

Recapitulation of the Conference

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The themes of the Fifth Quadrennial Congress favored conventional literary history rather than recent trends in criticism with the announced topics ranging in chronology from Confucius to modernism. The keynote speech on the reaction to Chinese culture in early American literature was in some degree inappropriate, confined as it was to the eighteenth century, whereas most of the other papers dealt with the modern period. This opening speech did, however, touch on the theme of Confucius, and it may also be considered relevant because of methodology. It helps to confirm a principle of comparative literature, that there is almost no limit to the making of comparisons based on historical relationship provided that some degree of direct contact can be established. The introducing of colonial America into the history of reactions to Chinese culture in the Western world demonstrates that it is still possible to discover new evidence of literary relations between China and the West before the nineteenth century. More than half a century ago, Shau Yi Chan submitted his doctoral dissertation on "The Influence of China on English Culture during the Eighteenth Century" to the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Chicago, certainly one of the earliest dissertations in the history of comparative literature to involve China. Yet a scant two years ago, Willy Richard Berger presented a *Habilitationschrift* to the philosophy department of the University of Bonn [Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität] on "China-Bild und China-Mode im Europa der Aufklärung." Even in the common ground they tread, each makes its own impression, and between these two academic treatises, scores of similar works have been published, most of them leaning heavily on their predecessors and only a few making significant contributions of their own. In recent years, historical research in the pre-modern period has greatly declined, in large measure because of the widespread impression that everything of importance has already been discovered and thoroughly exploited. This defeatist attitude is mistaken.

It is still possible to discover new facts and new relationships, to add them to the store of accumulated knowledge, and, when necessary, to revise accepted opinions and interpretations.

At a conference held in Brighton by the British Comparative Literature Association as an extension of the recent ICLA meeting in Paris, an eminent Chinese commentator wondered whether the current critical debate between conservative literary historians and avant garde literary theorists could properly be considered as an extension of the eighteenth-century quarrel between the ancients and the moderns. Two of the panels of the present conference – that concerning modernism on one hand and that concerning Confucianism and Taoism on the other – seem to support this notion and to provide a practical illustration of it.

Modernism is a term parallel to primitivism in being both value laden and completely relative. Both points of view are perennial or at least have been evident from ancient times to the present. The primitivist looks back with nostalgia to the past as the ideal state and the modernist complacently considers the present as the ultimate in human attainment. Since the late eighteenth century, moreover, a third group, the futurists, have gone one step further; they look forward to times to come as more worthy of attention than either the past or the present. Not represented in the present conference, the futurists utilize for the most part the genres of utopia, dystopia, and science fiction; they may envision the future as likely to embody extraordinary degrees of improvement in life style, or, vice versa, bleak retrogression in either physical or intellectual conditions or even both.

In purely literary terms, modernism may be equated with a movement or a period, but it is more commonly considered as an attitude, spirit, or perspective. In the West the only national literature in which modernism is universally considered as representing a definite time span together with a specific coterie of writers manifesting a concrete set of principles or goals is the Spanish. *Modernismo* is recognized in nearly all Hispanic histories, anthologies and dictionaries of critical terms as a movement originating at the turn of the nineteenth century, and comprising a renewed esthetic orientation in Spanish and Latin American letters inspired to some degree by French Parnassianism and Symbolism. The degree of unanimity or general recognition accorded in the literary history of Spain to *Modernismo* is not matched in any other Western literature although the term *modernism* referring to heterogeneous esthetic and philosophical concepts has been applied to various aspects of other Western national literatures, particularly

the German. Otherwise modernism in the West is a purely chronological designation, indicating merely that which is contemporaneous. Historically the notion of modernism originated in the realm of the fine arts, where it represented a revolutionary break with the past, amounting almost to repudiation; in literature the separation from tradition was far less radical. Literary modernism, incorporated trends and tendencies that had previously emerged at intermittent points and had been gradually absorbed rather than having remained as forces opposed to the main stream. Also modernism has served as an umbrella of ideas and attitudes enveloping such subsidiary movements as Symbolism, Decadence, Dadaism, and Surrealism. Modernism was and perhaps still is – despite the inevitable rise of further concepts such as NeoModernism and PostModernism – a vast international conglomerate nourished by myriads of semiautonomous national and individual enterprises. Shunsuke Kamei assigned modernism in Japan to the period of the 1920s, “from the last part of the Taisho era to the beginning of Showa.” In regard to China, the consensus of scholars I have consulted supports the view that modernism grew out of the May Fourth Movement, but that it is not a mere chronological designation of all writing after that date. Instead it is a conscious literary effort characterized by the use of the vernacular rather than a classical style. In this sense it is parallel to the Italian Renaissance in which demotic Italian superseded Latin and Greek. Indeed one of the papers in the present conference pointed to resemblances between aspects of the Western Renaissance and Chinese fiction of the nineteenth century. Leo Ou-fan Lee in his analysis of literary experiments in Shanghai similarly suggested a parallel with a Western scholar’s portrayal of post-Renaissance modernity as “a time of emergence from darkness, a time of awakening and ‘renascence,’ heralding a luminous future” in which man would actively participate in the creation of the future as a dynamic agent of change.

Jeffrey C. Kinkley in his treatment of contemporary conditions on the China mainland suggested that in literary criticism modernism is a contrary force to positivism and that it has been condemned by the establishment for its Western origins.

The papers in the present conference did not seek to define or establish an indigeneous esthetic consciousness in China separate or distinguished from the massive social-historical upheaval known as the May Fourth Movement. Rather they indicated specific contacts or relationships between individual Chinese writers and similar figures in the West historically accepted as leaders in breaking away from traditional molds or in establishing new

ones.

Leo Ou-fan Lee in his "In Search of Modernity" did not give a formal definition of modernism in China, but instead provided a number of descriptive characteristics in connection with a coterie of writers associated with experimental periodicals in Shanghai in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Some of these writers "championed a 'modern shape of poetry' — a rhymeless, free-verse form with emphasis on poetic texture"; others introduced a style of fiction resembling a Japanese school of "New Sensationalists"; and all referred to experimental Western writers now generally ranked under the rubric of Modernist. The May Fourth Movement itself, according to Lee's interpretation of it as both a literary technique and a climate of ideology, has three major elements: a dismantling of traditional codes of writing or literary sacred cows so that conventional referents may take on new meanings; the imposition of a moral imperative in art to present external reality, thereby reflecting a critical perception of the environment; and the preference of a rural slant in order to associate art with its underlying social-economic roots. In reaction against the latter principle, the editor of one of the Shanghai journals Chi-ts'un Shih described the contemporary scene as a predominantly urban phenomenon. In Shih's words, "even natural landscapes are different from what used to be." Oddly enough, as Lee points out, a contemporary description of the kind of poetry published in Shi's journal has more relevance to his own fiction than to the poetic contents of the journal. "A man betrays his subconscious in his dreams; likewise he betrays his hidden soul in his poetry, but only in an obscure dream-like manner." It is well known that traditional Chinese literature has much to say about dreams, and the preceding description would not be out of place if applied to some works in preceding centuries. Lee's brief summary of Shih's experiments in both technique and subject matter, however, revealed special aspects of the dream world he explored which belong particularly to the twentieth century, that is, fantasy, eroticism, the urban gothic and the grotesque. Although Lee observed that the grotesque had previously not engaged the attention of most Chinese writers, an extended analysis of the grotesque in earlier times was offered by John W. Scott in a comparison of *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Journey to the West*.

In a paper closely-related to Lee's, Jeffrey C. Kinkley commented on "Tensions and Resonances Between Modernism and Journalism in the Works of Chang Hsin-hsin." This paper was particularly welcome because its author is an intellectual historian, not a professor of literature, and his

interdisciplinary perspective contributed to the desirable breadth of the conference. Also his history-of-ideas approach provided an equally desirable paradigm of substantive scholarship. For the comparatist the main interest in Kinkley's paper is the relationship between literature and journalism; for the social historian, the main interest is the career of one of the major female writers in contemporary China. As far back as the eighteenth century, journalism in England and America was considered as a valid and respected literary genre in the collected works of such exponents as Defoe, Addison, Franklin and Paine. In the nineteenth century, however, journalism lost almost all its prestige, and only within the last ten or twelve years has it once again acquired acceptance as a major narrative genre. Kinkley revealed that in this regard China led the West, or at least developed independently, for journalism and literature in this intellectual environment "cross-fertilized" each other earlier and more extensively than in the West. In the late 1970s Chinese reportage had absorbed much of the narrative technique of fiction, but continued as in the past to emphasize subject matter over technique. Kinkley considered the mixing of the genres of journalism and literature as a major aspect of modernism, concentrating on the interweaving process in the writings of Hsin-hsin Chang. In her extended narrative *Peking Man*, she presents "the words of 100 people, distilled from several hundred interviews," seeking in these taped responses to develop modernist "consciousness" over modernist techniques. One might point as a parallel to a recent development in Western anthropology of interviewing representatives of various social categories and publishing the interviews as scientific data, as in the works of Oscar Lewis, or even of comparing journalistic-type interviews with descriptions drawn from novels. Kinkley observed that in some ways Chang used as a model the methodology of oral history developed by Studs Terkel in his socio-psychological narrative *American Dream*. After an extensive analysis of the combination of taped interviews, journalism and fiction in *Peking Man*, Kinkley concluded that Chang's major literary achievement revealed a greater degree of resonance than of tension between modernism and journalism.

Kinkley also threw light on a social-esthetic problem raised by a Western visitor to China in the eighteenth century and presented in the keynote address, that is, whether this traveler was correct in charging that the notion of romantic kissing was nonexistent throughout the entire Chinese empire. Kinkley cited a billboard poster on the China mainland during the last decade that portrayed a Mata Hari figure in order to advertise a dramatic

performance. This poster boldly proclaimed: "Kissing Right on Stage."

One could hardly find a greater contrast in methodology than that represented by Kinkley's paper and that by another on the same panel "On Narrative Digression and Nonsequential Interpolation: Comparative Study of Works by Li Ju-chen and Melville." Even though this Chinese author and this American one belong to the middle of the nineteenth century, the paper was presumably placed in the rubric of modernism either because of the author's statement that Li Ju-chen incorporated the "modern notion that the writer's own mental reality is the primary determinant of the concepts of the novel" or because the methodology of the paper derives from a modern development in literary theory, narratology. According to this paper, narrative work requires a double and an independent time, that of "the time line of the story" and that of "the time line of the discourse." In other words, the story incorporates a time sequence of the events being told about as well as the time of the presentation by the teller. It seems to me, however, that in at least one genre, journalism, which seeks immediacy or absolute contemporaneity, the time perspective of events and that of the relating of the events usually coincide. Other theorists who have considered the relation between literature and journalism indicate that literary narrative begins at a specific time and arrives at a moment of closure; whereas journalism begins with the immediate past, emphasizes the present, and suggests the future. The inevitable conclusion to be derived from the present interpretation of narratology is that journalism is not narrative — in contrast to the historically-arrived conclusion of Kinkley that journalism and literature coalesce. The other theoretical concept of "narrative digression and nonsequential interpolation" means in simpler terms merely any divergence from the main story line. The various ways in which the sequence of events in fiction is interrupted or broken up could be illustrated by hundreds of authors equally as well as by Li and Melville, and no convincing reasons were offered to explain why these two in particular were chosen. Indeed the resemblances pointed out derived more from theme and genre than from structural aspects of time. Even the parallel involving "encyclopedic or anatomical writing" does not hold up. I refer to this notion because encyclopedic discourse, introducing long catalogues of information, frequently irrelevant, is a well-known characteristic of Chinese literature in general and it has been satirized by the contemporary Argentinian Jorge Luis Borges. At first glance Li's providing of information on obscure and esoteric aspects of medicine, music, phonetics, mathematics,

divination, astrology and chess does indeed seem to resemble Melville's "library cataloguing of the ocean and the whale." In actuality, however, these two examples of encyclopedic intrusion are not parallel because Li's, in common with Chinese tradition, ranges over a myriad of disparate and independent topics whereas Melville's is confined to the homogeneous one of the whaling industry.

Another paper specializing in theory treated the "time-space construct of narrative" from a vaguely deconstructionist point of view. Ching-kiu Stephen Chan drew illustrations from drama in his "Temporality and the Modern Subject: Effects of Memory in Lai Sheng-ch'uan's *The Other Evening, We Put Up a Show of "Hsiang-sheng."*" The technique discussed involved the use of chronology and perspective in order to reverse normal relationships. As in the Western theatre of the absurd, the end result is a "show of disorder."

Repercussions of modernism in Japan were treated by Shunsuke Kamei in regard to the famous novelist Tanizaki, who constantly wavered between Japanese traditionalism and new literary currents from America. He was in addition drawn to Chinese culture because of its tranquil and static quality. His masterpiece in traditional literary style *Shunkin-sho (An Extract from the Life of Shunkin)* combines echoes from his modernist period and influences from contemporary English fiction with the style of *The Tale of Genji*.

Introducing nature imagery to illustrate the truth of the saying that there is something of T'ang in every Romantic writer of verse, Jean Pierre Barricelli revealed the affinity between the great Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi and the world-famous Chinese poet Li Po through their choice of picturesque objects and a visual aesthetic of distance (both optically and philosophically). Taking as a point of departure Leopardi's "L'infinito" and Li Po's "Question and Answer in the Mountains," Barricelli embarked on a discussion of compound imagism and symbolism to establish the affinity through the poets' sensitivity for particular aspects of the natural world whose value lies in their conjoining with human consciousness.

Toru Haga presented a related example of how poets and painters have appropriated the landscape to their own purposes. As a consequence of generations of Chinese poets describing the junction of two rivers, Hsiao-Hsiang, pictorial artists established eight views of the junction as conventional subjects for the demonstration of their own skills. A number of Japanese pictorial artists in the sixteenth century then established a parallel prototype

of scenic beauty in eight views of a district of their country, Omi.

It is obvious that in the context of this conference studies of influence and relationship are divided into two categories – one in which the East is the emitter and the West the recipient, and the other in which the direction is reversed. Scholars for many years have debated the question of whether such American writers as Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman, who decorate their works with lavish references to oriental philosophy, actually possessed a profound knowledge of the wisdom of the East or whether their references masked merely superficial acquaintance. Chang-fang Chen tackled this problem in relation to “Thoreau’s Orientalism: Chinese Thought in *Walden*.” On the basis of considerable evidence of Thoreau’s familiarity with the Confucian classics, he concluded that Confucius exerted a considerable influence on Thoreau’s thinking. In regard to the Taoists, however, he did not claim a direct influence despite a number of similarities in nature mysticism and political ideals.

Both Franklin and Jefferson in eighteenth-century America touched on the common Western opinion of the period that the Chinese ideogram is pictorial rather than abstract. The later theoretical development of this view by the American art critic Ernest Fenolosa and its practical application by the French poet of Polish extraction Apollinaire was treated by Willard Bohn. Although experiments in the use of blank pages in fiction had been introduced by Laurence Sterne in the eighteenth century and by Machado de Assis in the nineteenth, Bohn traced the concept of white spaces in poetic visual form to Mallarmé and Claudel at the turn of the nineteenth century as an aspect of modernism. After analyzing several of Apollinaire’s experiments with visual form in the guise of pictographs, he concluded that “the personal touch” is paramount in both Apollinaire’s poetry and the Chinese ideogram.

The geographical area most greatly neglected by both Western and East Asian comparatists is that of the Middle East. A welcome contribution, therefore, was Francis K. H. So’s paper on “Middle Easterners in the T’ang Tales” based on records disseminated in 981 describing Chinese impressions of travelers, merchants, and adventurers from the Middle East.

One of the most original of the papers developing a literary theme was that on cockfighting in China and England by Robert Joe Cutter. Confining himself primarily to poetical references to the sport in the two national traditions, he concluded that the English poems are bloodier than their Chinese counterparts and that they devote more attention to the details

of battle because of their connection with Western heroic narratives. The relative reticence in the Chinese poems he attributed to the influence upon them of the hymns in the *Shih ching* with their tendency to rely on formulae and brief evocative images. Cutter has entered upon a theme of tremendous scope, probably even more extensive in Latin America than in Asia or Europe. A book of 300 pages on the history and literature of the sport in only a single country Venezuela, for example, has a bibliography of five pages. [Omar Albert Perez, *La Pelea de Gallos en Venezuela*, Caracas: Editiones Espada Rota] Cutter should be encouraged to expand his essay into a book covering the theme in universal literature.

A much more familiar theme in most literatures is that of interpreting life as a dream. I-Chung Wang traced this theme in regard to dreams artificially induced in Chinese and Japanese drama, arguing that the confidence that this procedure produces is a precursor of modern psychology. These dreams may legitimately be interpreted as reflections of personality, but not as harbingers of the future except to the degree that the future of the individual who dreams may depend on his individual traits and dispositions. This ingenious paper suggested that when the induced dreams of the pillow take place within the context of the life is a dream formula, the result seems to be a dream within a dream.

Another perennially popular theme is that of ghosts and the supernatural. In drawing a parallel between revenge ghosts in Chinese Yuan drama and those on the English Elizabethan stage, Joyce C. H. Liu argued that in both cultures spirits of the dead cry out for revenge because of the lack of justice on earth. The plot similarities indicated by this scholar were convincing, but they still did not prove that the dramatic effectiveness of the plays depends on the metaphysical or cosmic notions associated with retributive justice, nor that these notions are necessarily based on archetypal myths rather than universal ethical concepts derived through reason. The appeal of these plays to their contemporary audiences, moreover, may have been based in large measure on a supernatural atmosphere created through artificial effects such as costuming and staging.

Sukehiro Hirakawa treated the related ghost-wife theme as it is found in a short story by the Japanese-American Lafcadio Hearn based on a Japanese original of the twelfth century. The story concerns a poor samurai who divorces his wife whom he really loves in order to settle in a distant province with a richer and more beautiful second wife. After an absence of several years, he separates from the second wife in order to return to his

first love. He enters the house where they had formerly lived together, and finding his wife at home, he loses no time in claiming his connubial rights. In the morning, he discovers that the woman in bed beside him has turned into a rotting corpse. Hirakawa pointed out that in the original version the ghost of the wife appears because her love in the language of the "Song of Songs" was even stronger than death, rejecting a feminist reading of the story in which the wife takes on the gruesome aspects of a corpse in order to revenge herself against her husband. Hirawaka maintained that for him personally it is unacceptable to believe that hate is stronger than love. He also introduced similar tales from China and Korea, but insisted on a fundamental difference; in the Japanese versions the husband did not know that he was sleeping with a ghost, but in the others the protagonists as well as the reader knew that the wife was supernatural. The Japanese version has a strong resemblance to one of the motifs of the vampire theme in Western literature – that of the Bride of Corinth. In this story, a young girl returns from the dead, not only to sleep with her lover, but to suck his blood. This theme originated in Greece in the second century and is world famous in a poem by Goethe.

Masayuki Akiyama explored a similar erotic theme concerning Chinese and Japanese ghosts. He showed that a modern Japanese tale "A Ghost Story: The Peony Lamp" by Encho Sanyuti stemmed directly from a Chinese source of the fifteenth century. In this tale a young man lives in marital contentment with a young lady and her maid who are both ghosts and is warned by a third person that the liaison will end in disaster. This story is parallel to the Greek legend of the lamia (or beautiful woman who becomes a snake) made famous in English poetry by John Keats. Akiyama expanded his research to include details of the use of talismans to forfend evil and of the sources and religious significance of these charms. Akiyama also indicated that some ghosts are motivated by revenge and others by love. The latter group he compared to the female vampire Carmilla in the nineteenth-century novel by Sheridan Le Fanu. The aristocratic Henry James is ordinarily not associated with the vampire theme, but Akiyama revealed that one of his stories "De Grey: A Romance" concerns a type of spiritual vampirism transmitted from one generation to the next and that it closely resembles a later story by the Japanese writer Yusa. The protagonists in both stories are innocent of wrongdoing, but fall victim to a curse visited on an entire family. The importance of this paper and others on ghost themes lies in the extremely close similarity discerned between

Eastern and Western narratives, evidence of the universal appeal of the themes. No longer should ghosts and vampires be relegated to the limbo of *Trivalliteratur*. As Akiyama observed, stories about them can carry threads of serious thought as well as entertainment.

It should be noted, moreover, that in Latin America fantasy, the unreal, and the supernatural have had an extraordinary vogue in recent years. The works of Fuentes, Cortazar, and García Marquez, to name only three, illustrate the vital force of the supernatural in serious literature. Critical discourse on the trend has become so pervasive that Alejo Carpentier remarked that "the magicians are becoming bureaucrats" by erecting "codes of the fantastic."

Feminism in this conference was not confined to female ghosts. Another feminist reading was presented by Ying-ying Chien, who analyzed the Chinese novel *Jing Ping Mei* from this perspective. According to her interpretation the death of the dubious heroine, Jin Lian, is not an indictment of her sexual exploits, but rather a condemnation of the society which required her to engage in them. Kyubok Chung introduced a group of Korean classical tales that might represent a challenge to feminists. In these tales, a man dresses as a woman musician in order to determine whether another woman would make a desirable marriage partner. Another Korean scholar, Chong-yon Chu, introduced a myth with Korean and Chinese variants in which a god fathers a son upon a mortal woman. The mother subsequently tells the son that he will be acknowledged by his father if he can find a "matching portion" of a hidden object. The boy eventually finds the object, which is either part of a male-female sword or an identical sword. In a comparative literature conference such as this one, this paper would be more valuable if broadened to include reference to the Arthurian legend concerning the sword Excalibur or to Greek myths about gods mating with mortal women to produce heroes.

A paper concerning the Japanese fictional masterpiece *Shank's Mare*, to use the English title, was introduced with the rhetorical question, was it intended merely for entertainment? One might ask precisely the same question about this paper itself. The author suggests a parallel with Fielding's *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews*, but otherwise provides no comparisons with other literatures.

No question of entertainment entered the third panel, that on Confucius, which, although treating some ghost lore, represented tradition over modernism and substance over theory. John Tam's analysis of Philip Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* in the light of the *Analects* of Confucius served as an

introduction to the esthetics of the Chinese sage for Western neophytes. Perhaps underestimating the overriding didacticism of Confucius, Tam maintained that both Confucius and Sidney considered the function of literature to be that of furnishing pleasure as well as instruction and that both combine moral pragmatism with esthetic concerns. Sheun-fu Lin stressed an aspect of Confucius that is also present in Sidney, the notion of self-fulfillment in becoming a gentleman — or of attaining “the positive values of intelligence, fame, and the perfectibility of man.” Lin’s purpose was to reveal how Confucius was portrayed in the core portion of a collection of essays from the fourth to the second centuries B. C. attributed to Chuang Tzu. In form, although not in historical reality, the relevant chapters resemble the writings of Plato describing the philosophy of Socrates. According to Lin’s exposition, Chuang Tzu used the persona of Confucius “as a device to voice his own philosophy,” an obvious resemblance to Plato.

Chao-ming Chou compared Chuang Tzu with another commentator on Confucius, Wang Ch’ung of the first century A. D., the exponent of a philosophy which resembles modern materialism. Chou portrayed Wang Ch’ung as a coldly rational opponent of degenerate, or decadent, Confucianism in contrast to the idealism of Chuang Tzu. His interpretation of Wang Ch’ung’s attitude toward death and ghosts based on a materialistic denial of immortality provided a counterbalance to the ghost lore presented in the papers previously described. The philosopher unequivocally denied that the dead become spiritual beings or ghosts. As a consequence, he opposed extravagance in funerals. Although he allowed for ritual sacrifice, he adopted an attitude comparable to that of Bacon in regard to bribes: they are acceptable, but do not change anything.

Three papers discussed the influence of Confucianism in the West. Reinhard Düssel revealed that the contemporary European philosopher — novelist and Nobel-Prize winner Elias Canetti in treating the role of a ruler in society derived a solution to the twin problems of death and the crowd in writings attributed to Confucius and early Confucianism, specifically in the rules and practices involved with mourning. John Rotherford showed how a contemporary novel about Hong Kong, Timothy Mo’s *The Monkey King*, represents “a fictional critique of Confucian ethics” in which the author unequivocally finds authentic Confucianism “as timely and useful today as ever.”

John T. Dorsey in an analysis of an American novel, John Hersey’s *The Call*, revealed how the author depicts the confrontation between

Confucianism and Christianity on the one hand and that between Confucianism and social change on the other. In the conflict between Confucianism and Christianity, however, there exists significant common ground in wisdom and moral teachings. Both religions, moreover, are challenged to prove their relevance amidst the social upheavals of twentieth-century China. In regard to social change, Hersey depicts Confucianism first of all as an obstacle to social change, but later explores its social character. Dorsey indicated how these two themes intertwined in the character of David Treadup, an American missionary who travels to China at the beginning of the twentieth century in order to evangelize and modernize the country. But his mission is a failure, for not only does he lose his faith, but his efforts to encourage modernization are swept aside in the onrush of social change.

A contrary direction was indicated by Sang Tae Kim. After revealing several examples of the strong hold of Confucian morality in nineteenth-century Korea, he described two novels that were highly critical of the Confucian tradition and that called for reform based on Western social concepts. These novels did not portray Confucianism as a rational system, but rather as a type of blind despotism, particularly in its requirement that a woman obey her parents, then her husband, and, if he dies, her son. Kim did not attempt a feminist reading, but one would seem to be appropriate.

Only two papers treated philosophies other than Confucian. Ping-hui Lao offered a reinterpretation of discourse in Zen Buddhism as a revolt against standardization of the language, treating various techniques of the masters as a type of ancient deconstruction. Despite the difficulty inherent in using rational discourse to penetrate a metaphysical system such as Zen, based as it is on allegory and pictorial expression, Lao succeeded in conveying his interpretation that Zen represents in part a sceptical attitude toward the power of language adequately to communicate meaning. "What is perceived to be static, definitive, authoritative, or final is revealed to be in need of further contestation and investigation."

Somewhat of a novelty was the effort of Robert Sheng-you Lai to subject a major Western literary work to Eastern critical concepts, specifically to expose William Blake's poetry to the light of orthodox Zen Buddhism. One undoubted link between these two widely-separated systems is that both assume that "the highest truth" cannot easily, if at all, be expressed in words. Otherwise the parallelisms offered were farfetched, for example, Blake's statement "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires" compared with a Zen master striking a worm with a spade. But

precisely because neither system is governed by logic or transmitted by the conventional meanings of words, it is impossible to make unequivocal statements about them. Another line cited from Blake, 'Eternity is in love with the productions of time,' has little connection with Zen formulae as maintained, but encapsulates the Western philosophical notion of antinomies, elsewhere expressed by Blake himself as "the world in a grain of sand, eternity in an hour."

One of the examples of human behavior widely treated in philosophy, history and literature is that of taking one's own life. Joseph S. M. Lau in a survey of "Suicide as Self-Fulfillment in Chinese History and Literature" sought to answer the question of his students at the University of Wisconsin, whether the self-killing recorded in Chinese literary texts reflects "to some degree the fact that life in ancient China was relatively cheap." The question may have been raised because most people in the West associate suicide with modern Japan rather than ancient China. Drawing upon Chinese texts of ethics and history, Lau indicates the major reasons for the suicides that have been recorded in history and literature, most of which are based on the premise that honor is more important than life. He gives some examples of ritual dying, but does not treat love suicide or Liebestod as it is known in the West. None of the motives he analyzes have much in common with the primary causes for suicide in contemporary United States: poor health, economic stress, death of a loved one, and domestic difficulties. For this reason one might conclude that empirical research or official statistics have no bearing on the question raised by Lau's students. This may be true, but it is just as true that the mundane causes listed above with the exception of domestic difficulties almost never enter contemporary history and literature of the West. It seems to me that the question of whether something is "cheap" or "dear" can be answered only statistically, but no statistics about ancient China were available to Lau's students nor are they available to anyone else. They came to the erroneous conclusion that because suicide figures prominently in literature it must necessarily occupy a proportionately significant position in life. The value of Lau's paper consists not in answering a hypothetical question of sociology, but in providing a coherent explanation of various aspects of an involved ethical problem in Chinese culture.

By and large, studies of influence and relationship are more successfully carried out by a scholar who traces the impact of foreign writing on his own native literature or literature of specialization than by one who tries to show how the material he is familiar with has been received elsewhere

in the world. This principle of starting at home is even more valid in regard to translating from one language to another. Opinion is almost unanimous that the foreign work is best transformed by one whose native language is not that of the original author, but of the translation. Indeed examples may be cited of translators who have not even known the language of works they have converted into their own idiom.

The four previous Tamkang conferences contained a large number of papers on translation, mostly theoretical. This time the number was proportionately much less, probably because theory on the subject has reached a point of saturation or exhaustion. The new direction in this conference consisted in the discovery and analysis of different translations of the same text. Writing about translation is essentially divisible into two categories: the theoretical and the technical. The trouble with illustrations of the solving of technical problems is that they concern particular works and special situations and thus fail to arouse general interest. Papers on theory have a broader relevance, but by now are inevitably repetitive, incorporating very little that is new except jargon.

A sound definition of translation was given in the major paper in the area of theory, that by Stanley R. Munro: simply the rephrasing of "something in print from one language to another;" anything beyond represents the quality not the essence of translation. Munro summarized the main theoretical approaches in the current state of the art, while admitting that nothing substantial has been added since the appearance in 1791 of the treatise by the Scotsman Alexander Fraser Tytler *On the Principles of Translation*. Most current treatments boil down to a distinction between literal and free renditions. In regard to this dichotomy, Munro properly insisted that thought and feelings take precedence over words and structures. My only point of disagreement concerns Munro's principle that the translator must have an "experience with life" more or less similar to that of the original work. As he expressed it, the soul of the translator must "be transmigrated into the spirit of the author." Authors of all literary masterpieces, however, do not necessarily live through the experiences of the characters they write about. The creators of autobiographical fiction obviously do so, but those who choose other genres may not. Who can say, for example, that the authors of *Hamlet*, *Dracula*, or *Les Misérables* had personal experiences, physical or metaphysical, at all resembling those of their characters? If the creative artist can depend solely on his imagination and linguistic skills, surely the translator can do so as well.

Naomi Matsuoka highlighted the basic linguistic difference between Japanese and English literary styles; one is vague and diffusive, the other precise and specific. Then she gave valuable hints for the special and difficult task of translating Japanese novels that have complex or multiple points of view in which an author, a narrator, and a character merge and separate repeatedly throughout the narrative. Such floating narratives, as they have been called, are not essentially alien to the English and American literary tradition, however; they may be found in the stream of consciousness novels of such authors as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and William Faulkner. These authors restructured traditional English sentence patterns in order to free their works from the confines of rational, expository realism and create a poetic idiom. Matsuoka suggested that a number of the techniques of the stream of consciousness novel may well be used in translating the floating narrative style of the Japanese novel into English.

An analysis of the formal principles behind the Japanese poetical genre of the haiku presented by Kirby Record revealed many parallels between the problems and techniques involved in translations from one language to another and those involved in creating original poetry in the haiku form in languages other than Japanese. His delineation was thorough, precise, and comprehensive. It might be supplemented, however, by the comment of Naomi Matsuoka that examples of the haiku are often overinterpreted by foreign critics because of its extreme simplicity. Although it may be true that enthusiasm for the form has been "minimal in academic circles" in America, Etienne, of the Sorbonne and the world's most important advocate and practitioner of East-West comparative study, has written extensively about the genre. Record in his presentation properly emphasized the current notion of reader response in its American guise of transactional theory that was originated by John Dewey and developed by Louise Rosenblatt.

Shirley I. Paolini provided an unusual example of a creative writer translating her own work in "Eileen Chang's English Translation of *The Golden Cangue*." Paolini's contribution had more to do with themes and motifs, however, than with either Chang's theory or practice in translation, notable for her effort to "maintain traditional Chinese dialogue" in some segments of her work while in others integrating specifically English colloquial phrases.

The major experimental area in translation is that based on the machine, which has been in the process of development for at least thirty years with

gradual and steady improvement keeping pace with the passage of time. Myung-Ho Sym provided a highly informative explanation of the technology involved in computer translation, essentially a process of trial and error in which the human operator makes the final choice.

As I interpret Sym's presentation, the computer operates like a slot machine in a gambling casino while incorporating a larger element of chance. Also the computer is programmed in favor of the customer or consumer, not designed to work against him. I perceive the human translator as following essentially the same process except that no two human beings have the same variables in programming in contrast to computers, several of which might have identical programs. Current theories of reader response correctly assume that each reader reacts in a discrete individual manner to the material to which he is exposed according to his previous experiences or programming. His intellectual and emotional responses are parallel to the choices made in translating by either a human agency or a mechanical one.

The three papers in the conference devoted to multiple translations could be interpreted in this way. Multiple translations consist of the handling of the same text by different translators. Eugene Eoyang compared the translations of Chinese classics by Arthur Waley and Ezra Pound, Adrian Hsia compared four Chinese translations of Goethe's *Faust*; and Theresa M. Hyan compared several English versions of modern Korean poetry. These and other translators make their choices on the basis of meaning, esthetic equivalent in their native languages, and a combination of the two. A further element is the climate of opinion, religious, social, moral, political, and economic, in which the translator works. Moral, religious and political restraints might exist in one intellectual environment as opposed to complete freedom of expression in another. This type of intellectual freedom of expression is, of course, completely different from the freedom of the translator to go beyond the literal meaning of his original text.

The final and perhaps most controversial paper of the conference was that of John Deeney, widely and deservedly regarded as the semiofficial historian of the East-West dimension of comparative literature. It is appropriate that he should address this group, therefore, on the topic "Modern Developments in Chinese-Western Comparative Literature Studies. A Golden Decade (1977-1987) for the 'Chinese School.'" First of all, I should like to see him change the dates in later versions of his paper to 1971-1987 and the term "Decade" to "Epoch" or "Period" in order to

include the first of the Tamkang conferences, certainly an event of major historical significance. The key phrase in Deeney's title is "Chinese School," and he is already famous for coining it in order to establish a troika with the already-existing French and American schools. He has confided to me that the concept of a Chinese School has already aroused controversy, and I can understand why although I have no personal reason for joining in the polemic. Although the terms American and French schools in regard to comparative literature have absolutely no geographical significance, they do represent two distinct methodologies. "American" refers primarily to the pointing out of resemblances or analogies in literary works, the authors of which have had no direct contact; "French" refers to the exposition of influence of one work upon another or some other type of direct contact; "Chinese School," on the other hand, does not embody any particular methodology, but is a concept entirely geographical. So far I have not seen any sign that my friends from the Land of the Rising Sun are about to launch a parallel Japanese School, and I rather doubt that it will come about in the future. I see absolutely no reason, however, for objecting to Deeney's principle that "comparative literature studies should not remain a monopoly of the West but should also be investigated from a Chinese perspective." At the present time, toward the end of Deeney's "Golden Years," however, this notion which at the time of the first Tamkang conference may have seemed an unrealizable ideal has become a *fait accompli*, at least in so far as the enthusiastic acceptance of comparative literature as an academic discipline is concerned. The historical and bibliographical part of Deeney's survey provides ample evidence. Like a true positivist (which he may not be), he indicates that the facts are the foundation upon which the entire edifice rests. I am, nevertheless, still in doubt as to what is meant by "a Chinese perspective," and I should like to see Deeney answer his own question "What is distinctively indigenous to China's literary tradition and what do these special characteristics have to say in terms of comparative literature?"

In his trinity of Taiwan, Hong Kong and the China Mainland, moreover, Deeney did not perceive a unity, but observed instead that "the differences considerably exceed the shared area of similarity." He is correct in his observation that comparatists in Taiwan and Hong Kong have "for all practical purposes, restricted themselves to Chinese-English teaching, research, and publication;" whereas scholars on the mainland have devoted themselves to the languages and literatures of nearly all parts of the world.

The type of provincialism which restricts comparative interests to a single zone, to use terminology popular in Eastern Europe, is certainly a weakness, but a change may be on the way, suggested by the elevation of a professor of Spanish to the presidency of our host institution, Tamkang University. It should be stated, moreover, that very few single scholars on the mainland are masters of more than one literature in addition to their native Chinese. Indeed with very few exceptions this is the situation throughout the world. Many Europeans because of their geographical location read and speak several languages, usually those of neighboring nations. But even in Europe few scholars work effectively with more than one literature in addition to their own. To be sure, one can always point to Etiemble and one or two others like him who regularly deal with six, eight, or ten languages, but there are few Etiembles in the world in either the West or the East, and there are not likely to be many others produced in the future.

Deeney appropriately emphasized the head start that has in large measure given Taiwan its present eminence; if some of its young scholars branch out into literatures other than English there is no reason why it cannot maintain its present privileged position. Deeney made a good point, however, that Hong Kong is strategically located to serve as a clearing house for Eastern comparatists as well as to maintain a climate of opinion for compromise over esthetic as well as political issues.

The Taiwan-Hong-Kong axis is likely to continue as a viable entity, and cooperative efforts such as the present conference seem certain to control the nature of Chinese comparatism for years to come. Whether or not the continued emphasis in Taiwan on literary theory and criticism is considered as a salutary or an unfortunate phenomenon, it is a direct result of the affiliation of universities in this country with those in the United States. It is relevant to observe that if present conditions continue, the influence of the United States in academic affairs is likely to become almost as pervasive in the China Mainland. For at least the last three years students from this area have been clamoring for admission to comparative literature programs in Canada and the United States, and the number actually in attendance increases each year. This influx will undoubtedly lead to a levelling out of the differences between the approaches to comparatism in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the China Mainland as well as to a strengthening of the prestige of the Taiwan-Hong-Kog axis. Let us hope that this process will lead in the "China dimension," to use another of Deeney's phrases, to his goal of "a comparative literature *academic frame-of-mind* which is

international by nature" rather than based on "a particular national identity."**

While preparing this retrospective view of the impressive achievements of the last five years, I have revived nostalgic impressions of the parent conference in 1971. At that time I was a stranger to all the participants except those from the West and two or three from Japan. I was almost instantaneously overwhelmed, however, by the generous hospitality and pervasive good will of the organizers; and by the time that the conference had reached its conclusion the first moments of cordiality had developed into firm friendship. During the intervening years these bonds of friendship have grown even stronger, and the past week has resembled a home-coming experience.

Nearly all of the sponsors and organizers of the first conference have also played important roles in the present one, and on behalf of all the participants I should like to thank them for everything they have done to safeguard the high intellectual quality of the papers and to provide the rich range of social amenities we have all appreciated. Our greatest debt is to Dr. Limin Chu, the prime mover in the last four conferences and the prototype of the scholar-gentleman, remarkable for his humor, graciousness, and intellectual distinction. I wish that time allowed for special mention of the contributions of each member of the organizing committee, the secretariat, and the executive staff, but I must limit myself to special thanks to the Deputy Secretary-General Ch'iu-lang Chi and the Assistant Secretary-General Chang-fang Chen. It would not do, however, to neglect the other end of the scale, the hard-working students and teaching assistants, for they are the potential scholars and administrators of the future. I should like to single out as their representative Anson Yang, the genial trouble shooter whose indefatigable energy has astonished nearly all of the overseas guests staying at the Grand Hotel. Finally, I have already alluded to the significance to the academic origins as Professor of Spanish of the recently-inaugurated President of Tamkang University, Yea-hong Chen. I am sure that under his leadership the University will continue as the outstanding force in comparative literature initiative in this part of the world. To all of you, our deepest gratitude and appreciation.

Notes

**A loose parallel to Deeney's notion of a Chinese School exists in regard to

Latin-American literature, and critical discourses from that area might serve as models for answering his question concerning the difference between Chinese literature and Western. Some students of Latin-American literature have argued that the predominant schools of criticism in Europe and especially the United States are based upon a social ideology favorable to the political and economic systems from which they stem. Respected Anglo-American critics, for example, have been accused of subtly favoring a consumer society and attacking Marxism. Latin-American literati, unlike some Chinese professors of comparative literature, have, therefore, objected to the indiscriminate application of alien models to their own writing. In opposition to critical theories upholding the American way of life and its extension to the rest of the world, these Hispanic voices have called for appraisals of their work and cultural heritage that take into consideration the historical conditions upon which they are based. Some Chinese professors, however, not only have no objection to subjecting their own tradition to Western criticism, but heartily assist in the process. I have previously questioned the logic of the latter situation, and Deeney's call for a Chinese school certainly registers more than uneasiness with it. A contemporary Uruguayan novelist, Mario Benedetti, presents a series of questions that are surprisingly relevant to literary criticism as it is applied to the traditions of China and Japan: "Should Latin American Literature. . . be made meekly subject to the canons of a [European] literature that is formidable in its traditions but is now going through a period of crisis and fatigue? . . . Should structuralist criticism be thought of as the inevitable yardstick with which to measure our letters? Or, on the contrary, together with our poets and novelists, shouldn't we also be creating our own critical focus, our own methods of investigation, our own evaluative guidelines, produced by our very own conditions, interests, and needs?" This quotation is taken from a collection of essays reflecting problems in the historical relations between Latin-American and Anglo-American literatures that are strikingly similar to those encountered between Western and Eastern literatures: *Reinventing the Americas: Comparative Studies of Literature of the United States and Spanish America* edited by Bell Gale Chevigny and Gari Laguardia (Cambridge University Press, 1986). The main difference between these two sets of literary relations is that the great contribution of Latin-American writing is a product of the twentieth century; whereas that of China rests upon a tradition of many centuries. Also the debate in Latin America concerning alien criticism emphasizes social and ideological aspects; whereas Deeney is concerned primarily with esthetic values.

It may seem that there is an incompatibility in my challenging Deeney's notion of a Chinese School of comparative literature while drawing attention to Latin-American complaints about the application of alien forms of criticism to their writing. In my opinion, the apparent inconsistency is resolved by the concept of universal literature, based as it is upon the general human condition, but modified by social variations that permit separate value systems. This is the basis of the formulation I have presented at a previous Tamkang conference, *Universal Literature, Yes; Common Poetics, No*. I see absolutely no reason for China, Latin America or other parts of the world to adopt trendy critical theories from any other place (whether New Haven or Paris). Each part of the world is justified in formulating its own value system and applying it to its own literature or to others. But these value systems should be based upon historical esthetic traditions, not on fluctuating fads or social ideologies. The methodology of comparative literature, however, need not vary from country to country or zone to zone. It concentrates on works, not theories, and allows for the evaluation of these works by any set of criteria or standards that seem relevant. A valid protection against

critical anarchy is the reliance upon universal appeal.

"Universal appeal" is a more concrete criterion than the concept of "universals," the latter ordinarily amounting to the predominant notions in the Western mainstream. Appeal is measured by such objective manifestations as repeated editions, translations, and general awareness. The question still remains whether there are any other objective standards that can be applied on equal terms to all the great literary traditions of the world, in particular, the Latin-American and the East Asian as well as the Euro-centered. If such standards exist, how are they to be weighted by the separate historical, religious, social and economic traditions of each of the above divisions? Deeney is probably right in objecting to the subjecting of Chinese literature to a critical process devised by Western thinkers and designed to inculcate particular attitudes toward life. Perhaps China needs to develop its own modern critical process corresponding to that of the West as a supplement to its traditional, historical codes. But the function of comparatists in both cultures – Chinese and Western – should be to concentrate on a means of perceiving universal characteristics (not Christian, capitalistic, Marxist, or any other ideologies masquerading as "universals.") The accomplishment of this would bring in the era of universal literature.