

Introduction

New Direction in the Humanities¹

How can the average scholar of China and the Humanities hope to stay on the narrow path between European-and-Anglo-American Orientalism and Chinese Occidentalism? How can we respond to that banker's plea (in the preface) and teach once more a culture of humaneness through the Humanities? How can we help the Humanities avoid a crisis? How can we help scholars from China interact more with the international academic community? This book is my answer to these difficult questions and it is three years in the making. The preface tells of its beginnings and traces briefly the process of turning this book from a theoretical dream into a practical reality.

This book has three purposes: The most immediate is to put into book form some of the most thought-provoking research in the Humanities that deals with the complexity that is modern-day China. This most ephemeral objective is to bring aspects of China as it is today to the English-reading audience with both the specialist and the casual reader in mind. Diachronically, it was toward the end of August, 2009 that I completed the editing of the first three chapters of the book. My editorial work on the second part

1. This introduction and this volume by no means attempt to introduce the reader to the history of China. In editing this volume I assume that the reader has already been to China or already has some familiarity with China. For those who are completely new to China, I suggest that they read this volume along with or in addition to the following books: For an eclectic but highly thought-provoking comparison of the Greco-Roman tradition with that of the Chinese Classical tradition please see *Aristotle in China: Language, Categories and Translation*, by Robert Wardy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); For a general overview of modern Chinese history please read *The Search for Modern China* by Jonathan D. Spence, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991); For an in-depth study of Chinese history please read the multi-volume *Cambridge History of China*, edited by John K. Fairbank and Denis Twitchett; (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); For the influence of European thought on China please read *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West*, by Benjamin I. Schwartz, (Belknap / Harvard University Press, 1964), in conjunction with *China and Charles Darwin*, by James R. Pusey, (Harvard University Asia Center, 1983); for a definitive account of the beginning of Communist China please read *From Friend to Comrade: The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, 1920-1927*, by Hans J. van de Ven, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991). To understand the great complexity that is China and witness an example of moving beyond Orientalism and Occidentalism please read the on-going multi-volume work *Science and Civilization in China*; Founded by Joseph Needham, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954-).

of the book took almost a year to complete. I received the last contribution in July of 2010 and I finished the editing of the final part of this book in late November of 2010. Almost all research in this book is “New Knowledge.” For some readers, the China that is constantly renewing itself will be uninteresting, for it is no longer the mythical Celestial Empire or the Communist or Socialist utopia. China is today what it has decided to become or as Endymion Wilkinson puts it the China that is “ever in the process of becoming.”

A second purpose for this book is to hope for a form of relevance that survives the present. China is changing rapidly and anyone who lives outside of China for over six months will return to a very different China. The only hope for this book’s long-term relevance is that a reader in ten for fifteen years will look at it as a time capsule of sorts that has captured the state of China in the process of becoming and the role of the Humanities in this process during the last three years of the first decade of the twenty-first century. The conference organizer, the contributors, the publisher and the editor have done our part. It shall be up to the readers of this volume to carry on the search for a new direction in the Humanities.

The final purpose of this book, as stated in the title, is to transport readers to a crossroads in China at the intersection of the Humanities, the human, and the humane.

Chapter Summaries

This book has a total of twelve chapters organized into three parts that proceed from the philosophical and theoretical, through the Humanities in China to their influence on people in China.

Part One A Culture of Humaneness | 仁义文化

In part one, the first three chapters of this volume address the theme of a culture of humaneness. 吴青 [WÚ qīng] sets a tone for the entire volume by emphasizing love, humaneness, and human rights not just for men but also for women. Her chapter speaks of her experiences working as a human rights activist in China. She shows the reader that while much more needs to be done in China, change is indeed possible with the love that her mother 谢冰心 [XIÈ bīng xīn] (a famous writer who was regarded as the conscience of China) showed by openly supporting the students’ democratic movement in 1989 with eight characters in Chinese calligraphy: “Students love the country. I love the students.” It is with this love, that 吴青 [WÚ qīng] now opens this book to its readers, and invites them to feel her love of a country that is full of new meanings and new directions.

Alison ASSITER reflects on 吴青 [WÚ qīng]’s focus on the need for love that was emphasized by 谢冰心 [XIÈ bīng xīn] and finds common ground with the philosophical writings of both Slavoj Žižek and Søren Kierkegaard

through the ideology of love that will be necessary to improve human rights in China. She also links 吴青 [WÚ qīng]'s experiences in China with her own experiences improving human rights conditions in Iran.

Judy LATTAS continues on this theme of love, and reflects on the anniversary of the student human rights protests of 1989 and then links her thoughts with that of 吴青 [WÚ qīng] and Alison Assiter through her interpretation of Hannah Arendt's thoughts on education. She concludes her chapter and the first part of the book by telling the reader that by going to China she learned at the center of a teacher's work—no matter if she or he is from China, England, or Australia—is love.

Part Two The Humanities in China | 中国的人文学

The four chapters in part two of this volume represent what Anglo-American and European readers traditionally call the Humanities. Scholars from China and from outside of China present four chapters on distinct topics in the Humanities that range in time from prehistoric China to the present day. This chapter is by no means comprehensive but only gives a taste of the most recent types of research that belong to traditional fields such as archeology, theatre studies, English Modernism, and Film Studies. The backgrounds of the authors in this chapter are just as diverse for they are representatives of academies of three different countries.

Astrid VICAS begins this part of the book by making a daring comparison of “human agency” as recorded in the earliest Chinese written records (on tortoise shells) to those found in the earliest Western tradition. She then ponders how this Chinese tradition challenges the notion of “human agency” in Western philosophy.

Sasiporn PETCHARAPIRUCH continues this comparative humanities approach by presenting a detailed analysis comparing the Ming Novel of 水浒传 [*shuǐ hǔ zhuàn* or *The Outlaws of the Marsh*] and the Qing Dynasty Adapted Court Play of 忠义璇图 [*zhōng yì xuán tú* or *A Diagram of the Stars of Loyalty and Righteousness*]. She argues that the Qing Dynasty adapted stories from Ming Dynasty novels in the plots of court theatre as a method of legitimizing their own authority as the rulers of the Empire of China.

To have a study of Virginia Woolf's works included in a volume on China may be a surprise to many readers. However China has now decided once more to be open to the international world. They have chosen, however, to begin their resurgence in the world by understanding all that is Anglo-American. Virginia Woolf certainly belongs to that tradition. As 曹小琴 [CÁO xiǎo qín] tells her readers in “Virginia Woolf in Contemporary Chinese Media: An Investigation,” because her essays were included in mandatory English texts in the secondary school curriculum in China, there is now a devoted following of all things on Woolf.

In the last chapter of part two, 马纶鹏 [Mǎ lún péng] in “The Cinematic Transformation in Post-Socialist China: A Case Study of the Film 满城尽带黄金甲 [*mǎn chéng jìn dài huáng jīn jiǎ* or *Curse of the Golden Flower*] Direc-

ted by 张艺谋 [ZHĀNG yì móu]” makes some ground-breaking conclusions about the darker side of the burgeoning Chinese film industry. His chapter seems to suggest that the People’s Republic, like the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty is using stories from past dynasties in China to legitimize their own rule. However unlike the Manchu rulers, his analysis reveals only a dark portent for the future of Chinese civilization.

Part Three Humanities’ Mark on People | 以人文和仁文化人

The five chapters of part three of this volume revolve around the theme of how the Humanities can influence people, both positively and negatively, in everyday life. The current trend in Colonial, Post-Colonial, and Subaltern studies can be summarized as the legacy of Jacques Derrida’s Deconstruction of everything that that has two opposing sides. We have of course the binary opposition between colonial and Post-Colonialism, and the power dynamics of the master class and the subaltern. One common theme in these studies, is that the language in which these writers (for in these studies the author is already dead) choose to express their thoughts is always English. However, Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Homi K. Bhabha have all increasingly written in a style that is subversive to what is traditionally considered “good and proper” English. In their way, by destabilizing the semantic fields of the language of the colonizers and masters, they are helping to give voice to the colonized and the subaltern. The ideas promoted by these and others (such as Said’s concept of Orientalism) have such a hold on our collective conscious, that Faculties that used to be called Oriental Studies in England have in the past decade changed their names to avoid the term “the Orient.” However therein lies the danger of the absolute truth, for as Cécile LEUNG argues in a clear and concise style in her chapter, “l’Université l’Aurore [震旦大学 *zhèn dàn dà xué*] (1903–1951): The Relevance of a Foreign University in China,” even Catholic colonizers who taught with love and care could provide a generation of intellectuals from Shanghai with both a Western education and a traditional Chinese education. More importantly graduates of such schools of the colonizers became humane people who always saw their humanistic education as their moral compass.

No matter how well languages are written, it is music that is the universal language. In a chapter that might be more aptly entitled “Knowing When to Clapp,” 徐舫 [XÚ fāng] shares with her readers the immense interest that residents of Shanghai show in European “high-culture.” Despite the prohibition of European classical music during much of the last half of the twentieth century, and despite the Chinese people’s single-mindedness toward profit, their love of music and their love of being seen as having good taste in “high-culture” become evident in knowing when to clap during a concert. Relying on her extensive knowledge of the performing arts world in China, 徐舫 [XÚ fāng] in her chapter “Governance on the Production of Identity:

Consuming Western High-Culture in Contemporary Shanghai” gives us a glimpse of the enjoyment or consumption of European fine arts in Shanghai.

Writing on the effect of another form of Western art, Charles LOWE in his chapter “Teaching an “Other” Literature in China” brings his readers into a classroom in Shanghai where students do not react to Dylan Thomas’s “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” in a normal Anglo-American fashion. In his courses on Anglo-American literature, Charles LOWE uses literature to open dialogues between two cultures with different literary and philosophical traditions.

The term “subaltern” used to mean only a lower ranking British military officer. This term is now associated with Subaltern Studies that seeks to rewrite colonial history from the perspective of those who were colonized.² As with all fashions in the academy, this term will fade from memory. Giving a voice to those who do not have the privilege to speak or who are forced to speak in a foreign tongue will never be out of fashion.

The last two chapters of this book give voice to two groups of individuals whose voice remains obscured and silenced in China. Written during the riots that occurred in June of 2009 in 新疆 [xīn jiāng] or “东突厥斯坦” [dōng tū jué sī tǎn or East Turkestan], Robert Warren WILSON sent me his chapter titled “Assimilative Apprehensions and Strategic Responses: Uyghur Counter-Narratives” a year after those riots. He explained that while the Chinese news media insisted that there was open access to the internet in 新疆 [xīn jiāng], there was none for him and his interviewees. He was only able to respond to my invitation to contribute to this volume after departure from the area. His chapter provides an analysis of the current state of Uyghur culture and language in 新疆 [xīn jiāng]. He shares with his reader the dilemma that is faced by Uyghurs as the Chinese government continually insists on “liberating” them from their own language and culture.

Rural women in general but especially ethnic minority girls from rural areas in China have very little opportunity to speak their mind. In 罗兆红 [LUÓ zhào hóng]’s chapter titled “Equality of Opportunity and Development for Ethnic Minority Girls” she gives a detailed account of the impact that a school founded by 吴青 [WÚ qīng] and others has had on the lives of ethnic minority girls.

These two chapters provide an opportunity for readers of this book to understand and listen to the story of two groups of underprivileged people in China. Reading both of these chapters, the reader may also find that they are in conflict with each other. This is the story of modern-day China, complex, protean, and at times in conflict.

2. Donna, Landry, and Gerald Maclean, eds., *The Spivak Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 1996), 203.

