinese version the author tends to avoid the use of punctuation.

#### 4. The analysis

##### 4.1 Corresponding images

On the subject of fully semantic correspondence, the passage below is significant:<sup>7</sup>

<p><b>Dieu</b> a beau avoir créé ce monde, drôlement absurde. Elle l'a déjà en elle, et en guise de <b>déesse</b>, Elle ne trouve que la tristesse. ce monde déjà existait, Avant que <b>Jésus-Christ</b> soit né. avant que <b>Marie</b> soit vierge, <b>Ève</b> commit bien son péché (Gao 2012a: 8-9)</p>	<p>上帝白造這人世間 也真夠荒誕 她哪怕天性是女神 只落下憂傷  耶穌基督誕生之前 世界已經存在 聖瑪利亞還是處女 夏娃已經犯了緊急 (Gao 2012b: 47-48)</p>
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The foregoing quotation reveals that Gao Xingjian willingly and clearly refers to religious myths of Christianity, mentioning God (“Dieu” / Shangdi 上帝), Jesus Christ (“Jésus-Christ” / Yesu Jidu 耶穌基督), the Virgin Mary (“Marie” / Sheng Maliya 聖瑪利亞) and Eve (“Ève” / Xiawa 夏娃). From a cultural perspective, the explicit reference to Christian figures who influenced the history of Western thought may be interpreted as the author’s plan to shape a specific cultural

<sup>7</sup> *Ballade nocturne* has been translated into English by Claire Conceison. However, in order to avoid undermining the purpose and the outcomes of our analysis, we decided to omit the English version.

framework, consistent with a given vision of the world. From a linguistic perspective, interestingly, aside from the name of God (“Dieu” / Shangdi 上帝),<sup>8</sup> these references are introduced in the text – and in the Chinese theological discourse – as phonetic loanwords:<sup>9</sup> this remark underlines, to a certain extent, a distance in terms of the referential relation. Nevertheless, the cultural and lexical gaps did not discourage Gao Xingjian from reproducing this passage of *Ballade nocturne* to the Sinophone audience. A similar case is provided by the following extract:

<p>ELLE: <b>Le Mont-Saint-Michel</b> n'est pas forcément au but du monde. Jour après jour, le soleil se lèvera toujours.</p> <p>LA COMÉDIENNE: <b>Elle, après s'être abreuvée du café au lait au petit-déjeuner,</b> ne vivra plus que d'autres de sa propre nature. Et bientôt, elle sera assimilée à la houle de la foule, comme une ombre en plein jour, en songe. (Gao 2012a: 24)</p>	<p>她: 米歌而聖山 遠非世界的終極 一日後一日 太陽還照樣升起</p> <p>女演員: 她同別人區別並不大 早餐咖啡同樣加牛奶 隨後便消失在 上班人群中 明晃晃陽下 只有個影子在做夢 (Gao 2012b: 80-81)</p>
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The first verse of both the French and the Chinese passage open with the name of a small isle situated in the northern France, “Le Mont-Saint-Michel”, Mixi'er Shengshan 米歌而聖山. Once again, the Chinese version adopts a literal translation of a specific Western reference, by means of a combination of a phonetic loan (Mixi'er 米歌而 translates “Michel”) and a semantic element<sup>10</sup> (Shengshan 聖山 translates as “Sacred mountain”). A Francophone and French reader probably grasp the reference to the Mont-Saint-Michel as a metonymy of the end of the world. On the other hand, the fact that it is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site does not seem to fully motivate Gao Xingjian's choice to preserve the term of the metonymy even in *Yejian xingge*, whose audience, allegedly Chinese and not only Sinophone, may not immediately perceive or re-elaborate the reference.

<sup>8</sup> This is one of the four possible translations of the name of God in the Bible, together with *Tian* 天, *Shen* 神 and *Tianzhu* 天主. For further exploring the controversy tied to the rendering of the idea of the Christian God, see the Bulfoni and Grandi (2006).

<sup>9</sup> The name of Jesus, *Yesu* 耶穌, for instance, reproduces the Latin word “Jesus” (Bulfoni and Grandi 2006, 158). The introduction of biblical terms and concepts in China began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the earliest Bible translations produced by Catholic missionaries (Bulfoni and Grandi 2006, 157).

<sup>10</sup> This is one of the strategies adopted for neologism formation in Chinese (Bulfoni 2004).

Quoting from the second half of the aforementioned example, there is another point worth mentioning: “Elle, après s’être abreuvée du café au lait au petit-déjeuner” / zaocan jia kafei tongyang jia niunai 早餐咖啡同樣加牛奶. Through these words, Gao Xingjian details the woman’s life, perfectly invisible and ordinary, adding that she had white coffee for breakfast. This particular aspect of her everyday life may serve as a clue for a Western habit, an unlikely element of Chinese routine.

Nevertheless, from the analysis also emerge several cases of domestication<sup>11</sup> of *Yejian xingge*, the fact that brings the discourse to the issue of the pattern of “dissonance”.

#### 4.2 Rephrased meanings

In the domain of “domestication” strategies, a first approach is revealed by the following extract:

<p>ELLE: [...] Que la parade de <b>majorettes</b> défile, Avec les battements du <b>tambour</b>, Les filles, femmes de demain, Se joindront à notre bataille, (Gao 2012a: 17)</p>	<p>她: [...] 叫小姑娘列隊遊行 敲打起銅鼓 未來的女人們 快投入戰鬥 (Gao 2012b: 66)</p>
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First of all, the author interestingly chooses to rephrase the French word “majorettes” (Gao 2012a: 17) into *xiao guniang* 小姑娘, “little girls” (Gao 2012b: 66), so that the specificity of the image is – presumably – replaced by a less-specific and more recognizable picture. This is, to a certain extent, confirmed by the twofold interpretation of the word *tonggu* 銅鼓, that may be portrayed as the “bronze drum” as well as the “Western-style drum”.

Another strategy is that of reporting a figure of sense by partially amending the textual surface. For instance:

<sup>11</sup> According to Lawrence Venuti’s notion of domestication as the act of approaching the target-language reader by minimizing the exoticism and providing him a natural and smooth literary, through localizing the external culture. Domestication is opposed to foreignization, described as the act of intentionally breaking the target-language routine and keeping the exoticism, that is accepting foreign culture or foreignness (Venuti 1995).

<p>LA COMÉDIENNE:</p> <p>Voici une ballade vieillie et lyrique, Mais aussi résonne encore, Aussi triste pour toujours. Une ballade chantée par une femme, <b>Comme une salade, bien épicée, Qui reste quand même très crue.</b> (Gao 2012a: 5)</p>	<p>女演員： 這是一首老舊的情歌 至今依然在回響 還總也這麼憂傷</p> <p>這歌現今由女人唱 好比涼菜拌辣醬 又麻辣來又淒涼 (Gao 2012b: 38)</p>
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The above quotation, drawn from the beginning of the play, ends with a simile: in the French version, the play itself, *Ballade nocturne*, is described as a green salad that, despite its generous dressing, remains flavorless, whereas the Chinese version *Yejian xingge* is analogized to a spicy cold dish that appears dreary, despite the hot sauce on it. We can assume that the author rephrases the French text so as to avoid equivocal meanings and ambiguity, and gives prominence to the easy understanding for the Chinese audience.

Another strategy employed by Gao Xingjian in self-translation, as the analysis reveals, is that of challenging the linguistic system in order to enhance the meaning. As declared in several critical essays, one of the author's commitments when writing in Chinese is to savor and enrich the language, to seek the widest expressive potential (Gao 2014).

The extract below shows an intriguing case of the use of language in recreating the Chinese version.

<p>ELLE:</p> <p>Que reprochez-vous, gentilhomme ou vagabond? Tous <b>soumis au jupon!</b> (Gao 2012a: 13)</p>	<p>她： 不論常常君子 還是流浪漢 統統拜倒 石榴裙下 還有什麼可說？ (Gao 2012b: 56)</p>
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The metaphor of being tied and subdued to a woman's skirt is idiomatically introduced in both versions: "soumis au jupon!" / *baidao shiliuqun xia* 拜倒石榴裙下. In practice, the French idiom is transformed into an equivalent idiom in the Chinese language version: this is also a paradigm of domestication of the Chinese version, in that Gao Xingjian turns this French expression into a similar one which Chinese readers are familiar with.

Acknowledging that, as is universally recognized, idioms carry profound cultural implications, we should admit that the two idioms differ somehow in accordance to their historical cultural context. Indeed, the two idiomatic expressions, which

are supposedly similar in meaning as well in their textual manifestation, reproduce dissimilar cultural shades.<sup>12</sup> Thus, this example depicts one articulation of self-translation, where the slight distance interposed between the versions is due to the specificities of the language systems, not to a different use of language itself.

### 5. Concluding remarks

In the first place, it is worthwhile to note that studying self-translation as translation seems to lead to a more articulated approach to texts ascribed to the author as autonomous and self-transparent creator.

Additionally, few concluding remarks upon the process and the product of self-translation are to be mentioned. From the point of view of the process, forms of domestication or foreignization emerge from this – still restricted – analysis, but a uniform pattern is extremely hardly identifiable.

Presumably, following the above-quoted declaration of the author, Gao indulged himself by recreating to obtain the same effect that the French text was designed to provide. Interestingly, as Rainier Grutman points out,

this freedom to correct and rewrite – the exclusive poetic license of writers since the Romantic era – explains the trust we intuitively place in self-translators: they know the author's intentions well, simply by virtue of the fact that they are their own.  
(Grutman 2013, 65-66)

However, this may more likely be attributed to the nature of the play itself, that offers scarce displacement occasions and culture-specific elements, and, on the other hand, seems to be addressed to the public of the world and depicted by universal features, which is perfectly consistent with Gao Xingjian's desire to transcend national boundaries and to communicate to the world (Gao 2014).

From the point of view of the result of the self-translation, involving the user of the translation, another remark comes to light. In the first place, we should consider that: sometimes “[self-]translation consists less in a linguistic transposition than of a reorientation towards a new audience” (Gao 2014, 67); in fact, the interpretation of a sign is always dependent upon the context and general cultural background of its reader (Oll 2013, 52). As some examples revealed, in several occasions *Yejian xingge* enables a disruption of target-language cultural codes. Even though it would not seem unreasonable to question if the Chinese text is “naturally” meant to be addressed to a Chinese audience, it is hardly assumable that Gao Xingjian effectively favors one side. On the other hand, it may be stated that the creation of

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<sup>12</sup> The reference is specifically to a pomegranate-red skirt worn by a noble woman, adored by every man for her grace.

another version may be linked to a desire to speak to a different – but not wider<sup>13</sup> – readership. Inasmuch as Gao Xingjian’s works reach the world through translation, we could infer that Gao’s self-translation may primarily reflect the aesthetic needs and a quest for expressive freedom of the author. As Susan Bassnett suggests,

Translating one’s own writing seems to involve more than interlingual transfer, it involves reconstructing, perhaps [...] being possessed once again by the Muse and starting off along another creative path.

(Bassnett 2013, 19-20)

Therefore, despite his Chinese origins and his privileged relationship with the Sinophony, as *Ballade nocturne* demonstrates, it is true that the author seems perfectly comfortable in his “acquired” language, that becomes a place for further artistic investigation and practice. The experience of self-translating *Ballade nocturne* into Chinese enables the author to fully articulate the plurality of his own creative process, the heterogeneity of meanings, and the expressive forms through which the aesthetics materialize. And it may well be assumed that that the original version of the play falls somewhere in-between. Finally, the fact that he consciously chooses to adapt and revise a number of elements, but he also allows himself the freedom not to alter the text – and consequently not to juxtapose the entire text to a Sinophone audience – may be interpreted as a declaration of a hybridized identity.

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<sup>13</sup> As his works have been banned in Mainland China since 1989.



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## “CHINESE STYLE GRAFFITI” BY THE KWAN-YIN CLAN

### *Introduction*

Graffiti has been an incredibly spreading phenomenon starting from the United States in the 70s and expanded all over the world in a very short time.<sup>1</sup> It appeared in China in the '90s but it was only in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century that it became a noticeable artistic phenomenon visible in the main Chinese cities.<sup>2</sup> Graffiti art (*tuya yishu* 涂鸦艺术)<sup>3</sup> was introduced to Beijing in 1995, when Zhang Dali 张大力 (Harbin, 1963) embarked on an artistic project entitled *Dialogue and Demolition - Duihua yu chai* 对话与拆 (1995-2005),<sup>4</sup> which consists of more than 2000 images of bald big heads sprayed on the walls of the ancient city doomed to be demolished, accompanied by the tags<sup>5</sup> AK-47 or 18K.<sup>6</sup> In those years (and even before), other writers were active in Hong Kong.<sup>7</sup> According to Lu Pan, their work was fundamental “in introducing Western-style graffiti into mainland China in the late 1990s” (Lu 2015, 31). Starting from Hong Kong, and then from Shenzhen,<sup>8</sup> and Guangzhou, graffiti began to

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<sup>1</sup> For more details about the birth and the evolution of the phenomenon in the US and abroad, see: Drogheria 2015.

<sup>2</sup> For more details about the initial steps of the development of “contemporary graffiti” in China, see: Valjakka 2011, 71-74.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed analysis of the expression *tuya yishu* and other Chinese translations of the word “graffiti”, see: Ivi, 77.

<sup>4</sup> For more details on Zhang Dali and his art, see among the others: Marinelli 2004, 429-462, and Wu Hung 2000, 749-768.

<sup>5</sup> “Tag” is a stylized signature of the “nickname” of the writer, normally done in one color.

<sup>6</sup> Zhang Dali usually uses two tags in his graffiti works: i) AK-47, the name of the assault rifle developed in the Soviet Union in World War II; and ii) 18K, the abbreviation of the term “18-karat gold” (Pizziolo and Rovasio 2009).

<sup>7</sup> According to Minna Valjakka: “Zhang might not be the first [writer in China] because before him there was a writer called MCRen (MC 仁) active in Hong Kong [...] and according to the documentary, *Great Walls of China* (Pearl Channel 2007), there might have been some writers active in Hong Kong even before the mid-1990s” (Valjakka 2011, 73-74).

<sup>8</sup> In the documentary “Graffiti Asia” a writer from Shenzhen says: “Many Hong Kong writers come to Shenzhen because after '97 the border is open, so they come to Shenzhen and find some nice walls” (Hassan 2009).

spread all over China, especially in minor cities, such as Wuhan, Shenzhen, and Chengdu (Hassan and Sanada 2011, 11). Then, in the mid-2000s, also thanks to the wide spread of the underground culture,<sup>9</sup> it extended its field of action in all major Chinese cities and became popular also in Beijing and Shanghai.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Kwan-yin Clan in Beijing*

Since the mid-2000s, several crews have been active in Beijing. Among them, the most important are the Kwan-yin Clan (*Guanyin* 观音), the ABS crew (“Around Bohai Sea”),<sup>11</sup> the BJPZ (“BeiJing PenZi”),<sup>12</sup> and the most recent KTS (“Kill The Street”) and TMM (“The ManageMent”).<sup>13</sup> Kwan-yin Clan was one of the first to be found, exactly in June 2006. The crew is composed of eight members: AP, KENO, SCAR, JER, ERICTIN, YUMI, VIGA, and NAT (EricTin 2009).<sup>14</sup> Their aim “is committed to the dissemination and development of graffiti art in China” in order to “explore the fusion of graffiti art with Chinese culture” (Flickr 2008). For that reason, their art is usually called *Zhongguo tese de tuya yishu* 中国特色的涂鸦艺术 “Chinese Style Graffiti,”<sup>15</sup> because it blends together the style of Western graffiti and the traditional Chinese aesthetics.

The name of the crew is significant because it clearly reveals the deep meaning of their art: “Kwan-yin” explicitly refers to the Bodhisattva Guanyin (*Guanyin Pusa* 观音菩萨 [观音菩萨]), one of the most popular and well-known deity in China. The crew itself points out that the story of the Bodhisattva was of fundamental importance to choose their name (Flickr 2008). The Bodhisattva Guanyin, in fact, was introduced into China via the Silk Road and initially was presented in a male form, but when Buddhism rooted in China, the Bodhisattva was sinicized and subsequently transformed into a Chinese female deity, which later became extremely popular all over the country. Kwan-yin Clan’s artistic aim is to present

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of the underground culture in China, see among the others: De Kloet 2010.

<sup>10</sup> For more details on the urban art scenes in Beijing and Shanghai, see: Valjakka 2016, 357-371.

<sup>11</sup> For an explanation of the acronym “ABS”, see: Qin 2010.

<sup>12</sup> *Penzi* 喷子 is equivalent to “writer” in English. Other translations of the word “writer” in Chinese are: i) *tuyazhe* 涂鸦者 (“a person involved in graffiti” or “graffitist”), ii) *tuya yishujia* 涂鸦艺术家 (“graffiti artist”) (Valjakka 2011, 77).

<sup>13</sup> These crews are named in the most important documentary on graffiti art in Beijing entitled “Spray Painting Beijing. Graffiti in the Capital of China,” directed by Lance Crayon (Crayon 2012). For more details on this documentary, see its official website (Spray Painting Beijing 2015).

<sup>14</sup> The number of the crew components is extremely changeable. For example, in 2008 they were 12 writers (Youtube 2008).

<sup>15</sup> The definition “Chinese Style Graffiti” is used, for example, in two important videos about the crew: i) “Guanyin 观音(KWAN-YIN) crew -- Chinese Style Graffiti” (Youtube 2008); and ii) “Zhongguo tese de tuya yishu: Guanyin(KWAN-YIN). Graffiti Chinese Style” (Niurenku 牛人库 2012).

graffiti art in China as an *alter ego* of the Bodhisattva Guanyin: as it has happened for Guanyin, graffiti art came from abroad, but if it wants to become popular it has to sinicize its forms, undergoing deity own metamorphosis.<sup>16</sup> In order to do this, the constant reference to Chinese culture is a *leitmotiv* in all their works. In their art, in fact, they really borrow lots of elements especially from Chinese traditional calligraphy and painting.<sup>17</sup>

Shengongyijiang 神工意匠 (*Ars divina*, 2010): A “Chinese style work” by the Kwan-yin Clan

The use of Chinese characters and the reference to the art of calligraphy are two distinctive features of the major works realized by the Kwan-yin Clan, and particularly by EricTin, the leader of the group.<sup>18</sup> The title of one of the most interesting works of the crew is *Shengongyijiang* 神工意匠 (*Ars divina*,<sup>19</sup> 2010, fig. 1). In that work, EricTin has created a graffiti *piece*<sup>20</sup> in Chinese characters sprayed on a public wall in calligraphic form, shaped on a horizontal scroll and embellished with colophons and traditional decorative patterns.



Figure 1. Kwanyin Clan – EricTin, *Shengongyijiang* 神工意匠 (*Ars divina*), June 2010, graffiti: spray on a wall, Beijing.

<sup>16</sup> Niurenku 牛人库 2012. This idea is confirmed by EricTin and Nat in the two interviews quoted in note no. 15.

<sup>17</sup> The references to calligraphy and painting are very common in their works: for example, the reference to calligraphy is evident in the work entitled *Shirupozhu* 势如破竹 (*With Irresistible Force*, 2009), the reference to traditional landscape painting in the work entitled *Shanshui PIC* 山水PIC (*Landscape Painting PIC*, 2007), and the reference to bamboo painting in the work entitled *New style* (2008). For more details on these works, see the official blog of the crew opened by EricTin on August 31, 2006 (Sohu.com 2006).

<sup>18</sup> For an overview of their main works, see: Art Crimes 2014.

<sup>19</sup> The Latin translation of the title is by the author.

<sup>20</sup> “Piece” is a graffiti painting, short for masterpiece. It’s generally agreed that a painting must have at least three colors to be considered a piece (Art Crimes 2015).

This graffiti piece clearly follows the European style, especially in the use of colors, and it is also influenced by the “German school”.<sup>21</sup> There is a slight tendency towards *wildstyle*,<sup>22</sup> even if the characters are still readable. The use of 3D<sup>23</sup> is definitely visible. The inner colors in the text are very simple but embellished with geometric decorative inlays. The first *outline*<sup>24</sup> and the thickness of each character are black, the second double outline is red with glow effects, and the final, interrupted outline is yellow. The yellow line shape suggests the spiral movement of the clouds in the background, which reproduce the Chinese traditional decorative pattern called *yunwen* 云纹 (“clouds pattern”). Stylized drips are drawn into the clouds to add a graffiti effect to the whole composition. A dark grey shadow is finally drawn in the back of each character in order to underline the illusion of three-dimensional shape and space.<sup>25</sup> So, from a stylistic point of view, this work imitates the Euro-American graffiti manner perfectly.

As regard to the compositional structure, instead, *Shengongyijiang* seems to reproduce the typical arrangement of an ancient Chinese horizontal scroll. This type of calligraphic scroll is usually composed of three main elements: i) the most important one is the “big characters calligraphy” (*dazi shufa* 大字书法) in the center of the scroll; ii) other inscriptions and a colophon respectively on the right and left sides written in small characters; iii) the artist’s red seal(s) that balances the composition (for its color and position) (Li 2009, 158-171). The graffiti work *Shengongyijiang* has the same compositional arrangement: i) the most important element is the piece written in big Chinese characters in the center of the horizontal wall; ii) a poetic inscription and a colophon are written in small characters respectively on the right and left sides; iii) lots of tags in different colors and positions balance the whole composition.

The “calligraphic piece” in the center is composed of four Chinese characters, *Shen gong yi jiang* 神工意匠:<sup>26</sup> they are a Chinese “four-character idiom” (*chengyu* 成语)<sup>27</sup> used to title the work. This *chengyu* is an idiomatic expression used to describe the sublime beauty (exquisite conception and compositional structure) of a work of art (e.g. architectural buildings, paintings, etc.) shaped not only as

<sup>21</sup> This is a suggestion by the Italian writer Nevla Alven (Nevla Alven, facebook message to author, July 31, 2015).

<sup>22</sup> “Wildstyle” is a complicated construction of interlocking letters (Art Crimes 2015).

<sup>23</sup> “3D” is a three-dimensional style of letters, used for added effect on basic letters, sometimes applied to wildstyle for an extra level of complexity (Art Crimes 2015).

<sup>24</sup> “Outline” is the skeleton or frame work of a piece. “Finale outline” is the outline re-executed to define the letters, after fill-in and designs have been applied (@149<sup>st</sup> The Cyber Bench: Documenting New York City Graffiti 2015).

<sup>25</sup> In the official blog of the crew, EricTin shows all the stages of the creative process (EricTin 2010).

<sup>26</sup> EricTin confirms the content of the *chengyu* in a post in the web forum “Graffiti – Hip Hop” (Tuya ba 涂鸦吧) (Kwanyin\_Tin 2010).

<sup>27</sup> In an interview, EricTin affirms that the insertion of *chengyu* in his pieces is a distinctive feature of his work (Merenda 2016, 155-156).

a result of human capacities and labor, but also thanks to divine intervention.<sup>28</sup> This *chengyu* has taken inspiration from the last line of a poem composed by Zhao Puchu 赵朴初 (1907-2000)<sup>29</sup> entitled *Pingdeng Yuan* 平等院 “Byōdō-in Temple”.<sup>30</sup> In this poem, Zhao Puchu describes the ecstatic sensation (l. 1) while contemplating the sublime beauty of the most beautiful building in the temple, the “Phoenix Hall” (*Fenghuang Tang* 凤凰堂) (l. 2), built about a thousand years before (l. 3).<sup>31</sup> He compares its solemn beauty to the literary peaks reached during the period of full literary grandeur in the Tang dynasty (618-907) (l. 4). In the poet’s vision, Buddhism overloaded those peaks, because the “divine breath added something that goes beyond what human nature requires” (*shengongyijiang*, l. 5).<sup>32</sup>

Another important element in this work is the calligraphic inscription on the top-right corner. It seems to be a Chinese traditional calligraphy in “running script” (*xingshu* 行书) written in black ink brushed on paper. Actually, none of the traditional calligraphic instruments (brush, ink, and paper) has been used: they have been replaced with spray can, spray painting and street wall. Even if the final effect is extremely similar, conception and technique have been changed completely. The text quoted in the calligraphy is:

天际征鸿，遥认行如缀。平生事，此时凝睇，谁会凭栏意！

*Tianji zheng hong, yao ren xing ru zhui. Ping sheng shi, cishi ning di, shui hui ping lan yi!*<sup>33</sup>

This is the second stanza of an ancient poem entitled *Dian Jiangchun* 点绛唇 “Rouged Lips”.<sup>34</sup> The poem was composed by Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 (954-1001), a famous poet/scholar of the Song dynasty (960-1279), during his exile in the South of the Empire. In this poem, he expresses his inner emotions through a rich imaginary that allows him to skillfully establish similarities with nature. Empathy with nature, pain for an unjust exile, pervasive loneliness, and idyllic scenes are

<sup>28</sup> For the Chinese definition of this *chengyu*, see the online version of the *Hanyu da cidian* 汉语大辞典 [Comprehensive Dictionary of Chinese Language] (hydc.com 2014).

<sup>29</sup> Zhao Puchu was a well-known social activist and a Buddhist leader in China, accomplished in classical poetry and calligraphy. For more information about Zhao Puchu, see the online version of the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Chinese Culture* (Fu 2011).

<sup>30</sup> Byōdō-in is a Buddhist temple in the city of Uji in Kyoto Prefecture (Japan). It was originally built in 998 as a rural villa and then transformed into a Buddhist temple in 1052.

<sup>31</sup> The Phoenix Hall was constructed in 1053. It is the only remaining original building of the Byōdō-in Temple.

<sup>32</sup> The original poem in Chinese is: *Tan guanzhi, Fenghuang Tang, Zhishen huang zai qian nian shang. Qi zhi shi xiangjiao zhuangyan ji Sheng Tang? Geng bie you shengongyijiang* 叹观止，凤凰堂，置身恍在千年上。岂只是象教庄严继盛唐？更别有神工意匠。

<sup>33</sup> EricTin confirms the text of the poem in a post on the web forum “Graffiti – Hip Hop” (Kwanyin\_Tin 2010).

<sup>34</sup> The first stanza is: *Yuhun yunchou, Jiangnan yijiu cheng jiali. Shuicun yushi, yi lu gu yan xi.* 雨恨云愁，江南依旧称佳丽。水村渔市，一缕孤烟细。 For more details on this poem, see: Li et al. 2009, 210.

the central themes of the poem. These themes are recurrent in Chinese poetry of all times and through this work by the Kwan-yin Clan they are reactivated in a fragment of contemporary urban art. Wang Yucheng wrote:

Laden with frowning cloud and steeped in tearful rain,  
The southern shores still beautiful remain.  
In riverside village flanked with fishermen’s fair,  
A lonely wreath of slender smoke wafts in the air.

Afar a row of wild geese fly,  
Weaving a letter in the sky.  
What have I done in days gone by?  
Gazing from the balustrade,  
Could I weave my way as far as they?  
(Translated by Xu Yuanchong, in Xu 2005, 4)

The third fundamental elements of this graffiti work are the six tags disseminated in the composition.<sup>35</sup> The tags of the crew are three:

1. one is on the top-left corner, written in white simplified Chinese characters (*Guanyin* 观音), and shaped in running script on a vertical column: this tag represents the colophon of the calligraphic work;
2. one is on the bottom right, written horizontally in yellow capital letters (*KWANYIN*): this tag represents the author’s signature on (his) painting;
3. the last one is also on the bottom right but it is composed of only one traditional Chinese character (*Guan* 觀), written in white color<sup>36</sup> and shaped in “regular script” (*kaishu* 楷书): this tag represents a *throw-up*<sup>37</sup> shaped like an ancient calligraphy.

The other three tags of EricTin are written in Latin alphabet:

1. one is on the bottom left: it is written in yellow capital letters (*ERICTIN*) in the same style as the specular crew tag (*KWANYIN*);
2. one is on the right-top: it is written in thick white capital letters (*TIN*) and it is symmetrical to the *Guan* 觀 character below;
3. the last one is intermingled with the big characters of the central piece, creating a visual content that shows a real fusion between Chinese and Western cultures.

<sup>35</sup> Writing 6 different tags, EricTin links his work to the Euro-American graffiti writing tradition. Obsessive repetition of tags is, in fact, extremely common in Western graffiti writing (Mininno 2008, 10).

<sup>36</sup> In this work, all the “Chinese” elements are colored in black or white, which are the main colors of Chinese traditional painting: clouds are white, Chinese characters on the right top are black, tags written in Chinese characters are white and their outlines are black, the big characters in the center are partially white with a black outline.

<sup>37</sup> *Throw-up* is “a quickly executed piece consisting of an outline with or without thin layer of spray paint for fill-in” (@149<sup>st</sup> The Cyber Bench: Documenting New York City Graffiti 2015).



So, not only in the style and content of the central piece and of the right inscription on the right, but even in the tags, Kwanyin Clan realizes a balanced fusion between Western bomb-lettering and the art of Chinese calligraphy, providing a perfect mix of modern and traditional elements.

### *Conclusion*

The analysis of this work clearly shows the distinguishing *modus operandi* of one of the most important crew in Beijing, the Kwan-yin Clan. Influenced by the Euro-American tradition of graffiti art, they add Chinese elements to their works in order to create a totally new style which is clearly Chinese but is also understandable abroad. Starting from the idea that “tradition makes modernity”, they conform Chinese traditional aesthetics to the artistic language of contemporary graffiti, giving a start to a new line of research for the development of graffiti art in China. By blending Chinese forms and Western techniques, traditional compositions and modern ideas, they reflect the aim of a large part of Chinese contemporary art at dialectically facing their past tradition and at opening to a new one as well, balancing global integration and local responsiveness.

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ELENA MACRÌ

## WHAT IS 'NEW SHANSHUIHUA'? LANDSCAPE REPRESENTATION IN CHINESE CONTEMPORARY ART

A cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium. The cultural landscape the result.

(Sauer 1963, 343)

### *Introduction*

Contemporary landscape depictions can be generally divided into two main categories: conventional *shanshuihua*,<sup>1</sup> based on the core characteristics of the scholars' tradition and imbued with traditional aesthetics (Zhang, Deng and Sun 2001; Guo 2010), and new *shanshuihua*, grounded in the context of contemporary social and cultural issues. The twenty-first century is generally seen as the moment during which Chinese landscape painting has become "postmodern" (Yin 2011, 45). With this term, art historians refer to a set of new ideas and aesthetic criteria which inform contemporary landscape depictions and it is usually used to indicate the passage from traditional *shanshuihua*'s structures, revolved around a philosophical approach to the natural world, to contemporary perspectives, based on the idea of a deeply fragmented and anthropized spatial reality.

This transition has been made possible by the driving force of new art forms, concepts and images coming from the biennials boom started with the Third Shanghai Biennale (2000; Wu 2001, 41-49), from which emerged a new definition of Chinese art that, as Zhang Qing pointed out, was moving "from grandiose heroism or utopian narratives to specific experiences in contemporary life and culture" (Zhang 2010, 347). Thanks to the development of exhibition system, throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s, a new context was provided for artists' practice and what was very different within this context was that new concerns and content such as industrialization, urbanization or environmental pollution, had a great impact on conceptions of traditional landscape representation, leading artists to rethink the role of *shanshuihua*, adjust it with new current issues and explore new means of expression.

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<sup>1</sup> The term *shanshuihua* literally means "mountain and water painting" and refers to traditional Chinese landscape painting, based on a philosophical approach to the natural world and made on paper (or silk) with brush, ink and vegetal or mineral pigments.

First comes the idea of landscape as a new visual construct defined by the impacts of human activity on natural ecosystem or, according to the art theoretician and curator Yongwoo Lee's definition, a "realist *shanshui* based on a backdrop of actualities" (Lee 2015, 10). This idea, which seems obvious in the context of China's serious environmental crisis, implies new iconographic solutions that mix traditional landscape imagery with images related to the context of contemporary visual culture such as built environments, industrialized territories and polluted places, in order to reflect society's new sense of landscape. The depiction of altered environments naturalizes current social and cultural processes,<sup>2</sup> conferring a new quality to *shanshui* depiction in terms of aesthetic principles and function. Landscape is now intended as a powerful medium for documenting China's environmental degradation and stimulating discussion about the exploitation of nature and, in this perspective, it is also used to document artist's engagement in the work of social critique.

The second idea framing the thinking of contemporary landscape depiction is the legacy of traditional *shanshuihua*, always present, although altered in its symbolic and aesthetic values. From the iconographic point of view, this topic is marked by iconic elements that emphasize environmental degradation, although reminding the imagery of traditional landscape painting and its idealized view of nature. This new figurative mode creates a strong visual dissonance and is intentionally used to highlight the marginality of nature in a formally naturalistic representation, perfectly illustrating the documentary impulse of this new artistic genre whose approach to landscape is much more moral rather than philosophical. It appears clearly that the identity of new *shanshuihua* transcends the conventional idea of artistic representation of nature peculiar to Chinese traditional painting, defining itself in a larger theoretical framework that includes current social and environmental problems.

This paper intends to identify the diverse ways in which contemporary artists perceive and depict landscape, exploring the shift occurred in the conceptual and visual structure of new *shanshuihua*. Since scholarly studies on this topic are extremely few, the analysis will be based on the issues emerged from three important exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art organized outside China and centered on the new idea of landscape representation, whose principal objective was to outline the main features of this recent artistic trend. As case studies, the author will take the following exhibitions: *Pure Views: Remote from Stream and Mountains: New Painting from China*, curated by Lü Peng in 2010; *Shanshui: Poetry without Sound? Landscape in Chinese Contemporary art*, curated by Ai Weiwei, Uli Sigg and Peter Fischer in 2011; *Humanistic Nature and Society: An Insight into the Future*, curated by Wong Shun-kit in 2015. The exhibited works enable us to recognize some main recurring themes, revealing how artists approach landscape through a variety of media including ink

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<sup>2</sup> On the cultural value of contemporary landscape depictions, see Shen Kuiyi 2006, 284–286.

or oil painting, photography, installations, performances and video, but always in relation to traditional landscape imagery. This paper aims at exploring how contemporary Chinese art use tradition to further observe the contemporary cultural context, researching the new ontological value of *shanshui* through new inspirations and themes.

*“Pure Views: Remote from Stream and Mountains: New Painting from China”*

In the early 2000s, a growing number of artists begin to deal with issues related to the experience of living in an increasingly altered environment.

In her article on the latest perspectives of landscape depiction in contemporary Chinese art, the scholar Pauline J. Yao has provided useful opinions to analyze the new ways in which artists approach landscape, presenting all the factors that have significantly changed their understanding of nature (Yao 2006, 367). She classifies Chinese landscape into four different categories corresponding to four different ideas through which artists discuss the crisis in the new relationship between man and nature. A series of exhibitions curated by Lü Peng and entitled *Pure Views: Remote from Stream and Mountains: New Painting from China* (2010, Louise Blouin Foundation, London; 2011, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; 2011, Chengdu Biennale; 2013, Arts Santa Mònica, Barcelona) have sanctioned these new figurative trends, bringing Chinese landscape into the 21st century (Lü and Bai 2011).

The aim of these shows, always presented in a slightly modified form and title, was to offer a set of new visual experiences for making *shanshui* legible as the product of the new socio-cultural perception of the natural world, essentially based on the idea of alienation from nature. In order to strengthen this curatorial perspective, the exhibition's title is borrowed from a painting by Song Dynasty artist Xia Gui that makes a pointed reference to the legacy of *shanshuihua* and its traditional idea of landscape depiction. This intended reference is used to show how artists draw inspiration from the impressive imagery of traditional *shanshuihua* in order to represent, and better highlight, contemporary concern about man's increasing detachment from nature.<sup>3</sup> This solution sets the tone for all the exhibitions that, as a statement of purpose, seem to declare that contemporary Chinese artists “voluntary search for resources in Chinese traditional culture, even though they adopted their own contemporary perspective” (Lü 2012, 411).

Traditional culture and contemporary perspective are two concepts that play a central role in the interpretation of Chinese current landscape representation, as well as in the research of art historians and theoreticians who are intent on interpreting how ink tradition is extending its influence upon China's

<sup>3</sup> A similar curatorial perspective informs the exhibition *Altered Shan Shui States*, curated by Tang Zehui and organized in Beijing in 2013.

contemporary art history. In this regard it should be noted that, over the past few years, contemporary ink art has experienced a noteworthy revival, inspiring exhibitions,<sup>4</sup> specialized art fairs and galleries,<sup>5</sup> auctions<sup>6</sup> and symposiums<sup>7</sup> held to discuss how artists reference their art tradition, how they transfer the traditional ink imagery into a contemporary form, medium and style.

*Pure Views* exhibitions have presented more than 80 works of art by emerging as well as internationally renowned artists, such as Wang Guangyi, Fang Lijun, Yue Mingjun, Zhang Xiaogang and He Sen, the leading exponents of the most well known art movements developed through the nineties. In their works, artists represent landscape using new media, materials and new modes of expression that go beyond ink, brush and paper, although their pursuit of new inspirations is deeply rooted into their artistic heritage, which is a highly representative symbol of Chinese cultural identity, demonstrating how the reinterpretation of traditional themes can meet contemporary needs. This point is made clear in the press release from the Louise Blouin Foundation, the art space in which took place the first exhibition in the series:

*Pure Views* is a group presentation of contemporary paintings that employs Western materials to reflect upon and reinterpret traditional Chinese civilization and temperament. The age span of participating painters is quite large. In their observation and understanding of traditional painting, these artists, born of different generations between the 1950s and the 1980s, differ in perception, judgment, and attitude. However, as soon as a Chinese artist focuses his attention and receptivity on his own cultural tradition, once he discovers its wonders he begins to create new genre of contemporary art. (Louise Blouin Foundation 2010)

It is important to remark that the search for new resources in traditional culture should not be read as a problematic methodological paradox that abstracts Chinese

<sup>4</sup> *Fresh Ink: Ten Takes on Chinese Tradition* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2010); *Ink: The Art of China* (Saatchi Gallery, London, 2012); *Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2014); *Unscrolled: Reframing Tradition in Chinese Contemporary Art* (Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, 2014/2015); *Cold Ink: Contemporary Transformations of Chinese Ink Painting* (Artshare.com, 2014); *Ink Remix: Contemporary Ink Art from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong* (Canberra Museum and Gallery, Canberra City, 2015); *Revolution in Tradition: China's Post-Ink Painting Era* (Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris, 2015); *Jing Shen: The Act of Painting in Contemporary China* (Pac, Milan, 2015). *Tradition Today: Ink Painting and Calligraphy* (Kunstmuseum Gelsenkirchen, Gelsenkirchen, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Ink Asia (Hong Kong, 2015) is a new art fair specializing in ink art. Ink Studio is a Beijing-based gallery opened in 2013 and focused on contemporary ink art.

<sup>6</sup> In 2013 Christie's had its first Chinese contemporary ink paintings private sales exhibition entitled *Beyond Tradition: Chinese Contemporary Ink* (New York/Hong Kong, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> *The Future of Contemporary Ink Painting* (May 2011, Hong Kong Arts Centre); *Another Modernity or Contemporaneity? Traditional Chinese Media in the Context of Contemporary art* (May 2013, Hong Kong Museum of Art); *Ink Art Symposium* (February 2014, The Metropolitan Museum of art).

art from its current socio-cultural context, or from the contemporary global art scene because, upon closer inspection, the viewer can see the artists' fundamental outlook on their time. In the 21st century China, the notion of *shanshui* cannot ignore the marginality of nature in contemporary life and the exhibited works illustrate very well what has happened to the landscape in the context of Chinese art, how it has changed as the natural surroundings and the cultural perspective have changed around it.

However, this topic is tackled through the reinterpretation of traditional imagery with its symbolic potential, considered a primary source for creating a new, contemporary and globally recognizable artistic genre and, at the same time, the best means to enhance the extreme distance from the natural reference. Both elements are essential parts in the construction of contemporary landscape identity and reinforce its historical and cultural dimension.

### *Shanshui: Poetry without Sound? Landscape in Chinese Contemporary art*

The exhibition *Shanshui: Poetry without Sound? Landscape in Chinese Contemporary art* (2011, Museum of Arts, Lucerne) is another important and highly suggestive exhibition that signals the new shift in landscape representation, revealing how it can be re-conceptualized.

The exhibition has brought together 15 selected historical *shanshui* paintings<sup>8</sup> and 70 contemporary artworks chosen from the Sigg collection, realized between 1994 and 2011 by famous and emerging Chinese artists. It is important to underline that some works such as Yuan Xiaofang's *Untitled (Flight Plan)* (1994-1997), Qiu Shihua's *Untitled* (1994-2001), Ji Dachun's *Keep Secrets* (1997), Liu Wei's *Untitled* (1998), Gu Wenda's *Mythos of Lost Dynasties* (1999), Huang Yan's *Chinese Landscape: Tattoo* series (1999), Xu Bing's *Landscript* (1999) have to be considered as artists' personal reflections upon one of the most important subject of Chinese art and cannot be recognized as part of a well-defined artistic genre that has come to prominence in the early 2000s and has established itself as a legitimate artistic trend only at the end of the first decade of the 21st century.

In the perspective of this exhibition, the concept of *shanshui* refers both to the structural dimension of traditional landscape painting that uses brush, ink and paper or silk as main media and is imbued with a classical view of nature, and to the contextual dimension of contemporary artworks realized through ink or new media and all related to a totally expressionistic exploration of visual forms, necessary to conform artistic research to current reality.

<sup>8</sup> Traditional paintings are from the collection of the Rietberg Museum (Zurich) and the Musée Guimet (Paris).



Explaining the concept behind the exhibition, Uli Sigg, the owner of the artworks and one of the three curators, has claimed:

I see the exhibition as a kind of platform to show the spectrum as broad as it can be. Works of artists who intend to continue using traditional art form; of artists that want to give it a new breath of life; of artists that take a more far reaching look, some seeing it as a beautiful dream, others as a corpse; of those who mock traditional art and ultimately of artists that have no relationship whatsoever to *shan shui* any more, for whom landscape is an object to represent like any other, without any spiritual meaning. In my view all these positions exist in one way or another in this exhibition, clear at times and obtuse at others.<sup>9</sup>

The exhibition intends to thematize the creative reinterpretation of tradition as a principal feature of contemporary landscape depiction, showing how *shanshuihua* can be conceptually innovated by merging traditional sensibilities with contemporary perspectives. The theme of tradition is addressed in the exhibited works in a diversity of ways and, from the iconographic point of view, this aspect is rendered through visual elements that recall the imagery of traditional landscape painting, although revealing contemporary man's dysfunctional relationship with nature. It is worth reminding that new *shanshuihua* tends to replace nature with an idea of nature as something altered (Wu 2008, 235), thematizing today's threat to natural environment. In this perspective, tradition, serving as a highly symbolic means for narrating this topic, is perceived as a document that each artist can read through his interpretative method (Hu 2011, 26-27), as a space in which landscape becomes a contemporary cultural expression that mixes current perspectives with classic artistic tradition, offering a kind of multi-sensory experience.

#### *Humanistic Nature and Society: An Insight into the Future*

In the twenty-first-century, landscape has become an ideological tool with different layers of meaning, used by artists also to explore the environmental and social impact of China's modernization. This is the theme of the exhibition *Humanistic Nature and Society: An Insight into the Future* (2015, Palazzo Ca' Faccanon, Venice), organized by the Shanghai Himalayas Museum as a collateral event of the 56 Venice Biennale. In the press release is stated that:

As time goes by, unprecedentedly drastic changes have been witnessed in the present day. As a result, the cultural root for traditional Shan-Shui spirit seems to have been on the verge of disappearance. Under such a circumstance, how to revive and reconstruct the social value and significance of it? Resorting to their personal experience and

<sup>9</sup> Peng Wei 2011.



insight, the artists manage to give their response in a visual way, inspiring more people to pay attention to issues highly pertinent to the sustainability of human society. [...] From the delineation of the natural landscape, to the probe into problems that are commonly faced by contemporary people, and then to the presentation of a humanistic approach with a somewhat futuristic touch, the exhibition intends to depict a constantly evolving imagery to inspire more reflection and cast light on an insight to the future in the language of visual art.  
(Randian 2015)

This exhibition focuses on the interaction between environmentalism and artistic practice, offering through multiple visual sources a critical observation on the rapid and remarkable Chinese urban development. According to curatorial perspective, in China's increasingly urbanized society,<sup>10</sup> the understanding of nature is deeply changed and, consequently, the character of contemporary landscape representation should reflect the altered state of physical environment in order to convey the importance of environmental problems to the public and create empathetic understanding within the viewer.

The exhibition has featured works realized through a wide range of media by artists who use landscape as a visual construct to represent the new relationship between man and nature, in order to balance his disconnection from it. The show was accompanied by a forum entitled *Shanshui Politics* and discussing the possibility of "a Shan-Shui society that could be established as an ideal model for the future" (Shanghai Himalayas Museum 2015). The first step toward a 'shanshui society', endowed with an ecological consciousness, is to remind the attitude implicit in the traditional idea of landscape representation and, in this perspective, the exhibition was divided into three sections (Peach Blossom Spring – The Imagery of the Past, Metamorphosis – The Imagery of the Reality and Shan-Shui Society – The Imagery of the Future), in order to better highlight the visual and moral legacy of the past, the current condition of the environment and the extensive changes available for the future.

The visual journey begins with two reproductions of landscape painting by Xie Shichen (1487-1567) and He Haixia (1908-1998), perceived as an expression of harmony between man and nature. However, in the second section, landscape loses its poetic and allusive dimension and gives considerable attention to the effects of industrialization, urbanization and pollution that are strongly transforming Chinese physical environment. Artists, such as Ni Weihua, Wang Nanming, Wang Jiuliang and Yang Yongliang, focus on ecological issues and what emerged from their works is a new social landscape, typified by images of ruins, high-rise buildings, arid riverbeds, garbage dumps, urban development and social inequality, new visual modes that represent the role of social and cultural factors

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<sup>10</sup> On this topic, see Wang Meiqin 2016.

in contemporary landscape representation, highlighting the ways in which artists perceive, experience and interact with their current physical reality.

This new visualization of nature, basically related to the idea of ruination, well reflects how the concept of ecology construct the new landscape identity and, in the third section of the exhibition, MAD Studio's architects Chen Bochong and Ma Yansong propose their sustainable urban development project, inspired by the aesthetics of traditional Chinese landscape painting and in which the quality of a modern and efficient urban environment is improved by the contact with the natural world (Dai 2015, 33-37).

Besides documenting China's serious ecological crisis, this exhibition makes an attempt to envision a better future imbued with ecological consciousness, emphasizing the importance of an empathetic approach to the natural world. *Humanistic Nature and Society* outlines the possibility in constructing a new relationship between man and natural environment and, also in this case, the starting point is the legacy of traditional *shanshuihua*.

### Conclusions

In the 21st century China, the notion of *shanshuihua* implies a new attitude toward nature and an active involvement with an altered real landscape. From different theoretical and curatorial perspectives, *Pure Views*, *Shanshui: Poetry without Sound?* and *Humanistic Nature and Society* have thematized these new viewpoints, re-defining the concept of landscape in the context of contemporary Chinese art, exploring its new characteristics and presenting it as a new artistic genre. Beside showing the diverse ways in which artists perceive, interpret and communicate their idea of landscape and landscape representation, the important question that these exhibitions have posed is whether the use of tradition is a valid means of investigating the contemporary cultural context.

All the exhibited works represent artists' individual sense of landscape articulated through empirical evidence, visual atmosphere and negative aspects related to the physical environment, but they also try to conciliate past and present or, better, to internalize the past tradition to enhance a contemporary sense of place, approaching landscape always in relation to its traditional imagery.

However, at a time of rising nationalism during which also the President Xi Jinping openly promotes the revival of traditional culture, it is important to remind how the strategy of "formulating traditional symbols into essential markers of Chineseness" can be dangerous, as Wang Nanming has laid out in his article (Wang 2010, 353). This risk is substantiated by the phenomenon of "China Brand" existing in the context of contemporary Chinese art,<sup>11</sup> as well as by growing market opportunities

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<sup>11</sup> See Peng Wei 2011.

related to the revival that contemporary ink art has experienced in recent times. In this perspective, curators and art exhibitions system have a highly responsible job: to prevent these new and - in my opinion - extremely powerful stylistic trends appeared in new *shanshuihua* from being turned into a new kind of "export painting" (as it happened to some famous artistic experiments of the 1990s), totally controlled by demand within Western market and conformed to its preferences.

Undoubtedly, *shanshuihua* has always been and continues to be one of the most representative symbol of Chinese cultural identity, but in its contemporary declination it cannot be reduced to or used as a mere and abstract mark of Chinese culture and spirit, for the reason that, in the context of new *shanshuihua*, tradition is considered a powerful and allegorical lens through which observe the contemporary reality and analyze its environmental conditions, in order to enhance its extreme distance from the natural reference funded in traditional landscape painting.

By examining themes and trends, these exhibitions have well delineated the cultural transformation inscribed in new *shanshuihua*, in which landscape is no longer perceived as the sublime expression of beauty and harmony between man and nature, but as a tool that raises questions about the distress of nature and of man. These exhibitions have challenged the idea of what landscape is in a contemporary context and, in doing so, they also have raised interesting questions about the theoretical perspective and the aesthetic language with which we can discuss this new artistic genre. It is hoped that these topics will develop more scholarly inquiries.

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DANIELE MASSACCESI

## ITALIANS “MADE IN CHINA”: A CASE STUDY IN THE PROVINCES OF MACERATA AND FERMO

### *Introduction*

The present article is an English version of a previous paper published in 2015 in the Italian journal *Quaderni Asiatici* (Massaccesi 2015). The work attempts to explore the thoughts about cultural identity of young Italians of Chinese origins in the central and coastal part of Marche region, through a data collection about the local Chinese community and a survey conducted between January 2014 and September 2015.

In terms of Chinese immigration in Italy, it is always hard to avoid the mention of the cases of Milan or Prato (Tuscany): there is possible to find out the oldest and biggest Chinese communities in Italy. Nevertheless, during the last few years Italy faced an important regional increase of Chinese immigrants all over the country. The Marche region, in the central part of the Italian eastern coast, has witnessed for the last couple of decades a significant increase of the foreign community. The presence of the Chinese people drew the attention of institutions, media, and public opinion, both locally and nationally. In particular, the central area of the region started in the last few years an intensive and dynamic activity of cultural and economic exchange, probably facilitated and emphasized by the historical background of the area, which gave birth to important characters for the relations between China and the West: Matteo Ricci (Macerata, 1552 - Beijing, 1610), Teodorico Pedrini (Fermo, 1671 - Beijing, 1746), and Giuseppe Tucci (Macerata, 1894 - San Polo dei Cavalieri, 1984), just to mention the well-known ones.

The first Chinese restaurant was established in this area in 1987, in Civitanova Marche (Province of Macerata). In 2010 big celebrations were organized in the territory to recall the life and achievement of the above mentioned Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci in China, who died and was buried in Beijing exactly 400 years before. Following that event, the University of Macerata, in partnership with the Beijing Normal University, opened a Confucius Institute to start an intense activity of cultural promotion and exchange between China and this part of Italy.

The collaboration between the two sides was also emphasized by the visit in 2013 in Civitanova Marche of the Chinese Consul General Ms. Wang Xinxia, and the visit in Macerata in 2015 of the First Secretary of the Office of Educational Affairs at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Rome Mr. Liu Junhua.

In 2014, the Province of Macerata had a population of 321,314 inhabitants in an area of 2,773.75 km<sup>2</sup>. The Province of Fermo had instead 176,408 inhabitants in an area of 859.51 km<sup>2</sup> (ISTAT 2014). Roughly 18,000 Chinese were living in Italy in 1990; the number reached 330,000 units in 2011 (Latham and Wu 2013). According to the Prefecture of the Province of Macerata and the ISTAT, in 2014 in this area there were 33,621 foreign citizens (among them, the Chinese were 3,274); in 2015, the Chinese in the Province of Fermo were 2,994 (18,169 the foreign citizens; Tuttitalia 2013).

### About "Identity"

"Identity" can be obviously defined in different way, according to different point of view, context, and field of research. Among the main contributions to the understanding and use of "identity" in the social sciences, I will here underline the work of the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, who describes identities as something "liquid", something in a process of neverending change and evolution (Baumann 2002 and 2003). The Italian philosopher Umberto Galimberti highlighted the role played by "time" to describe "identity" (Galimberti 1992, 451), while the Italian sociologist Alessandro Dal Lago wrote about the coexistence and multiplicity of identities, often depicted and produced from the outside (Dal Lago 1999, 20), especially in the case of migrants and foreign communities, where "identity" means basically to identify or not to identify yourself with something related to National values, categories, elements (Sen 2006), realities, tradition. One of the initial question of this work was exactly if and in what way this could be the case of the Chinese "Nuovi Italiani" (or "New Italians", young Italians of Chinese origins; Granata 2011). The feeling of cultural belonging is something often stressed, for instance, in the National and local social media, like in a recent letter from Bai Junyi, former president of the Sino-Italian association Associna (Associna 2005). In terms of academic research on Chinese identity, one notable contribution definitely come from the scholar Tu Weiming, with his studies on "Cultural China" and the idea of three "Symbolic Universes" (Tu 1995, 1).

With regard to the "Chinese identity" or "Chineseness", at the beginning of the last century the intellectuals of the *Dazhongyu Yundong*<sup>1</sup> used to define the language as the main symbol of an ethnic character (Fang 1992). Almost a century later, and in a definitely more globalized world, "Chinese" has so many different definitions

<sup>1</sup> The so called *Dazhongyu yundong* 大众语运动 "Movement for the Language of the Mass"

and it is possible to find out so many different way to think the "Chineseness", as we can read, just to give an example, in this article:

To many in Hong Kong, then, 'Chinese' may primarily mean a cultural, ethnic, or racial marker of identity rather than of political nationality. There are 'Chinese' of various types who make up the majority population in Taiwan and Singapore, a significant percentage in Malaysia and Thailand, and large numbers around the world. So when the demonstrators chant 'Hong Kong People!' they are asserting that to be a citizen of Hong Kong is emphatically not the same as being Chinese. (Chin 2014; The Economist 2017)

So, who is Chinese? The following passage could be a starting point for a broader set of answers:

The answer may seem simple at first: a person who looks Chinese. But imagine a young woman born and brought up in the U.S. Her grandmother is from China, and she happens to have inherited many of her grandmother's physical traits. She doesn't speak Chinese or identify in any way with Chinese culture, and she thinks of herself as a proud American. When she is called Chinese, she forcefully rejects the label. Or consider my own case. Canadian by birth, with Caucasian physical features, I have lived and worked in China for more than two decades, speak the Chinese language, identify with Chinese culture and am now a permanent resident of China. But almost no one considers me Chinese." (Bell 2017)

Is Chineseness a racial category? Is Chineseness defined mainly by ethnicity more than nationality or citizenship? Professor Daniel Bell, prominent scholar of Chinese Philosophy and dean of the school of political science and public administration at Shandong University, seems to refuse this idea in his recently published article "Why Anyone Can Be Chinese. A scholar who's lived in China for more than two decades argues that Chinese identity should be cultural, not racial":

The dominant elite culture in ancient China emphasized cultural belonging, not race or ethnicity, as the most important trait for citizenship. Chinese people were those who adhered to the common ritual norms of the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 B.C.). One could learn to be Chinese." (Bell 2017)

So, again, who or what is a Chinese? And how? What are his/its main characteristics and features? Young men and women of Chinese origins who were born or grew up in Italy are, among many others, trying to give an answer to these questions. Answers that contain not only a personal point of view, social and educational background, opinions or experience, but also a process of "localization" and not a more general and National feeling of "China", as we can see comparing two different opinions, the first one from Francesco Wu, a member of Associna and a Sino-Italian entrepreneur with Zhejiangese origins, and the second from a Chinese student who lived in Italy for a small number of years:



Our culture is very conservative and traditionalist, we share a strong feeling of duty and the will to reciprocate the huge sacrifice made by our parents to take care of us. (Wu 2013)

Sometimes I think that the Italians do not know much about the Chinese. In their view, the Chinese are the Chinese from Wenzhou, because the Chinese who live and work in Italy are Wenzhounese. [The Italians] have not seen Chinese from other parts of China, they think that all the Chinese come here to start a [business] activity. Now China is strong, beautiful, modern, so we hope that the Italians will have the opportunity to know more about China, [and realise that] not all the Chinese who come in Italy are here to start an activity and make money. (Youtube 2015)

Zhejiang is in fact one of the most developed and richest province in the People's Republic of China, with a well know culture of entrepreneurship, as emphasized, for instance, by the Italian reporter, based in Beijing and Milan, Gabriele Battaglia in his recently published book on China:

Zhejiang, la regione a sud di Shanghai nota per la propensione al business dei suoi abitanti che, per inciso, erano anche i cinesi che vedevamo nelle nostre città italiane. Compravano gli stock e li esportavano in Europa.<sup>2</sup> (Battaglia 2017)

### *The survey*

Apart from the above-mentioned Sino-Italian association Associna, there are other organizations with different degrees of activity upon the Italian territory made by and for young people of Chinese origins, like the one gathered in the Facebook group "Italian Born Chinese", which also provides an example of some feeling of identification and some 'rules' or definition of the group itself (Facebook 2017).

Another example of the rising interest for the young Italians of Chinese origins is the TV serial *Italiani Made in China*,<sup>3</sup> a reality show which illustrated the stories of six Sino-Italian guys during a visit to their relatives in the People's Republic of China (Real Time TV 2017).

As previously noticed, this research is mainly based on a number of semi-structured interviews conducted in the provinces of Macerata and Fermo between 2014 and 2015. The interviewees were local young people of Chinese origins, of an age between 12 and 30 years old. They are sons and daughters of Chinese migrants who arrived in Italy years ago, belonging to the so called "second generation" and to the "1.5 generation" (or "1.25" or "1.75", those who arrived in Italy in different

<sup>2</sup> "[Zhejiang Province is] the region South of Shanghai famous for the entrepreneurial spirit of its inhabitants who, by the way, were exactly the Chinese we used to observe in our Italian cities. They purchased [commodities] stocks and sold them to Europe", in Battaglia, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> The title of this article is also inspired by the title of this TV serial.



stages of their early teens; Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 17; see also Cologna et al. 2009). The latter is the most represented part of the group: they were in fact mostly China-born Italians, and that is not strange that the language used for the interview was Italian in most of the cases, Mandarin Chinese in a few cases. These boys and girls use Chinese dialect to communicate with their parents or relatives, Mandarin Chinese to speak with other Chinese from different regional areas, and Italian to communicate with Italian people, including the author. About 70% of the total amount of the interviewees were in fact born in the People's Republic of China. However, this was not an explicit choice, but rather just the result of a random selection process. The author also tried to keep a gender balance in the collected interviews: roughly 45% of the interviewees are in fact males.

The meeting and interviews were mainly realized in local schools and private houses in the cities of Macerata, Civitanova Marche (Province of Macerata), and Porto Sant'Elpidio (Province of Fermo), where the biggest part of the local Chinese community live and work. Most of the respondents were excited and showed friendliness, although a bit of insecurity and shyness due to the young age of the interviewees was also present. All the interviews were recorded.

With a duration from 10 to 60 minutes or above, and depending case by case, the interviews usually started with an informal self-introduction and questions regarding the study or job, situation at home, sport, hobby, feeling of Italy, and memories of China; in the second part, the main focus was their definition or image of "China", "Chineseness", "Wenzhounese", Italian character, both from a local or National point of view; finally, a few questions in the attempt to touch their understanding (if any) of "identity" through their feeling of identification or not identification with whatever is considered "Chinese" and "Italian", and/or the reason for that.

Age, gender, age at their arrival in Italy, level of school education in the Italian system, level of school education at their arrival in Italy, geographical origin in China, etc. Although these aspects are quite relevant in shaping identity-formation among immigrants and children of immigrants, the present work does not attempt to draft a detailed analysis of cultural identity, but just a general idea of the feeling and thoughts from the point of view of the Chinese 'Nuovi italiani' who live in the central part of Marche region. Nevertheless, the importance of these different aspects are sometimes noticed by the young Sino-Italians themselves, like well expressed in the words of a Italy-born Chinese boy:

Loro, che sono nati in Cina e sono arrivati magari verso i sei/sette anni, si sentono un po' più cinesi che italiani. Vedo in loro una passione per le radici più radicata rispetto a noi che siamo nati in Italia [...] Poi ci sono certi ragazzi che sono venuti qua intorno ai tredici/quattordici anni che non riescono a relazionarsi molto con gli italiani e magari dopo dieci anni non parlano ancora bene l'italiano.<sup>4</sup> (Granata 2011)

<sup>4</sup> "Those guys, who were born in China and arrived here when they were six or seven years old,

An attempt to emphasize different cultural identity affiliation and feeling of “Chineseness” based on different generation might be also seen in the following extract, where the Chinese female migrant, writer and editor, Hu Lanbo talks about the Chinese New Year in Italy, in an article published in the official bimonthly review of the Confucius Institute (Italian edition):

在海外过年，这滋味只有华侨自己知道。[...] 我们这代华侨到意大利创业，多少年的春节都在海外过了。但是对春节的感觉，已经在我们的心里打上一个结。很多华侨说，他们的快乐在于回忆在中国所过的每个节日，这分明是他们文化的根还在中国，因为他们有这个根，在异国的生活才不会迷失自己。那么二代华侨在意大利长大，受意大利文化熏陶，他们对春节没有太多感觉，他们文化的根应该在意大利了。第一代华侨到意大利是为了改善生活，多数人达到了这个目标，改善了经济状况，有满足感，加上有自己文化的根基，基本没有第二代那样的问题。虽然第二代没有第一代的语言问题，创业的艰辛，但是他们有文化归属感的困惑。<sup>5</sup>

The following are selected statements regarding these feeling of being / not being Chinese and being / not being Italian, and a few descriptions of their understanding of Chinese / Italian characters and cultural elements. The age of the respondent indicated below is the age at the time the survey was conducted. The content of the interviews is translated from Italian or Chinese to English by the author:

I feel I am Italian because I can speak the Italian language and I know more Italian than Chinese people  
(Jiang, 13 years old; born in a big city in Southern Italy, he has been living in the Province of Fermo for 6 years)<sup>6</sup>

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they feel slightly more Chinese than Italian. In them, I can see a more deeply rooted passion for the origins compared to us who were born in Italy [...] Then there are guys who arrived here when they were thirteen or fourteen years old, and it is hard for them to create relations with Italian guys, and after ten years living here they can not speak a good Italian yet.”

<sup>5</sup> “The feeling of celebrating the Chinese New Year abroad is something that only the overseas Chinese know. [...] Our generation of overseas Chinese who arrived in Italy to start a business has spent many Chinese New Year festivals abroad, but this feeling left a mark in our hearts. Many overseas Chinese say that their happiness lies in recalling every Festival in China, which clearly testify that their cultural roots are still in China, and because of these roots they are able to not get lost when they are abroad. But the second generation of overseas Chinese who grew up in Italy and received a deep influence from the Italian culture do not have such a feeling for the Chinese New Year Festival, their cultural roots must be in Italy. The first generation of overseas Chinese came in Italy to improve their living condition, and many of them achieved their task, they improve their economic condition, they have a feeling of satisfaction, plus they still have their own cultural foundation, and do not have the problem of the second generation. Although the second generation did not have the language-barrier difficulty and the hardship of entrepreneurship of the first generation, they have a problem of cultural belonging”

<sup>6</sup> To keep the identity of the respondents anonymous, especially considering that most of them were underage, the article uses fancy names.

Being Chinese means to be born from Chinese parents, to know the Chinese language, to know about the Chinese history [...] Wenzhounese people want to be entrepreneurs, they don't want to be common workers or employees, Chinese people from other part of China are not that way, only the ones from Wenzhou.

(Chen, 25 years old; born in Wenzhou, he has been living in Italy for 13 years, 12 of them in the Province of Fermo)

[Being Chinese] is something you feel, that's it, there are no other objective way [to describe it]; in the future we will all be Europeans, if not for the culture then that will be for the economy, we will all be European citizens, that's it, that's a matter of globalisation [...] the world is the same wherever you go, nothing really changes, a part from the language.

(Dai, 23 years old; born in a big city in Central Italy, he has been living in the Province of Fermo since he was 6)

[I] am always Chinese, my face is a Chinese one [but] I love the blue sky, this is for me the most important thing.

(Tao, 25 years old; born in Zhejiang Province, he arrived in Marche Region when he was 15, now living in the Province of Macerata)

Many Chinese just care about how to make money, [but instead] I am the kind of person who spend money and love to travel, I don't work much and don't feel like working [...] all the Chinese who suffered, like my dad, when he was young his family had no money, thirty years ago, there was poverty in China, so it is quite normal for those Chinese to have this kind of task [to make money]. I live in good conditions, my son will live even better, the third generation will not have anything to worry about [...] the Chinese don't like the sea, don't like to get the sunshine, all they care about is money"<sup>7</sup>

(Bai, 24 years old; he was born in a middle-sized city in Marche Region)

[Money] is the main goal for the Chinese people [...] The Chinese who arrived in Italy lost their love and integrity [...] money is their only goal, they live for money, fight for money, we lost everything, that's a human loss, a loss of human integrity [...] here in Europe the parents are happy if their sons are happy, they don't give too much importance to money, but for the Chinese people money is the most important thing, even more than human relations [...] My parents don't want to know if I am doing good or not, they just ask how much money I can send them [... The Wenzhounese people] are simple-minded people, peasants, different from the ones from Beijing or Shanghai, places where the people are educated and cultured [...] they are all peasants, many among them can barely write their name, the reason why they come here is just to work [...] The second generation of Chinese are slightly different, but if you don't break the tie with your family you will never be free [...] The parents take decisions for their sons, the sons have no power in the decision-making process, it's hard to break the [family] tie [...] at the same time, the kids can protect and emancipate themselves

<sup>7</sup> This one is a quote from an interview with a young man from the Province of Ancona, not far from Macerata.

because they can speak Italian.

(Hao, 30 years old; born in Zhejiang Province, she arrived in Italy when she was 14 and settled in the Province of Fermo at 21, after working in many other Italian cities)

[A negative aspect of China is that] teachers are too tough.

(Wei, 14 years old; born in a middle-sized city in Northern Italy, she moved back to China with her family for a while, and arrived in the Province of Macerata a couple of years later)

The Chinese do not like dogs and do not respect pets [...] most of them spend the biggest part of their life working, [...] they are very strong, they work all night until the early morning [...] they work hard to make more money.

(Jia, 12 years old; born in the Province of Macerata, he moved back to Zhejiang Province with his family and came back in Italy in 2009)

When we were in China, we lived in a poor town, there were no asphalt-made roads but only small streets like those in the countryside, you could barely see a car passing-by, the streets were very narrow, all the building were pretty old, [but today] you can find a district which looks like a rural town and after a kilometre or so you can see something like New York and the streets are full of vehicles.

(Chao, 14 years old; born in Shanxi Province, he moved to the Province of Macerata when he was 7)

很多问题我不知到怎么回答，真的，你今天问的这些问题，有一些，我自己还。。就是。。。很谢谢你问了因为我想去了解一下。。。其实我对中国不是很了解。。。对这个文化也不太多的了解，除了学校之外平时生活上还有很多东西需要学的。<sup>8</sup>

(Zhang, 21 years old; born in Zhejiang Province, she moved with her family in the Province of Macerata when she was 10)

Language, cultural context, family, money, hard-work: these seems to be the main characteristics of the “Chineseness” according to the respondents. However, confusion and hesitation seems also to come out from their words.

The following ones, are other statements and comments by the interviewees regarding the relation between “Chineseness” and the Italian character, between China and Italy, and between their feeling when comparing the two realities.

The Italians are romantic, they love holidays. The Chinese always work. The Italians spend lots of money to have fun and chill out, the Chinese don't. [...] Especially the

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<sup>8</sup> “I do not know how to answer to many of your questions, really, the questions you have asked me today... some of them... I... I mean... thanks for asking, because now I also want to understand a bit more... to say the truth, I do not know much about China... I do not either know much about its culture, a part from what you learn at school there are many other things about daily life we need to learn”.

Chinese from Zhejiang Province are like this, the Chinese from the North are more similar to the Italians.

(Li, 30 years old; born in Zhejiang Province, her family moved to the Province of Fermo when she was 5)

[The Italians] when do something they do something very slowly [...] they love the sea [The Chinese from Zhejiang Province] work hard and are very skilled in trade affairs.

(Hu, 30 years old; born in Zhejiang Province, she moved to Italy with her when she was 17 and since then she has been living between the Province of Macerata and Florence)

If I am in China I spend most of the day at school and have no free time, but here I am off at noontime [...] here you stay at school during the morning, then in the afternoon you can go to play football or volleyball, in China school is the main thing, we always have to study hard.

(Wu, 17 years old; born in Zhejiang Province, she arrived in the Province of Fermo with her family when she was 12)

[My Italian classmates] chat and make noise all the time during our class, but I want to listen to the lesson, if you do not chat with them you are not part of the group [...] the lifestyle is different between Italians [and Chinese], entertainment for instance [...] in China we use to go out, find a karaoke bar, sing and drink all night, they do not go back home before being completely drunk [...] this is the way of Chinese young people to have fun together, you first go out for dinner, then to the karaoke bar to get drunk, finally at home, always the same, this is typical of the Chinese young people [...] The Italians are more tolerant than the Chinese, if two Chinese guys have a quarrel maybe they won't talk each other forever, while the Italians will still be friends and do not hate each other.

(Wang, 23 years old; born in Fujian Province, she and her family moved to the Province of Fermo when she was 13)

Italians are open-minded people, when you meet you kiss each other on each cheek, this is something nobody does in China [...] at school you share the same straw when drinking Estathé,<sup>9</sup> here is another thing nobody does in China [...] when I am in China I do like Chinese do, when I am in Italy I behave like the Italians [...] People from Zhejiang are particular, they do not want to work as employees, they always want to start a new business [...] it's my parents' words that tell me what to do, they tell me that once I will be an adult I will start my own business, earn as much money as possible, our family push us to do so [...] the schools in Italy are not as tough like the ones in China, also the teachers are less strict, in China if you do not study they beat you, the Chinese study also during the night [...] the main feature of the Chinese is that they work hard, much harder than the Italians, you Italians every year go travelling somewhere, you are off on Saturday and go out, the Chinese work harder and that's because to make money is more important than just chill out, because

<sup>9</sup> Common soft drink made of sweet tea, bought and consumed in a small plastic glass with a long straw.

they are afraid of getting older, if in the future you get sick and have no money you will be in trouble.

(Zhao, 19 years old; born in Wenzhou, her family moved with her in the Province of Fermo when she was 6)

Working hard is the most obvious feature of the Chinese people living abroad [...] nonetheless, I am like the Italians, I want to work only during the working days.

(Cheng, 20 years old; born in Zhejiang Province, he moved to the Province of Macerata with his family when he was 13)

Generally speaking, the Italians are very friendly, they take care of the children and are very good-mannared people, but [unfortunately] some of them hate the Chinese and discriminate them [...] 中国人本来大部分都是比较困难的,不是很有钱的,所以他们必须得努力工作,不然的话他们没有饭吃。<sup>10</sup>

(Huang, 25 years old; born in Zhejiang Province, she arrived in the Province of Fermo with her family when she was 15)

The Italians think that [the Chinese] use to work hard in order to make good money, the Chinese are hard workers, they work also during the holidays [... in China we are in class] from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., I think this is exaggerated, a young girl can't even enjoy her childhood, the school is taking up all your time.

(Ping, 23 years old; born in a big city in Northern Italy, he moved to the Province of Fermo when he was 13)

### *Final remarks*

A first observation, based on the results of the survey, is that the different geographical origin creates in these young people an awareness of a different setting of cultural characteristics. For this reason, the expression “Chinese community” become something not easy to delineate and circumscribe. However, a *trait d'union* which is generally recognized as a tool of identification seems to be the use of the language (no matter here if for “Chinese language” they refer to standard Mandarin or local dialect) and some sort of general knowledge of Chinese culture. To identify oneself as “Chinese” but not be able to speak Chinese creates confusion and embarrassment in the observed cases. Nevertheless, the language seems to be more and more often a barrier not just for the Chinese community abroad, but also for the people within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China, as acknowledged less than two years ago by the Chinese government itself (Roberts 2014), or as even emphasized by a female author in this article published in the *The Wall Street Journal*:

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<sup>10</sup> “Originally, the biggest part of the Chinese people used to live in harsh conditions, they didn't have much money, that's why they had to work hard, otherwise they had nothing to eat”.

When I tell other Chinese people that I am originally from Wenzhou, I usually get two replies. One, your family must be rich; two, your dialect is basically a foreign language. (Lin 2014)

Identity, need of identification, feeling of belonging, feeling of discrimination, etc. rely also pretty much on personal situations and experiences, aspects which go beyond the individual's cultural origin. A second remark is in fact that for many of the interviewees, the feeling of being or not being Chinese or Italian depends on the way the people around them (parents, relatives, friends, schoolmates, teachers, colleagues, etc.) make them feel in this or that way. This is, in another words, a process of identity-creation based on other people's judgment and behaviour. And unfortunately, as stressed by the Italian sociologist Milena Santerini, Italy is probably not yet the best place for the social integration of children of immigrants from different cultures (i.e., beliefs, religion, habits, etc.) and with different somatic traits (Granata 2011).

To conclude, on the base of the selected quotations showed previously, it seems possible to state that there is among this new generation of Italians with Chinese origin an awareness of the cultural complexity and geographical differences that impact on their cultural identity. China is a plural universe also for the Chinese abroad, and especially for the young people of Chinese origin who know China just through the tales of their parents and the information they can get from the media. Perhaps the feeling of identity can not just be included in the formula "half Chinese, half Italian" (as they are often depicted by National media and public opinion), but instead connected to the lifestyle and desires of teenagers and young people of the same age, especially to the ones who share with them some experience of migration. The survey did not find out any kind of refuse of the origins of the interviews nor the total acceptance of the habits and tradition of their parents, but instead the adoption of behaviours and styles mutated both from their families and their own local peers, friends, and classmates.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Something already noted and emphasized in previous studies. See, for instance, Granata 2011.



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## AN OVERVIEW OF THE LATEST THEORIES ON THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF *LONG*, THE CHINESE DRAGON

During the '80s and '90s China's opening-up policy, globalization together with cross-cultural communications increased a need for preservation of the country's cultural heritage. Many Chinese researchers looked back to the past and explored the potential of archaeological materials, inscriptions, myths, and legends of ancient China. The origin and evolution of Chinese symbols became a critical area of their studies: the *long* 龙, the dragon, is one of the main symbols of Chinese culture.

During the '80s, a great debate about the origin and the meaning of the dragon took place, starting with the famous "dragon-is-totem" thesis by the poet and writer Wen Yiduo 闻一多 (1899-1946). In the late Qing (1644-1911) dynasty, the totem-theory was introduced to modern China, stimulating scholars like Wen Yiduo to research the native dragon totem, and therefore instigated a new trend of self-identification marked by dragon (Xu 2011, 94). In the 1940s, Wen Yiduo (1948, 221-238) applied the Western notion of "totem" to analyze the dragon as a fictitious creature or a synthesis of different animals. The dragon would therefore be a compound of various totems, each one venerated by the tribes of ancient China, as a token of the historical process of cultural integration they had undergone.

As a consequence of this hypothesis, in the 1990s, He Xingliang (1991), from the Institute of National Minorities at CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), associated the various totems to the ethnic minorities, attributing the dragon the significance of a symbol of unity under the Chinese cultural identity (Zhonghua minzu 中华民族). According to He, totemic culture was particularly prevalent in minority cultures where totemism was used against the threat of their assimilation within Han culture (He 1990, 37-39). However, He argues that the Chinese culture as a whole had a totem in common (the dragon) and there is no regional variety in the view of the dragon as a unifying totem. Every minority culture worshipped this dragon totem, dedicating ceremonial offerings to it, at the same time it became the emblem and symbol of the Zhonghua identity or the common totem of China. Later on, as a next step, the dragon became the symbol of peace and union among the various ethnic groups, giving the mythical animal a political value with nationalistic connotations (Sleeboom 2014).

The totemic theory had three fundamental characteristics:

- The unifying value of the dragon as an emblem of cultural syncretism and Chinese territorial unification.
- The identification of the dragon as a sacred and powerful emblem.
- The dragon only exists as a totem, and not in nature.

Totemic theory had obvious applications throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nowadays the first among the most reliable theories (Chen 2012, 124-126) on the origin of the mythical animal implies the “dragon-is-totem” thesis, i.e. *Long wei she shuo* 龙为蛇说: the dragon would derive from the snake, becoming a kind of “deified-snake”. According to Wen Yiduo, snake clan merged with another clan and absorbed the many other kinds of totem clan. The mythical dragon became the totem of a unified China by incorporating elements of the totems of separate cultures already part of the empire (or the States conquered by the advancing empire).

Other scholars disagreed with the totemic theory due to the lack of written sources or traces have not that have not yet been discovered and historical records do not mention the dragon as the name of a clan (Hu 1987, 71-77; Shelach-Lavi 2001, 37-38). Scholars assert that totemic theory cannot fully explain the origin of the image and sound of dragon. If totem was the mark and sometimes the name of a clan, it was unacceptable for tribal men to mix up their sacred totems, even when they were defeated.

Another reliable theory on the origin of the mythical animal would be *Eyu yuanxing shuo* 鳄鱼原型说: the dragon derives from Chinese alligators (*Alligator sinensis*, the sole still existing in Anhui, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu provinces), or from crocodiles or their ancestors of bigger dimensions, like the saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*), which lived in prehistoric times along the Chinese oriental coasts (Wang 2006, 65; Wang 1987, 79). They were able to forecast the atmospheric disturbances by perceiving changes in air pressure (Bates 2007, 9-11; He 1990, 23). Scholars Gong Sui 公隋 and He Xin 何新 consider the crocodile, respected and feared by ancients, had been venerated as a sacred animal (Gong 2012). According to totem expert Wang Dayou 王大有 (2006, 65), the resemblance to the alligator in the grave M45 of Puyang (Xishuiipo Henan, fig. 1), belonging to the Yangshao 仰韶 dated around (4500–3000 BC) culture,<sup>1</sup> would be a further confirmation of the origin from *Alligator sinensis*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sun et al. 1988, 1–6; Kesner (1991, 29-53) dates the site between 5000 and 4000 BC.

<sup>2</sup> The remains of a man were placed between two mosaics made by white shells: the right mosaic represents a tiger, the left one a proto-dragon similar to a crocodile-alligator (Cucchi et. al. 2011, 13). According to Allan, in ancient Chinese astronomy, the Green Dragon (*qing long* 青龙) constellation of the East was related with the white Tiger (*bai hu* 白虎) of the West, as evidenced by the findings of the Xishuiipo tomb, in which the skeleton is positioned along a north-south axis

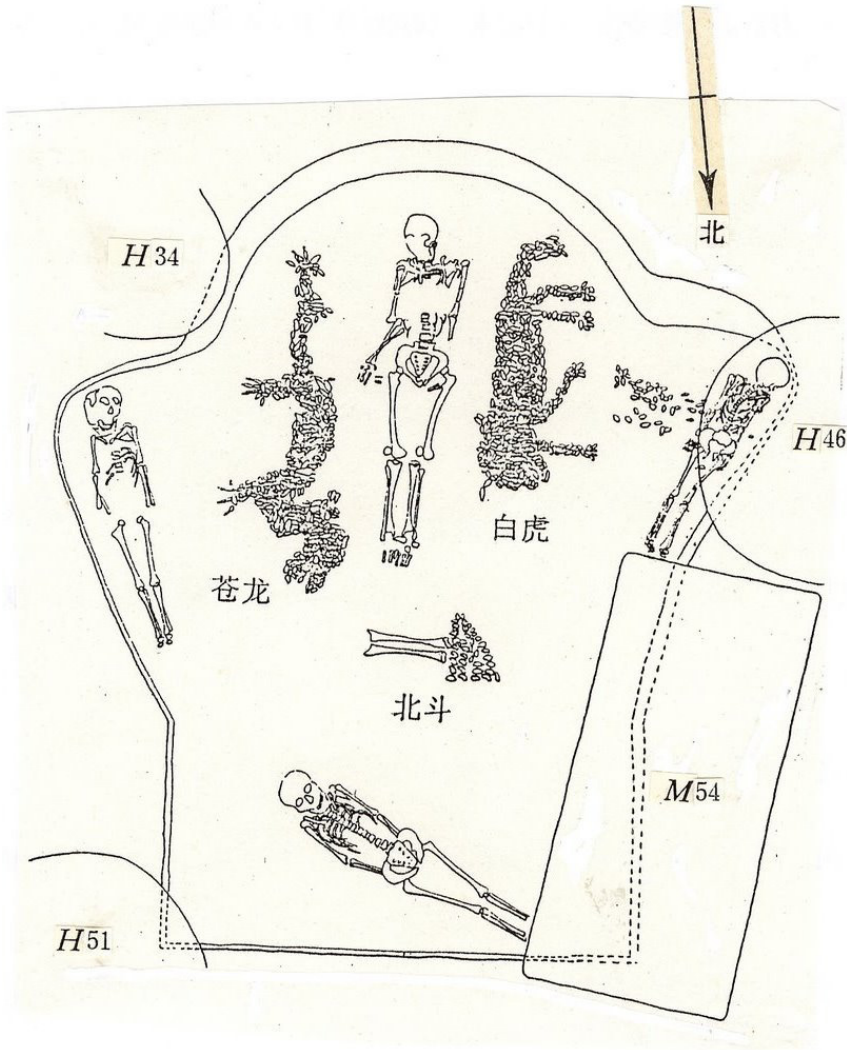


Fig. 1) Burial of a chieftain with shell sculptures of tiger and dragon-alligator (?), grave M45 of Puyang at Xishuiipo (Henan), about 4500-3000 a.C.

(Meccarelli 2014, 66-67). The tomb could belong to a shaman or reflect shamanism of Neolithic people (Chang 1988, 36-39; Underhill and Habu 2006, 121-148). Some claim that it is an allusion to the supernatural and/or celestial sphere, where the “dragon” would be a common alligator. According to James, instead, the kit-set reproduces a part of the Big Dipper (James 1993, 100-101). Feng (1990, 52-60) and Bo (1996, 9-10) claim it to be the representation of an asterism. See also Shelach-Lavi 2015, 83-85, 98.

Professor Nelson (2008; 2014) asserts that the dragon took its form from the large mythical reptiles, and hereafter, in the centuries, a mix of other living creatures which were venerated in China, such as tigers, snakes, birds, turtles, merged into it. These animals were related to water and to the female element *yin*, Nelson argues, the dragon had the power of water, just like women had the control of the dragon in a social contest, with strong shamanic connotations.

Another reliable theory is *leidian yuanying shuo* 雷电原型说: the dragon would be an evolution of the character of the clouds curved lines, because it was created to represent the lightening in the sky (Li 1995, 88-92 and Wu 2000, 24-32, 74) or the thunder (Hu 1987, 71-77) by the ancient populations. Scholar Hu Fuchen (1987, 73) from the Institute of Philosophy at CASS asserts that the pronunciation of the written character *long* 隆 for (thunder-) ‘rumble’ is similar to *long* 龙 for ‘dragon’. Primitive agriculture was largely dependent on rain for irrigation, farming and animal husbandry began to take the place of hunting and fishing as the main source of food. Human beings prayed for good weather for crops, and the imaginative figure of dragon has been gradually created as an agriculture numen. For these reasons the geologist Zhao Feng 赵丰 (2010, 32-33; 2010, 26-27), with the analysis of latitude and climatic transformations, puts the origin of the mythical animal in the need to represent the tornado (called *long juanfeng* 龙卷风 ‘swirling-dragon wind’). This hypothesis would explain why the dragon is related to water and to the sky.

Recently old theories have kept coming back regarding the myth of the dragon as a prehistoric animal or an animal living in the era of the most ancient men, still alive in the collective visual memory. These theories were not taken in consideration due to the fact they refer to periods when man had not yet appeared, but when autochthonous dinosaur fossils, to which were given the name of *long*, were recently found, these ideas returned.<sup>3</sup> To support their argument, scholars point out that the modern definition of “dinosaur” (*konglong* 恐龙) means “scary dragon,” and sources related to the fourth century (*Huayang guo zhi* 华阳国志) document the discovery in the third century BC of “dragon bones” in Sichuan Province (Dong 1997, 118).

Comparisons between Chinese and foreign cultures must also consider the correlation existing between Chinese dragon and the snake-shaped creatures of the Indian subcontinent known as *nāga*. The Chinese character *long* was used in the ritual Buddhist literature, starting from Han period (206 BC- 220 AD) to translate the Sanskrit term *nāga* (Strickmann 2002, 64; Capitanio 2008, 76). The *nāga* were Godly snakes with human faces that thrived in the depths of the watery regions of the earth where palaces were built.

<sup>3</sup> For example, in Liaoning the Meilong 寐龙 was found in 2004 (dating back about 130 million years ago) and the Zhenyuanlong 镇元龙 in 2015 (dating back about 125 million years) (Xu and Mark 2010, 838-841); (Brusatte et al. 2015, 888-898).



Fig. 2) Painted pottery pan with coiled snake-dragon pattern from M 3072 at Taosi, Xiangfen, Shanxi (c. 2500-1900 B.C.), Longhan Culture

New hypotheses have emerged about the origin of the dragon, along with reliable thesis. Scholar Yang Xiulu 杨秀绿 (1990, 86-90) of the Literature and Art Research Institute of the Qiandong, asserts that the dragon must have been a real animal and considers it an oceanic giant python (*haiyang jumang* 海洋巨蟒), assimilated into their primitive cosmologies by tribal societies. The primitive people, Yang argues, who were in awe of the giant python began to use it as a totem symbol of the ancient eastern barbarian clans (Sleeboom 2004). Later on, when tribal society entered class society, it was mythologised, especially as rulers used the dragon as their symbol. Su Kaihua (1994 a, 1-3; 1994 b, 115-120) of the Nanjing Academy for Officers of the Land Force considers the dragon an ancestral symbol, that is the representation of an embryo, as a symbol of the human evolution, because it fulfilled the function of conveying a message about the origin of man. Although it may be a universal phenomenon prevalent in primitive cultures all over the world, the Chinese dragon is a cultural phenomenon unique to China.

The scholar Sarah Allan (1991) – starting from the analysis of the snake-shaped body carved on the *pan* 盆 basins used for ritual ablutions, dated back to the Late Neolithic period (3000-2000 BC) (fig.2)– has associated the dragon to the deep sea and to the “Yellow Sources,” of the underworld in early Chinese mythology. Prof. Allan has consequently highlighted the ancestral connection between the dragon and the water element, in a sacred context related to the cult of the dead.<sup>4</sup>

Despite differences in interpretation, every scholar agrees in recognizing the dragon as a symbol of the Chinese civilization, even if Barry Sautman (1977, 76-78)

<sup>4</sup> The link with water has definitely a very ancient origin (Cohen 1978, 244-265).



limits the cult to the upper class till the delicate moment of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1977), when the animal officially became the symbol of China as a whole.

In the last years, in line with the globalization agenda and with the preservation of the country's cultural heritage, new issues emerged. Many Chinese scholars have focused their attention on the distinction between the Chinese dragon *long* 龙 and the dragons of the other cultures. In 2006 it was taken a significant step forward in refusing the translated version of the character *long*. The reason is that although the translation of the character into "dragon" immediately leads to the concept of China, Catholicism attributes a demoniac meaning to dragons, and this can give place to several misunderstandings, also towards the Chinese population, by which the dragon is identified.<sup>5</sup>

In order to avoid misunderstandings, it was proposed a semantic diversification between the dragon and the *long*, in order not to lose in translation the cultural value of the word.<sup>6</sup> However, the phonetic translation *long* could create misunderstandings when read in the Anglophone world: Huang Ji (2006, 161-169) and Pang Jin (2007) proposed the term "loong" which is very similar to the Chinese pronunciation and to its transliteration in *pinyin*, and moreover would not create any misunderstanding with the various meanings of the word "long" in English;. The double "o" would have also represented, for Huang and Pang, the eyes of the dragon (cited in Zeng 2008, 30).<sup>7</sup>

Pang Jin defined the *loong* as a sacred creature, which includes five animals (fish, alligator, snake, pig, horse) and five phenomena of nature (clouds, fog, thunder, lightning, and rainbows). Its iconography would be a creature with magical connotations, created by the ancient populations in order to understand control, and make propitiatory the natural phenomena they depended on to survive (Liu 2015, 40-43).

Considering all the assumptions and data needed to trace the origins of the dragon, it can be argued that throughout the centuries, Chinese ancestors living in different regions continued to enrich the dragon image with features animals familiar to them. The holistic image has come down from generation to generation, until becoming the common identity of all the Chinese. Beyond the various theories, recently it emerged among Chinese scholars, the need to focus their attention on the distinction between the *long* (Chinese dragon) and the dragons of the other cultures. The intent is to analyze the dragon by avoid misunderstandings and demystifications. This way, it might be clearer how the composite motives

<sup>5</sup> The problem continues to be the subject of a lively debate (Tao 2009, 15-21); (Gong 2012, 245-248).

<sup>6</sup> "Translation consists in the reproduction in the receptor language of the message of the source language in such a way that the receptors in the receptor language may be able to understand adequately how the original receptors of the source language understand the original message." (Nida 1984, 119).

<sup>7</sup> It was also proposed "liong", the union of "lion" and the letter g. The lion, sacred animal and potentially linked to positive aspects, would share with the *long* a propitiatory value.



due to various influences of zoomorphic and polymorphic nature, developed in steps during a thousand-year process of elaboration by various populations and cultures, which has its own roots in a very archaic contest. Chinese dragon always preserves a dynamism originating from the synthesis of different cultures, while it was subjected to a continuous and functional adaptation: the royal value, the highly composite aspect, and its functions stemming from its “sacred and epic-mythological background” are the constants that, in time, elevate it to a zoomorphic transfiguration of the Chinese cosmological system.

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## A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE CHINESE INFORMATION SOCIETY AND INTERNET GOVERNANCE

During the last decade, the academic attention on the Chinese Internet has been growing not only because China is the most populated country in terms of Internet users (CNNIC 2018), but also because at the time this article has been written four out of ten of the most lucrative Internet companies in the world were Chinese. In 2005, Kluver and Yang already noted an increase of scientific publication focused on the relation between PRC and World Wide Web acknowledging “Chinese Internet” as a new research field (Yang and Kluver 2005, 308). Ten years later, Herold and De Seta provided a meta review on the 20 years of Chinese Internet research which included the topics that have been analyzed (2015, 68). Interestingly, the study of Herold and De Seta showed a very limited presence of the Chinese internet studies focused on international issues. Yet, the international role of China in the field of Internet governance has begun to be more relevant; this trend has been already noted by scholars like Milton Muller (2010, 124); Galloway and Liu (2014, 73), Arsène (2012, 4) and Hong Shen who even proposed an analytical framework (2016, 307).

This article aims to provide a historical perspective on the People’s Republic of China’s strategy in the field of Internet governance (*Quanqiu Hulanwang Zhili Tixi* 全球互联网治理体系). Namely, I will define two stages of Chinese Internet history. The first is more focused on the formulation of the so called “constitutive choices” for the development of the Internet (Starr 2005, chapter 2) which basically influenced its development in the country. The second stage is more internationally oriented and aimed to promote the multilateral model (*Duobian moshi* 多变模式) which can be considered an alternative to the multi stakeholder model (*Liyi Xiangguan Duofang Guanfang Moshi* 利益相关多方关方模式). In more general terms, at the present stage, Internet governance is based on the multi-stakeholder model according to which there is a direct involvement of government but also private sector and civil society organizations (Klein 2002, 201; Kleinwacher 2000, 553; Muller 1999, 504; Weber 2014, chapter 3). The alternative model, closer to the Chinese position, is based on a greater role played by inter-governmental bodies.

*Defining the information society, a Western perspective*

The idea of information society represents an evolution from “information economy” or “knowledge economy”. The economist Fritz Machlup was the first scholar to quantify the economic value of the U.S. information production (1962, 3-5) as well as the first researcher to analyze how this kind of production impacted traditional economy. During the first years of the Seventies, other researchers designed other ideas, such as “information economy”, announcing a new historical phase similar to the industrial revolution, but mainly addressed to political and social issues. Bell (1976, 165) referred to a real information revolution, incentive for the postindustrial society. According to his theory, the exchange of information would have represented the base for every social and economic exchange.

The third view was proposed by the Japanese researcher Masuda who coined the expression “computopia” foreseeing some of the most important changes in the field of information technology and on its usage (1983, 146). More in detail, the Japanese scholar was able to foresee the historical growth of intellectual creativity pointing out first, the necessity of reformulating the idea of privacy and security; second, the need to propose a new framework to evaluate time, value, third and more importantly, the information objectification and commodification.

Starting from the first years of the Nineties, the idea of information began to be analyzed at the international level. While between 2002 and 2003 in China there was a debate on how implementing the information society, during the same time the United Nations proposed international mediation through the establishment of the *World Summit on the Information Society* (WSIS). The most important feature of this initiative was that information society was understood as an expression of a globalization process and in contrast with the state power. The basic idea proposed by the United Nations was a society “where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge to achieve their full potential in improving their quality of life” (UN Docs WSIS-03/Geneva/Doc/4-E, 12 December 2003). It is possible to note how in the WSIS the information society vision highlights the importance of “the people at the center”.

*Defining the information society, a Chinese perspective*

The Chinese approach to “information society” differs from the international approach. One clear confirmation comes from the translation of “information society” into *Xinxi Shehui* 信息社会. It is interesting to note that among the potential synonyms, the term *xinxihua* 信息化 was selected. It could be translated into “informatization”. Sources from Chinese government both in Chinese and English refer to *chanyehua* 产业化 or *gongyehua* 工业化 giving the idea of juxtaposition to “industrialization”. The core idea of information society in China

is understood as a different phase from the “industrialization” period. In other words, the Chinese information society is considered as “the historical process, during which information technology is fully used. Information resources are developed and utilized, the exchange of information and knowledge sharing are promoted, the quality of economic growth is improved, and the transformation of economic and social development are promoted” (Central Committee and State Council 2006). Summing up, it is possible to note how the Chinese government has designated more importance to the technocratic characteristics of the information society than to the individualistic ones.

At the time of writing this article, three political leaderships have been involved in the management of the Internet in China. The first leadership was guided by Jiang Zemin whom leadership as Secretary General of the CCP started in 1989 and ended in 2002. The second leadership had Hu Jintao as General Secretary from 2002 to 2012. The last leadership started in 2012, and at the time of writing, has Xi Jinping as Secretary General. It is possible to argue that all the three leaderships have assured a regular development of the information society for China developing policies aimed to advance technologic applications and an efficient infrastructure.

#### *First leadership. Defining the importance of the information society. Three key events*

Jiang Zemin was the first CCP secretary general who officially confirmed the necessity to develop an information society. To this concern, it is important to highlight at least three episodes that took place in 2000. First, the National People’s Congress that took place on March 3rd during the Chinese People’s Consultative Conference; second, the speech held for the Central Military Commission on August 11th; and finally, the welcome message given at the World Computer Congress on August 21st (Jiang 2010, 255-261).

#### *Second leadership, First conflict at the international level, WSIS and NIP*

Hu leadership followed the policies lunched by Jiang, they confirmed that informatization had to be considered the “main power driving the country’s overall economic and social development” (Qu 2010, chapter 1). This contribution of the second leadership is important because it confirms the first conflicts with the international community. One of the most important episodes took place in Geneva during one of the *World Summit of Information Society* (WSIS) preparatory meetings in 2004. WSIS can be considered one of first platforms in the field of information society; its main goal is to decrease the digital divide that separates rich countries from poor ones by supporting Internet development in the developing areas. At the first meeting of intergovernmental preparatory committee of the



WSIS. The Chinese government was represented by Ambassador Sha Zukang, head of the Chinese delegation. Mr. Sha raised six issues: the respect of social, cultural and economic characteristics, especially for developing countries; the promotion of a stronger infrastructure for the information society; a higher level of security; improving the role of human resources; the primacy of the governments in the decision-making process on the private sector and civil society.

Besides one of its first official stances at the international level, during the second leadership there was another important achievement that was the National Informatization Plan (NIP) 2006-2020 issued by the State Council and the Central Committee in 2006. That plan acknowledged that “informatization is a great trend in present global development and an important force to promote economic and social reform” (NIP 2006 – 2020). The same document also presented seven strategies to support the domestic informatization development which were the following: moving forward the informatization of the national economy, supporting e-government development, building advanced network culture, promoting social informatization, perfecting comprehensive information infrastructure, use of information resources, raising the competitiveness of the information industry.

*Third leadership, rising voice at the international level. The World Internet Conference and the establishment of the Central Leading Group for Internet Security and Informatization*

The third, most recent, leadership has been and is still managed by CCP secretary general Xi Jinping. A very influential voice under Xi presidency was Lu Wei, former chief of CCP Propaganda department and head of the general office of the Central Leading Group for Internet Security and Informatization (*Zhongyang Wangluo Anquan He Xinxihua Lingdao Xiaozu* 中央网络安全和信息化领导小组). Although at the time of writing this article Xi's first mandate was still *in fieri*, it is possible to note a more active role from Chinese delegations in the international communities. Some events that would confirm this trend are the promotion of the World Internet Conference (WIC) that regularly takes place in Wuzhen every December, the update of the international code of conduct for information security approved by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and supported by the United Nations in September 2015, the establishment of the Central Leading Group for Internet Security and Informatization in the summer 2014, after Snowden's revelations on cybersecurity, NSA (National Security Agency), and PRISM (Planning Tool for Resource Integration, Synchronization, and Management) online surveillance activities. The Central Leading Group for Internet Security and Informatization is chaired by Xi Jinping.

### *The Information Society at the international level*

At the beginning of the 2000s an international debate on information society had begun developing. One historical document was the Plan of action of the World Summit on Information Society that was presented in Geneva on December 2003. The entire initiative, divided in two phases, (Geneva 2002 and Tunis 2003), was supported by the International Telecommunication Union and the United Nations. Among the goals of the plan was the development of information society at the national, regional and international level and direct involvement of government, private sector, civil society and regional institutions in the decision-making process.

One second important contribution to the information society debate was provided in 2004 by the *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development* (UNCTAD); this event was a chance to design a method aimed at quantifying information and communication development. The conference was important not only because was internationally oriented, but also because sharing similar ideas to the Plan of action of the World Summit on the Information Society was one of the first attempts to implement the multi stakeholder model aimed to improve data quality and accessibility as well as technology information and communication values. A particular attention was directed to developing countries ([measuring-ict.unctad.org](http://measuring-ict.unctad.org)).

Besides the development of plans of action the mid of 2000s, international organizations started also to develop specific tools to support the development of the information society. One very important initiative in this sense was launched by ITU which in 2007 started to publish the annual report *Measuring the Information Society*, considered one of the first historical sources to measure information technology and in the long term.

### *The Information Society at the international level in China*

It is safe to argue that despite the efforts made by the leaderships of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, the Chinese contribution on information society at the international level arrived late. This delay is justified by the fact that one of the first definitions and frameworks for the information society in China was developed only in 2011 with the publication of the report *Information Science and Technology in China: A Roadmap to 2050* (Li 2011, 50-54) provided by the Chinese Academy of Science. The main goal presented in the report was to develop a informatization process in the scientific, economic, and social management fields. More in detail, the report proposed a society that fulfilled the following characteristics (see also Austin 2014, 4):

- User oriented;
- Meet national security needs;

- Allow for the construction of a harmonious society
- Operate “free from monopoly”
- Be ubiquitous
- Offer “convenient” access to information
- Provide the ability for people to “more effectively cooperate”
- Create opportunities for a “higher quality of life”
- Be seen as a human and social phenomenon rather just as a technological enabler
- Have Chinese characteristics through an expansion of Chinese language web content

One of the main differences between the policies implemented by the Chinese government and other Asian states since the very beginning was the creation of informatization index proposed by the State Informatization Leading Group in 2000. At that time, the main task was to find a compromise between the needs of Chinese internal bureaucracy and the requests imposed by international organizations, mainly supported by United States organizations. Indeed, the index was designed referring to similar criteria already implemented by the Japanese government, the Asian Pacific Cooperation (APEC), The European Union, the City Government of Seattle and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU 2004: 12).

### *The role of the private sector*

The development of the Chinese information society was possible because of the creation of a private sector that supported the government plan. To this regard, it is important to highlight the contribution provided by Jiang Zemin who let the technology sector grow faster than other economic ones (Austin 2014, chapter 2). In more general terms, the Nineties represented a historical watershed for the Chinese internet. For instance, in 1995 China Telecom made its first official public connection with the United States thanks to the cooperation of the private company Sprint. In March of the same year, the Chinese Science Academy in Shanghai realized a project that connected through the Internet Hufeï, Wuhan, Nanjing Chinese Science Academy branches. The last important episode of 1995 was the lunch of the first national Bulletin Board System (BBS) gust by the China Education and Research Network (CERNET) at Tsinghua University.

Moreover, during the Nineties the Chinese government developed a supportive economic environment for the technology sector. Between 1997 and 1999 there was a mushrooming of startups that eventually would become some of the biggest companies in the Chinese Internet. Among these firms there is the search engine Sohu, the web portal Sina that eventually contributed to develop the most popular

microblog platform Sina Weibo, the e-commerce platform Alibaba, and OICQ one of the first applications launched by Tencent.

Name	Kind of platform	Year of launch
Itc.com.cn	Portal	1997
Netease (163.com)	Email	1997
Sina.com	Portal	1999
Alibaba	B2B	1999
EachNet (Acquired by Ebay in 2013)	E-commerce	1999
eLong	Etravel	1999
OICQ (Tencent QQ)	Instant communicaiton	1999

During the Nineties, CCP mainly invested in the economic sector creating a solid economic environment as well as developing infrastructures. On the other hand, it underestimated the development of a solid information warfare (IW). After the bombing of the intelligence and communication office at the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999, during the ex-Yugoslavia war, IW was inserted in the political agenda. More in detail, the Chinese government realized only after 1999 that U.S. intelligence was able to control and intercept Chinese embassy cables and exchanges of communication. The delay on information warfare was confirmed by Hwang who stated that the People's Liberation Army launched its first cyber information warfare units only in 1999 (2012, 193). Some other observers also noted that "China's military cyber capabilities concluded that the available evidence suggests that the PLA does not currently have a coherent IW doctrine, certainly nothing compared to U.S. doctrinal writing of the subject" (Mulvenon 1999, 185).

*Between duinei 对内 and duiwai 对外*

The necessity to develop a more secure system of information finds an important confirmation with the establishment of the implementation of the "Golden shield project" (*Jindun Gongcheng* 金盾工程), also known as the "The Great firewall of China", a system that blocks and prevents IP addresses from being routed and that comprises standard firewall and proxy servers at the Internet gateways in order to monitor and control Chinese users' online activities. The "Golden Shield Project" was officially approved in 1998, but it became official only in 2003. Bandurski argues that the purpose of the Great Firewall "was to hold back the tide of foreign influence" (2014). In more general terms, until a few years ago the Chinese communication strategy was divided into two phases, namely, *duinei* 对内

and *duiwai* 对外 where the first one refers to domestic audience and the second to an international one. During its early days, the Internet in China was considered a “foreign thing’. And like all foreign things, it was something to emulate and fear” (ibid.). In more general terms, the management of the Internet was under the Information Office of the State Council (Guowuyuan Xinwen Bangongshi 国务院新闻办公室), a governmental body mainly focused on external propaganda established in 2011. In the most recent years, especially during the Xi leadership, the distinction between *duinei* and *duiwai* has been reduced. Indeed, in recent years, not only have new Chinese Internet management offices been established, but the Chinese government has also begun to raise its voice in international organizations in order to improve domestic control of the Internet infrastructure and of online content.

On the institutional side, one of the most important leaders who contributed to reshape Chinese Internet policies and management has been Lu Wei, former head of the State Internet Information Office. Together with President Xi Jinping, Lu Wei also managed the Central Leading Group for Internet Security and Informatization established in November 2013 and with the specific goal to manage several cyber issues such as political, economic, cultural and military. This new body was established after Edward Snowden’s revelations on the NSA program. The importance of this new body was confirmed by President Xi himself who confirmed “Internet security and informatization is a major strategic issue concerning a country’s security and development as well as people’s life and work” (Xinhua 2014).

At the international level, there are at least four examples that have proven a more assertive role of the Chinese government in the field of Internet governance.

The first one is dated February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015, that day Lu Wei published an article on the Huffington Post titled “Cyber Sovereignty Must Rule Global Internet” (Lu, 2015). The article praised the diplomatic relations between China and the United States and proposed six suggestions to improve global Internet governance. The most important point of the article was the promotion of the multi-lateral model proposed and supported by the Chinese government. Lu highlighted that “without multilateralism there would be no multi stakeholders. Exaggerating disagreements due to difference concepts is nether helpful to the China-U.S.” A more cooperating is needed not only for China-US bilateral relations but also for the global Internet governance. Beside the content of the article, it is interesting to note that Lu Wei chose a U.S newspaper instead that a Chinese (written in English) to share his thoughts.

The second confirm is the organization of the *World Internet Conference* - WIC (*Shijie Hulianwang Dahui* 世界互联网大会) an annual event that takes place every year in the city of Wuzhen, in Zhejiang province and with the goal to discuss Internet issues and policies. This event is interesting because, although there are already long-time established international organizations like Internet Corporation

for Assigned Numbers (ICANN), Internet Telecommunication Union (ITU), Internet Governance Forum (IGF), with WIC China aims to present itself as a leader which plays an active role in managing the discussion and founder of a new alternative platform to the existing ones. The first WIC edition took place in 2014 and got a significant media coverage also due to the proposal on the cyber sovereignty document discussed during the last day of the summit. The event was attended by Wu Hequan, president of the Internet Society of China, several Chinese CEO and managers like Ma Yun from Alibaba, Li Yanhong from Baidu, and Ma Huateng from Tencent. There were also western managers like Reid Hoffman, cofounder at LinkedIn and a several representatives from Apple, Amazon, Google and Facebook who took part in the summit. The second year the event was introduced by President Xi Jinping and prime ministers from Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. During his welcome message, Xi renewed the importance of respecting the national sovereignty of every country as well as the right to choose the model and the means to manage the Internet. The WIC experience is not limited to confirming the Chinese international ambitions in terms of internet governance, but it also confirms how China is now able to create new platforms for discussion and better address its strategies.

The third example comes from the election of Zhao Houlin as secretary general of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 2014. Zhao was the coordinator of key programs in specific areas during the *World Summit on Information Society*, his manifesto reflects Chinese policy supporting vision, action and harmony. Three pillars quite recurring in the Chinese narrative.

The last example is economic. The Chinese Internet market is still appealing to a lot of Chinese firms. Some of them decided to withdraw from it because of apparent political reasons, others like Facebook were directly blocked by the Chinese government. However, the interest is still alive, indeed in spring 2016 Google reactivated Google Play platform, Mark Zuckerberg joined the Seattle Biz-Tech Summit in the fall of 2015 before the official visit of Xi Jinping to the United States. The event was framed as a way to “demonstrate Chinese over the American tech industry” (Mozur and Perlez 2015). Indeed, that event also saw the presence of CEOs and representatives from Microsoft, LinkedIn, IBM, Intel, Qualcomm, Airbnb and Cisco. In more general terms, the attention from U.S. Internet companies is still visible despite the cyber security law issued during summer 2015 that ask more sensitive information to foreign companies to operate in China and the forced implementation of the Chinese operating system NeoKylin to all the terminals of Chinese public offices.

## Conclusions

The results accomplished by the Chinese government in terms of the Internet development have been impressive. China is the most populated country in terms of Internet users; it also has more than 90% of its online population that accesses the Internet using mobile devices. This article showed that China has developed its information society following a particular and different path compared to the international community. This phenomenon is interesting, not only from a domestic perspective, but it is also becoming relevant at the international level as it was confirmed by WIC and in more general terms, by the promotion of a multi-lateral model for Internet governance. One useful future line of research might be represented by the role of Chinese delegations within international organizations like Internet Corporation for Assigned Numbers (ICANN), Internet Telecommunication Union (ITU), Internet Governance Forum (IGF). All this might be useful to contest the idea according to which Chinese internet is isolated by the rest of the world.

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LUCA PISANO

## REWRITING MEMORIES: GLIMPSES ON THE LITERARY DESCRIPTIONS OF TAIPEI'S "CITY SOUTH" (CHENGNAN)

### *Literature, spatiality and hegemonic power*

In the field of the cultural geography, the subjectivity of the literary experience has gained particular attention as peculiar expression of the different ways space can be perceived, described, and sometimes rewritten (Crang 1998, 44). Therefore, literature, as a form of representation, never refers to a simple objective space but it can make a decisive contribution in the formation of a geographic imagery, to understand the possible social meanings related to certain places; through series of symbols and signs is thus possible to draw out the geographic individuality and the contours of spaces as real cultural landscapes.

Since the XVI century, the city and the urban space have been chosen as preferred background of a growing number of literary works in Europe, a phenomenon mainly related with the social and economic transformations that have gradually brought to inevitable changes of space and, consequently, of its perception. Even in the sinophone context, the same development can be seen since the beginning of the XX century, as widely stressed in the literature related to the "Pearl of the Orient" Shanghai from the 20s to the 40s (Brizay 2010, 14; Lee 1999, ch.2).

Regarding the city of Taipei and the related literary works, the topic is more complex as we need to take into account the distinction between the colonial and postcolonial periods, primarily for all the linguistic and cultural implications associated to these different phases. It was pointed out, in fact, how the Japanese had a decisive contribution in the urban planning development of Taipei/Taihoku, which included the areas of Dadaocheng 大稻埕 and Mengjia 艋舺, first commercial settlements located outside the city walls (no longer in existence, dating back to the period of domination by the Manchu) along the east bank of the Danshui river (Yao 2006, 47-48). Beside the priority to impose (even by force) a pacification of the island, the new urban plans clearly revealed their colonialist aspirations, mainly associated with a cosmopolitan vision of potential (as well as ambiguous) assimilation of local people, carried out since the 20s to make the *hontōjin* 本島人 (the islanders) loyal subjects of the Tenno, the emperor of Japan. This plan

of integration took a substantial shift during the last period of the domination (1931-1945) with the enforcement of the cultural plan *Kōminka undo* 皇民化運動 (Imperial Subject Movement) that involved radical changes in some practices of Taiwanese daily life. However, only educated people identified with *kōminka* while the rest of the population remained marginalized, outside hegemonic control (Fong 2006, 175). This aspect is revealed in some literary works of the period as in *Xiansheng Ma* 先生媽 [The Doctor's Mother] (1945) by Wu Zhuoliu 吳濁流 (1900-1976), and *Dao* 道 [The Path] (1943) by Chen Huoquan 陳火泉 (1908-1999) where the struggles of the main characters to become and be recognized as Japanese fellows had to face the harsh reality of disillusionment and identity crisis when they eventually realize that the Japanese didn't consider Taiwanese people as human beings (Kleeman 2003, 218).

With the end of WWII, the Nationalist government (already ruling over the mainland territory) went at once to occupy all those empty spaces left by the Japanese, on the one hand censoring their influence on the island but on the other accepting the colonialist stance (Allen 2012, 35). Following the KMT exodus to Taiwan since 1949, it starts a new era with massive sinocentric propaganda, avoiding any reference to the colonial past, but exploiting the symbolic value of buildings and premises erected by the Japanese as display of their hegemonic supremacy, through a process of both removing and replacing the related ideological discourse. In the following decades, the urban planning of the capital proceeded according to this principle, trying to promote the city as a part of the rhetoric of the "authentic Chinese" bulwark. Street-renaming was indeed among the earliest priorities of the KMT government policies during the de-japanization of the island in 1946 (Hung, Fong 2014, 90). However, street-renaming strategy was not such primary concern for the previous Japanese rulers: they did not rename the streets of Taiwan until the mid-occupation period, implementing the project of renomination of the *chō* 町 (the Japanese municipality system) in 1916, initially in the cities of Tainan and Taichung and later (1922) in Taipei (Huang 2011, 50-51). While the Japanese government showed some respect to the Taiwanese local history retaining the most traditional place-names for their new *chō* names (mainly in Taipei but not in Tainan and Taichung that adopted full Japanese style place names), the KMT government renaming program was expected to carry forward the Chinese spirit, to propagandize the Three People's Principles of Sun Yat-sen, to commemorate national figures and to present the local geography. Therefore, shortly after 1947, all Taipei's streets were renamed according to place names of mainland China, erasing local identity and the identification of the residents with their locality (Huang 2011, 54). Looking at the architecture, the KMT government continued to take advantage of the still widely present Japanese heritage for its own purposes; only starting from the 70s, it assisted the construction of buildings with tough ideological claims, as the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall (Allen 2012, 126-127). These sites, as well as many of those

referred to the Japanese colonial past, are now deeply rooted in the collective consciousness of the local people, and contributed to shape their sense of belonging to the space they live in.

In the context of Taiwanese literature, the earliest attestation of Taipei's urban space as background of literary products can be seen in the narrative of some authors from the Japanese colonial period. Glimpses of the city appear as shadows in the tale describing the vicissitudes of the indolent character of *Moluo* 沒落 [Decline] (1935) by Wang Shilang 王詩琅 (1908-1984) or as the bustling capital celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Japanese rule over the island with the organization of an international fair in *Qiu xin* 秋信 [Autumn letter] (1936) by Zhu Dianren 朱點人 (1903-1949). However, although we still cannot find a peculiar awareness towards the perception of the urban space, the above works are crucial as accounts of the living style of the city as opposed to the rural spaces narrated by the earliest nativist writers of the period, Lai He 賴和 (1894-1943), Lü Heruo 呂赫若 (1914-1951), Yang Kui 楊逵 (1905-1985), Long Yingzong 龍瑛宗 (1911-1999).

After 1945, during the first phase of the KMT presence in Taiwan, Taipei occupied only a marginal role, to appear with increasing frequency since the mid-60s onwards thanks to the flourishing of the Taiwanese literary modernism. As consequence of Taiwan's economic boom, since the 70s the urban space (not only Taipei itself) became the standard context of a large number of literary oeuvres, no matters which stylistic choices individual authors opted for. This occurrence needs to be considered in the wider context of the literary debate on the "return to the native" (*huigui xiangtu* 回歸鄉土) started at the turn of the 1970s and with its climax between 1977-8, when the critical discourse exposed an increasing virulent politicization. The choice of the urban space as literary background was a quite common feature among modernist writers in opposition to nativists who chose programmatically to focus on rural settings. This kind of literary practices revealed merely one of the conflicts between modernist and nativist writers on the *façade* of the literary debate. More serious theoretical essays on the matter showed that such a conflict would have only a marginal impact on the authentic significance and the aims of literary products; in a remarkable article, the writer Wang Tuo 王拓 (1944-2016) in 1977 proposed that, instead of writing about rural regions and country people, Nativist literature should be concerned with the "here and now" of Taiwan society, which embraces a wide range of social environments and people, reflecting the social reality and the material and psychological aspirations of its people (Chang 1993, 159). From this perspective, it seems that the choice of specific context as urban spaces can be also considered as an appropriation of a distinctive trait of the nativist ideology with emphasis on local space as a crucial factor in the shaping of the cultural identity.

Only in recent times, scholars have begun to turn their attention to the cultural references related to spaces as part of the narrative background from Taiwanese writers (e.g. see Xingzhengyuan wenhua jianshe weiyuanhui 2008;

Li 2011). Following the postmodern stream and its peculiar perception of urban space, it has been noted that some authors have developed very heterogeneous sensitivity in relation to the very same places where they set their works. This type of investigation that analyses the relationships between landscape and literature is still blooming and achieving more orderliness, since the manifold perspectives the research works are carried out from (Fan 2015, 228).

### Taipei's "City South"

Because of the large amount of literary references related to the city of Taipei, this paper will focus exclusively on some of those referring to a specific urban area of the capital, known today as *chengnan* 城南, namely "the south of the city". This designation dates back at least to 1901 when the Japanese government drew maps for urban planning of the area south of the ancient walls of Taipei, to set up a new neighborhood in the exclusive use of Japanese residents. When, in 1945, the Japanese left the island, this area was already extended to the eastern gate of the city and later, in 1949, following the KMT migration from the mainland, the whole area was gradually occupied by the intelligentsia loyal to Chiang Kai-shek. This zone, today roughly located in the triangle enclosed by Heping East Road, Xincheng South Road and Roosevelt Road Sec. 3, was remembered for the presence of the residences of many famous intellectuals, as well as for the teaching staff dormitories of Taipei's most renowned universities together with many eminent independent bookstores and publishing houses, all located in the nearby, flourished starting from the end of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s. Most of them started their business as publishers and circumspect advocates of the Dangwai 黨外 movement (opposition parties were still forbidden at that time), spreading their publications among ardent supporters. After the lifting of the martial law (1987) and the change in the political climate, many publishers shifted their activities to bookstores, mainly specializing in academic books (Taiwan duli shudian wenhua xiehui 2016, 93). Writer Yang Jiaxian 楊佳嫻 (1978) from Kaohsiung described her first approach with the *chengnan* bookstores with a lively account of Tonsan Books 唐山書店, one of the earliest of the area (Yang 2006, 105).

Generally aligned with the KMT propaganda, the strong influence of an idealized traditional Chinese culture imported from the mainland can be felt in the whole environment, as summarized by author Lin Liang 林良 (1924) in his short essay "Wenfeng fuyan hua chengnan" 文風拂面話城南 [Brushing literary breeze narrates the south of the city] who recalls that most of the staff working in the building of the Committee for the Promotion of the National Language lived in its proximity, especially in an alley (Chongqing South Road, Sec.3, Lane 36) thus nicknamed "National Language Alley" (Lin 2007, 26).

The genuine display of the appropriation of cultural elements from the colonial

past reveals the most distinctive common trait of literary works settled in *chengnan*; this is particularly worth of attention, as it is clearly at odds with the KMT policy of the forced suppression of Japanese culture influence carried on from 1949 onwards.

What seems to emerge from various accounts shows that this process of appropriation is often a reflection of the nostalgia for an idealized past, far away not only in time but in distance. The common denominator in the different representations of this peculiar urban landscape is symbolized by the Japanese-style houses that occupied much of the area and were mainly used as private residences by authorities and academics arriving from mainland China, after the Japanese left the island.

This area, from its earliest days, had a strong cultural flavor preserved for decades especially around his button vein, namely Wenzhou Street (Wenzhou Jie 温州街). This street, with its narrow alleys and intersections, has had a profound influence that can be traced in a large number of literary works, some of which seem to convey the intellectual atmosphere that reigned there and, despite the changes over the years, is still perceptible today.

One of the earliest literary account can be found in the renowned short novel “Dongye” 冬夜 [Wintry Night], published for the first time in 1970 by Bai Xianyong (1937) on the literary journal *Xiandai wenxue*, and whose background is set in prof. Yu Qinlei’s Japanese-style home. Yu Qinlei, an English literature professor at Peking University, followed the Nationalist army at the end of the civil war, moving to Taiwan and continuing his profession in a local university. The storyline is focused on the meeting of Yu Qinlei with his old companion, Wu Zhuguo 吳柱國 who, in the meantime, became a well-known professor of Chinese history in the US and was in Taiwan for a conference at Academia Sinica. Their encounter is both a nostalgic reminiscence of the common past (the idealistic spirit of their direct involvement in the protests of May Forth 1919 uprising) as well as a manifestation of the frustrations and futility of the present (the dissolution of May Forth Movements’ ideals, the compromises they both had to accept to face post-1949 life), it’s the inevitable victory of the “reality” of the present over the “idealism” of the past (Ouyang 1976, 281). The description of Yu’s residence gives the impression of a decaying, nearly abandoned house: that’s clearly the representation of Yu Qinlei’s hopeless thoughts towards its approaching old age; “with the incursion of the cold of ‘the present age’, ‘Wenzhou’ cannot warm up anymore” (Ouyang 1976, 303. In the last section there’s clearly a word pun regarding the actual meaning of the first character *wen* of Wenzhou) The use of literary parallelisms, such as the above one, is hidden in many points of the novel: in this case Yu Qinlei’s feelings are the results of both general considerations rising from the discussion with prof. Wu, as well as from personal difficulties, for example the accident that made him lame on the right leg and forced him to renounce the much sought-after grant that would allow him to teach abroad (Ouyang 1976, 278, 282). Bai Xianyong knows very well the environment described in the novel: he studied at the National Taiwan



University (NTU) at the end of the 50s, joining the intellectual atmosphere of the time, and starting his academic career in the USA few years later. It should be remembered that many famous scholars such as Yin Haiguang 殷海光 (1919-1969), Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋 (1903-1987), Tai Jingnong 臺靜農 (1902-1990), Zheng Qian 鄭騫 (1906-1991), lived right in those Japanese-style houses of the *chengnan* area.

As well as Bai Xianyong, Lin Wenyue pursued an academic career, in this case remaining in her own *alma mater*, thus becoming a close colleague of the aforementioned Tai Jingnong and Zheng Qian in the Chinese Department at NTU. Tai and Zheng are the main characters of Lin Wenyue's essay "Wenzhou Jie dao Wenzhou Jie" 溫州街到溫州街 [From Wenzhou Street to Wenzhou Street], where she recalls the last gathering between her two old masters, both living in traditional Japanese-style residences in Wenzhou Street but in two different alleys, not so far away from each other, nevertheless a long distance for two old men. Through Lin Wenyue's descriptions, Zheng and Tai seem to embody the figures of intellectuals arising from the past, whose dialogues are reminiscent of the traditional Chinese culture. The entire scene seems a return to indistinct bygone days, filled with an unutterable longing, even expressed by their long silences. It's a picture on the verge of the disappearance; Lin Wenyue was aware of this, and that's why she wished to preserve it in her own script. The antiquity, idealized in the nationalist rhetoric, is represented here in the spontaneity of the two protagonists, with their difficulties in adjusting to a present they don't feel to belong to. The passing, shortly afterwards, of the two old friends became the symbol of a world vanishing forever along with the places that hosted it (both their homes had been torn down thereafter), leaving behind only the shadows of its past, and the melancholy of those who lived it.

However, the most detailed and thoughtful literary descriptions of the *chengnan* area can be found in two works written by prominent female writers: *Wenzhou Jie de gushi* 溫州街的故事 [Tales from Wenzhou Street] by Li Yu 李渝 (1944-2014); and *Yunhe* 雲和 by Yang Jiaxian. Although these two oeuvres were published within fifteen years of each other, they describe two distant worlds, at least half a century apart. In Li Yu's stories, we find the narration of the author's childhood when, just three years old, she left mainland China with his parents to relocate in Taipei, right in Wenzhou Street, since his father had become professor at the geography department of the NTU. In the 80s, after moving to the United States, Li Yu started to set down her childhood memories linked to Wenzhou Street. Yang Jiaxian moved to Taipei to study at National Chengchi University first, and then at NTU. The title of her collection of short stories - *Yunhe* - refers to Yunhe Street (Yunhe Jie 雲和街), an intersection of Wenzhou Street, crossing the very center of *chengnan*, where she lived during her university years. Apart from the age difference of the two authors, it is therefore clear that for Li Yu Wenzhou Street represents primarily the location of her private affections, consequently her accounts are inspired by personal and family matters. Quite different is Yang Jiaxian's perspective, describing Yunhe

Street and the surrounding area mainly inspired by the aura of the importance those places have had in the past, as yearning for the good old days.

Although Li Yu wrote her stories in an epoch in which the reckless urban development had stretched in the *chengnan*, her priority is however to linger on the narration of places and people of the past. Her stories sometimes seem to dwell on apparently insignificant details, but conferring greater spontaneity in a broad context where the Japanese-style houses are just part of a larger landscape. In the appropriation of those buildings once used by the Japanese, the reader can notice the attempt of the new occupants to charge them with symbolic significance, in their aware idealization of the earlier life in mainland China (Lin 2012, 32); as well as the Japanese built those dwellings on the basis of their own conventions, in the same way the new residents seem to consider them as allegory of their condition of displacement and alienation. While those lodges maintained the original shape, is possible to perceive how the domestic environments rather reproduced an atmosphere with intrinsically Chinese connotations. In Li Yu's accounts, it is clear how this phenomenon occurred with unaffectedness, especially considering the high cultural level of local inhabitants, many of whom were professors at the nearby universities. The heavy idealization of the past in Li Yu's work, can be seen even from the substantial marginalization of interior conflicts of the protagonists: the inertia of the surrounding environment as well as the slow passing of time appear to outline their disposition, mostly denoting a sense of indolence and resignation towards the present. Therefore, every character seems primarily animated by the desire to fulfill the duties of the social role, as though that was a crucial condition for maintaining the order of the traditional society, to keep living in those Japanese-style houses like in bell jar.

Unlike Li Yu, Yang's representation of *chengnan* has much more realistic traits: while Li Yu wrote her stories during the 80s portraying the generation of her parents, Yang Jiaxian shows us how this area has changed over the decades, unfolding its present condition. The different approach of Yang Jiaxian that led to the drafting of *Yunhe* has indeed a relation with the work of Li Yu: it's not the longing for traditional China but for the age Li Yu and her family lived in, filtered through a clear influence of European culture. From Yang Jiaxian's perspective, *chengnan*, with all its illustrious residents of the past, is the cradle of Chinese humanistic civilization in Taiwan, therefore the reverence for this area is meant to capture the *genius loci* that still seems to pervade the environment. Yang also focuses on the Japanese-style residences, but to bring out their value from an historical cultural standpoint, as heritage of Japanese colonial period as well as dwellings of eminent personalities that have left their important intellectual legacy. The realism of Yang's description is rooted in the desire to depict *chengnan* current situation not as a static image but as a moment of transition from one epoch to another. This kind of narrative strategy allows Yang to focus her attention on the way places reverberate on people's feelings: from this point of view, her

approach is rather different than Li Yu's, where priority is given to the vicissitudes of the protagonists, and places are just the background against which they move.

For Yang Jiaxian the main concern is the landscape and its correlation with the surrounding reality. From this point of view, the Japanese-style houses are just one of the many environmental details that are caught by the author during her wanderings like a *flâneuse*. Yang Jiaxian and Li Yu, although from very different perspectives, have been both able to grasp the deep spirit of *chengnan* lying in the intellectual predisposition this area has had over the last 60 years. Yang and Li belong to generational and social contexts far from each other, consequently their perceptions have helped to shape different portraits of the area: in Li Yu, *chengnan* emerges from a past that today seems even further away, as the reflection of a society inevitably anchored to a former epoch and to a kind of sensitiveness now already extinct. Yang Jiaxian unveils the *chengnan* of the present days that related itself with modernity, globalization and the reality of the contemporary age, just opposed to the intellectuals in their ivory towers narrated by Li Yu.

### Conclusions

Since culture is always *placed*, both the production of culture and the construction of meaning have strong spatial influence (Chang 2015, 13). The authors who have written about the *chengnan* area are all fully aware of the historical implications of the territory and, in a diachronic view, they seem to show how a material space can contribute to the social construction of an identity. In Taiwan, this is a notoriously sensitive and debated topic, especially considering the last century's history, and it has been and continues to be a motive of animated confrontations and controversies with inevitable political and social implications. From the analysis of the cited literary works, distinct features can be highlighted in the interpretation of the meanings attributed in different epochs to this specific area of the city.

In Li Yu the symbolic value is perhaps the most incisive, and the sense of dislocation is particularly vivid: the Japanese-style homes represent a double dislocation, as legacy of the Japanese colonial period and as symbol of appropriation by continental Chinese intellectuals, the advocates of the cultural hegemony by Chiang Kai-shek in the first decades of KMT government. This latter aspect is particularly clear in the frequent references to traditional Chinese culture, related to a strictly Confucian-style education. Li Yu, from this perspective, is perfectly integrated within this kind of social ethic to the point that no hesitations ever emerged; the strong idealization of the past, in fact, reveals her sense of trust in the values she was raised with. In Yang Jiaxian the sense of dislocation is mainly related to the consciousness of the cultural heritage symbolized by those Japanese-style houses once residences of famous intellectuals; however, the state of abandon of

the few still surviving today looks like a metaphor of the identity crisis pervading the younger generations.

The *chengnan* labyrinth seems now even more difficult to decipher than in the past. In the eyes of a person unaware of its earlier history, *chengnan* appears today nothing but a dense network of sleepy alleys, lined with gloomy concrete buildings. The cultural hegemony of the previous epoch appears to have been dismissed in the name of hybridity as a new concept of cultural authenticity (e.g. see Chen 2006, 147-153), in a geo-historical narrative that attempt to disclose the extant meaning of those facts and circumstances about to fall into oblivion, with the awareness of “how material spaces are complicit in the social construction of identities” (Horton and Kraftl 2014, 166).

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GABRIELE TOLA

THE JOHN FRYER PAPERS:  
STATE OF THE ART AND NEW PERSPECTIVES\*

The John Fryer Papers (hereafter shortened as FP) represent a fundamental but often neglected archival resource. In the introduction of the article, the author briefly summarises the history of the FP and of their cataloguing; then, in the first chapter, he draws a brief summary of how the FP have been employed in secondary literature. In the second chapter, an outlook of the most important contents of the FP is sketched and further research perspectives are highlighted, with a particular focus on the fields of missionary linguistics and of cultural interactions between the West and China. In the third and last chapter, various questions about the FP are raised, especially pertaining to their cataloguing and preservation. The purpose of the article is to present the FP to a broad audience; the author believes the article can represent a useful bibliographic instrument for research on John Fryer and, in a broader sense, on the transfer of Western knowledge to the East (Xixue dongjian 西學東漸).<sup>1</sup>

*Introduction*

The FP are housed in the Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley (hereinafter abbreviated as UCB); they are among the most important primary sources for research on John Fryer (Fu Lanya 傅蘭雅, 1839-1928) and, at the same time, a notable archive to retrieve information on the circumstances of late Qing

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<sup>1</sup> Among the numerous treatises on the topic, Xiong 2011 can be consulted as a comprehensive text.



China. They include materials for teaching Chinese, articles, translations, notes, letters and copious miscellaneous material.<sup>2</sup>

Of the six cartons in which the FP are divided, only the first three are available for consultation. Cartons four to six have not been arranged; they contain thousands of newspaper clippings relating to information on arrivals and departures of ships to and from San Francisco, though dates and sources are not provided.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the six cartons, a box of letters written and received by Fryer is also available; nevertheless, it should be noted that the FP represent only a portion of the bequest effectuated by Fryer to the library of the University of California.<sup>4</sup>

The great majority of documents included in the FP is represented by handwritten material; credit for their typewritten transcription belongs to Ferdinand Dagenais. Starting in 1987, Dagenais began to analyse the FP material:<sup>5</sup> the objective was to continue the work and expand the results expressed in the text composed by Richard Gregg Irwin, *John Fryer's Legacy of Chinese Writings*.<sup>6</sup> Irwin, chief Chinese cataloguer and bibliographer at the East Asian Library, UCB, started the compilation of the original text around 1950;<sup>7</sup> he later integrated his work in the first part of the following decade, following the visit by Charles E. Fryer, son of John Fryer, who made some important biographical information available to him.

#### *The FP and secondary literature: a brief sketch*

The activities carried out by foreign missionaries and scholars in the context of the Western affairs movement (Yangwu yundong 洋務運動), also known as

<sup>2</sup> A detailed list of the FP folders is available at the following link: [http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf0d5n97zt/entire\\_text/](http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf0d5n97zt/entire_text/). Last consultation: October 2017.

<sup>3</sup> The information was kindly provided to the author of the article by Ferdinand Dagenais, one of the most eminent researchers of John Fryer: the author deeply appreciates and thanks him for his help. As supposed by Dagenais, the tasks Fryer had to take charge of as Agassiz Professor of Oriental Languages and Literature at UCB included the analysis and promotion of commercial activities between San Francisco and East Asia: shipping traffic presumably represented the best estimate of these activities. According to the hypothesis by Dagenais, it is highly plausible that Fryer himself had cut the newspaper clippings, since a professional service would have included sources and dates.

<sup>4</sup> Among the various materials, the bequest includes approximately five thousand lantern slides. According to Dagenais 2010, vol. 1, preface, viii, they have still not been located; if found, they would represent an irreplaceable visual archive of China at the end of nineteenth century. On the history of the donation of the collection by Fryer, Levenson and Huff 1977, 135-37, 144 and passim can be consulted.

<sup>5</sup> Dagenais 2010, vol. 1, preface, vii.

<sup>6</sup> The work has been edited and provided with supplementary material by Dagenais; it was thus published in Irwin and Dagenais 1999. In the text, a list of the volumes included in the bequest by Fryer to the East Asian Library is provided; the list is organized according to call number, publishing year, author of the original work and Chinese title with Wade-Giles transcription. In the book, names of Chinese colleagues who worked with Fryer are supplied as well.

<sup>7</sup> Irwin and Dagenais 1999, preface.



Self-strengthening movement (Ziqiang yundong 自強運動), have already been extensively analysed from different perspectives. Pertaining in particular to their translation endeavours, most frequently carried out in cooperation with Chinese colleagues, the existing secondary literature is extremely abundant. Specifically concerning the efforts lavished by Fryer during more than three decades spent in China,<sup>8</sup> among the main trends of research one precisely focuses on his activity for the Translation Department (Fanyiguan 翻譯館) of the Jiangnan Arsenal (Jiangnan jiqi zhizao zongju 江南機器製造總局).<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, a list of the results of his undertakings, comprehensively including all texts rendered into Chinese and compiled by Fryer in cooperation with his Chinese colleagues, has still not been drawn up; different primary and secondary sources should be integrated in order to obtain a detailed outline of his translation achievements.<sup>10</sup>

Notwithstanding the aforementioned abundance of primary and secondary sources, the FP have been employed in only a few works of secondary literature. A text that plays an irreplaceable role is *The John Fryer Papers*;<sup>11</sup> the book, composed of three volumes, is a partial reproduction of the contents of the FP. The work represents a precious instrument for scholars, since it intelligently integrates the FP with other sources of primary and secondary literature related to Fryer and to the contents of the papers themselves.

One of the first academic works with broad circulation to extensively quote from the FP is *John Fryer*.<sup>12</sup> The monograph is centred on the life of the translator; it makes extensive use of the correspondence of Fryer with his relatives, colleagues and friends for a more precise outlook of his activity at the Fanyiguan. The book by Bennett can be legitimately considered a pioneering work: all texts related to John Fryer published afterwards quote it as a fundamental reference.

Among secondary sources published at a later stage, the FP have been fully used in Wright 2000. The text is an outstanding treatise on the linguistic aspects of technical and scientific translation of Western source-texts into Chinese, with

<sup>8</sup> The immense amount of texts of secondary literature broadly referring to the translation activity by foreign missionaries and scholars in late Qing China cannot be exhaustively mentioned in the article; specifically pertaining to the translations composed by Fryer and his Chinese colleagues for the Jiangnan Arsenal, Wang 1995 and Zou 1986 can be consulted, in addition to the texts mentioned further on in the chapter.

<sup>9</sup> For an overview of the education circumstances at the Jiangnan Arsenal, Biggerstaff 1961, 154-99 can be consulted.

<sup>10</sup> Some among these lists include texts translated by Fryer and his Chinese colleagues which are not considered in others, and vice versa; the confusion also derives from the rarity of a few of these texts, such as those preserved only as manuscript. This is the case, for instance, of *Lixue xuzhi* 理學須知, not included even in the personal library of Fryer and described in Kurtz 2011, 125-38. The most representative among the aforementioned lists are annotated in Tola 2018 and, more extensively, in Tola 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Dagenais 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Bennett 1967.

a focus on the chemical nomenclature and late Qing China. In addition to the folders pertaining to the relevant topics, the text by Wright particularly quotes the private correspondence of Fryer, from this point of view skilfully integrating the aforementioned work by Bennett.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, there are also other monographs that, although not centred on Fryer, quote specific sections of the FP; one example is Kwong 1996 (in particular 120-23). The work, dedicated to the famous Chinese reformist Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865-1898), describes his encounter with Fryer; the material from the Papers is used for a more precise description of the event.<sup>14</sup>

*The FP: an outline of their contents and new research perspectives*

The contents of the FP can be grouped into different categories and formats. In the first carton the majority of folders is composed of papers and articles on the Chinese political, economic, social, linguistic, philosophical and religious circumstances.<sup>15</sup> Some folders are specifically of interest for scholars of missionary linguistics, especially number twenty, entitled “A contribution to Chinese philology”; within the folder, Fryer expresses some peculiar linguistic theories on the Chinese language endorsed by him, such as the idea of a primitive common origin of all the world’s languages. Fryer tries to prove the hypothesis according to which English and Chinese have a common phonological background with an abundance of examples; ignoring analyses on the historical significance of the theory,<sup>16</sup> some transcriptions annotated by Fryer to render Chinese characters, sometimes provided on the basis of the Shanghainese pronunciation, can prove to be useful for researchers of missionary linguistics, especially of the systems of romanisation of Chinese language devised by foreign missionaries and scholars in late Qing China.

Analogously, in the first carton, the series of six folders “The great men of China”<sup>17</sup> includes the description of important Chinese personalities; they are

<sup>13</sup> Other monographs indirectly employed the FP, particularly quoting Bennett 1967 and Dagenais 1997; among these, Reardon-Anderson 1991 and Wang 2000 can be mentioned.

<sup>14</sup> For further information on this encounter, Kwong 1994, 194-99 and Sakade 1983, 482, can be consulted.

<sup>15</sup> Some folders are expressly devoted to the analysis of specific aspects of other nations as well; by way of illustration, folder fifty-two is centered on “The mission of the Japanese and the Anglo-Saxon peoples”.

<sup>16</sup> It can be here mentioned, by way of illustration, the debate going on in the nineteenth century on the *Ursprache*. Consult also Wind et al. 1992.

<sup>17</sup> “The three great founders of Chinese civilization”, “The three great poets of China”, “The three great philosophers of the Confucian school”, “The three great Chinese Buddhist travelers to India”, “The three great reformers of China” and “The three great Chinese viceroys of the last dynasty” respectively.

presented from the perspective of a foreign translator who was able to become personally acquainted with some of them.<sup>18</sup> Finally, folders number thirty-eight and forty, “Roman Catholicism in Shanghai and the vicinity” and “Missionary work in China” respectively, are important for scholars of missionary linguistics and history of cultural interactions between the West and China. In these folders, Fryer supplies his acute insider perspective on the relevant situation in late Qing China.

The second carton, in turn, is composed of texts edited by Fryer as teaching materials for his courses as Agassiz Professor of Oriental languages and literature at UCB.<sup>19</sup> Notwithstanding various obsolete ideas related to the Chinese language, folders number three, nine and thirty-five<sup>20</sup> are particularly interesting from a linguistic and literary perspective.

Finally, the contents of the third carton are slightly different from those of the first two. The carton indeed contains numerous accounts of travels realised by Fryer in China;<sup>21</sup> it also includes numerous miscellaneous documents. The latter probably represent the less researched, and, at the same time, the one deserving most attention, material within the FP. To provide some examples, the third carton comprises the translations of two texts: the first is an English rendering of the *Pipa ji* 琵琶記 [Story of the lute], one of the most renowned dramas during the Ming dynasty, composed by Gao Ming 高明 (ca. 1307 – ca. 1371). According to the information provided in the folder, the rendering available in the FP is based on a previous French version<sup>22</sup> compiled by the sinologist Antoine-Pierre-Louis Bazin (Ba Zan 巴贊, 1799-1863).<sup>23</sup> This translation was carried out by “George B. Smyth”<sup>24</sup> who can be identified with George Blood Smyth (Shi Meizhi 施美志, 1854-1911), former president of the Anglo Chinese Methodist college at Fuzhou;<sup>25</sup> on the basis of preliminary research conducted by the author of the article, the text can be

<sup>18</sup> Some among them, such as Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927) and Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929), have not met Fryer but were able to read his translations. For the former, consult Geng 2015, 60-61 and footnote number 52; for the latter, refer to Tola 2016.

<sup>19</sup> On the topic, Chun 2005 can be consulted.

<sup>20</sup> Respectively “Language and literature”, “Mandarin language” and “Chinese language and literature”. Due to space limits, other important folders in the second carton cannot be considered here; for a broader overview, refer to the link in footnote no. 2.

<sup>21</sup> A reproduction of some accounts can be read in Dagenais 1989, Dagenais 1990 and Dagenais 1996.

<sup>22</sup> *Le Pi-pa-ki ou l'Histoire de luth*, published in Paris in 1841 by the Imprimerie Royale.

<sup>23</sup> Chinese professor at the École des langues orientales and author of the Chinese grammar *Mémoire sur les principes généraux du chinois vulgaire*, published in 1845 in Paris by the Imprimerie royale. For further information on Bazin, refer to Pouillon 2012, 71.

<sup>24</sup> John Fryer Papers, BANC MSS C-B 968, Carton 3, Folder 33. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>25</sup> As indicated in the *San Francisco Call*, volume 111, number 16, December 16, 1911; the newspaper can be publicly consulted thanks to the California Digital Newspaper Collection project and is accessible at the following link: <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&d=SFC19111216.2.38>. Last consultation: October 2017.

considered among the first, if not the earliest, English renderings of the *Pipa ji*.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, the identification of the source-text of the second translation is more complex; Fryer only provides an English rendering of the title.<sup>27</sup>

Again in the third carton, folder number thirty-four, “Material re Chinese scientific terminology”, is fundamental for researchers of Chinese missionary linguistics and technical and scientific lexicography. Lastly, two other folders are worthy of note in the carton; the material stored within folder number thirty-two, “Genealogy of the Fryer family”,<sup>28</sup> served as the basis for all descriptions of the life of John Fryer in secondary literature starting from the aforementioned text by Bennett, *John Fryer*. Folders number forty-two to forty-four, on the other hand, include useful miscellaneous materials, such as letters, copies of work contracts signed by Fryer for the Jiangnan Arsenal,<sup>29</sup> newspaper articles and notes on teaching materials.

Finally, the correspondence box includes letters received and sent by Fryer to friends, relatives and colleagues; a substantial portion contains information on his work at the Jiangnan Arsenal. Among the letters to colleagues, those sent by Fryer to Joseph Edkins (Ai Yuese 艾約瑟, 1823-1905),<sup>30</sup> John Glasgow Kerr (Jia Yuehan 嘉約翰, 1824-1901)<sup>31</sup> and William Alexander Parsons Martin (Ding Weiliang 丁韋良, 1827-1916)<sup>32</sup> can be mentioned, in addition to correspondence with other influential historical personalities of late Qing China.<sup>33</sup> The letters included in the box, therefore, can provide insights into historical facts, institutions and the circumstances of late Qing China; since this information comes from Fryer’s own perspective, it can help draw a better description of his life and activities as well.

<sup>26</sup> As for example affirmed in Kong 1976, xvii, “[...] there is still no complete English version of *Lute Song* (*P’i-p’a chi*)”.

<sup>27</sup> According to preliminary research by the author of the article, the source-text might be identified with the *Mofang ji* 磨房記; nevertheless, additional study is necessary for positive identification of the text.

<sup>28</sup> Within the folder, material coming from different sources is gathered, tracing the history of Fryer’s family from 1660 to the seventh generation, in 1920.

<sup>29</sup> On the topic Dagenais 2010, vol. 2, 475-78 can be consulted.

<sup>30</sup> Edkins is the author of numerous treatises on the dialects, religion, philology and history of China.

<sup>31</sup> For a biography, consult McCandless 1996.

<sup>32</sup> For a biography, consult Covell 1978.

<sup>33</sup> Despite Fryer mentioning in different circumstances a diary, it has still not been identified. It is also important to notice how, as pointed out in Dagenais 2010, vol. 1, editorial notes, xv, numerous letters have been specifically copied by Fryer himself; he was probably conscious of the importance of his role as an historical figure and figured that they would have been later consulted by scholars, therefore committing himself to their transcription.

### *Cataloguing, preservation and other prospects*

Some questions arise when consulting the FP. The first is related to the criteria used for the cataloguing. Cartons two and three have indeed been arranged according to the format, such as “Course materials” or “Travels”; a new way of organising the cartons could take into consideration contents rather than formats. For example, folder number twenty-three in carton three, “Language and literature”, could be placed side by side with folder number thirty-five of carton two, “Chinese language and literature”;<sup>34</sup> the same can apply for many other materials scattered in different cartons. It could especially be useful to further categorise folders labelled as “Miscellany” or “Miscellaneous materials”; the need of classification for the enormous amount of information stored within might explain why they have not been analysed in depth by scholars.

An issue pertaining to the FP is the fragility of the material itself. Scanning the papers, especially the manuscripts, which have not been typewritten by Dagenais, would be extremely important; in the first place to avoid deterioration, which in some cases is already critical, and secondly in order to maintain their original aspect, consistent with a recent trend of publishing photomechanical copies and critical editions of significant manuscripts and texts produced by foreign missionaries and scholars active in China.<sup>35</sup>

Research on single sections of the FP, such as the already mentioned English translation of the *Pipa ji*, could also be a useful eventuality. Various materials stored in the FP have never been analysed, due to various reasons; nevertheless, different sections offer numerous linguistics, literary and historical research perspectives. For example, in folder number thirty-six of carton three, “Papers re the Chinese exclusion act”, classified as “Miscellaneous materials”, a “Chinese brochure in six parts”<sup>36</sup> is summarised. The “brochure” was supplied by a certain “M. Wang, of Honolulu” and it provides an insight of the historical background of the Chinese exclusion act, together with the initiatives and the reactions to oppose the act organised by Chinese people.

Moreover, it should be remembered that the FP do not only store texts written by or related to Fryer. This is the case with folder number thirty-eight, “Papers

<sup>34</sup> The first one is catalogued as “Miscellaneous manuscripts”, the second as “Course materials 102 B”.

<sup>35</sup> Due to space reasons, in the article all the reproductions of texts composed by foreign missionaries and scholars in late Qing China cannot be mentioned; by way of illustration, the reader can refer to Zhou 2013, Standaert, Dudink, and Monnet 2009 and Zhang, Masini, and Piazzoni 2014. As for the critical, indexed and annotated photomechanical printings of texts such as dictionaries, glossaries, translations and technical and scientific treatises, the reader can refer, by way of example, to Witek 2001 and to the various works produced at Kansai University Graduate School of East Asian Cultures, such as Uchida and Shen 2013.

<sup>36</sup> John Fryer Papers, BANC MSS C-B 968, Carton 3, Folder 36. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

by S. C. Kiang Kang Hu”, classified as “Miscellaneous materials”, in which articles written by Jiang Kanghu 江亢虎 (1883-1954) are gathered.<sup>37</sup> Analogous is the case of folder number thirty-seven, “Papers by Edward James”, also catalogued as “Miscellaneous materials”; within the folder, academic articles signed by the Methodist missionary Edward James are archived.

The last issue related to the FP is the cataloguing of cartons four to six; as already mentioned, the material has not been classified and cannot be consulted. It is highly plausible that the contents of these cartons are extremely rich; they could provide important information to the scholar of economic and commercial history of China at the end of nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. A classification of this material can also be accompanied by further cataloguing of the already accessible folders, or by their unification for subjects.

### Conclusions

The complexity of the contents of the FP cannot be fully described in the limited span of an article. Nevertheless, the author hopes that the article can represent a bibliographic introduction to the FP, giving a glance of their contents and highlighting a few of the possible research perspectives of such an important archival resource.

The author had the chance to consult the FP during different research missions; he was therefore able to seize a glimpse of late Qing China through the eyes of John Fryer, a translator who spent decades of his life engaged in the renderings of technical and scientific texts, among other endeavours. Even though the ideas and visions of Fryer at times prove to be partial and limited, a skilful use of the FP can richly enlarge research perspectives within the bigger frame of the study of Xixue Dongjian. The author hopes the article can represent a useful instrument for researchers of missionary linguistics and of the history of cultural interactions between China and the West; at the same time, he wishes to dedicate his energy in the future to some of the aspects mentioned, or only hinted at, in the article.

<sup>37</sup> In Irwin and Dagenais 1999, 2, the bequest made by Jiang Kanghu to the East Asian Library, UCB, is mentioned; the bequest is also described in Levenson and Huff 1977, 137. A work describing the life of Jiang Kanghu is stored in the library; the text, *Such a Life: Autobiography of Kiang Kang-hu* (1883-1954), was published by the Jiang family in San Francisco in 1948.

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ALESSANDRO TOSCO

LIKE “AN UPTURNED BASIN”:  
THE DEATH OF THE HEROINE IN THE DRAMA *DOU E YUAN*

Fair torch, burn out thy light, and lend it not  
To darken her whose light excelleth thine

William Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*

Classical Chinese drama often stages fatal events concerning female deaths in which, because of various circumstances, a heroine dies murdered by a man or commits suicide in order to escape an appalling fate. Together with a previous work (Tosco 2017, 333-46),<sup>1</sup> the present essay constitutes the first step of a research of a much wider scope about ethics in women's death in the theatrical repertoire of ancient China. Here we will concentrate on the perception of pain in classical Chinese drama through the analysis of the deaths of the heroines of the most renowned libretti in the Yuan 元 dynasty (1279-1368). In order to do so, we will suggest a comparison with the female deaths in the most important Greek tragedies, taking into consideration the analysis presented by Loraux in her essay *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman* (1987). As the scholar demonstrated, the Greeks portrayed the death of the heroines in a diverse tragic imagery: both shameful and noble deaths always conform to a code of values in which the male sphere is clearly distinguished from the female one. Whether they are intentional or forced suicides, or else exemplary executions, the deaths of the heroines – always the result of social justice and not of a personal choice – mirror an ethical code also in Chinese imagery, rooted, in this case, in Confucian morality and in Buddhist religiosity.

Against such a backdrop, this article will focus on the death to Dou E 竇娥, the protagonist of the drama of the same name by Guan Hanqing 關漢卿 (1220?-1307?): *Dou E yuan* 竇娥冤 [The Injustice to Dou E]. This libretto belongs to the trial drama category and is part of the wider group of the socio-familial dramas (*gong'an ju* 公案劇); the work also belongs to the *danben* 但本 genre, in which the main role is played by a female character (*zhengdan* 正旦). We will then try to investigate the death of the heroine as well as her inner turmoils, also comparing them with *Antigone*, a tragedy by the Greek Sophocles.

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<sup>1</sup> In this work the suicide of Wang Zhaojun 王昭君 in the *Han gong qiu* 漢宮秋 [Autumn in the Han Palace] drama and that of Yang Guifei 楊貴妃 in the *Wutong yu* 梧桐雨 [Rain on the Wutong Tree] drama are analysed.

*The perception of pain and of death in Greek and Chinese dramas*

In this section, we are going to recall the salient points in the debate on the perception of pain and the sense of tragic in classical Chinese drama, in order to highlight how the representation of Dou E's death inserts itself in a wider picture (For an accurate reconstruction of this debate, see Falaschi 2002, 153-70).

In traditional Chinese drama the Greek classification of theatrical texts into "tragedy" or "comedy" is not contemplated. In fact, dramatic works were all defined as *zaju* 雜劇 ("variety show") in Yuan dynasty, in that the playwrights did not identify their compositions with a specific genre. Nevertheless, in its pioneering study on Chinese drama of the Song and Yuan dynasties of 1915, the scholar Wang Guowei maintained that in the vast theatrical Yuan repertoire only seven plays could be identified as tragedies, that he defined as *beiju* 悲劇.<sup>2</sup> As regards the narrative structure, these works showed a painful register from the beginning to the end, whereas, as regards the content, they put on stage heroes and heroines that were able to exhibit a great willpower in facing their misfortune (Wang Guowei 2014, 118).

Can we actually compare, however, the sufferings and the pain endured by the protagonists of these *beiju* to the excruciating inner conflicts that afflict and torment the souls of the heroines in the Greek tragedies? Does Wang Zhaojun's suicide, imbued with love, loyalty to emperor Yuan 元帝 and devotion to her fatherland, move from the same premises as Alceste's, committed as a sign of *pístis* ('loyalty') to her husband Admetos, in Euripides' drama?

Several scholars have criticized Wang Guowei's position, sustaining instead the absence of a tragic genre in Chinese drama. Among these, Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 firmly denied the existence of a sense of tragic in Chinese plays and affirmed that in Chinese drama there is no trace of the Greek concept of *hamartía* 'failure, fault, guilt' and of the inner conflict tormenting the soul of the protagonist. In order to be really tragic, a Greek hero – the critic asserts – has to have committed a fatal error or to be tormented by an irreconcilable conflict; he has to be aware of the fact that no matter how he will react, he will be wrong. On the contrary, Chinese heroes never make a mistake and never hesitate. They are well aware of what society expects from them, and well know what the duties that the position they occupy imposes on them are and thus act accordingly. In the end, even if the virtuous protagonist dies, the villain is punished and a sort of happy ending triumphs (Ch'ien Chungshu 1935, 37-46).

<sup>2</sup> *Beiju* literally means "representation" (*ju* 劇) of a "painful" (*bei* 悲) event. The term *bei*, that etymologically means "sadness, sorrow, grief" and seems to correspond exactly to the Greek concept of *páthos* "torment", from which Greek tragedy moves, actually does not belong to the Chinese theatrical tradition.

Though not dealing with tragedy and tragic sense in the theatrical dimension, Keightley proves the lack of a dramatic sense in the ancient Chinese culture. He explains that the Chinese hero is just and benevolent inasmuch he is a model of virtue worthy of emulation. According to this scholar, the Chinese hero necessarily had to be represented in this way, in that cause and effect were rigidly honest in the universe. Hence, the man who acts according to the moral precepts prospered, the villain did not (Keightley 1994, 37). On the contrary, the Greek hero carries out a mimetic and cathartic function, as in the tragic tradition, as described in Aristotle's *Poetics*.

A third group of scholars considered the analysis of Chinese drama by means of Western parameters of judgment only – i.e. merely applying the Greek theatrical categories to the *zaju* – an oversimplification. They maintained, instead, the existence of a peculiarly Chinese sense of tragic in some Yuan plays. The expression *Zhongguo beiju* 中國悲劇 'Chinese tragedy' was then coined, to indicate a kind of tragic drama with specific Chinese features. In this respect, Yao Yiwei 姚一葦 shows that, since China experienced various schools of thought such as Confucianism and Taoism and religions such as Buddhism, it could not originate dramatic plays comparable to the Greek tragedies. The Taiwanese critic affirms that Chinese drama does not stage a dilemma between two ideological values of equal dignity between which the protagonist has to choose, but a conflict between good and evil, between what is right and what is wrong (Yao Yiwei 1975/76, 444). It is then a struggle between good people and bad people, where the good people are always the protagonists; they suffer and pay with their own life for a crime they did not commit by virtue of an ideal they believe in, but in the end, after several vicissitudes, they are always rewarded according to the specifically Chinese retributive concept.

The debate revolves around the term *beiju*, used to translate what Western culture defines as 'tragedy'; but up to what point can we glimpse a Chinese correspondent of this important Western genre in these *beiju* of the Yuan dynasty? We can surmise that, to discourse on tragic drama eluding important issues such as irreconcilable conflict or concepts such as guilt, the guilt of the *génos* 'race, kin' – all values that are extraneous to the Chinese *beiju* – would empty it completely of its content and drastically dwindle its value. In the same way, to discuss Chinese heroes in the same terms used for tragic heroes does not seem appropriate. The Greek hero *par excellence* is afflicted by an excruciating inner conflict that leads him to choose between two options of equal value; he is aware of the fact that any decision he will take will be wrong and he will have to pay the price for his guilt; he is a hero that acts on the scene in first person. The conflict of the Chinese hero, instead, is based on the antithesis of the struggle between the forces of good and of evil – a conflict that has to be framed in a typically Confucian perspective – but the choice between these two possibilities is not perceived as excruciating, since it is an unequal comparison between a right value and a wrong one. The Chinese hero, then, when facing this decision, naturally chooses good over evil. The rigid

and codified structure of the Yuan dramas prevents the protagonist from making a choice different from what is expected of him: the protagonists embody well-defined positive ethical values, such as the sense of humanity (*ren* 仁), empathy (*shu* 恕), loyalty (*zhong* 忠) or filial piety (*xiao* 孝), according to the role their character plays in the family or in the society. On the contrary, they dedicate little or no attention to psychological makeup nor do they represent human passion, such as anger, hate, jealousy, pride, or desire for revenge (Falaschi 2007, 45-64). It is important to point out that in this kind of drama the pain that the hero suffers is not the atonement of a crime committed by him or his ancestry, as we often see in the Greek culture; it is a pain that rather comes from the outside, generated and developed independently from his actions.

What has been said so far does not imply that in *beiju* there are no conflicts other than the one between good and evil. There are oppositions between values that we can legitimately define as 'tragic' such as the conflict between the good of the empire and individual will. Such is the case of the emperors Yuan and Minghuang 明皇, protagonists of the dramas *Autumn in the Han Palace* and *Rain on the Wutong Tree*, respectively. Similarly, there is the case of the conflict between the unyielding loyalty (*zhong*) to his lord and the individual will coming before Cheng Ying 程嬰, the character weaving the entire plot in the theatre piece *The Orphan of Zhao* (*Zhaoshi gu'er* 趙氏孤兒). Nevertheless, the way in which these conflicts are perceived by the protagonist is not 'tragic'.

In such dramas the internal conflict experienced by a Chinese hero is always expressed in terms of contrasting values of a public order (*gong* 公) and those of a private one (*si* 私). Here the protagonist always opts for the public value, thus sacrificing any private or personal inclination together with those he holds most dear. One's own sacrifice or the sacrifice of one's personal sphere is always seen, therefore, to be the superior value. This is a far cry indeed from the idea of conflict in Greek tragedy, as we shall see below exemplified in the character of Antigone. Once the decision has been made, the Chinese hero never feels remorse for his choice nor is he troubled by a sense of guilt; he suffers and hurts terribly, of course, but he never shows the slightest intention – not even in his thoughts – to reconsider his decision; he is aware of having complied to the moral precepts and accepts the consequences of his behavior without regrets or remorse. Emperors Yuan and Minghuang or the faithful Cheng Ying adhere perfectly to this logic.

Two more fundamental features in Yuan dramas clash with Greek tragedy: the benevolent role of Heaven that, indifferent of human sufferings, does not persecute men, and the final retribution with which every *zaju* ends. As to the first issue, since man is only a small part of the universe, he could never think to go against nature or fate: this action would be considered presumptuous and unnatural (Shih Chung-wen 1976, 42). This does not hold true for Greek drama, in which many plays are hinged on the conflicting relationship between the gods and the hero. As regards the final retribution, this concept constantly returns in every

Chinese drama; as a matter of fact, the law of retribution (*baoying* 報應), of clear Buddhist origin, lingers at the end of every *zaju* suggesting some kind of happy ending to the play. This also happens when the hero dies: in this case, retribution generally consists in the unmasking of the fraud of the traitor and the resulting punishment and death of the latter, or simply in revenge. In the Chinese point of view of the optimistic faith in the benevolence of the universe (Keightley 1994, 47-8), good necessarily has to triumph: in a world rigidly divided between the good that has to be pursued and the evil that has to be avoided, a theatrical performance cannot end leaving the villain unpunished, especially since an innocent victim has suffered or even died because of his actions. Sure enough, the punishment of the culprit shows the spectator that evil can be eradicated from society and that the universe can go back to the pursuit of the Confucian principle of harmony (*he* 和).

When framed inside a system of Confucian values,<sup>3</sup> female dramas in the classical Chinese repertoire hinge around "the conflict between natural impulse and conventional morality, or that between personal desire and social or familial responsibility, which often leads to conflict between wrong and right" (Ma Qian 2005, 33-4). Many heroines, therefore, interpret conventional roles that embody traditional values, in the wake of the didactic examples narrated by Liu Xiang 劉向 (79 a.C.–8 a.C.) in his *Biographies of Exemplary Women* (*Lienü zhuan* 列女傳). Nevertheless, although society dictates that a woman has to give up her own freewill in favor of social duties, sometimes the heroines, both in theatrical libretti and in short stories, act according to their own desires and passions. They must even pay the consequences of their actions with their life. Surely, the sufferings and the deaths of Chinese heroines differ from those of the protagonists of Greek tragedy. Though sharing the same ordeals inflicted on them by a hostile fate, the turmoil, the tears and the inner dilemmas that afflict them, sometimes pushing them towards the extreme act, are experienced, represented and perceived by the public in a totally different way. In classical Chinese drama, it would be inconceivable to put on stage a powerful and complex character such as Medea and her inner conflict; at most, her story would have been told by Liu Xiang among the negative examples of lascivious courtesans (*niebi* 孽嬖).

Among the female characters embodying the traditional values, i.e. the Confucian values, we surely have to list Dou E, a blatant example of how fate or destiny (*ming* 命) can persecute a virtuous heroine that, crushed by grief, is obliged to pay with her death for a crime she did not commit. We will now turn to investigate the inner turmoil of Dou E, her capital execution and how Heaven (*tian* 天) restores the social order.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> On the relationship between Confucianism and the role of the woman, see Li Chenyang 2000.

<sup>4</sup> On Dou E as a tragic heroine, see Xie Bailiang 2014b, 201-217.



*The execution of Dou E in Dou E yuan*<sup>5</sup>

The poor scholar Dou Tianzhang 竇天章, after losing his wife, runs up a debt with an old usurer woman called Madam Cai 蔡婆婆. In order to pay off his debt, he entrusts his seven-year old daughter Dou Duanyun 竇端云 to the woman, so that in the future she will marry her son and become her daughter-in-law. After this, Dou Tianzhang leaves for the capital to sit the imperial examinations. Thirteen years later, Dou Duanyun, who now goes by the name of Dou E, is a widow; in the meantime the herbalist and apothecary “Excellent” Doctor Lu 賽盧醫, a quack deeply in debt with Mistress Cai, tries to strangle her, but she is saved by two villains passing by, Old Zhang 老張 and his son Donkey Zhang 張鱸兒; as a reward, they ask to marry Madam Cai and her daughter-in-law respectively, but the latter categorically refuses to enter into a new marriage. Donkey Zhang then plots to murder Madam Cai in order to force Dou E to marry him; he pours a poison bought from doctor Lu into the Madam’s mutton tripe soup that the young woman had prepared. In consequence of fortuitous events, Madam Cai asks Old Zhang to taste the soup and he dies instantly. Donkey Zhang, then, blackmails Dou E: if she does not marry him, he will report her as the murderer of his father. The young woman refuses and Donkey Zhang takes her to court, where the prefect has her whipped three times, not listening to her declarations of innocence. Only after the prefect orders the flogging of Madam Cai, does Dou E confess a crime she did not commit to avoid her old mother-in-law suffering this terrible punishment. As a consequence, Dou E is sentenced to death and dragged to the gallows. Before the execution, the pious young woman pronounces three prophecies that will prove her innocence: her blood will not be spilled on the ground, instead, it will splash on the standards delimiting the place of the execution; though they were in the warm sixth month, a blanket of snow will fall from Heaven and will cover her corpse; finally, the whole region will suffer a terrible three-year drought. After her execution, Dou E’s father, now a high officer appointed to review trials, comes back after a thirteen-year absence. Dou E appears to him as a ghost (*hun* 魂) to ask him to review her trial. This way, the real culprit, Donkey Zhang, is sentenced to death and the incompetent judge is punished.

In the whole drama, Dou E is presented as a character that fully embodies the Confucian virtues; first of all, the filial piety (*xiao*) towards her mother-in-law:<sup>6</sup> the heroine decides to confess a crime she did not commit – consequently to be sentenced to death – in order to prevent Madam Cai being tortured; furthermore, as a ghost, she intercedes with her father so that he might take care of the old

<sup>5</sup> The complete title (*zhengming* 正名) of this play is: *Gan tian dong ti Dou E yuan* 感天動地竇娥冤 [Moving Heaven and Shaking Earth: The Injustice to Dou E].

<sup>6</sup> Here Dou E perfectly matches the *Precepts for Women* (*Nü Jie* 女誡) by Ban Zhao 班昭 (45?-117?); in particular the sixth *Qu cong* 曲從 [Implicit Obedience] recommending absolute devotion to her mother-in-law.

mother-in-law now that she is alone. Dou E's compliance to the Confucian virtues is also shown in her chastity (*jie* 節): in her devotion towards her dead husband and her categorical refusal to enter into a second marriage with the uncouth Donkey Zhang; this way she conforms to the precept prescribing that "a chaste woman does not marry twice".<sup>7</sup> Dou E complies then perfectly to the female precepts of the three-fold obedience and four virtues (*san cong si de* 三從四德) mentioned by her father in the fourth act of the drama.<sup>8</sup>

The injustice suffered by Dou E is not a consequence of her own guilt nor her ancestry, as we can see in Greek tragedies. The evil here is external, generated independently of her actions, that is, because of the greed and yearning of the perfidious Donkey Zhang.

In the first act of the drama, the young woman recalls the well-established values of Buddhist creed and wonders if the evil she is expiating in this life is not the atonement for a guilt committed in a previous life:

[...] 莫不是前世裏燒香不到頭，勸今人早將來世修。我將這婆侍養，我將這服孝守，我言詞須應口。

[...] It is because I did not burn enough incense in my previous life / That I have to be punished in this one? / I urge you people to cultivate your next life while still living. / I shall serve my mother-in-law and mourn for my husband, / And I must keep my word.<sup>9</sup>

In the second act, when Donkey Zhang accuses her of his father's death, Dou E tries to prove her innocence and addresses an invocation to Heaven that resumes the poor condition to which fate has constrained her:

[...] 打的我肉都飛，血淋漓，腹中冤枉有誰知！則我這小婦人毒藥來從何處也？天那，怎麼的覆盆不照太陽暉！

[...] I am beaten till pieces of flesh fly in every direction / And I am dripping with blood, / Who knows the wrongs I feel in my heart? / Where could I, a woman like me, get the poison? / Oh, Heaven, why doesn't the sun / Ever reach underneath an upturned basin? (Zang Maoxun 1958, 1508; Ma Qian 2005, 68)

<sup>7</sup> Fragment of a quotation taken from *The Biography of Tian Dan* (*Tian Dan liezhuan* 田單列傳), contained in the *Records of a Grand Historian* (*Shiji* 史記) by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145-86 BC): "The loyal minister does not serve two princes, and a chaste woman does not marry twice" (*Zhong chen bu shi er jun, zhen nü bu geng er fu* 忠臣不事二君，貞女不更二夫).

<sup>8</sup> As Dou Tianzhang says, the three-fold obedience and the four virtues are respectively: "obedience to father before marriage, to husband after marriage, and to son in widowhood. Virtues are serving you parents-in-law, respecting your husband, getting along with your sisters-in-law, and living in peace with your neighbors." (三從者：在家從父，出嫁從夫，夫死從子；四德者：事公姑，敬夫主，和妯娌，睦街坊); see Zang Maoxun 1958, 1513; Ma Qian 2005, 76.

<sup>9</sup> Again framed in a Buddhist point of view, Dou E, in the second act, gets to some kind of acceptance of her death, and says that "Birth and death are just part of transmigration" (*ren sheng si, shi lunhui* 人生死，是輪回). See Zang Maoxun 1958, 1501-06; Ma Qian 2005, 56-64.

Presumably, what Chinese people feel as *bei*, i.e. painful and heartbreaking, lies in the ascertaining that one can find himself in the condition of feeling as “an upturned basin” never reached by the sun (*fu pen bu zhao taiyang hui* 覆盆不照太陽暉) because of an adverse fate or because Heaven is indifferent to human sufferings, that is, an honest individual can be offended and violated by his wicked counterparts (Falaschi 2007, 45-64). This image conveys sorrow and dismay, but it seems different from the concept of *páthos* of Greek drama.

A heart-wrenching appeal to Heaven recurs at the beginning of the third act; when Dou E is accused and sentenced to death, she addresses a excruciating invocation to Heaven and Earth so that they come to her defense and prove her innocent; the verses she pronounces seem to express some kind of distrust on the part of the heroine towards Heaven and Earth because they have forsaken her:

有日月朝暮懸，有鬼神掌著生死權，天地也，只合把清濁分辨，可怎生糊突了盜賊、顏淵？為善的受貧窮更命短，造惡的享富貴又壽延。天地也，做得個怕硬欺軟，卻元來也這般順水推船。地也，你不分好歹何為地？天也，你錯勘賢愚枉做天！哎，只落得兩淚漣漣。

The sun and moon hang in the sky day and night / Ghosts and spirits hold power over life and death. / Heaven and Earth should distinguish the pure from the impure, / But why have they confused Dao Zhi with Yan Yuan? / The good suffer from poverty and die young; / The wicked enjoy wealth, rank, and long life. / Even Heaven and Earth fear the strong and bully the weak. / They, too, push the boats with the tide. / Earth, how can you be Earth if you can't tell good from evil? Heaven, you do not deserve the title since you mistake the fool for the stage. / Oh, I have nothing left but streams of tears.<sup>10</sup>

In both this invective against Heaven and the powerful image of the upturned basin a painful cry can be perceived caused by the discovery of Evil. In these lines the protagonist expresses her loneliness and dismay as someone living in a world devoid of light, filled with darkness. Not only has this world been abandoned by the gods but these same gods also seem to be conspiring with Evil against all that is good. Set against the Chinese value system such expressions of despair and denouncement appear rather strong and certainly non-conventional. And yet, in the end, though, in the last lines of the same act, when the executioner is going to brandish the axe with which he will hurl the deadly blow, the officer utters: “Ah, it is really snowing. Can this be possible?” (*Ya, zhen ge xiaxue le, you zhedeng yi shi!* 呀，真個下雪了，有這等異事異事!) (Zang Maoxun 1958, 1511; Ma Qian 2005, 74); the prophecies she announced begin to become true before the fatal blow is hurled. Heaven, then, proves to be attentive to Dou E and her undeserved fate, becoming a witness of her innocence.

<sup>10</sup> Dao Zhi 盜賊 (lit. Zhi the Bandit) and Yan Yuan 顏淵 – favorite Confucius' disciple – represent the bad man and the good man *par excellence* respectively in Chinese literature. See Zang Maoxun 1958, 1509; Ma Qian 2005, 70.

In the entire drama, except for her father, the protagonist is presented as the only character endowed with Confucian *junzi* 君子, a nobility of spirit. She is also, however, fragile in a corrupt world in which all the other characters causing evil turn out to be petty (*xiaoren* 小人). Dou E's "internal moral law" is her only weapon of defence against the others and the corrupt world and yet, unlike other Yuan dramas (such as *Zhao Li rang fei* 趙禮讓肥 [Zhao Li offers his flesh], or *Xiao Zhangtu fen'er jiu mu* 小張屠焚兒救母 [Little Butcher Zhang Immolates His Child to Save His Mother]), this will not manage to save her from death. Evil triumphs.

At the end of the third act Dou E does die, but in the fourth act her ghost comes back on stage almost grotesquely appearing to her father who then solves the plot. Through the final retribution (*baoying*), Good finally triumphs and a kind of happy ending is acted out whereby the virtuous heroine's honour is restored. In such a fashion the spectator is guided back to a harmonious intelligibility of the universe.

The adverse fate endured by Dou E recalls Antigone's; though for quite different reasons, the two heroines are sentenced to death, although Antigone, who is sentenced to be buried alive, will avoid this capital execution by hanging herself. The deaths of the two young women move from the same premises: as highlighted by Loraux, usually virgins (or, as in the case of Dou E, chaste women) do not kill themselves, they are killed (Loraux 1987, 31).

Although they share the same destiny, the turmoil suffered by the heroines is different; Dou E is not tormented by an inner conflict between what can be defined as "non-written laws" (*fúsis*) and "written laws" (*nómos*),<sup>11</sup> as Antigone is;<sup>12</sup> she is, instead, a victim of the events and is not suffering for a conflict between two values of equal dignity. Moreover, as stated by the chorus in the fourth episode of the tragedy, Antigone is obliged to pay for the guilt of her ancestry. Although each of them has to be inserted in her own cultural and moral system, the invocation pronounced by the Greek heroine seems to recall – at least on a superficial level – the invocation addressed by Dou E to Heaven. Antigone will descend to the realms of Hades because she buried her brother; at first, the young woman will wonder what laws of the gods she had disobeyed, but immediately afterwards asks herself why she is still appealing to them:

<sup>11</sup> The contrast in the Greek world between what is perceived as *fúsis* and *nómos* recalls the distinction operated by the Confucian philosopher Xunzi 荀子 (313-238 BC) between what in man belongs to his original nature (*xing* 性) and what, instead, is artificially acquired (*wei* 偽).

<sup>12</sup> In Sophocles' tragedy, Antigone appeals to the ancestral laws of Nature then buries Polynices' body, the brother who had betrayed the homeland. She thus violates the law against such an act as decided by Creon, lord of Thebes and her uncle. Captured and condemned to be segregated in a cave she hangs herself. Creon in turn is punished for his unjust decree when he sees both his son Haemon dead, who has taken his own life over his beloved Antigone's body, and his wife, Eurydice, who kills herself upon learning of her son's suicide. Sophocles' sympathies thus seem to lie with the protagonist even though the fact remains that both Antigone and Creon are right, albeit from two very different points of view, sisterly love and religious piety, on the one hand, reason of State, on the other.

[...] What ordinance of heaven have I transgressed? / Hereafter can I look to any god / For succour, call on any man for help? / Alas, my piety is impious deemed. / Well, if such justice is approved of heaven, / I shall be taught by suffering my sin; / But if the sin is theirs, O may they suffer / No worse ills than the wrongs they do to me!" (Sophocles 1912, 385)

Unlike Dou E, Antigone openly inveighs against the gods because of the disgrace they condemned her to; the extreme gesture, her suicide, seems to be the only possible solution that could end an excruciating conflict and an adverse fate, even if her death will cause a series of sorrowful events. This is the actual tragic element of the drama.

Dou E dies as well, nevertheless, through the expedient of the reappearance on stage as a ghost, the final retribution (*baoying*) is enacted with the punishment of the culprit and the rehabilitation of the virtuous heroine. The spectator's trust in Heaven, that goes back to pursuing its natural harmony (*he*), is not betrayed; the Chinese perception of pain and death are then very distant from the feeling dominating Greek drama.

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CRISTIANA TURINI

AETIOLOGY OF DISEASE AND THE PROCESS OF DIVINATION:  
A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF REALITY NEGOTIATION  
IN THE BIOMEDICAL CONTEXT AND AMONG  
THE NAXI PEOPLE IN YUNNAN PROVINCE

Berger and Luchmann (1967) have first developed the idea that reality's negotiability is deeply rooted in the concept of reality as socially constructed. Awareness of the subjective nature of social reality and of the possibility for consent about its "truth" to be reached through a process of negotiation, has produced relevant implications. This is in regards to the analysis of society itself, but also to the study of medicine, which is understood as a cultural system being part of a broader social system.

What is of specific concern in the aforementioned premise is the fact that the culture of a society has been increasingly seen, amongst other things, as the agent forging the way its members feel and think also about sickness and healing. Through this very process, it is made sense of the experience of these aspects of reality to societal members (Hahn 1995). There is nothing about the body which is pre-social: everyone's experience of his own physiology is a social experience and no pre-subjective condition lies outside cultural intervention. As Freidson (1970, 205) has pointed out: "medicine is involved in the creation of illness as a social state which a human being may assume", and as Kleinman (1988) has suggested, diagnostic classifications are indeed human inventions socially meaningful about what is normal and what is not".

These brief, essential remarks are meant to constitute the preliminary framework against which the general aim of this paper is to be set. Attention will be paid to the development of an anthropological and comparative study of the patient-doctor encounter. The conflictual relationship which comes into being in the negotiation of the reality bringing them together will be explored through the differing perspectives and backgrounds each participant brings to the encounter. Further considerations will be proposed in terms of alternative epistemologies elaborated by non-Western medical systems, with particular reference to the Naxi people living in Yunnan province whose culture understands the body as a "microcosm" of the universe and pathological conditions cannot be situated in mind or body alone, but involve also social relations and self (Sheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). I will then examine the nature of the relationship between layman



and practitioner in the context of Naxi culture thus developing a cross-cultural comparison approach.

Biomedicine can be actually considered as a part of a society's cultural reality concerned with sickness and healing, as our own "ethnomedicine". One of the most relevant problems the clinical encounter poses is how to ensure some communication between physicians and their patients since they have very different views of ill health. This component of the analysis cannot be left out of consideration when dealing with the process of reality negotiation, because it produces specific patterns of dominance and power (Anderson and Helm 1979).

The physician's perspective on ill health is gradually acquired through the process of medical education he undergoes as a student, and it will influence him during his entire professional life. Modern Western doctor's view of clinical reality emphasizes those phenomena that can be objectively observed and measured, which are therefore defined as "real" clinical facts (Helman 2000). This viewpoint focuses on the physical dimensions of illness and considers largely irrelevant the psychological, social, and cultural ones. The great importance attached to physiological facts leads the doctor confronted with a patient's symptoms to relate them to some ongoing physical process (Hahn 1995). On an individual level, the meaning of the disease and the emotional response to it are influenced by factors such as the cultural and social background in which the symptoms appear, the personality of the patient, the interpretation of the significance of this event, the behavioral changes in relation to others, as well as changes in the regular bodily functions (Helman 2000; Zola 1973). In other words, becoming ill is a social process involving both the subjective experience of physical changes and the confirmation of these changes by other people.

Thus, it is evident that the two perspectives are embedded in competing conceptualizations, which need to be negotiated, in order to reach an agreement. With regard to this, Eisenberg (1977) has elaborated a very clear distinction between the patient's subjective experience of being ill (illness) and the biomedical conception of pathological conditions affecting bodily structures and functioning (disease): while the physician looks for the disease and society recognizes a disease, the patient has the illness. However, in the clinical consultation the two parties are separated not only by competing conceptualizations, but also by differences in power. This encounter has indeed often been described as an "asymmetrical structure of the role relationship" (Parsons 1975, 264, cited in Anderson and Helm 1979, 259). As an asymmetrical dialogue, its success depends on the attainment of an agreed interpretation of the patient's condition. The search for a *consensus* is precisely what has been referred as "negotiation". However, due a power differential, in this process a real mediation of the two parties is hardly ever easily achieved: each participant tries to influence the other about the outcome of the consultation, but the physician maintains a disproportional advantage, thanks to social factors (Anderson and Helm 1979).

Actually, the typical encounter occurs within a hospital or a clinic, where the doctor's reality is supported by the context and his ideology appears to be the prevailing one. It is he who decides the length of the consultation, which is not usually even subject to client evaluation. The patient has no choice but to enter the physician's space: a setting in which he is practically an outsider and is therefore subject to the physician's compelling influence (Anderson and Helm 1979). Besides, even if the encounter is felt as a routine by the doctor, it is something that very frequently causes discomfort and worries in the patient. Much of this anxiety depends on the uncertainty he is urged to deal with and on the control of information the doctor partly makes use of in order to maintain patterns of dominance (Hahn 1995).

Since the process of reality negotiation is essentially a social one, meaning that social realities are constructed through language, it might be assumed that the use of language made by those in the medical profession is another great advantage they have in directing the negotiation of reality. It is indeed an important tool either to gain and to maintain authority in the consultation. The physician, having access to a complex, technical vocabulary, is often in a position to confuse and intimidate the patient, to talk down to him, and therefore has much more strength in determining *the* reality (Anderson and Helm 1979). Even the use of typification in diagnosis has become an instrument to anonymize the client, to keep distancing from bodies of others. This encourages their alienation, and reaffirms the doctor's own expertise. The role of the doctor is one of prestige and authority. He is in the position to reveal the patient something previously unknown to him, and he has the possibility of negating or ignoring the patient's perception of reality.

There is a remote possibility that the patient can gain an advantage: this occurs in the strategy of interviewing, when he or she is aware of the fact that the participants are negotiating. In this setting, the client's "advantage is realized if she or he does all the responding and can propose counteroffers rather than initial offerings" (Anderson and Helm 1979, 267). This reinforces the idea that medical diagnosis can be physiologically, and even socially constructed and negotiated. It might be understood as a systematic, eliminative process, constituted by offer and responses (Scheff 1968). The patient gives reasons for his seeing the doctor which the latter rejects one by one, and the physician then makes counter-proposals until an agreement about an illness acceptable to both is reached.

For reasons of space, I will not enter into the merits of more specific implications which may be of relevance in the biomedical context, but which lie outside of the main purpose of this discussion. It might be of interest, indeed, to linger over some observations emerging from the analysis conducted so far. Allopathic medicine is a product of our society expressing two main organizing principles of our culture: the Cartesian mind/body dualism, conceptualizing the human body as a machine (primary responsibility for its repair and maintenance being given to medical technicians) and the belief in the possibility of ritual and symbolic

human hegemony over the bodily processes of life and death (claimed by the medical establishment). These two key principles inform not only the physician's reality and his approach to disease, but also biomedicine in general that, "like all ethnomedicines, is rooted in cultural presuppositions and values, associated with rules of conduct, and embedded in a larger societal and historical context" (Hahn 1995, 132). Ours is a society in which sickness is caused and defined by physiological alterations, therefore, in seeking cure, the physician will primarily focus on physical characteristics. Thus, biomedicine shows its nature of science studying and curing neither persons, nor their bodies, but the diseases of bodies (Hahn 1995), while the process of reality negotiation between doctor and patient can be read as a metaphor expressing indeed a means for bridging the disease-illness gap (Good and Good 1981; Katon and Kleinman 1981).

In a variety of non-Western settings, the living patient is not treated as a "case", but as an autonomous actor. Alternative epistemologies, developed by non-allopathic ethnomedical systems, tend to understand relations among entities such as mind/body or individual/society in rather holistic terms (Sheper-Hughes and Lock 1987), thus escaping Cartesian dualism and the subsequent concept of a mindful self-separated from nature and from the body.

This is what happens also among the Naxi<sup>1</sup> people inhabiting today the region of northwestern Yunnan and southwestern Sichuan.

The hostile environment they live in, dominated by the last offshoots of the Tibetan plateau, allowed for centuries the preservation of a complex, syncretic system of shamanic practices including ritual elements from Buddhism, Daoism and the Tibetan Bön religion, though the situation has started to change deeply since the last generation of great *dongba*<sup>2</sup> extinguished in 2003.

For a better understanding of the modalities through which Naxi culture forges the way its members feel and think also about sickness and healing and of the process of reality negotiation bringing the patient and the practitioner together in this context, let me elaborate on the premises in which such an encounter is embedded. First of all, Naxi reality is populated by a myriad of supernatural beings with whom they have to confront daily: big and small deities, demons, spirits.<sup>3</sup> Many of these forces have a regional character and are only known to local

<sup>1</sup> They are one of the 55 ethnic minorities officially recognized by the Chinese government. According to the last official census *data* published by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission of the P.R.C., in 2010 the Naxi population amounted to 326.295 people, 295.464 of whom were living in Yunnan (State Ethnic Affairs Commission 2015).

<sup>2</sup> The *dongba* 东巴 is the Naxi ritual specialist mainly involved in the celebration of ceremonies and whose distinctive trait is the ability of chanting and writing the ritual manuscripts, compiled in what Rock (1937, 5) already in 1937 defined as the only pictographic script still existing in the world. The other two ritual specialists are the *sangni/sangnipa/sangpa* (桑尼/桑尼帕/桑帕) or shaman, having a privileged and more personalized relationship with the invisible world, and the *pa* 帕, the diviner proper.

<sup>3</sup> One of the most important classes of spirits is that of the Nature Spirits, who can become

practitioners, while Naxi ritual specialists belonging to different valleys would not be able to identify them in their entirety.<sup>4</sup>

The whole of this variety, often accompanied by indeterminacy and lack of coherence in the descriptions collected from one valley to another, however does not reflect substantially different worldviews, conversely, apparently discrepant representations continuously point to very similar understandings of the position occupied by the individual in a web of relationships in which the supernatural, the cosmological and the natural forces influence the life of a person.

All the abnormal sensations of the body gain a social existence through the description of symptoms which makes the experience of sickness accessible to knowledge and intervention (Young 1982). In the context of Naxi culture, the descriptions made by ill persons are often elaborated in very general terms and simply express a discomfort essentially revealing a body in fragmentation.<sup>5</sup> Such descriptions suggest illness, rather than defining it, thus allowing to grasp the world of relations lying behind it: illness can therefore be understood in terms of visible expression of a discontinuity occurring in the web of relations with which Naxi life is interwoven.

Such a solution of continuity involves a disruption in the order of things through which chaos bursts into people's life and body. Chaos causes bodily fragmentation, an incoherent pathological condition that needs to undergo transformation in order to restore to the communicative the indecipherable message it embodies.

Therefore, the Naxi body narrates the corporeal version of an unintelligible message about a *particular* illness occurrence that has yet to be rendered into speech and which involves the cosmological, the social and the physiological spheres. In contrast, the allopathic body is often silenced during the doctor-patient encounter inasmuch as it is forced to speak through increasingly sophisticated technologies.

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mischievous and harmful if not duly respected (Rock 1952).

<sup>4</sup> Although any exhaustive description of such beings would turn out an impossible task, many of them were described by Rock (1972) and the most important entities causing illness have been identified by Turini (2015).

<sup>5</sup> The link between pathological condition and fragmentation has much to do with the idea of "normality" the Naxi have, which is in turn deeply rooted in their history and social dynamics. As their communities live in small valleys or on top of high plateaus, often isolated because of the snow or the heavy monsoon rains, members of households, families and villages construct their "normality" on harmony and reciprocity, establishing relations of mutual support and cooperation, preventing threatens to fragmentation, conflicts, and divisions, thus gaining survival. The physiology of the body is the natural reflection of the physiology of Naxi communities: a healthy body holds a sense of harmony, of wholeness, it is perfectly integrated in social and cosmological relations, while it entails fragmentation, loss and decay in sickness, when it becomes a physical repository lacking its souls, its relations with the cosmos having been altered. The health of a person, therefore, often reflects the quality of the individual's relations with others, while social and cultural elements interact to forge the sensations the Naxi have of their body in good and ill health. For further discussion see Turini (2015).

As elsewhere (Last 1981; Davis 2000), what initially seems a lack of system turns out to be a system oriented towards the proliferation of possibilities, structuring and informing the move towards divination that will unfold that message meant to be realized in speech thus revealing the causes of imbalances in the cosmos and in the relations of beings living in it.

Although I was able to collect descriptions about a variety of different techniques of divination<sup>6</sup> employed by the Naxi, in this analysis I will only take into account the one involving the use of incense sticks, which is also the more commonly used by the *sangpa*<sup>7</sup> in the Lijiang area.

Divination usually takes place in the *sangpa*'s house, precisely in a central room of the building having a raised platform with hearth and tripod in the middle, constituting the heart of the Naxi house.<sup>8</sup> Before starting, the ritual space is purified using the smoke of cypress branches. Occasionally, the *sangpa* also performs another ritual act consisting in rinsing his mouth with clean water in order to purify his body. Then, the patient lights the incense sticks (one to three) and, before passing them on to the ritual specialist, pays homage to the *sangpa*'s protective deities with three bows. Once the incense sticks are in the officiant's hands, he starts uttering unintelligible magic words to invoke the deities who will assist him while divining.<sup>9</sup>

The kind of medical diagnostics unfolding from that moment on refers to a circumstantial epistemological paradigm (Ginzburg 1979, 70-71) in which the search for aetiology and the reconstruction of events take place from clues that are gradually made available through a series of questions and answers between the patient's relatives and the ritual specialist.

During the divination session the practitioner acts whilst keeping in mind a list of all possible aetiological agents. In those cases where he has a fairly clear hypothesis about the cause of illness in his mind, he will ask some rhetorical questions and eliminate certain possibilities, using the shape of the incense burning embers as a starting point for the analysis, and as confirmation of it.

The proposed investigation of the process of divination takes advantage of the notions of simultaneity and sequencing. The hypothesis is that the transformation of chaos into order occurring in the divination session is evidenced in the transition from simultaneity to sequencing in the practitioner's speech. The generation of order from chaos contains a considerable creative potential allowing the individual to put events that initially suggested the idea of simultaneity and contradiction in a causal relationship, thus forging new combinations and sets of meanings. In this

<sup>6</sup> I will not go here into the matter as it has been discussed elsewhere (Turini 2015).

<sup>7</sup> For convenience, I will refer here to the *sangpa* in terms of male ritual specialist, although I also met female *sangpa*.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed study of the Naxi house see McKhann (1989), Hsu (1998).

<sup>9</sup> In some cases, the incense smoke becomes the means through which the *sangpa*'s soul travels to regions of the supernatural world.

perspective, the patient is given a chance to create continuity with his past life where illness had caused rupture.

What follows is an example of simultaneity in divination from my field notes in the district of Shangrilà:

[...] The child's illness is caused by a white turban,<sup>10</sup> but it's because somebody died after falling from horse and the family had to celebrate the ceremony to accompany his soul to the Kingdom of the Ancestors. Following the ceremony you have two lands for burial, though you did not go to the one you were supposed to and went instead where you should not have gone. You should give the child a new name [...].

Combining one idea to the following in an incoherent way, veering from one concept to another inconsequentially, the *sangpa* simultaneously links a series of possible aetiologic agents: the soul of a family member, a demon originating from somebody dying a violent death, the deity of the mountain where their dead are buried. At this stage of divination, the client has only been suggested some possibilities which are not sufficiently clear to be considered correct and the practitioner can still move in a different direction making use of the same words.

Only at a later time will the *sangpa* be able to establish priorities, giving sequentiality to events, putting possibilities into order. The proliferation of possibilities punctuated by intermittent consensus, nods of approval and gestures of refusal is the pattern by which knowledge develops. A bunch of incoherent ideas gives way to an ordered sequence where alternatives are reduced and finally an unambiguous diagnosis is produced, together with the necessary circumstantial therapy and hopefully the curing.

In this process, the client, far from being a passive element, appears as an important reference point: he gives, more or less intentionally, more or less covertly, those indications guiding the ritual specialist's choice at every cross-roads. Therefore, the image of the patient being guided towards therapy by the *sangpa* is an illusion. What really happens during the divination session is that the patient guides the *sangpa* through a process of negotiation of reality the aim of which is the achievement of a diagnosis that is satisfactory for both the client and the practitioner.

Divination intervenes to decipher the embodied coded message, what was formless in the ill organism finds a verbal form, in terms of explanation, which also allows to take over control of the pathological condition. Conversely to what happens in the biomedical context, the Naxi patient is given an explanation for his illness in the terms of *his* reality, which is shared with the *sangpa* through a negotiation based on the dialogical mode. Obviously, for the therapy to be effective

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<sup>10</sup> Like in the Han tradition, members of the bereaved family wear a white turban on the day when the funerary ceremony is held.



and the diagnosis to be correct, it is necessary that reality has, both for the patient and the *sangpa*, the same characteristics, culturally and socially defined. This allows the practitioner to treat disorders which are not only corporeal, but also social and even cosmological. For this reason, the complete aetiology of an illness cannot ignore the social and personal history of the patient.

The Naxi cultural context is one in which sickness “is thought to be defined by human experience and caused by human interactions” (Hahn 1995, 19), where a unitary vision of society, mind, and body is encouraged, and where patient is an active partner in the health care process. Even if this ideal is known to the West, indeed it is not part of the daily attitude, because “Western medical practice materializes sickness in terms of intrasomatic events” (Young 1981, 385). In order to successfully negotiate “reality”, modern physicians should actually conceive “the body as mindful and the mind as embodied” (Daniel 1985, 123).

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## THE “THREE HEROES” OF THE ITALIAN RISORGIMENTO IN KANG YOUWEI’S *YIDALI YOUJI*: A CELEBRATION OF CAVOUR

After the failure of the Hundred Days Reform (Wuxu bianfa 戊戌變法, June 11 to September 21, 1898), Chinese scholar and reformer Kang Youwei was sentenced to death and escaped China. During his long exile that lasted for 16 years (1898-1914), he travelled across Europe and visited Italy from 16 to 28 June 1904. He reached the Italian peninsula by sailing through the Indian Ocean and crossing the Suez Channel in Egypt, landing in the Italian port of Brindisi in the night between 15 and 16 June. During his trip to Italy, Kang Youwei visited the city of Naples, the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii and the Vesuvius volcano (June 16 to 17). He then reached Rome and sojourned there for one week (June 18 to 26), during which he visited many museums, ancient historical and cultural sites and art galleries. He eventually left Rome and, passing through Florence, reached Milan on June 27. He stayed there for one day and on June 28 left Italy for Switzerland (Lo 1967, 195-196; Bertuccioli 1958, 82-89).

Kang Youwei narrated his Italian trip in the *Yidali youji* [Travel diary of Italy] (hereinafter referred to as *YDLYJ*), which was published for the first time in Shanghai in 1905 as part of the first volume of a broader collection named *Ouzhou shiyi guo youji* 歐洲十一國遊記 [Travel Diaries of Eleven Countries in Europe]. Besides the *YDLYJ*, the collection should have included the travelogues of ten countries, but in the end only two of them were published: the *YDLYJ* and the *Falanxi youji* 法蘭西遊記 [Travel diary of France] (1907). The *YDLYJ* was reprinted from 1906 to 1911, and revised editions were published in 1980, 1985 and 2008 by Zhong Shuhe, in 2003 by Li Xuetao and in 2007 by Zhang Ronghua.

The *YDLYJ* is a long account of about 72,000 characters on the Italian route, including long and detailed descriptions of Italy’s many historical sites, monuments, paintings, sculptures, as well as the author’s many thoughts about Italy. It can be considered a hybrid between a travelogue and an essay about Italy, because the last chapters of the work (Kang 1985, chapt. 43-50) are dedicated to Italian history, religion, politics, economy and cultural habits, in constant comparison with China or other eastern and western countries. One of the most interesting topics for Kang Youwei was contemporary Italian history, in particular its unification process, as will be further described in this paper.

*The Italian Risorgimento and its “heroes” in the “YDLYJ”*

Kang Youwei wrote about the Risorgimento<sup>1</sup> (*Yidali tongyi* 意大利統一 “Unification of Italy”) in chapters 6 (Kang 1985, 73-76), 9 (Kang 1985, 90), 35 (Kang 1985, 153), 42 (Kang 1985, 168), 43 (Kang 1985, 169-171) and 44 (Kang 1985, 177), paying attention to both the events and main agents of the unification process. He narrated the main events of the Risorgimento mostly in chapter 43, where he retraced the crucial circumstances that led to Unification, from the Congress of Vienna (1815) to the annexation of Rome (1870; Kang 1985, 169-171).

Kang Youwei also wrote about Risorgimento protagonists, the so-called “three heroes” (*san jie* 三傑, Kang 1985, 168): Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) and Camillo Benso Count of Cavour (1810-1861), describing their contributions to the accomplishment of getting Italy unified.

Kang did not attach the same importance to every “hero”. He quoted just twice Mazzini (Mazhini 馬志尼) in chapter 6 (Kang 1985, 75-76), without illustrating which role he had in the Unification course. He instead quoted Garibaldi (Jialibodi 加里波的, or *Jia jiangjun* 加將軍 “General Jia”) six times in the diary (Kang 1985, 74, 75, 76, 168, 171 twice). In the passage below, Kang not only praised his military ability, but also his humility in not accepting any reward for his merits:

咸豐十年，加里波的起義兵徇滅之，而歸之於薩諦尼王。(Kang 1985, 171) [...] 加將軍為創意三傑之一人。功成不受爵，長揖歸田廬，[...] 真人傑矣哉。  
(Kang 1985, 168).

In the tenth year of Xianfeng’s reign (1860), Garibaldi and his brave army led the uprising and defeated the Bourbons, bringing [Sicily] to the king of Sardinia.<sup>2</sup> [...] The General was one of the three heroes who created Italy. After his achievements, he did not accept any honorific reward; rather he took a bow and retired himself to the countryside [...]. Such a heroic man!

When discussing Count Cavour (Jiafu’er 嘉富洱/加富洱), Kang Youwei quoted him 12 times (Kang 1985, 73, 75 six times, 153, 171 twice, 177 twice) and referred to him with the titles of *Gong* 公 ‘Duke’ or ‘Count’, *Hou* 侯 ‘Marquis’, *Xiang* 相 [‘Prime] Minister’, or *Chen* 臣 ‘official’.<sup>3</sup> Kang considered his role in the Risorgimento trend of events much more relevant than the ones of Garibaldi and Mazzini; he did not appreciate Garibaldi and Mazzini’s tendency to support revolution and exalted Cavour’s inclination to diplomatic action:

<sup>1</sup> This term – meaning “rising again” – refers to the historical, political, ideological and cultural process that began, according to some historians, at the end of 1700 and ended in 1861 with the foundation of the Kingdom of Italy; according to other historians, it began in 1815 and ended in 1870 with the annexation of Rome. Cfr. Holt 1970, 19-21.

<sup>2</sup> Victor Emmanuel II (r. 1849-1878), King of Sardinia and Piedmont, called *Yimannuhe di er* 伊曼奴核第二.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Luo Zhufeng, 1994, vol. 1, 1431; vol. 2, 56; 1996, vol. 7, 1134.

[...] 君臣一德，以成大業。當時意人激於法俗，多倡革命，加里波的、馬志尼亦主是義。而嘉富洱審時度勢，有適有英主相得，獨主王權，以合成意大利統一之業。[...] 苦心於外交，以成弱小之國，惟諸葛可與比倫。吾於近世歐洲人才，最為敬慕。

(Kang 1985, 75).

[...] He [Cavour] was an official and a man of great virtue who made great achievements. At that time, Italy was shaken by French customs and people strongly advocated for revolution; even Garibaldi and Mazzini supported the idea. But Cavour studied and weighed the situation at the same time, and with the support of a sage king [Victor Emmanuel II], he himself took on the regal power and in the end accomplished the unification of Italy [...]. Using his diplomatic skills, he built the small and fragile country. Only Zhuge [Liang]<sup>4</sup> compares to him. Among the talents in Europe, he is the one who I admire and respect the most.

Cavour is presented here as the leading mind of the Italian Unification. He had been a capable diplomat, a strategist who could reason with lucidity on the most effective action to accomplish the mission, without giving in to revolution. Kang Youwei admired him so much that he dedicated to him a long *fu*<sup>5</sup> poem (Kang 1985, 75-76), in which he narrated the “encounter” he had with the statue<sup>6</sup> of the Count while visiting a park<sup>7</sup> in the city of Naples. The poem is 383 characters long and can be divided into four parts, with an alternation of narration, description and celebration of Cavour. The first part of the *fu* (characters 1-94) describes the accidental “encounter” with the statue and the author’s enthusiastic reaction:

我生遍數歐洲才，意相嘉侯實第一。  
我今首登歐洲陸，初遊即見嘉侯銅像聳雲而突兀。  
方面大耳修軀軀，眉宇雄偉態強倔。  
森然天人姿，降誕救意國。  
我生最想慕之英雄，忽爾遇之喜舞不可遏。  
譬如好色者見所愛慕之美人，情意歡欣中暢發。

<sup>4</sup> Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181-234) was the formidable General and strategist of the Kingdom of Shu during the period of the Three Kingdoms (220-280). He is also one of the main characters of the novel *San Guo zhi yanyi* 三國志演義 [Romance of the Three Kingdoms] attributed to Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中 (1330-1400 ca). Cfr. Twichett and Loewe 1986, 356; Chang and Owen 2010, vol.1, 51-53.

<sup>5</sup> A *fu* 賦 is a poetic form that consists of a combination of prose and rhymed verse, which developed during Han times. Kang may have chosen it as poetic form in this case because of its descriptive, celebrative and narrative features. Cfr. Chang e Owen 2010 vol.1, 83; vol. 2, 17-21.

<sup>6</sup> As some research has demonstrated so far, there are no statues of Cavour in the city of Naples.

<sup>7</sup> It is not possible to identify this park, as the description given by Kang Youwei is too vague. It could be the garden of Villa Reale, one of the most ancient public gardens in Naples, opened in 1697 by Luis de la Cerda and transformed into a public garden by King Ferdinand of Bourbons (1751-1825) in 1771. Cfr. *Napoli e dintorni* 1976, 319.

Among all the talents of my generation,  
 the Italian Minister Count of Cavour was the best indeed.  
 Today for the first time I reached the European continent,  
 As I started the visit, I bumped into the bronze statue of Count Cavour,  
 Unexpected and majestic.  
 Squared face, big ears,<sup>8</sup> mighty chest,  
 large forehead and virile gaze;  
 Dignified in his appearance, like a celestial being descended to save Italy.  
 The hero I admired most among the ones of my generation,  
 here it is, I met him by chance. I dance with uncontrollable joy,  
 like a lover who just saw his beloved and felt overwhelming delight.

The second part of the poem (characters 95-210) is a narration of the context in which Cavour acted. Here Kang Youwei illustrates the importance of Cavour's diplomacy, comparing the deep strategic bond between Cavour and King Victor Emmanuel II to the one between Zhuge Liang and King Liu Bei 劉備 (161-223). Kang also stresses the difficulties encountered by Cavour during diplomatic action, which were much more difficult than what Bismark, the German chancellor, had experienced:<sup>9</sup>

忽念構造遇之艱，聳然起敬手加額。  
 少日躬耕類南陽，壯能擇主同諸葛。  
 君臣魚水亦復同，明良千古難遇合。  
 當時革命民主論紛紜，獨以尊王違俗說。  
 遂以分裂十一邦，竟能統一國獨立。  
 外結英、法兩君相，內容加、瑪二豪傑。  
 前拒強奧之奴制，後絕霸法相侵壓。  
 成功雖同俾斯麥，艱難締構過千百。

All at once I realized how difficult the creation [of Italy] was,  
 I conjoined my hands as a sign of respect and honor.  
 The young Zhuge [Liang] ploughed the soil every day in Nanyang,  
 He grew up and could choose [Liu Bei] as his lord.<sup>10</sup>  
 Sovereign and minister are tied like fish and water,

<sup>8</sup> The physical description of Cavour seems to recall the one contained in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* about King Liu Bei: "He stood seven and a half feet tall [...]. His ear lobes were elongated [...]", cfr. Roberts 1994, vol. 1, 10, and the one of General Sima Shi: "He had a round face and large ears, a flat mouth and thick lips", cfr. Roberts 1994, vol. 3, 1301. Liu Bei was the founder of Han-Shu state; he unified China during the Three Kingdom era (220-280) with the fundamental help of Zhuge Liang. They were both historical figures and fictional characters. Cfr. Xiong Victor Cunrui 2009, 4-5.

<sup>9</sup> Otto Von Bismark (1815-1898) was the Prussian Minister who led Germany to unification and its transformation into a nation in 1871. Cfr. Biesinger 2006, 73-74.

<sup>10</sup> This also seems to be a clear reference to an episode of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, in which Zhuge Liang was asked by Liu Bei in person to help him unify China; he eventually accepted. Cfr. Roberts 1994 vol. 1, 435-459.

Such a wonderful bond has hardly been seen in centuries.  
 At that time, discourses on revolution and democracy were animated;  
 [Cavour] instead stood loyal to the king and went against the tide.  
 Then from eleven divided states he founded a whole independent nation.  
 Outside, he joined forces with the minister of England and the sovereign of France,<sup>11</sup>  
 Inside, he led the two heroes Garibaldi and Mazzini in.  
 First, he broke the domination of the mighty Austrian empire,  
 Then, he crushed the oppressive French tyranny [of the Bourbons].  
 Such an achievement, although it is similar to Bismark’s,  
 was much harder to obtain.

The third part of the poem (characters 211-294) can be considered a *climax* in celebration of Cavour: he is depicted as a mythological figure, a supernatural being unmoved by any human passion that could lead armies and skies, as well as the destiny of a country:

超然若無人世欲，意國為妻情何窄。  
 大地嘉偶汝最奇，得此丈夫種不滅。  
 瓣香我只為公焚，今日相見情彌親。  
 有若公生吒風雲，揮斥天地獨立軍。  
 仗劍昂首向蒼旻，微公誰歸無典墳。  
 奈波里本非公國，鑄金乃記范蠡勳。  
 Unmoved by any human passion,  
 He took Italy as his spouse, their sentiment being so deep.  
 This couple is the most marvelous in the world,  
 with such a partner the [Italian] ancestry will not disappear.  
 For you only, Count, I burn incense with respect.  
 Today we met and I feel for you deeper than before.  
 The Count leads the wind and the clouds,  
 rules Sky and Earth, alone leads armies.  
 A sword in the hand, his head towards the sky,  
 no one could come back without the Count, not a grave in memory.  
 Naples was not the hometown of the Count,  
 [but] she melt gold in honor of Fan Li.<sup>12</sup>

The fourth and last part of this *fu* poem (characters 295-383) is a descriptive one. Here the author first described the setting of the scene in which he happened to

<sup>11</sup> Here Kang refers to the alliance between Cavour, Napoleon III (r. 1852-1870) who was leading France, and the Count of Malmesbury (1807-1889), the Prime Minister of England, in the war of Crimea (1855). Thanks to his participation in the war, Cavour took part in the peacemaking congress in Paris and presented the Italian issue. Cfr. Holt 1970, 188-192.

<sup>12</sup> Here Cavour is associated with Fan Li 范蠡 (V century BC), minister and sage counsellor of King Guojian of Yue state, who fought against the state of Wu for supremacy in China during the Warring States period (722 BC-481 BC). Cfr. Wang Zijin 2008, 5-10.

see the statue, and then his thoughts seem to go towards the East, to his faraway motherland and her troublesome situation. Kang seems to feel a sort of melancholic emotion; perhaps he wanted to be there to help his fellow citizens and his mother country, but he could not:

林木森蔚樓台新，海浪淙淙石堤濱。  
電燈萬千歌樂喧，繡幃香鞋草成茵，  
士女嬉遊瞻仰頻。我生東方之大秦，  
當公立國之始已四旬，與公相隔三萬里之關津。  
豈意入境第一日，先見公像結緣因。  
東海西海波瀾接，徘徊悵望想千春。

The wood is green and lush, buildings are new,  
sea waves gurgle on the stony quay.  
Thousands of brilliant lights, the air filled with songs and melodies,  
embroidered curtains, scented shoes on the grass,  
gentlemen and ladies walk in delight,  
respectfully admiring and admiring [the statue].  
I was born in the Great Qin Empire<sup>13</sup> of the East,  
from the foundation of the Kingdom [of Italy] already four decades,  
thirty thousand *li* separated me and the Count.  
How could I imagine that the first day at the threshold [of Europe],  
I first would have met your statue: this was destiny.  
Waves bond eastern and western seas,  
Wandering to and fro, thoughts melancholically lost in space and time.

### Conclusions

Kang Youwei was not the only scholar who was interested in Risorgimento. In fact, the history of the Italian Unification seemed to echo many times in China and Japan. His disciple Liang Qichao (1873-1929) also wrote two works about this topic,<sup>14</sup> where he showed his propensity to Mazzini (Tang 1996, 89-92). In general, we can say that among the Risorgimento protagonists, Mazzini and Garibaldi were much more praised than Cavour.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The term “Da Qin” was used by Chinese people to refer to the Roman Empire, which was compared to the first Chinese Empire of the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC). Cfr. Bertuccioli 1985: 109.

<sup>14</sup> They are *Yidali jianguo sanjie zhuan* 意大利建國三傑傳 “Biographies of the Three Heroes who built the Italian nation” and the uncompleted opera *Xin Luoma* 新羅馬 “New Rome”, published in 1902 in Japan. Cfr. Bertuccioli 1981, 309.

<sup>15</sup> About this topic, see the contributions of Bertuccioli, Corradini, Bordone, Fusatoshi Fujisawa 藤沢房俊 and Takaharu Miyashita 孝晴宮下 collected in the volume *Garibaldi, Mazzini e il risorgimento nel risveglio dell'Asia e dell'Africa*, published after the conference held in Parma in 1982, cfr. Borsa 1984, 287-326 e 357-400.



Kang Youwei instead seemed to go in the opposite way. He just mentioned Mazzini, labelling him as a revolutionary, and praised Garibaldi, fascinated by revolution too, but also a brave General and humble person. Finally, he used poetic words to celebrate Cavour, depicting him as the typical Chinese hero, a powerful and supernatural being as well as a rational mind and diplomatic master. He also praised his faithfulness to the king and to the monarchical system, as a sort of continuity with the past form of government. Kang eventually recognized himself in Cavour, as they seemed to have many things in common: they both did not have a propensity for revolution, preferring diplomacy, and both remained faithful to the sovereign and supported the monarchical constitutional form of government. He maybe would have liked to be for China what Cavour had been to Italy, but he did not have the chance, and seemed to declare this disillusion in the last part of the *fu* poem.

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SOME REMARKS ABOUT MENCIUS' THEORY OF  
HUMAN NATURE IN THE XÚNZĪ

I

In chapter 23,<sup>1</sup> Xúnzǐ ascribes to Mencius the following statement: “孟子曰：人之學者，其性善。” which is translated as: “Mencius contended that since man can learn, his nature is good.” (Knoblock 1994, 152); “Mencius states that man is capable of learning because his nature is good.” (Burton Watson 1963); “Mencius says: The nature of men who learn is good.” (Graham 1989, 246).

While it is certainly true that both Mencius and Xúnzǐ do not share the same position about human nature, scholars have repeatedly pointed out that the latter did not understand properly Mencius' theories; to use A. C. Graham's words: “Xunzi's case against Mencius, although lucid and coherent, is consequently always a little off target.” (Graham 1989, 246).

We can however go a step further and ask if Xúnzǐ did actually misunderstand his opponent or if he, on the contrary, had a clear picture of what Mencius actually thought about human nature, and therefore attacked him on this very firm ground.

This article will also present an alternative reading of the aforementioned statement based on its grammar and some of the key issues at the core of the disagreement between the two thinkers.

II

With the exception of Graham's translation, the sentence “人之學者，其性善” has been interpreted as a nominal sentence without the final particle *yě* 也 carrying a cause-effect relationship: man's inborn nature is good, therefore he is able to study and learn. That such a sentence may be interpreted as carrying a cause-effect relationship is not awkward: it is a feature of classical Chinese noun predication. Such structure can also appear with the particle *zhě* 者, just like Xúnzǐ's statement

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<sup>1</sup> Quotations from Xúnzǐ are taken from Knoblock 1988-1994.

(Yáng and Hé 1992, 703-24). The following examples show respectively one sentence with the particle *zhě*, but without the particle *yě*, and one without both *zhě* and *yě*: “故善人者，不善人之師；不善人者，善人之資。” “Therefore the good person is the teacher of the bad; but the bad person is the raw material for the good.” (Zhuāngzǐ, Dà zōngshī, 174. Translation by Ryden 2008, 57).<sup>2</sup> “君子之德，風；小人之德，草。” “The Virtue of the gentleman is like the wind, and the Virtue of a petty person is like the grass.” (Lúnyǔ jíshì, 12.18. Translation by Slingerland 2003, 134).<sup>3</sup> Here is a noun predication bearing a cause-effect relationship: “是以古之易財，非仁也，財多也。” “The ancients disregarded material goods not because they were benevolent but because there were many goods at their times.” (Hánfēizǐ 49). “不刑而民善，刑重也。刑重者，民不敢反。” “When the people are good and yet no one inflicts punishments, that is because the punishments are severe; when the punishment are severe, the people do not dare to transgress.” (Shāngjūnshū 18).

The particle *zhě* is frequently encountered in noun predication (Scarpari 1995, 80): “吾所欲者，土地也。” “It is the land that I desire.” (Hánfēizǐ 49). “臣之所好者，道也。” “What your servant loves is the Way.” (Zhuāngzǐ 3. Translation by Mair 1994, 26)<sup>4</sup>. “曲士不可以語於道者束於教也。” “You can’t tell a scholar of distorted views about the Way because he is bound by his doctrine.” (Zhuāngzǐ 17. Translation by Mair 1994, 153).

The particle *zhě* is not only described as a pronoun but also as a marker of pause between the first and the second noun phrase constituting the noun predication (Wáng 2004, 244; Guō 2007, 36-7) and it is frequently encountered in the structure “...zhě...yě” “...者...也”. It is also possible for such a construction to appear without the final *yě*, although this rarely happens (Wáng 1980, 348), especially if the noun predication signals a cause-effect relationship, for if the second noun phrase is structured as a verbal clause, it can erroneously be understood as narrative or descriptive, as it can be seen in the example taken from the *Shāngjūnshū* (Guō 2007, 37).

Turning now to the sentence in the *Xìng’è* chapter, we notice that there is no sentence final *yě*, and the first noun phrase is a verbal clause nominalized by the particles *zhī* and *zhě*. This seems to suggest that the second part may be understood as a verbal clause without any mark of noun predication.

<sup>2</sup> The Mǎwángduī edition of the *Lǎozǐ* has the particle *yě* directly after the character *zī* 資 but not after the character *shī* 師: “故善人，善人之師；不善人，善人之資也。” (Bóshū *Lǎozǐ* jiàozhù, 367).

<sup>3</sup> The *Mèngzǐ* also contains a similar statement displaying the final particle *yě*. See *Mèngzǐ* 3A2.

<sup>4</sup> For an alternative translation see Billeter (2002).

## III

Although studying and learning are important topic in the *Mèngzǐ*,<sup>5</sup> their role is not as crucial as is in Xúnzǐ's program of self-cultivation. As stated in the preceding paragraph, we can postulate that such ability may be an instance of man's predisposition toward goodness, but such a claim would be at odd, since we must also point to the fact that no Warring States philosopher has brought the faculty of studying and learning as a proof of man's innate moral predispositions.<sup>6</sup>

For Mencius, the source of moral development is already present in the heart of every human being as "innate but incipient moral senses" (Van Norden 2000, 122), although at a latent stage (Shun 1997 b), and the process of moral cultivation is primarily rooted in reflecting upon or concentrating<sup>7</sup> (*sī* 思) on these moral senses which Mencius calls "four sprouts" (*sì duān* 四端):

孟子曰：人皆有不忍人之心。先王有不忍人之心，斯有不忍人之政矣。以不忍人之心，行不忍人之政，治天下可運之掌上。所以謂人皆有不忍人之心者，今人乍見孺子將入於井，皆有怵惕惻隱之心；非所以內交於孺子之父母也，非所以要譽於鄉黨朋友也，非惡其聲而然也。由是觀之，無惻隱之心非人也，無羞惡之心非人也，無辭讓之心非人也，無是非之心非人也。惻隱之心，仁之端也；羞惡之心，義之端也；辭讓之心，禮之端也；是非之心，智之端也。人之有是四端也，猶其有四體也。有是四端而自謂不能者，自賊者也；謂其君不能者，賊其君者也。凡有四端於我者，知皆擴而充之矣，若火之始然、泉之始達。苟能充之，足以保四海；苟不充之，不足以事父母。

Mencius said: All men have the sense that cannot bear the suffering of others. The former kings, because they had the sense that cannot bear the suffering of others, acted out such sense in the way they governed. With such a heart acting such a government ruling the world was like rolling it on one's palm. When I say that everyone has the sense that cannot bear the suffering of others, I mean that if someone was, all of a sudden, to see a little child about to fall into a well, he would feel distress and compassion, not because he wants to be in good term with the child's parents or to receive the praise of his neighbours and friends; nor it is because he would get the reputation of being merciless and insensitive if he does otherwise. From this, we can see that those who lack the sense of sympathy are not human; who lack the sense of shame are not human; those

<sup>5</sup> See *Mèngzǐ* 6A11; 2A2; 3A3.

<sup>6</sup> Needless to say that anyone can be exposed to potentially dangerous and perverse doctrines: "楊墨之道不息，孔子之道不著，是邪說誣民、充塞仁義也。" "As long as the doctrines of Yáng Zhū and Mòzǐ will continue to spread ceaselessly and those of Confucius will not be given full recognition, those heresies will deceive the people and will prevent benevolence and justice from arising" (*Mèngzǐ* 3B9). Also *Mèngzǐ* 4A1 links the absence of ritual propriety and learning with the ruin of the state: "故曰：城郭不完，兵甲不多，非國之災也。田野不辟，貨財不聚，非國之害也。上無禮，下無學，賊民興，喪無日矣。" "Therefore it is said that uncompleted city walls and scarcity of weapons do not bring disaster to the state; nor untamed lands or undeveloped economy are a harm to the state; the state will be doomed when there is no ritual propriety in the upper classes and no learning in the lower classes."

<sup>7</sup> Such is the way Bryan Van Norden (2000, 122; 130, n. 31) translates the word *sī*.

who lack the sense yielding are not human, and those who lack the sense of right and wrong are not human. The sense of sympathy is the origin (*duān* 端) of benevolence; the sense of shame is the origin of righteousness; the sense of yielding is the origin of the sense of rituality; the sense of right and wrong is the origin of wisdom. Men have these four sprouts just like they have their four limbs. Those who have these four sprouts but consider themselves incapable of being good bring harm to themselves, and those who say their ruler is incapable bring harm to their ruler. When one has these four sprouts in himself and knows how to extend them, it is as a fire beginning to blaze or as a source beginning to flow. If one really knows how to expand these four sprouts, that will be sufficient for him to protect everything within the four seas, otherwise he won't be able to serve his own parents (*Mèngzǐ* 2A6).

A similar statement can be found in chapter 6A6 without the noun phrase *sì duān*:

乃若其情則可以為善矣，乃所謂善也。若夫為不善，非才之罪也。惻隱之心，人皆有之；羞惡之心，人皆有之；恭敬之心，人皆有之；是非之心，人皆有之。惻隱之心，仁也；羞惡之心，義也；恭敬之心，禮也；是非之心，智也。仁義禮智，非由外鑠我也，我固有之也，弗思耳矣。

As for one's instinctive nature, it can become good. That's what I mean with good. If one does evil deeds, that is not the fault of one's innate faculties. Everybody has the sense of compassion, the sense of shame, the sense of respect and reverence, and the sense of right and wrong. Benevolence is the sense of shame; righteousness is the sense of shame; the sense of rituality is the sense of respect and reverence; wisdom is the sense of right and wrong. Benevolence, righteousness, rituality and wisdom are not granted to us from outside, we already have them. We just don't think about them.”<sup>8</sup>

The last two quotations explain the incipient conditions of human nature in the *Mèngzǐ* and can be used as a starting point for drawing a comparison with what Xúnzǐ's thought about man's inborn nature:

是不及知人之性，而不察乎人之性偽之分者也。凡性者，天之就也，不可學，不可事。禮義者，聖人之所生也，人之所學而能，所事而成者也。不可學、不可事而在人者，謂之性；可學而能、可事而成之在人者，謂之偽。

[Mencius] failed to understand human nature, he failed to discern the distinction between inborn nature and artifice. In everyone nature is what is bestowed by heaven. It cannot be learned, nor it can be worked through effort. Rituals and righteousness

<sup>8</sup> The passage doesn't explicitly display the compound *sì duān*; however, it retains the exact wording of the previously quoted *Mèngzǐ* 2A6, with the exception of *gōng jìng* 恭敬 instead of *cí ràng* 辭讓. It is highly unlikely that this passage is not referring to the four sprouts (Lau 2000, 194; Shun 1997, 52; Scarpari 2010, 203), since both *Mèngzǐ* 2A6 and 6A6 explicitly state that all these characteristics are within every human being (“人之有是四端也，猶其有四體也” “Men have these four sprouts just like they have their four limbs.” 2A6; “仁義禮智，非由外鑠我也，我固有之也” “Benevolence, righteousness, rituality and wisdom are not granted to us from outside, we already have them” (6A6). For a discussion on the relation between *gōng jìng* and *cí ràng* see Shun (1997 b, 52-6).

were generated by the sages; they are what man becomes capable of by learning, accomplishes through effort. I define nature what in man which cannot be learned nor worked through effort; I define artifice what man can become capable of once learned and what man can accomplished once put into practice (*Xúnzǐ* 23.1c).

Since this passage directly follows the sentence “人之學者，其性善”，we may ask ourselves on which ground is *Xúnzǐ* arguing against his opponent: if the ability to study and learn is a proof of man's inner goodness, then the argument of the *Xing'è* chapter quoted above can be summarized as a refutation of what Mencius conceived as *xing* (Goldin 1999, 11-3); because *Xúnzǐ* stated from the beginning that human nature is bad, he cannot but reject any claim about its goodness, for goodness is something that can be acquired only through conscious activity and effort, just like learning.

One may be tempted to say that a sentence like “人之學者，其性善” may point to the fact that *Xúnzǐ*'s target is not Mencius' hypothetical claim about man's inborn nature, but his understanding of the process of learning and its outcomes. But if we take a closer look at what *Xúnzǐ* had in mind when he talked about learning, we may shed some light in understanding his concept of human nature and how it disagrees with Mencius' view. While *Xúnzǐ* provides a detailed account of the cognitive processes of the heart (“心何以知？曰：虛壹而靜” “How does the mind know? I say: emptiness, unity, and tranquillity”: 21.5d<sup>9</sup>) in order to know and understand the Way (“人何以知道？曰：心” “How does one know the Way? I say: the mind”: *ibid.*), without proper guidance the heart is not able by itself not only to develop in accordance with morality, ritual and righteousness, but also to recognize any doctrine, teaching, knowledge or notion that can conform to the ethical ideal (Hóng 2013; Liào 2013). Although Mencius does not explicitly state the nature of learning and its direct influences on human nature, given his sketch of human moral predispositions it should be safe to assume that learning would affect the development of those moral instances (*sì duān*) which are supposed to grow and expand, eventually attaining a stage of full maturity. Such is the interpretation of Wáng Xiānqiān in his reading of Mencius' first claim about human nature found in chapter 23 of the *Xúnzǐ*: “孟子言人之有學，適所以成其天性之善，非矯也。” “Mencius claims that man's learning complies with what brings his inborn goodness to completion and that such is not an unnatural process.” (*Xúnzǐ jǐjiě*, 435).

If we admit that Wáng Xiānqiān's interpretation is correct, that learning for

<sup>9</sup> Regarding the characters *xū*, *yī* and *jìng*, scholars (Chén 2006, 40-1; Hóng 2013, 39-45) have pointed out that *Xúnzǐ* may certainly have been exposed to the doctrines contained in the chapters *Nèi yè* 內業, *Xīnshù shàng* 心術上 and *Xīnshù xià* 心術下 of the *Guānzǐ* 管子, and that he then subsequently modified their core notions in order to tally with his ideas of the heart and the mind. For an introduction and translation of the *Nèi yè*, see Kirkland (2004, 40-52), Roth (1999), Ryckett (1998, 15-56) and Chén (2006). The last three references also provide annotated translation.



Mencius is a tool to provide proper guidance to man's inborn moral dispositions to develop correctly and in complete accord with his nature, such a conception would be at odd with what Xúnzǐ had in mind when he discussed learning. In the *Jiě bī* chapter, the mental faculties of human beings are listed as part of human nature. Even if we suppose that the slogan *rén zhī xìng è* “人之性惡” “Human nature is evil” might point only to human desires and emotions,<sup>10</sup> cognitive faculties are not deemed by Xúnzǐ as evil:

凡以知，人之性也；可以知，物之理也。以可以知人之性，求可以知物之理，而無所疑止之，則沒世窮年不能遍也。其所以貫理焉雖億萬，已不足以浹萬物之變，與愚者若一。學、老身長子，而與愚者若一，猶不知錯，夫是之謂妄人。故學也者，固學止之也。惡乎止之？曰：止諸至足。曷謂至足？曰：聖王。

For everyone, the ability to know comes from human nature, and what can be known are the underlying patterns of things. If one takes the human ability to know that comes from human nature and uses it to seek the underlying patterns of things that can be known, but one has no point at which one will stop, then even with old age and the end of one's years, one will not be able to cover them all. Even if the things for which one has managed to string together their patterns are many million in number, it will still not suffice to comprise all the changes of the myriad things, and so one will be the same as a foolish person. Someone who in pursuing learning becomes old with a grown son, yet who is the same as a foolish person and still does not understand his mistake—such a one is called a reckless person. And so, learning is precisely learning to have a stopping point. Where does one stop it? I say: One stops it when one has reached utter sufficiency. What do I mean by “utter sufficiency?” I say: It is becoming a sage (*Xúnzǐ* 21.9 Translation by Hutton 2014 with slight modifications).

The key point is that *zhī* has no sensitivity to what may constitute as *dào*, as the Way. It has no capacity to discriminate and recognize alone what is morally appropriate and what isn't (Hóng 2013), even though Xúnzǐ at some point seems to admit that human beings may have an innate capacity to address themselves toward goodness, although always with proper guidance provided by external sources:<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Scholars (Scarpari 1998, 485-86 and the references quoted; Graham 1986, 57; Graham 1989, 250-51) have argued that the word *è* for Xúnzǐ may actually refer not to evil *per se* but to the nefarious social consequences that would certainly arise when following one's spontaneous desires, let alone the fact that some scholars have doubted the sentence *rén zhī xìng è, qí shàn zhě wěi yě* “人之性惡，其善者僞也” may actually be a later interpolation.

<sup>11</sup> “故人心譬如盤水，正錯而勿動，則湛濁在下而清明在上，則足以見須眉而察理矣。微風過之，湛濁動乎下，清明亂於上，則不可以得大形之正也。心亦如是矣。故導之以理，養之以清，物莫之傾，則足以定是非、決嫌疑矣。” “The human heart can be compared to a pan of water. If you set it straight and do not move it, the muddy and turbid parts will settle to the bottom, and the clear and bright parts will be on the top, and then one can see one's whiskers and inspect the lines on one's face. But if a slight breeze passes over it, the muddy and turbid parts will be stirred up from the bottom, and the clear and bright parts will be disturbed on top, and then one cannot get a correct view of even large contours. The heart is just like this. Thus, if one guides it with good order, nourishes it with clarity, and nothing can make it deviate, then it will

涂之人可以為禹。」蜀謂也？曰：凡禹之所以為禹者，以其為仁義法正也。然則仁義法正有可知可能之理。然而涂之人也，皆有可以知仁義法正之質，皆有可以能仁義法正之具，然則其可以為禹明矣。今以仁義法正為固無可知可能之理邪？然則唯禹不知仁義法正，不能仁義法正也。

Anyone on the streets can become a Yu. How do I mean this? I say: that by which Yu was Yu was because he was benevolent, righteous, lawful, and correct. Thus, benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness have patterns that can be known and can be practiced. However, people on the streets all have the material for knowing benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness, and they all have the equipment for practicing benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness. Thus, it is clear that they can become a Yu. Now if benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness originally had no patterns that could be known or practiced, then even Yu would not know benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness and could not practice benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness. Shall we suppose that people on the streets originally do not have the material to know benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness, and that they originally do not have the equipment for practicing benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness? (*Xúnzǐ* 23.5a).

The characters *zhì* 質 and *jù* 具 seem to indicate respectively the ability to know something and to think and the ability to act (Liào 2013, 79); it can be link to *Mèngzǐ* 7A15, but only apparently because even if both philosophers are discussing innate abilities:

孟子曰：人之所不學而能者，其良能也。所不慮而知者，其良知也。孩提之童，無不知愛其親者，及其長也，無不知敬其兄也。親親，仁也。敬長，義也。無他，達之天下也。

Mencius said: Innate faculties are what men are capable of without learning; conscience is what men are aware without having reflected upon. No child is not aware of his love for his parents, and extends it to his elders; nor it is the case that he is not aware of his respect for his elder brothers. Loving one's parent is the source of benevolence; showing proper respect to the elders is the source of the sense of justice and propriety. There is nothing else to extend to the world.

While the baby is already capable to feel love and respect for his parents and his elder brothers, this capacity and awareness being innate, for *Xúnzǐ* what the characters *zhì* 質 and *jù* 具 represent is only something which can be potentially, but not necessarily, expressed and acted: in the passage quoted above, all the instances of *néng* and *zhī* are modified by the modal verbs *kě* 可 and *kě yǐ* 可以. It is important to notice that although the faculties of knowing and reasoning are

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be capable of determining right and wrong and deciding what is doubtful. If it is drawn aside by even a little thing, then on the outside one's correctness will be altered, and on the inside one's heart will deviate, and then will be incapable of discerning the multifarious patterns of things." (*Xúnzǐ* 21.7b).

present since birth (“所以知之在人者謂之知” “That by which people understand things is called the ‘understanding.’ Xúnzǐ 22.1b), they are by no means a guarantee to understand the rules of proper conduct, otherwise that would imply that the heart *by itself* is equipped with all the instruments to know and recognize any situation in compliance with the Way (“心不知道，則不可道，而可非道” “If the heart does not know the Way it cannot act accordingly but may go against it.” Xúnzǐ 21.5b), hence there would be no need for studying ritual, music and the culture flourished during the time of the sage kings. Since even animals are endowed with *zhī* (“禽獸有知而無義” “Animals have knowledge but no sense of righteousness and propriety” Xúnzǐ 9.16a) and since human heart also has its own fallacies (“聖人知心術之患，見蔽塞之禍” “The sage knows the problems in the ways of the heart, and sees the disaster of being fixated and blocked up in one’s thinking.” Xúnzǐ 21.5a. Translation by Eric Hutton 2014), although it can overrule instinctive reactions (“心居中虛，以治五官，夫是之謂天君” “The heart dwells in the central cavity so as to control the five faculties—this is called one’s Heavenly lord.” Xúnzǐ 17.3), it is only through learning with a teacher and self-cultivation practices that one can become a true gentleman (“越人安越，楚人安楚，君子安雅，是非知能材性然也，是注錯習俗之節異也” “It is like the way the people of Yue are at home in Yue, and the people of Chu are at home in Chu—the gentleman is at home in what is graceful. They differ not because of endowment, nature, intelligence, and capabilities, but rather because of the measures by which they train and refine themselves.” Xúnzǐ 4.8). With this in mind, it appears that *zhī* is just an inborn faculty of human beings (and animals too) which enables them to acknowledge and become acquainted with external world, but not a source of morality: it is not labelled by Xúnzǐ as *wěi* 偽, nor has it any awareness of good and evil, otherwise one may infer that the heart by nature has already in itself the capacity of distinguishing good and evil. Not only the source of moral development is studying the former kings’ government, culture, ritual, and music (“故學者，以聖王為師，案以聖王之制為法”), but it is imperative to find a good who master who teach how to distinguish good and evil (“無師，吾安知禮之為是？” “If there are no master, how can we know that rituals are good?”; “今誠以人之性固正理平治邪，則有惡用聖王，惡用禮義哉” “Now, if we really suppose that human nature is originally correct, ordered, peaceful, and controlled, what use would there have been for sage kings?” Xúnzǐ 23.3a).

#### IV

Given the brief quotation of chapter 23, we cannot be completely sure of how Xúnzǐ was acquainted with Mencius’ ideas of human nature and moral development. We have argued that the sentence “人之學者，其性善” was viewed by the above quoted translators as a cause effect relation, the goodness of human nature being

the latter, which brings about the ability to study. However, in the *Mèngzǐ* there is no argument for such a claim. We may take a step further, and argue that cognitive faculties do not constitute proof of any moral predisposition whatsoever. The ability of studying and learning may be seen as part of human nature, but not as an instance or manifestation of innate goodness.<sup>12</sup>

We have seen that Wáng Xiānqiān's interpretation of Xúnzǐ's quotation of Mencius does not take the ability of learning as a proof of man's inborn goodness, rather the content of one's learning content may suit to man's predispositions toward goodness, and these predispositions are (according to Wáng's interpretation) granted and bestowed by heaven. That implies that goodness is not viewed as a product of coercion, but something already present in human nature.

Such a claim stresses the fact that Xúnzǐ was probably aware that Mencius conceived human nature as a process which also includes moral development. Although even in the *Xúnzǐ* we can find traces of human nature conceived as dynamic, they seem to be related only to physical health and physiological processes (*Xúnzǐ* 22; Robins 2001, 150–55).<sup>13</sup> That would entail that Xúnzǐ may have had a good grasp of what Mencius thought about human nature, and since he disagreed on this very same concept, he provided his own definition about what counts as *xìng* and what doesn't: man's moral improvements cannot be seen as spontaneous and tallying with his own inclinations. Instead, sometimes moral behaviour, inner cultivation, and ritual practice can go against one's own spontaneous reactions: in chapter 23, Xúnzǐ says explicitly that morality, exemplified in letting an elder eat first and yielding toward elder brothers, are manifestations of behaviours that are discordant with one's nature.

<sup>12</sup> In the Guōdiàn manuscript *Xìng zì mìng chū* 性自命出 the sentence “牛生而長，雁生而伸，其性使然，人而學或使之也” “The nature of the ox makes it become big after being born and so is the case for the goose which can stretch its neck once born. As for man's ability of learning, that is also something brought about by his nature.” (XZMC, 5) also seems to point to the fact that the ability of learning is something given by our own nature. However, it is not linked to its original moral capacity, since in strip four we find “好惡性也；所好惡物也。善不善性也；所善所不善勢也” “Like and dislike are part of human nature; what is liked and disliked are external things. Good and evil are part of human nature; what makes it manifest its goodness or its evil are circumstances.” (XZMC, 4-5).

<sup>13</sup> Goldin (1999, 12-3) states that: “By contrast, there is no organic or dynamic element to Xunzi's *xing*.” and that “The Mencian *xing* can grow and change; to Xunzi is immutable.” However, given the passage in *Xúnzǐ* 23, “性傷謂之病” “I define illness injuries to one's nature”, it is likely that *xing* retains some organic or physiological nuances. That the character *xing* is linked to physical development is evident in the previously quoted passage of *Xìng zì mìng chū* (see note 10). Since some crucial characters are missing, the passage is quite problematic. Scholars (Lǐ 2002, 142; Liú 2005, 93) reconstruct three characters, the first two being *shǐ rán* 使然. Chén (2002, 182) reconstructs as follow: “其性也，人生而學或使之也”. See also Cook (2012, 702-3) for an alternative translation. The passage is absent in the *Xìng qíng lùn* 性情論 manuscript purchased by the Shànghǎi Museum. Liáng Tāo (2009, 184) links this passage to the tendencies of articulating the problems and the definition of human nature (*xìng* 性) in terms of *shēng* 生.

今人饑，見長而不敢先食者，將有所讓也；勞而不敢求息者，將有所代也。夫子之讓乎父、弟之讓乎兄，子之代乎父、弟之代乎兄，此二者皆反於性而悖於情也。然而孝子之道，禮義之文理也。故順情性則不辭讓矣，辭讓則悖於情性矣。 Now if people are hungry and see food but do not dare to eat first, that will be because there are some to whom they will give way. If people are tired but do not dare to seek rest, that will be because there are some for whom they will substitute themselves. When a son gives way for his father, a younger brother gives way for his older brother, a son stands in for his father, or a younger brother stands in for his older brother, these two kinds of conduct both go against one's nature and are at odds with one's inborn dispositions (Xúnzǐ 23.1e).<sup>14</sup>

Taking a step further, however, we can see that if we treat *qí xìng shàn* “其性善” not as a nominal predicate but as a normal verbal sentence, the state of goodness becomes the result of the act of studying, not the cause, therefore the translation could be: “the nature of the men who study will tend toward goodness”; or “the nature of the men who learn will be good” (Robins 2001, 151).

Of course, we cannot establish with accuracy what sort of text Xúnzǐ read for assessing Mencius' ideas about human nature. However, the passage analysed seems to reveal that Xúnzǐ not only disagreed on his opponent on the ground of what constitutes human nature (Bloom 1994, 19-53; Bloom 1995, 21-32; Shun 1997 (a), 1-20), but he seems to have understood how Mencius did conceive man's inborn nature since he didn't reject totally the notion of *xìng* as dynamic or organic.

Since Xúnzǐ is deeply concerned about man's moral action, it is perfectly understandable that he concentrated his efforts on the faculty of heart to deliberate and assess what kind of actions and behaviours may or may not conform with the Way, and man's appetitive and psychological aspects. What he saw in Mencius was a concept of human nature conceived as capable of manifesting goodness as the outcome of the process of learning. Thus, he thought that studying could probably push human nature into a natural development course toward goodness.

Since Xúnzǐ addressed the issue through a different angle, he couldn't but reject the thesis of his opponent.

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<sup>14</sup> The *Shuōwén jiězì* explains *bèi* as follows: “*誩*，亂也。从言孛聲。誩或从心。” “*Bèi* means disorder. It is composed by radical *yán* 言 it is pronounced as *bèi* 孛. *Bèi* may also be written with the heart radical *xīn* 心” (*Shuōwén jiězì zhù*, 97). *Bèi* also conveys the meaning of social and ethical disorder, and it is often followed by *luàn* 亂, as shown in Xúnzǐ 2.2; 23.1; 23.3a.

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TANINA ZAPPONE

THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT  
SPOKESPERSON SYSTEM AND THE “RIGHT TO KNOW”:  
A PROPOSAL FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Since its establishment, in 1983, the Chinese government spokesperson system has gone through a gradual but pervasive evolution: significant changes have occurred in term of communicative models, intended audiences and strategic motivation.

The article proposes a critical evaluation of the main stages of this evolution in light of public relation theories (Grunig and Hurt 1984, Mancini 2008). In particular, the paper tries to develop the analytic framework delineated in previous studies, by examining changes to direction of information flow, occurred under the influence of technology, knowledge of public relations and domestic transformations.

The analysis retraces the three-step evolutionary process described by Ni Chen in 2011, which – following a set of phases well-accepted in academic literature – distinguishes an initial stage (1983-2002), an intermediate stage (2003-2008) and a mature stage (2008-nowadays) in the development of the system but extends the existing work to consider the impact of domestic factors on spokespersons’ practice, such as new information technologies and the normative push toward the disclosure of government information, initiated in 2008.

The study puts forward the hypothesis that in recent times the figure of government spokesperson, originally born in response to international concerns and based on a one-way communication model, has been acquiring a new role, which goes beyond the purposes of propaganda. On the wave of domestic reforms and technological innovation, public spokespersons are increasingly conceived not only as the focal point for connecting public administration and the media, but also as a bridge between government and commoners: they promote mutual understanding, instead of pursuing mere persuasion.

Relying on public relation theories previously applied to countries which experienced a transition toward democratic and transparent system,<sup>1</sup> the paper does not intend to suggest that the evolution of China’s spokesperson system

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<sup>1</sup> Specifically the research refers to Grunig four public relations models and the evolutionary process of citizen-institution communication practice, described by Mancini in 2008, to the case of China’s spokesperson system.

implies similar political reforms, but that it could be underpinned by political and social processes, which should be understood in the wider context of China's government communication. In the author's opinion, the transformations in communication models, which are clearly manifested on the formal level - despite of the persistence of an authoritative political system on the substantial level - are not only the result of a pragmatic importation of advanced public relations models, aimed to guarantee new internal consensus around the one-Party system, but also the signal of a more gradual and hidden change in the conceptualization by China's leadership of citizen-government interaction. These factors have been so far neglected by western scholars who analyzed China's spokesperson system, since they have mostly adopted a theoretical perspective limited to communication studies. A more complex approach could be investigated in future studies, providing that a wider analytic framework and greater attention to direct sources from Chinese literature would be applicable.

### *The "initial stage" of the system*

We have noticed the speech on the Sino-Soviet Union relationship delivered by Chairman Brezhnev on March 24 in Tashkent. We firmly reject the attack toward China in the speech. As to the Sino-Soviet Union relationship and international affairs, we emphasize the practical action taken by the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup>

This three-sentence three-minute announcement, with no room for questions, given by Qian Qichen on 26 March 1982, constitutes the first press conference which marked the kick-off of China's government spokesperson system. The system was formally established one year later<sup>3</sup> in February 1983, with the enactment of the "Opinions on implementing a system of spokesmen and strengthening the work of foreign journalists" ("Guanyu shishi sheli xinwen fayanren zhidu he jiaqiang dui waiguo jizhe gongzuo de tongzhi" 关于实施设立新闻发言人制度和加强对

<sup>2</sup> The news conference was held in response to a speech given by Soviet Union leader Leonid Brezhnev. The first official spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was Qi Huaiyuan 齐怀远 who held his first press conference on March 1, 1983. On 23 April 1983, the Association of Chinese Journalists presented the just-appointed spokesmen of various departments under the State Council (Yang He 2014).

<sup>3</sup> The document was issued by the Propaganda Department (*Zhongxuanbu* 中宣部) and the Leading small group for external propaganda (*Zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan lingdaoxiaozu* 中央对外宣传领导小组). The involvement of the last institution shows the external scope of the initiative. Before that, in 1982, the Leading Small Group for External Propaganda, jointly with the Leading Small Group for Propaganda and Ideology, issued a series of recommendations regarding the relationship between politics and media. At the beginning of the same year the draft of "Guanyu sheli xinwen fayanren zhidu de qingshi" 关于设立新闻发言人制度的请示 [Instructions for the establishment of a system of spokesmen] was circulated (Yang Yang 2014).

外国记者工作的意见) and was officially announced on April 23, 1983, when the China Journalists Association introduced the just-appointed spokesmen of several departments under the State Council.

The government spokesperson system can be defined as an internal mechanism set up within administrative agencies to ensure the regular release of information by official spokesmen, by means of press briefing, interviews and press conferences. The system ideally provides systemic support to the work of spokesmen, by coordinating main strategies, giving critical evaluations, and collecting and analyzing feedback from public opinion polls.

Before 1983 press conferences were occasionally held in China. Nevertheless, the formalization of the system only begins in 1983, when the State Council's agencies with relation with foreign countries are required to appoint official spokespersons and to release news on a regular basis. The initiative takes place in the wider context of the rebuilding of country's image after the ideological excesses of Mao's era, and looking at the necessity of build up peaceful, stable and cooperative relations with foreign countries, in order to foster domestic reforms.

The Opinions explicitly states that the system is "intended to reshape international news reporting on China" (Ni Chen 2011, 76). Even more clearly, the "Interim regulations for the work of news spokesmen" ("Xinwen fayanren gongzuo tiaoli" 新闻发言人工作暂行条例) issued in November 1983 to standardize press conferences practice, define the role of spokesman as to meet the needs of "serving foreign news media" (*wei guowai de xinwen meiti fuwu* 为国外的新闻媒体服务), urged by the launch of economic reforms under Deng Xiaoping's leadership (Xie Keling 2009). The Regulations are interpreted as an "issue regarding only external propaganda department" (*zhi shi duiwai xuanchuan bumen de shi* 只是对外宣传部门的事; Yang Yang 2014), therefore still in 1988 only a few agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State National Bureau of Statistics, the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, had set up an internal press conferences mechanism (Guo Weimin 2006, 65).

At this stage of development - which Ni Chen defines as the "initial stage" - government communication follows a traditional model of external propaganda and self-promotion, which corresponds to Gruning public information model: practitioners mostly disseminate favorable information about their organizations. The frequency of press conferences is not regular, Chinese spokesmen just read texts, without accepting questions,<sup>4</sup> and make extensive use of the formula "no comment" (*wuke fenggao* 无可奉告). The message employed is intended to informing on country progress and persuading the West to invest in China (Zhang Juyan 2008,

<sup>4</sup> At first the Foreign Affairs Ministry make announcements without taking any questions. Since September 1983, journalists could raise questions to the spokesperson on the first week of every month and the rate doubled from 1986. In 1988, journalists could ask questions at every press conference and in 1999, restrictions on the number and length of questions are lifted (Sun Shangwu and An Baijie 2013).

307). The flow of information is “one-way and top down in direction” (Ni Chen 2011, 77), and results in a “communication with propagandistic function”,<sup>5</sup> through which the institution basically aims to achieve specific goals, mostly related to the self-perception of its outward image. It does intend at neither informing nor enhancing the relationship with the receptors of the communicative message (Ni Chen 2011, 113-117), but serves image-building purposes.

### *The domestic dimension and the second stage of development*

Since the late Nineties, in the wake of a rapid economic development and important events,<sup>6</sup> the spokesperson system has achieved increasingly higher standards. Especially under the direction by Zhao Qicheng (1998 - 2005) of the State Office Information Office,<sup>7</sup> the number of press conferences has risen exponentially,<sup>8</sup> and the officials have begun to be more accommodating toward journalists to cultivate public relations with them (D’Hooghe 2014, 136). Realizing the strategic dimension of new media, Zhao started to invest in modern multimedia communication tools.<sup>9</sup> He considers press conferences “the swiftest and most effective way to influence news coverage in domestic and foreign mainstream media” (Zhao Qizheng 2010, 49).

One of the most noteworthy novelty of this phase is that Chinese government has realized that the system needs to confront not only foreign media, but also domestic public opinion. In particular, in 2003 - which is known in China as the “year of news spokesperson” (*xinwen fayanren nian* 新闻发言人年) - the SARS

<sup>5</sup> Rolando 1995, quoted in Mancini 2008, 113.

<sup>6</sup> Among the most significant of these, the request of access to the WTO, the participation in the bidding for the Olympic Games of Beijing 2008, and the case of the “Report of the Select Committee on US National Security and Military / Commercial Concerns with the People’s Republic of China”, commonly known as the Cox Report, in July 1999.

<sup>7</sup> The Information Office was set up in 1991 as a symbol of the recognized need to improve China’s international image after the events of Tiananmen. It is the “branch of the government specifically dedicated to conducting propaganda and thought work aimed at foreign audiences” and is responsible for “explaining China to the world,” and ensuring that the foreign media “objectively” and “accurately” report on China (Edney 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Between 1991 and 1995 the average annual press conferences organized by the Association of Journalists Chinese was 51. Since June 1995, the routine meetings with the press of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have increased from once to twice a week. A number of institution have established its own spokesperson system: in National People’s Congress, the Political Consultative Conference and the ministries and the commissions of the State Council in 1995, Hong Kong in 1997 and Macau in 2000 government. In February 1999 for the first time a Chinese court - the Supreme Court of Yunnan Province - presented its spokesman (Cheng Duli and Wang Weijia 2011).

<sup>9</sup> On 10 May 2000, during a seminar on news dissemination in the digital era, hold at Qinghua University, Zhao Qizheng states that new media and the internet represent one of the best opportunities for China’s institutional communication to get competitiveness in the global media system (Zhao Qizheng 2010, 27).

(Severe acute respiratory syndrome) crisis revealed the centrality of the domestic dimension of the system. The weak response of the authorities to the disease outbreak caused not simply a public health problem, but one of the most severe socio-political crisis since the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown. The hesitations of the Ministry of Health to share the real data on the infection and the attempts to censor news broadcasting about the epidemic not only damaged government image and credibility, but also spawned panic across the country, undermining social stability and national security. As Premier Wen Jiabao pointed out in a cabinet meeting - “the health and security of the people, overall state of reform, development, and stability, and China’s national interest and international image are at stake”.<sup>10</sup> China’s leadership has understood that economic prosperity is no longer sufficient to guarantee stability and to achieve political legitimization. This has led to increased transparency and the improvement of the work of official spokespersons: not only the number of conferences has dramatically increased,<sup>11</sup> but standardized rules of international practice have finally been adopted: the time for opening remarks has been reduced from 50 to 5 minutes, while Q&A time has been extended; more foreign journalists have been invited, and senior officials and experts occasionally join the conferences, in order to increase credibility and accuracy of information; government websites publish videos and scripts of press conferences online.

Despite its persistent focus on foreign-oriented communication, the system has entered a second stage of development, as a consequence of increased awareness of the internal social risks related to government miscommunication: it has shifted to a two-way asymmetrical model of scientific persuasion, in which practitioners seek feedback from their targets with the purpose of persuading the public to adopt a desired behavior. Slowly, but steadily, the government has enhanced its awareness of the system of rights and duties, which governs the relationship between public administrations and citizens. Political and administrative identity – previously overlapping – have gradually begun to differentiate. First requests of transparency have begun to circulate, although citizens are still perceived as passive receptors, and do not participate in identifying communication needs (Mancini 2008, 113).

### *The mature stage of development and “the right to know”*

In his analysis of the evolution of the Chinese spokesperson’s system, Ni Chen argues that since 2008 the system has reached a mature stage of development. He analyzes, in particular, how the system deals with two events occurred that year, namely the earthquake in Sichuan province and the Olympics in Beijing. In the first

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Huang Yanzhong 2004.

<sup>11</sup> From 9 in 2002 to 160 in 2004; in the previous decades the total number was 220.

one, the government proves to be more open, by providing timely and frequently updated official news and institutionalizing public relations; in the second one China successfully “seizes the moment to demonstrate the country’s strength to the world” (Ni Chen 2011, 80), elaborating an effective communicative strategy and further enhancing professionalism.<sup>12</sup> However, Ni Chen seems to undervalue one aspect – by just mentioning it –, which, in the writer’s opinions, is deeply associated to the sophistication of the system, namely the emergence of a new perception of the concepts of openness and transparency by the Chinese government, related to the notion of the “citizens’ right to know” (*gongmin zhiqingquan* 公民知情权).<sup>13</sup> These are the basic principles behind the “Regulations of the PRC on the publicity of government information” (“*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo zhengfu xinxi gongkai tiaoli*” 中华人民共和国政府信息公开条例), approved in 2007 by the State Council, and other documents, issued in recent years, concerning government information publicity (Mottura 2014). They constitute meaningful novelties, including not only the procedures of the public administration, but also the idea that transparency and accountability (instead of secrecy and discretion) may legitimize and stabilize political order. Even though the newly established mechanism certainly implies an unbalanced power relation between government and citizens, it demonstrates a new sensibility and responsiveness to the citizens’ needs (in particular to the need to know what the government does), and embodies new strategies of interaction. The spokesperson is one of the main channels of information disclosure (Guo Yicong 2011), and the press conferences system is part of China’s commitment “to enhance the level of guarantee to citizens’ right to information” (Sun Pinghua 2014, 290).

The conceptual framework has gradually changed: it has overcome the dimension of external propaganda, being more frequently connected to the management of domestic public affairs and the maintenance of social stability. The spokesman has begun to be described not only as a “guide for public opinion” (*shehui yulun yindaozhe* 社会舆论引导者), but also as an advocator of public interests (figure 1).

<sup>12</sup> Increased professionalism is still one of the key element of spokespersons’ evolution. Looking at current spokespersons’ resume, we know that, for instance, that Lu Kang, who becomes the Foreign Ministry spokeman on 15 June 2015, along with Hong Lei and Hua Chunying, has had a diplomatic career spanning 22 years serving at the Chinese embassies in the United States and Ireland. Besides a degree from China Foreign Affairs University, Lu achieved a master’s in public policy, after studying at the National University of Singapore in 2000 and 2001 (Zhao Shengnan 2015).

<sup>13</sup> The expression “right to know” refers to the right to access government information, both in passive and active sense.



[Figure 1. Source: Wei Xiutang 2007]



At the end of the first decade of the new millennium, in the wake of this new perspective, the system has evolved on a quantitative and qualitative level,<sup>14</sup> as well as in communicative terms: it has definitely adopted a two-way asymmetrical model of communication with the media and public, in which the government set the agenda and tolerate questions, and has begun to consider elements of two-way symmetrical communications. Communication is still both persuasive and manipulative, but the government starts understanding media needs. In officials statements the purpose of spokespersons has become to create good relations through explanation and dissemination, instead of publicising or propaganda. The audience is no longer perceived as passive receivers of public information dissemination, but as partners and stakeholders in a dialogue. While at the international level this change lies on the doctrine of “peaceful rise” and the pursuit of “cultural soft power”, on the domestic level it could have been boosted by the increasing engagement in listening, which emerges from a new social perception of government transparency.

<sup>14</sup> In 2009, there were a total of 1,646 press conferences, held by SCIO, departments under the State Council, Party organizations and provincial government, compared to 900 in 2004 (Lye 2010, 558). In 2010 the names of the spokesmen of eleven departments under the Party were announced (Zhao Lei and Xin Dingding 2010). Spokespersons generally appear to be more experienced, confident and professional (Ni Chen 2011).

*The cyber spokesperson: toward a bidirectional model?*

At this stage, the peculiar figure of the “cyber spokesperson” (*wangluo xinwen fayanren* 网络新闻发言人) meaningfully emerges.<sup>15</sup> It is theoretically possible that anyone, connected to the internet, interacts with these representatives of the government in online forums and microblog.<sup>16</sup> Innovative methods are thus introduced to deliver a non-linear and unlimited message, always “expandable” through online links (Zhou Min and Tan Yidan 2010). This type of communication is faster and synthetic, and contents range from large/extraordinary to small/routine events (Pan Zhichang 2011, 47).

The transition to web 2.0 and in particular the success of official microblogging (*weibo* 微博) at all level of PRC administration makes available innovative platforms for information, discussion and sharing. The communicative model from one to many is revolutionized by social media. They offer a kind of communication from many to many, which cannot be unilaterally controlled, and where the receiver actively joins the communication process. With the emergence of the figure of the cyber spokesperson, China’s officials even adopt bidirectional/two-way symmetrical model of communication, which allows not just the media, but also citizens to play an active role in the communication process. Their contribution becomes essential not only to define the operational functions of the institution, but also to determine the success and even the contents of the communicative process.

In the author’s opinion, this recent transition is not only the result of the employ of new technologies. On the contrary, the government strategy to populate the cyberspace with official spokespersons, basically motivated by the goal of spread a positive image on social network and silence online dissent, could be correlate to an increasing awareness of citizens’ expectations, to the leadership’s availability to meet rising demands of participation, and to the goal of positively engaging citizens in country’s political life, to build new consensus. With due distinction, the process seems to recall what happens in liberal countries, where, as Mancini argues, when publicity, transparency, and public participation are no longer perceived as a concession of the government, but as a necessary act, citizens and media become major players within a communication process characterized by increasing complexity and openness (Mancini 2008, 115).

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<sup>15</sup> The first cyber spokesperson was formally appointed in September 2009, in Guiyang (Guizhou province), which was followed right after by many other local governments. 2009 is known in China as the year of the spokesman of the internet (*wangluo xinwen fayanren* 网络新闻发言人).

<sup>16</sup> In some cases, such as the site Wang Shang-wen zheng 网上问政 (literally, “ask the online government”) the forum is permanent, citizens can ask at any times; local regulations set time limit to answer citizens’ questions.

### Concluding remarks

This paper tries to show that the communication pattern adopted by China's government spokesperson system since its establishment has gradually moved from a one-way public information to a two-way asymmetric model, culminating in the current two-way symmetrical model, embodied by the figure of cyber spokesperson. This model, although still retains elements of previous patterns, is ideally intended to build relationship, engage in dialogue to resolve conflicts, and not merely disseminate positive information.

By referring to Gruning and Mancini theories, the paper puts forward the hypothesis that these changes are taking place under the impulse of factors, such as increasing openness and transparency, which elsewhere have characterized the transition of political systems from authoritative to democratic structure.<sup>17</sup> Although China politics is walking on a very different and unique path - which under Xi Jinping seems to be characterized by an even more centralized political power -, the country economic and administrative system is slowly moving toward modifications similar to those occurred in liberal countries. Increasing economy privatization, integration into the global economy, interactions with world audiences, and the revolution in information technology are certainly driving forces of this evolution of China's political communication. However - starting from SARS crisis - the gradually shift of system's focus from the international to the national stage - further enhanced by the access of official cyber spokesperson to the web 2.0 - suggests that the most recent modification of the system is mainly related to inward issues. As Mancini argues, governments communicative processes can be deeply related to different conceptualizations of the notions of transparency, public participation and right to know. Not surprisingly recently published manuals for Chinese official spokespersons point out that one of the main challenges that nowadays government communication has to cope with is constituted by the impact of the web 2.0, which has not only transformed production and dissemination of information, but also strengthened citizens' capabilities to use online resources to check government credibility, to even produce news - sometimes more promptly than spokespersons -, in a word, has enhance citizens' awareness of their own right to be informed. Nowadays government communication has to cope with five conceptual transitions: "from single media to multimedia" (*cong danyi meiti dao duoyuan meiti* 从单一媒体到多元媒体); "from providing information to providing services" (*cong tigong xinxi dao tigong fuwu* 从提供信息到提供服务); "from corporate communication to social distribution"

<sup>17</sup> A study conducted in 1998, based on the Gruning's excellence theory, for instance, found that the transition of Slovenia's political system from communism to democracy, as well as the consequent economy privatisation, resulted in the practice of the generic principles of communication in public relations (Grunig et al. 1998).

(*cong jigou chuanbo dao shehui fenfa* 从机构传播到社会分发); “from service consumers to expert users” (*cong fuwu yonghu dao kaifa yonghu* 从服务用户到开发用户); “from describing news to interpreting news” (*cong miaoshu xinwen dao jiedu xinwen* 从描述新闻到解读新闻) (Gao 2014). The Chinese leadership seems to have decided to respond to these challenges by boosting government communication and establishing mechanisms of fast, continuous and effective public interaction (Yang Yang 2014). Its immediate purpose is, without doubt, the creation of social consensus and its realization is far from being effective and to ensure an equal and rightful dialogue between government and citizens.<sup>18</sup> However, this recent evolution has laid the basis for further potential developments, supported by the need to take the citizens’ views in due account, as a way to increase reputation and credibility. That is not so much as a proof of democratization, but as a sign of innovation in China’s government communication; anyway it is something which deserves attention, since

perhaps one of the challenges China poses to our understanding of narratives of development, progress and modernity is that innovative change may well also be possible, if not flourish, under postmodern authoritarianism. (Perlez 2015)

The existing literature on China’s spokesperson system has mainly focused on the institutionalization of public relations (Ni Chen 2009), its influence on public diplomacy (Zhang Juyan 2008) and on crisis management, while studies on government microblogs have mostly emphasized their impact on government legitimacy (Jingrong Tong and Landong Zuo 2014) and the coexistence of emerging transparency and tight political control on political online communication (Qi Zhang and James L. Chan 2013, Bei Guo and Ying Jiang 2015). However western analysis has rarely considered the theoretical framework delineated in China literature around the figure of government spokesperson, which would reveal the unique conception of spokesperson’s role in PRC leadership’s and scholars’ eyes. A research key point to be addressed in the future should be, for instance, the analysis of training manuals for spokespersons edited in China, which give guiding principles to practitioners and most of the times, differently from western scholars, do not operate a sharp distinction between online/offline and domestic/international communication, but consider spokesman’s work as a whole. Chinese

<sup>18</sup> A detailed report of shortages of China’s spokesperson system would go beyond the scope of this analysis. It suffices by pointing out that the degree of institutionalization and internal standardization of the system is not yet satisfactory. It lacks administrative regulations, which guarantee effectiveness or completeness of communication as well as objectivity of information. The Party still holds a relevant role in deciding time, place and topics of press conferences, and the development of its internal spokesperson system is still too limited. At local level spokespersons are, on average, still low-skilled (Cheng Duli and Wang Weijia, 96-100. Zhang Hongmei and Dong Bin 2006).

scholarly literature on transparency, public participation and citizen-government interaction should also be given great consideration as an important source to understand how these ideas are conceptualized in the Chinese context, how and to what extent they are correlated to spokesperson's work, and to recent changes in communication. This approach would bring to a wider perspective over the issue, allowing to overcome the problematic and insufficient vision that simplistically equates the conduct of China's practitioners to those in Western liberalist system, or evaluates it in the limited perspective of western theories on public relations, ignoring internal theories and contextual dynamics.

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## Abstracts

VICTORIA ALMONTE

This paper will introduce Western scholars to the geographical work, *Lingwai Daida*, *Notes from the lands beyond the Passes*, written by Zhou Qufei in 1178. Zhou Qufei was an imperial official during the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). He lived and worked many years in Guangxi province. His work contains descriptions of geography, history and customs of Guangxi province and it includes descriptions of oversea territories, until Northern Africa countries. In this paper, first, the author will try to define which versions are available nowadays, then you will focus on the work's structure and its main features, in the end, the search will lead us to compare Zhou's work and Fan Chengda's *Guihai yuheng zhi* (On Guihai rural affairs). Fan Chengda (1126-1193) was a poet and an imperial official of Song dynasty, he was considered an academic authority in geography, especially of southern provinces of China. The main aim of the present paper is to underline the importance and the historical value of *Daida*, in the framework of overseas relationships of Chinese empire.

SELUSI AMBROGIO

In contemporary China, the relationship between past and present, as well as that between tradition and modernity, is extremely problematic and actual. There are several reasons for this cultural complexity, and among them one is particularly relevant: the weight of the Western thought – both European and American – on the evaluation of Chinese tradition of thought. The use of Western thought as a criterion of comparison, both consciously and unconsciously, is still common. The widely-renowned principle of “exclusion” of Asiatic thought from the realm of philosophy is often attributed to Hegel and to the colonial culture of the 19th century. In this paper, we will focus on the correct definition and chronological collocation of this so called “exclusion”. We need to know the true reasons of this exclusion to better understand the weakness it hides and its possible deconstruction. After this investigation, we could have put this theory to test using the hermeneutical keys already produced within the contemporary Continental philosophy – Jaspers, Heidegger, Gadamer and Derrida among others – but we prefer to make use of the thought of a contemporary Chinese thinker, namely Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, one of the leading thinkers of 19th century Modern New Confucianism (Dangdai Xinrujia 当代新儒家). We would like to allow a Chinese thinker to speak on behalf of Chinese thought from his point of view, since Chinese thought has all the qualities necessary to compete with Western philosophy when both are compared on a common free ground.

MARTINA CODELUPPI

Ha Jin and Ma Jian are two amongst the most important voices in contemporary Chinese diasporic literature, who recounted the Tian'anmen Square democracy movement in the form of fictional *témoignages* inspired by their personal recollections. This article compares their two different voices by showing the influence of temporal and spatial displacement on the narratological features of the novels, emphasising the role of the individual in the process of reshaping memory through literature. Ma Jian's *Beijing Coma* (2008) and Ha Jin's *The Crazy* (2003) served as the corpus of the analysis, which addresses the relationship between the authors and their memories as it emerges through the narrative discourse.

ORNELLA DE NIGRIS

In the last 30 years, China has been experiencing a major development of the museum system and a proliferation of art museums. This rapid development has seen not only the transformation of public art museums, but also an incredible growth of private collections and the construction of new ones. According to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, by 2011 there were 3589 museums in China – one for every 380 000 people, a number that has continued to grow considerably, reaching 4 165 registered museums in 2015. This article aims to offer a diachronic description of the evolution of the art museum system in China after Deng Xiaoping's reform launched in 1978, by highlighting key historical facts which led to the proliferation and development of the sector. It focuses on the development of the Chinese art museum system as a whole and take into account the parallel development of the privately owned and the state-owned art museum. I argue that this growth, which has been labelled "museumification" was fostered by two forces: the government's new political agenda and the development of private collections. My aim is to analyse how they interact. I will also highlight how this reflects on the way contemporary Chinese art is collected and exhibited.

GIULIA FALATO

Alfonso Vagnone S.J.'s (1568–1640) contribution to the diffusion of Western moral philosophy into late Ming China is often neglected, but it is undeniable. His pedagogic treatise, *Tongyou Jiaoyu* 童幼教育 (On the education of children, c.1632), the oldest proof of a Sino-Western exchange in the field of pedagogy, introduced various aspects of the European Classical and Renaissance education, integrating these with Confucian (and neo-Confucian) precepts on moral cultivation.

An epistemological similarity between Vagnone's teachings and the eminent Neo-Confucian philosopher and pedagogue Zhu Xi 朱熹's precepts was first identified by Han Lin 韩霖, the author of the foreword to the treatise. The potential influence of Zhu Xi's approach to the education on Vagnone's pedagogic treatise is the purpose of the present paper, which will be based on a preliminary intertextual analysis between *Tongyou Jiaoyu* and the Neo-Confucian primer *Xiaoxue* 小学 by Zhu Xi. This study also intends to shed new light on the Chinese sources of *Tongyou Jiaoyu*, a topic which is also crucial to understanding the Jesuit's adaptation of terms and concepts of foreign origin.

SIMONA GALLO

As a multifaceted artist, a “citizen of the world”, a deterritorialized author with bilingual and a bicultural consciousness, Gao Xingjian 高行健 constantly reveals his ability to give his hybrid self the shape of literary and artistic works which transcend boundaries. His desire to go beyond individual linguistic borders and to address the entire world became tangible through self-translation.

This article focuses his most recent play written in French and self-translated into Chinese – *Ballade Nocturne / Yejian xingge* 夜間行歌 – and offers a preliminary comparative analysis of the two versions. With a translational approach, it aims at highlighting potential evidences of the author’s collaboration strategies with the Sinophone and the French audience, when reterritorializing his work. Following the preliminary hypothesis that Gao Xingjian’s self-translation stands as a dialogue with his essentially twofold public, the analysis suggests that *Ballade nocturne* becomes a place for further artistic investigation and practice, as well as a chance to articulate the plurality of his own creative process, and his hybrid self.

ADRIANA IEZZI

In China, the urban phenomenon of graffiti art (*tuya yishu* 涂鸦艺术) emerged in the mid-90s, and since the beginning of the 21st century, it has quickly acquired a large following among young artists in the major cities of the country. The KwanYin Clan (*Guanyin* 观音) is one of the most representative crew of the so-called “Chinese Style Graffiti”. Founded in Beijing (2006), the aim of this crew is to merge Euro-American graffiti tradition with Chinese artistic culture, in order to create an “in-between” style. In all its “pieces”, it uses intermixed elements and techniques both Chinese and Western, exploring the fusion of graffiti art with China’s social environment. In the work entitled *Shengong yijiang* 神工意匠 (Ars divina, 2010), one of its most important “piece”, KwanYin Clan creates a 3D graffiti piece using Chinese characters, treating public walls like horizontal calligraphic scrolls full of tags and colophons, and writing ancient poetry in “running script” (*xingshu* 行书) by means of spray. Through the analysis of this work, this paper aims at: i) reconstructing the *artistic philosophy of KwanYin Clan*, focusing on the harmonic blending of ancient patterns and modern materials, Western styles and Chinese techniques; ii) revealing how Chinese writers have shaped a *new aesthetics* highly contemporary but deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture; iii) showing how Chinese artists assimilate graffiti art languages from the post-modern Western avant-garde movement to reflect on China’s contemporary transformations; iv) demonstrating how, in China as everywhere, the globalizing tendencies as well as the desire for specificity and particularity can be fulfilled within transculturality.

ELENA MACRÌ

In the 21st century, *shanshuihua* 山水画 appears as a changing concept. The establishment of new visual and conceptual frameworks for a different “*shanshui*-type” challenge the idea of what landscape means in the context of Chinese contemporary art.

This article attempts to identify the diverse ways in which some contemporary artists perceive and depict landscape. By looking at three representative art exhibitions organized outside China as case studies, this essay intends to present some major theoretical changes pertaining to contemporary landscape representation occurred from the early 2000s to the present. The unifying questions of this paper are: what does the idea of new landscape representation actually mean? What is the relationship between the legacy of traditional

*shanshuihua* and contemporary perspectives? These questions can be used to explore the new landscape identity and its use of tradition to further observe the contemporary cultural context.

DANIELE MASSACCESI

In the last few decades, also the Central-Eastern part of Italy faced an important increase of Chinese communities. For this reason, in 2011 local media created the expression “New Prato” phenomenon, being Prato the Italian city with a very large Chinese community, one of the biggest in Europe. For the migrants (and their sons in particular) identity is just one of the many issues they have to face while living in a new country. Closed between the need of an identification (both national and ethnic) and the refusal of it, the experience of many Italian-born Chinese young people seems to suggest the idea of a “new kind” of identity. Through a fieldwork based on a survey conducted by the author in the Provinces of Macerata and Fermo in 2015, and data collection of the local Chinese community, this article attempts to explore the identity of the “New Italians” with Chinese origin, as often the national media refer to them.

MARCO MECCARELLI

China’s opening-up policy, globalization together with cross-cultural communications increased a need for preservation of the country’s cultural heritage, since the ‘90s. Many Chinese scholars looked back to the past and explored the potential of archaeological materials, inscriptions, myths, and legends of ancient times. The origin and evolution of Chinese symbols became a critical area of their studies: the *long* 龙, the dragon, is the highest-ranking symbol in the Chinese animal hierarchy. This article helps to bridge the gap by introducing the reliable theories on the origin of the mythical animal, focusing particularly on issues of typology, classification, and latest debates on the distinction between the *long* and the dragons of the other cultures.

GIANLUIGI NEGRO

At the present state Internet governance is mainly based on the multi stakeholder model which sees the combination of governments, private sector and civil society. In the last five years has been developing an alternative model mainly based on the role of state governments and based on multi lateral decision-making processes.

The article aims to provide a historical overview on the Chinese vision of Internet information society starting from the 90s in order to identify the constitutive choices of the Chinese Internet governance. A particular attention is addressed to the role of private sector and its co-evolutionary approach in relation to the state government as well as the shift from an approach primarily focused on domestic issues (*duinei*) to a more international oriented one (*duiwai*).

LUCA PISANO

The literary representation of space allows us to understand the landscape not just as a reality external to the narrating subject but as a network of symbols whose deep values and meanings give life to an aesthetic experience. Consequently, the identity of the landscape is not a univocal concept but it stems from the interpretation of the multiple cultural indicators attributed to it. Within the Taiwanese literature, a central field of research

focuses on the analysis of the literary landscapes as background of literary works. The urban space of Taipei is certainly one of the privileged places, to the point of being today considered an autonomous research topic as Taipeiology. This essay wish to retrace the representation and imagery related to a specified context of Taipei, the so-called “city south” (chengnan), making the reader as a flâneur between spaces and places of the literary texts.

GABRIELE TOLA

The John Fryer Papers (FP) are a fundamental archival resource. In the introduction of the article, the author briefly summarises the history of the FP and of their cataloguing; then, in the first chapter, he draws a brief summary of how the FP have been employed in secondary literature. In the second chapter, an outlook of the most important contents of the FP is sketched and further research perspectives are highlighted, with a particular focus on the fields of missionary linguistics and of cultural interactions between the West and China. In the third and last chapter, various questions about the FP are raised, especially pertaining to their cataloguing and preservation. The purpose of the article is to present the FP to a broad audience, giving a glance of their contents and highlighting possible research perspectives; the article represents a useful bibliographic instrument for research on John Fryer and, in a broader sense, on the *Xixue Dongjian* 西學東漸.

ALESSANDRO TOSCO

This article analyses the “tragic” representation of the heroine’s exemplary execution in the well-known drama (*zaju* 雜劇) *Dou E yuan* 竇娥冤 (The Injustice to Dou E) by Guan Hanqing 關漢卿 of the Yuan dynasty. Some Chinese critics have argued that this play can be considered an authentic “Chinese tragedy” (*Zhongguo beiju* 中國悲劇); however, by comparing Dou E’s execution with Antigone’s death in the eponymous Greek tragedy by Sophocles, this article demonstrates that there is a substantial difference between Chinese and Greek dramas based on different notions of “tragedy” and contrasting ways of representing pain on the stage. Taking all these issues into account, this article analyses the aesthetic values of *Dou E yuan* and the audience’s reception, discussing the cultural background in which these dramatic representations are set.

CRISTIANA TURINI

This contribution aims at developing an anthropological and cross-cultural analysis of the patient-practitioner encounter in Western biomedical context and among the Naxi people today inhabiting the region on the border between Yunnan and Sichuan provinces. The conflictual relationship which comes into being in the negotiation of the reality bringing together the patient and the doctor is explored through the differing perspectives and backgrounds each participant brings to the encounter. In the context of Naxi culture, the investigation on the nature of the relationship between layman and practitioner cannot leave the process of divination out of consideration, since the Naxi understand the body as a “microcosm” of the universe and pathological conditions cannot be situated in mind or body alone, but involve both cosmological and social relations and self.

MARTINA TURRIZIANI

After the failure of the reformist experiment known as “Hundred Days’ Reform” (June–September 1898), the eminent Chinese scholar and reformer Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858–1927) was forced to leave China and stay in exile for the following sixteen years. During the years 1904–1908 he undertook a lengthy trip to Europe and detailed what he had seen in all the European countries he visited in his *Ouzhou shiyiguo youji* 歐洲十一國遊記 (Travel Diaries of Eleven European Countries), which was published for the first time in 1905. Italy was the starting point of his travel, and after crossing the country from south to north in twelve days, Kang wrote an extensive travelogue (about 72 000 characters): the *Yidali youji* 意大利遊記 (Travel Diary of Italy). In the diary, he did not only describe the Italian cities along with the historical and artistic sites he saw, but also provided his opinions on topics like art, culture, religion, politics, economics and history of Italy and the West in general. He was deeply interested in Italian history, in particular in the Italian unification (Risorgimento), to which he dedicated long parts in his travelogue, recounting in detail every event and presenting all the characters who had a role in the success of the process. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the attention Kang Youwei paid to the three “heroes” of Risorgimento: Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882), Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872) and Camillo Benso Count of Cavour (1810–1861). Kang clearly showed his preference for the latter, as it is confirmed by the long *fu* poem he dedicated to Cavour and whose content and structure will be deeply analysed in this study. The final section of this paper will examine the reasons why Kang Youwei considered Cavour as the fundamental figure in the Italian unification and why “Risorgimento” was so important in relation to China’s troublesome present and future history.

LUCA VANTAGGIATO

In chapter 23 of the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子 there is a quote attributed to Mencius which states: “*rén zhī xué zhě, qí xìng shàn* 人之學者，其性善。” It is generally believed that such statement reveals *Xúnzǐ*’s misunderstanding of Mencius’ conceptions of human nature. However, it is also possible that *Xúnzǐ* did understand correctly his opponent, and vigorously replied to Mencius offering his own views of human nature. Although *Xúnzǐ* paid much more attention to studying than his opponent, the sentence in the *Xìng è* 性惡 chapter attributed to Mencius may stress moral growth as a process directly linked to human nature, a theoretical starting point which *Xúnzǐ* could not have accepted. This article offers a grammatical and philosophical analysis of the quotation of the *Xìng è* 性惡 chapter, and shows how accurate was *Xúnzǐ* in his rebuttal of Mencius’ ideas about human nature.

TANINA ZAPPONE

Relying on public relation theories (Grunig and Hurt 1984, Mancini 2008), the article tries to develop the analytic framework delineated in previous studies on PRC government spokesperson system, in order to collocate the evolution of the system in the wider context of China’s government communication.

Through an analysis of the impact of domestic factors on spokespersons’ practice – such as new information technologies and the normative push toward the disclosure of government information, initiated in 2008 – the study puts forward the hypothesis that in recent times the figure of government spokesperson, originally born in response to

the needs of external propaganda, has been acquiring a new role, relates to government's increasing responsiveness to citizens' expectations and to the goal of positively engaging citizens in country's political life, in order to build new internal consensus.



## Contributors

VICTORIA ALMONTE PhD, is an adjunct Professor of Chinese Language and Literature at Tuscia University of Viterbo and a post-doctoral fellowship researcher at La Sapienza University of Rome. Her main research is focused on the linguistic contamination and cross-fertilization between Chinese and Arabic lexicon and idioms. She is currently working on the realization of a web-oriented dynamic platform (Open Research Environment) based on a responsive database containing toponyms used in selected Chinese geographic works, in order to promote the networking and the sharing of knowledge between researchers.

SELUSI AMBROGIO is currently adjunct professor of Chinese Language, Literature and Philosophy at University of Macerata and University of Urbino. His research interests range from Chinese literary criticism (i.e. Yan Lianke), Contemporary New Confucianism (Mou Zongsan), Early Jesuits and converts in China (i.e. Ricci, Xu Guangqi,...), and Orientalism in 17-18th century Europe. One of his most recent article on Mou and Heidegger has been published in a special number of *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* (“Understanding Contemporary Chinese Philosophy”, 2018: 13.1). He has been appointed member of the board of the European Association of Chinese Philosophy (EACP). He is also member of EACS, AISC and SACP (Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy).

MARTINA CODELUPPI holds a PhD in contemporary Chinese literature from Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Sorbonne Nouvelle University. Her thesis envisaged an analysis of the polyglossia characterising contemporary Chinese literature in a global, transnational perspective, with a focus on fictional memory. She teaches Chinese language at Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna. Among her other research interests are translation studies, literary theory, and critical discourse analysis.

ORNELLA DE NIGRIS is a sinologist and expert in modern and contemporary Chinese art. In 2014 she obtained the PhD in Civilization of Asia and Africa at La Sapienza University of Rome with a thesis on the contemporary Chinese museum system. She is currently Honorary Fellow of Chinese language and culture at the Oriental Studies Department of La Sapienza University of Rome. From 2014 to 2017 she has been responsible for the cultural activities of the Confucius Institute of Rome, and served as an adjunct professor of Chinese Art History at Carlo Bo' University in Urbino. She held numerous stays in Asia (2004-2014),

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GIULIA FALATO completed her PhD at the Institute of Oriental Studies, La Sapienza University of Rome, in April 2017. Her research specialty resides in the intellectual history of China, with a particular focus on Sino-Western exchanges in the fields of pedagogy, moral philosophy and lexicon. After having relocated to the UK she joined the Graduate Recruitment Team at the University of Oxford and collaborates with the Department of Continuing Education and the University of Roma Tre.

SIMONA GALLO holds a PhD in Linguistic, Literary and Intercultural Studies in European and Extra-European Perspectives from the University of Milan, under the supervision of Alessandra Lavagnino. Her research interests involve Chinese and Sinophone Literature, transcultural aesthetics, cultural translation and intertextuality. She currently teaches Chinese Literature and is a member of the Italian Association for Chinese Studies (AISC), the European Association for Chinese Studies (EACS) and the Contemporary Asia Research Center (CARC).

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ELENA MACRÌ Sinologist, lecturer, founder of Ink Hub, a curatorial and educational platform dedicated to promote Chinese contemporary ink art and culture. She received her MA in Chinese Studies and PhD in Chinese Art History from the University of Naples “L’Orientale”, specializing in Chinese modern and contemporary art. Her PhD dissertation and published articles are centered on the evolution of landscape painting and her current research interests focus on Chinese contemporary ink art theory and practice. She has lectured at the University of Naples “L’Orientale” (2009-2015) and has been in charge of collaborations and projects with different academic and cultural institutions, planning and coordinating artistic and cultural projects, exhibitions and events. In 2018, she has coordinated the Ink Art Week Project and curated the Ink Riders exhibition (Venice).

DANIELE MASSACCESI was born in Macerata (Italy) and obtained his BA and MA degree in Chinese Studies, at La Sapienza University of Rome. He lived in China for seven years, and obtained his PhD in Sociology at Renmin University of China, with a dissertation on the relation between migrant women and female emancipation in nowadays Beijing. He lectured at the School of Asian Studies of the University College Cork (Ireland) from 2011 to 2013, and at the Department of Human Studies of the University of Macerata from 2013 to 2018.

MARCO MECCARELLI is adjunct professor at the Universities of Catania, Macerata and Urbino. He obtained in 2005 a Postgraduate Diploma from the School of Specialization in Oriental Archaeology at La Sapienza University of Rome where he completed his PhD in 2010 in History and Civilization of Oriental Asia. His research interests lie in the broad field of Chinese art and international relations. He is co-author of the first Italian monograph on the history of Chinese photography.

GIANLUIGI NEGRO is Post Doctoral Researcher Fellow and Editor Assistant at China Media Observatory (CMO) at Università della Svizzera italiana (USI). He is author of *The Internet in China From Infrastructure to a Nascent Civil Society* (Palgrave, 2017). He is member of Global Internet Governance Academic Network (Giga-Net). He is currently visiting research Fellow at Peking University, School of Journalism and Communication for a research project funded by the Sino Swiss Science and Technology Program. He is in the editorial board of *Chinoresie.info* and in the scientific committee of the EU China dialogue on media and communication summer school organized by Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) and the School of Journalism and Communication at Peking University. Gianluigi researches focus on Chinese Internet history and Chinese internet governance.

LUCA PISANO is currently Associated Professor of Chinese language and literature at Università degli studi di Enna “Kore”, Italy. His main research field is contemporary Chinese literature from Taiwan and Hong Kong, with particular focus on geocritical perspectives and spatial awareness in the construction of cultural identities. Besides, he is engaged in the study of the literature and performance practices of Chinese zither qin 琴, periodically pursuing his research in Hong Kong with master Sou Si-tai 蘇思棣, learning the repertoire transmitted by Tsar Teh-yun 蔡德允 (1905-2007).

GABRIELE TOLA is currently JSPS postdoctoral fellow at Kansai University. His specialization is Chinese studies, with a focus on the formation of modern Chinese scientific and technical lexicon. He has published articles in *Studi e Problemi di Critica Testuale*, *Monumenta Serica*, *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* and in international journals and international conference proceedings, touching upon the history of bilingual glossaries in late Qing China and the interactions between Chinese and Italian literature.

ALESSANDRO TOSCO graduated and received his PhD in Euro-Asiatic Studies at the University of Turin, Italy. He is currently Assistant Professor of Chinese language and literature at the University of Enna “Kore”, Italy. His research interests include Chinese lexicology and classical Chinese literature, with a focus on theatre in the Mongol period. On this topic, he recently published the translation of the drama *Autumn in the Han palace* by Ma Zhiyuan (Aracne, 2018), with a critical introduction on the figure of Wang Zhaojun.

CRISTIANA TURINI graduated in Chinese Language and Literature, holds a PhD in History and Civilizations of Eastern Asia from La Sapienza University (Rome) and a MA in Medical Anthropology from the School of Oriental and African Studies (London). She perfected the study of Chinese language at the Italian Institute for Africa and the East (ex Is.Me.O.), at BLC University (Beijing) and at Wuhan University. She conducted her fieldwork on Naxi

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MARTINA TURRIZIANI awarded a PhD from the Department of Oriental Studies at La Sapienza University of Rome and is currently working as Adjunct Professor of Chinese Literature at “G. D’Annunzio” University of Chieti-Pescara. Her recent research focuses on the image of Italy in late Imperial Chinese sources, in particular as it emerged from the *Yidali youji* (Travel diary of Italy) written by the Chinese scholar Kang Youwei (1858-1927). Her last publication is *The image of Italian Unification in Kang Youwei’s Yidali youji 意大利遊記 (1905)* (Cesati, 2017).

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TANINA ZAPPONE got her PhD at Rome University “La Sapienza” in 2013 and granted the National Scientific Habilitation for Associate Professor in the field of Cultures of Central and East Asia in march 2018. She is currently a research fellow and an adjunct professor of Chinese Language at the University of Torino. She is author of a monograph titled *La comunicazione politica cinese rivolta all'estero: dibattito interno, istituzioni e pratica discorsiva* (2017). Her main research interests include China’s public diplomacy, political language and communication.

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