East-West Connections: Review of Asian Studies

Volume 6, Number 1
2006

Edited by
David Jones

A Publication of
The Asian Studies Development Program

The ASDP Association of Regional Centers

Georgia Philosophy Series
GEORGIA PHILOSOPHY SERIES

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Asian Studies Development Program

In 1990, the Asian Studies Development Program was established by the East-West Center and University of Hawai`i to assist two and four-year colleges and universities incorporate Asian studies into the undergraduate curriculum.

As part of its goal of improving the long-term capacity of American higher education to teach about Asia, ASDP offers a variety of programs aimed at faculty, curriculum and institutional development, including summer residential institutes in Hawai`i, field seminars in Asia, and U.S. mainland workshops. ASDP provides on-going support for its alumni and other interested educators including the annual ASDP meeting, the ASDP newsletter, an active listserv for alumni and others, a website of undergraduate course syllabi and bibliographies on Asian topics and, more recently, East-West Connections, an annual volume of edited papers from the ASDP national meeting and submissions from outside the conference.

ASDP works collaboratively with institutions committed to developing and sustaining Asian studies programs by advising on strategies for developing Asian studies programs that include building faculty expertise, sources of funding and support from private foundations and government agencies, and the development of library and other resources. Close to 500 colleges and universities throughout the U.S. are involved in the ASDP network, and there are 20 ASDP regional centers that collaborate with each other as members of the Association of Regional Centers.

ASDP has received funding and support for its programs from the Freeman Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Korea Foundation, the Fulbright Group Travel Abroad Program and ASDP alumni, as well as the
East-West Center and University of Hawai`i. Many ASDP alumni are actively involved in ASDP and are integral to its activities and accomplishments.

Elizabeth Buck and Roger T. Ames are Co-Directors of the Asian Studies Development Program.

**East-West Center**

The East-West Center is an education and research organization established by the U.S. Congress in 1960 to strengthen relations and understanding among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific, and the United States. The Center contributes to a peaceful, prosperous, and just Asia Pacific community by serving as a vigorous hub for cooperative research, education, and dialogue on critical issues of common concern to the Asia Pacific region and the United States. Funding for the Center comes from the U.S. government, with additional support provided by private agencies, individuals, foundations, corporations, and the governments of the region.

Charles E. Morrison is President of the East-West Center.

**The University of Hawai`i**

The School of Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific Studies (SHAPS) represents the University of Hawai`i’s commitment to education and research on Asia and the Pacific. SHAPS has the largest resource facility for Asian and Pacific studies in the world. Established in 1987, SHAPS offers academic programs in Asian Studies, Hawaiian Studies, and Pacific Islands Studies. SHAPS helps to coordinate the efforts of some 300 UH faculty who offer more than 600 courses related to Hawai`i, Asia, and the Pacific. The Asian Studies Development Program works primarily with the centers for Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies, Korean Studies, South Asian Studies and Southeast Asian Studies.

David McClain is President of the University of Hawai`i.
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Editor’s Note

We are pleased to present our readers with the sixth volume of *East-West Connections*. The contents of this issue continue to reflect the interests of our readers by offering scholarly articles on both content and pedagogical topics. These articles stretch across regions and the spectrum of Asian Studies and offer readers articles of social science content as well as the humanities and the arts.

This issue of *East-West Connections* would not have been possible without the hard work of Jeffrey Dippmann, its guest editor. It is with this issue that Jeff becomes an associate editor of *East-West Connections* and joins the permanent staff of Ronnie Littlejohn, our Book Review Editor, and me. I am most grateful for Jeff and Ronnie’s talents and steadfast commitments in making *Connections* a reality. We at *East-West Connections* and the Asian Studies Development Program’s Association of Regional Centers (ARC) are delighted to have Jeff’s commitment to assist us in bringing *Connections* to you. This issue will once again reflect favorably on his talents as a scholar, professor, and colleague.

*East-West Connections* is an undertaking of ARC and enjoys its ongoing support. This issue also marks the appointment of ARC directors to our Advisory Board. We welcome: Paul Dunscomb, (University of Alaska Anchorage), Ronnie Littlejohn (Belmont University), Mark Esposito (Black Hawk College), Jim Detrick (University of Central Arkansas), Jeffrey Dippmann (Central Washington University), Bob Irwin and Stephan Johnson (City College of San Francisco), Keith Krasemann (College of DuPage), Andrew Chittick (Eckerd College), Carolyn Kadel (Johnson County Community College), David Jones (Kennesaw State University), Joseph Overton (University of Hawai’i Kapiolani), Kent Mitchell (Middlesex Community College), David Dixon, (Missouri State University), Joanna Crosby (Morgan State University), Michele
Marion (Paradise Valley Community College), Fay Beauchamp (Community College of Philadelphia), Katharine Purcell (Trident Technical College), Bob Eng (University of Redlands), George Brown (Slippery Rock University), and Annie Malloy (Tulsa Community College).

This issue would not be possible without the cooperation from its contributors, generosity from its editors, support from our patrons, the ASDP staff (Betty Buck, Roger Ames, Peter Hershock, Virginia Suddath, Grant Otoshi, and Sandy Osaka), and the ASDP Association of Regional Centers. We continue to appreciate the support from Terry Bigalke, Director of Education at the East-West Center, and Charles Morrison, President of the East-West Center.

My gratitude also goes out to John Crow, my assistant over these last several years and the production editor for East-West Connections. John heads off to graduate school in Amsterdam and will be sorely missed.

This journal has evolved over the years as we continue to cultivate a special venue for publishing in Asian Studies.

—David Jones
Guest Editor’s Note

It has once again been an honor and privilege to serve as guest editor for *East-West Connections*. In this capacity, I have had the opportunity to read a variety of exceptional papers, while at the same time enjoy extensive conversations and exchanges throughout the editing process. I am always gratified to see the true creativity and intellectual rigor exhibited by the alumni and supporters of the Asian Studies Development Program. As I noted last year, so much of this is directly attributable to the outstanding work done by Roger Ames, Peter Hershock and Betty Buck. We are all grateful for their dedication to the goals of infusing Asian Studies into the undergraduate curriculum across the entire spectrum of higher education.

This year’s volume reflects some of the work presented at the 11th Annual Meeting of the Asian Studies Development Program. The 2005 meeting, unlike its predecessors, was a joint meeting between ASDP and its sister organization, AsiaNetwork. Held at Whittier College, Whittier California, the conference provided a unique opportunity to share work with a new group of colleagues invested in the study and dissemination of Asia related research and association projects. While organizing and conducting a joint conference presented its own set of new challenges, the meeting was a huge success and proved invaluable in establishing new relationships and solidifying ties between our members. Due to the fact that it was a joint conference, however, this year’s volume does not include the keynote address.

As with last year’s volume, the 2006 *East-West Connections* is a rich and varied collection. In addition to essays on philosophy, pedagogy, art, literature and economics, we have included a Special Section representing the highly successful Fulbright-Hays Group Project to Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. Several participants have contributed
essays detailing the ways in which the trip, and subsequent curriculum projects, has enriched their courses and lives. We hope to continue this practice in the future, and invite you to consider contributing your own “Reports from the Field” in the future.

I must also apologize to one of our contributors from last year’s volume. Qingjun Li’s essay, [L]ike Dusk on the Eastern Horizon: Reading Cane Through Chinese Culture, was mistakenly attributed to Jun Li. This error is squarely on my shoulders.

Finally, I want to thank my anonymous editorial reviewers, the consulting editors, Ronnie Littlejohn and David Jones for their contributions to this year’s volume. Without you the journal would never see the light of day. My work has been appreciably easier because of you.
Jim Deitrick opens this volume with an essay exploring the pedagogical and ethical issues surrounding the teaching of meditation in the classroom. Given our mission in religious studies of providing objective, non-sectarian coverage of the world’s traditions, does the introduction and practice of meditation overstep the boundaries of sound pedagogical methodology, or does the centrality of meditation in the Eastern traditions demand such an approach? Deitrick argues for the latter, albeit with some reservations and cautionary advice.

Jennifer Manlowe’s discussion focuses on the difficulties, and promise, of teaching the comparative philosophy of religion, specifically identifying the cross-cultural exploration of notions of the self. Following a brief history of earlier attempts to categorize the world’s religions, including the ineffective identification of “Asian” traditions, she goes on to argue that we can usefully employ Thomas Kasulis’ cultural orientations of “intimacy” and “integrity” to explicate both the universal and differential notions of the self.

Dennis Arjo also contributes a work of comparative philosophy, in this case analyzing the use of poetry in the philosophical works of Confucius and Plato. Arguing that these poetic allusions are usually ignored by philosophers, Arjo explores how the respective philosophers’ use of poetry can illuminate both the similarities and differences within their thinking. To this end, his paper compares Socrates’ use of poetry in the *Meno* with Confucius’ utilization of the *Book of Songs*.

Shudong Chen examines both the philosophical and social ramifications of speaking through silence. Weaving together examples from the Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist traditions, Chen demonstrates the important role silence has played in eastern philosophical and
religious thought, and suggests that such silence may appropriately employed as a heuristic for resolving, or at least ameliorating, some of the modern world’s most contentious issues.

Qingjun Li’s essay once again returns us to a comparative perspective. By placing Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* alongside the 16th century *Peony Pavilion*, by Tang Xianzu, she argues that the motifs of sentence and solace (solas), which dominate Chaucer’s writing, can also be found in Tang’s work. Rather than finding these similarities as evidence for conscious imitation on the part of Tang, Li demonstrates that such parallels may lead to a fruitful examination of the universality and cross-cultural relevance of the concepts.

Susan Clare Scott moves the volume into the world of art. Drawing upon the traditional Chinese insistence on the complementary balance (Yin/Yang) of the macrocosm, Scott demonstrates the ways in which Chinese landscape painting can be understood as the artist’s interpretation of a microcosmic view of the universe. Through analysis and illustrations, she clarifies how the sacredness of the Earth pervades and dominates the ways in which pictorial compositions are created, the ways in which mankind is represented in the landscape, and the ways in which nature is presented to and experienced by the viewer.

Wioleta Polinska explores the value of Daoist and Buddhist cosmological theories in addressing the contemporary ecological crisis, particularly through the medium of art. Following a discussion of the East Asian philosophical and artistic theories of holism and humanity’s place within the cosmos, she goes on to consider contemporary western environmental art and its role in fostering a more inclusive vision of the world. Polinska concludes with an argument that Christian theologians should begin to dialogue with both eastern and western environmental art as a means of envisioning an ecologically friendly cosmology and praxis.

Mark Green, Juneyoung Andrew Hur, Richard Mack, Adam Rachlis and Heather Spearmint present a report on their summer research project sponsored through the National Science Foundation and Central Washington University. While China’s continuing water shortages have fostered numerous studies into the interaction between water resources and economic development. The essay included in this volume narrows this gamut to an inquiry into the economic utilization of water in the dry Northwest region. By comparing the water usage
and allocation in the industrial, agricultural and domestic sectors and by applying water consumption data across time at the national, regional and provincial levels, the study evaluates the appropriateness of China’s reaction to its emerging water crisis.

Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen reflects on the life-changing experience of participating in the 2004 Fulbright-Hays Study Tour to Malaysia and Indonesia. In addition to describing personal transformation, Sheetz-Nguyen sets out to analyze the ways in which Malay identity is created and understood within western scholarship. Specifically, she raises two fundamental questions: how can we better understand the role of sacred, secular and epistemological space in the Malaysian village, and what is there to learn from the sacred and secular spaces of a region.

This year’s volume concludes with a new feature, a Special Section entitled Reports from the Field. George P. Brown opens the Section with an introduction to the 2006 Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad program to Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. This is followed by reports from Khoushik Ghosh, Abbas Noorbakhsh, Shudong Chen, Faith Watson, and Debra Majeed on the ways in which the experience transformed their curriculum and the innovative projects arising from their participation.
Should Students Meditate in Courses on Asian Philosophy and Religion?

Jim Deitrick, University of Central Arkansas

Abstract

Given the importance of mediation in many Asian philosophies and religions, many college professors advocate engaging students in the practice of meditation when teaching about these traditions. There are relatively obvious reasons for doubting the ethicality of this practice, however, which are considered here. Responding to these doubts, I argue that it is not only ethically appropriate, but perhaps also academically indispensable for professors to engage their students in meditative practices when teaching about Asian philosophies and religions. At the same time, I also argue that the aforementioned reasons for doubting the ethicality of this practice should be taken seriously and allowed to affect the ways in which meditation is taught among students. Suggestions are thus given for how students may be engaged in the practice of meditation in academically and ethically appropriate ways.

Introduction

The primary question I address in this article is whether we college professors—especially those, like myself, who teach in secular, state-funded institutions—should incorporate the practice of meditation into our undergraduate courses on Asian philosophy and religion? To be explicit, I intend this as an ethical question: I wonder if it is in keeping with the ethics of our profession to teach students to meditate or otherwise engage them in meditative practice.

I raise this question for several reasons. First, anecdotal evidence suggests that the practice is relatively common. The editors of *Teaching Buddhism in the West: From the Wheel to the Web* report, for instance, based on observations at the conference out of which this volume of essays grows, that “many people [i.e., college professors] think that Buddhism
is based on meditation and that just as chemistry courses have lab sessions, courses on Buddhism should have meditation sessions” (Hori, Hayes, and Shields 2002, xxv). My own observations at conferences and among colleagues confirm theirs, only I would add that many not only think it—they actually do it. While we cannot say on the basis of these observations how common the practice is, I am comfortable asserting that at least a significant minority of college professors who teach about Asian religions and philosophies engage students in the practice of meditation, and probably more.

At the same time, as I will suggest, there are good and relatively obvious reasons to think that engaging students in meditation practice is not ethically appropriate—at least not in every instance. Moreover, I suspect that few who engage in the practice have thought much about these reasons, despite their obviousness. Indeed, until recently, I had not. It was only after a colleague raised concerns at an ASDP summer workshop two years ago that I first contemplated the issue. As I have shared the ideas developed in this article among colleagues, I have also heard most of them say they have never thought about it, either. My aim in this article, then, is to elaborate the reasons that call the practice of teaching meditation to students into doubt and consider their consequences for our educational practice. To anticipate, I will argue that engaging students in meditative practices can be appropriate, but only in certain conditions. A corollary objective of this article, therefore, is to offer criteria for deciding when our teaching of meditation is appropriate, and when it is not.

What Does It Mean to Engage Students in Meditation Practice?

Before proceeding, two points of clarification are in order. The first concerns my use of the term “meditation.” I use the term here to refer to a broad range of activities commonly performed in Asian religious and philosophical traditions, some of which might more commonly go by the name of “yoga”—indeed, I might just as well have asked in this article whether we ought to engage students in “yogic practices” in our courses. Generally speaking, the activities that I refer to are those various physical and mental exercises whereby practitioners seek to transform their consciousness and attain liberation from ignorance, suffering, and rebirth. These range, for example, from Raja Yoga to Vipassana to Zen. The question I ask in this article is whether we ought to engage undergraduates in any of these or similar practices?

I must also clarify what I mean by “engaging” students in these practices. Professors may engage students in the practice of meditation
in any number of ways. Some professors, though I suspect very few, send students into the field to learn and practice meditation with qualified meditation teachers. (This might be a particularly attractive option in upper-division courses.) Others, relatively more, take students on a fieldtrip to a meditation hall or yoga center or invite meditation teachers into the classroom. In most cases I suspect, professors themselves provide students with minimal instruction in the practice of one or more techniques—e.g., focusing on a flame or counting of breaths—and then allow time in class or send students home to “experiment.” There are certainly other scenarios that can be imagined, but this adequately covers the range of practices I am inquiring about. By asking about the ethics of engaging students in meditation practice, I am asking broadly about all of these practices, some of which, as it happens, may turn out to be “more ethical” than others.

**Does the Practice Serve Legitimate Academic Goals?**

Anyone who engages students in the practice of meditation probably suspects as I do that some of their colleagues (from other departments, no doubt) regard the practice as downright “flaky.” As we consider the spectacle of our students’ meditating in class, our colleagues’ fears are easy to imagine: We have “gone native.” We have lost our objectivity and are inappropriately luring students into our own subjective worlds. In short, we are advocating religion when, in fact, we should be teaching about it.

In all fairness, we should note that our colleagues’ suspicions are understandable, even if they turn out to be unfounded. After all, seen in relation to more traditional educational techniques, engaging students in the practice of meditation may appear both novel and alternative. It is not only understandable, but even appropriate that new and alternative techniques be met with skepticism. The onus of responsibility no doubt lies with those who employ such techniques to justify their use; without such justification, their critics’ suspicion may be excused.

Unfortunately, in some cases at least, our colleagues’ fears are more than justified. Consider, for instance, the course on Buddhism taught by O’yun Park, described in his contribution to the volume, *Teaching Buddhism*, mentioned above (Park 2002). Park, who teaches in a secular, state-funded university, offers his course as a “humanistic” alternative to the “objective” and “scientific” ways in which Buddhism is typically approached in Western college courses. One of the central features of his course, as might be expected, is its involvement of students in the practice of meditation.
As Park explains, it is crucial for students to meditate in his course because it is the only way in which “the essence” of Buddhism can be “truly known or shown.” Indeed, Park goes so far as to assert that “teaching and learning Buddhism[,] if not filtered through meditation, is not worthy of attention” (59). These are strong claims, but Park’s enthusiasm is easy to understand if we also consider his more basic reasons for teaching Buddhism to undergraduates in the first place. As he puts it,

One of my objectives in teaching Buddhism is to let students know that the Buddha’s own quest was not merely a personal quest but more fundamentally a human quest—an attempt . . . to enter into a reality which is not to be owned, but which, when it is lacking, leaves all possessions ultimately unsatisfying. In other words, I do my best to offer students the Buddha’s world, that is, nirvana . . . . (61)

Is Park suggesting that the goal of his course is to enable his students to enter nirvana? Is he advocating Buddhism? I think so. While his comments here are ambiguous, in numerous other places he confirms the suspicion that his goals are, frankly, less than academic.1 In one instance, he so much as admits this, claiming that the “contagious truth” of Buddhism which he teaches in his course “is simply not attainable through a mere academic study of Buddhism” (61; italics added). Elsewhere he reiterates the primary goals of his course as “introduce[ing] students to the Buddha’s world and to help[ing] them be engaged in the process of moving in that direction themselves. In the process, the spirit of Buddhism may rub off on them” (68; italics added). Park insists it is important to teach Buddhism in this alternative way because “one’s spiritual thirst will not be quenched at the fountain of objective learning and if that is all there is, then one would be doomed to remain thirsty” (67). Apparently not wanting his students to remain thirsty, Park offers them more than “mere” academic learning; he offers them nothing less than the thirst-quenching “essence” of Buddhism.

Park seems in all of this to be doing more than teaching students about Buddhism; he is advocating its practice. While engaging students in meditation may be a good way to do this, such advocacy is hardly an academically legitimate goal, at least not in a secular context. If this is why professors engage students in meditative practice, its critics might reasonably argue, then surely the practice is unethical. It not only fails to serve legitimate academic goals, but, further, by promoting the religion

1. Park might say they are more, not less, than academic. At any rate, they are not academic.
about which it is supposed only to teach, it serves goals that are directly contrary to the values of democratic society and secular scholarship.

Fortunately, this is not the only reason why professors engage their students in meditation. Others—such as myself, and most, I think, who employ the practice—have no intention of advocating religion among their students. My goals at any rate are “merely” academic; I want students to understand and think critically about religions, not to practice them. For me, engaging students in meditation is a useful way of achieving these goals, and nothing more. How is it useful?

In the first place, engaging students in the practice of meditation helps them understand the nature of meditation itself. By engaging in meditative practices, students are able to investigate the experiences generated by these practices directly and thereby discover levels of meaning that are, in the main, inaccessible through more conventional research methods (e.g., reading books about meditation). It also helps students understand religious and philosophical ideas that stem from meditative practice. As Paul J. Griffiths observes, for example,

[i]t is upon meditative practice that the religious life of the Buddhist virtuoso is based and from such practices that systematic Buddhist philosophical and soteriological theory begins. The experiences produced as a result of meditative practice have therefore historically been of great importance to Buddhist philosophical theory; it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the whole of the magnificently complex edifice of Buddhist philosophy is a drawing out and systematization of the implications of such experience. (Griffiths 1986, xii)

Something similar might be said about many other Asian traditions, as well. Implied in this observation is that certain Asian religious and philosophical traditions cannot be understood apart from the meditative experiences that support them. Engaging students in meditation practice not only enables them to investigate these experiences directly, but also to explore their connections with broader religious and philosophical “truths.”

While similar, in some senses, to Park’s practice, the difference of purpose has important consequences for how this practice is to be understood and evaluated. It agrees with Park, for instance, that the Buddhist concept of nirvana is intimately bound up with the kinds of experiences Buddhists have while meditating. As such, it also agrees that the meaning of terms like “nirvana” may be not be entirely accessible to those who do not meditate. It, therefore, also agrees that in order to understand what Buddhists mean when talking about nirvana, it helps to have some acquaintance with the kinds of experiences they have while
meditating. Note, however, that the goal in this case is not to convince students that the experience of nirvana is noble and humanizing or that it quenches their spiritual thirst. The goal is more modest (and academically appropriate); it is “merely” to help students understand the concept of nirvana and its relation to the subjective experiences of meditation practitioners.

Of course, we professors must teach our students to approach such study carefully and in full view of its purposes and limitations. For one thing, there is no guarantee that what the scholarly imitator and the dedicated religious practitioner experience is the same. They each engage in meditative practice for significantly different reasons, and these motivations may impact the nature of their experiences. Moreover, undergraduate students enrolled in a single course obviously cannot be expected to dedicate many hours to developing their meditative abilities. At most, they can only be introduced to the practice of meditation and thus the best they can hope for is a glimpse of the kinds of experiences had by accomplished meditation practitioners.

This glimpse, however, is better than nothing and goes a long way toward helping students understand the nature of meditation and its role in Asian religious and philosophical traditions. While there is no guarantee that students’ experiences will correspond exactly to the experiences of dedicated meditation practitioners, we can still expect their experiences to be much like any other beginning meditator’s experience, giving them at least a beginner’s understanding of the nature of meditation and the ideas that grow out of it. When done with these academic goals in mind, it is certainly legitimate to engage students in meditation practice.

Should Students Meditate in the Classroom?

Perhaps admitting that we have thus far established the academic legitimacy of engaging students in mediation practice, critics might still reasonably ask about the value and legitimacy of students’ practicing meditation in the classroom as a lab exercise. The kind of experiential learning advocated here, it might be argued, is best carried out in the field. It is, after all, only in their lived contexts that religious practices like meditation make complete sense. While it may, therefore, be legitimate to send students into the field to observe and practice meditation, students should not meditate in class.

That meditation is best studied in the field is obviously true. The full range of meanings of any religious practice can only be discovered in context; abstracting it from this context no doubt affects its meaning.
Unfortunately, it is not always practical or even possible to send students into the field. For one thing, it is time-consuming. Moreover, especially in rural parts of the country, meditation and yoga centers can be hard to find, and the sites that do exist are often small and cannot accommodate large numbers of students. The next best thing, as suggested above, might then be to invite meditation teachers into the classroom. But even this is not always possible or practical. Even where certified teachers are available and willing to host a group of students or come to class, it is customary to give them at least modest honoraria, and such funds are not always available, especially in state-funded institutions. While it would certainly be better to send students into the field or even to invite meditation teachers into the classroom, it is not, in most cases, feasible. It is, nevertheless, still academically beneficial for professors to provide instruction on meditation and opportunities for students to engage in its practice in class.

Admittedly, this limited exposure can hardly be expected to provide deep and thorough insight into the nature of meditation and related religious and philosophical ideas. It certainly will do little to alert students to the full range of meanings meditation practices have in their indigenous contexts. Nevertheless, it can, for example, give students some sense of the relation among practice, insight, and thought in Asian religious and philosophical traditions or what these traditions mean when they assert the limits of rational inquiry. It is possible, too, that it might give students at least some inkling of what meditation practitioners are talking about when, e.g., they speak of Brahman-consciousness or Buddhist “Suchness.” While this understanding is less than thorough, our goal in teaching is not always to be thorough. Especially in lower-division survey courses, we are sometimes happy if our students understand even a little.

To summarize the discussion so far, when students are encouraged to engage in meditation practice for legitimate academic reasons like the ones I have outlined here, the practice is not only useful, but perhaps even an indispensable method for studying Asian philosophies and religions. It ought, therefore, to be encouraged among undergraduate students. It is best for students to learn and practice in the field; this is certainly true. When this is not feasible, it is still pedagogically advantageous for students to receive instruction from their professors and to be provided opportunities in class to engage in meditative practice.

Should Professors Teach Students to Meditate?

At this point, the objector might admit that it is permissible for students to practice meditation in the field and even in class, but not with
instruction from their professors. If students are to learn to meditate, they must only do so from qualified teachers for the simple reason that learning meditation from unqualified teachers may harm students, psychologically and spiritually. Again, this is a relatively obvious reason for questioning the ethics of the practice. It is so common, for example, for teachers and advocates of meditation to warn of the dangers of practicing without proper instruction that I hardly need to cite examples of the custom here. Nevertheless, an example will also acquaint us with these alleged dangers.

Bhikkhu Khantipalo is among those who warn of the dangers of practicing meditation without proper guidance (Khantipalo 2005). He claims, for example, that an improper motive for practicing meditation “may easily lead the unwary into illness, and sometimes mental imbalance.” Pride in one’s accomplishments can interfere with one’s spiritual progress, he warns, and fascination with one’s progress can “degenerate into visions and strange happenings, leading . . . [practitioners] into the realms of occultism and magic.” Moreover, Khantipalo insists that certain fear-provoking “visions” (e.g., of oneself as a corpse) should flatly be avoided by those who lack proper guidance, so great are the dangers they pose. He also cautions against trying too hard to meditate. Indeed, according to Khantipalo, “it is through straining or forcing meditation practice that many emotionally disturbed states arise. Sudden bursts of intense anger all over insignificant trifles, fierce cravings and lusts, strange delusions and even more peculiar fantasies can all be produced from unwisely arduous practice.” “With all these dangers,” Khantipalo reasonably concludes, “it is a skilled teacher who is most necessary to give advice, so that these and other wrong turnings are avoided . . . .” It might thus be argued that since most professors who engage their students in meditation practice are not qualified to give such advice, their teaching of meditation to their students is dangerous and therefore wrong. As Khantipalo insists, “there is nothing worse in Buddhist meditation, where a person’s own sure experience is of paramount importance, than a half-baked disciple who sets himself up as a master.”

This is an important objection that deserves to be taken seriously. Professors obviously should not endanger their students’ mental or spiritual health. If these dangers are real, then depending on their severity, it may be wrong for professors to teach students to meditate. At the very least, appropriate precautions should be taken and students alerted to the risks so they can give informed consent for their participation in class meditative exercises.

How real are these dangers? Being relatively inexperienced in the
practice of meditation, I am not sure I am qualified to say. At least some of Khantipalo’s claims seem reasonable. At the very least, it is easy to see that, like learning to play a sport or musical instrument, it helps to have a qualified instructor if one wants to learn to meditate well. Bad habits, I am sure, can be hard to unlearn. It thus seems no more appropriate for me to teach my students to meditate than it would be for me to teach them to play basketball or the piano. I am simply not qualified to do so and I would hate to give them bad advice. That the practice of meditation is alleged to be dangerous is all the more reason to doubt the appropriateness of my teaching it to students. In general, then, I do not think it is right for professors (most of whom, I presume, are not qualified to teach meditation) to teach students to meditate or supervise their meditative practice.

But, what of professors who are properly qualified to teach meditation to students? Should they do so? Even this is questionable considering what is involved in teaching meditation to students. In short, it implies a religious dimension to the teacher/student relationship that is not appropriate for (public) university professors and their students. It at least seems to imply, for example, that professors are assuming some kind of responsibility for the spiritual growth of their students, something that professors qua professors should not do. Supervision of students’ spiritual growth should be left unambiguously to religious teachers.

Fortunately, we professors do not need to teach our students to meditate in order to engage them in its practice, even in the classroom. The key, I believe, to engaging students in meditative practice in a professional and ethically appropriate way is allowing certified teachers to teach students to meditate through the medium of published sources, some of which are readily available on the Internet (e.g., Khantipalo’s “Practical Advice for Meditators,” cited above). It may be presumed, I would think, that since qualified teachers publish these materials, their advice is adequate to allow readers to avoid untoward mental states or other potential dangers of meditation. It may be presumed, in other words, that the risks of following their advice are not too great. By using these materials, professors do not need to fear giving their students bad advice; to the contrary, they avoid giving them any advice, at all. Professors also avoid not only acting as students’ gurus, but also even the risk of the students’ confusing them for such. Plainly, if professors do not teach their students to meditate, their students will be much less likely to confuse them for religious teachers.

2. I thank Peter Herschock for pointing this fact out to me after hearing a draft of this article presented at the ASDP annual meeting in 2005.
It seems reasonable, then, that professors, especially those who are not qualified to teach meditation, should not teach their students to meditate. Rather, they should provide students with instructions published by qualified teachers and opportunities to put these instructions into practice. As the danger of practicing without proper guidance probably grows the more one practices, it also seems reasonable that the number of such opportunities should be relatively few. Students who wish to meditate at length should be directed to find a qualified teacher to guide them.

**Should Students Be Required to Meditate?**

A final objection to the practice of engaging students in meditative practice arises in the cases of students who are afraid to participate. Some, for example, may fear that it goes against their religious convictions, that it constitutes a form of idolatry, for example, or might open them to demonic possession. I have certainly encountered such students in the Bible-Belt university in which I teach. Should such students be required to meditate? Moreover, what of students who simply fear the dangers of unsupervised meditative practice discussed above?

In cases like these, it seems clear that students’ autonomy should be respected, and thus also their desire not to participate. Students should not be required to do things that violate their religious convictions or that they seriously fear. At the same time, however, I would suggest that they not be excused from such valuable exercises too easily. Care should be taken to insure that they are sufficiently instructed on the purpose and value of the exercise. It should be explained that participation neither requires nor encourages them to believe anything; indeed, the point of the exercise is to put their own beliefs aside and engage in objective analysis of the phenomenal experiences produced by meditation. It might also be pointed out that not everyone would consider meditation a religious practice, and that, even if it is taken as a religious practice, it is a nearly universal practice in world religions and thus some form of meditation is probably sanctioned by their own religious tradition. Nevertheless, if students truly believe that engaging in meditative practice would violate their religious commitments, or if they are simply afraid, then they should be given the opportunity to opt out. Instead, they may be instructed merely to sit quietly while the rest of the class meditates.

**Conclusion**

I have argued here that there are good reasons to doubt the appropriateness of engaging students in meditation practice. At the same time, I have shown that none of these reasons is decisively against the practice. Still,
these reasons alert us to important ethical problems, and thus suggest conditions for engaging students in meditation in an ethically responsible way. In summary:

1. Professors should only engage students in the practice of meditation in service to academically legitimate goals. To avoid confusion, they should also provide adequate instruction on the purpose of the exercise and how the practice of meditation is expected to enhance students’ learning of Asian religions and philosophies.

2. Whenever feasible, professors should send students into the field to study meditation from qualified teachers or invite qualified teachers to class. When neither of these options is feasible, it is still academically beneficial, and hence appropriate, for professors to engage students in meditation in class.

3. At the same time, professors should not teach students how to meditate or offer advice to students about how to meditate. It is unprofessional and may pose unacceptable risks for students. Instead, professors should have students learn to meditate using instructional materials published by qualified teachers.

4. Moreover, professors should alert students to the alleged dangers of meditation, and inform them that most traditions would advise them to seek out a qualified teacher if they wished to engage in continued meditative practice. In keeping with this advice, professors should not allow students to meditate in class more than a few times.

5. Finally, professors should give students the opportunity not to participate in meditation practices if they feel strongly that it goes against their religious beliefs or fear its potential dangers.

When these conditions are met, it is both beneficial and ethically appropriate for students to be engaged in meditation practice in the classroom as part of their education about Asian religious and philosophical traditions. While there are significant ethical problems to be confronted, they are not insurmountable. Given the intellectual benefits of meditative practice for students, benefits that may not be had in any other way, it is appropriate to provide students with this valuable learning opportunity.

In closing, I would also like briefly to consider the implications of the argument I have developed here for teaching students about other
religious traditions that depend equally on other religious practices—e.g., prayer, recitation of scripture, magic, etc.? It might be pointed out, for instance, that just as it helps to have first-hand acquaintance with meditation in order to understand certain forms of Buddhism, so it helps to have first hand experience with prayer in order to understand Islam or magic in order to understand Wicca. Does this imply that it is also proper for professors to engage their students in prayer when teaching about Islam or magic when teaching about Wicca?

While this is a good question and one that deserves a response, I hesitate to offer a response here given the complexity of the issue and the present limits of space. The short answer is that yes, students may legitimately be engaged in just about any religious practice as part of their studies (obviously practices like human sacrifice or self-mutilation that harm others or oneself, or practices that violate the law would not be appropriate in any case); but, as with the practice of meditation, there are appropriate and inappropriate ways of doing so that are relative to the specific dynamics of each type of practice. Working out the details of what constitutes propriety in each case is the subject for another article, however. I should, nevertheless, be clear that I am not suggesting that students be required actually to pray to Allah as part of their study of Islam; but, if the appropriate conditions were met, there would be nothing wrong with asking them to “go through the motions” of prayer, imagining what it might be like to pray “for real.”

In order for such practices to be appropriate, however, the same ethical principles should apply. This means working in every case to insure that our educational methods (1) serve legitimate academic purposes, (2) do not expose students to unacceptable levels or forms of harm, and (3) demonstrate adequate respect, not only for the religious traditions we study, but also for our students’ autonomy. When such conditions are met, then engaging students, even imaginatively, in religious practices can be a valuable way of helping them learn about the traditions that give rise to and sustain such practices.

References


De-Centering the Self: Teaching Philosophy, Religion, and Culture

Jennifer Manlowe

Teaching Notions of Self

More often than not, when one speaks of Western philosophical foundations for religious study one uncovers the following notions: mind-body problem, the existence or not of the soul, God, will, nature/essences, and an ethical or virtuous self. Comparative philosopher, Masao Abe claims that most Western religions are based on the idea of one absolute God: Yahweh in Judaism, God the Father in Christianity, and Allah in Islam. In each of these religions, the one God is believed to be a personal God who is essentially transcendent to human prophets and who commands people to observe certain ethico-religious principles. Although we should not overlook some conspicuous differences in emphasis among these three religions, we can say with some justification that each understands itself to be ethical, prophetic, and monotheistic.

For the majority of Western philosophers of religion prior to the 21st century, most have approached traditions in search of the best way of discerning the will, knowing the Truth (with a capital and singular “T”), and defending its accuracy through the right arguments, principles, and laws. Comparative philosopher Eliot Deutsch claims, “The majority of Western philosophers seem to see philosophy as closely aligned to science in its spirit of objectivity if not in its precise methods.”

Again, prior to the 21st century, non-Semitic Eastern religions, despite their rich variety, have often been lumped together under a single category, “Asian.” Unlike the Semitic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which most Western scholars recognize as clearly having

common character, such “Asian” religions as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto exhibit significant differences in their religious essences, and hence cannot be legitimately classified into a single category. In order to bring this point into sharper focus, I take up Buddhism alone from among the Eastern religious traditions and contrast it with Christianity in terms of how each tradition constructs the self and its liberation.

When one makes generalizations about Buddhist Philosophical and Religious thought, in ways philosophers of religion might, one finds different philosophical emphases and concerns: non-duality, heart-mind as one word, impermanence, interdependence, emptiness, insubstantiality, the wisdom of spontaneity, intimacy and intuition, context-driven truths, and self-cultivation through right relationships. Many Asian philosophers have seen their philosophies as easily affiliated and explicated in art and ritual. William James referred to this division in terms of the “tough-minded” versus the “tender-minded” when comparing Western with Eastern Philosophy—this reading of difference is deeply influenced by turn-of-the century ideas about Western superiority.

In the latter half of the 20th century and early 21st century, we find more philosophy programs opening a dialogue with Asian philosophical thought. Some philosophers and astute university administrators have come to learn that philosophy is not the exclusive province of the West, and that, indeed, non-western traditions have a depth, range, and distinctive character that need to be recognized. As Eliot Deutsch says:

We need not only to enrich considerably our own philosophical background but we also need to understand better our own traditions. We now live in a global society with highly interdependent cultures and economies, and since many nations, including most conspicuously the United States, are rapidly becoming multicultural, to be dialogue partners with our neighbors in such a situation we need to know a great deal about different world traditions. As true lovers of wisdom, we think better and more creatively when we understand and appreciate the diverse ways in which basic issues have been dealt with, identified, and defined in different cultures. (Deutsch xi)

Moving, philosophically, from West to East and from East to West, and back again, is worthwhile if we are to ever transform the smallness of our perceptions.

With the aim of teaching how cultural orientation shapes religious imagination and how religious imagination shapes cultural orientation in a philosophy of religion course, two questions are worth posing:
1. How can I know something is real, moral, good, beautiful or of value? 2. How can I convey my position to another? It is well known that people from various cultures give dissimilar answers to such basic philosophical questions. In the early days of comparing cultures among religious scholars and historians at the Parliament of World Religions (1893), Western philosophers would often foster the crippling idea that these different cultures operate not only according to different logics (something that this essay illustrates) but live in wholly different worlds (something that this essay rejects).

A little more than a century after the Parliament of World Religions, we have the work of comparative philosopher Henry Rosemont who encourages us to ask more mutually empathic and respectful questions of tradition, for instance “How might an intelligent and thoroughly decent human being come to be, or remain, a subscribe to one or another of the world’s faiths?” We also have the good fortune of learning from comparative philosopher Thomas Kasulis, author of *Intimacy or Integrity: Philosophy and Cultural Difference* who invites us to discover how differences between cultures reflect the particular aspects of human life that a culture tends to emphasize, enhance, and place as central. In other words, to understand “what is foreground in one culture may be background in another” (Kasulis 20). Kasulis poses two basic cultural orientations useful for teaching comparative philosophy of religion: intimacy and integrity. A culture’s basic choice between these two orientations is then reiterated in its approach to meaning making, styles of argument, art, ethics, politics, and constructions of “the self” thereby generating broad and mutually supportive cultural patterns. In broad strokes, Kasulis traces these patterns in ways that illustrate very different constructions of the self:

1. Intimacy is objectively verifiable, but personal rather than public.
2. In an intimate relation, the self and other belong together in a way that does not sharply distinguish the two.
3. Intimate knowledge has an affective dimension.
4. Intimacy is somatic as well as psychological
5. The ground of intimacy is not generally self-conscious, reflective, or self-illuminating. (Kasulis 32)

Buddhist religion and philosophy often articulate the self in ways that mesh well with Kasulis’ description of intimacy. In Buddhism, the world of human beings (and the self) and the world of nature are understood as interdependent and yet equally subject to change, that is, both are transitory, mutually influencing, and transmigratory. Emancipation from the cycle of human birth and death is not to be achieved until a person can eliminate a more universal problem, the transience common to all things in the universe. Here we see that the basis for Buddhist liberation or salvation is not personalistic, as in an “I-thou” relationship with God, but cosmological and thus impersonal and trans-anthropocentric. Human beings have a special significance among creatures; it is only humans who, endowed with self-consciousness, can go beyond anthropocentrism and reach an awareness of communion with all things, not just other human beings.

Comparative philosopher Masao Abe claims this “cosmological basis of Buddhist human salvation could offer a spiritual foundation which could solve one of the most pressing problems of today’s world—the ecological problem of the destruction of the natural environment which is inextricably connected with human estrangement from nature. Environmental destruction results from anthropocentrism when people regard nature merely as a means to realize selfish goals and persist in seeking new ways to exploit and conquer it.”4 He continues, “What is necessary for the present day is not a new humanism but a new cosmology. There must be a cosmology which is extricated from anthropocentrism and yet which can provide humankind with its proper place in the universe. It is not an objective cosmology but an existential and personalistic one” (Abe 70). Kasulis and Rosemont would agree with Abe and Kasulis might be inclined to agree with me calling this new way an “intimacy-sustaining cosmology.”

As we move to the integrity orientation as presented in chapter three of Kasulis’ book, we find the following descriptions of integrity:

1. Integrity is impersonal, public verifiability, not the expert, is the basis of authority.
2. Integrity has a “belonging to” rather than a “belonging with” orientation.
3. Integrity is purely intellectual, not introspective or intuitive.

How the Christian tradition might illustrate integrity features is seen when attention is given to its theocentric concerns. In this tradition, human beings are viewed as lacking the integrity of their creator who is pure, transcendent, and unknowable in his divine perfection. This ruler of the universe is worshipped as the only God. For many who believe Jesus is God’s son, this integrity reaches further and one is either for Him and therefore saved or against him and therefore damned. In light of Kasulis’ work, I offer an approach related to philosophy of religion by focusing on ethics across cultures.

(1) An ethical orientation of integrity tends to focus on the agent’s responsibility: one ought to respect the integrity, autonomy, and the rights of others. 
(2) An ethical orientation of intimacy, on the other hand, tends to focus on the person’s responsiveness: it involves developing the ability or skill to feel the pain of others.

Kasulis’ point is that although one’s cultural orientation of self-hood may seem full-proof to one’s own worldview, it may seem to be a grave mistake in thinking from another’s worldview. What may appear to be commonsense from one orientation, that is, Shakespearian values of “To thine own self be true,” may seem cruel and insensitive from another perspective. The philosophical orientation of self-hood that a culture does not follow can nevertheless be appreciated and accessible as a background or an underemphasized aspect of its own world. The two gestalts are not necessarily incommensurable conceptual schemes but rather can complement each other.

One way to offer students an experiential way of beginning to appreciate this double-gestalt way of seeing is by showing them the image Kasulis employs of either the old woman with a kerchief or a 1920s young Gibson Girl (Kasulis 21). Are they looking at a young woman whose head is turned away in one-quarter profile and whose chin, nose tip, and eyelashes are all we can see of her face or are they looking at an old woman whom we see in full face and whose large nose dominates the picture?” Although many may already be familiar with this image (or the equally useful image that is both a vase and two
faces in profile), one can guide them to realize that they saw one image spontaneously and had to “learn to see” the other. This discussion can segue easily into how much of reality we have been taught to see or taught to see in a particular way. This exercise illustrates how perspective shapes what one sees. By describing the features of each image, they have the opportunity to look for the alternative image by making a special effort to see these alternative features. Some are never able to see the second image or are able to see it only after considerable tracing of features, but even this failure is helpful for consciously to “see how we are seeing” takes a kind “first-perspective bracketing” and by cultivating these skills we can facilitate a better understanding of difference among philosophical self-orientations.

Another way to illustrate how these philosophical orientations of selfhood operate differently in divergent cultures is to draw from current events that illustrate cultural misunderstanding of primary orientation. For instance, a site of mutual misunderstanding on the nature of the self that is being negotiated currently is the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (UNDHR). This document is an integrity-based-self-oriented and rights-based document created by mostly educated European professionals in the late 1940s and many cultures resist signing onto it. For those who claim to understand the language of rights, some say they are not able to persuade their communities to adopt them as vehicles for organizing themselves and their governance.

Kasulis claims that this “human rights” problem is more than just a misunderstanding; it is a problem in cultural persuasiveness around the nature and primacy of the self. The language of rights presumes a privileging of individualist or integrity values and this privilege does not translate well in cultures that orient themselves around relationality or intimacy values. This cultural persuasiveness, or lack of it, is a matter of cultural orientation as Kasulis points out.

When I speak of cultural orientation, I am not trying to make any essential claims that would inflame Edward Said, author of Orientalism, that say something such as “All Asian people are like X.” Rather, I am suggesting that when comparing cultures in terms of their religious similarities and differences, we might find it helpful to watch for certain general patterns that might have heuristic value. This will aid our concern for the possibilities and limitations of cross-cultural analysis, communication, and cooperation. This heuristic value may be useful in
examining how the language of the UNDHR might be translated and misunderstood across cultures.

In the context of this essay and by following Kasulis’ lead, I use the term “culture” as being broadly construed to include not only national cultures, but also subcultures within these national cultures and even subcultures that may cut across national cultures, that is, marked, for example, by gender, economic or social class, and ethnicity. Two serious mistakes we can make in teaching the philosophy of religion are the universalizing error and differentiating error.

**Universalizing Error**

*Universalists* presume we are living in an increasingly globalized context where cultural differences can be recognized and negotiated via the universal acceptance of common, perennial values. The present call for an international recognition of “human rights” is of this sort: whatever the differences among us might be, the assumption is that if we can agree on a few basic universal ideas, mutually beneficial cooperation will follow. Religious leaders espousing this approach include: the Dalai Lama, Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Ba’hai Faith. In his book, *God Has Many Names*, Christian theologian John Hick proposed his “Copernican revolution” in theology by emphasizing the necessity of a “paradigm shift from a Christianity-centered or Jesus-centered to a God-centered model of the universe of faiths.” He continues, “One then sees the great world religions as different human responses to the one divine reality, embodying different perceptions which have been formed in different historical and cultural circumstances” (Abe 42). This tendency to look for unity or essences in religion seems to be a search for a neutral symbol that can exist over and above the names of the various religions. Raimundo Panikkar, author of *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, claims, “the divine reality is many names and each name is a new aspect, a new manifestation and revelation of it. Yet each name teaches or expresses, as it were, the undivided Mystery.”

5 The error of this view is that all religions are united by being reduced to a single principle; diversity in pluralistic situations is lost in a homogenizing thirst for commonality.

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Differentialist Error

*Differentialists* resist such globalizing as a threat to culturally meaningful difference and diversity. Instead of universalization such cultural critics expect or endorse a manifold of liaisons among people of similar background, experience, values, or interests. Marxism’s class consciousness arose from such a model, as do many other forms of racial, ethnic, and gendered forms of self-identification or solidarity. Often the assumption is that those who are not us can never understand who we are; hence we should never allow “them” to define, interpret, or categorize us. The argument is that cooperation, if indeed it is actually possible, should not arise from the oppressive homogenization that universal structures either wittingly or unwittingly support. Instead, the claim is that cooperation should arise from some community of conversation in which people of different worldviews strive together for common goals. Religious leaders espousing this trend include Million Man March organizer, Louis Farrakan, and Feminist Theologian, Mary Daly.

Teaching Philosophy of Religion

Philosophers of comparative religions are challenged to scrutinize how the extreme universalist philosophers of religion fail to appreciate how profound cultural difference can be for philosophical constructions of “the self.” For instance, when we think we are talking about the same thing such as “the self” or “human rights,” we may think we are in agreement because we use the same words. This, however, does not mean we are valuing the same things at all. For example, in Japan, the term *keroshi* means “death by over work” and was invented about 40 years ago to help Japanese companies understand that human beings are not machines that can grind away for hours without frequent breaks or adequate rest and relational renewal with loved ones. Although the number one killer in North America is heart attack—often seen as stress-related—there is no such term in our parlance, nor is there an organized effort to combat this work-related stress in the American workplace.

To illustrate another intercultural conundrum, in Japan the term for “rights” is *kenri*. This term was invented to translate the newly introduced Western term about 100 years ago. Japanese people generally understand what the term “kenri” means, and its presence in the language may suggest to a universalist that Japan is in agreement
with liberal democratic principles. Yet, the sense and use of the term “kenri”—its force, normative functions, relation to other key notions or values, and its use in argument—are not equivalent to the English word “rights.” Universalists’ eagerness to seek common ground wherever possible leads to misinterpretation. The transfer of words or even ideas from one culture to the next does not entail a shared cultural view of what is important.

In contrast, extreme differentialists, often ignore the possibility of communication across boundaries. They may think translation is impossible; “they” will never understand “us; we’re terminally unique!” Translation can at times happen even when we may not want to be understood, sometimes we “others” are comprehended by “them.” Furthermore, to claim “they” can never really understand “us” assumes we understand ourselves perfectly and also assumes we understand others well enough to know their capacity to understand us. Without some understanding across boundaries, the very claim about the impossibility of universality is itself a universalization.

As we think through what is right and wrong about these two positions, what we are seeing instead is that the blurring of the distinction between understanding and persuasion is essential. We might understand the other (universalists are right on this count), but still remain not persuaded necessarily by or sympathetic to the other (the differentialists are right on this count). In fact, the boundaries separating cultures or subcultures are often most visible when we understand what the other is saying but do not grasp its relevance. This is the crux of why examining cultural orientations can help us in our communication and comprehension of each religious tradition. It is important to realize that we may understand ethical terms in a technical sense such as human rights, but in a profound sense not be persuaded to make its claims the basis of our behavior. This lack of persuasion is paramount as we look at religious, philosophical, and cultural orientations of the self. We can begin see how orientations toward intimacy or integrity shape how we construct the self.

**Conclusion**

In teaching philosophy, religion, and culture, students often want to shop—as autonomous individuals—in search of the-perfect-fit religion of their own making. Sometimes they try to find harmonious unity
between all traditions. Others avoid opening their minds in anyway to anything that is not fundamentalist Christianity or Islam. To see one’s work as fostering close reading as well as thorough listening to the philosophies, rituals, and embodied practices of each tradition is a critical place from which to begin. Kasulis’ heuristic of intimacy/integrity offers teachers of religion, culture, and philosophy ways to present philosophy that is not “the view from nowhere,” but is a view deeply rooted in cultural assumptions. By using one particular axis of difference, intimacy vs. integrity, Kasulis’ work helps illustrate how these two starting points lead to very different worldviews and very different notions of self-hood. Such a methodology for teaching religion and philosophy promotes students to cultivate a deeper awareness of their own cultural orientation and move them toward recognizing diverse patterns of relation that construct culture itself.

I hope students will come to learn to accept that though we may understand each other’s terms of “self,” we may not be persuaded to draw similar conclusions about how we should live, how we should behave, and how we should orient ourselves. Allowing for this humble gap of respect of these overlapping ways of seeing can foster a kind of stepping back and surveying what about religious dialogue divides and unites the humans.  

6 I thank Kevin Schilbrack for his conversation on this topic.
Of Unswerving Horses and Immortal Souls: A Comparison of Confucius’ use of the *Book of Songs* and Socrates’ Appeal to Poets in the *Meno*

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Abstract

Confucius’ repeated appeals to the *Book of Songs* to establish and defend a moral point seem strikingly at odds with the argumentative and discursive methods of classical Western philosophers such as Plato. Easy contrasts on this point, however, are challenged when Socrates, a Western philosophical persona to whom Confucius is often contrasted, himself appeals to classical poets when making a point, as he does with a fair frequency. These poetic allusions are usually ignored by philosophers, who focus on Plato’s banning of the poets from the perfect city of the *Republic* when the matter is raised at all. This paper compares Socrates’ use of poetry in the *Meno* with Confucius’ of the *Book of Songs*. Beginning with Confucius’ apparent insouciance in reading the *Songs*, I argue that Socrates’ appeal to ‘the poets’ actually reinforces the familiar distinctions noted. While Confucius is more concerned to appropriate the familiar for his own creative purposes, Socrates’ more literal reading of poets underscore the need for philosophical wisdom, or undermine the authority of the poets themselves.

Introduction

A cornerstone of classical Chinese literature, the *Shijing, or Book of Songs*, is widely quoted in the *Analects*, and Confucius regularly recommends to his disciples a thorough knowledge of the work, congratulating any student who displays such familiarity with the highest praise. This constant reference to the *Songs* and the high esteem in which the collection is held is an obvious example of Confucius’ celebrated love of learning and reverence of tradition. Often, Confucius reaches for the *Songs* when making a basic moral point about how we should live, or the characteristics of a morally exemplary person (*junzi*), and he clearly
prizes finding an echo of this claim in a verse from the classics. The ability to make a point by way of quoting the *Songs* is seen by Confucius as an important sign of learning, and he is particularly delighted when one of his followers demonstrates this lamentably rare talent. Confucius summarizes the value of the *Songs* as follows:

> My young friends, why don’t any of you study the *Songs*? Reciting the *Songs* can arouse your sensibilities, strengthen your powers of observation, enhance your ability to get on with others, and sharpen your critical skills. Close at hand it enables you to serve your father, and away at court it enables you to serve your lord. It instills in you a broad vocabulary for making distinctions in the world. 17.9

This typically Confucian insistence on a shared, traditional text and the attitude of reverence for this collection of older works, suggests some familiar and easy contrasts with Western thought. Here we see the aesthetic mindset of the East, the acute sensitivity to the right turn of phrase, combined with the tradition and custom bound deference to the masters of old that is to be contrasted with the critical, argumentative style of the Western philosophers, including Confucius’ rough contemporary, Plato. Where Confucius revered the wisdom and beauty of the *Songs*, Plato, as we all know, distained the works of the poets of his own traditions and opposed the dispassioned appeal to reason to the lazy reliance on what we’ve been taught. This comfortable contrast, I want to suggest here, is a little too easy. For one thing, Socrates is often to be found in Plato’s dialogues quoting poets freely, and not always with distain or skepticism. At times, he seems to rely on the cultural authority of the Greek poetic tradition in much the same way as Confucius does. At the same time, Confucius’ own way of appealing to the *Songs* is not as straightforwardly reverential as we might expect, as the master has a habit of using the poems in ways far removed from their original purposes.

**Unswerving Horses**

In light of the reverence for the *Books of Songs* Confucius is known for, it is startling to note that the authority of the *Songs* is often brought to bear on issues the texts themselves are not in any obvious way about. For the most part, the *Book of Songs* is a collection of verses relating to the lives and immediate, often day to day, concerns of Chinese living during the early Zhou dynasty, well before the time of Confucius himself: “There are folk songs…, romantic odes about life among the nobility at court,

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1 All quotations from the *Analects* are from Ames and Rosemont, 1998.
political laments, festive ballads, ceremonial hymns, celebrations and dirges.” (Hall and Ames 1987 67). They are not, for the most part, particularly philosophical in their topics or themes.

In the hands of the master, however, the Songs take on an explicitly moral dimension, as songs praising the beauty of women, for instance, or the carving and polishing of bone or jade, become meditations on the development of virtue. As Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont Jr. state bluntly in their translation of the Analects, “Confucius is given to citing the Songs creatively and out of context” (Ames and Rosemont 1998, pg. 232 n. 22). In a bit of interpretive creativity that at first glance almost suggests insouciance, Confucius summarizes the point of the Songs as a whole with a single line from Song 297: “Go vigorously without swerving (2.2).” Considering the overall themes of the Analects, Confucius is presumably hoping to evoke here an image of moral rectitude, of steadfast commitment to the Dao. He fails to note, however, that the text in question is about horses, and not morality at all.

Quoted in full, the stanza in which the line is found reads:

Sturdy are the stallions, in the distant open grounds
Among those sturdy ones, there are dark-and-white ones,
There are red-and-white ones, there are hairy-legged ones,
There are fish-eyed ones;
With their chariots, they go vigorously without swerving;
The horses are swift. (Quoted in Ames and Rosemont 1998 232 n22)

As Ames and Rosemont note, there is little to suggest that the song was anything else, originally, than an ode to fine horses.

In order to make some sense of Confucius’ use of the Songs, and to set the stage for a comparison with Plato’s rather different and less celebrated reliance on the poetry of his own tradition, I will rely on David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames’ careful analysis in their work Thinking Through Confucius. In this work, Confucius’ use of the Songs is considered within a broader treatment of the overall philosophical and in particular epistemological import of his thought. Within this context, Confucius’ creative reading of the Songs looks far from careless or dubious; it is instead a particularly rich instance of the only kind of reading of poetry possible. Hall and Ames explicitly contrast the kind of thought that is evinced in Confucius use of the Songs, and indeed of tradition more broadly, with the rationalistic, argumentative discourse we find in Western philosophy. The appearance of poetry in some of the most seminal founding text of that tradition is for that very reason something worthy of consideration.
Knowledge in an Immanent World

Contrasting the immanent, processional cosmology of classical Chinese thought with the Western belief in a primary and eternal transcendent reality, Hall and Ames make two points that are relevant to our concerns. The first is that because it doesn’t recognize a transcendent reality to which beliefs or claims about the world may or may not correspond, knowledge in classical Chinese thought is conceived of as something pragmatic, highly contextualized, and performative. To know in the Confucian world is to be able to bring about something in the world. The second point is that since Confucius focuses almost exclusively on the social world any actor is necessarily a part of, success in any such endeavor is unlikely absent a thorough familiarity and facility with the various resources traditions and customs make available. As Hall and Ames put it:

For Confucius, knowledge is grounded in the language, customs, and institutions that comprise culture. Culture is the given world. Thinking is cultural articulation that renders this giveness effective. There is no knowledge to be gained of a reality which precedes that of a culture or transcends determinations. (Hall and Ames 1987, 67)

The point here is that Confucius has little notion of a static, transcendent reality to which our beliefs can succeed or fail to correspond--there is nothing akin to Plato’s Intelligible Realm of Forms, for instance, that can be the focus of our epistemic concerns, or ground a search for purely objective, propositional knowledge. Consequently, knowledge becomes a practical matter of successfully making one’s way through the thoroughly human world one is naturally a part of. Since that world is 1) defined largely by its past as embodied in tradition but 2) is constantly evolving and changing, one needs both a thorough familiarity with that past and an ability to adapt traditional ideas and practices to new times and novel situations.

Hall and Ames interpret the Confucian emphasis on learning and its connection to living well against this background. According to Hall and Ames, Confucius intimates a four-way relation between learning (xue), reflecting (si), realizing (zhi) and living up to one’s word (xin). Since the end point of thinking in Confucian philosophy is not the grasping of an objective (in the sense of transcendent or mind-independent) reality, but rather success in an evolving social world, the epistemological challenge is to learn that world in such a way that one is able to reflectively realize and make the most of one’s place in it. While the traditions of the past form the raw materials of this learning, the emphasis on reflection points
to the need to be able to apply this to one’s present, possibly novel circumstances. As Hall and Ames put it, “if one simply learns without reflecting critically on what one is learning, one will fail to act ‘properly,’ that is to personalize what is learned in such a manner as to make it appropriate and meaningful in one’s own unique circumstances” (Hall and Ames 1987, 48). It is this critical, personalized application of what one has learned that enables one to respond appropriately, demonstrating a knowledge of things sufficient to bring about one’s intended effect. Among the highest manifestation of this, in the Confucian view, is the ethical achievements of the exemplary person. The junzi is someone who is able to take the cultural resources at his or her disposal, and successfully use them to cultivate to a high degree the familial and social relations that define us as humans.

The point Hall and Ames want to make with this in regard to the Book of Songs is that Confucius’ creative interpretations of classic works in facts exemplifies this very epistemic strategy. Far from seeing the Songs as something to be memorized for their own sake—a pedagogy according to which a song about horses would remain just that—the Songs are used by Confucius as the basis for his own highly personalized and contextualized instruction. They mean, in other words, what Confucius needs them to mean, or better, is able to make them mean in the present circumstances:

For Confucius, the Songs is not simply a repository of historical information to be learned…it is a primary source of creative reflection…It stimulates one to pursue personal cultivation, to exercise one’s creative imagination, to ascend to levels of heightened awareness, and to develop a deepened sense of sociality…It constitutes an authoritative structure of personal, social, and political experiences, which, given creative adaptation, can serve as a framework of constituting a harmonious community in the present. (Hall and Ames, 1987, 64)

Moreover, according to Hall and Ames, there is no other way language can become meaningful within this overall epistemological orientation. In the absence of transcendent objects, or ideas, or essences to which words can ultimately refer, linguistic meaning itself emerges in the same kind of interplay between past and present:

The language of…Confucius is one in which meaning is disclosed and/or created by virtue of a recognition of mutual resonances among instances of communicative activity. Language is the bearer of tradition, and tradition, available through linguistic expression and ritualistic evocation, is the context of all linguistic behavior. The language user appeals to present praxis, and to the repository of the significances realized in the traditional past, and he does so in such a manner as to
set up deferential relations between himself, his community, and the authoritative models invoked. (Hall and Ames 1987, 297)

Whether or not we should assert something so sweeping about language use in general in Confucian thought, such passages do seem to capture the spirit of the master’s use of the Songs. Plainly the value for Confucius lay not so much in their literal meanings, but in the deeper meanings that a particularly creative reading could draw out of them in a particular social and historical context, and for a particular audience. If, here and now, among these interlocutors, it’s possible to quote a poem about horses to make a point about moral rectitude, such a reading is perfectly appropriate. We must remember that the Analects as whole record what Confucius said to his students, while engaged precisely in instructing them on the finer points of ethical conduct and a life well lived. Presumably this very context would have led his intended audience to be quite prepared to defer to Confucius’ interpretations, and to consent to read the Songs as providing moral lessons.

Plato and the Poets

On the reading offered, Confucius’ reverence for the Book of Songs remains intact, if somewhat more complex than originally expected. The Master’s expansive and creative use of the Songs evinces his abiding belief in their relevance and depth rather than a careless disregard of their original meanings. In contrast to this reverence, Plato’s estimation of poetry can be described as resolutely ambivalent. There are times when Plato holds poetry in high regard. In the Symposium, for example, we find Diotima praising the creativity of poets in explaining the nature of love to Socrates, connecting poetry with “Wisdom and all her sister virtues” (Symposium 209a). On the other hand, in works such as the Republic we find the more well-known antipathy for the work of poets, and famously Socrates bans them from his perfect state. This ambivalence stems from two convictions from which Plato seems never to have wavered. One is a willingness to take poetry seriously, epistemologically speaking. Throughout the dialogues, Plato is willing to grant that poetry can convey important truths—a careful audience can gain from poetry true beliefs about important things. This willingness to take poetry seriously, however, is countered by the equally firm conviction that it is an unreliable source of true beliefs, both because it can deliver false as well as true beliefs, and more importantly because even when getting

2 Trans. Michael Joyce, in Hamilton and Cairns 1982..
3 See in particular the discussion of Homer in Book X (600-603).
things right, poets offer something less than genuine knowledge. Plato’s epistemology distinguishes merely true beliefs from beliefs we can show to be true in an appropriate way, and often he suggests this element of justification or demonstration is lacking in poetry. In the parlance of modern epistemologists, even when true, what we learn from poets lacks warrant. The resulting ambivalence shows up early in Plato’s works, and Socrates’ stated conclusion in the Apology expresses one from which Plato never much strayed. After testing the poets for genuine wisdom, Socrates concludes that while their works can no doubt be of great value, the poets themselves can not be credited with much wisdom: “poets do not compose their poems with knowledge, but by some inborn talent and inspiration, like seers and prophets who also say many fine things without any understanding of what they say” (Apology, 22c).

Socrates’ appeal to poets in the Meno is particularly illustrative of Plato’s seemingly conflicting appraisals of poetry as a source of belief. Three poets make an appearance in the Meno, and Socrates turns to them for three different reasons. He reaches for Homer, briefly, for little more than a nice turn of phrase; he quotes approvingly a passage from Pindar in support of a central contention of the dialogue; and, finally, he quotes Theognis even more extensively, but this time in order to show a confused poet unhelpfully contradicting himself on an important matter. Socrates’ appeal to Pindar in particular demonstrates both the apparent value Plato at least sometimes sees in poetry, as well as his doubts. It is also, in light of the context in which Pindar makes his appearance in the work, an especially apt place to look for a comparison with Confucius’ use of the Songs in the Analects.

Immortal Souls

While the Meno as a whole considers whether or not virtue can be taught, the middle sections of the dialogue find Socrates introducing distinctly Platonic claims about the immortality of the soul, metempsychosis, and the theory that learning is a matter of recollection. This interlude, prompted by Meno’s paradoxical challenge to the very possibility of

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4 In Grube, 1981. I am here, and will be throughout except when noted in the text, treating Socrates as a character in works composed by Plato, with the views of the latter being my main focus. I am persuaded, however, that we can distinguish the earlier Platonic dialogues from later, more mature works in part thematically, as Plato introduces ideas that seem not to have been associated with the historical Socrates. For the most part, however, Plato added to what he learned from Socrates, rather than abandoning it. So while I will distinguish Socratic and Platonic ideas, it should be understood that Plato mostly endorsed both.
theoretical inquiry, is significant in ways that go beyond the particular doctrines introduced. As a transitional dialogue, the *Meno* marks one of the earliest appearances of these ideas in Plato’s work, and so one of his first attempts to meld these more metaphysical speculations with the more typically modest and ethically minded Socratic themes of the earlier dialogues. We should pay attention, then, to the manner in which Plato’s more elaborate claims about the soul make their appearance. In this light, one of the first things we notice is that Plato has Socrates turning to Pindar for help when introducing and then defending some “fine” claims about the soul he’s heard others make. The passage in question reads as follows (Pindar’s lines are in italics):

The speakers were among the priests and priestesses whose care it is to be able to give an account of their practices. Pindar too says it, and many others of the divine among our poets. What they say is this…the human soul is immortal: At times it comes to an end, which they call dying, at times it is reborn, but is never destroyed…:

*Persephone will return to the sun above in the ninth year*

*The souls of those from whom*

*She will exact punishment for old miseries*

*And from these come noble kings, Mighty in strength and greatest in wisdom; And for the rest of time men will call them mighty heroes.*

As the soul is immortal, has been born often and has seen all things here and in the underworld, there is nothing it has not learned. (*Meno* 81b-e)\(^5\)

Socrates then uses what he takes to be the poem’s religious point—that after death the soul is reborn and uses in its new life what it has learned before—to support his general claim that *all* learning is possible only by way of the soul’s recollecting what it knew in a previous existence. In the passages that follow, Socrates gives these claims a proper philosophical defense, by way of the famous example of the slave boy whom Socrates teaches a bit of geometry through a series of careful questions. Socrates argues that since he has not told the slave boy anything directly, but rather only prompted him to discover the right answers within himself, we must conclude he in some way already knew those answers. Hence his ‘learning’ is really an instance of ‘recollection’, something only the supposition of an immortal and transmigrating soul could account for. Having thus established both by reference to Pindar and by way of philosophical demonstration that learning (as recollection) is possible,

\(^5\) In Grube, 1981. All quotes from *Meno* are from this volume.
Socrates and Meno return to their original discussion of the possibility of teaching virtue.

What should we make of all this? We can start by noting the religious tone Plato introduces into the dialogue here, and indeed the religious context of this part of the dialogue is both critical and complex. Pindar was, and would have been known by Plato’s contemporaries to have been, associated with various Orphic ‘mystery religions’ then popular in Athens. The ‘Eleusinian Mysteries’, a cult with which Plato himself was known to be associated, was particularly prominent, and Pindar (like Plato) at times makes explicit use of the ideas and language typical of the Mysteries. Typical of these mystery religions was a belief in an immortal and divine soul, the proper care of which could lead to a kind of salvation.

Running counter to this prominent strain of Greek religious thought was an equally prevalent but opposed ‘Delphic’ strain which tended to stress modesty and moderation in human strivings to know or approach the divine. This line of thought also finds its way into Plato’s works, particularly in the earlier dialogues. Socrates’ divinely endorsed skeptical claims in the Apology that he lacks wisdom and understanding, and his explicit contrast between the wisdom of humans and that of the gods, is typical of this tendency. In the Meno this side of Socrates makes an appearance at the end of the discussion of the immortality of the soul. While confirming that he personally believes the story he has just told, Socrates adds that he “doesn’t insist [his] argument is right in all… respects (Meno, 86b).” This kind of disclaimer is itself not atypical. Even in his later dialogues, Plato has Socrates take a step back from more speculative, mythological or religious claims to which Plato himself seems to have been sympathetic. In the Phaedo, for example, after a rather lengthy and detailed description on the fate of the soul in the after life, Socrates adds that while he’ll stand by the general spirit of his account, “no sensible man will insist that things are as I have described them.” (Phaedo, 114d.)

In light of this, I suggest we see Plato in the Meno as both indulging and resisting what would become a typically Western temptation, namely the temptation to believe we can access transcendent truths by way of “divine inspiration”, or what would come to be called revelation, understood as a special, non-evidential and non-inferential knowledge,

6 In what follows I rely extensively on Morgan 1992.
7 In Grube, 1981.
a knowledge possible perhaps only by the grace of the divine. By Plato’s lights, it is this, and really only this, that is on offer in poetry. But Plato’s willingness to indulge the likes of Pindar is coupled with the philosophical suspicion that no such knowledge is forthcoming, or at least that any claim that cannot be philosophically defended is suspect for that very reason. The fear is that the supposedly divinely inspired utterances of the poet (or priest or priestess) are second rate at best—when the poets do get it right it’s by way of a sort of epistemic luck. If, as seems plain, the historical Socrates was much more inclined towards philosophical doubts and Plato towards religious belief, the episode in the *Meno* perhaps also represents an early instance of Plato’s growing if still tentative willingness to assert his more religious tendencies against the agnosticism of his revered teacher. Here the tension between looking for while being skeptical of revelation is mirrored in this most famous of philosophical partnerships.

On this reading, Socrates’ appeal to Pindar in the *Meno*, often ignored or treated as a mere illustration of Socrates’ claims about the soul, is quite important. It is at once a typically ambivalent comment on the epistemic power of poetry, its relation to philosophic wisdom and Socratic doubt, and on the ability of humans to achieve the kind of knowledge of the divine Socrates is relying on. The tension evinced, it goes without saying, is hardly unique to Plato, and indeed recurs repeatedly in the subsequent history of Western thought. The confrontation of the Greek philosophical tradition with early Christianity, for instance, provoked a comparable uncertainty, given voice by for instance, Turtullian’s famous question “what has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” Thus was initiated the dance of ‘faith’ and ‘reason’ that continues in the West to this day.

**A Comparison**

This reading of the *Meno* gives us something to work with when comparing the role of poetry in the works of Plato and Confucius. We can begin with some similarities. Plato has Socrates citing poets at least sometimes for the same sort of reason Confucius cites the *Songs*, viz. to support a broader, philosophical point, and in both cases the cultural authority of the texts being quoted is doubtless a rhetorical consideration. Moreover, in both cases I think it’s fair to say that the broader concerns of each thinker determines to a great deal just how the texts are used and understood. In neither case are the poetic texts allowed to speak entirely for themselves. But it is in the dramatically divergent ways in which each thinkers looks to find the sought for meaning that reveals the deeper differences we might expect to find here.
I argued earlier that the apparent insouciance Confucius displays in reading the *Songs* disappears if we follow Ames and Hall in putting that reading in its proper epistemological and cosmological context. If that context shows the meaning of a poem to be something that exists only in the creative interplay between poet and audience, there’s no sense in which *Song* 297, for example, is ‘really’ about horses and not virtue. In the case of Plato, we probably wouldn’t be too tempted to see insouciance—the Pindar fragment does seem genuinely to be talking about immortal souls and metempsychosis in a straightforward enough way. One might be tempted, though, to find Plato’s reading a bit bloody minded or ham fisted in its unwillingness to pay much attention to anything else in the verse. The story of Persephone is a typical Greek myth: complex and more than a little lurid, replete with divine incest, rape, infanticide and cannibalism. We might suppose a lyric poet of Pindar’s stature and talent is doing more than making a philosophical point about knowledge and our fate in the great beyond in invoking such a story. Plato nonetheless tells us nothing about the broader work (now otherwise lost) from which the fragment is drawn. Pindar’s intended message is immaterial and is sacrificed to Plato’s philosophical preoccupations.

Plato’s interpretive focus makes sense when placed in the broader context of his philosophical orientation. Important to Plato were the philosophical concepts that rightly limned the transcendent reality he took to be primary. While these concepts would include the claims about the soul defended in the *Meno*, the proper context for those claims would be the philosophical Theory of Forms, not the traditional Orphic myths invoked by Pindar. It is in reference to this transcendent reality that the poems become meaningful, and the question of their truth decided. Without this contact with a more basic reality, the works collapse into mere ‘imitation’ of what is real, and stories told remain mere myth. While Plato is willing to cede the poet’s insight, by way of a kind of divine gift, into a higher reality, it is a philosophically stripped down version of that concerns Plato, the poet’s indulgent and detailed visions of divine shenanigans not withstanding. Poets in general, Plato suggests, have a tendency to cover up what truth they possess with unreliable and often dangerous accounts of dreadful behavior on the part of the gods, an aspect of traditional Greek poetry that Plato cannot abide. Consolidating the move, as is said, from *mythos* to *logos* that marked the development of the Greek philosophical tradition, Plato naturally distinguished the philosophical content of the poetic texts from the mythological elements he saw as distractions. Accordingly, when
using Pindar, Plato emphasizes the parts that are more amendable to philosophical demonstration. The rest, unsurprisingly, is less interesting, and so ignored or discounted. If Confucius sought to invest the words of the Songs with a meaning discovered in their application to his current ethical and pedagogical concerns, Plato was happy to take the poets at their word, but only so long as they agreed with him, or were at least speaking his language.

To take our comparison one step further, we can consider the respective attitudes each thinker displays towards the broader traditions that produced the poetry each looks to. Confucius’ reverential attitude towards tradition as a repository of cultural resources, and in particular his insistence that thorough knowledge of one’s traditions is necessary (if not sufficient) for serious thinking, can be contrasted with Plato’s once again more ambivalent attitudes. It is clear that Plato saw poetry as a force to be reckoned with, something whose cultural authority could be appealed to when introducing admittedly difficult and controversial ideas. Indeed, Plato not infrequently sees the force of tradition, and of traditionally told stories, as critical to social cohesion and the maintenance of legitimate political authority. Socrates’ introduction in the Republic of the ‘noble lie’ about the origins of the three classes of citizens of the ideal state comes to mind. At the same time, it seems Plato saw poetry as competing with a more adequate source of wisdom, namely philosophy—its authority accordingly being at times unearned or exaggerated. At a minimum, the claims of poetry, and tradition more broadly, were to be submitted to more careful philosophical scrutiny. And where tradition and philosophy clashed, philosophy often prevails with Plato. A repeated theme of the earlier dialogues in particular is that common wisdom and ‘what everyone knows’ must give way to the critical force of Socrates’ questioning. If, as is widely held, the Confucian tradition has struggled at times with balancing reverence for tradition with the need for genuine challenge and innovation, we can perhaps see in Plato an anticipation of the Western difficulty in balancing a celebration of autonomy with an acknowledgment of the legitimate and inevitable role of social forces, including traditions, in shaping individuals. If the Western philosophical tradition can be said to be marked by both a temptation to and suspicion of reliance on revealed wisdom, something similar might be said of its attitudes towards the wisdom embodied in tradition. If tradition is sometimes seen as a source of wisdom, it is also seen at other times as a repository of ill earned authority and superstition, Kant’s ‘self-incurred tutelage.’ This too is a dance that continues to this day.
References


Searching for a Voice of Silence Across Cultures: Does Silence Speak?

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Abstract

With “大音希聲” (dayinxisheng) of Daodejing (41) and “繪事後素” (huishihousu) of the Analects (3:8) as the focused points of departure, this paper discusses the crucial ways that make silence communicative. It attempts to suggest, quite metaphorically, a certain “grammar” or “aesthetic” of silence that is inherent in, and thus helpful in explaining, the various literary cases the paper refers to across-culturally. Silence speaks because silence, as always, has its invisible, inaudible, intangible, and yet indispensable content and context to be silent about, in, with, and for — often with varying degrees of intensity. As we all communicate with one another through silence and across-culturally from time to time, the ways that silence speaks, as indicated by these about, in, with, and for, suggest, in other words, a grammar or aesthetic, which is not only culturally specific but also universally meaningful. Understanding the communicative power of silence thus remains crucial in this increasingly vociferous and ostentatious world of ours, especially as it is so infested with misunderstandings and miscommunications that bear horrible consequences, such as wars, and often irremediable damages to our invaluable human and natural resources. Ultimately, learning how to communicate through silence is like learning to understand and appreciate classical Asian art, such as a simple poem from the Book of Songs, which requires not just momentary patience but significant suspension or change of our mentality, that is, our modern way of looking at things. It challenges our modern mind or obsession for clarity or our intolerance for ambiguity, as Stephen E. Toulmin would so suggest. It would encourage us, in other words, to cultivate a more context-specific approach instead of our preference for absolute abstraction. Modernity prevails, as Toulmin argues, in Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity, often at the expenses of healthy doses of skepticism and tolerance through ideological indoctrination, action of intolerance, and violence. To create such a discourse of modernity
that stresses rationalization or systemization for maximum efficiency, as Toulmin analogizes, it is quite deplorable for us to have simplified “Montaigne” into “Descartes,” reduced “Leviathan” into “Lilliput,” transformed “reasonable” into “rationale,” and turned “ideas” into “ideology.”

Understand the aesthetic of silence therefore will help us discover further what we need to be silent with for deeper reflection, the health of our mental balance, effective cross-cultural communication and dialogue, and, simultaneously and ultimately, our renewed appreciation and intimacy with life.

The virtue and beauty of communicating through silence are some of the major “issues” that have been frequently confirmed across spectrum of philosophical investigations that otherwise do not converge. But what makes silence work or how does it work? These are still questions yet to be answered. Silence does not express by itself. It must have its auxiliaries and conditions. The silence that speaks must have its unseen content and context to be silent about, in, with, and for. Thus to know what we are silent about, in, with, and for, which are culturally specific, is crucial for us to understand what makes silence speak and meaningful. Culturally significant and particular, there are also degrees, levels, intensity and ways of silence regarding how it communicates under varied circumstances. To do that, we need to know not only the meaningful phenomena of silence themselves but also the culture that encodes, enriches, and enlivens silence as an enlightening means of communication. We need to understand therefore the people who value it, the particular circumstances and ways that it becomes effective, and the ultimate impact that it creates on the culture as a whole. When Chinese sages, such as Confucius and Laozi, emphasize the importance and value of silence, they also suggest on what makes silence work, its grammar and aesthetic. Of silence, there are indeed various interesting cases in the West and the East that relate how silence communicates. For John Keats, “heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter” because the music of “soft pipes, play on; not to the sensual ear, but, more endear’d pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone” (Davis 1986, 822). Homer in the Iliad also demonstrates how silence in the form of hushed murmurs and laconic verbal description casts rare magic of beauty on Helen. It is, nonetheless, in the Eastern literature that we see extensive examples that emphasize the virtue of communication through silence. Not just in Daoist and Buddhist texts, as quite expected, but in Confucian literature as well, there are significant cases regarding how silence is valued.

But the aesthetic of silence is probably most concisely expressed by “大音希聲” in *Daodejing*, and “繪事後素” (3:8) in the *Analects*. Both emphasize an important aesthetic of silence from a different but related viewpoint. What does Laozi mean when he says “大音希聲”? Does he mean “the great note sounds muted” (Mair 1990, 7)? Does he imply “the greatest sound is ever so faint” (Ames and Hall 2003)? But the great sound, which might sound faint, is certainly not “muted.” What makes great sound “faint,” after all, is well explained by the word “xi 希” itself. It is because that the word is indicative of not just itself in terms of the quantity or quality of the sound but also the very physical and human environments that make sound faint. Clearly, silence is relational and contextual as it is meaningful and beautiful. The beauty of the silent sound or sounded silence depends on the size of environment, depth of the valley, delicate quality of the sound itself. Great sound or music therefore is not “muted” but the suggestively sounded note that appeals to the sensitive ear that captures it where it most delicately sounds. There is always a subtle relationship or proportion between the sound and the milieu in which it echoes. Should the Chinese character “yin 音” be therefore translated as “sound” or “music”? Indeed, the word “yin 音” does mean harmonious sound or music, while “sheng 聲,” however, indicates inharmonious sound. If this is the case, the great music is the one that is of the most harmonious relationship with the natural and human environment that echoes it and thus appears most appealing to the sensitive ear.

Put it another way, great sound that appears in such harmonious vibration with nature and human sensitivity becomes music and is music itself. Often, it is the great music of nature inaudible to people at large but only to those, such as Ziqi Nanguo in *Zhuangzi*, who can hear sound of nature or music of heaven, “hooting, hissing, sniffing, sucking, mumbling, moaning, whistling, wailing” (Graham 1981, 49). The great music of silence or the great thoughtful silence, in other words, can only be suggested, as Basho so implies, by voices of nature, such as the cicada’s rasp that fans out, like unending waves of sounds, from near to afar. This is dynamic quietude and musical silence that can only be heard through the cicada’s rasp echoing in the mountain.

2 “Faint” for 希 is undoubtedly a favorite choice as we can also see in Wing-Tsit Chan’s translation “great music sounds faint” (1963) as well as Philip J. Ivanhoe’s “The great note sounds faint” (2002).

In seclusion, silence
Shrilling into the mountain boulder,
The cicada’s rasp. (Davis 1995)

Similarly, in the poem, “The Zen Meditation Hall Behind Broken Hill Temple,” by Chang Jian, we can also hear the profound silence through lingering sound of bell. Dayin 大音 thus presents a full dimensional picture of silence with an infinitely vast space for our mind to penetrate, to roam about, to vanish into, or to rest in peace with.

As mountain scenes invite the song of birds,
Images in the pond empty the human mind.
Everything has vanished now into the heart of silence,
Except the sounding of bell and chime. (Zhang & Wilson 1994, 121, emphasis added)

To further understand “大音希聲,” we must comprehend “繪事後素,” which should provide an additional but indispensable view from a closely related but different angle. What does Confucius mean by “繪事後素”?

Zixia asked: What do these verses mean:

Oh, the dimples of her smile!
Oh, the black and while of her beautiful eyes!
It is on plain silk that colors shine.

The Master said: “Painting starts from a plain white silk.” Zixia said: “Ritual is something that comes afterwards?” The Master said: “Ah, you really opened my eyes! It is only with a man like you that one can discuss the Poems!” (Leys 1997)

Does Confucius mean, “The colors are put in after the white” (Lau 1979), “Painting starts from a plain white silk” (Leys 1997), “the application of color is to the unadorned” (Ames & Rosemont 1998), or “The application of colors comes only after a suitable unadorned background is present” (Slingerland 2003)? Does he suggest one should leave background unpainted or blank while finishing a painting (Bao & Wang 1983, 72)? Does it simply state, “The beauty deliberately worked out by human is behind which by nature,” because huishi 繪事 stands for what is good and beautiful created through human deliberation, while su 素 indicates everything that is beautifully original and natural, and thus implies a comparison embedded in such verbal structure as “after …,” “behind …,” or “next in order ….” 4 Therefore, does it mean ren 仁

is like *su* 素, unadorned, like plain silk, to be applied on and referred to by *li*? Does it suggest that we do not overpaint but leave the background blank, not to obscure *su* 素, which is our implicit but primary goal to elevate and to which we should direct all our viewers’ attention through each of our brush stroke, as we need to reach *ren* through the guidance of *li* 樂?

Whatever the argument, one thing is clear in all, that is, silence is intimately relational and contextual. It must have something to be silent about and for and a place to be silent in with varying ways or degrees of intensity. Whether we apply colors or brush strokes on the plain white silk or leave it as unadorned space, between what is painted and what is left unpainted, there is always a meaningful dialogue or dialogic relationship that, while subtly in balance or delicately in motion, enlivens and enriches silence. Within such a relationship, everything painted points not only to itself but also *is* meaningfully left unpainted or unadorned for the imaginative minds to engage what is invisible, intangible, but essential or inherent. In Basho’s poem, *su* 素 is thus the vast or infinite space of silence that we *feel* through the echoes of cicada’s rasp. The mountain is *alive* with each vibration of sound. The sound gives the mountain a sense of movement with rhythmic ups and downs of cicada’s rasp. The sound makes the mountain profoundly silent, and, in turn, the profundity and depth of the mountain and silence make the sound further subtly meaningful. As is also shown in the excerpt from the famous poem, “Song of the Pipa,” by Bai Juyi, the Chinese Tang poet, silence apparently speaks and strikes. But it is also apparent that without the notes played “loud as drumming rain, soft as whispered secrets” that appeal to the ear like “pearls of varied sizes cascaded on a tray of jade” or “an oriole warbled from within the flowery branches…,” it is inconceivable that “perfect crystal silence spoke more loudly than sound.”

First she played *The Rainbow Skirts* and then *Six Minor Notes.*
Loud as drumming rain, soft as whispered secrets,
Pearls of varied sized cascaded on a tray of jade,
An oriole warbled from within the flowery branches,
A stream sobbed its way across its sandy shoals.
The Stream then turned to ice, the note to crystal,
To a perfect crystal silence that spoke more loudly than sound.
(Zhang & Wilson 1994, 157)

The pause, the brief or momentary silence, is indeed suggestive of *dayin* 大音” and *su* 素.” It is this momentary pause that makes all the difference of the entire piece of music played, but the crucial pause also
relies on the preceding notes so played to build up for this particular moment of silence as dayin 大音” and su 素 to speak through.

As a matter of fact, whether we are Daoist or Confucianist, to understand the meaningful aesthetic of silence as dayin 大音” and su 素, it is also important for us to understand stillness. It is stillness that ultimately suggests, through silence, the majestic sagely humanity as sheng 聲. In Zhuangzi, as we know, it is suggested that the ultimate freedom is not there with motion or movement but inherent in supreme stillness (jingji 靜寂) and actionlessness (wuwei), which reveal human nature as authentically as the full still water that catches clean and clear images in pure reflection. Anyone who reads the first chapter of Zhuangzi may still recall that the eye-catching perfect image of freedom and spontaneity that the mystic fish-birds so majestically represents finally appears as nothing more than mere illusions because their freedom is ultimately conditioned or motivated by the invisible flow of air. Such an impression of freedom, motion, and movement therefore illustrate no true sense of freedom or spontaneity, which is, however, so vividly embodied, in sharp contrast and irony, as if through perfectly still water, by the motionless and emotionless shengren 聲人. Besides, no matter how highly Confucius thinks of ren 仁, it is, nonetheless, not ren but sheng, which represents what Confucius considers the highest or ultimate realm.5 This is the realm that suggests supreme detachment and perfect actionlessness as enlivened by the legendary sage-kings, such as Yao, Shun, and Yu, who often appear acting like Daoist sages. Once, Confucius, for instance, utters so emotionally his great admiration of Shun and Yu, “The Master said, ‘How lofty Shun and Yu were in holding aloof from the Empire when they were in possession of it’” (Lau 1979, 8:18).6 With Yao, he is also in his utmost awe, “Great indeed was Yao as a ruler! How lofty! It is Heaven that is great and it was Yao who modelled himself on it. He was so boundless that the common people were not able to put a name to his virtues. Lofty was he in his successes and brilliant was he in his accomplishments!” (8:19).

But however lofty these legendary kings really are in terms of their characteristic detachment and awe-striking actionlessness, they are yet, as Yang Bojun emphasizes, to become the perfect personification of sheng, obviously for being still not measured up to supreme stillness, which

6 For comparison, here is Leys’ translation: “The Master said: ‘How sublime were Shun and Yu: they had dominion over all that is under Heaven, and yet were not attached to it.” Here is also Ames and Rosemont’s version: “The Master said, ‘How majestic they were—Yao and Shun reigned over the world but did not rule it.”
means perfect harmony and peace in accordance with nature, “Even Yao and Shun,” as Confucius emphasizes, “would fail short of bringing peace and harmony to people through [perfect] self-cultivation.” In Liji (38), it says that “Man is born in stillness, for stillness is his nature given by Heaven. In response to external things, he becomes active, for activity is the expression of his desires motivated by his nature” (Lao An 1999, 170-1). Not unlike Confucius, the literary persona in Zhuangzi, Confucius in the Analects, also appreciates Shun as the supreme ruler for his exemplary action of wuwei. In Zhuangzi, Confucius, for instance, insists on the virtue of wuwei, stillness, and actionlessness of action through his analogous reference to the image of water. “Confucius said, ‘Men do not mirror themselves in running water—they mirror themselves in still water. Only what is still can still the stillness of other things’” (Burton 1964, 65). To further explore the full symbolic meaning of the still water, Zhuangzi let Confucius thus reply to the question, “What do you mean when you say his virtue takes no forms?”

Among level things, water at rest is the most perfect, and therefore it can serve as a standard. It guards what is inside and shows no movement outside. Virtue is the establishment of perfect harmony. Though virtue takes no form, things cannot break away from it.” (Watson 70)

7 My own translation with reference to Lau’s: “He [junzi] cultivates himself and thereby brings peace and security to the people. Even Yao and Shun would have found the task of bringing peace and security to the people taxing”; For comparative reference, here is Leys’ translation: “Through self-cultivation, to spread one’s peace to all people: even Yao and Shun could not have aimed for more,” and Ames and Rosemont’s: “They cultivate themselves by bringing accord to the people. Even Yao and Shun would find such a task daunting.”

8 Here included is also A.C. Graham’s version, for comparison and clarity, “None of us finds his mirror in flowing water, we find it in still water. Only the still water can still whatever is stillled” (1981, 77).

9 For further reference, here is a much longer version from A.C. Graham on the same passage:

“Being level is the culmination of water coming to rest. That the water-level can serve as standard is because it is protected from within and undisturbed from outside. As the saying goes, ‘the wind passing over the river takes some of it away, the sun passing over the river take some of it away; but even if wind and sun were both to abide with the river, the river would suppose that they had never begun to infringe on it., for it is something which issues from forth from springs of its own. The filling of a contour by whirling water, still water, flowing water, water bubbling up, water dripping down, water gushing from the side, water dammed and diverted, stagnant water, water with several sources, makes the same deep pool. Hence the water abiding with the earth fills its contours, the shadow abiding with the shape fills its contours, anything abiding with another thing fills its contours. The Power is the wholly at peace with itself on the course which is in accord. That the Power fails to shape the body is because other things are unable to keep distance from it. (81)”
Indeed, both audible and visual, dayin 大音 and su 素, however, does not easily reveal itself in the form of communicative silence or “deep [does not automatically] call unto deep,” as Emerson would argue here as well, unless, as we have discussed, there are appropriate circumstances, which also mean particular mental conditions that we need in order to understand and appreciate silence. Basho’s famous frog haiku should be a good example on this.

The ancient pond
A frog jumps in –
Sound of water. (Davis 1995)

Simple as it is, the great poem, nonetheless, captures the crucial moment that tunes the simple note of sound into great note of music, which communicates through provoked silence. It turns a single isolated action into the harmonious orchestra of nature. But without a responsive mind that transcends or loses itself, silence only falls on deaf ear. As long as we are ready, we can be the part of action that poem perfectly suggests through silence. It is because the poem depicts the “dramatic” moment when our fractal or fragmented self slip into the watery universe of the pond following the little frog and becomes part of the system of nature. It also implies how we might be thus led to let go our “self” and become “transformed,” “naturalized,” or “eternalized” into the world of profound silence following the momentary “sound of water.” What happens then is indeed the rare moment when we are so enlivened to the beautiful silence through the very ripples or echoes of “sound of water” that concur both audibly and visibly in the pond and in our minds. With the frog, there emerges perfect union between the audible silence and visible echoes that defines and refines a universe that defies our usual human sense experience. The “sound of water” signifies, in other words, a unique occasion when our physical and psychological world, our imaginative response and intellectual reasoning, all are emerged or blended into one another to suggest an aesthetic experience that elevates ourselves. Undoubtedly, it is the rare moment when the seventeen syllables become lyrically profound or, as Montaigne would imply, “accidentally philosophical.” It makes a little noise into profound sound, music, and silence with the “ancient” pond, the immeasurable depth and beauty of which, like that of Walden, as Thoreau would suggest, depends on where it is. The sound of water is now literally the sound of nature and sound of culture that
appeals to the geographically and culturally fine-tuned sensitive ears. The sound thus, indeed, becomes an indicator, a pointer, not just to itself but to the very natural and cultural environment that make it meaningful and live. It is not just relational and contextual but cultural as well.\(^\text{10}\)

As we have already noticed in the Basho’s frog poem, what makes silence so simultaneously audible and visual should probably be further observed in terms of “synaesthesia,” a rhetorical term that suggests the unusual (but undoubtedly universal) aesthetic or live human experience where regular sense experiences dissolve, as the audible becomes visual while the visual becomes audible.\(^\text{11}\) With regard to what is suggested with this special term, it is clear that the audible silence is often also quite suggestively visual. In his poem “London,” William Blake, for instance, suggests that he not only hears but also sees “… the hapless soldier’s sigh/Runs [silently] in blood down palace walls” (Kirszner 1991, 899). In *Nostormo*, Joseph Conrad describes how “the solitude appeared like a great void, and the silence of the gulf like a tense, thin, cord to which [Don Martin Decoud] hung suspended by both hand,” and how “the cord of silence snap[s] in the solitude of the Placid Gulf” with a single self-

\(^{10}\) What makes silence sound or heard are also geographically and culturally significant phenomena. According to Mikako Ichikawa, Professor of English, the City University of Osaka, Japan, whom I invited to visit Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas, for a two-week Scholar-in-Residence program in April 19-30, 2004, it is certainly the size of Japan besides its history that makes the sound of water audible and meaningful. Illuminating her points with photos taken where Basho’s frog haiku was supposedly written, Professor Ichikawa suggested that the size of Kansas, for instance, would not make the sound so audible. Neither would people in Kansas appear as responsive to the sound the way Basho did. America is simply, as Professor Ichikawa implied, too large for the little sound to be heard and paid attention to. But one of my students, Kathleen B. Walsh, indeed heard the communicative silence that haikus suggested and in response she wrote one herself, after one of these inspiring lectures by Professor Ichikawa, for the first time in her life.

On the highway’s edge  
Still, wild creatures of Kansas  
Sacrificed for speed.

\(^{11}\) Even in everyday situation, we often run into expressions, such as “it looks hot” or “it sounds cool.” For vivid discussion of cases concerning “synaesthesia” in classical Chinese and western literature, see Qian Zhongshu, “Synaesthesia” *Comparative Literature Studies: A Collection*. Ed. Zhang Longxi and Wen Rumin. Beijing: Peking UP, 1984).
inflicted gunshot (1972, 498-9). In “Tong Guan,” Qian Zhongshu discusses how much a little flower of apricot sticking quietly out of the wall of a yard suggests noisy colors of the coming spring (Qian 21). Qian also refers to mystics, such as Saint-Martin, who confesses, “I heard flowers that sounded and saw notes that shone” (28). Do we not also hear and see the subtle texture and richness of sonata music at the Nelson Art Gallery, Kansas City, Missouri, through the perfect stillness and silence of a young girl in white contemplating before her piano in an oil painting, “Sonata,” by Childe Hassam? With our understanding of the infinitely interconnected and interacted universe as suggested through the great sounds of silence, the ancient rhetoric seem to suggest a world, an experience, more than it signifies.

With “synesthesia” in mind, we may take another look at the following haiku also by Basho. It seems to be a poem that eternalizes the momentary and the fleeting through the mind-enlightening silence, which is both audibly and visually striking.

A flash of lightning  
Into the gloom  
Goes the heron’s cry. (Kirszner 1991)

In a split second, do we really hear the heron’s cry or merely see the soundless awe-striking lightening (as light travels faster than sound)? Do we just hear the heron’s cry that is so terrifying as to make us feel that we see a soundless lightening that suddenly tears apart the dark heavenly curtain with such relentless force and in such surrealistic way? Or do we see the lightening that snatches on us with such shocking suddenness and soundlessness that resembles, in our moment of awe and hallucination, the ear-piercing shriek of a heron in the pitch-dark night? Again, this is a unique aesthetic experience that encompasses all human senses by suspending or blurring all our usual logical or sensible distinctions of experiences. Instantaneously, while hearing the lightening against the backdrop of the pitch dark sky, we also see it in the shrieking heron’s cry. Yes, the vast blankness (su 素) does allow us a rare glimpse of great sound (dayin 大音) that, however, does not reveal itself so often unless under such a unique moment. This might be exactly what Stephen Crane has experienced, as he is so struck by the soundless flash of impression that enlightens him.

The flash of the impression was like light, and for this instance it illumined all the dark recesses of one’s remotest idea of sacrilege, ghastly and wanton. I bring this to you merely as an effect—an effect of mental light and shade, if you like; something done in thought similar to that
which the French Impressionists do in color; something meaningless and at the same time overwhelming, crushing, monstrous.12

Is this the soundless impression a kind of “primordial experience,” as we might also encounter, according to C. G. Jung, in the second part of Goethe’s Fauste, which “rend[s] from top to bottom the curtain upon which is painted the picture of an ordered world, and allow [us] a glimpse into the unfathomed abyss of what has not yet become” (Jung 1933, 155-6)? Or is it “a strange something that derives its existence from the hinterland of man’s mind — that suggests the abyss of time separating us from pre-human ages, or evokes a super-human world of contrasting light and darkness”? Is it “a primordial existence which surpasses man’s understanding, and to which he is therefore in danger of succumbing”? Could it not thus be the great sound (dayin 大音) that “arises from timeless depths … foreign and cold, many-sided, demonic and grotesque” or the one “bursts asunder our human standards of value and of aesthetic form”? Is it not audibly the great silent note that brings us a “disturbing vision of monstrous and meaningless happenings that in every way exceed the grasp of human feeling and comprehension makes quite other demands upon the powers of the artist than do the experiences of the foreground of life” (Jung 155-6)?

Instantaneous as it is, the dayin 大音, so awe-striking, may have also lingered for many years onward, like an endless silent motion picture with the strange image that Richard Wright captured as a child of his “father and the strange woman, [with] their face lit by the dancing flames, [which] would surge up in [his] imagination so vivid and strong” that he feels that “could reach out and touch it.” It was so “vivid” and “strong” that he “would stare at it, feeling that it possessed some vital meaning which always eluded me” (42). It is, indeed, this kind of silence that has the peculiar power to impress, to connect, to transform one’s mind, or to “commence [a great] author” such as Henry James — “almost on the spot, as James so confesses on one of these rare moments that mysteriously sticks to his memory.

To feel a unity, a character and a tone in one’s impressions, to feel them related and all harmoniously colored, that was positively to face the aesthetic, the creative, even, quite wondrously, the critical life and almost on the spot to commence author. They had begun, the impressions—that was the matter with them—to scratch quite audibly at the door of liberation, of extension, of projection; what they were of one more or less knew, but what they were for was the question that began

to stir, though one was still to be a long time at a loss directly to answer it. (James 1956, 253, emphasis added).

Yes, silence, sometimes, in the form of “sacred hush, a finer clearer medium, in which [one’s] idiosyncrasies showed,” as James also vividly suggests in *The Ambassadors*, could be strikingly impressive, engaging and enlightening in making people so “lived” with “deep devoted delicate sensitive noble” feeling.

It struck [Lambert Strether] really that he had never so lived with her as during this period of her silence; the silence was a sacred hush, a finer clearer medium, in which her idiosyncrasies showed. He walked about with her, sat with her, drove with her and dined face-to-face with her — a rare treat “in his life,” as he could perhaps have scarce escaped phrasing it; and if he had never seen her so soundless he had never, on the other hand, felt her so highly, so almost austerely, herself: pure and by the vulgar estimate “cold,” but deep devoted delicate sensitive noble. Her vividness in these respects became for his, in the special conditions, almost an obsession; and thought the obsession sharpened his pulses, adding really to the excitement of life, there were hours at which, to be less on the stretch, he directly sought forgetfulness. (1960, 204, emphasis added).

Indeed, it is through *su* 素 that *dayin* 大音, which are rarely heard or caught a glimpse of synaesthetically, emerges from inside. Silence makes us think and feel deep. There is always momentary silence around us, with us, and inside us that could be as enlightening as Basho’s “sound of water.” But we are often too busy, too careless, or too carefree, to even notice it. But now we should learn how to appreciate silence as a special communicative language, which is not only culturally specific for us to know the specific cultures that it relates but also universally significant for us to see how humans can also communicate and understand one another through silence. We should not only learn how to pray together in silence but also have our heart-to-heart dialogue in silence through gestures, bodily language, the beauty of our environments, such as the green deep mountain that echoes the unblown flute,13 which we need to protect together and share with one another. We would undoubtedly be happier and our life richer when we learn how to understand and appreciate more the beauty of silence that a little frog brings or a voiceless smile suggests. Therefore, as long as we know how to explore nature

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13 See also Basho,

I heard the unblown flute
In the deep summer shadows
Of the Temple of Suma. (David, 1995)
both inside and outside ourselves following the *leads* of silence, we will appreciate further the very life we lead. This is, perhaps, why Confucius asks rhetorically, “Does *tian* speak? And yet the four seasons turn and the myriad things are born and grow within it. Does *tai*n speak?” (Ames & Rosemont). This is perhaps also why Pablo Neruda thus sings in his poem *Keeping Quiet*:\(^4\)

If we weren’t unanimous  
About keeping our lives so much in motion,  
If we could do nothing for once,  
Perhaps a great silence would  
Interrupt this sadness,  
This never understanding ourselves  
And of threatening ourselves with death,  
Perhaps the earth is teaching us  
When everything seems to be dead  
And then everything is alive.

This is why “in the Confucian and [Daoist] traditions that provided the ritual and conceptual contexts for the Chinese appropriation of Buddhism,” emphasizes Peter Hershock, “manifesting [de] entails an active extension of … enlightenment as a ‘silent bond’ [moqi 默契],” which, for me, suggests the powerful message of *dayin* 大音 and *su* 素, and thus, of course, “takes on a more dynamic and explicitly narrative cast” (129, 1996).\(^5\) This is also why, for Emily Dickinson,

Speech is one symptom of Affection  
And Silence one—  
The perfectest communication  
Is heard of none— (1681, 1960)

Therefore, as long as we are not so much in a hurry to fill our time and space with words and sound or “dread” silence, as Dickinson would also say here,\(^6\) we will be enlightened by *dayin* 大音 yet to hear and *su* 素 yet to shine through from behind this increasingly vociferous and

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\(^4\) Here I thank my colleague, Dr. Kami Day, for helping me identify the current source where the poem appears with the title, “Keeping Quiet.”

\(^5\) For convenience, consistency, and clarity, all Chinese names and words in the Wade Giles system are “pinyinized” or converted to the common *pinyin* system including those in the quoted texts.

\(^6\) See also Dickinson,

Silence is all we dread.  
There’s Ransom in a Voice—  
But silence is Infinity.  
Himself have not a face. (1251, 1960)
ostentatious world of ours. Ultimately, learning how to communicate through silence is like learning to understand and appreciate classical Asian art, such as a simple poem from the Book of Songs, which requires not just momentary patience but significant suspension or change of our mentality, that is, our modern way of looking at things. It challenges our modern mind or obsession for clarity or our intolerance for ambiguity, as Stephen E. Toulmin would so suggest. It would encourage us, in other words, to cultivate, for deeper understanding and for healthier mental balance, a more context-specific approach instead of our entrenched modern mind for absolute abstraction, precision, and clarity.

References


Sentence and Solas in the Writer’s Craft of The Canterbury Tales and The Peony Pavilion

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Abstract

I stress the importance of Chaucer’s criteria of sentence and solas set out in The Canterbury Tales to the vital role literature has played across cultures in shaping our own understanding of the human being. Although these literary criteria are characteristically associated with Chaucer, I show that authors of literary works in other cultures also employ them. Specifically I focus on a Chinese work written by Tang Xianzu in 1598 entitled The Peony Pavilion. I offer a reading of The Peony Pavilion in terms of sentence and solas, but I do not claim that Tang was intentionally trying to meet a standard set by an English writer almost two hundred years before his time. Instead, I want to show only that Tang wrote a work that had, within its own culture, sentence and solas in comparable ways to that expressed by Chaucer in his culture. I conclude that The Peony Pavilion, no less than The Canterbury Tales, has both sentence and solas, and approaching the text with a view toward these criteria rewards the reader with an appreciation for the craft of each author and the possible meanings of their respective works.

792 Th is is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
793 That ech of yow, to shorte with oure weye,
794 In this viage shal telle tales tweye,
795 To Caunterburyward I mene it so,
796 And homward he shal tellen othere two,
797 Of aventures that whilom han bifalle.
798 And which of yow that bereth hym best of alle-
799 That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas
800 Tales of best sentence and moost solas
801 Shal have a soper at oure aller cost,
(Chaucer 1982, 792-801)
As a writer of poetic narrative, Chaucer is obviously a remarkable master. Laura Kendrick observes that “Chaucer made the *Canterbury Tales* to renew the productive forces of English society and, at the same time, through controlling play, to stabilize the late fourteenth-century social order” (17). In Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*, the narration of events runs smoothly, and every section of the prologue and the tales is clearly distinguished and articulated. From an introduction through suspense to crisis and resolution, Chaucer provides his readers with the special enjoyment of “…tales of best *sentence* and most *solas*.”

In this essay, I will stress the importance of Chaucer’s criteria of *sentence* and *solas* to the vital role literature has played across cultures in shaping our own understanding of the human being. In order to recognize how these concepts are pursued and embedded by writers in their literary craft, it is worthwhile to trace their derivation in history. In Chaucer’s hands, the criteria of best *sentence* and most *solas* form the guiding structure of all the tales, the presentation of characters like the Pardoner, as well as the narrator’s remarks in *The Canterbury Tales*. Although the literary criteria of *sentence* and *solas* are characteristically associated with Chaucer, the concept is ubiquitous in literary works of other cultures as well. This can be shown in a Chinese work written in 1598 entitled *The Peony Pavilion* by Tang Xianzu. While I intend to offer a reading of *The Peony Pavilion* in terms of its *sentence* and *solas*, I do not claim that Tang was intentionally trying to meet a standard set by an English writer almost two hundred years before his time. I want to show only that Tang wrote a work that had, within its own culture, *sentence* and *solas* in comparable ways to that expressed by Chaucer in his culture. Therefore, the application of these criteria is translatable to Chinese literature. My claim is that *The Peony Pavilion*, no less than *The Canterbury Tales*, has both *sentence* and *solas*, and approaching the text with a view toward these criteria rewards the reader with an appreciation for the craft of the author and the possible meanings of the work. Both *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Peony Pavilion* employ *solas* to bring out the sentence they want to convey.

Connotation and Etymology of *Sentence* and *Solas*

If we take a look at how *sentence* and *solas* evolved in the history of English language usage, it is not difficult to conclude that both words have rich meanings and history. The *Oxford English Dictionary* reports various spellings for *solace* (səˈlɑːs). The earliest recorded form is *solas*, in 1290 and in the c.1300 *Life of Beket*. Chronologically, the spellings alter to *solace* (1340), *solasse*, (1530) and *sollace* (1593, Shakespeare). Isolated
cases include solae and soles. Solas, the spelling that Chaucer frequently uses, was an Old French word used as an adjective to mean “comfort, consolation.” It derived from the Latin *solacium* which has the stem *solari* “to console, soothe.” But from 1297 to 1525 *solas* was also used in English as a noun to mean pleasure, enjoyment, delight; entertainment, recreation, and amusement. This is the way it is used in the famous passage in Chaucer’s *General Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales* quoted at the beginning of this paper. Also, in the *Franklin’s Tale*, Chaucer uses *solas* again in this sense when he writes, “He goth to his cuntre... Wher as he lyveth in blisse and in solas” (Chaucer 1982, 94). The connection between bringing pleasure or enjoyment and giving comfort or consolation may lie in the ordinary way in which we sometimes sigh with comfort after an enjoyable experience, as though it flows over us and relieves our stress and frustration over life’s twists and turns. Likewise, we often feel consoled after a loss or over our troubles by something that pleases us, makes us smile, and changes our mood. Humor and comfort seem related, as is also true of enjoyment of literary stories and a sense of consolation gained from the reading. So, we should not be surprised to find that both spellings *solas* and *solace* are used to speak generally about things that fulfill life and enrich it, that create interest and entertainment, and things that bring enjoyment and comfort. It is this kind of emotive state Chaucer’s host challenges the pilgrims to produce with their tales.

*Sentence* (*sentans*) first shows up as an adjective in French in the 12th century. It is spelled as *sentencia* in Spanish, *sentence* in Portuguese, and *Sentenza* in Italian, all adapted from the Latin *sententia* meaning “opinion,” or a “maxim of truth” or “essence of an insight.” The use of *sentence* for an idea or opinion put forward as truth first shows itself in English in 1340. *Sentence* was used as the position on doctrine put forward by a person to questions asked of him by a religious court in 1375. It is this meaning that is implied when referring to Peter Lombard’s famous *Sentences* (12th century) which was actually a collection of the teachings of the Church Fathers on questions of Christian theology. Chaucer uses *sentence* as the essence of a thought, its gist or most significant idea, or simply the point made by a story as in his uses of this term in the General Prologue passage about *sentence* and *solas*, and also in the Nun’s Priest’s Tale.

The idea that great literature as storytelling should have the *sentence* and *solas* that Chaucer requires of the tales of his pilgrims did not originate with Chaucer. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle describes what makes a discourse persuasive. Along with the character of the speaker, he
specifically mentions the emotional power of the passage as well as its ability to make a rationally convincing claim about truth (McKeon 2001, *Rhetoric*, Bk. 1, Ch. 2). The standards of solas and sentence are compatible with Aristotle’s approach. In other words, writers in their material should aim to provide both interesting entertainment and knowledge of practical benefit or even moral deliberation. The entertainment side of this task may be associated with solas and the knowledge of the practical with sentence. English works forming the immediate background for Chaucer, such as *Beowulf*, also display solas and sentence, even if their authors do not expressly put these concepts forward as a standard for their craft.

Chaucer’s challenge to the pilgrims is that each should tell a tale which has the best entertainment or emotional effect (solas), and yet also, at the same time, contains the best lesson or insight about life (sentence). In the Host’s statement of the contest rules, Chaucer sets himself the goal of having his characters balance the measure of sentence and solas in a tale so that a story strive for both equally, each co-ordinating with the other and not subordinating it, so that the tale never becomes merely didactic or solely entertaining. Sometimes we may feel that one tale has more solas than sentence, while another is stronger in its sentence. But generally speaking, sentence and solas are embedded in every tale.

*Sentence and Solas in the Canterbury Tales*

Laura Kendrick in her book *Chaucerian Play: Comedy and Control in the “Canterbury Tales,”* explores many interesting questions as to why Chaucer’s writing moves “toward laughter” (Kendrick 1988, 14). Carl Lindahl comments that, “Kendrick grounds Chaucer’s fiction in a medieval tendency to balance the serious and the playful, sentence and solas” (Lindahl 1991, 657). Lindahl’s point that Chaucer tries to balance sentence and solas in the pilgrims’ stories can be illustrated by a brief analysis of some tales.

The Miller’s Tale, for example, is usually categorized as a fabliau.¹ The comic story, the rhetorical description of the major characters, and the interweaving plot components have made this tale one of the

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¹ A fabliau always has an earthy subject matter and ordinary or even crude style. It emphasizes bodily functions such as sex, defecation, farting, the appetite, and crude emotions. These tales show little respect for authority and the chief characters tend to be admired as clever tricksters and not for their morals. Even so Talbot Donaldson (1970) stresses the importance of the language that Chaucer uses in this tale to his intent to parody, and Booker Thro (1970) believes that Chaucer is much more creative in his character design than is the typical fabliaux of his period.
most favorite and representative of the Chaucerian narratives. A reason The Miller’s Tale is very appealing to its readers can be found in its artistic and literary combination of great entertainment and understated instruction—solas and sentence. Nicholas, an Oxford student, lives with an old carpenter John and his much younger wife, Alison. Nicholas is intoxicated and fascinated by Alison’s beauty. So, they conceive a plot to have an affair. A rapid sequence of events then brings about numerous entertaining situations. There is the affair, an embarrassing kiss applied to Alison’s bottom by another would-be lover named Absolon, the burning of Nicholas in Absolon’s inept revenge, and finally John’s falling from the roof. As a result, everyone is humiliated and made to look ridiculous. The miller concludes his tale in this way,

Thus plumed was the carpenter’s wife,  
in spite of all his guard and jealousy;  
and Abslom has kissed her lower eye;  
and Nicholas is scalded in the bum:  
this tale is done, and God save all the company!  
(Chaucer 1982, 664)

By means of lively language, vivid description and an intriguing plot, Chaucer creates a remarkable tale which is ample in its outrageous solas. Writing about Twentieth Century interpreters, Thomas Farrell says, “Early in this century, The Miller’s Tale was widely seen as objectionable: Manly described it as ‘not fit to be read in mixed company’” (Farrell 1989, 789). The Miller’s Tale generates a lot of laughter and enthusiasm among its readers which can be concluded from the fact that this tale survived in several versions. It is able to function very well as a light-hearted tale. George Jones has also demonstrated that the tale is just the sort we might expect from a medieval miller (Jones 1955, 3-15). Just as Jones has done a study of the Miller’s tale to confirm that it is consistent with what we might expect from a medieval miller, Burke Severs (1974) has also explored the place of Clerk’s in the social history of this period. We should not anticipate a didactic piece filled with philosophical maxims from a lower class working man with little education. Neither should we expect a different kind of solas from him. We could say that it is a “slap stick” comedy, and that it gratifies readers who appreciate the crude physical humor and jokes told by millers. So here Chaucer has crafted very successful solas, to delight and to please and made it appropriate to the story teller.

In contrast, the presence of the Miller’s Tale’s sentence is less evident and direct in this tale. However, behind the entertaining laughter after reading this tale, we can still feel the real intention of Chaucer. Its
objective seems to poke fun at cocky university students, lusty young wives, foolish old husbands, and courtly love itself. Therefore, we could feel that the tale purposefully employs irony to unveil the flaws of some societal problems and distorted practices. Chaucer himself seems to point to such a reading when, during the telling of the tale, the Reeve becomes angry at the Miller because he thought the lesson of the tale was to say that older men were gullible and easily deceived. However, other lessons seem to be equally defensible. Chaucer uses the Reeve to show that a tale with skillful solas may have more than one sentence. Since all of the people in the tale are humiliated, perhaps a better defense could be made for the interpretation that the sentence of the story is that the more people engage in folly, crude, and immoral actions, the more likely that they will eventually be shamed by themselves. Just as a Chinese proverb goes, “Those who play with fire may become its victims.” This sentence parallels Paul Olson’s view that the punishment of the three male figures, at least, constitutes a condemnation of the vices they embody: avarice in John, pride in Absolon, and lechery in Nicholas (Olson 1963, 227-36).

Although the Host’s challenge is for each tale to balance sentence and solas, The Miller’s Tale seems to have a more obvious solas. In contrast, The Clerk’s Tale seems to be the reverse, with a dominating sentence. The clerk tells about Walter, an Italian duke who has been a bachelor all of his life. When he finally decides to take a wife, the Clerk marries Griselde, a low-born but amazingly virtuous woman whom everybody loves. However, Walter devises several tricks to test her devotion by first taking away her daughter, then her son, and finally sending her away from his home completely naked. Nevertheless, Griselde accepts each of these tragedies with great patience and integrity. The Clerk ends the tale by offering the advice that women should strive to be as steadfast as Griselde, even if facing such adversity is unlikely and perhaps impossible.

It is clear that The Clerk’s Tale strives at sentence, but the exact teaching of this story is enigmatic and debated. Does the story mean to teach the conservative principle of hierarchy in domestic, political and spiritual relations as Elliott Krieger thinks? (Krieger 1975) Susan Hagen believes that the tale is not about wives’ duties to their husbands at all but rather about the unconditional duty of the human soul to God. Donald Reiman thinks that the Clerk is trying to expose the excesses of both Walter and Griselde to show that each of them has something

2 Alfred Kellogg (1972) has written on the background of the Clerk’s tale’s use of Griselda as it is found in Boccaccio and Petrach.
to which they are subordinate, but that since their submission is not to
God their fate will be disaster (Reiman 1963, 356-73). Other scholars
believe that the sentence is embedded in the more abstract teaching that
patience and steadfast devotion to one’s promises and obligations will
always return happiness in the end. An interesting way of thinking about
the happiness Griselde found in her obedience is in M.L. Warren’s
“Griselda’s ‘Unnatural Restraint’ as a Technology of the Self,” in which
Warren appropriates Michael Foucault’s views to conclude of Griselde
that, “Her subordination has become her insubordination, and her
radical obedience a mode of self creation…her obedience does not equal
passivity. Rather it is an active mode of creative being set into motion
by her deliberate choice to be obedient in all things. Like the early desert
monks Griselda reinvents herself in the desert of her obedience.” For
Warren, the Clerk’s message is that Griselde should be seen as a threat to
male authority, not as a woman cowering before a man. My own reading
is that Chaucer also intends to show here as elsewhere that women
cannot trust men as they can trust God. A woman, or any person, faced
with trials from God can endure based on the faith that God intends the
good for us. But when women are confronted with trials placed on them
by men, they can have no such assurance. So, the Clerk says

This story’s told here, not that all wives should
Follow Griselda in humility,
For this would be unbearable, though they would,
But just that everyone, in his degree,
Should be as constant in adversity
As was Griselda; for that Petrarch wrote
This tale, and in a high style, as you’ll note.
For since a woman once was so patient
Before a mortal man, well more we ought
Receive in good part that which God has sent.
(Chaucer 1982, 1142-55)

The solas in The Clerk’s Tale lies in its ability to create in the medieval
reader, at least, an interest in what will be the next test Walter will lay
down before his wife. There is also the suspense over whether the wife
is able to pass the test, or even whether she should try to do what her
husband asks. After all, we may question whether Griselda should put
aside her own will in the way the tale presents. But the sentence is also
evident in the sense that we should receive what God has sent us with
the sort of patient obedience that Griselde shows to her husband. The
significant point is that the sentence would not have such a compelling
force as it does if it were not for the solas of the tests. Chaucer not only
makes use of *sentence* and *solas* in the shaping of the tales themselves, but also in how he portrays the tale tellers. The description of the Pardoner as well as the tale he tells illustrates just how careful Chaucer is to weave *sentence* and *solas* into the entire fabric of The Canterbury Tales. The Pardoner holds an interesting office in medieval England. Alfred Kellogg and Louis Haselmayer have documented the nature of this office as well as the attempts to restrict the abuses of which Chaucer’s Pardoner seems to be guilty (Kellogg and Haselmayer 1972, 212-44).

As we learn from the General Prologue, a Pardoner is a layman who sells pardons for sin called indulgences. Indulgences are certificates from the pope by which people hope to receive some share of the merits of the saints and thereby escape more lightly from the pains of Purgatory than they would otherwise. The Pardoner not only sells indulgences, but he also has a collection of sacred relics to market. The *solas* in the presentation of his character comes through in the ridiculous and humorous facts that we learn about these so-called relics. They are not the physical or material remains of any saint at all. They are merely bones and rags he has gathered from various sources and for which he claims the supernatural power to be able to cure sick animals, increase wealth, and make husbands trust unfaithful wives. These incredible results are all available for a fee.

The *sentence* of The Pardoner first emerges when he admits that greed is his motivation for selling indulgences and relics. So, the humorous satire evidenced in the *solas* of his occupational wares and how to sell them turns more seriously important when he tells the other pilgrims that his only motivation is that people give him money. He says that he does not want to be like Christ’s disciples who had to work hard with their hands. Chaucer criticizes the Pardoner by having him reveal his true motivation of making money by using his church position.

The Pardoner’s Tale creates *solas* by having three wild tavern men go on a quest for Death, but instead they find a fabulous treasure (Chaucer 1982, 441). Such a story brings forth a sense of mystery and makes us interested in what the three men will find. The location of the treasure adds even more suspense. The story of the three revelers meeting their deaths under the tree where the treasure lies has its *sentence* expressed in the Latin phrase *Radix malorum est cupiditas* (the root of all evil is greed). Greed is the Pardoner’s own sin, and yet it is the vice he preaches against with such powerful effect that he brings people to repent of their avarice sincerely.

Chaucer’s use of a story which has its main teaching directed against greed but told by a man who admits to this vice is intentional *solas*. The
Pardoner’s Tale offers the teaching condemning greed in a well crafted tale full of solas. But the Pardoner admits to holding the opposite values. He has composed a story of such great solas as to move his hearers to turn from greed and seek forgiveness, even if his own motivation is to make money from their desire for salvation.

Through the Pardoner, Chaucer raises questions about the implications of storytelling in general. We may wonder now whether Chaucer’s purpose in the Pardoner’s tale really has anything at all to do with greed or the selling of indulgences. Perhaps his tale is meant to raise an even more troublesome sentence. The story raises a fundamental question in the hearers. Can a deed be termed a “good action” if it is done with evil intentions? To this extent, the Pardoner’s tale is like the Miller’s. Can a tale be a moral tale if it is told by someone who is filled with selfishness and who is morally reprobate? Chaucer is sensitive to the role of the reader / hearer in the interpretation and evaluation of texts. But the Pardoner’s tale still makes us wonder whether a story teller must accept the sentence of the story he tells.

The Pardoner seems to live a life at odds with the sentence of his story, but those who heard his story would nonetheless have been comfortable with the sentence that greed can only lead to destruction. On the other hand, the Wife of Bath seems to live a personal life that is well matched with the sentence of her tale. And yet, the pilgrims who listen to her tale might have been very uncomfortable with the sentence that women want to rule over their husbands and get things to happen as they wish. The Wife of Bath’s story asks “what do women want?” This is a question that has not only a great deal of solas, but it makes us ready to receive a significant teaching in sentence. Her tale may be called a literary confession but not because the wife is apologizing for her own behavior, rather she is explaining or justifying it through the tale itself. Unlike the Pardoner, whose tale suggests that he will be judged for his greed, the Wife’s tale offers a sentence that is compatible with her life, even if it would play into the hands of those in her culture who are misogynists by supporting the criticism and suspicion of women. The solas of the Wife’s

3 There are three Middle English analogues to the Wife of Bath’s Tale: Gower’s Tale of Knight Florent, The Weddyncge of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell, and The marriage of Sir Gawain. See Meredith Cary’s “Sovereignty and Old Wife,” for a comparison between the Wife’s tale and its English analogues.

4 Patricia Magee (1971) argues that the Wife of Bath is not a radical feminist who wants to dominate men, but that she is a woman who wants to be dominated and dependent on a man. She thinks that there is a difference between what a woman “thinks” she wants and what she “really” wants.
personal character lies in her bold pursuit of power over men through her marriages to five husbands.

The *solas* of the Wife’s Tale shows at the very beginning when the story puts at the center of the tale an Arthurian knight who must go on a quest to answer a great question in order to live. The question is “what do women want?” However, there is an enticing *sentence* in this tale as well. The Wife of Bath is trying to teach everyone that contrary to the fact that her culture portrays women as required to be obedient and subservient, actually women really want to rule over their husbands and get things to happen as they want them, not as the men do. The tale is a blend of *sentence* and *solas*. In the tale, the knight rapes a virgin in the woods, expressing the basest kind of masculine authority over the feminine. The knight is condemned to death, but the king, in honor of the ladies and the queen’s pleas, allows the ladies to judge him. Here the reader experiences *solas* in the reversal of the knight’s position. The knight must answer the question of what women most desire. He receives the answer from an old and remarkably ugly woman who requires that he pledge to do whatever she asks of him, thereby granting her what every woman wants. Returning with the answer that women most desire to have sovereignty over their husbands, his life is spared.4

The Wife of Bath’s tale is a brief Arthurian romance in which Chaucer uses the entertaining *solas* of the “loathly lady,” which was first a theme in John Gower’s *Tale of Florent*.5 The twist that Chaucer gives to this story is that the loathly lady does not transform automatically as in Gower’s story, but she controls the transformation herself. It is a result of her will. The woman offers the knight the choice that he can have her old, ugly and faithful; or young, beautiful, and possibly unchaste, he says

> My lady and my love, and wife so dear,  
you yourself choose which may be most pleasurable  
and most honorable to you and to me also.  
I don’t care which of the two I get;  
for whatever pleases you suffices for me (Chaucer 1982, 374-79)

This move both enhances the *solas* of the tale and allows Chaucer to reinforce the tale’s principal *sentence*. We find the transformation of the knight remarkable and interesting, and we also see the basic teaching of the tale come into view. It is as a reward for the knight’s granting her sovereignty that the old hag *chooses* to change into a beautiful maiden. The *sentence* emerges from the *solas* of the tale: giving the woman authority results in her being tenderly loving and beautiful and the two living a happy life together. “Kiss me,” said she, “...for I swear I will
be both these things to you; that is to say, both fair indeed and good” (383-85).

As we have seen, whether from his account describing the tale tellers themselves or the tales told, Chaucer has taken seriously the criteria of *sentence* and *solas*. He weaves *sentence* and *solas* into the crafting of both the tales and the characterizations of the story tellers. However, this concept for constructing literature is not just Chaucer’s patent. It is also evident in the literature of other cultures as well, such as in the Chinese drama, *The Peony Pavilion*.

**Sentence and Solas in *The Peony Pavilion***

*The Peony Pavilion*, also translated as *The Return of the Soul*, is called *Mudan Ting* in Chinese, and it was written in 1598 by the famous Chinese dramatist Tang Xianzu of the Ming Dynasty. *The Peony Pavilion* was Tang Xianzu’s third play. He also wrote *The Handan Tale* (*Handanji*) and the *Tale of the Southern Bough* (*Nankeji*) both based on old Daoist stories and each representing his desire to reconcile the claims of Confucian ideals, human feelings and emotions, and the values of Daoism and Buddhism. Written in a beautifully poetic style, the drama revolves around the love story of Liu Mengmei, a young scholar, and Du Liniang, the daughter of a high official in southern China.

There are many layers of *solas* in this story that surface when we think within the Chinese culture. In the following, I am considering *The Peony Pavilion* as a complete work, but like Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, it contains many fascinating substories that are each filled with *solas* and *sentence*. For example, there is the extraordinary history of love narrated by the judge of hell in Scene 23 through the medium of puns on the names of thirty-eight different kinds of flowers, the choice of teacher Chen as Du Liniang’s tutor in Scene 5, and the treatment of the ridiculous barbarian Li Quan in Scene 47. However, according to the major plot narrative, the young Liniang is the only daughter of a wealthy official. In her culture, she should marry only whomever her parents choose in accordance with the traditional Chinese viewpoint. Whether or not she loves the chosen man, while not irrelevant, is certainly not determinative. When she falls in love with a man unknown to her parents, we are immediately in suspense over whether she will come to possess him, and if so, how. Her love for him contradicts social norms and we are interested in what might happen. Then, we watch as Liniang pines away for her lover and dies of lovesickness and we feel some despair and hopelessness, believing that
her desire to have Mengmei is defeated. But just as the story seems to end tragically, the scene is shifted to the world beyond, into the Daoist hells. Tang throws us into the realm of the supernatural. Again, the suspense builds. We do not know what to expect her fate to be in the hells. But then, it is the lord of hell who makes it possible for her to return in search of her love.

Judge: Let me see the Register of Marriages. Here it is. Here is a Liu Mengmei, Prize Candidate in the next examinations. Wife, Bridal Du, loved in the shades, later formally wedded in the world of light. Rendezvous, the Red Apricot Convent. Not to be divulged. There is a person here with whom you share a marriage affinity. On this account I shall release you now from this City of the Wrongfully Dead, so that you may wander windborne in search of this man. (Tang 2002, 133)

Shockingly and dramatically, three years after her death, Liniang comes back to life. She secretly marries the man for whom she has been pining. When finally the couple catches up to Liniang’s father in order to validate their marriage and unite the family, Liniang’s father is adamant in his rejection of them both. He thinks a trick is being played on him and the woman claiming to be his resurrected daughter is actually a ghost. Only when Tutor Chen proves that Liniang casts a shadow, leaves footprints, and reflects an image in a mirror are we certain that she is restored as a real woman. The tests are entertaining and keep us waiting to see whether her father will accept their result. Throughout the entire drama, Tang grasps the audience’s interest by creating solas through suspense, contradiction of social norms, and supernatural forces. Chaucer piques our interest with The Miller’s Tale of crafty plots of adultery and love: the obedient Griselde who proves her loyalty, three rogues who discover buried treasure, and a knight whose life and death quest is a search for an answer he seemingly cannot understand. Similarly, Tang uses the solas of a young girl that must pass through hell itself to unite with her lover.

While The Peony Pavilion creates great solas, it is also filled with sentence. There is much that is instructive about Liniang’s nobility as a dutiful Confucian filial daughter, even though she is ultimately able to possess the man who loves her, and whom she loves. Tang wants to be sure that we fully grasp how firmly she is set in the context of filiality. Her mother says Liniang has no need “for all of Confucius” but that she “…must gain some knowledge of the Duke of Zhou’s Book of

5 In Gower’s narrative the loathly lady story is about a woman who was magically transformed into an ugly shape, but who can be restored to her former state by some
This book sets the doctrine for appropriate female behavior in ancient China. When Liniang’s father interviews Tutor Chen for the purpose of employing him as Liniang’s tutor, he tells Chen, “She has memorized the Four Books and *The Four Books for Ladies*” (54). These books embody the right practice for the daughter of wealthy families in the Ming period. Liniang’s mother makes it clear to her what a woman should be:

> For a girl it is proper to sit in her chamber,
> Busy fingers embroidering flowers.
> And how goes her work by window’s light?
> As the spring day lengthens
> She adds a row of stitches:
> Then, if idle hours prove hard to fill,
> She may suitably turn to books and lute. (54)

Her mother’s instruction parallels that of Tutor Chen: “As the *Rites* prescribe, ‘it is proper for a daughter at first cockcrow to wash her hands, to rinse her mouth, to dress her hair, to pin the same, to pay respects to father and mother’” (24). Liniang’s mother, fearing her daughter’s death is imminent, praises her daughter and reinforces the sentence that she was filial, as a good daughter ought to be.

> Oh, my own daughter, day by day
> a hundred times you would pass before me
> and never once did I see irreverent levity in your yes.
> She had studied by heart Ban Zhao’s “Four Precepts” from end to end;…. (106)

But no other passage conveys Liniang’s deep commitment to Confucian filiality than her tender remarks to her mother just before her death.

> Bridal: Mother I make obeisance to express my gratitude (*Stumbles to her knees in prostration*)
> From my first years you have prized me
> as your “thousand gold pieces”
> but I, unfilial,
> cannot serve you to the end of your days.” (100)

In all of this, Tang is affirming that Liniang is making an effort to conform to the social norm of filiality, even if she wants to marry for love. He is not recommending that a girl in love should go against her filial duties. Rather, he is offering the *sentence* that filiality is appropriate toward parents and expected by the society.

> Even after her reunion with her love and her own revival from the
dead, Liniang tells Mengmei what is the acceptable way they should follow to be married: “Sir, I must remind you of the worlds of Mencius, that a young couple must ‘await the orders of the parent and the arrangements of the go-betweens.…A ghost may be deluded by passion; a woman must pay full attention to the rites” (207). It can be seen that Liniang is deeply influenced by Confucian teachings for women, even if she does go against the teachings by pursuing her own love. In her own person she brings together both a loyalty and devotion to the teachings of Confucius, but she is emblematic of the new woman of the Ming period in a Confucian dominated society. Just as the Wife of Bath was created by Chaucer as a woman who went against social conventions, Liniang must find her own way through the expectations placed on her.

Although Liniang falls in love without her parents’ permission, confessing this even to the judge of hell, Tang uses the Chinese idea of “marriage affinity” (yin yuan 姻緣) as a literary device of explicit sentence. He teaches the audience that heaven (tian 天) has nevertheless brought the couple together and they are destined for each other. One reading of this design is that Tang is telling the audience that when a woman pursues love, it may be the result of the will of heaven (tianming 天命), and identified as yin yuan. In a powerful scene having both sentence and solas Tang has Judge Hu consult the marriage books where he finds Liniang listed in the “Register of Heartbreaks” and both she and Mengmei are included in the “Register of Marriages,” confirming the teaching Tang wants to transmit to his culture. Just because women want to marry for love, this should not be always rejected. Sometimes the pursuit of love is necessary to the realization of the will of heaven.

According to Tina Lu, *The Peony Pavilion* creates an important new sentence in Chinese literature by developing the character of a female protagonist in such a manner as to promote an appreciation for her sentiment, passion and love (qing 情) in the male-female relationship (43). In *The Peony Pavilion* Liniang is highly educated, sensuous yet respectable, and a strong willed young woman. She dies from pining specific action. In this sense, Gower’s use of the theme resembles the more widely known “princess kissing the frog who then turns into a prince” motif.

6 Liniang’s mother’s reference here is to Ban Zhao’s work known as the *Lessons for Women* (女誨).

7 Texts from this period such as the *Classic for Girls* (*Nuerjing* 女兒經) and the *Book of Filial Piety for Women* (*Nuxiaojing* 女孝經) still defined the roles of women up to the period of Tang Xianzu’s writing. See Wang 2003.

8 For example, Liniang’s father, Tutor Chen, and Liu Mengmei each introduces himself when they first appear on the stage. See Pan Zhiheng.

9 *Hundred Surnames* was a rhymed explanation of many famous surnames in China. *The Thousand Character Text* is written in rhymed quadrasyllables that uses 1,000
away and seeking a desired lover whom she first conceived of in a dream. This type of conduct was not previously regarded as appropriate behavior for a Chinese woman during this period. The Confucian text that instructed girls on proper behavior, the *Classic for Girls* (*Nuerjing*) still shaped the perception of women in the culture at the time of *The Peony Pavilion*’s writing. But Tang’s writing turns Liniang into an exemplary figure who symbolizes for most subsequent writers in the late Ming and early Qing periods the legitimacy of a woman’s unswerving pursuit of love and passion (*qing*), and of her standing up to her father in order to possess her love. Against her father’s doubts and cynicism, she responds leaving little doubt about the importance of her lover’s affection compared to her father’s demands: “No more of this! Father, your daughter stands living here before you and you refuse to acknowledge her, yet Liu Mengmei took me in marriage though three years a ghost!” (311). She becomes an alter ego for her female audience because she makes it acceptable for women to feel romantic passion, and to seek it outside of the constrictions of filial obedience. In this way, *The Peony Pavilion* as a literary work performed an important cultural function in the early Qing. In his skillful use of the *solas* of *yin yuan* and Liniang’s visit to the hells, Tang provides his audience with the sentence that such an apparently new social relation as a woman marrying for love may actually have behind it the deeply mysterious will of heaven (Swatek 2002, 43).

Although a central purpose of Tang in writing *The Peony Pavilion* is to address the way in which love can be and was pursued in his culture, the play is not exclusively serious in its use of *sentence* and *solas*. There is more in the text than a couple dying of lovesickness, a resurrected young girl, a visit to the hells, and the suspense of winning Liniang’s father’s recognition. In Chapter Seventeen, Tang’s introduces Shi Daogu, whose role in the play is a blend of *sentence* and *solas*. Through her story, Tang shows that he can create *solas* by the use of humor as well.

The *solas* of Shi Daogu’s story gets expressed through her self introduction. Tang uses the typical *chuanqi* dramatic form to have her announce herself to the audience using the first person. Tang has her make use of ludicrously misapplied lines from the books *Hundred Surnames* and *The Thousand Character Text* in tracing her ancestry. He means for us to enjoy her autobiography and find it outrageous, funny, crude, and bawdy. Although a ritual specialist, Shi Daogu is not some holy nun defined by living a pure life. She is well acquainted with the earthiness of life. Instead of the erudite and sophisticated explanations of the origin of surnames as found in the books she so hilariously
misquotes, Shi Daogu tells a story about the origin of her surname, worthy of the Miller’s Tale or that of The Wife of Bath. Her name “Stone” came to her because she has an obstruction “right at the fork” between her legs (80-81). After becoming tired of living with her mom and waiting on her nephews and nieces, she is provided with a suitable bridegroom by a go-between “with a flexible tongue” (81). Shi Daogu is looking for a marriage, even if she knows that what her future husband will find in their most intimate moments. After the wedding came the honeymoon night

Night comes on and the groom gets itchy.
He babbles away
the phoenix warbled overhead
and then he gets frisky…(82-83)

Instead of the honeymoon night being delightful excitement for the groom, it turns into bitter disappointment. So, Tang’s introduction of Shi Daogu shows a similar interest in bawdy humor that can be associated with Chaucer’s character of the Wife of Bath.

When her life as a bride does not work out, Shi Daogu chooses another path in life. She gets a convent, hangs up portraits of the guardian gods, and starts pacing the Dipper. Tang employs a female daogu to teach his audience the sentence that a woman can be of value even when not conforming to the social norms of the Confucian system such as marriage. As the master of her temple she manages money, makes decisions, travels as she wants, and is called upon by those in need. She becomes an image of an independent woman who is not restrained by the rules for female behavior.

Conclusion

The Peony Pavilion, like The Canterbury Tales, also contains sentence and solas and various levels of its meaning and significance may be drawn to the surface by the reader who judges the work by means of these criteria. In The Canterbury Tales, Chaucer sets forward a literary standard when he lays down the challenge that each tale must have the best sentence and most solas. I have demonstrated that not only his own work, but also The Peony Pavilion in the Chinese tradition will reward the reader who seeks both the sentence and solas of the text. Evaluating both the writer’s craft and the intended meaning of the work by these criteria has value not just for pilgrims competing for a free dinner, but for the audience in a Chinese theater as well.

Both Chaucer and Tang use solas to carry the sentence they want to convey. They use solas to prompt the reader to think, to question, and
to draw conclusions. The fascinating story of the Wife of Bath not only
draws us in and baits our curiosity about “what women most want,” but
it also forces us to think about other truths that are less directly stated.
For example, what sort of ideal image for a woman can be held in a
culture in which a man may rape his own wife? Even the pilgrims telling
the tales more often present indirect rather than clearly stated sentence.
Likewise, although Tang often makes his sentence clear, as when he wants
to present Liniang as a good Confucian filial daughter, he nevertheless
does so in a manner that entertains and intrigues the reader. His solas
also carries the more indirect sentence that women should be able to
pursue their own love, and it will not wreck the country to allow it. Such
love may be within heaven’s intention.

The writers whose works have the best sentence and most solas
possess the foundation stones necessary for ensuring the success of their
literary work. Without solas, sentence would be only bland doctrine and
argument. Without sentence, solas would be only empty entertainment
and emotion. Only by means of the skillful combination of sentence
and solas can ideal literature be produced. These guidelines for literature
were not only maintained throughout the Medieval or the Renaissance
period, but they are also sought by contemporary writers as well. Indeed,
this dual function for literature is its most permanent and universal
cross-cultural truth. We have seen that the presence of sentence and solas
in The Peony Pavilion contributes to making it a masterpiece of Chinese
literature. It is apparent that Chaucer’s literary standard is translatable
into the appreciation of The Peony Pavilion. Although these concepts
were developed by Chaucer in the Western literary world, Tang crafted
his work in the context of Chinese culture in the ways which I have
shown to be obviously consistent with Chaucer’s standards.

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Sacred Earth: Daoism as a Preserver of Environment in Chinese Landscape Painting From the Song Through the Qing Dynasties

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Abstract

Like the Chinese garden, landscape painting can be understood as the artist’s interpretation of a microcosmic view of the macrocosm of the universe. The Chinese term for landscape painting (shanshui hua), “mountains and water,” implies the ancient Daoist balance between Yin and Yang, complementary forces generated by the cosmic Dao. Landscape painters from the Tang Dynasty onward have created this balance in their paintings. The Daoist beliefs in the sacredness of the Earth pervade and dominate the ways in which pictorial compositions are created, the ways in which mankind is represented in the landscape, and the ways in which nature is presented to and experienced by the viewer. This paper demonstrates how Chinese landscape painting expresses the reality of man’s role in the transformation and change of the macrocosmic universe.

“The ways of men are conditioned by those of earth,
The ways of earth are conditioned by those of Heaven,
The ways of Heaven by those of the Tao,
And the ways of Tao by nature.”
Laozi, Daodejing, Chapter 25

As early as the Han Dynasty, a canon of Religious Daoism called The Scripture of Great Peace (Taipingjing) taught “a profound respect for the Earth as a living body.”¹ This concept of the Earth as a sacred body

¹ The scripture was believed to have been transmitted by an Immortal, and appeared miraculously at the time when a mass movement toward the search for the Queen Mother of the West took place in the year 3 BC, during a reaction against the institution of state Confucianism by the Emperor Wu. The Taipingjing included a description of the world “where all would be equal, and recommended itself to the government.” See
has been given expression by Chinese artists in hundreds of landscape paintings, many inspired by the themes of the sacred mountain, the representation of the Daoist paradise, and the dynamic movement of the vital energy, *Qi*, which defines the form and transformation of all nature. This paper will focus on these themes as they were expressed over the centuries in Chinese landscape painting.

Like the Chinese garden, landscape painting can be understood as the artist’s interpretation of a microcosmic view of the macrocosm of the universe. The Chinese term for landscape painting, *shanshui hua*, “mountains and water,” implies the ancient Daoist balance between Yin and Yang, complementary forces generated by the cosmic Dao. The vital energy or life force, *Qi*, creates patterns of movement and transformation that maintain balance in the universe: winter and summer, night and day, high and low, male and female. Landscape painters from the Tang Dynasty onward have created this balance in their paintings, and the concept is expressed in the earliest treatise on Chinese painting (the first of Xie He’s Six Principles, *Qi yun shengdong*, or “animation through spirit consonance”). The *Qi*, or spirit, sums up the presence of the Dao in a landscape painting.

The sacred mountain, worship of which can be traced back as far as the Shang Dynasty, is invariably part of the landscape painter’s composition. This formation of mountains, either distant or looming near the picture plane “forms the pivot connecting human and scared realms” and was seen by Daoists as the place where the primordial energy, *Qi*, was strong and refined, alive and breathing. Early examples of the power of this spirit can be seen in the bronze sacred mountain incense burners of the Han Dynasty; the smoke from the incense escaping from the openings symbolized the *Qi*, and the presence of the living Daoist immortals who dwell within the sacred mountain, the
celestial paradise (Figure 1).⁵ A twelfth-century silk tapestry illustrates this idea literally, showing a vision of paradise inhabited by immortals and decorated lavishly with peach trees and cranes, Daoist symbols of immortality (Figure 2).⁶ A fourteenth-century handscroll by Chen Ruyan titled *Mountains of the Immortals* also shows the paradise from the Daoist’s viewpoint: a range of blue and green mountains suggest the Tang Dynasty courtly style, but the azurite blue and malachite green are also elements that were used in the preparation of magic elixirs that were believed to give the human body control over yin and yang, and in the end enabled the adept to achieve a state of transcendence over reality, and ultimately, immortality. Therefore, the presence of the blue and green colors strongly suggests the desire for immortality, or the Daoist paradise itself. In the painting a red temple is nestled in the peaks in the upper right corner, and immortal beings walk in the landscape or dance with cranes (Figure 3).⁷

Other examples are Puguang’s *Isles of the Blessed* (Yuan Dynasty), depicting the mountains in a long handscroll floating on the waves of a turbulent sea, and Wang Yun’s *The Fanghu Isle of the Immortals*, dated 1699, which shows the sacred mountain on an island, which was described in a Daoist text as early as 400 BC (the *Liezi*): “The towers and terraces upon [the mountain] are all gold and jade, the beasts and birds are all unsullied white: trees of pearl and garnet always grow densely ... the men who dwell there are all of the race of Immortal Sages” (Figure 4).⁸

Sacred mountains were also sites where one could find cavern-heavens (*dongtian*), or grottoes deep in the earth that functioned as “boundaries of the spirit world and gateways to Paradise.”⁹ Caverns or grottoes are

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⁸ For Puguang (active 1286–1309) Isles of the Blessed, see *Taoism and the Arts of China*, catalogue 145 and pp. 370–371; Wang Yun (1652–1735), *The Fanghu Isle of the Immortals*, is illustrated in catalogue 149, p. 377. The Liezi was “designated a Taoist classic in the eighth century.”

⁹ *Taoism and the Arts of China*, p. 17.
sometimes designated as such literally in landscape paintings, such as Daijin’s *Seeking the Tao in a Cavern-Heaven*, painted during the Ming Dynasty, where we see the scholar in a rocky landscape entering the cave, which leads into the mist of the distant mountains (Figure 5).\(^{10}\)

Cave entrances may be present more subtly in mountain landscapes depicting men contemplating the beauty of nature, suggesting the quest of the scholar for immortality. A later example is Daoji’s handscroll titled *Outing to Zhanggong Cave*, where the artist’s use of blue and green colors quietly suggests the Daoist paradise (Figure 6).\(^{11}\)

Compositions of rocks in Chinese gardens, or painted representations of gardens, often display cavern-like holes eroded by water, which are also highly suggestive of the grottoes leading to the Daoist paradise. An example is a detail from Yuan Jiang’s handscroll, *The Gazing Garden*, a handscroll created during the Qing Dynasty, showing a wall built into the natural rock eroded with holes, one of which forms a cave-like entrance into a grotto, through which a path leads the eye of the viewer toward the small pavilion on the other side of the wall. A man-made door in the wall is a visual complement to the grotto entrance (Figure 7).

Water as the complement to the mountain expresses the low level, or the moving *Yin* principle. Where a high waterfall cascades down a mountainside, the inherent energy and life of the mountain is expressed; where a river flows beneath the mountain transformation and movement (*the Qi*) is present, essential for the balance in nature. It is difficult to find a Chinese landscape painting that does not contain the juxtaposition of mountains and water: two examples are Shen Zhou’s famous hanging scroll *Lofty Mount Lu*, dated 1467; and Kuncan’s *Lofty Mountains, Endless Streams*, dated 1660 (Figures 8 and 9).\(^{12}\) In Kuncan’s painting the scholars in their pavilion contemplate the vital energy of the mountain that visibly swirls around their retreat in the form of mist and clouds. Here the landscape is a symbol of the transforming cosmic process, and simultaneously represents a seeking of the inner spirit, or “inner alchemy” of the human body. The scholars are aware that what appears solid in nature is actually in flux—that generated by the flow

\(^{10}\) “The Sacred Landscape” in *Taoism and the Arts of China*, catalogue 148, a hanging scroll in the Palace Museum, Beijing. See also *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art*, p. 111.

\(^{11}\) *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art*, catalogue 60, a handscroll in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

of Qi through the earth. This idea is also deeply at the heart of the discipline of Feng-shui, or geomancy, to be discussed below.

The role of man in nature is always expressed in landscape painting as gentle and accepting; above all, that of belonging. From the viewpoint of the religious Daoist, the human body (as well as the ritual altar) is visualized as a mountain. The “inner alchemy” of the body is related to deities in the Daoist heaven; the structure of the human body “thus mirrors the universal order inherent in the Dao.” Therefore the relationship between man and nature is strengthened by a system of divine correspondence between the microcosm of man and the macrocosm of the universe. This fundamental belief in religious Daoism is often reflected in the way human beings are represented by the artist in the landscape. Most often, even when painting an intimate scene, the Chinese artist finds a way to suggest “that man and nature should meet on equal terms.” The activities of humans in landscape paintings, however tiny or large they may be in scale, are those that seem to direct the viewer’s attention to the surrounding nature, rather than to the quiet presence of human kind. Scholar’s activities, such as playing chess, writing poetry, or listening to music, are always visible within open pavilions, suggesting the harmonious relationship between man and nature. Figures climbing mountain paths, laden with bundles, suggest their “intimacy with mountains” so praised by Fan Kuan as early as the tenth century. Man in these Daoist inspired landscapes does not see danger in the most awesome precipice, but rather the acceptance and tranquility of his spiritual home. Thus we see in paintings how scholars sit comfortably in their small houses at the edge of towering cliffs, or climb indefatigably up treacherous paths between gigantic rocks, yet always seem to belong there. A Qing Dynasty example is Daoji’s album leaf titled Landscape, or Man in a House Beneath a Cliff (Figure 10).

Architecture in landscape painting also invariably follows the principles of Daoism. Never do the buildings show unusual structural or engineering feats, which would suggest man’s conquest of nature, nor does the painter show ruins or wrecks, which would suggest “nature’s domination over man.” The placement of the dwellings of humankind rather suggests man’s experience of and his intimacy with nature, as well

13 See Taoism and the Arts of China, pp. 17–18. The roots of “inner alchemy” can be traced as far back as the fourth century, when a text titled Scripture of the Yellow Court (Huangting jing) was transcribed by the famous calligrapher Wan Xizhi (307–365 AD).

as his wish to dwell within it. Pavilions in the mountains, especially in the middle and distant views, are strongly suggestive of the habitations of the Daoist immortals among the sacred peaks, examples of which we have discussed above, or may even depict actual Daoist temples built throughout the centuries on sacred mountain sites. An example can be seen in the hanging scroll by Lu Guang, dated 1369, titled *Spring Dawn at Cinnabar Terrace*, a sacred spot identified as Mount Mao Shan near Nanjing (Figure 11). Mount Mao was an ancient Daoist center and is here symbolically represented by the artist as a manifestation of his own practice of “inner alchemy.” An outdoor Daoist altar is depicted on a cliff at the top of the mountain.

Small pavilions in the landscape are viewing places for natural surroundings in all seasons, and represent the acceptance of humankind within the cosmic cycle of nature—a key Daoist principle—but the thatched cottage or hut, simple and open to the air, is more specifically the scholar’s pavilion, which is frequently found in landscape painting beginning with the Yuan Dynasty when scholar-officials and artists fled from foreign rule and the destruction of all they loved in their culture. Eventually the scholar’s pavilion in the mountains, often depicted solitary and empty, became synonymous with the ideals of hermitage and retreat and suggested all the poignant nostalgia for the past, lost to the literati under foreign rule. Yuan artist Ni Zan became famous for his lightly painted landscapes with empty thatched roofed huts; one example is called *Empty Pavilion in a Pine Grove*, which presents “a world detached from the social turmoil that shook China in the fourteenth century.” Called “The Noble Recluse,” Ni Zan was a devoted Daoist, and the title of his painting refers to the symbolism of his abandoned home; he creates a composition simple but deeply moving: trees by the shore of the lake and mountains in the distance emphasize the harmony of nature, and the small pavilion under the pine tree nestles there as if for comfort. Ni Zan makes the whole a symbol of himself and his world, which has become inseparable from Nature (Figure 12).

The placement of pavilions, temples and scholar’s huts in landscape painting is carried out with reverent respect for nature. Where buildings


16 *Taoism and the Arts of China*, p. 365, catalogue 142. The work is a hanging scroll, ink on paper, in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

are present in a landscape composition, the requirements of Daoist spiritual influence are always met by the embracing placement of rocks, water and trees, which are never disturbed by the presence of man. Pavilions are nurtured within the arms of the mountain, or perch on the edges of rivers and lakes. Walls meander around rocks and trees, paths and fences follow the shapes of mountain forms or riverbeds, ancient pines lean over courtyard walls. Nowhere in landscape painting does one see evidence of nature altered or disturbed. Wen Boren’s *Spring Dawn at the Elixir Terrace* (Ming Dynasty; Figure 13), for example, shows a Daoist adept, standing alone on a cliff surrounded by clouds, watching a crucible that is refining an elixir. Behind him in the rugged landscape is a path along the edge of a river, which is carefully bordered by a balustrade that follows precisely all the jagged edges of the riverbank, making no alterations in the natural landscape. Kuncan’s *Green Mountains Reach to the Sky* (Qing Dynasty, Nanjing Museum; not illustrated), shows a curving path following all the crevices of the rising mountain cliffs (also with a border of balustrade in the foreground) all the way to the pavilion on the peak, with the same natural movement of the mountain that we see in the flow of the waterfall to the left of the path.\(^\text{18}\) In both these examples, as in countless others, man dwells in nature with reverence and respect.

Even in paintings where fantasy dwellings or Daoist temples are executed in the exacting style of *jiehua* (drawing carried out with ruler and compass or other mechanical aids, which was established in Chinese painting academies as an art separate from landscape painting), the precisely drawn structures are carefully placed in the landscape according to the strict rules of geomancy (or *Feng Shui*), so that the proximity of trees, rocks and water satisfy the requirements of the spiritual relationship between building and landscape.\(^\text{19}\) In the case of the painting by Yuan Yao, *Autumn Moon Over the Dew Terrace*, dated 1721, the use of jiehua for the depiction of the Jian-Shang Palace is based on contemporary styles of palace design, even though the structure represents a fantasy vision of the Han Dynasty. Yet the highly decorative palace is balanced in the landscape by the mountains.


water, dramatic rocks, mist and night-falling dew, all shimmering in the moonlight (Figure 14). 20

Throughout Chinese history, Daoists and geomancers record that tampering with the truth of nature is inevitably disastrous. Geomancy, called *di li* or “principle of the earth” during the Ming Dynasty, is referred to in numerous writings by educated elite scholars. One such writer, Xie Zhaozhe, describes families who, fearful of defects in a burial site, “construct mountains of earth, convert fields into slopes, build hedges and walls, creating labor of ten years and expense of 10,000 strings of cash” and end by disordering the truth in “stopping up the veins of the earth, [which] not only cannot buy good fortune, but will hasten disaster.” 21 In his book, *Fruitful Sites*, Craig Clunas records that it was fear of damage to “the veins of the earth” that led the elite of Taihe county to oppose large-scale gypsum mining there in the fourteenth century, and their action finds many echoes in later Ming literature. Other instances seem to abound: concerning the gardens of Nanjing, Gu Qiyuan writes at the beginning of the seventeenth century of their rarity, which he ascribes to the Ming government’s prohibition against digging ponds, “lest they damage the vital breath (Qi) of earth in the Imperial Capital.” 22 As Clunas makes clear, the practice of geomancy penetrated numerous Ming Dynasty treatises on garden design and the actual building of gardens. A collection of seventy-one quatrains from a work titled *The Classic of Lu Ban*, has many references to the benefits and perils of different sites and layouts of land. Two verses translate as follows:

“If there is a rock resembling a reclining ox,  
The site becomes a ‘bringer of farms and fields.’  
And if there are hills all round the place  
Domestic animals will thrive well.”

“There may be a triple rock at the back of the house,  
But the granaries will be full of grain.

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20 *Taoism and the Arts of China*, catalogue 150, pp. 378–379. In the background of Yuan Yao’s hanging scroll is a tower containing a marble bowl designed to catch the “sweet dew,” a sign of Heaven’s acknowledgement of the virtuous reign of the Han Emperor Wu (140–87 BC).

21 For this portion of my paper I am indebted to Craig Clunas, whose chapter on “The Landscape of Number” in *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China*, Durham, NC, 1996) provided me with invaluable insights into the uses of geomancy and its history. For Xie Zhaozhe’s criticism, see Clunas, pp. 180–181.

Rocks behind the house mean average luck,
But if there is a pond as well, one will be completely at leisure.”

Such verses not only demonstrate a beneficial consciousness of the layout of land forms, but strongly suggest the Daoist way of avoiding any tampering with nature that we have seen exemplified in Chinese landscape paintings: in the idealized views we have discussed the purity of untouched nature pervades the themes of man and his relationship with mountains and water. But the reality of civilization world wide, demonstrates almost daily instances of the violation of sacred earth that have caused holocaust-scale disasters. In the United States alone, California’s clearing of forests for vast housing developments on the coastal mountainsides has resulted in widespread erosion, disastrous mud-slides and flooding, and the destruction of thousands of homes.

Daoism teaches us that landscape rules itself; it obeys its own laws of climate, geography and the seasons; laws of growth and decay determine the structure and relationship of its parts. The Chinese landscape painter, conscious of all these things, is an observer of nature, a lover of nature, a dweller in nature. Daoist beliefs in the sacredness of the earth pervade and dominate the ways in which the artist perceives the landscape; the ways in which nature is presented to and experienced by the viewer, and the simple result is a representation of the reality of man’s role in the transformation and change of the macroscopic universe. When the painter is successful, the viewer will enter the painting and follow the mountain path with the lonely traveler, or join the scholar in his pavilion on the mountainside and feel himself at one with nature (Figure 15). Hundreds of Chinese landscape paintings, embodying as a whole the Daoist principles of the sacredness of the earth, quietly speak vital messages to all mankind.

23 Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, pp. 185 (quatrain 67) and 188 (quatrain 64).
Figure 2. *Immortals in a Mountain Pavilion*, silk tapestry album leaf, Northern Song Dynasty (early 12th century). National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.
Figure 3. Chen Ruyan, *Mountains of the Immortals*, ink and color on silk, Yuan Dynasty (late 14th century), detail. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. A. Dean Perry (1997.95).
Figure 5. Daijin, *Seeking the Tao in a Cavern-Heaven*, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, Ming Dynasty (15th century). Palace Museum, Beijing, Republic of China.
Figure 6. Shitao (Zhu Rouji), *Outing to Master Zhang’s Grotto*, handscroll, ink and color on paper, Qing Dynasty (ca. 1700). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1913 (1982.126). Image copyright The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Figure 8. Shen Zhou, *Lofty Mount Lu*, hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, Ming Dynasty, 1467. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.
Figure 9. Kuncan, *Lofty Mountains, Endless Streams*, hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, Qing Dynasty, ca. 1660. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.
Figure 10. Daoji, *Man in a House Beneath a Cliff (or Landscape)*, album leaf, ink and color on paper, Qing Dynasty. C.C. Wang Collection, New York. Photo from *The Compelling Image*, plate 11.
Figure 13, left half. Wen Boren, *Spring Dawn at the Elixir Terrace*, handscroll, ink and color on paper, Ming Dynasty. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.
Figure 13, right half. Wen Boren, *Spring Dawn at the Elixir Terrace*, handscroll, ink and color on paper, Ming Dynasty. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.
Figure 14. Yuan Yao, *Autumn Moon Over the Dew Terrace*, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, Qing Dynasty, 1721. Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln. Inv.-No. A89.1. Photo: Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Köln.
Figure 15. Shen Zhou, *Walking with a Staff*, hanging scroll, ink on paper, Ming Dynasty, 1485. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.
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Ecology And Art: East Asian Traditions Meet West

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Abstract

Recent discussions of ecological crisis have emphasized the far-reaching consequences of environmental neglect. This paper will argue that aesthetic cosmologies in the Daoist and certain Buddhist traditions (Huayan, Zen Buddhist) as well as their respective artistic traditions can provide Christianity with helpful ecological resources. In addition, examples of contemporary environmental art in the West will be examined for their ecologically sensitive messages. The aesthetic traditions of East Asia display well the vision of nature in which every element of the universe is celebrated for its particular contribution. According to this model, humanity’s role is not to dominate nature; rather, as members of the cosmic community, humanity needs to align themselves with the rest of the universe. Since our culture is deeply visual, East Asian aesthetic traditions together with contemporary ecological art, provide an important insight how to envision environmental ethics of care.

I am for an art that is political-erotical-mystical, that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum. … I am for an art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists and extends and accumulates and spits and drips, and is heavy and coarse and blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself.¹

Recent discussions of ecological crisis have emphasized the far-reaching consequences of environmental neglect, from pollution and the decimation of various ecosystems, species extinction, and rise in health problems to injustices against the most vulnerable - the poor, women and children.² Domination of nature (naturism) is closely linked to other


systems of domination, such as the domination of poor countries in the South by the rich in the North, and the global presence of domination based on gender, race, ethnicity or class status. While many think that the environmental crisis stems from the rampant industrialization encouraged by the expectation of ever-growing profits and surplus, the role of anthropocentrism in the western Christian tradition has been widely recognized as one of the contributing factors. Recognizing the limitations of any particular religious outlook, scholars involved in interreligious initiatives acknowledge the need for uncovering the resources present within the worlds’ religions to develop ecologically sound cosmology and environmental ethics. The aim of such a dialogue is to provide a “creative revisioning of mutually enhancing human-earth relations. … [R]eligious traditions may help to supply both creative resources of symbols, rituals, and texts as well as inspiring visions for reimagining ourselves as part of, not apart from the natural world.”

A number of recent anthologies reflect this concern for an examination of ecological issues from the angle of world religions. Thus, various Christian theologians begun to engage in a dialogue with other religions to advance their own ecologically sensitive theologies. In addition to the mutually relevant resources present in other religious traditions, some theologians acknowledge the importance that art can bring to the discussion at hand. For example, a Daoist scholar, Jeffrey Meyer, calls


for the inclusion of aesthetic appreciation (of poetry, paintings and of Chinese gardens) into the educational system to invoke a respect for nature. Rosemary Radford Ruether, likewise, recognizes the significance of arts in the protest liturgies: “We can call on all the arts — song and music, dance and mime, posters and banners, costumes and puppetry — to shape the public liturgies of biospheric politics.” According to Sallie McFague, art from paintings, sculpture, and poetry to literature, dance and music gives us an opportunity to pay attention to the details and particular existences of beings other than ourselves: birds, stones, trees, etc. In what follows, I will look at the aesthetic cosmology as well as artistic traditions present in Daoism and Buddhism and suggest how these resources can further our ecological concerns. I will also consider diverse examples of contemporary environmental art involving landworks, environmental art and protest art inspired by the experience of artists coming from minorities affected by ecological injustices. I will argue that the spiritual art of Daoism and Buddhism and contemporary environmental art could assist the Christian tradition in envisioning an ecologically friendly cosmology and praxis.

**Daoist and Buddhist Cosmology**

Westerners introduced to philosophical Daoism find this philosophy intriguing partially because Daoism embraces contrasting ideas to those historically present in the western philosophical or scientific contexts. In fact, much of Daoist philosophy parallels post-modern science, philosophy and religion. The major differences between the western tradition and Chinese classical thought is summed well by the observation that “the Chinese were inclined to see life more as an art than as a science.” That is, in contrast to western manner of focusing on how general principles and norms apply to specific life situations (logical construction), the Chinese focused on the particular. The significance of

the particular is displayed by paying attention to its unique situatedness and its interrelatedness with other particulars. Roger Ames and David L. Hall call this Daoist approach respectively an “aesthetic composition” or an “aesthetic perspective.” and characterize it in the following way:

It begins with the uniqueness of the one particular as it collaborates with other particulars in an emergent complex pattern of relatedness … [I]t is not determined by preassigned principles, it is fundamentally anarchic and contingent, and as such, is the ground for optimum creativity, where creativity is to be understood in contradistinction to determination.\textsuperscript{11}

A cosmological theory which entails the denial of any privileged perspective – divine, human, material, or ideal.\textsuperscript{12}

In contrast to western preoccupation with the necessary or eternal principles and the transcendent patterns (logical order), the Daoists stressed spontaneity and rejected any preassigned pattern. Dao, is the source of all reality in the sense that it is the Becoming-Itself. Dao does not represent a totalizing Whole or One; it does not stand for a single-ordered cosmos. Instead, Dao is a form of union only when one understands that union as the sum of all possible orders; not as a Whole but a collection of all connected wholes. This is to say that all of the reality is composed of “the non-coherent sum of all orders defined from the myriad perspectives taken up by each item in the totality of things.”\textsuperscript{13}

Any specific order construed by one element of the world reflects its own perspective and its own unique interaction with other particulars in its environment. But the totality of unique particular existences and perspectives never add up to a single-ordered cosmos.

This is why David Hall ventures to say that Daoism denies any privileged perspective and leaves no grounds for asserting an anthropocentric attitude towards the rest of reality. A seminal Daoist philosopher, Zhuangzi, devalues the privileging of any specific perspective in a story that deals with the arbitrariness of our concept of beauty: “Maojiang and Lady Li were beauties for human beings, but fish upon seeing them would seek the deeps, birds on seeing them would fly high, and deer upon seeing them would dash off. Which of these four

\textsuperscript{11} Ames, “Putting the \textit{Te} Back into Taoism,” 117.
understands what is really handsome in this world!”

In Daoist view, diverse particulars develop a full plethora of perspectives that arise from their individual contexts. As a result, neither humans nor any other part of reality can presume the absolute insight about the world around us. Daoism leaves no space for a utilitarian approach towards the other aspects of reality, but instead celebrates and values all things. Valuing the “others” is an intricate aspect of Chinese philosophy that underscores the interdependence of all beings. Ames employs the metaphor of making a stew to express the correlationality of all particulars. Just as each ingredient in a stew expresses its full flavor when it is interacting with all other ingredients, so in the Daoist perspective does each member reach its full potential. That is, each individual being maximizes its own creative possibilities only when engaged in an appropriate creative response to other particulars.

The aesthetic order present in Chinese Daoist philosophy is also expressed in Huayan school of Buddhism that developed in China in the seventh century. The jewel net of Indra became a powerful image that exhibits the interdependence of all beings. In each “eye” of the net there is a glittering jewel and since the net spreads infinitely in all directions, the jewels are infinite in number. Close inspection of the singular jewel will discover that “in its polished surface there are reflected all the other jewels in the net, infinite in number. Not only that, but each of the jewels reflected in this one jewel is also reflecting all the other jewels, so that there is an infinite reflecting process occurring.”

This sight visualizes a profound Buddhist perception about the nature of reality — the fact that all members of the universe are interrelated in infinite number of ways. They are interdependent in the sense that all

14 Zhuangzi 6/2/69


beings are involved in the dynamic process of repeated and continuous mutual interactions and interconnections. As all models, this one too has a limitation of possibly suggesting that the universe is static. But the Huayan cosmos is impermanent and ever-changing; the particulars are not statically interdependent but instead are in the process of ongoing interdependent co-arising.18

As in Daoist cosmology, Buddhist cosmology such as Chinese Huayan and the Japanese Zen Buddhism of Kūkai and Dōgen offers an aesthetic understanding of the universe in which there is no teleology, no center, and no hierarchy.19 Instead of traditional Christian celebration of human uniqueness, Daoism and Buddhism affirm the uniqueness of all elements of the universe. Instead of western fixation on human control of the universe, the eastern philosophers perceive a profound interdependence between all members of reality. Instead of seeing the whole universe as molded to satisfy human concerns, the universe is perceived as independent and indifferent to human concerns. Specific order of the universe results from the totality of all interactions and is not governed by the singular needs of humanity. Instead of Christian affirmation that reality reflects the divinely assigned order, the Chinese and Japanese philosophers reject preassigned patterns and affirm creative and spontaneous processes emerging out of countless influences. By celebrating particularity and creative movement, Daoism and Buddhism see nature as a work of art in which “rightness’ is defined by the comprehension of particular details that constitute it as a work of art.”20

Within this model, a proper human response in any given situation is to creatively align oneself with the unfolding order of the reality. This spontaneous response is to arise out of an assessment from within the temporality of one’s specific experience. Transcendent rules cannot be appealed to because spontaneous response needs to recognize one’s place within one’s changing environment at any given time. Spontaneous order of the particulars in Daoism resembles the work of art in that just as each work of art is a unique and spontaneous creation relying on

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20 Ingram, 81; Ames, Putting the Te Back into Taoism,”117.
specific details chosen by the artist, so is the act of the particular in the aesthetic order. Nature, just as work of art, should be appreciated for what it is – “a marvelous fact which can be understood only in terms of its own inner dynamism.”21 As such, nature should never serve as the background for human dominating presence.

At the same time that Daoism and Buddhism appreciate the particular, both of them are holistic accounts of reality. Thus, in Daoism, one speaks about de or the local, the particular, one also speaks about dao or whole which stands for unity, oneness, similarity.22 Likewise, Buddhism asserts the non-duality and continuity of all nature, a “common field of reality,” a “single continuum or relational matrix.”23 Many ecofeminist thinkers strongly oppose this holistic concept of nature by pointing out a number of harmful consequences of that view. Val Plumwood argues that removing boundaries between self and nature comes from confusing dualism and atomism. She thinks that in their desire to get rid of atomism, holistic thinkers erroneously pronounce indistinguishability as the only solution to the egoistic accounts of the self. The problem of such a position comes from not being able to distinguish oneself from others: “If I see myself as ‘indistinct’ from you … then I cannot preserve a real sense of your well-being as opposed to mine.”24 Another critic states that in a holistic account “the claims of the constitutive parts are invalidated: that is, the ‘right’ to ‘live and blossom’ no longer counts – what counts is the well-being of the whole.”25 Furthermore, holistic attempt to empathize with the other beings by identifying with them leads to the very opposite of what is intended, i.e. to expanded egoism or self-aggrandizement consistent with male concept of ego.26 Finally, holism leads to “the devaluation of an identity tied to particular parts of the natural world as opposed to an abstractly conceived whole, the

21 Ingram, 79.
22 Ames, “Putting the Te Back into Taoism,” 129.
26 Cheney, 125; Plumwood, 166.
cosmos.”27 While most of these criticisms refer to deep ecology, they are also relevant to any holistic accounts. Critics of holistic models suggest following a “self-in-relationship” model which “clearly recognizes the distinctness of nature but also our relationship and continuity with it.”28

While the criticisms listed above might be applicable to some forms of holism, it is important to examine whether these criticisms apply to all forms of holism. Does the notion of “the whole” necessarily lead to absorption of the particulars and further isolation from nature? Our initial discussion of philosophical Daoism and certain kinds of Buddhism seems to suggest otherwise. Although these accounts recognize the whole, they do not do so at the expense of the parts. David Landis Barnhill addresses this aptly in the Huayan context:

First, there is an emphasis on experiencing reality as a whole and not just a collection of parts, however interrelated. … Second, the whole is not some transcendent realm but is concrete and ever-changing; the absolute is nothing other than phenomenal world. Third, the whole is not separable from, prior to, or more important than the parts. Each part is not only necessary for the whole to exist, it is the whole. … Fourth, despite the holism involved, each part remains distinct. Fifth, while Huayan presents a holistic view of reality, relationships are accentuated: the whole is single field of differentiated integration.29

According to this model of “relational holism” there is a full value given to the integrating whole and the concreteness of the parts with their ever-unfolding relationships with each other. The oneness in this model involves radical relationality. But Barnhill’s statement that each part is the whole smacks precisely of the kind of undifferentiated whole strongly criticized by ecofeminists. Here we have to understand that Barnhill’s “identification” of one and the whole is motivated by Huayan deep appreciation of each individual phenomenon: “each phenomenon takes on an unqualified value: on it depends the entire universe: indeed it is the universe as a whole and all other phenomena.”30 In other words, the whole universe would be a different kind of universe, were it not for the presence of this specific member of the universe. Since every element of

29 Barnhill, 91-92.
30 Barnhill, 89.
the reality interpenetrates all the rest and is, in turn, interpenetrated by everything else, one can proclaim that this element is everything else. This element is everything else in the sense of its contribution to this specific state of being in the universe. In a similar manner, one’s identification or sympathy with another element of the universe (or the whole) does not need to imply indistinguishability but rather recognition of the rich relationality of that element (or mutual relationality of all parts).

But even if holistic models do not need to imply a sacrificing of either the sense of self or the concreteness of relationships with other selves, do they bring any advantages that are not already achieved by relational models proposed by many ecofeminists? When Plumwood postulates the view of self-in-relationships, she envisions it as consisting of continuity and difference, interdependence and relationship. She calls for the concept of self that is essentially related to nature while admitting that in the standard western view, the self is related to the rest only accidentally. To posit some examples of people’s strong connection to the land, she, interestingly, mentions the indigenous cultures but without addressing why their holistic worldviews created the desired responses of the self. In fact Plumwood admires the attitude of the Aboriginal people who speak of land as \textit{part of them}. Could it be that the holistic eastern spirituality and philosophy could provide a helpful account of how to treat the parts of the universe as essentially connected to human beings? The rich image of an ever-evolving reality that takes a specific shape due to the mutual, ongoing interrelations between unique particulars provides just that. Aesthetic model of the universe where everything needs everything else for its well-being assigns unqualified value to each part of the whole as well as to the arising whole itself.\footnote{Space does not allow to address possible problems coming from this view. One major issue is that of affirming those parts of reality that are considered deeply harmful such as microbes causing fatal diseases or environmentally noxious radioactive waste. Another problem would be that of affirming individuals who cause grave danger to human or nonhuman world. Graham Parkes suggests that only the radical-egalitarian deep-ecological representatives of Taoism and Zen would encounter this difficulty. In contrast, Dōgen and Kūkai would “want to take into account the effects of propagating tubercle bacilli or radioactive waste on the flourishing of human (and other) beings before deciding to let them bloom.” Consult Parks’ “Voices of Mountains, Trees, and Rivers: Kukai, Dogen, and a Deeper Ecology,” \textit{Buddhism and Ecology}, 111-128.}

Furthermore, contemporary physics, astronomy and biology make us constantly aware of the deep connections between the members of the universe on a subatomic level and of the genetic and cellular similarities
of all organic matter. This picture of reality strongly resembles a holistic model. Not only did all the parts of the universe evolve together but also they exercise a continuing influence on each other. For example,

As portions of the universe, we are all brothers and sisters: elementary particles, quarks, stones, snails, animals, humans, stars, galaxies. Once we were all together in the form of energy and the original particles, in the primordial sphere, then we were in the giant red stars, then in our Milky Way, in the Sun, and on Earth. We are all made of the same elements. As living beings we have the same genetic code as other living beings… [W]e have a common origin and certainly a single common destiny…. From the outset everything interacts and establishes a creative dialogue with everything around it.32

Not only were all parts of the universe at one point present in the first stars, suns and galaxies but human beings, animals and plants are composed of matter that was once part of our prehistoric ancestors. Through the cycle of decomposition and recomposition, humans, animals and plants continue to provide the fertile ground for each others’ well-being. Our origin as individual beings and our daily subsistence in the biotic sphere is the very example of the interdependent mode of being between all members of the universe. This account of mutual interactions between all phenomena in nature squares well with the holistic account. By contrast, the self-in-relationships model fails to provide conceptual scheme that captures the unfolding evolution of the whole and the continual interdependence of its parts. The relationship model is successful when dealing with injustice perpetuated by people’s abuse of power against other humans or nature. At the same time, this model is not addressing the rich connections between non-human elements of nature and those relations between humans (and non-humans) that do not involve the abuse of power.33 But these neglected connections are paramount. They not only allow us to underscore the common history and common future for all members of the universe but they also inspire us to treasure the intrinsic value of every aspect of the universe. Realizing our kinship with the rest of reality, we learn to value the unique contribution of and relationships with others; we learn how to connect with them in a manner that is not purely accidental but deeply essential.


Artistic Tradition

Concern for developing closer connections to nature is expressed well in a celebrated essay, “In and out of Harm’s Way: Arrogance and Love” by Marilyn Frye. According to Frye, the western worldview is typified by an arrogant eye that sees everything else with reference to one’s own needs and desires. In this view, there is no space for recognizing that the other is indifferent or independent; instead everything is either for or against one’s own self.\(^3\) In contrast, the loving eye

knows the independence of the other. It is the eye of a seer who knows that nature is indifferent. It is the eye of one who knows that to know the seen, one must consult something other than one’s own will and interests and fears and imagination. One must look at the thing. One must look and listen and check and question.\(^5\)

The metaphor of an arrogant versus loving eye connotes one’s whole orientation towards the other, an orientation that either asserts the intrinsic value of the other or denies it. To arrive at a loving perception of the other one must be involved in a certain kind of looking that attempts to fully appreciate the other’s unique mode of being. I think McFague is right when she says that developing this attentive perception can be greatly assisted by the art.\(^6\) Art can teach us how to pay attention to particular aspect of reality and how to see it as different, with its own integrity, as existing for itself. Art can inspire us to look at things in a new way; to pay full attention to the details overlooked in the past.

The loving care and attention come readily to mind when one reads through one of the classic examples of Japanese haiku (Bashô, seventeenth century):

An old silent pond
A frog jumps in.
Splash! Silence again.

What is remarkable about this poem is that the everyday, mundane happening was considered worthy of the poet’s complete attention. In the Zen Buddhist spirit of exulting the present moment, the author allows the pond and the frog to take the main stage and speak their own language. A fleeting moment from a slice of reality is lifted up

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\(^5\) Frye, 75.
and celebrated for no other reason than its enigmatic ordinariness. In another poem, the same author occupies himself with altogether different things:

Fleas, lice
The horse pissing
Near my pillow.

If the frog is not commonly recognized as an exceptionally beautiful or imposing animal, fleas and lice or a horse involved in a trivial act of living are what many would consider ostensibly distasteful, especially as objects of art. The fact that the poet chooses to include these elements of his life experience suggests that every part of the universe and every aspect of our experience are worthy of our consideration. This poem sends an indelible message that “the simple, elemental experiences of things, whether of lice or of butterflies, the pissing of horses or the flight of eagles, have a deep significance, not of something beyond themselves, but of their own essential nature.”37 By dedicating poetry to the ordinary, the author gives us a chance to pay full attention to things we usually overlook; he gives us a gentle tap to wake us up from the indifferent slumber and to see the distinctness even of flies and urinating horses.

Daoist and Zen Buddhist traditions of painting have a long history of mutual influences38 and each tradition produced innumerable examples of careful attention to singular plants and animals or to specific landscapes. For example, within the context of Chinese paintings, the two major categories by the tenth century were birds and flowers and grasses and insects. In addition, there was a separate class of paintings that dealt exclusively with trees.39 By comparison, in the West, there was generally little interest in the depictions of fauna and flora until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When the animals or plants appear in the western context, they often serve as decorations on the margins of medieval manuscripts, or as part of the background or as symbols standing for spiritual or human reality. In other words, there is hardly any attention given to the animals or plants that displays them in their

37 Suzuki, 237-238.
38 For an account of such influences see Shaw, 183-202; Brinker and Kanazawa, 17-18, 37-45; Barnet and Burto, 24, 68, 80; Mai-Mai Sze, *The Tao of Painting: A Study of the Ritual Disposition of Chinese Painting* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956), 77-78, 103-102.
39 Barnet and Burto, 78.
independent modes of being: “the interest in them is chiefly as creatures for man’s use – hunting dogs, falcons, horses – and, in the case of the dead fish, fowl, and rabbits in Dutch still-life painting, as objects for man’s consumption.”

Chinese and Japanese masters of painting find orchid, bamboo, plum tree, lotus, banana tree, radish, heron, bat, sparrow, rat, ox, monkey, rooster and goose some of their favorite subjects. Whether in the context of writing haiku or that of creating a painting, there was a tremendous emphasis placed upon the kind of attention given to the observed phenomena. Any attempt to master the object under consideration or to use it for any purpose other than to study it for its own sake was rejected. The artist was to free herself as much as possible of her own inclinations to categorize the other, so that the other could emerge as speaking from its own inner life. Thus, when discussing how to draw a bamboo according to the Zen Buddhist spirit, a paradoxical language of becoming one with the object is employed. One’s own ideas of the other must be left behind so that “To become a bamboo and to forget that you are one with it while drawing it — this is the Zen of bamboo, this is the moving with the ‘rhythmic movement of the spirit’ which resides in the bamboo as well as in the artist himself.”

The end result of such a sincere depiction by the artist was a representation of the object in its own independent existence. Viewing of the work was supposed to create similar identification with the object. The anecdote about a famous Japanese painter states that when he saw a drawing of a chicken by a student of his, he clucked several times. What the instructions about drawing a bamboo and the anecdote teach us is the importance of genuine respect for the other’s distinctive way of being so that one can gain a glimpse into the life of the other.

One example of such a glimpse is a Chinese ink painting that represents a small fish in the middle of a vast space of water (Pa-ta Shan-jen, 1625 – 1705?, Fish). This album leaf (as with other Chinese paintings) has no frame which underscores the limitless space even further. Not only

40 Barnet and Burto, 78, 80.
41 Suzuki, 31.
does the artist give its sole attention to a small fish and its unique way of being but the vastness of space places this animal in the larger context of its environs. The central focus on the fish renders it indispensable but its small size stresses its place within the larger context of the universe, its place within the whole. Furthermore, depicting the seemingly unlimited space has another important role — a statement about the artist’s inability to describe the reality fully. That is, “The Chinese painter deliberately avoids a complete statement because he knows that we can never know everything, that what we can describe, or ‘complete,’ cannot be true, except in a very limited sense.”

The artist’s partial understanding makes sense when one considers Chinese cosmology — the artist perspective is one of many in the infinite network of interactions and this situation is still further complicated since the artist is depicting a very different mode of being than his own, that is, the life of a non-human being.

Another work, this time exhibiting the life of vegetables, comes from a Zen Buddhist painting (Ito¯ Jakuchû, 1716-1800), Vegetable Nirvana. Here we see a variety of vegetables arranged around the central image of a large radish (daikon). Daikon happened to be an important part of the Buddhist monastic diet and the author of this painting had a special connection to the vegetable kingdom by the virtue of coming from a family of greengrocers. The humble radish in this painting is actually a coded reference to the Buddha’s death scene in which he is surrounded by his mourners. This painting, thus, serves to communicate an important Buddhist belief in “the essential capacity of all things, including those within the vegetable realm, to reach the enlightened state.” The idea that insects, birds, trees and grasses and even the land itself are destined for enlightenment signifies the deep Buddhist estimation and respect for every element of the cosmos.

This great respect for all parts of reality are also evident in Daoist and Buddhist landscapes. Landscapes paintings became a dominant form of Chinese painting beginning with the Northern Sung period (960-1126) and were common in Japan from the fifteenth century, yet Europeans

45 Brinker and Kanazawa, 183.
47 Barnet and Burto, 68.
who came in contact with these works were not impressed. One European critic in the seventeenth century stated that “The Chinese have as little knowledge of architecture and painting as I of Greek or Hebrew.” And another writer in the eighteenth century attributed to Chinese works: “false lights, false shadows, false perspective and proportions, … in short, every incoherent combination of forms in nature … are the essentials of Chinese painting.” What the European observers found particularly inferior about the East-Asian landscapes was the prevalence of empty space and the lack of perspective. From early Renaissance on, European art follows the convention of perspective, according to which everything is rendered from the position of the singular spectator. In this approach, the spectator establishes the center of the universe from which everything is examined. As John Berger puts it, “The visible world is arranged for the spectator as the universe was once thought to be arranged by God. … [T]here is no visual reciprocity. There is no need for God to situate himself in relation to others: he is himself the situation.” This monopoly of seeing was considered as the only sophisticated and proper way of representing reality. Thus, Chinese paintings appeared to Europeans as primitive.

In contrast, the Chinese painter did not display the landscape from one point, but rather from many different viewing positions. This approach reflected well the process which led to creating a specific piece of landscape art. The artist took much care to explore the surrounding area in order to experience the many wonders of the terrain. A fourteenth century Daoist master, Leng Qian, places the following inscription on the scroll of his work Mount Boyue:

> Along the way we encountered strange pines and wondrous rocks; lofty, majestic peaks and cliffs; flying waterfalls and bubbling streams; … emaciated monks and strange beasts; monkey chattering and bird calls. (All of these) lay in my heart and took hold of my imagination. Creeping vines led us to the summit of the mountain.

The artist imbibes all of these sights from a one day hike and attempts to relate the richness of his experience in his work. The painting draws in

the observer to wander with the artist through the valleys, the mountains, the gatherings of pines, bamboo trees, various brushes, and mysterious rock formations. The eye is actively engaged in a journey throughout the picture as the multiple perspectives unveil themselves little by little. Both the shifting perspectives and the painting in the form of a scroll allow the artist to capture the sense of space and an element of time. As a handscroll that is unrolled little by little, the journey through the painting allows the viewer to trace the artist’s experience in the land: “And just as the panoramic handscroll is a world in miniature, so may the time taken to view it represent in miniature the time that such a journey would take in a real landscape.”

Overall, the multiple viewing points dethrone the single spectator position and the static depiction of nature so popular in the West. Instead, the Chinese painting invites the reciprocal interaction between the land and the viewer — both the artist and the viewer place themselves in the very land in order to fully experience the changes in the surrounding environment. The Daoist master knows that to do justice to any land formation requires the effort of learning about the specific site and requires paying attention to the many details along the road. At the same time, he humbly recognizes that his rendering of the view is never finalized or complete; he simply offers a few perspectives on the complexity of the whole: “His landscape is not a final statement, but a starting point; not an end, but the opening of a door.”

In addition to presenting the view of a site from several angles, the Daoist masters have shown a great concern for executing details of the site under changing conditions. An eleventh century master insists that a unique character of every moment in the landscape needs to be captured — from different seasons, weather conditions, the change of lighting throughout the day to a careful rendering of flowing water and moving clouds. It is not surprising that in light of this careful attention to the land, many of the East-Asian landscape paintings do not include human presence. When people do appear, they are presented as tiny figures who appear as one element of nature; neither human affairs nor human goals dominate the landscape scene. Furthermore, to stress the sense

52 Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, 255.
of continuity and interdependence among all things, the Chinese and Japanese painters often use monochrome ink.55

This approach is starkly different from the western tradition of paintings. Up through the Renaissance, the primary two categories of paintings that represent nature are either encyclopedic or emblematic. The first category is “concerned basically with obtaining control of the world around by ordered classification and description” whether of animals or plants.56 Emblematic landscape generally serves as a suffix, a perfunctory to the main scene representing various types of human affairs.57 The second category, employs the natural elements for didactic or moralistic purposes. Here nature also appears in the background to the human activity in the main scene, but instead of having a solely perfunctory role, nature serves as a symbol of the human search for meaning in life. For example, a fifteenth century Nativity (Master of Flémalle) shows in the upper right corner a glimpse of a landscape with a clear devotional end in mind. A winding road leads up to a church situated on a hill and serves as a mirror of human journey to God.58

Only starting with the eighteenth century was there a full rise of tradition that devoted its attention to nature as its primary object. The landscape painting became especially popular in Great Britain, a development which art historians ascribe to the new agricultural ambitions and the territorial expansion abroad due to colonialism. British painters were closely following the model of Italian seventeenth century landscapes of Roman Campagna (by Nicolas and Gaspard Poussin, Salvator Rosa and Claude Lorrain).59 This was executed with such care that the artists did not even attempt to represent the actual view. Whether in poetry or in painting, the scene is always presented from a height (necessary for proper perspective). This is done in a manner that does not display the beauty of the hill or a mountain but simply displays what can be seen from the top of them. British landscape artists

55 Barnet and Burto, 68, 74.
57 Roskill, 47-48.
58 Roskill, 43-44.
59 John Barrell, _The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place 1730-1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare_ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 6, 44, 60; Roskill, 92.
could not be farther in their approach from their Chinese and Japanese counterparts. Not only are the British artists uninterested in what they can learn about their landscape as they are exploring the land; they are actively maintaining the distance between themselves and the land. In the words of one critic, poet or a painter “is able to see the landscape, not as something in which he is involved, and which is all around him, but as something detached from him, over there.”

At the same time, nature takes a more prominent place in eighteenth century works. Many of the portraits of renowned families are often situated in their estates and the artists take great care to render plants and trees specific to that place. This detailed execution of the land was not there to celebrate the natural beauty of the place; rather it served to establish the family’s social status, its material prosperity or its access to recreational pleasures. When the specific sites were depicted without any human presence, they were often chosen because the artists were aware of their utilitarian function. Fascination with a particular site was partly inspired by the natural resources of the land: coal, iron, water, the impressive construction of bridges and canals, or the land’s commercial prospective. The uncultivated land stood for the uncivilized land so that there was a tendency among painters and poets to perceive nature in terms of the profits that it could provide for humankind. In the words of one poet of the day: “O vale of bliss! O softly-swelling hills!/On which the power of cultivation lies,/And joys to see the wonders of his toil…” In this framework, the landscape vistas of colonized “primitive” territories was especially promising as they represented the still unexplored wealth and fertility of the land.

In contradistinction to the western utilitarian view, Daoist and Buddhist artists take time to observe and explore the intricate details of the landscape and nothing seems too insignificant for their attention. The artistic tradition of East-Asia showcases well the vision of nature through a loving eye. Mountains, daikons, frogs, small fish, as well as fleas, lice and urinating horses are worthy of attention not because of their service to humanity but because the artists consider them important for their own sake. Humanity is seen as an important member of the cosmic

60 Barrell, 21.
61 Roskill, 93-95.
63 Roskill, 104-111.
community that needs to align itself with the rest of the universe. Every element of the cosmos is shown both as unique and as dependent on everything else. This is why a small fish is centrally displayed and at the same presented in the vastness of surrounding space and why humans are shown as small figures in an extensive landscape. The key characteristics of the East-Asian cosmology — the individuality and independence of each element of the universe together with the interdependence between all things — are made powerfully visual in the artistic traditions we examined. While this aesthetic cosmology as well as artistic vision do not guarantee ecologically sensitive attitudes, we cannot afford to overlook these potent resources.

Not unlike East Asian spiritual art, contemporary landworks make us aware of the many sights, and the very vitality of nature often in unexpected, innovative ways. Much of the art classified as “landworks” or “environmental art” is ecologically sensitive because it points out environmental deterioration and teaches us to look at nature with a loving eye. The movement of environmental art since its beginnings in the mid 1960s has taken steps to create public spaces that address environmental issues. As early as 1965, Alan Sonfist started his project *Time Landscape*, which aimed at reclamation of the indigenous forest of Manhattan. The artist was struck by the unnatural separation from the environment in the lives of contemporary city dwellers: “We use television to witness our natural surroundings. People drive to the beach where they watch the sunset in their cars with the windows rolled up and the air conditioner on. Around our dwellings we put trees in boxes and try to grow them in geometric shapes.” After researching the botany and geology of the indigenous land, Sonfist recreated the original soil and rock formations as well as grasses, flowers, birches, cedars and oaks on a site that was an urban wasteland. A vacant lot covered with litter was transformed into a natural terrain where birds and small animals

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began to take its shelter. Through this project, the artist gave the community an opportunity to become aware of their native landscape, an opportunity to realize that the city is more than the concrete and glass. In an attempt to reconnect humanity to nature, the artist invited New York city dwellers to rediscover the earth’s natural landscape.

Other artists employ light and sound to awaken our senses about the natural surroundings. Charles Ross attempts to recall human intimacy with the rest of the universe, the fact that we were all made of the same original matter. To revive this intimacy, he is projecting bonds of light spectrum into commercial spaces through large scale prisms. In 1986, Ross installed thirty-five prisms under glass skylights in the atrium at the Plaza of the Americas in Dallas, Texas. The spectrums of light change throughout the day and from season to season as the earth moves through the space. Pedestrian walkways, staircases, gardens, glass elevators, restaurants and an ice skating rink become sites where people are continuously encountering the cosmic energy traveling through the universe. In a different setting, that of the Big Spring Ranch in Montana, Patrick Zentz turns to music to capture our attention of environmental processes. By installing music making apparatus, he is able to translate the currents of the wind, the flow of the creek and the temperature changes into a score that combines sounds of string instruments, flute-like tones and drumbeats. A similar concept was employed by a group of artists in Seattle who created a Sound Garden along the shoreline of Lake Washington. At the top of the wave of land, there is a grove of towers with wind-organ pipes that convert the movement of the wind into a whale-like sound. The artists intended the walk along the shoreline to become full of sensory experience: a “journey of hearing, sight, and movement.” Hearing the melody of the winds, observing the movement of the waves on the lake and absorbing the surrounding terrain allow one to fully appreciate the beauty of the site.

If Sonfist, Ross and Zentz create art that aspires to reconnect us with nature, Mierle Laderman Ukeles attempts to “reconnect” us with our waste. In collaboration with the New York Department of Sanitation, Ukeles designed Flow City which is an actual part of the garbage facility on the Hudson river. Her structure begins with a Passage Ramp, a walkway for visitors that is made of recyclable materials such as glass.

67 Charles Ross, untitled, Sculpting with the Environment, 46.
68 Douglas Hollis, untitled, Sculpting with the Environment, 108.
and shredded rubber. *Passage Ramp* leads to a *Glass Bridge* from which the public can observe garbage trucks that dump their loads into waiting barges. The viewers can see the actual waste beneath their feet: “They will be able to watch all of the things they worked so hard to buy go to waste.” At the end of the bridge is *Media Flow Wall* made of crushed glass with monitors set into it. The monitors transmit views from live cameras that document the accumulation of garbage at the landfill, show the recycling process in the sanitation plant and view the effect that the plant has on the river.

Still different voices come from minority artists who remind us of the environmental injustice committed against the most vulnerable working class. Ester Hernández plays with the familiar image from a box of *Sun Maid* raisins displaying a bonneted smiling calavera holding a basket of grapes. In her work Sun Mad (1982) she substitutes the attractive girl with an image of a human skeleton and the original advertisement “a fat free, cholesterol free food” is replaced with “unnaturally grown with insecticides, miticides, herbicides and fungicides.” In this provoking image, Hernández presents a satiric portrayal of the consequences of pesticides on the Chicano grape workers: “instant death of the onslaught of life-threatening diseases.” A similar topic is related by Juana Alicia in her *Las Lechugueras* (*The Women Lettuce Workers*, 1985), a mural in the San Francisco Mission District. The artist documents the violation of the human rights of women immigrant workers by depicting a pregnant woman who is sprayed with pesticides from a plane dusting a lettuce crop.

From Sonfist to Alicia, contemporary artists present us with visual reminders of our fundamental intimacy with nature as well as our disconnection from our natural environment. Light, sound and the introduction of the enclaves of indigenous ecosystem are some of the means that the artists employ to foster our reconnection with our natural surroundings. These means direct our attention to the elements of our universe that are such integral parts of our lives that we commonly overlook them. But paying attention to our natural surrounding includes also being aware of our wastes, their polluting affects and our own individual contribution to these problems (as Ukeles displays so

69 Mierle Laderman Ukeles, untitled, Sculpting with the Environment, 187.
70 Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Chicano Art: Inside/Outside the Master’s House (Austin, TX: The University of Texas Press, 1998), 85.
well). Not only are we harming the well-being of other species, land, water and air, but as Hernández and Alicia remind us, we harm those who are the most vulnerable in our societies — immigrants, minorities and women.

Why should Christian theologians turn to lessons from Daoism, Buddhism or contemporary art? While a number of Christian thinkers turn to holistic models of the universe, they base these models primarily on the new discoveries in physics and astronomy.71 To a large extent this is so because the Christian Bible and Christian tradition has little to say on the issue of ecological concerns per se. As one author puts it: “But apart from some sections in the Hebrew scriptures (with a smattering in the New Testament), there are few biblical guides for Christians on how to practice love toward nature.”72 The few exceptions consist of the notion of stewardship of nature (Genesis 1:26), a sabbatical legislation (Leviticus 25) that demands periodic rest and restoration to animal and human labor as well as to the land itself. Various theologians propose sacramental cosmology that extends the meaning of Christ’s incarnation to all creation. In this model, the whole universe is seen as the body of Christ or body of God. Still, the fact remains that the Christian biblical tradition does not provide a holistic picture of the universe in which every member of the cosmos has an intrinsic value separate from human needs and purposes. This is where East Asian traditions can assist Christian theology in envisioning a rich cosmology that appreciates the uniqueness of every living creature.

Moreover, East Asian cosmology helps to stress the importance of holistic models in which the cosmos is seen in some ways as a whole but without, at the same time, obliterating the diversity within it. This is to say that moving to paradigms that see the cosmos only as a community of beings undermines the deep sense of interconnectedness between all aspects of reality. For example, Sally McFague speaks of ecological community or “subject-subjects model” to stress that we always learn and exist in relationships. She recognizes that this paradigm is based on human relationships but argues that it can be extended to nature if we look at “animals, trees and plants, and even the earth as a whole as subjects, as agents which both influence each other and are influenced

72 McFague, Super, Natural Christians, 166.
by them.”73 While McFague accentuates the individuality and selfhood of all things, she also introduces many elements from the holistic model such as human radical dependence on the world, radical unity between all subjects, the organic character of the world and seeing world as a whole.74 In other words, not unlike Plumwood, McFague wants to affirm the essential connection of self to nature (in contrast to accidental connection) but in doing so she paints a picture typical of a holistic model. East Asian cosmology provides a paradigm that addresses the concern for the particularity and distinctness of every member of the universe as well as the sense of essential connections with all the rest, the sense of being part of the whole, of having a common past and future.

Contemporary environmental art, on the other hand, is helpful in addressing the actual needs of our current society. Environmentally sensitive artists skillfully diagnose our slumber-like existence and employ innovative means to wake us up from our apathy towards nature. By doing so, environmental artists play a role similar to that of the prophets of the past — they display visually both the social critique of our ways and provide possible ways of reconnecting with the whole. Introducing elements of natural environment into our common city dwellings, challenging our wastefulness and our lack of concern for the other, these artists boldly address our shortcomings towards others whether human or non-human species.

Ancient East Asian aesthetic tradition together with contemporary environmental art offer us visual ways that support ecologically sensitive philosophies and theologies. Giving consideration to the visual is important for several reasons. First, by doing so we resist the “text-logocentrism of the academy” where most of our research and teaching deals with the written text at the expense of material and visual culture.75 Second, since we have been shaped by the canons of western art that placed nature in the background of human affairs, we need to adopt an approach that challenges these visual norms. Third, realizing that we live in a popular culture that is dominated by the visual, we need to contest our disparaging attitudes towards nature by the visual. Daoist

73 McFague, Super, Natural Christians, 108.
and certain Buddhist (Huayan, Zen Buddhist) aesthetic cosmologies and their artistic traditions together with contemporary environmental art envision for us some helpful examples of how to develop the ethics of care according to the loving eye.
A Comparative Study of Water Resource Allocation in the Northwest of China

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National Science Foundation/Central Washington University Program

Abstract

China’s continuing water shortages have launched a multitude of studies into the interaction between water resources and economic development; this paper narrows this gamut to an inquiry into the economic utilization of water in the dry Northwest region. By comparing the water usage and allocation in the industrial, agricultural and domestic sectors and by applying water consumption data across time at the national, regional and provincial levels, this study evaluates the appropriateness of China’s reaction to its emerging water crisis. Econometric analyses of the water consumption/sectoral change relationship is integrated with information gained from interviews with industrial users, government officials, and non-government organizations in order to develop a comprehensive approach to the complexity of the water resource situation.

Introduction

Despite China’s remarkable average annual GDP growth of 8-10% over the past decade, “China faces a water resources crisis of multiple dimensions throughout the country.”1 This paper examines the relationship between the booming economy and the exponential degradation of the water resources. A number of economic aspects of the water resources crisis are analyzed by means of an econometric analysis

that examines causal relationships about water use in the industrial, agricultural and domestic sectors.

Because water resource issues play a more crucial role in the dry Northwest of China, we juxtapose the region to the entire nation in order to better evaluate the extent of the imbalance. The study uses the common specification of the Northwestern region to include the provinces and autonomous regions of Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Western Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, and Shaanxi. A background of water resource and economic development issues is presented in Part One. Hypotheses on water use by each of the economic sectors are then developed in Part Two, along with the econometric models by which the hypotheses are tested. Finally, in Part Three, findings are presented and policy implications are drawn.

Background: Northwest Water Resources and Economic Progress

Water Resources of the Northwest: One factor of progressively critical importance to the Northwest’s and China’s economic growth in recent years has been the new limitations imposed by environmental constraints and disasters. Economic growth, as well as the broad standard of living, has become partially subjected to a new degree of environmental constraints. Massive desertification and erosion has had impact upon millions of acres of farmland, and the deserts are increasing by 10,400 km² each year. Severe flooding has cost hundreds of billions in disaster response and relocation costs. Water pollution has rendered some rivers unusable, and over-consumption has drained major waterways before they reach the sea. These issues doubly impact the Northwest, for it has both a drier climate that increases its susceptibility to water shortages and a deficit in development, that makes prevention, relief, and recovery more difficult.

The Northwest lies beyond the influence of the Pacific Ocean, and the annual rainfall of Shaanxi, the wettest province of the dry Northwest, currently averages only 740-830 mm annually. Furthermore, there has been a 5% decrease in rainfall between 1980 and 1999. Over 90% of the water utilized in the Northwest goes directly to agricultural production, where its economic output per unit is comparatively low.

4 Shaanxi Provincial Water Bureau, interview by the authors, 16 July 2004.
5 Ibid.
use has led to a 12% drop in groundwater tables and water shortages downstream without bolstering regional development by any notable degree.\(^6\)

The Northwest’s developmental deficit compounds the geographical water disparity by promoting inefficient water consumption, over-polluting, and limiting the economic output per unit of water. Small rural farms have no incentive to utilize water saving techniques, and the lack of infrastructure makes gauging water usage for volumetric pricing inconceivable. Smaller industries are more important to the smaller economies of the Northwest, yet they typically produce fewer products and more pollution than the larger, more efficient industries of the developed areas. However, because these small industries are more important to local economies, enforcement officials must struggle to justify shutting them down, and the industries themselves are left with no incentive to reduce pollution. Finally, because the agricultural use of water in the Northwest consists of hundreds of millions of individual farmers with no effective means of monitoring water usage, the implementation of a volumetric pricing scheme is simply out of the question. These are but a few examples of how developmental problems exacerbate the water shortage in the Northwest.

*History of Economic Development in the Northwest:* Before Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms, the centrally planned economy attempted to treat the Northwest on equal terms with the coast in a form of “balanced development.” Each of the first two five-year plans advocated the relocation of industry and development inland (to the Northwest) to bring the interior up to coastal standards. The focal point of this northwestern development was Shaanxi Province, which was targeted to receive 15% of all foreign, in other words, Soviet, funding. The Northwest continued to receive attention in the next decade as the central government devoted itself to developing the western borders for defense reasons. After the Sino-Soviet split of 1960, China felt its imbalance caused by a preponderance of heavy industry in the coastal areas to be a significant military liability, and the deteriorating relations with the Soviet Union only increased the priority to move critical industries and jobs into the Northwest. Not only did this bring industrial defense jobs to the region, but universities and engineers were also transferred inland with defense in mind.

Conversely, in the next decade, the Northwest’s development suffered under Deng Xiaoping’s plan to facilitate his reforms by concentrating development in specific coastal locations. The development of special

\(^6\) *Ibid.*
economic zones favored the coast, because Deng Xiaoping’s program was focused on international trade. Accordingly, the Northwest was completely excluded from this phase in development. Hence, China’s general economic growth mentioned earlier in this introduction has slowly, and ineffectively spread from these main coastal regions. The new jobs, increased wages, and higher standards of living have increased the income gap between the coast and the interior. The “trickle-down” effect of Deng’s nodal growth economy never reached the Northwest with any significance, leaving both infrastructure development and foreign investment lagging behind the coastal regions.

The central Chinese government, under pressure to respond to lagging economic conditions in the Northwest, initiated its Great Western Development Strategy (GWDS or Xibu Da Kaifa) in 2000, ahead of the tenth five-year plan. As the purpose of the program is to develop China’s peripheral areas in general, its target area incorporates a wider region than the Northwest, including poorer provinces in the South and North-Central. To date, the GWDS has allocated and helped to raise over 700 billion RMB to improve infrastructure and livelihoods in five main areas: major infrastructure, rural infrastructure, ecological projects, education campaigns, and economic readjustment.7 The major construction projects include the railway from Tibet to Qinghai, large-scale gas pipelines, electrical networks, and reservoir construction, while rural infrastructure denotes a focus on small roads, electrical lines, plumbing, and communication lines. Funding for ecological projects has been focused on reforestation and reclamation, and the educational allocation is designed to localize economic growth. The economic readjustment campaign aims to raise the standard of living for minority populations by harnessing the local natural resources and bringing in high-tech jobs.8 Much of this funding has been earmarked for rural projects.

Figure One depicts a comparison of the percentage of industry that is classified as “Heavy” for the Nation, the Northwest, and Shaanxi Province. Shanxi Province is included as it is by far the most industrialized of the Northwest provinces. Growth in all locations over the decade is obvious from the graph, along with markedly higher proportion of heavy industry in the Northwest. The relatively large presence of state owned enterprises (SOE’s) in the Northwestern provinces is concentrated on the defense industry. This is another cause of the important role of heavy industry in the region, as shown in Figure Two. The relative shares of state-owned

7 Chang.
8 Ibid.
enterprises in Northwest and Shaanxi provinces are particularly high because of the government policies during the Mao period. There is a very slowly declining trend, probably due to the privatization of SOE’s by the central government. The sudden increase in SOE’s in 1997 could be possibly related to the Asian Financial Crisis in that there was a marked slowing of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

**Figure One**

**Figure Two**
Figure Three shows that Northwestern provinces have had little increase in the composition of foreign-owned enterprises even after the initiation of the Great Western Development Strategy. This is important because Foreign-Owned Enterprises are typically many times more water-conserving and environmentally friendly than SOE’s.

**Figure Three**

![Graph showing Industrial Output of Foreign-Owned Enterprise](image)

Figure Four shows a markedly lower proportion of small scale industry in the Northwest. The sudden drop after 1996 in Shaanxi province of the proportion of small enterprises is also noteworthy. This declining trend of small enterprises in the Northwestern provinces is likely beneficial to the region, as small enterprises tend to be less efficient in water consumption and less regulated in terms of water pollution.

In summary, the juncture of economic and environmental problems has prompted the Communist Party to adopt a new philosophy toward the economic/environmental relationship: sustainability.\(^9\) Regarding water supply, this entails a new level of resource management. For the Northwest, this strategy implies a new sense of respect, in that China as a whole can no longer utilize northwestern resources at an unsustainable rate or send heavy polluters inland instead of cleaning them up. Just as the Northwest was once developed with the future of China’s defense in mind, it must now be developed according to the needs of the future of China’s economy and environment. Sustainable development is designed to provide the Northwest with a strong basis to accommodate

\(^9\) Bao, 1 July 2004.
the forthcoming population and economic growth confronting China’s future.

Figure Four

Objectives and Analysis

The primary objective of this study is to analyze water usage across all economic sectors in the dry Northwest region and to determine causal relationships. Accordingly, this analysis compares water use in the industrial, agricultural and domestic sectors. By comparing the water usage and allocation in these three sectors across national, regional and provincial levels, this study evaluates the appropriateness of China’s reaction to the Northwest’s emerging water crisis.

Eight economic variables are considered in this cross-sectional analysis: Location, Industry Mix, Industrial Ownership, Industrial Size, Agriculture Water Efficiency, Crop Pattern and Domestic Water Usage. These key economic variables determine water demand and are treated in seven related hypotheses:

(1) Location Hypothesis: it is expected that water is more effectively utilized in water-scarce provinces compared to China as a whole.

(2) Industry Mix Hypotheses: Because tertiary and high-tech industries are both typical indicators of development and are lighter water consumers, their lack of representation in the Northwest would imply a resource management challenge posed by a regional reliance on heavy industries that consume more water. It is anticipated that in a cross sectional comparison, tertiary industries both consume less water per
unit of output and emit less wastewater per unit of output than primary industries and secondary industries. It is also expected that high-tech industries utilize water relatively more efficiently while heavy industries utilize water relatively less efficiently. These questions are examined in light of the fact that the relative shares of industry in the tertiary and high-tech sectors are smaller in the Northwest.

(3) *Industrial Ownership Hypothesis:* The Northwest’s historical legacy of state-owned enterprises could also be a major factor in water consumption patterns. Because SOE’s have a reputation for inefficient water consumption and pollution, their associated predominance in the Northwest could negatively impact the industrial water consumption numbers. State-owned enterprises are expected to utilize water less efficiently than their private and foreign-funded counterparts as measured by output value per unit of water used and per unit of wastewater emitted.

(4) *Industrial Size Hypothesis:* Large industries tend to be more efficient in both their resource management and production rate. Because they often have the facilities to treat their own water, large enterprises’ low pollution output and ability to re-use water can be beneficial in managing a region’s resources. The Northwest’s higher proportion of large industry could actually provide substantial economic activity at less cost to the water resources, and it is expected that large- and medium-sized enterprises utilize water more efficiently than small enterprises, both with respect to output value per unit water supplied and with respect to output per unit of wastewater emitted.

(5) *Agricultural Water Efficiency Hypotheses:* The current allocation of water supply to agriculture cannot be expected to continue as the dominant use throughout a period of rising industrial and residential demands. The trend toward massive reallocation has already begun, and the agricultural sector’s ability to adjust to this decreasing supply is essential for the Northwest’s economic future. In terms of this reduction, it is anticipated that:

A) Decreasing agriculture’s percentage of the total water supply leads to more efficient water utilization by farmers as measured by gross output value of farming per unit water in cross-sectional analysis.

B) An increase in the ratio of surface water supplied to ground water leads to a less efficient water utilization.

(6) *Crop Patterns Hypotheses:* Because water scarcity plagues so much of the underdeveloped, agricultural Northwest, experiments in shifting crop patterns have been conducted across the region. Crops that conserve
the highest percentage of their invested water’s value would seem the most appropriate where water is scarce, and any such conservation would benefit the water resources of the Northwest. It is expected that:

A) In the water-scarce regions, water-intensive crops are sown in higher proportions than crops that require less water.

B) The percentage of sown area of water-intensive crops planted is lower in water-scarce regions.

(7) Domestic Water Usage Per Capita Hypotheses: Domestic water usage has been on the rise in both rural and urban China, due primarily to rising standards of living and increases in the population. As per capita income rises in the Northwest, the standard of living will need to compromise between this increase and the water shortages; the water resources and supply cannot afford to have the domestic sector increase water usage at the national rate, so it is expected that:

A) Domestic water usage per capita is lower in water-scarce regions compared to China as a whole.

B) Domestic water usage increases with per capita income and employment in high-tech and tertiary sectors.

Data Selection and Model Specification

Almost all statistical data used in the regressions were derived from the Statistical Yearbooks of China and Shaanxi Province from 1995 to 2003, which provided cross-sectional and time-series data on each of China’s 31 provinces, special administrative areas, and autonomous regions for the years 1994 through 2002. The regression models transformed the panel dataset into a cross-sectional dataset by including time as an independent variable; this significantly increased the number of observations for each variable and rendered the statistical analysis more robust. Dummy variables that isolate the seven Northwestern Provinces were used to permit regional and national comparisons.

Regression Model 1

To test the first four hypotheses concerning the various factors that affect the efficiency of water use and wastewater emission by industry, we constructed a model using provincial-level data from the China Statistical Yearbooks which employed two related measures of industrial water efficiency in alternative specifications. The first specification measured the efficiency of wastewater of all state and non-state enterprises with annual sales over 5 million RMB (hereafter “above designated size”) in each province by calculating the ratio of Gross Industrial Output Value to Total Volume of Industrial Wastewater Discharged. The second
specification measured the efficiency of water use of all state and non-state enterprises above designated size in each province by calculating the ratio of Gross Industrial Output Value to Total Volume of Tap Water Supply in Cities for Productive Use. In each specification, higher ratios indicate higher water efficiencies.

To avoid the problem of spurious regression, we included time as a regressor. The incorporation of time as an independent variable is a way to detrend the data — to separate the effect of the experimental variables from general, time-dependent trends. In addition, we heed Granger and Newbold’s rule of thumb, using a Durbin-Watson statistic that is lower than R² as a good indicator of spurious regression. (Gujarati 1995, 718-725.)

The full model involved eight independent variables, one of which was time and another was the dummy variable that isolates the Northwestern provinces. The remaining six are: the share of GDP in the tertiary sector, the share of gross industrial output value of enterprises above designated size that are state-owned or state-holding enterprises, the share of gross industrial output value of enterprises above designated size that are foreign-owned enterprises, the share of gross industrial output value of enterprises above designated size that are enterprises of heavy industry, the share of gross industrial output value of enterprises above designated size that are small enterprises, and the share of gross industrial output value of enterprises above designated size that are high-tech enterprises. The full model takes the following form:

\[
\begin{align*}
(1) & \quad \text{EFF}_{WW} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{TERT} + \beta_2 \text{HIGH} + \beta_3 \text{HEV} + \beta_4 \text{SOE} + \\
& \quad + \beta_5 \text{FOR} + \beta_6 \text{SMALL} + \beta_7 \text{NWEST} + \beta_8 \text{TIME} + u \\
(2) & \quad \text{Substitute} \ \text{EFF}_{WW} \ \text{for} \ \text{EFF}_{WU}
\end{align*}
\]

Where:

- \( \text{EFF}_{WW} \) = total industrial output / volume of industrial wastewater discharge (RMB/cubic meter)
- \( \text{EFF}_{WU} \) = total industrial output / volume of tap water supply for productive use (RMB/cubic meter)
- \( \text{TERT} \) = tertiary sector output / GDP
- \( \text{HIGH} \) = high-tech industrial output / total industrial output

10 Total Annual Volume of Water Supply was divided into Residential and Productive Uses.
HEV\% = heavy industrial output / total industrial output
SOE\% = state-owned enterprise output / total industrial output
FOR\% = foreign-owned enterprise output / total industrial output
SMALL\% = small enterprise output / total industrial output
NWEST = dummy variable for 7 Northwestern provinces
TIME = time
u = stochastic error term

The regression estimate of each coefficient $\beta_i$ represents the net effect of the corresponding variable on industrial water efficiency, controlling for the other model’s other variables. We measured the statistical significance of each $\beta_i$ according to the corresponding t-statistic and p-value, and the explanatory power and significance of the overall model can be evaluated by the R$^2$ (and adjusted R$^2$) statistics and the F-test, respectively.

**Regression Results: Regression Model 1 Specification (1)**

### Model Summary

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$^a$ Predictors: (Constant), % Output High Tech, TIME, % Output Heavy Industry, % Output Small Enterprise, Northwest Dummy, % Output State-owned, % GDP in Tertiary Sector, % Output Foreign-owned

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$^b$ Predictors: (Constant), % Output High Tech, % TIME, % Output Heavy Industry, % Output Small Enterprise, Northwest Dummy, % Output State-owned, % GDP in Tertiary Sector, % Output Foreign-owned

$^c$ Dependent Variable: Gross Industrial Output/Total Volume Industrial Wastewater Discharged

### Coefficients

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$^d$ Dependent Variable: Gross Industrial Output/Total Volume Industrial Wastewater Discharged

**Results of Regression Model 1 Specification (1):** Examining the R$^2$ and F statistics from above, we can see that the model is a good approximation of the data, in that all the independent variables are statistically
significant except for TERT%, this exception may be due in part to high correlation with HIGH%. These results support our hypotheses for each of the variables, with the exception of HEV%. Thus, industrial wastewater efficiency is higher in the Northwest compared to China as a whole; it is generally higher in foreign-owned enterprises and high-tech enterprises and generally lower in state-owned enterprises and small enterprises. The magnitudes of the variable coefficients suggest that the most significant indicator of industrial wastewater efficiency is the proportion of total output value contributed by foreign-owned enterprises. This indicator can be explained by the fact that foreign-owned enterprises often maintain higher environmental standards and employ more efficient and innovative production processes. The next two strongest indicators are the proportion of total output value contributed by high-tech enterprises and the proportion of total output value contributed by state-owned enterprises. These findings further underscore the importance of ownership and technology as determinants of industrial wastewater efficiency. The location variable’s coefficient proved to possess the smallest magnitude, which suggests that natural resources and environmental history are less important than mobile factors and development strategies.

One result runs counter to our hypothesis, namely, industrial wastewater efficiency is higher in provinces where heavy industries comprise a higher proportion of total output value relative to light industries. A possible explanation of this unexpected result comes from manner in which the high amount of wastewater reuse heavy industries employ lowers their proportion of discharged water to water intake below the level of light industries. Many development areas in China require large and heavy industrial enterprises to have their own in-house wastewater treatment plants and, in any case, these enterprises must meet certain quality and quantity discharge requirements. Furthermore, unlike light industries, many heavy industrial processes do not utilize tap water which comes with higher discharge standards. The bottom line is that wastewater efficiency is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for water use efficiency. If heavy industries are more inefficient than light industries with respect to water consumed, their behavior would be completely consistent with the results. The second specification of this model supports this explanation.
A Comparative Study of Water Resource Allocation

Regression Results: Regression Model 1 Specification (2)

Model Summary

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* Predictors: (Constant), % Output High Tech, TIME, % Output Heavy Industry, % Output Small Enterprise, NorthWest Dummy, % Output State-owned, % GDP in Tertiary Sector, % Output Foreign-owned

**Results for Regression Model 1 Specification (2):** The R² and F statistics above indicate that the model is a reasonable approximation of the data, and all the variables are statistically significant except TERT % and SMALL %. The results support each of the hypotheses concerning the statistically significant variables. Efficient use of the water supply by industry is associated with regions where high-tech and foreign-owned industries comprise a higher proportion of total output, while state-owned and heavy industrial enterprises simultaneously comprise a smaller proportion of total output. Industrial water use is also more efficient in the Northwest than it is nationally.

As in specification (1), the variables with coefficients of the highest magnitudes are HIGH % and FOR %, indicating that most significant factors influencing industrial water use efficiency are the shares of total industrial output value that come from high-tech and foreign-owned enterprises. The third most influential variable is HEV %, and its coefficient now indicates that higher shares of total output value in heavy industry are strongly associated with inefficiency of water use.
Regression Model 2

To test the *Agricultural Water Efficiency Hypothesis* (A) and the *Crop Patterns Hypothesis* (A), we constructed a cross-sectional regression using provincial-level data from 2002. We expected to find a positive association between the gross output value of farming per unit of water supplied to the agricultural sector and (1) location in the Northwest and (2) the ratio of total sown area of fruits (orchards) to cereal, and a negative association with (1) surface-water's share of total water supply and (2) proportion of water allocated to agriculture versus industrial and domestic users.

\[
AGReff = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{SHARE}_{agr} + \beta_2 \text{SURF} \% + \beta_3 \text{MIX}_{fr/cer} + \beta_4 \text{NWEST} + \beta_5 \text{TIME} + \epsilon
\]

Where:

- \(AGReff\) = gross output value of farming / volume of water used by agriculture (RMB/cubic meter)
- \(\text{SHARE}_{agr}\) = share of total water supply allocated to agriculture (\%)
- \(\text{SURF}\%\) = share of total water supply as surface water (\%)
- \(\text{MIX}_{fr/cer}\) = ratio of total sown area of fruit to cereal (\%)
- \(\text{NWEST}\) = dummy variable for Northwestern Provinces
- \(\text{TIME}\) = time
- \(\epsilon\) = stochastic error term

Regression Results: Regression Model 2
A Comparative Study of Water Resource Allocation

Results of Regression Model 2:
The $R^2$ and F statistic indicate that the model is a good overall fit of the efficiency of farming with respect to water consumed by agriculture. The results support the hypotheses (1) that increasing agriculture’s share of total water supply leads to less efficient agricultural production and (2) regions which use higher proportions of groundwater relative to surface water are more efficient agricultural producers with respect to water consumed. In looking at the efficiency of ground water versus surface water usage, the explanation lies in water delivery systems. Recently, the majority of ground water delivery has become managed by private entrepreneurs who are pricing water volumetrically and thus, giving farmers a stronger incentive to use water efficiently. In contrast, surface water delivery remains unreliable, due in large part to infrastructure deterioration from a lack of infrastructure investment in the 1970s and 1980s. Farmers will use surface water if it is available to them, but prefer to use ground water as it has proven to be more reliable in the past, and until projects like the Guanzhong Irrigation Improvement Project\(^{12}\) can restore some faith in the surface water delivery, there will continue to be inefficiency in the way farmers utilize surface water.\(^{13}\) No correlation could be identified between crop mix and efficiency of agricultural water usage based on the regression results. It is likely that a relationship could be identified with a larger dataset.

Regression Model 3

This model uses an alternative definition of agricultural efficiency to permit evaluation of the location and crop mix hypotheses. While Model 2 defines efficiency of agriculture in terms of gross output value of farming per unit of water allocated to the agricultural sector (RMB/cubic meter), Model 3 defines efficiency of agriculture as gross output value of farming per unit of irrigated land (RMB/hectare). Whereas

\(^{12}\) See Appendix B for more details.

Model 2 tests how efficiently farmers are utilizing the water allocated to the agriculture, Model 3 tests how efficiently farmers are irrigating their crops net of how efficiently they are utilizing the water allocated their sector. We achieve this specification by including the dependent variable in Model 2 as an independent variable in Model 3.

\[
\text{IRR}_{\text{eff}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{SHARE}_{\text{agr}} + \beta_2 \text{SURF}\% + \beta_3 \text{MIX}_{\text{fr/cer}} + \beta_4 \text{AGR}_{\text{eff}} + \beta_5 \text{NWEST} + \beta_6 \text{TIME} + \text{u}
\]

Where:

\(\text{IRR}_{\text{eff}}\) = gross output value of farming / unit of land irrigated (RMB/hectare)
\(\text{SHARE}_{\text{agr}}\) = share of total water supply allocated to agriculture (%)
\(\text{SURF}\%\) = share of total water supply as surface water (%)
\(\text{MIX}_{\text{fr/cer}}\) = ratio of total sown area of fruit to cereal (%)
\(\text{AGR}_{\text{eff}}\) = gross output value of farming / volume of water used by agriculture (RMB/cubic meter)
\(\text{NWEST}\) = dummy variable for Northwestern Provinces
\(\text{TIME}\) = time
\(\text{u}\) = stochastic error term

Regression Results: Regression Model 3
Results of Regression Model 3: Although the model only contains 25 degrees of freedom, three out of five variables are significant at the 5% level and a fourth has a p-value of 5.9%. The results indicate that, controlling for farm output efficiency with respect to total water supplied to agriculture, regions that dedicate a higher proportion of their land to water-intensive crops (i.e. fruit) rather than crops that use less water (i.e. cereal) generally produce a higher value of total crops per unit of land irrigated. Furthermore, controlling for farm output efficiency with respect to total water supplied to agriculture, regions that receive a higher proportion of their water supply from surface water relative to groundwater generally produce a higher value of total crops per unit of land irrigated. Comparing this result to Model 3, where the coefficient on SURF\textsubscript{W} had a negative sign, we infer the following pair of relationships.

1. Surface water is a less efficient mechanism for supplying water for agriculture due to irregular delivery schedules and deteriorating infrastructure. Farmers who receive a higher proportion of their water supply from groundwater can manage their irrigation schedules more efficiently due to timely water deliveries and incentives to conserve water based on volumetric pricing.

2. Given the same level of agricultural efficiency per unit of water supplied, farmers receiving a higher proportion of their water supply from surface water irrigate land more efficiently since they are under more pressure to conserve the water they receive, since surface water deliveries are less reliable.

Regression results relating location (i.e. Northwest versus national) to efficiency of agricultural production per unit of irrigated area net efficiency of agricultural production per unit of water supplied can be explained from similar logic. Given the same level of agricultural efficiency per unit of water supplied, farmers in the Northwest are less
productive with irrigation than farmers nationally. In other words, ceteris paribus with respect to farm output value per unit of water supply, it is a disadvantage to be located in the Northwest.

Finally, we infer that the variable for share of total water supply allocation to agriculture is insignificant in the regression since from Model 3 we know that it is a major factor in determining agricultural water efficiency with respect to total water supplied.

**Regression Model 4**

To test the Domestic Water Usage Per Capita Hypothesis (A) concerning the factors that affect per capita daily water consumption by urban residents, we constructed a cross-sectional regression model using provincial-level data from 1997 to 2002. We expected to find a positive association between per capita daily water use in urban areas and indicators for higher standards of living: per capita income, share of total employment in tertiary sectors, and share of total employment in high-technology sectors.

\[
\text{TAPWTR}_{\text{urb}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{DISP}_{\text{inc}} + \beta_2 \text{TERT employ\%} + \beta_3 \text{HIGH employ\%} + \beta_4 \text{NWEST} + \beta_5 \text{TIME} + u
\]

Where:

- \( \text{TAPWTR}_{\text{urb}} \) = per capita daily consumption of tap water by urban residents (liters)
- \( \text{DISP}_{\text{inc}} \) = per capita annual disposable income of urban residents (RMB)
- \( \text{TERT} \) = heavy industrial output / total industrial output
- \( \text{SOE} \) = state-owned enterprise output / total industrial output
- \( \text{NWEST} \) = dummy variable for Northwestern provinces
- \( \text{TIME} \) = time
- \( u \) = stochastic error term

**Results Regression Model 4**

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</tbody>
</table>

* Predictors: (Constant), % Employment in High-Tech Sector, % Employment in Tertiary Sectors, Disposable Income Per Capita for Urban Residents
A Comparative Study of Water Resource Allocation

Results for Regression Model 4: The model supports the hypotheses concerning location and disposable income, while it refutes the hypotheses concerning shares of employment. In support of the claim that scarcity drives efficiency, the findings show that urban residents in the water-scarce Northwest use less water per capita, and urban residents with higher disposable incomes generally consume more water. Contrary to our hypothesis, the model also suggests that urban per capita daily water consumption is negatively associated with the share of employment in high-tech industries. This result is counterintuitive if we associate increased employment in the high-tech sector solely with higher standards of living (which is associated with increased water consumption). However, controlling for disposable income per capita, a rising share of high-tech employment in total employment does not indicate higher standards of living at all, but rather a change in the composition of urban employment. The composition of employment in high-tech enterprises in most regions of China is very different from the composition of high-tech enterprises the United States. In China there is a vast wage disparity between the well-educated managers, engineers and technical personnel who own dishwashers and flush toilets and the low-skill workers, many of whom have recently arrived from the countryside, and who live in **hutongs**, traditional one-story housing units which lack modern, water-consumptive amenities. The high polarization in terms of wages and standards of living which characterizes the composition of employment in the high-tech sector has serious consequences for urban per capita water consumption. From a theoretical standpoint, if we assume that the relationship between per capita disposable income
and per capita water consumption follows a Johnson S-curve, then
greater income disparity implies a lower level of water consumption per
capita. At the poles of the S-curve, the relationship between income
and water consumption is much weaker than it is near the center. As
a region’s share of total employment in high-tech enterprises increases,
high-salaried high-tech employees will occupy the flat upper regions
of the S-curve, while low-salaried low-skill employees will occupy the
flat bottom regions. The implications for the employment composition
of the economy as a whole will be fewer middle-class employees with
rates of water consumption strongly correlated with rates of per capita
income. The combined effect within the high-tech sector of high-wage
employees (who have reached a saturation level of water consumption)
capturing income that could potentially be earned by middle-class
employees with rising incomes (and rising water consumption spending
habits) but is spent instead on non-water-consumptive amenities such
as BMWs and airplane tickets, shows up as per capita water savings in
our regression model.

Conclusions and Policy Implications:
The findings of our analysis reinforce both a positive outlook toward
water efficiency and the reality of the need for further improvement
driven by policy changes. These conclusions are based on our findings
from both data analysis and a series of interviews of policy makers and
water users across all sectors that were conducted in Shaanxi Province in
the summer of 2004.

Industry:
Causes for optimism in the Northwest’s industrial sector result from
its high production efficiency per output of industrial waste water
(compared to China as a whole) that owes its origins to the trends set by
heavy, foreign-owned and large industries. Most of these plants contain
some internal wastewater treatment technology that aids in cleaning and
recycling their water, thus satisfying government discharge regulations.
Because they can afford to invest in treatment and give considerate
support to the regional economy, these industries offer a compromise
between economic growth and water resource management. Not so for
the smaller industries, towards which the central government has recently
targeted an anti-pollution campaign for five of the heaviest polluting
industries, namely, paper/pulp, chemicals, concrete, coal mining, and
steel manufacturing. Representatives at both the local and national level
are closing many of the smaller, more polluting firms, consolidating the
medium sized firms, and fining heavily the large enterprises in order to promote efficient water usage and discharge. Along with the now heavy regulations and close monitoring of wastewater discharge, point-source industrial pollution continues to fall under central control.

Because of the recent success in dealing with the larger industries, small industries and SOE’s are now the top polluters. Small enterprises do not have the capabilities or funding to have in-house water treatment technology, and therefore, they often discharge water below national standards. Some are able to avoid detection by altering their processes when inspectors arrive. Typically, the worst of these polluters are the SOE’s, which also prove to be the most inefficient water users across industry. Because these criticisms of SOE’s are rooted in problems of efficiency, the generally accepted solution, privatization, addresses that concern directly. The private management regularly increases efficiency, and can therefore afford the higher standards of production. Continued incentives for private investors to restructure SOE’s under stricter standards would greatly improve the industrial water problems.

_Agriculture:_
Because the growing economy translates directly into a growing demand for domestic and industrial water increases and the resulting transfers out of agriculture into those sectors, agriculture needs the most improvement in overall water efficiency. Programs such as the Great Western Development Strategy will continue to reallocate water out of agriculture, even though the population will retain its demand for food products. The success of increasing yield of farm production through decreases in water allocation, which raises the value of water for agriculture, depends on the ability of the agricultural sector to conserve and increase efficiency.

The agricultural sector has already begun to meet this challenge. Although less water is used, output is increasing in volume and profitability, and with the right anticipatory action, it is extremely plausible that this success can continue. The World Bank and Central Government’s programs to re-line canals and help optimize the use of the surface water supply are counteracting inefficient water usage. By creating another water source for farmers to rely upon, this project might provide some relief for the falling ground water tables. This new water source will also help in boosting the already increasing standard of living associated with shifting to higher profitability cash crops. By increasing profit, these cash crops can increase the potential for farmers to invest in water saving techniques, even if the new crops require more water.
While it may seem counterintuitive to plant a higher proportion of water-intensive crops relative to crops that use less water, it is actually more productive for farmers. There are a variety of factors that must be taken into consideration, other than water, that affect crop profitability. Crop prices, for instance, vary across regions and fluctuate seasonally. Water-intensive crops are generally also high-value crops and labor-intensive, rather than land-intensive, which is well-suited for China’s competitive advantage in global agricultural markets. Water-intensive crops can also generally take advantage of irrigation-saving technologies such as drip irrigation and micro-sprinklers.

The categorical major problem within agriculture is the lack of volumetric water pricing. Farmers are charged per mu for water and therefore have no incentive to save irrigation volume. Without this incentive, individuals will not feel pressured to conserve, and this fact will continue to impede agricultural water conservation. Also, because farmers feel as though they cannot always rely on surface water delivery systems, they continue to insist on drawing ground water for irrigation. This project’s regressions conclude that areas where surface water is in higher proportions have higher efficiencies in farming, yet the dry Northwest region still overdraws water from the aquifers. This aspect of agriculture is in need of the governmental monitoring administered to industry. Without the incentives of a new pricing system, ground water tables and surface water supply will continue to decline, exacerbating the already scarce water supply.

Domestic:
Living in a water-scarce region, the urban residents in the Northwest use less water per capita than coastal urbanites, and this conservation increases the overall water efficiency of this region. The major improvement surrounding domestic water is surely the increase of wastewater treatment plants. Unfortunately, the majority of domestic wastewater comes from the vast multitude of small towns and villages, where wastewater treatment plants are harder to justify. Most large municipalities are on a schedule to solve their urban wastewater problems, but without a comprehensive network of treatment, the expansive minor waterways will continue to degrade.

The cities are also encouraging conservation through pricing incentives and educational campaigns. In Xian, the local government is implementing a gradual water price increase of .5 RMB per year over three years and putting stricter regulations on the over-use of water, but only a small percentage of China’s population is impacted by
these movements. Some local government offices, NGO’s and student
groups are attempting to promote education programs in water saving
techniques, but these movements are slow to show results.

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Malaysia Truly Asia: Reflections on the 2004 Fulbright Hays Study Tour

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Abstract

This reflective and scholarly essay represents the culmination of a Fulbright Hays and East West Center study tour directed by Drs. Barbara and Leonard Andaya in summer 2004. It is an attempt to reconcile the connections between East and West, by reflecting on complex national identities, traditional and modern cultures, and the geography of Malaysia, a country that seeks to cast itself as most representative of Asia. By drawing on the experience of travel in Malaysia, lectures from the study tour, articles and books published by the lecturers, and additional scholarship, it appears evident that Malaysia rightfully lays claims to its new worldwide image of being “truly Asia.”

The *Aurea Chersonesus* of Ptolemy, the “Golden Chersonese” of Milton, the Malay Peninsula of our day, has no legitimate claim to an ancient history. The controversy respecting the identity of its Mount Ophir with the Ophir of Solomon has been “threshed out” without much result, and the supposed allusion to the Malacca Straits by Pliny is too vague to be interesting.¹

Again and again, while traveling in Greece two summers ago, I saw the same advertisement that had aired on television the summer before when I was visiting Southeast Asia. The ad promoted tourism in “Malaysia truly Asia”; that is, when visiting Malaysia you will meet at an intersection of many different Asian cultures and peoples, and it is this country that effectively fulfills this bill. I saw this same ad while participating in an East West Center and Fulbright Hays Study Tour of Malaysia and Indonesia

in summer 2004. Hoping to link East and West, idealistically I proposed to go on the study tour with an eye for picking out the colonial imprint of the British on this region. I specifically planned to look for iconic, sacred, and secular architectural designs that crossed from West to East through religion, government, trade, and industry. Prior research helped me to understand that beginning in the eighteenth century, many trade goods, especially tea, lumber, spices, and silk, were transported from Southeast Asia to London, that great imperial city of the nineteenth century. While glimpses of the colonial West are occasionally apparent, the modern world is more starkly evident in Kuala Lumpur (KL), where the tour began. Perhaps, it is the contrasts between the traditional and colonial mixing with the modern that helps us to best understand the meaning of this country’s worldwide advertising scheme.

Imbued with my studies of the age of Victoria, I approached KL through the lens of an English-speaking person, going for the first time to the Straits Settlement. I was quickly disabused of my arrogance as I learned I had little awareness of this Southeast Asian region. After arriving at a state of the art Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), I was especially disoriented and unprepared for the cosmopolitan city in which I found myself. I think the depth of my appreciation for and comprehension of what I saw, heard, tasted, and smelled depended first on some prior knowledge of Asia, in my case Myanmar. The highly gifted scholars, Barbara and Leonard Andaya, walked me through this space as my knowledgeable guides. We visited Malaysia’s universities, met faculty, and learned about the peoples, culture, and government of Malaysia. We traveled from south to north, visiting Melaka, Perak, Penang, and Kelantan Province. Touring tea plantations in the Cameron Highlands, we also trekked through jungles. Nonetheless, the learning curve proved steep for those of us with little historical or cultural awareness of these aged geo-political regions; Malaysia is clearly more complex than Myanmar.²

Although I think, as an historian, to be a good historian, one needs to cultivate a sort of nostalgic sensibility or aesthetics, just to be drawn into their subject. I also think if you are an able historian, you are quickly disabused of your nostalgia for a long-gone and happy era by your quick recognition of the political, social, and religious powers that transform

cultures. Hence, I recoiled when seeing the golden arches selling Magna Macs, borrowing from Samuel P. Huntington, appearing on every street corner in KL. Further, I did not wish to be identified as a muscular American moving through the streets of Asia, ever so confident of my “right” to be there in the first place; or that I was spying or investigating this distant cultural zone. I realized I was in a new space, an Islamic country, so I transitioned to a more cautious approach, as I gingerly stepped out of myself and began to move into a new world. At first overwhelmed, I carefully picked my way through the maze and slowly acculturated by learning on a day-by-day basis about this new and complex sphere of humanity.

Since I based my project on investigating the secular and sacred spaces, along with accompanying iconic architecture, I strained to find colonial architecture and public spaces, manicured boxwood gardens, arches, columns, colonnaded buildings, railroad stations, symmetrical and well-planned boulevards, and graceful, beautifully appointed hill station homes of which Graham Greene and Somerset Maugham write. I wanted to find these kernels of familiarity, something to hang onto, eureka moments you might say. Ahh! Yes, this reminds me of the iconic Arches of Titus, Septimius Severus, and Constantine in Rome, Marble Arch in London, or the Arc de Triomphe in Paris; perhaps the Column of Trajan in Rome or even better Lord Nelson’s Column in Trafalgar Square. Similarly, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, British and American readers learned about Malaya through the vicarious modality of reading. They read explorers’ journals. For example, the late Victorian journalist Isabella L. Bird not only toured the American West, she also spent five weeks traveling and writing about what she saw there in The Golden Chersonese: and the Way Thither. Readers also experienced Malaya via East India Company accounts and the London Times, where reports of Parliamentary Select Committees published their findings. Of course, this was the practice of all government bureaucrats in the age of Victoria: to collect, categorize, itemize, and atomize bits of

information from the colonies. British Blue Book compilers used the same frameworks of analysis for England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, especially in regards to the poor.

From past to present, Malaysia’s mixing of peoples, religions, and cultures, appears relatively harmonious. Looking a bit deeper, there are hairline and occasionally deep crevices that need to be bridged. For instructions on the past, understanding how British colonials constructed ‘Malayness’ and how Malaysia is faring in the twenty-first century, I turned first to A.B. Shamsul, who provided us with a very interesting lecture on Malaysia. Shamsul’s scholarly lecture lured me in as he turned to Bernard Cohn, Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British Rule in India. Shamsul demonstrated how Cohn’s thesis might help us to also understand our own travel activities. Cohn and then Shamsul argued the British constructed investigative modalities or devices to collect facts in order to “conquer epistemological space” in India, Burma, and Malaya. Cohn, seconded by Shamsul, identified these modalities as ‘investigative,’ ‘historiographical,’ ‘survey’ing,’ ‘numerative,’ ‘surveillance,’ ‘museological,’ and ‘travel,’ as expressed in the Colonial and Foreign Office documents. Indeed, we, as part of the Fulbright Hays travelers, although self-conscious of our mission, fell into these categories, especially the travel, surveillance, and museological modalities.

Given its history, as a crossroads of peoples, it is sometimes difficult to unravel the epistemological space of Malay identity. Upon arrival, the Andayas and several guest lecturers claimed aptly that contemporary Malaysia is a multi-ethnic society. By numbers and percentages the primary social groups are Malays, Chinese, and Indians, and within each group, there are additional subsets. For example, among Indians, Tamils comprise a certain percentage of the Indian population. The majority population, the Malays constituting sixty-two percent, is identified as bumiputera, translated into English as “sons of the soil.” Under this category fall those who identify themselves either as having Malay ancestry, or who lived for generations in the Archipelago. By

proportion of ethnicity in the country, the Chinese comprise twenty-
four percent, Indians another seven percent, with an additional seven
percent classed as “others.”

In several provocative essays, A.B. Shamsul sought to solve questions
relating to Malayness. We were told repeatedly that “malayness” was
constructed. In pre-colonial times, Malay identity was and remains
wrapped up in *bahasa*, or language, *raja* or the ruler, and *dan agama*
or religion. By 1891, the colonial census identified three categories,
Malay, Tamils, and Chinese. The Malay identity gathered steam when
the first newspaper printed in this language was published in 1907. In
1913, the Malay Reservation Enactment provided a legal definition
of ‘Malay’; first determined by culture, then by custom, religion, and
language. In 1963, with the formation of the Federation of Malaya,
new considerations broadened the sweep of Malayness, when the term
*bumiputera*, was coined to accommodate Malays, native Muslims, and
non-Muslims of Sarawak and Sabah. There are no less than three and
maybe more constructions of Malay identity. For some, Malay is what
South Asians and the Chinese called the people of the Archipelago,
and Malay is what the colonizers called the inhabitants of the Melaka
Straits. “Malay” is also what inhabitants call themselves. More closely
defined, Malays speak *bahasa Malay*, identify themselves as Muslims in
the Shafi’i branch of Sunni Islam, and follow a set of social and cultural
codes known as *adat*. Indeed, Shamsul ably showed us various social
categories have their origins in the framework of a colonial agenda. For
Shamsul, the term Malay is embedded in the *kampung* or village, of
which epistemological space, both secular and sacred, is comprised.

To take this paper beyond Cohn and Shamsul, there are many possible
analytical forms, which could form scaffolding for a discussion. I wish

and ‘Chineseness’ from the Perspective of a Malay” in Ethnic Relations and Nation-
Building in Southeast Asia, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian
Studies, 2004), 116.
12 Michael G. Peletz, “Sacred Texts and Dangerous Words: The Politics of Law
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to raise two questions. First, how can we come to better understand the role of sacred, secular, and epistemological space as it is situated in the kampung or village? Secondly, what can we learn from the lived or secular and sacred spaces of a region, to what extent does this information reflect or does not reflect on Malayness? Although this distinction may be simplistic, it is for understanding and discussion that we may use this framework of analysis. Place is important; the people who live there carve out their particular social and cultural identities; and the ways in which they achieve this code remains equally important. The social designation, by a core group, of physical space as sacred, political, military, commercial, or environmental, sheds light on values, customs, and the political power or purchasing capital of the society. The power to control economic or productive space is witnessed in Malaysia in the marking of durian trees as part of the family legacy by the orang asli, the development of new rubber plantations, the rise of a modern complex of government buildings, and the expansion of a high-tech engineering corridor. Clearly, embedded in the landscape of this multi-ethnic geopolitical configuration of a country, are sacred spaces, including the Batu Caves, the Putrajaya Mosque, and the Church of Saint Paul in Melaka. The landscape of sacred and important spaces in Malaysia is also part of the construction of social identity; helping us to understand the intersection between identity and the political spheres in which Malays live.

Historians have tended to regard the rise of a great entrepôt, Melaka, on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, as a strongly identifiable starting point for Malay history. This peninsula drew many people, because it served as a mid-way point between China and India. First, to arrive were the indigenous peoples, the sea people or orang laut, who have since disappeared, and have been outlived by the orang asli. In Malaysia, indigenous peoples are known as the orang laut, or sea peoples, and orang asli, or original peoples. While the orang laut disappeared, their

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counterparts, living in the interior, are known as the *orang asli*.\(^{16}\) In the past, the seafaring peoples, and presently the *orang asli* or indigenous peoples, were categorized as “those who live in the Archipelago.”\(^ {17}\) The *orang asli* are the key to understanding the history of the Archipelago over the longue durée. The indigenous peoples traded with many travelers who passed through the Melaka Straits while en route to points south and east, and then north. Some scholars believe Chinese sailors in search of gold, tin, and exotic forest products, arrived in the Straits by 200 B.C.E.\(^ {18}\) Indian sailors searching for gold arrived around 300 C.E. They brought Mahayana Buddhism and Hinduism to the archipelago. Arab traders seeking spices may have arrived as early as the fifth century, but the verity of the arrival of Islam is validated by tombstone markings dating from the fourteenth century. The first Western Europeans arrived in the sixteenth century. In 1824, the Anglo-Dutch treaty drew the line between Sumatra and Melaka on the Malay Peninsula. This settlement, a crossroads for trade and piracy, opened the way for further European establishments, including a British colony, British government, businesses, and partnerships. Favorable relationships continued until 1957, when Malaysia received her independence.\(^ {19}\)

Superimposed on the British footprint is a rapidly developing and modern urban environment in KL, which carries deep ramifications, especially relating to epistemological space and its representations. That is, what does it mean to be “Malay,” or what does it mean to be “Malaysian?” living in a cityscape? In geo-political terms, strategically located inland from the Straits of Melaka and the South China Sea, KL is Malaysia’s largest city. It is strikingly modern, and its city fathers have the wisdom to pay close attention to historical sites, although not to the degree most architectural historians and public historians would accept. This historical space, a panache of contrasts, features wide open and narrow streets buzzing with traffic. At the heart of the city, divided by ‘lots’, is the iconic Meredeka or Independence Square, which has a gazebo, statues, a fountain, and manicured tropical garden. Within a short distance, and protected by an expanse of close-clipped grass, is a


complex of colonial government buildings. These are situated within close proximity to the Royal Selangor Club; all of these structures bear the mark of British architectural design, bricks. The Royal Selangor Club, named for Malaysia’s famous silver ore, has a wide-faced façade that appears imperial in a modest way, not drawing on Georgian architecture, but rather turning, quite surprisingly to Tudor design, reminiscent of black and white work in Germany. The British architect for the Supreme Court buildings, just across the street from the Royal Selangor Club, drew on Moorish designs. These buildings, still serving the government and society, are perhaps among Malaysia’s most important architectural attractions for tourists.

According to the United Nations Development Program website, as of February 2005, 25 million people called Malaysia home, with an anticipated population growth to 32 million by 2015. KL is designated as one of twelve mega city centers in the world. It acquired this attribution through intensive state planning that originated with Prime Minister, Dato Sri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad’s 2020 “world first” - high-tech and economic development super corridor plan, announced on 1 August 1996. Mahathir proposed to take Malaysia into the twenty-first century on a variety of planes, in order to compete with China. The success of plan 2020 could not be more omnipresent, because from the time you arrive at KLIA, you step foot into a bustling city center, filled with shops, peoples, and connected to the suburbs by a high-speed monorail. The plan, now almost completed, included a Multi-media Super Corridor or “MSC,” which is a high tech development zone spanning KL from north to south.

A modernistic skyscape is forming in Malaysia’s largest city. Gracing the skyline is the fourth tallest communications tower in the world, which looks very much like the BBC tower in London and houses a restaurant at its top. Included in the MSC on the north side of the

21 See Bunnell, Malaysia, Modernity and the Multimedia Super Corridor, 1; and R. S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, Malaysian Politics under Mahathir (New York: Routledge, 2002).
city are the Petronas Twin Towers. Conquering physical space in the sky, by constructing the world’s tallest building as part of an accelerated government development program, was undoubtedly part of Mahathir’s vision. Dwarfting the Column of Trajan in Rome at 98 feet high, and Nelson’s Column in London standing at 185 feet, both celebrating military victories, the Petronas Towers evoke the minarets of a mosque expanded to sky-high proportions. The Petronas Towers shoot into the sky at 1,483 feet, with 32,000 windows, celebrating the commercial achievements of Malaysia in the late twentieth century. The twins were surpassed in 2004, when the Taipei 101, at 1,670 feet, opened for business. Shopping or simply window-shopping in a highly polished granite and glass setting appears to be a favorite pastime in KL. Disorientation is quite possible, because it is difficult to determine your exact location whilst inside the tall structures. The degree to which Malays have turned to this commodified space is perhaps a little puzzling, given the devotion to Islam, which is often overtly apparent in the fashion of dress in the general population. Indeed, the Towers are so very Western one would be hard-pressed to say whether or not they were in a shopping mall in Los Angeles or West Chester County, New York.

Indeed, the Mahathir government utilized capital development funds to implement its political goals, as part of its 2020 vision for the future of Malaysia. On the south side, near KL International Airport, 2020 planned and implemented the construction of two expansive communities, Putrajaya the government zone, and Cyberjaya the economic development zone. Theoretically, these areas borrow from the idea of a village or kampung. Putrajaya was designed following neighborhood designs and planned so as to increase social interaction. Cyberjaya, the adjacent industrial park with accompanying living spaces,
which are all programmed to be “smart homes” and served by “smart schools,” is equally impressive.

In a country where the secular and sacred are intertwined at the upper echelons of government, separating the messages represented in the architecture and city plans may be daunting. Eco-friendly Putrajaya is the administrative center of Malaysia, where massive government buildings, costing $1.3 billion and including the Prime Minister’s office, are built atop a hill overlooking long tree-lined and manicured boulevards, and have been constructed to impress, to overwhelm visitors, and to last for 100 years.29 The building has a European design, reminiscent of Versailles, but it is topped with three blue onion-shaped domes and banked by walls of fountains. The new marble and granite interior is softened with dramatic murals depicting women in traditional garb participating in everyday life activities. Opposition to such extravagance was expressed as follows: “It is bigger than the White House and 10 Downing Street put together.”30

The unity of the state and religion in Malaysia is sometimes difficult to separate and compartmentalize. In this country, mosques dominate all other sacred spaces in size and magnificence. The architectural design of these structures has a European ancestry, from the Pantheon in Rome to Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. In KL, the Masjid Jamek is within walking distance of the city’s colonial district. This mosque, designed by a British architect and constructed with red brick and marble, follows a North Indian architectural plan. Completed in 1909, its construction was funded by the Sultan of Selangor. From the outside, with its five gilt domes reflecting the sun back into the sky, the Sultan of Perak’s mosque in the silver state is a celebration of the spirit of Allah. The mosque is at the heart of the ummah, a fundamental concept in Islam, which expresses the essential unity and theoretical equality of Muslims across diverse cultural and geographical settings.

Mode of dress is a cultural practice that has the capacity to mask individualism and limit diversity. Since this was my first foray into an Islamic country, the first point of interest to me as an American who thought it extremely hot and humid, was the fact that Muslim women dress very modestly, as they are covered from head to toe usually in loose fitting clothing, ideally made of silk. Muslim women wear at the very

least a tudong, a headscarf drawn tightly about the face; more devoted women wear the hijab or loose fitting clothing with the scarf covering the chin. This marked clothing design may make an American feel ever so self-conscious when walking the streets in a sleeveless dress. The hijab and tudong are required apparel for entering local prayer rooms, or surahs, where Friday prayers are chanted. While visiting religious buildings, women were provided with these basic coverings, so we could safely enter the sacred space in all humility. Separating secular from sacred space in Malaysia is integrally connected to dividing oneself off for prayer. For devout Muslims, prayer five times a day is a requisite behavior. Prayer does not require attendance at a mosque; but when the faithful go to the religious centers, all women don the hijab and every person removes their shoes before entering. All worries about personal belongings left at the door are banished because shoes are watched over by two fellows stationed outside the mosque, whom I will call the “shoe protectors.” In the secular sphere, in order to encourage piety, hotel rooms also include a prayer rug and a green arrow pointing in the direction of Mecca.

While visiting Putrajaya, we stopped at one of the country’s largest mosques, which had been designed and constructed in tandem with homes in the MSC, or high tech corridor. In Putrajaya, a wealthy sector of the Malay population, homes of the wealthiest citizens are situated closest to the mosque, located within hearing distance of the call to prayer, and near the large mosques where Friday prayers are recited. After taking in the 116 meter minaret standing to the side of the building which has five tiers representing the pillars of Islam, men and women in our group removed their shoes, and women put on coverings, the tudong and hijab supplied by the community to ensure modesty.31 The main entrance of the Putrajaya mosque was designed in a pattern reminiscent of the gates of a palace in ancient Persia. Upon entering the sacred space of the mosque, which can accommodate as many as 15,000 members of the ummah, I felt as though I was enwrapped in the largess of the spirit of God. All marble and granite, the building takes its cues from others in the Middle East, as it features tall windows, wrapping along the sides of the room and softly illuminating the building’s interior, while large, round chandeliers hang from the ceiling. Long strips of pastel-

toned carpeting covered the floor; twelve square pink granite columns supporting the thirty-six meter wide dome, punctuated the space. To put the Putrajaya dome into context, the one in Saint Peter’s Basilica is forty-two meters, while the dome of the Pantheon is forty-two and two tenths meters in diameter. On the wall facing Mecca is a graduated arch, blending Gothic and Romanesque architecture together. Telescoping back into the wall is the qibla, situated in a niche, the sort of space a statue of the Virgin Mary might occupy in a Roman Catholic Church. The qibla, simply marking the direction for prayer, and paling in comparison to the awesome area surrounding its site, featured surrounding walls adorned with gold leaf calligraphy proclaiming, “There is no god but God” and “Mohammed is the messenger of God.” A paneled glass wall wraps around the room, providing an ambulatory, opening access to other areas, where ablutions are made by men, a courtyard celebrates the life of Muhammad, and the library is maintained. And so in this sense, sacred architecture of the Islamic world brings traditions of the West to the East in a very apparent fashion.

Although Islam dominates colonial and post-colonial landscapes, the government permits more than one belief system to flourish; however, it keeps a cap on the power of alternative belief systems through laws. The legal system is frequently cast as pluralistic to emphasize the diversity of its practices. The first is Malay customary law, the second is Islamic law, and the third is national, statutory, or government law, which was introduced by the British in the late nineteenth century. Therefore, we are able to find more than one expression of spirituality or the sacred in space and place. If the Malay government were truly hegemonic, then we would have seen only Islamic spaces in the forms and shapes of mosques and surahs. But, this was not the case, and this is what makes Malaysia a most fascinating subject for discovery; here one can find the intersection of animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity with Islam.

We traveled out of KL to “see” or “visit” the orang asli in the district of Batu 16, Gombak. According to Dr. Julie Edo, there are eighteen to nineteen identifiable groups. The orang asli comprise less than one

33 Peletz, “Sacred Texts and Dangerous Words,” 69.
34 Bunnell, Malaysia, Modernity, and the Multimedia Super Corridor, 122.
percent of the Malaysian population. Of that small number, about
twenty percent are Christian and thirty-five percent are Muslim, but
many retain certain elements of their traditional lifestyle. Those who
converted to Islam, it is thought, succumbed in some way to the 2020
modernization plan forwarded by Mahathir. The remainder of
the community may be classified as animists. I accompanied the Fulbright
Hays group on a visit to a group of people living in the jungles outside
KL. Indeed, I would not find manicured boxwood parks in their midst,
because this shrub would be challenged by the climate just two degrees
north of the Equator. Rather we found small communities living under
the umbrella of very tall trees that provide shade from the equatorial
sun. The orang asli harvest wild plants and herbs, cultivate fruit trees,
and maintain an intimate relationship with the environment, especially
durian trees. Durian trees may mark a sacred site, as these people believe
spirits may inhabit them; but this is also a possibility with banyan trees.
Spaces under them may have been set-aside as burial sites, and from
this, “special” powers may be attributed to the shaded area underneath
the tree.\footnote{35} In addition to the beneficent spiritual attributes, the durian is
known throughout Southeast Asia as the king of fruit. It holds first place
in the palates of the original peoples; each tree is owned by a family in their
forest kampong, which after having been given individual identities, the
durian tree is named and passed on as inheritance from one generation
to the next. A panoply of fruits, such as sweetsop, soursop, longan, and
rambutan, complements the durian harvest in June and July. While
visiting the home of a hospitable member of this community, we feasted
on these wonderful and very sweet Southeast Asian treats.

Traditional orang asli homes sit upon stilts, about eight feet from
the ground. The structures, framed with wood, paneled with reed mats,
and roofed with palm leaf, also have a front porch accessed by climbing
a ladder; a missing ladder indicates family absence. The homes are
darkened with kerosene soot, poorly ventilated, and without permanent
room dividers, indicating the communal nature of the people. The
nomadic elements of the orang asli population live in homes that are
thatched and built on the ground; they live with dirt floors. These small
and disappearing populations of the orang asli survive as hunters and
gatherers. As nomads, they roam about, because they believe if they stay

\footnote{35 I wish to thank Dr. Barbara Andaya at the University of Hawaii for important
clarifications on keramat and its relationship to durian and banyan trees.}
in one location too long, the animals will either leave or take revenge. Although we did not visit this kind of a homestead in Malaysia, we stopped at a village on Sumatra, where the community opened their doors to our group. As the world of the orang asli stands at risk from aggressive developers, it was rather poignant to visit their homes.

Our host’s dwelling was built of cement block with a tin roof and compartmentalized rooms. This according to Colin Nicholas, coordinator of the Center for Orang Asli Concerns (COAC), signaled that the family had converted to Islam and assimilated government development initiatives embedded in Vision 2020.36 Since 1950, the orang asli have been receiving health care, yet they still depend on traditional healers and herbal treatments. Their shamans try to use psychology to kill or defeat sickness; and it is here that we share in their humanity, as we know that illnesses are frequently brought on by emotional and psychological upsets. Like everyone else in Malaysia, the orang asli live within reach of preventive health care and medical services, which operate under the 2004 Ministry of Aborigines and Rural Development. In view of the political elite, the original peoples were not overlooked when Mohammed Mahathir implemented his revolutionary Vision 2020.

It is human to seek relief from suffering; while the original peoples turn to animism, others in Malaysia, while looking to the future, retain their trust in Allah or Buddha. Elements of pre-Islamic traditions mark the landscape in the form of various sized shrines known as keramat. The keramat, marking a sacred space and remembering a hero and their significance in the life of the community, take the form of a tree, stone, or small altar, and appear in front of homes and along roadsides. Islamic, Chinese, and Indian communities all sacralize spaces outside the perimeter of temples or mosques.

Within KL there is a large Indian community, many of whom are employed in business, medicine, and legal services. The Indian business district is located on Ampang Street; you know you are in this secular space first by the aromatic smells of Indian cooking and second by the architecture. There, you will find moneylenders, silk venders, and Indian restaurants. As seven to eight percent of the population, Indians

in Malaysia comprise diverse groups, mainly distinguished by language and the part of India from which they immigrated. The majority of Indians in Malaysia are Tamils; but there are also Malayalis, Telugus, Punjabis, Gujaratis, and Sindhis. These disparate communities are divided into as many as eighty-three castes. The Malayalis are primarily Roman Catholic; while most of the Tamils, Telugus, Gujaratis and Sindhis are Hindus. Punjabis mainly follow Sikhism.37

Their sites of worship fall under four categories: cathedrals, community temples, caste temples, and crisis shrines. Crisis shrines are thought to be sacred, because miraculous events allegedly occurred there. Hindus of all castes and backgrounds attend these sacred sites, because the space is associated with curative properties. In KL, the most important Indian ceremony of the year, Thaipusam, begins at the Sri Mariamman Temple, which is a building located in the Indian business district. A pyramidal tower of colorfully painted Hindu deities graces the facade. From this temple an annual pilgrimage is made, with the faithful carrying Lord Marugan in a chariot to the Batu Caves. These caves, the most likely example of a crisis shrine, and a very impressive sacred space hallowed by the Indian community, are situated high up on the side of a mountain thirteen kilometers from KL.38 After climbing the 272 steps, passing statues of Lord Krishna, Shiva, Ganesha, and Lord Marugan along our way, we finally reached the top, only then to descend into a series of three caves, each lit by niches of candlelight and daylight, which pour in through crevices sliced into the rocky face of the mountain. Macaque monkeys, flitting by from time to time, inhabit the caves. Faithful Hindus celebrate the festival of *Thaipusam*, which honors the son of Siva, in late January or early February. This feast involves a penitential ritual. Somehow, the appropriation of nature’s complex rock formations as a sacred space links us to an interior tie with the past, a time before the building of walled cities and massing of armies. Another place known for sacred caves is Vietnam, where Buddhists have taken over natural spaces in the Marble Mountains overlooking Danang. By

37 Thanks to Vijayan Ramachandran for his comments on this particular aspect of Indian demographics in Malaysia.

situating sacred sites within caves, this practice touches and enables the human desire to reach mysterious and dim parts of ourselves, in order to come to a better understanding of life and our place in it.

According to a 1992 government publication, Melaka is a symbol of the ancient capital of Malaysia, while KL, with its Petronas Towers, Cyberjaya and Putrajaya, represent the modern capital of Malaysia.\(^\text{39}\) Overlooking the Straits of Melaka is the historic town of Melaka, a classic colonial town, whose residents have taken it upon themselves to develop this site for tourism. This urban sphere exhibits multiple faces of Malaysian identity, from the religious traditions of the pre-colonial sultanate, to the Christian and European communities, to the Chinese immigrants.\(^\text{40}\) Here in Melaka, I found what I was straining to see, tangible influence of colonial powers on Malaysia. For the first time, at the gates of the Formosa Fort, I saw the figure of a sculpted angel. This angel hangs above an arch, with wings extended from its shoulders, resembling Niké, companion of Athena or the spirit of victory, who promised success in battle. Both Romans and later Christians utilized angels, as exemplified by the winged angel prominently located atop Rome’s Castel Sant Angelo. The sculpted bas-relief angels here are posed watchfully over a gate. Atop the hill and overlooking the Straits of Melaka, an abandoned Portuguese fort and the Church of Saint Paul represent European colonial ambitions to control this important passageway from the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea. The mission church stands roofless, while vacant windows open to the world. Lids of tombstones commemorating those who died of malaria while trying to secure the site for the Portuguese are propped up against the walls of the stone structure. This sacred, if open space, achieves its important status because the body of Saint Francis Xavier laid in rest there for eight months before being transported to Goa, India. Melaka is also home to Saint Peter’s Church, the oldest Christian church in Malaysia, and Christ Church built by the Dutch in 1753. European inroads are reflected quite clearly as the location of Christ Church, all painted in red simulating red brick, is located on the “piazza” of Melaka.\(^\text{41}\)

\(^\text{39}\) For an especially perceptive account of Malayness, the kampung, and the Chinese in Melaka, see Nigel Worden, “‘Where It All Began’: the Representation of Malaysian Heritage in Melaka,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7 (2001): 218.

\(^\text{40}\) Worden, “‘Where It All Began,’” 199.

Spirituality in the Buddhist sense is enclosed; it is within one’s self that Enlightenment occurs, which may explain why Chinese temples in Melaka were so significant and inviting to us as academics. I think many in our group were most interested in Buddhism as a component of Asian studies. We are academics. We lead a life in which both our world and our reality take place in our intellects; we practice the life of the mind; thus, I think Buddhism is implicitly attractive to many of us.

There is an active neighborhood restoration movement in Melaka; I thought this was remarkable and indicated community spirit. Our guides through the Chinese neighborhood were enthusiastic and proud of their accomplishments in a country that is widely Islamicized. At the same time, the Chinese of non-Malay heritage are minimalized in their cultural status.\(^\text{42}\) In 1645, Lee Wei King founded the Temple of Cheng Hoon Teng, the oldest temple still serving the *sangha*, or Buddhist community. Significantly, the restored temple complex is situated in Peranakan, a neighborhood occupied by Chinese residents, many who are known as *Baba Nyonya*, a mixed community of Malay, or highly Malayized Chinese. The entrance to the Cheng Hoon Temple is profoundly interesting because of the artistically assembled multi-colored pieces of porcelain plates, which form the figures of spiritual protectors, and have been cut and cemented together; these are highly memorable: red, green, blue and yellow, blue and white, brown and white; these bright colors contribute to the energy of the engaged artwork. The rooftop curves upward, and yet you are drawn toward the interior. The temple compound occupies 50,000 square feet and includes altars to Guanyin, the Buddha, Ma Choe Poh, Queen of the Oceans, and Confucius.\(^\text{43}\) Multiple shrines dedicated to other sentient beings, include a pack of little dogs standing on their hind legs and dressed in yellow robes, strategically placed under a red lacquered table. Her puppies surrounded the mother dog; and her devotees provide small food and water bowls. A silver urn filled with sand and incense sticks sat atop the table; while a large, dark-red-lacquered bell, adorned with medallions in silver and gold, dominated the space in an adjacent room. A set of humanoid statues topped another table, representing life stages.

\(^{42}\) Worden, “‘Where It All Began,’” 218.

Obviously, a sacred space as interesting as this drew pious neighbors on a Saturday morning. Those visiting the site stopped to light long-red-tapered candles, or to drop a few coins in a box for purchase of incense. They proceeded without fanfare, each bowing three times to the Buddha and his attendants, while also offering prayers for assistance and in remembrance of their ancestors. Preservation of this important site signals power sharing across community lines, a theme repeatedly stressed; yet it is clear that those who are not in the majority in Malaysia either adapt to the pressures of Malay society by holding their own communities together, as do the Indians and Chinese, or they get discouraged and emigrate. It is also clear that by maintaining religious shrines, such as the Cheng Hoon Temple and ensuring the success of Thaipusam, Indians, and Chinese will maintain their valuable stake in this complex and rich society.

Seeing the ad touting “Malaysia, Truly Asia” while studying in Greece and on the island of Crete, made the previous summer in Southeast Asia come back to life. The Greeks had an extensive trading system, reaching beyond the Near East. Building on Greek trade routes and traditions, Arab traders claimed their ancestral founder was Iskandr, or Alexander the Great when they arrived in the Archipelago. Connecting the two, East and West, crystallized when I learned how ancient Greek culture marked a nexus for peoples traveling from the Mediterranean to Asia.

After six weeks traveling through the Malay world, I came away enlightened and better informed, but I remain curious about this widely historical region of Southeast Asia, frequently framed as a crossroads of cultures. Indeed, uncovering the multiple meanings of secular and sacred space adds insight to political and cultural power structures. Perhaps, it is with integrity that Malaysian advertisers rightfully tout their claim of being a place that most exemplifies the term, “truly Asia.”

References


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On June 21st, 2006, fourteen professors from colleges and universities scattered all over the U.S. gathered at the East-West Center at the University of Hawai‘i in Manoa to begin a remarkable thirty-seven day adventure that would take them to Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and back to Honolulu. The participants, most of whom were representatives from among the twenty regional centers of the Asian Studies Development Program, were funded on this program by a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Grant designed to develop new curriculum modules for this important region.

Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei are remarkable and important targets of study for many reasons, not the least of which is their rapid economic development. As former British colonies and as developing countries, they have earned their reputations as participants in the Asian economic miracle. These countries are also notable in having constructed relatively high levels of social peace in societies that are characterized by deep ethnic, religious, and linguistic divisions. Malaysia is composed of three major ethnic groups: the predominantly Islamic Malays (55% of the population), the predominantly Buddhist Chinese (35%), and the largely Hindu Indians (10%). Singapore is predominately ethnic Chinese (77%) with significant populations of Indians and Malays. Brunei is predominantly Malay, with very small Chinese and indigenous communities. Ethnic warfare and religious conflict are all too common in the world, and the leaders of these countries have constructed policies which have allowed them to escape, for the most part, the strife that
unfortunately characterizes some of their neighbors.\textsuperscript{1} A major focus of our program, therefore, was to explore the dimensions of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity and to learn about the policies that have been devised to deal with them.

Our program involved both academic and experiential learning, and all of the experiences that were scheduled for the program were aimed at providing the participants with the knowledge, resources and experience to develop curricular materials on Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei for their teaching. In the thirty-seven days of our program we heard from thirty-four speakers.\textsuperscript{2} These included respected academics, leaders of NGOs, government officials, representatives of political parties, an educator-entrepreneur, a political affairs officer in the US Embassy in Singapore, the US Ambassador in Brunei, a prominent novelist, an environmental activist, the President of the Malaysian Aids Council, and a museum curator-anthropologist. Our speakers topics ranged from ethnic and religious and historical issues to economic development, education, relations with neighboring countries, social problems, literature, environmental issues, and politics. We spent on average 90 minutes with each speaker, leaving time for both a formal presentation and a free flowing interchange of questions and answers.

We also traveled extensively throughout the region, constantly boarding airplanes and buses, checking into and out of hotels, and packing, unpacking, and re-packing our suitcases again. This travel made it possible for us to experience the diversity of this region at first hand, and to observe and interact with a wide variety of people who were located in different and distinctive cultural communities. In each place, in addition to the formal presentations made by our speakers, we made site visits to places that reinforced and sometimes challenged the formal learning processes that were gained through our speakers.

In Singapore we visited two museums (including the Museum of Asian Civilizations), a Chinese Opera shop, a Mosque, an Indian Temple, a Chinese Temple, the Singapore Housing Development Board and some model public housing apartments, the US Embassy, and the Singapore National Parliament. In Malaysia, we visited two universities, an elementary school for indigenous minority children, several mosques and Indian and Chinese temples, former British hill stations, a tea plantation, a rubber plantation, a pewter factory, several

\textsuperscript{1} The Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar have all experienced significant and on-going ethno-religious conflict in recent decades.

\textsuperscript{2} This included our orientation and follow-up presentations in Honolulu.
museums (including the Islamic Museum, an anthropological museum and history museums), a Chinese clan house, a Chinese fishing village, a marine reserve, an orangutan wild-life reserve, a reconstructed village with houses representing all of the ethnic minorities in Sarawak (Borneo), and the National Parliament (in session) of Malaysia. We spent several days in Kuala Lumpur, the capitol of Malaysia, and also visited Kota Bahru (the provincial capitol of Kelantan Province, which is ruled by the conservative Islamic Party), Penang (a Chinese dominated city on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula), Malacca (a historic seaport in the straits of Malacca), and Kuching, the capitol of Sarawak in Borneo. In our two days in the Sultanate of Brunei, we visited the national university, a historical museum, a “water village,” two mosques, a teacher’s association, and the US Embassy.

During our travels, we watched three cultural performances of music and dance, observed a Hindu religious ceremony, and watched a temple performance of South Indian *bharatanatyam* dance. We ate in many different ethnic restaurants, visited craft markets in several regions, walked un-paved trails and rode on modern subway systems. We saw much of the small city-states of Singapore and Brunei and a great deal of the varied countryside of Malaysia, and thus directly experienced the terrain and constructed cultural spaces of Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei.

From this rich, varied, and at times almost overwhelming range of experiences, the members of the group distilled key aspects of what they learned and created curricular projects that are appropriate to their own disciplines. Five of these projects are included in this special section of *East-West Connections*.

Two of these papers examine economic development. Koushik Ghosh presents a case study approach for students in his World Economic Issues course in which students work together in groups to conduct basic research and give oral presentations to the class followed by individual papers on their cases. His curriculum project explains how this ties economic theory to relevant case studies, in this case a project on Malaysia. Abbas Noorbakhsh describes a curriculum project for his undergraduate introductory course in international business on globalization and its effects in Malaysia and Singapore. He discusses the definition, measurement and comparative effects of globalization, and explains how his case study helps students to understand how globalization impacts economically developing societies.

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3 Other projects from the trip are published in an online version of the journal.
Shudong Chen’s paper is a broad ranging, provocative article that challenges us to think about the far reaching implications and dimensions of Multiculturalism in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. He contrasts the attempts of governments in these countries to create a common national identity that simultaneously both protects and privileges ethno-national and ethno-religious communities. He argues that a common identity that respects diversity within the broader national culture should be rooted in a more critical understanding of history and language, and should be bound together by literature.

Faith Watson presents a module for a writing course on Singaporean author Catherine Lim (who was born and raised in Malaya) that also deals with language, and with the creation of literary works that portray themes of colonialism, the status of women, linguistic transmutation, education and religion. She includes a section on narrative voice, and provides detailed assignments, objectives and references that make this a very useful model for teaching about the complex cultures of Malaysia and Singapore, and especially the Chinese cultures in these countries, through literature.

Debra Majeed discusses the interconnections between gender and Islam in Malaysia, and presents a course module that is designed to play a central role in her course on Islam in Southeast Asia. She details how encounters with specific individuals, speakers and events in Malaysia shaped her understanding of Islam in Southeast Asia, her curriculum development, and her larger research interests. The curriculum project presents her learning outcomes and goals and details the procedures, methods and resources that she uses in teaching the module. Her project is a valuable contribution to those who teach comparative religion, and to any course that deals with the vitally important topics of Islam and women in Malaysia.

Taken together, these articles present us with a variety of approaches to understanding complex and interrelated social forces in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. Together with the projects developed by the rest of our colleagues on this program, they will help to shape a better understanding of an important but often neglected part of the world.

None of these projects would have been possible without the help and assistance of many people and institutions. First, the Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Grant made it financially possible for us to embark on this journey of discovery, and created an institutional framework that made it possible for us to arrange for the many speakers that addressed us to take time out of their busy schedules to meet with us. The great respect that people throughout the three countries
that we visited have for the Fulbright name opened many doors to us. Secondly, we owe a great debt of appreciation to our friends in the Malaysian-American Commission for Educational Exchange, including Dr. Donald McCloud, the Executive Director of MACEE, Ms. Meena Ponnusamy, and Ms. Sharifah Mariam for their vital assistance in arranging the academic part of our program, and for their help on numerous other issues. Our travel agent, Ms. Rena Chooi was a marvelous and absolutely essential help to us in arranging the complex and much amended travel itinerary for the program, and our tour guide in Malaysia, Mr. Paul Raj, showed us the true meaning of unselfish and seemingly endless patience, good humor, organization, and compassion. Ms. Aishah Ameran and the entire Brunei Malay Teachers Association in Brunei treated us with great hospitality and we are all grateful for the time, friendship and wonderful dining opportunities that they extended to us. Professors Barbara and Leonard Andaya from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Hawai‘i provided our group with an invaluable orientation, gave us all wonderful suggestions on our individual projects, and listened patiently to our stories and to our initial project proposals on our return from Singapore. We had a terrific group of participants, and the pleasure of their company made our sometimes difficult journey together enjoyable, interesting and always worthwhile. Finally, at every step of the way from grant writing, arranging and rearranging the endless details of the program, managing the day to day operations of the trip, through presenting our projects in conference papers, my friend and colleague Joseph Overton proved to be an indispensable and essential partner in this project.
Teaching World Economic Issues in the General Education Curriculum, with an Emphasis on Asian Case Studies.

Koushik Ghosh, Central Washington University

Introduction

The need for an education that includes the importance of international trade and the reach of globalization in a coherent form to all university students is an imperative of our times. However, most international economics texts rarely pay attention to the complexity of issues and problems facing individual nations. The problem is two-fold in that most international texts are focused heavily on theories, and that they are generally not easily adapted for teaching at the introductory level. Even in upper level international economics courses, students understandably complain about the inability to comprehend the relationship between basic theory, and real-world economic issues and problems. Since these theories often lead to confounding conclusions in the dynamic world of new technologies and rapidly increasing international trade, parsing the issues faced by individual nations has become a necessary building block for developing an understanding of this new phase of globalization. In this article, I describe a project to help general education students, who take an introductory course in World Economic Issues, write country/region reports, and make oral presentations.

Developing Country Reports

This project develops skills for connecting and analyzing data and recent news using basic economic theories. Students also learn how to do research, learn from reviews and critiques, prepare reports and develop creative skills in crafting presentations. Students are divided into groups in this course. Each group of students is allowed to pick a country, or a region, by the third week of the quarter. In presenting students with
a choice of countries, I focus on the themes that have dominated the media during the preceding six months. For example, in Fall 2004, I discussed China, India, the Middle East, and the European Union. Typically, five students are assigned to a region, or to a country, though that depends on the number of students in the course. On average, 40 students take the World Economics Issues course.

The project consists of three distinct phases involving initial data collection and writing, a proposal for the country report, as well as an oral presentation. A student is expected to refine and revise the initial proposal using my remarks and the remarks of other members of the group. During the oral presentation, other students are expected to analyze and evaluate the reports in the form of critiques. In the final phase, the students submit papers that also include a self-evaluation report which is reflective in style and discusses the entire process of initial proposal submission, crafting the presentation, as well as the peer review of the presentation.

The First Phase

In the first phase of the project, students are allowed to pick countries and write a one-page report. Usually, the process involves an initial group discussion and a few reading assignments in which students follow their instincts about countries that they may find interesting to them. They are required to find information about domestic and international economic indicators, geography and natural resources, history and political economy, the monetary system and trade as well as other relevant socio-economic issues.

The initial reading assignments are from texts in the area of comparative economic systems, popular magazines, such as the *Economist*, as well as web based articles. At this stage, students are broken up into groups of five. Students discuss the purpose as well as the scope of the project within their groups and decide how to divide up the work. While the entire group participates in the initial research, each member is ultimately assigned to one particular sub-category, within a country/region. The specific topics on a country/region may vary slightly, but are usually focused on geography and natural resources, history and political economy, the monetary system and trade and current economic issues.

Students generally experience a great deal of challenge at this stage as they find themselves inundated with material. They tend to discover that after the considerable search effort new difficulties arise in sorting data and narrowing focus. This generates discussion within the group and forces students to recognize the importance of sharing data sources,
which requires guidance in some cases. Students are encouraged to be consultative during this process. Creativity in style is also encouraged as is rigor in reporting references.

By the end of phase one, all groups meet with the instructor, and discuss the possibilities of improving their reports to create a coherent oral presentation. Transitions, common themes, and differences in emphasis with other groups are discussed at that point. Students in a group begin to discuss additional data collection, and presentation styles. This allows them to achieve a level of uniformity, and discuss ways of improving teamwork in order to achieve the maximum impact when making presentations.

Phase Two

In this phase, students engage in intense teamwork. They meet regularly as groups, and with the instructor, both in class, and outside class. Instructor feedback and peer evaluation of presentation slides are used to achieve “continuous improvement” of the presentation. It is ensured that group presentations have similar format, though a high degree of flexibility is allowed in the areas of content and style. Uniformity is also achieved as far as the length of each presentation is concerned.

Students are also required to share references and constantly update this information as their presentations evolve. This makes it possible for students to ask meaningful questions as they are required to pursue cross-country analysis during their presentations. By the end of this phase, students are typically ready to launch PowerPoint presentations on their assigned countries, or regions. Students are required to discuss a country’s basic features characterized by the monetary system, natural resources, imports, exports, trade partners, political system, as well as special economic features.

Phase Three

Phase 3 is divided into two parts. In the first part, students deliver oral presentations. Student peers are required to undertake cross-country analysis in the form of critiques. The questions allow students to evaluate the recent economic performance of their country relative to the economic performance of other countries. In that process, they are also able to comment on the differences in political economy, monetary systems, natural resources, and social structure. They can also analyze trends and the relative importance of different sectors in these countries, and make observations about the future.

In the second part of this phase, students complete a term paper using information from their entire presentation, initial reports, and critiques.
Students appeal to basic theories in economics, and a few specific theories in the area of international trade, as they organize the data, and interpret facts and issues. This is the stage at which students distance themselves from the team effort and begin to reveal their individual abilities, in terms of their grasp of the theories that are presented to them, and their ability to relate them to the facts and the real issues facing the countries they are studying. This is the stage at which students are trained to think independently. They are allowed to make recommendations as long as they base their interpretations and suggestions on the theories presented to them.

**Conclusion**

Teaching this course over the past decade has taught me that this is an excellent way to build appreciation of the complexity of economic issues, in an increasingly globalized world. I embarked on this journey, convinced of the need for such a course, which would be available to students across the university. However, I was not certain of my ability to deliver it efficiently. Despite students’ complaints about the labor intensity of the course, they also comment on its rewarding nature, thus vindicating my madness.

**Appendix A**

*Country Report: Phase 1*

**Purpose:** This assignment is designed to focus on and accurately portray a single country/region during this phase of your research.

**Assignment:** You are to collect information about foreign trade and other relevant domestic socio-economic indicators of the country/region assigned to you. It is imperative that you collect information on political systems, relevant history and economic resources.

**Format:** All information collected must be presented in a one-page report. Reports must be typed (single spaced). Five (5) identical copies of the report should be submitted for all three outputs (one-page report, term paper, and oral presentation). Your finished report should be a concise, clear, economic picture of the country. Accuracy, relevance of information, richness of sources and overall appearance all play significant roles in the report’s evaluation.

**Appendix B**

*Country Report: Phase 2 and 3:*

Oral Presentation and Term Paper
Revise your Phase 1 assignment and formalize into two outputs (term paper and oral presentation):

a. In Appendix D you are given two sample country report that gives some indication of what your report could look like.

b. The general format of your report (term paper and oral presentation) should include the following and rely on these guidelines:
   - Country name, “Country Reports,” and student name should appear as illustrated.
   - All information ass detailed in phase 1
   - Additional information or topics may be included if it is relevant to the assignment (example: default on foreign debts, capital market crash, housing boom, IT development).
   - The oral presentation must follow the guidelines that will be presented during the class demonstration.
   - All oral presentations must be created with PowerPoint and relate closely to the term paper.

c. All critiques must be developed using the guidelines presented in Appendix C.

Appendix C

Country Report:
Critiques
   - Assessment of strengths and weaknesses (style and content).
   - Draw comparisons with your country, by building on Phase 1 discussions.
   - Questions that you have for the presenter (suggest sources).

Appendix D

*Case Study:* “Eyes on Asia: Japan”
Presented by Economics 102.01, World Economic Issues
Names of Presenters

I. *Introduction*
   1. Monetary System
   2. Trade Partners
   3. Imports and Exports
   4. Other Socio-Economic Indicators
II. Historical And Geographical Background
1. Japan’s dependency on imported resources
2. Key events surrounding the Meiji Restoration
3. Japan’s current political structure

III. Economic Successes
1. Moral code
2. Kaisha: the corporate family
3. Beliefs in business contributing to success
4. Keiretsu: the business elite
5. Giant trading companies, and banks

IV. Economics Problems
1. Political problems
2. Why Japan is in trouble
3. What needs to be done
4. Possible solutions and the inherent disadvantages

V. The Future: The End Of Fiscal And Banking Woes

Case Study: “Eyes on Asia: Malaysia”
Presented by Economics 102.01, World Economic Issues
Names of Presenters

I. Introduction
1. Geography, Political and Monetary System (Straits of Malacca)
2. Trade Partners (India, China and the West)
3. Imports and Exports (Palm Oil, Semiconductors, and Islam Hadare)
4. Other Socio-Economic Indicators (Literacy, Health, Pluralism)

II. Historical And Geographical Background
5. Malacca’s Importance As A Trade Hub (Ref.: Janet Abu-Lugod)
6. Tamil traders from India and the Ming Voyages (Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice)
7. The arrival of the Arabs, and the European Colonists (0f Islam, Rubber and Tin)
III. Economic Successes
   8. Malaysia’s Role in ASEAN
   8. Palm Oil and other Commodities
   9. Penang and the Semiconductors
  10. Bio-fuels and Bio-tech
  11. Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC)

IV. Political-Economic Problems
  12. What happens when a plantation economy takes root (Palm Oil)
  13. Socio-ethnic division of labor and New Economic Policy (Malay’s, Indian’s, and Chinese)
  14. Islam and the State (The Iranian Model vs. The Mahathir Model)
  15. The Bhumiputera Issue : Affirmative Action for the Majority, Employing Islam
  16. Immigrant Labor (Indonesia and Philippines (Criminalization and an Underclass)

V. The Future: Vision 20-20: What About The Haze?
Globalization and its Challenges and Opportunities in Malaysia and Singapore: A Two-week Curriculum Project Taught in an Introductory Undergraduate Course in International Business

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Abstract

Globalization is perhaps the most important force that has been shaping the soci-economic landscape of many countries during the past decade or so. It is argued that although globalization forces might have contributed to faster economic growth in those countries but they have also created challenges such as unbalanced economic growth, inequality, and potential socio-political instability in those parts of the world. Singapore and Malaysia are among the fastest globalizing economies of the world. This project is an attempt to provide a curricular platform for discussing the opportunities and challenges faced by these two nations through the process of globalizing their economic systems. The discussion will take place as an integral part of an undergraduate introductory course in international business.

Introduction

I. Globalization

(Hannerz 1990) argues that “there is now a world culture, but we had better make sure that we understand what this means. It is marked by an organization of diversity rather than by a replication of uniformity. No total homogenization of systems of meaning and expression has occurred, nor does it appear likely that there will be one any time soon. But the world has become one network of social relationships, and between its different regions there is a flow of meanings as well as of people and goods.”

Rapidly increasing levels of interconnectedness among private citizens, business entities, and public and private institutions in
different countries have caused an extensive degree of cultural diffusion. Consequently, national cultural attributes, per se, may not sufficiently explain one’s behavior in today’s socio-economic environment. Hence, in the global environment, the effects of domestic culture on individual, corporate, and governmental decision-makings in a country cannot be accurately understood without considering the degree of globalization of that country. It is true that people may carry the traits of their own cultures, but their behavior can also be conditioned by their adherence to a set of global considerations. The more globalized the country they inhabit, the more effective those considerations might become.

(Stiglitz 2002) defines the phenomenon of globalization as “fundamentally the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world which has been brought about by the enormous reduction of costs of transportation and communication, and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and...people across borders.”

(Bhagwati 2004) recognizes economic, cultural, and communication aspects of globalization and argues that “economic globalization constitutes integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, direct foreign investment, (by corporations and multinationals), short-term capital flows, international flows of workers and humanity generally, and flow of technology...Such economic globalization is distinct from...increased international accessibility of print and other media [communication aspects]...or growing enrollment of foreign students [cultural aspects].”

The advantage of the economic aspect of globalization lies in its measurability because the readily available data for international trade and investment flows can be used as a proxy to measure the level of economic globalization or openness in a country. But measurement of economic integration is, to some extent, a myopic approach to globalization because it excludes other aspects of this phenomenon.

Utilizing A.T. Kearney / Foreign Policy Magazine approach and definition of globalization, this author, in collaboration with a colleague, has calculated a more comprehensive and operational measurement of globalization by combining data on four general indicators of globalization: “Political Engagement,” “Technology,” “Personal Contact,” and “Economic Integration.”

According to *A.T. Kearney / Foreign Policy Magazine*, “Political Engagement” is comprised of data on the number of memberships in international organizations, U.N. Security Council missions in which each country participates, and foreign embassies that each country hosts. “Technology” embraced the number of Internet users, Internet hosts, and secured servers. “Personal Contact” reflected international travel and tourism, international telephone traffic, and cross-border transfers. “Economic Integration” included data on trade, foreign direct investment and portfolio capital flows, as well as income payments and receipts. Based on those data categories, the following *Globalization Scores* were calculated for Singapore and Malaysia.

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<td>Malaysia</td>
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The Median globalization score in a sample of 60 countries during the period of 1996 – 2001 was 2.53. The lowest score was 1.33 (for Colombia) and the highest was 7.19 (for Ireland). As seen from the table above, Singapore and Malaysia, compared to other countries, are not only highly globalized but they also demonstrate an increasing trend for globalization over time, with higher scores during the more recent years.

II. Opportunities and Challenges of Globalization

Rapid globalization has created opportunities as well as challenges for the countries that have gone through this transformation process during the current decade or so. The following summarizes some of the most widely observed examples of those opportunities and challenges that are created by the globalization process.

**Rapid Economic Growth**

The more globalized economies have gone through faster process of privatization of publicly owned enterprises and deregulation and liberalization of their already protected economic sectors and institutions. Such socio-economic reforms would make it possible for the country to receive and absorb larger sums of foreign direct investment and short-term capital flows from multi-national companies and other public or private enterprises in the rest of the world.

Rapid inflow of the otherwise scarce funds would provide ample opportunities for general economic growth and reduction of unemployment rate amongst domestic population in those countries. Generally, more globalized economies may experience higher rates of
growth and employment than their peers who still prefer to maintain a relatively autarkic economic status.

**Unbalanced Economic Growth and Inequality**

It is often argued that despite potential economic growth, globalization would turn internal economic dynamics of a country into an integral part of much larger regional or global economic entities. Therefore, the benefits of faster economic growth may not necessarily acquire a broad-based constituency among domestic social groups in those countries. In other words, the fruits of economic growth caused by a higher level of globalization may unevenly be distributed among different economic sectors, regions, industries, and sections of the work force in those countries that experience the growth. In the absence of devised public policies to address the consequences of unbalanced growth, economic grievances of those who perceive themselves as underprivileged parties in the process of economic growth, may prepare a fertile ground for development of socio-political crises in those countries. The emergence of corruption among the ruling elite in countries that experience faster economic growth would also intensify the sense of frustration among those who are left behind in this process and would contribute to the severity of possible social crises.

**Modernity, Tradition, and Social Conflict**

Expansion of modernity and its institutions is one of the direct consequences of rapid globalization. Modern economic, social, political, and cultural institutions along with increasing forces of globalization gradually penetrate the thick walls of tradition in the countries that are targeted by those forces. Old values and belief systems which feel the forces of change may retaliate by igniting a resistance process to preserve the old order. Conflict between traditional social beliefs, institutions and groups and the modern forces of globalization can create a fertile ground for social instability and crisis. The guardians of the old order would try to mobilize masses of people under xenophobic banners to resist “cultural invasion.” The extreme cases of this social strife can demonstrate themselves in violent forms such as terrorism and other types of political radicalism. Consequently, possible backlash against forces of globalization caused by the conflict between modernity and traditional ways of life must become a matter of serious concern for social engineering plans that are carried out in globalizing economies.

**Curriculum Project**

I teach a course titled “Introduction to International Business on
a relatively regular basis. This project is going to occupy a two-week portion of that course which is offered in a regular academic semester. The project will focus on discussion of globalization and its implications for international business.

**Objective:** The objective of the project is to first provide a definition and alternative measurements of globalization and then discuss arguments made by the proponents and opponents of globalization. Class discussion and participation, short documentary video clips, guest speakers, lecture and power-point presentation are the main vehicles of delivering the contents to the classroom.

*The main conceptual questions of this section consist of:*
1. The meaning and definitions of globalization.
2. Historical perspective of globalization.
3. Historical episodes of globalization.
4. Modern concept of globalization in the context of the current debate (late 20th and early 21st Centuries.)
5. Privatization, economic liberalization and deregulation in post-cold war period.
6. Comparative globalization: Common measurements of globalization for a country.
7. Major arguments by anti-globalization groups.
8. What does further process of globalization offer a country?
9. Ecological and environmental issues related to globalization.

*Opportunities Offered by Globalization*
- Higher economic growth and employment.
- Larger amounts of Foreign Direct Investment.
- More portfolio investment and development of financial institutions.

*Challenges of Globalization*
- Problems caused by unbalanced economic growth and inequality.
- Social implications of economic inequality.
- Modernization of socio-economic institutions and challenges posed on traditional social institutions and groups in globalized economies.
- Possible ethnic and religious tensions caused by the process of globalization, economic growth, and modernization.
- The possibility of social and political conflicts.
Case Study: Malaysia and Singapore

Malaysia and Singapore have been demonstrating increasing degrees of globalization during the past decade. They are perceived to be highly globalized economies.

What opportunities and challenges do Singapore and Malaysia face? (Applying the conceptual model to these two countries.)

- Evidence relating to economic growth in Singapore and Malaysia will be discussed in class.
- Income distribution and ethnicity in Singapore and Malaysia.
- Poverty and social classes in Singapore and Malaysia.
- Modernization, religion, and political participation in Singapore and Malaysia.
- Promotion of Islam by the government, status of women and youth, modernization, knowledge-based economy, and globalization in Malaysia.
- Political institutions and democracy in Singapore and Malaysia.
- The challenge of religious fundamentalism and its reaction to rapid process of globalization in Singapore and Malaysia.

Students will be guided to collect the factual information about the aforementioned issues in Singapore and Malaysia and present them to their peers in the class. Discussions of the factual information will be led by the instructor. Finally, the students are asked to express their opinion about the potential opportunities and challenges facing those countries the future. Every opinion will be subject to evaluation by other in the classroom. The instructor will use his insight based on his experience in those countries to lead the discussion. This process will approximately take two weeks (six hours.) The first-year trial of this curriculum project will be used to possibly modify the number of allocated classroom hours in the future.)

References


Why do I teach humanities? Does it mean helping students to see the broadest possible picture of humanity or making them sensitive to cultural phenomena that reflect subtle but vital differences beneath well-observed similarities and essential but overlooked similarities behind noticeable differences? Does it mean teaching students to be critical and creative thinkers to enable them to detect and discover the richest possible connection of humanity where least expected or to find the road not taken not only beyond but also within the road well trodden? Does it also mean to teach students how to think locally as well as globally

1 For this wonderful learning experience, I am so grateful to George Brown and Joe Overton, our devoted and fearless leaders who truly knew how to herd the most difficult species, the academicians, often with such a special sense of humor and a particular gift of understanding. I am also grateful to Professors Barbara and Leonard Andaya for being so helpful and responsive to our questions and requests with their engaging and encouraging comments and advice. For Betty Buck, Roger Ames, and Peter Hershock, who has indeed so personified ASDP, I am always grateful for their exemplary roles in having re-shaped me personally and professionally from a mere close reader of literature to an enthusiastic participant of cross-cultural dialogue since the summer of 2000. Furthermore, what is particularly meaningful as far as the trip is concerned is that I have not only learned so much from our presenters but also from all other participants who made our group such a live learning community – everyday. For this, I want to thank all my fellow participants, particularly, my dear roommate and friend, David Jones, as he had to put up with not only my amateurish gibberish on philosophy for the day but also my thundering snoring for the night – for the five entire weeks, with kindness, with humor, with stoicism, and, certainly, with quiet despair or heroic resignation. To the editors and reviewers, here are also my sincere thanks. Finally and as always, I thank Carolyn Kadel, my forever resourceful and supportive colleague and Director of International Education for this unforgettable trip.
– between, beyond, beneath and behind any specific local phenomenon? Does it mean cultivating all-rounded humans, not merely manufacturing specialized “utensils” (Confucius) or breeding a “specially trained dog,” as Einstein so emphasizes? If so, none would be possible, as Einstein would also emphasize, without the crucial “personal contact with those who teach” humanities.² It means humanities must be taught through instructor’s crucial personal contact, using his/her professional and personal strengths, to enhance, enrich, and enliven students’ critical and creative perception, judgment, and understanding not only in terms of their own cultural traditions but also cross-culturally.

To make this mission possible, it is crucial that those who teach humanities themselves must be further enriched and enlivened and enlightened especially nowadays in this increasingly incorporated and but also fragmented small world of ours amid the irreversible trend of globalization. This is why I consider this trip enormously helpful with regard to our mission of teaching about humanity through teaching humanities or making our divided and diversified world well connected in and through our classrooms. In each section below, I outline the rationale and measures of implementation regarding how to transform my professional and personal experiences from the trip in ways applicable to the humanities courses I teach.

This paper includes the following sections. (1) Statement of purpose. (2) Measures of implementation. (3) The concept of modernity as overarching ideology of globalization. (4) Multiculturalism as response to modernity. (5) Islam as response to crises both globally and domestically for cultural, national, and identity. (6) American history and literature as serendipitous points of reference. (7) China, Japan, Korean as additional

² In detail here is what Einstein says regarding why and how humanities must be taught:

It is not enough to teach man a specialty. Through it he may becomes a kind of useful machine but not a harmoniously developed personality. It is essential that student acquire an understanding of and a lively sense of the beautiful and of the morally good. Otherwise he – with his specialized knowledge – more closely resembles a well-trained dog than a harmoniously developed person … He must learn to understand the motives of human beings, their illusions, and their suffering in order to acquire a proper relationship to individual fellow-men and to the community …

These precious things are conveyed to the younger generations through personal contact with those who teach, not – or at least not in the main – through textbooks. It is this that primarily constitutes and preservers culture. This is what I have in mind when I recommend the “humanities” as important. (1982 65-6, emphasis added)
personal and professional references. (8) Reasonable optimism and pessimism in assessment. (9) Themes for study. (10) Mechanism and types of multiculturalism. (11) General questions and (12) Specific questions, both for brainstorming and overall study guides.

(1) **Statement of Purpose:** With multiculturalism as the focal and organizing theme and Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei as the basic examples, the curriculum project intends to paint a broadest picture of *humanity* as it has been so enriched and enlivened worldwide in the forms of human responses to *modernity* and the role of literature as the key measurement and embodiment of human development. The project will therefore examine the very nature of multiculturalism in relation to modernity, as it has been the case in these three countries within the context of world humanities regarding its necessity, possibility and mechanism for success as well as its actual and potential problems beyond, beneath, and behind its observed and observable instances of success.

(2) **Implementation:** The project, so defined in the above statement and detailed in the following rationale, will be, first and foremost, implemented “wholesale” as a new course on Southeastern Asia once considered acceptable in a community college setting through a regular new course proposal and examination procedure. Otherwise or meanwhile, it will be be incorporated into three existing courses that I have been teaching. For my Introduction to Humanities, a popular genre-based course on art (visual, audio, and performing) and literature, I will use probably 10% or 20% of course time to explore the materials from the trip. I will explain to students, for instance, how and why the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur are so important as the unique artistic and architectural monuments that define Malaysia as a young Muslin country with regard to its national aspiration and its economic achievement so artistically confirmed and consolidated, *this way*, as it tries to modernized itself rapidly. For my Introduction to World Humanities, an increasingly popular course on world civilizations and cultures on a chronological base, I will use approximately 15% or 25% of course time, with materials from the trip, to cover a wide arrange of issues regarding Islam, Southeastern Asia, Islam in China, Abrahamic religions, modernity, and multiculturalism, etc. For my Eastern Civilization, an equally popular course with a focus on China, Japan, India, and Korea, I will use about 20% or 25% of course time on Southeastern Asia and discuss Islam in China with Southeastern Asia as comparable and historical reference.

(3) **The concept of modernity as overarching ideology of**
globalization. So what is modernity? To teach the course as so intended, what I need, first and foremost, is a working definition of “modernity.” But however challenging as it always is to define modernity, here is one that may help my students to understand the fundamentals in a broadest possible sense. For me, modernization, globalization, democratic capitalism, westernization, Americanization, Islamic nationalism, and revolutions, such as Russian and Chinese revolutions, etc., are all inevitable responses, both positive and negative, to modernity. They are all, in other words, observable or manifested impacts of modernity, which is, simply put, an overarching ideology, a discourse and mindset that is obsessed with scientific models and standardization for clarity, purity, and efficiency, and therefore controllability with no tolerance for ambiguity and paradox. It is the mindset that prevails, as Stephen E. Toulmin describes in *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*, often at the expenses of healthy doses of humanism, skepticism and tolerance through ideological indoctrination, abstraction, action of intolerance, and even violence. In the creation of such a discourse of modernity that stresses rationalization or systemization for maximum efficiency and controllability, as Toulmin also analogizes, it is quite deplorable for us to have simplified “Montaigne” into “Descartes,” reduced “Leviathan” into “Lilliput,” transformed “reasonable” into “rationale,” turned “ideas” into “ideology,” and, for me, to sacrifice understanding for knowledge.3 Wittgenstein probably makes the concept clearer when he argues in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* that “the whole modern conception of the world is founded on the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena. Thus people today stop at the laws of nature, treating them as something inviolable, just as God and Fate were treated in past ages. And in fact both are right and both wrong: though the view of the ancients is clearer in so far as they have a clear and acknowledged terminus, while the modern system tries to make it look as if *everything* were explained” (1961,143).

(4) Multiculturalism as responses. With the concept of modernity so defined, the next step is for students to understand that multiculturalism is not born out vacuum but is an inevitable critical response to modernity. At the different phases of globalization, there are always “identity crises” popping up to confront us as individuals and as nations. Indeed, our understanding of one another, contrary to what we like to assume, does not automatically increase, if at all, following the trends of modernization and globalization. Instead, the old stereotypes persist, as

3 See particularly chapters 2 and 5.
people become more and more concerned about their ethnic, national, and cultural identities with the pressures of globalization, which tend to pigeonhole people as commodities, customers, or mere statistics.

While our world grows smaller and smaller, it also becomes more and more fragmented. There are also deep-rooted resentments, an ingrained victimization mentality, surreptitious and cynical exploitation of history for political gains and through globalization that often fans nationalism and xenophobia rather than cultivating goodwill and mutual understanding among peoples. Clearly, our contemporary world has long been infested with embittered, die-hard feelings and haunting memories. They are all coming back alive with vengeance amid tides of globalization or modernization. As I have observed during this trip, for instance, in response to the trends of globalization and, quite ironically under the umbrella of multiculturalism, certain cultural aspects in a multicultural society, such as Islam in Malaysia, could often be singled-out, simplified, exaggerated, or reinvented to be the dominant cultural/national “identity” — at the expense of or on a collision course with other cultural components. At the same time, multiple cultural aspects are meticulously allocated, as in Singapore, to maintain perceived economic and political advantages both domestically and internationally. Multiculturalism, perhaps, is not just a simple matter of demography, nor a stagnant equation, but rather a dynamic act of im/balance in motion as a response to both interior and exterior influences and pressures. It can also be a “politically correct” policy to adopt, as in Brunei, to pursue an enlightened, benign Islamic centered multicultural society.

From multi-co-existing cultures to multiculturalism, there is also a hidden emphasis on ideology. As a response to modernity, multiculturalism, however drastically different on the surface from what modernity stands for, is ultimately, or quite paradoxically, conditioned by the very paradigm of its opponent’s ideology. However post-modern sounding, multiculturalism, in other words, is virtually on the same hinge with modernity. Multi-co-existing cultures are facts, but multiculturalism is an ideology, an ideological interpretation of or approach to the given facts or situations with a methodological implication or assumption that things, however complicated or complex, by nature, can eventually be clustered or lumbered together by means of efficient deduction or categorization according to a certain political principles, order, priority and values. At this point, “naming,” such as Malaysia from Malaya, as our students should understand, is also a political gesture or power-endowing process within the entire scheme of national responses to modernity. So multiculturalism, in this perspective, is both a paradigmatically
cultural and political response to modernity, often in a quite ironical way, since it also tends to lump things together in accordance with the same overarching cognitive paradigm that legitimizes the perceived political order and power structure. With such a multicultural response to modernity, certain ethnic components, tensions, differences and similarities are often downplayed or exaggerated for political privilege and persuasion in terms of the perceived and desired clarity, order, superiority, and maximum level of controllability. It is because there was simply no such need for “naming,” nor was there the necessity to emphasize the importance for co-existence, since all cultures there were already in a natural state of co-existence as in the case of Malaya before the arrival of the British and the new names, such as “Malaysia,” were given to impose or instill the “modern” system of order and hierarchy. As an ironical consequence, “multiculturalism” also quite often reflects people’s natural instincts for cultural self-preservation amid perceived and/or actual identity crisis in order to maintain to “marinate” their political and commercial interests.

As I have also observed particularly in Singapore and Malaysia, the more things are mixed up within the given system, order, or hierarchy, the stronger are the tendencies for each culture thus lumbered together to focus on certain most desirable cultural aspects in order to emphasize ethnic and cultural identity, originality, purity, tradition, or heritage, imagined or real, through competitive exaggeration or creative re-invention. But such competitive and multicultural environments often become the best cultural repertoires that preserve certain cultural

4 Often, with colonization and modernization, places, regions, or cultures that have co-existed for hundreds of years or even centuries and have never needed an overarching “name” or “identity,” all of a sudden, were given one. So from Malaya, here is Malaysia, a similar process that turned the “nameless” dark-skinned and diverse groups of people on the other side Hindu river into “Hindus” with their multi-religious faiths, rituals, and practices, quite conveniently as well as confusingly afterwards, all clustered under one simple term, “Hinduism.” The story of how Hinduism, the term adopted by and for Hindu nationalism as a kind of all-exclusive counterpart response to modern versions of “isms,” is quite illuminating, as an additional reference, because the term is actually derived from “Hindu,” an originally derogative reference to these “nameless” dark-skinned native inhabitants over the other side of Hindu river. Not knowing much of them, the outsiders and invaders often indiscriminately call them “Hindus.” In Japan, though not a multicultural society, Shinto was elevated to become Shintoism — to be compatible to the all-powerful religious institution in the West, as the nation rushed itself toward modernization. At this point students can also be taught or reminded that cultural aspects are often subject to political manipulation as by these extra-nationalists,” not even native-born, of each given culture, such as Napoleon, of Corsica, Stalin, of Georgia, Hitler, of Austria, or the Manchu conquerors of China.
aspects or heritage long gone in their birthplaces. In Malacca Malaysia, for instance, I saw so many well-preserved or reinvented religious and cultural practices no longer available in China itself. But, on the other hand, what has been identified as Chinese, Malay, or even Portuguese are real only in their respective names, because everything has already been so mixed up to be truly taken apart from one another. The so-called Chinese cuisine is actually so Malay in taste and even in style, and so is Malay so much Chinese. The authentic Portuguese food turned out to be so disappointingly as well as interestingly “Chinese.” Similarly, things that do not previously exist in their identified birthplaces, such as China or India, or exist only as some kind of minor local practices, like the Hungry Ghost Festival, are practiced and preserved as to become the very symbols of the cultures par excellence. Often, as in Malaysia, people do not mind or even enjoy staying together but want to be different — however much there is such increasing pressure from top down to lumber them together with a common “identity,” which they didn’t have, don’t care much to have. For multiculturalism to truly become a bottom-to-top grass-roots phenomenon, the problem is how to make people care, not the governments.

(5) Islam as response both globally and domestically for cultural/national identity. In Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia, Joseph Fletcher argues that the great Muslin uprising in China in 19th century was “apparently deeply affected by the neo-orthodox fundamentalist thinking in the Middle East, and among the Naqshbandiyya in particular” (1995, XI 31). It is, in other words, partially motivated or inspired by a worldwide trend of Islamic revivalism, a kind of inward-turning, fundamental-leaning, self-withdrawing, and soul-searching response to modernity following Islam’s diminished influences and status in world politics under the ever growing shadows of Western dominance. “How “accurate” is this scenario so depicted worldwide nowadays? How does Islam continuously influence other crucial regions, such as these three nations, and in ways, apparent or subtle, as through growing numbers of tourists from other Muslin nations to Malaysia, particularly from the Middle Eastern countries, i.e., Saudi Arabia?

For my World Humanities class, this will be a major focal area on issues related not only to these three nations in question but also Islam in general. “However clearly or unclearly Muslins perceived the sum total of these facts,” also according to Joseph Fletcher, “non-Muslins must surely have promoted some degree of feeling among Muslins that all was not right with their political order, and such a feeling would presumably have led to a little soul-searching” (23). Is this still a relevant
statement worldwide and in the Southeast Asian nations? Does Islam help consolidate a “national identity” crucial to the Muslims, i.e., in Malaysia, at the expense of non-Muslim population? How do we also explain such phenomena that Muslims in Malaysia tend to consider themselves Muslims first rather than Malaysians? They seem to have more trust in Islam rather than in the nation-state. It seems to be easier or more logical for them to relate to Islam and/or to their local tribal cultures than to Malaysia, the modern nation-state, as “Malaysians.” This should also be the issue to be re-examined in terms of the worldwide Islamic response to modernity.

(6) **America as a serendipitous point of reference.** To further explore the issues as above and to teach our students, at the same time, how to take the road not taken within and beyond the road well-trodden as critical and creative thinkers, they must understand that here is an indispensable point of reference near at hand — the U. S.. Nowadays, of course, it often seems to be quite “politically correct” or even fashionable overseas to dismiss anything American as “arrogant” and “ignorant,” kind of “Bullshitism.” Is it, however, also “intellectually correct” to do so — without being equally arrogant and ignorant? Despite its unpopular foreign policies, America, nonetheless, is still the indispensable source of reference, especially for young nations, such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei, on many issues, such as the ones regarding modernity, multiculturalism, and nation-building, particularly in terms of such fundamentals as choice of national language and cultivation of national literature that embodies and enlivens national spirit, aspiration, and worldview. Moreover, it certainly makes perfect sense to say that literature reflects reality, but more often it is reality that reflects literature. Reality sometimes tries to match up with the Reality so perceived and perfected in literature, simply because literature contains such uniquely enriched deposits of human experiences and wisdom. Like in ancient Greece, China, and India, reality is often the result of our human desires to repeat, re-live the heroic events in the past glorified in literature. Literature enriches and enlivens reality, not just passively reflects it. My recent trip in Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei, is, indeed, very much like a great journey through the rich text of American literature. It is American literature that helps me better understand all these exciting but also often quite mind-boggling multicultural societies behind, beneath, and besides all their much talked about, wonder-making economic growth towards modernization.

American history, particularly its literary history, does help me to see how crucial it really is to balance economic development with a long
term plan for national literary creation and education indispensable for these multicultural societies to continue prospering with a gradual but fully cultivated, consistent, coherent national/cultural identity, a live sense of *togetherness*, not simply remaining being jumbled together in a colonial legacy. Economic growth thus should not be prized at the expense of such a long-term plan. America, once so bent on its utilitarian principles and single-mindedly pursuing wealth and prosperity, even initially turned down the Statue of Liberty, a great gift from France, on the ground of being too costly to install it. Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei are, now, more or less on the same track. “Growth, growth, growth, and growth [nothing else or at any costs?]!” the very mood, mode, and momentum for economic growth is perhaps truly expressed with this simple slogan from Mr. Mahatir, the former prime minister of Malaysia, the architect of Malaysia’s miracle economic turnover. But this growth also contributed as well to various social problems, such as corruption, renewed ethnic and religious tensions among the Muslim Malays and other ethnic components of this multicultural society, such as the Chinese, and Indians. Despite its economic growth, from *Malaya* to *Malaysia*, there is still long, long way to go. But whether the journey or transition would ever be successful, it depends very much on whether and how a strong and coherent national and cultural identity can be cultivated and endeared to all the ethnic groups, or ideally the “Malaysians,” through a certain well-balanced and implemented literacy and literature education.

With useful reference to what happened in America, we can clearly see how crucial such a balance for literacy and literature education really is for any young nation with a multiethnic background, simply because it is a crucial benchmark regarding how “mature” or independent the nation truly becomes. Don’t we still remember what Emerson tries to argue then that America would never be truly independent if it still has to depend on the old Europe for its own literary expression and artistic voice and vision? But such a balance, or the very necessity of it, is yet to be realized in these nations at least in terms of what I have observed. Wherever I went or whenever I had the opportunities during the trip, I often asked questions about the literary and artistic developments in the nations, especially when economy, plus related issues on social and political infrastructures, became such an over-dominant topic or subject that seemed to define Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei *per se*. When for instance, I asked our well-informed, prominent speakers to mention one or two novelists or poets of national status *beloved* to people of all ethnic groups, it usually turned out to be a very difficult moment for them.
They knew more of Shakespeare or Milton, or some very local, ethnically specific literature of each ethnic-group to which they belong, but none of any “national” authors. There is something apparently missing – a sense of togetherness, coherent national conscience and consciousness, cultural identity “legitimized” or “eternalized” by a significant body of national literature and art that consolidates and confirms any given nation as its inexhaustible well of wisdom, inspiration, a unique repertoire of national aspiration, voices, and vision. Such a body of literature is especially crucial for a true multicultural society to develop and mature its maturity because together without a coherent sense of togetherness so “literarily” substantiated is very much like “a tray of sand,” since sum, as Rousseau suggests in Social Contract does not equal to total.

With useful reference to American history, our students, if we want to teach them to be responsive and responsible thinkers, should also know that this literature issue is also the language problem that confronts these young nations in terms of which language to adopt as a national language endeared to all ethnic groups. Yes, this is, indeed, a crucial “To be or not to be” question, which can be easily translated into “To speak Chinese, English, Malay, and/or … this is great problem.” Like Americans, who finally decided to adopt English, the language of the enemy then, as its national language, instead of its initial favorites, i.e., Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, ones that were considered best representing the New Republic’s cultural heritages and political aspirations, Singapore and Malaysia, for instance, have similar problems with their choices of official languages. To have adopted English as Singapore’s official language is, as some of presenters argued, the wisest choice ever made by the former Premier Lee — of course, from the point of view of economic growth. But it may not necessarily be the case from cultivating a national identity and pride and sense of togetherness. As the language of a former colonial master, English, while bringing people together for daily business, is not, nonetheless, a language of heart or of daily business in its most “trivial,” private and personal sense. Instead, it has such lofty or sublimely alienating impacts on people. Catherine Lim, a noted Singaporean author of Chinese origin and political activist, originally from Malaysia, told us how hard it was initially for her even to imagine writing about her “fussy Chinese” stories in English, such a lofty language of Shakespeare, Milton, and Jane Austen. But, however much Lim may have overcome her initial awe and successfully found her own voice and vision in the master/ed tongue, whether English would eventually become a language of heart or emotion for all Singaporeans, which is a great must for a genuine national language to be and a national literature
to emerge, is still a question. Malaysia, meanwhile, is still debating and exploring the possibility, as well as the necessity, to bring back English as the national language, to make itself as much linguistically accessible and available both domestically and internationally for the obvious financial and economic advantages that Singapore, its chief rival and former “Malaysian,” has been enjoying so much as one of the English-speaking modern nation-states. It is also because English is literally the *de facto* national language, no matter how Malay remains as the official one — but still not the tongue of heart for many ethnic groups other than the Malays.

The eventual success of a truly multicultural society in Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei, as our students should also understand, depends not just on their economic strengths but on their yet-to-be-cultivated literary voices and visions.

(7) China, Japan, and South Korea as references: With reference to Japan and South Korea, we can see how each nation responds differently to modernity or whatever perceived and actual threats from outside. China and Korea, for instance, were exposed to a similar kind of threats in 19th century as Japan: the Western imperialism. But their responses were very different. Why? It’s partially determined and influenced by such crucial elements as geography and history and culture. If so, how do we characterize the Southeast Asian countries in terms of its response to modernity? Clearly, “the hand that opened the door was as important as the one that produced the knock from outside (Hall 1965, 36). With reference to Japan and South Korea, we can also see various thought-refreshing myths, miracles and miseries that have taken shape in these two nations as they head toward modernization in speed and scale that seem to be echoed or duplicated in Singapore, Malaysia, even in Brunei. However true these two nations are homogeneous by nature, what make their versions of modernity unique is their exploration and exportation of each national and cultural resources, literature and art particularly in their popular versions, in addition to their well-known hardware products, i.e., automobiles. South Korean soap operas are now, for instance, so overwhelmingly popular in Japan, its former colonizer who tends to look down upon the Koreans as inferior, and China, its cultural overlord. Meanwhile, I also know that so many people who become attracted to Japan and want to learn Japanese language are not primarily impressed by its industrial products but its *manga* culture and games. Multiculturalism eventually needs cultures to go on or move along with. The issue that should also be explored at this point is whether or how Islam provokes and promotes literature in general and literary
production in the Southeastern nations in particular — in ways and social functions compatible to or measurable in terms of those in the West and in China, Japan, and Korea, or in its own ways — in parallel with, in other words, the traditions and genres that we are familiar with, such as epic as “serious literature” and soap opera as popular one.

(8) **Optimistic and pessimistic assessments:** What is the future of multiculturalism in Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei? Is multiculturalism really exemplified in the region? If so, to what degrees, in what ways, and with whatever probably exaggerated and/or overlooked positive and negative aspects? I still want to see whether or how “Confucianism” adapts itself there while interacting with Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. I still want to observe how “lazy” Malay, “greedy” Chinese, and “untrustworthy” Indians manage and mend their ways for the colorful societies and cultures that they all share. But I do think that I have seen quite enough in Singapore and Malaysia to have some optimistic assessment, for the time being, particularly with regard to the on-going processes that often reflect good intentions and endeavors regarding what governments have done or have been trying to do amid generally democratic framework or through certain measurable procedures in overall peaceful environments — in addition to their admirable economic successes. In Singapore, multiculturalism, for instance, has been so meticulously implanted or embedded in everyday businesses and activities, i.e., amid or through housing project and urban designing. I have also seen how multiculturalism is reflected in ordinary citizens’ daily social and religious conducts. I saw, for instance, how people in Singapore paid tributes to a Hindu temple on their way to worship the goddess in a Chinese Buddhist temple — half a block away from the Hindu temple.

I have also seen and heard equally enough to form a not-so-optimistic, if not quite pessimistic picture regarding the future of multiculturalism in Malaysia. How is multiculturalism to be eventually embodied in the actual governmental policies? Does it mean everything for somebody or everything for everybody? Does “equality” mean “until everyone is equal” according to the die-hard Malaysian governmental policies, which push for pro-Malay regulations as the prerequisites for multiculturalism? Whether in Singapore, Malaysia, or in Brunei, could it be possible that ultimately what really turns out as a winner is not multiculturalism but an all-purposeful and all-pervasive government? Does multiculturalism need to be so meticulously planned and carried out through the overwhelming authority of governmental power from top down as, for instance, in Singapore? A true multiculturalism, as Confucius would
probably suggest, should be a society built on a kind of relationship best described as “conflicting complementarity” (harmonious despite differences). But I have seen in Malaysia, it is rather a relationship of conflicting similarity (sameness devoid of harmony). For linguistic and cultural reasons, the crucial transition from Malaya to Malaysia has not really occurred completely there. Malaysian is a term yet to be substantiated. Yes, people there are together, but are not really bound by a heart-felt togetherness. Muslims often consider themselves first Muslims rather than Malaysians and the Malays as Malays. There are also silenced concerns and unvoiced subtexts. As a colonial legacy and product of modernity as well, could ethnic violence again lead to blood baths among ethnic groups once together as good neighbors or even friends for generations, who, nonetheless, could become each other’s cold-blood murderers overnight? This has happened in the Balkans, Africa, and in other Asian regions as well. In addition to my own observations, our presenters also seemed quite divided with regard to how optimistic and/or pessimistic they are, especially in Malaysia, concerning the very past, present, and future of their multicultural societies. The dust has not yet set.

(9) Themes for study: Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei as foci of study regarding the (1) Roles of government, (2) Lasting impacts of colonialism, (3) Influences of Islam and of China, past and present, and other ethnic components, (4) Islam to China through Southeast Asia with Islam back to Southeast Asia through Chinese immigrants. This latter can be seen in terms of the following: the “Silk Road” via sea, Mongol invasions, Zheng He’s visit, Chinese migrations during the Qing Dynasty, Chinese migrations during the Colonial period, and Chinese migrations as a whole. More current themes include the Malaysian Chinese substantial support for China during Sino-Japanese war, the Chinese resistance movement during Japanese occupation, and the Communist revolution in China with its perceived threats. Today we can see the continuation of these themes through China’s Rising: Singapore’s investments in China, Chinese studying and working in Singapore and Malaysia, Singaporeans and Malaysians studying and working in China, and Singaporean and Malaysian models for Chinese government.

5 Here is Ames and Rosemont’s quite close translation of the original. “The Master said, ‘Exemplary persons seek harmony not sameness; petty persons, then, as the opposite’” (1998, 13:23) with further enlightening extended additional note from Zuo Commentary.
(10) Mechanism and types of multiculturalism amid dilemma and irony: capitalistic authoritarianism for multicultural democracy.
1. Multiculturalism and democracy: Democracy as an open society that needs multiculturalism and multiculturalism depends on democracy.
2. Multiculturalism and authoritarianism: Authoritarian regulation as “necessary evil”? Multiculturalism, language, cultural/national identity: English, Chinese, Malay, and …
3. Multiculturalisms and available models: Government implemented multiculturalism. This includes the Islam centered multiculturalism of Malaysia and Brunei and liberal capitalistic multiculturalism.
4. Multiculturalism and implemented mechanism. Multiculturalism is implemented, imbedded and enforced through constitutions, housing projects, architectural design, public religious/heritage celebrations, the education system, and as food preparation and consumption as daily rituals celebrated and confirmed as people eating and enjoying different ethnic foods. Education is pursued not just for what is being taught but the ways things are being taught, which matter in the long run, in implanting or implementing social and cultural values.
5. Multiculturalism and globalization.

(11) General questions: 1. What is multiculturalism? What does multiculturalism mean? 2. Does it mean everything and something for someone or everything and nothing to anyone? 3. What does multiculturalism try to achieve or what do we try to achieve through multiculturalism? 4. Does multiculturalism mean peaceful coexistence for common wealth and prosperity? 5. Is multiculturalism an idealistic or realistic response to reality, or a version of reality being so perceived in the name of multicultural society or community? 6. Is it a compromised or compromising response to a dynamic and often volatile reality? 7. What is the mechanism of assurance for its success or implementation regarding whatever its perceived and expected function and results? 8. What are the inevitable problems of multiculturalism? 9. What are the possible measures to deal with these problems? 10. In history we often see what makes a civilization or nation great is also what makes it vulnerable as in the case of ancient Greece, Rome, and modern Japan in the wake of Admiral Perry’s historic visits. What makes ancient Greece great, for instance, brings it down as well — with its arrogance overblown following its rapid overflowing achievements, its democracy degenerated into demagoguery, and majority rule turned into mob rule, etc., especially after the death of Pericles. Is it possible that what makes multiculturalism successful could also lead to its failure?

(12) Questions on Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei. 1. Is multiculturalism really so successful in Singapore without any perceived
or potential problems that would undo all or part of its successful story? If any, what are they? 2. How could it be dealt with accordingly? 3. With regard to the cases of Singapore and Malaysia, could or how could multiculturalism succeed without a distinguished body of literature and work of art that often not only reflects but also confirms and consolidates the very culture, or, in other words, culturally legitimates any given culture from which it is born, at least according to Ralph Emerson? 4. Is multiculturalism in Singapore and, to a greater degree, Malaysia, a measured and or radicalized response to reality and modernity? 5. How much could multiculturalism be achieved through governmental authority and power — through authoritarianism, democracy, or other “isms” through foresight of planning and implementation or with false conviction and blind idealism? 6. How and why does multiculturalism succeed in Singapore the way it does? 7. Is it a success? Does or how does it succeed in Malaysia? 8. So what is typical of Singapore and Singapore as a people? 9. Does English, which seems to be a working bond, really help creating a lasting national cohesion or a sense of nationhood in Singapore? 10. Is Singapore a “melting pot” that does not melt? 11. Is multiculturalism in Singapore and Malaysia a choice out of zero choice, both an end and means? 12. Is there a national identity of Singapore as might be reflected in stereotypical perceptions within and without? 13. Is Brunei really a multicultural society the way our host presents us for our brief two day visits? 14. Is a benign and enlightened monarch, as our speakers so emphasize, really the assurance of peace and success of a multicultural society with Islam as the guiding beacon?

6 Once involved in cross-cultural dialogues and debates, it is now quite common for one to dismiss another along with his/her arguments, “That’s stereotype!” By so doing, the person who makes such a judgment seems to imply that behind, beneath beyond the “stereotypes” there is certain pure truth yet to be grasped. Is it possible that no such truth ever exists behind, beyond, beneath the stereotypes but between the so off-handedly dismissible stereotypes? Is it the same case with regard to frequent uses of misunderstanding? Does “misunderstanding” or “misinterpretation” always suggest there is 100% correct understanding there beneath, behind, and beyond the very misunderstanding? Is misunderstanding also possibly a matter of kind of degree? I remember when I asked one of our presenters in Singapore, a political scientist, how Singaporeans were usually perceived or what usual stereotypes of Singaporeans worldwide. For “stereotypes” are often one of possible benchmarks that indicates how a certain nation is “mature” enough as to acquire a “national identity” as we often do so in literature referring to American “innocence,” French “arrogance,” “English gentlemen,” and so on. He hesitated for a while and then decided to dodge my question by saying that as a political scientist he talked about issues only with creditable data. Is it possible only with credible data? If so, he only needed probably no more than ten minutes for
References


his talk and then, as Wittgenstein would suggest, just stay silent afterwards. It is because throughout his entire two-hour presentation, with only occasional references to scientific data, he was talking in an utterly non-scientific ordinary tongue filled with innumerable stereotypes, which he himself, finally, had to come to term with or acknowledge from time to time — with occasional self-reflective asides or kind of self-effacing smiles or nods at me, when he, for instance, talked about “arrogance” of Singaporeans without, obviously, any creditable data as his scientific backup.
Catherine Lim: Manufacturing Voice in Multilingual Singapore and Malaysia

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Abstract
This is a detailed course description of a reading and writing course, using texts by Singapore writer Catherine Lim, in which students will become familiar with the history of Singapore and Malaysia, working closely with Lim’s texts to find evidence and then write authoritatively about colonialism, women, language and education and religions of Singapore and Malaysia; students will also identify Lim’s varied uses of voice and use the information about voice to hone their own skills at writing in personal, third persona and scholarly academic voices necessary for success in college.

Introduction
Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei are ethnically and linguistically much more diverse and sophisticated countries than is our United States. With most of the population in these three countries speaking at least two languages, often three or four, these cultures offer a glimpse into the psychological and social ramifications of multilingualism and the challenges of developing an authentic writing voice within such cultures. What could become a Babel nightmare actually becomes a marvelous pastiche of nuanced expressiveness and richly textured prose that leads the citizens of these three states to a deeper understanding of their world and ours. Singapore is a multilingual state in order to maintain its citizens’ Asian-ness; since 1987 everyone has been educated in English, but children also learn the language that is spoken in the home, which may be Mandarin, Tamil, or Malay; children are required to learn their “mother tongue,” which ironically is determined by the language their fathers speak. On the other hand, in Malaysia one must speak Malay in order to be considered Malaysian, and in addition to the Malay language
there are seven Chinese dialect groups, Indian language groups, and many indigenous languages of the tribes people. Even through Brunei mandates speaking and learning in Malay, many do speak English, and there are seven indigenous groups who speak other languages.

During our five-week Fulbright trip through these three countries, we listened to sessions in Parliament, met with other academics and writers and had lectures from politicians as well — all in English. Early in the trip we had Catherine Lim speak to us and share dinner with us — a great boon for me and my focus on her work for this curriculum. Like most good Singapore citizens, she is an effective entrepreneur who is able to profit by her writings which range from political and scholarly essays to short stories, novels and her 2005 book, *Unhurried Thoughts At My Funeral*, a quasi-first-person memoir. She is just right for this project because she was born and raised in Malaysia in a Chinese family that sent her to a Catholic school; in 1967 her family moved to Singapore, where she eventually married and had two children. Now divorced, she represents herself as living a free, successful and full life as a creative, sought after single woman!

My interest in Lim’s books is linguistic and literary. Living in a culture with English as our dominant and official language, I am perpetually astonished at the number of languages my students bring to the classroom, all of which are unofficial and for purposes of teaching the language of power and professionalism, unofficial. Some of those students become linguistically silenced in our writing and literature classes because we are so insistent on a pure spoken and written form of English. How can our culture continue to speak, write and communicate in only one language while the rest of the world is comfortable speaking many languages, most significantly English? My goal in this paper is to explore the way that Catherine Lim uses English, not her native tongue, to establish different kinds of authoritative “voices” in her novels and language, creating a texture where words from different languages intersect and weave themselves into the voice and voices that reflect the richness of Singapore and Malaysian speech. Lim writes in English, relying on British literary models and references to give stability and form to her prose, but she makes her writing fresh blending components of Chinese and Malay into her voice. Is hers a colonial or a post-colonial voice? These are issues we will address during the course.

**The Curriculum Project**

I will use several of Catherine Lim’s texts in a semester’s reading and writing course where students will participate in the joys of close reading
and analytical writing of these texts, my lectures and academic articles about the Malaysian and Singaporean cultures where Catherine Lim has grown up, lived and worked. Lim’s books included in the term are *The Serpent’s Tooth* (1982), *The Woman’s Book of Superlatives* (1993), *O Singapore!* (1989) *Unhurried Thoughts at my Funeral* (2005) and *The Bondmaid*. (1995). I will also use excerpts from Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre, and if the course were longer, I would begin with that Bronte novel to structure Catherine Lim’s multilingual “voice” within the British framework. Students will recognize the influences of Lim’s Chinese, Malaysian childhood, her Catholic education about which she writes with a keen eye and a cutting wit. Writing in English, she never misses an opportunity to expose the ironies and hypocrisies of her culture by combining voices, languages and images, some recognizable to an English culture audience, some not.

**Objective:**

I will use Lim’s work to show how she weaves Chinese and Malaysian languages into her writing but also how she has mastered the use of English as the language of power, ultimately appropriating it and the colonial Victorian novel genre for her own feminist, political and entrepreneurial purposes. To determine this we will look at colonialism, women, language and religions in Malaysia and Singapore. Then we will look at all of these issues in Lim’s writing and in her narrative voices because they change with each text and approach.

**Catherine Lim – Biography**

Catherine Lim, born Lim Poh Imm, grew up in Kedah, Malaysia in a Chinese family of 14 children. She has been married and divorced and has two grown children who live abroad. Lim has her Ph.d in Applied Linguistics and had taught and written for a newspaper before she began to write and lecture full time. She told me with a wink that she is 63, unmarried, and having the time of her life.

1. **Colonialism – Singapore and Malaysia**

I will begin with a brief lecture about the history of Portuguese, Dutch and British colonization in Singapore and Malaysia, bringing in maps to help my students position the story behind the places. This is a good opportunity for students to practice note-taking skills and being responsible for lecture data.

First came the Indians and Chinese as settlers, and in 1511 the Portuguese had taken over Melaka, leaving Singapore (then Singapura)
an outpost for the Melakan Sultanate. The Dutch took over in 1641, and by 1795 they became subjects of the French. 1819 marked the beginning of Singapore’s long history with Britain in the Treaty of February 6th between Sir Thomas Raffles of Britain and Sultan Hussein. In 1825 the Dutch agreed to British occupation of Singapore, and in December 1941 the Japanese bombed it and occupied it until 1945. In 1959 Singapore attained full self government, electing Lee Kuan Yew as Singapore’s first Prime Minister. He governed with an iron hand until 1990 when he relinquished his position to Goh Chok Tong, even though Yew still holds a tremendous amount of power. In 1961 Tunku Abdul Rahman announced that Sarawak and North Borneo should join Malaya and Singapore in a federation. By 1963 North Borneo, now Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore joined Malaya in The Federation of Malaysia. Singapore left (or was kicked out, depending on which state is speaking) and became its own city state in 1965, still with Lee Kuan Yew as Prime Minister.

Although Malaysia was originally settled by the Chinese, the indigenous people are called Orang Asli, Malaysian for “original people” (Rough Guide, 138). Malaysia and Singapore have a similar history of colonization. A Sumatran prince called Paramesvara, established a Malay speaking kingdom called Malacca around 1400 A.D. When Melaka fell in 1511 to the Portuguese, the country had its first wave of Islam missionaries, mostly Sufis (RG 68). In 1641 the Portuguese lost their fort at Malacca to the Dutch, who ruled for the next 150 years.

When the Japanese invaded Malaysia, they stayed until the end of World War II in 1945. In 1946 UMNO (The United Malaya National Organization) was formed, and by 1948 the ethnic Chinese Communist guerillas, originally Malay Communist Party members, began to resist the British in what is known as the Emergency. During this time the Orang Asli were subjected to fighting over what was their land, much of which was being used for large rubber plantations by the British. In 1955 MCA (Malayan Chinese Association) and UMNO won a parliamentary majority, and in 1957 Federation of Malaya was independent of British rule, while Singapore, outside the federation, was still a British colony.

In 1981 Mahathir Mohamad came to power and ruled Malaysia until he resigned in 2002, replaced by Abdullah Bidawi.

Questions and Issues:

How many languages have been spoken on the Malaysian Peninsula between 1400s and the time that Mahathir and Lee came into power?
Was there ever one overriding language?
How many cultures were developing in these locations?
What might be the impact of such an infusion of languages and cultures?

2. Women in Singapore and Malaysia

In Singapore women’s roles have been defined not just by the predominantly Chinese, Indian and Malay cultures, but also by the cultures of Chinese Confucianism, a conservative, developing government and the drive to succeed that is so prevalent in Singapore. People are encouraged to acquire the 5 Cs: cash, condos, credit cards, cars and country clubs. However, in Malaysia, women do not have the same tugs between familial ties and capitalistic consumerism; while many Singapore women dress for western style success, many Malaysian women wear long, brightly colored skirts and headscarves, covering their arms and legs, as well as hair and necks. Muslim women even go swimming fully clothed. Muslim women in Malaysia are ruled by a separate court system for all family matters, putting themselves in the hands of conservative Muslim laws and patriarchal rules. When a woman’s father dies, she gets less from the estate than her brothers do, so it is not surprising to find that in the northern, poorer regions of Malaysia, such as Kedah, where Lim was born, women work very hard so that they will survive if and when a husband leaves her, a father dies, or she is in some way dependent on herself.

Questions and Issues:
What is the effect on women and families in a consumer (5Cs as in Singapore) driven economy?
What is the effect on women and families when family law rules in the man’s favor, both in divorce and death?

3. Language and Education

Both of these societies are bi-lingual at the very least. With Malay the national language of both Singapore and Malaysia, it is staggering how many people speak English fluently. In Singapore the citizens learn English because it is the language of instruction in their schools, but students are also expected to learn a second language based upon their ethnicity, which is determined by the father. Already we have at least three languages at work here if we consider Malay as the “national language,” English as the language of instruction and then the variety of languages that are spoken or maintained at home, such as Tamil and
Chinese. Schools are very competitive, and most families that can afford tutors rely on them for the rigorous examinations students must pass in order to progress into college.

In Malaysia, families are obsessed with having college graduates in the family. In universities, women are 65% of population with Muslim women dominating because Malays are given preference and affirmative quotas. Here English is usually the third language, with Malay being the language of instruction except in lower grades where students can go to school in their cultural language, their “mother tongue.”

Questions and Issues:
What language would people use for personal interactions?
What language would be used for business transactions?
What language would be best for writing novels? Articles?
What is the effect of affirmative action quotas on the Chinese and the Indians?

4. Religion in Singapore and Malaysia
In both Singapore and Malaysia Buddhism, Hinduism, Catholicism and Islam are practiced, and temples, churches, and mosques are everywhere. In Singapore there are no governmental requirements about religion, and working Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Catholic communities are evident, mosques, temples and churches often cheek by jowl. In 1948 Malaysia agreed that Malays would automatically become federal citizens, while Chinese, Indian and others had to apply for such citizenship; in addition, such citizenship required two other things – an official language and an official religion. Islam became the official religion, and Malay is the official language. Singapore has no such requirement.

Questions and Issues:
What is the effect of being surrounded by so many different religious beliefs?
What is the effect of having the state require one religion for its citizens? What happens when people convert? What happens when they don’t? What happens in marriages between religions? Where do the other religions fit into a culture that mandates a state religion?
How does religion affect education?
Narrative Voice

When we speak or write, we gauge our audience and our intention with respect to that audience. If we want to reveal ourselves and speak out of our experience and our perspective, we write in *first person*. When we write more formally and hope to have more authority, we write or speak in *third person*. In narratives there is always somebody telling the story, but often that person has powers that go beyond what a real person might have. For example, the narrator might be able to tell us how a character is feeling or thinking; that voice is *omniscient*. Finally, students will need to master their use of *scholarly academic* voice, allowing themselves to participate in the academic dialogue with authority and legitimacy.

It is important to master the voice of your writing. Personal essays are written in first person, and analytical essays are written in third person. Story telling can use all three, but in this course my objectives are for students to be able to identify the voice in what they read and to master the voice in what they write. We will read Catherine Lim’s works which will demonstrate first person persona narrator, third person, omniscient and first person personal narrator. The assigned essays will require students to write in a less formal first person and also in an authoritative, academic third person.

Assigned Readings and Writings

*Assignment* — Read Anne Pakir’s essay “Medium-of-Instruction Policy in Singapore” to page 124. After a discussion about the differences between the education system in Singapore and what students experienced in their pre-college education in The United States, they will write a *first person* essay in which they describe their primary school education and define one major difference between it and the Singapore description Pakir gives. Students will also determine what the impact of that one difference has made on their learning, their skills and their approach to education.

Objectives — This will begin students’ close reading of texts, get them familiar with authoritative scholarly voices and give them an opportunity to write from their own experiences while understanding Pakir’s scholarship.

*Assignment* — Read Catherine Lim’s novel *The Serpent’s Tooth*, a novel that uses an unusual mixture of ironic voices and circumstances that address issues of *women, language, education and religion* in Singapore. Students will track one of these issues, reporting on their discoveries as we discuss each of the readings. I will give them information and a Power Point presentation on the Ten Courts of Hell that the Chinese
Confucians believed were the places one would experience as a result of committing certain crimes that range from things such as theft, gambling, disrespect, drug addiction, lack of filial piety, to cursing and wasting food. These Ten Courts of Hell are presented in a cave-like structure as part of Haw Par Villa, a park in Singapore built as a tourist attraction for people to learn about Chinese beliefs, and Lim writes about the effects of visiting these grisly depictions as a child. These will help students understand something of the Chinese religious beliefs about death and beyond. In their final essay students will take a position about how Lim depicts their particular issue and why she depicts it in that way. Students will be responsible for researching particular points about which they are interested, and they will present to the class their findings and the legitimacy of their sources. They will write an essay in which they take a position about one of these perspectives, how Lim has used it and why.

Objectives – This novel will give students a feel of the frustrations of trying to get ahead and becoming modern in contemporary Singapore society. In addition, they will see the representations of disparate cultures, generations, personalities and expectations. By giving them a choice of lenses for their focus, I can help them own one perspective, a part of Lim’s overall depiction. Their presentations and papers will give students practice owning and articulating with conviction their findings; because they are responsible for determining the legitimacy of their sources, they will also learn to identify authoritative scholarship as opposed to hearsay or personal perspective.

Assignment — I will have students look at the link about the Straits Chinese Magazine www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/resources/scm/scmidex.html - 15k , published in 1897-1907, so that they know that English stories were available at the turn of the 20th century. Students will read an excerpt from Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre (the entire text if time allows) and then begin with the Prologue of Catherine Lim’s The Woman’s Book of Superlatives. Then, we will read an excerpt from, or if we have time, the whole of Lim’s The Bondmaid so that we can have a discussion about colonialism, language and genres. I will assign several stories from A Woman’s Book of Superlatives, ending with “Transit to Heaven,” which will move us into a discussion about language and the politics and privilege of language use. Based on excerpts and comparisons between Bronte and Lim, students will write an essay in which they take a position about whether Lim has written a post-colonial novel or a colonial novel in The Bondmaid.

Objectives — My contention is that Lim has appropriated the British Victorian genre in her novel The Bondmaid (see George P. Landow’s
“Is Catherine Lim’s *The Bondmaid* a post colonial novel?” www.postcolonialweb.org/singapore/literature/c.lim/poco.html but I still have questions about whether she has appropriated the genre for post-colonial purposes or whether she is writing within the bounds of her English education. Students will look at Lim’s use of language, references and allusions to determine whether she is constructing her own kind of literature, simply copying a Victorian British genre or using a classic form to say and do something different entirely.

*Assignment* — The last story in *The Women’s Book of Superlatives* deals humorously with life after death, especially with respect to “Feminist Extraordinaire,” Dora Warren, who will meet Charlotte Bronte after her death. Students will write an essay in which they take a position about what they believe Lim is suggesting about faith, politics, and privilege, *or* they will write an essay comparing Lim’s use of language in *The Bondmaid* and in this short story, taking a position about *how* and *why* she is using language differently.

*Objectives* — I hope to get my students to read carefully enough to identify not only the voice of the narrator but also the kinds of imagery and linguistic techniques that make writing rich. Here Lim plays not only with Chinese linguistic constructions but also with what her character, Dora, calls “Shame Syndrome” about negative associations “that have accreted around words used by men to shame women” (128).

*Assignment* — We will read Catherine Lim’s most recent book *Unhurried Thoughts at My Funeral*, an ironic, cynical look at the Lim we heard in Singapore. She has stripped herself of traditional feminine roles, cumbersome religious beliefs and antiquated cultural bonds. She is determined that when she dies, she will ask God why he made it so difficult for her to believe in him. In the final chapter, we only read her question, “God?” and no answer. The students will write an essay in which they take a position about how Singapore and Malaysian culture could have shaped Lim’s cynicism.

*Objectives* — This text is written in *first person*, but students will have to analyze it in an authoritative *third person*. The text also brings together all the issues we have discussed, from women, religion, language and education in these mixed cultures, and it will allow us to discuss more extensively the nature of belief and commitment within these two cultures of Catherine Lim’s childhood and adulthood.

*Assignment* — Finally we will read the first and last short story in Lim’s book of short stories, *O Singapore!* The first is about the frustrations of living in a rigidly structured Singapore, the solution being to go into Malaysia to do things like spit, curse and chew gum, all outlawed
in Singapore. The last is a quirky compilation of letters from Lim to various governmental bodies who are advising her on certain elements of a story she is writing to represent Singapore in the “International Writers Conference in Oslo.” Of course, these government lackeys take out anything critical or challenging, leaving a story that says absolutely nothing. Ultimately the judges cannot place her story because they cannot “comprehend its full meaning.” The voices in each of the letters are distinctly formal and ridiculous, showing students the use of language and humor as political tools. I will give students George Landow’s article “Strong Leadership and the Catherine Lim Case” and describe the public castigation she got from Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong for two articles she wrote in the Straits Times. Students will write a final paper based on these two stories and what they tell us about the rigid governing structure of Singapore society. They will take a position about how the restrictions Lim depicts have hindered or enhanced her writing.

Objectives — Voice is so crucial to the way an author anticipates how his or her writing will be read that I want my students to see the ways in which Lim has manipulated her narrative voice to suit her many purposes. We will discuss just what her purposes are and what her agenda may be. Is she just another Singaporean entrepreneur out for herself, or has she a legitimate message that can motivate Singaporeans and the world to action that could make our world more peaceful and harmonious? Again, my goal in the written part of these assignments is to get students to write clearly and authoritatively to support their stated thesis and to quote substantively and logically to support their points. Lim’s broad approaches to voice and genre allow me to cover a great deal with respect to reading and writing.

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Islam & Malaysia: A Three-Week Segment for the Undergraduate Liberal Arts Course: RLST 200 “Islam in Southeast Asia”

Debra Majeed, Beloit College

Abstract

This curriculum development project is the result of extensive engagement in Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei as one of 13 participants in the 2006 SRU-ASDP-ARC “Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad in Malaysia and Singapore.” This project is a central segment of a 15-week semester course, RLST 200 “Islam in Southeast Asia.” The semester-long undergraduate course traces the historical development of Islam from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries in island Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on the interconnectivity of gender and religion in the region. The curriculum project provides at least two benefits: a comparative analysis of two significant global traditions and the first Religious Studies course at Beloit College to specifically focus on religion in Southeast Asia.

Introduction

While no consensus exists regarding the actual timing and emergence of Islam in Southeast Asia (SEA), most scholars agree that Muslims and their religion have influenced the region for at least the past seven centuries. Other observers point to an earlier date — 1100 A.D. — based upon the significance of Islam in Aceh, one of its earliest areas of influence. Nevertheless, scholars estimate that today one-quarter of the world’s Muslims live, work, and worship throughout most of Southeast Asia. Of particular interest for this project, three of the region’s eleven countries have predominantly Muslim populations: Indonesia — approximately 87 percent; Brunei — 63 percent; and Malaysia — 60 percent.¹

¹ See for example, Meredith L. Weiss, “Islam in Asia,” testimony before the Committee on House International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
This project affords at least two benefits for Beloit College, a private, secular, undergraduate institution with a two-person Religious Studies faculty. One, a comparative analysis of two significant global traditions. As a central segment of the 15-week semester course, RLST 200 “Islam in Southeast Asia,” research through this project introduced this participant to the teaching of Islam and the diverse practices of Muslims in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei (including the Philippines). Concentrating on this region permits a comparative analysis of the lived realities of Muslims, Christians, and others as they carve out identities as religious minorities or members of a majority group.

Two, the development of this course expands the college’s Asian Studies curriculum. At present, our course offerings focus primarily upon the intellectual, cultural, and political histories of China, Japan, and Korea, with only scant attention paid to Southeast Asia. When the geographical shift has highlighted this region, women and/or religion have rarely been central to the discussion, even though Southeast Asia is a “crossroads” for five global faith traditions. Moreover, since September 11, 2001, SEA has drawn the attention of extremist Islamic forces and “feminist” analyzes. That is to say, “jihadists” and changing family law practices compel us to pay greater attention to the phenomena of religion in the region with the single largest Muslim population.

Our extensive engagement with these SEA nations formally began on June 22, with two days of orientation led by Drs. Leonard and Barbara Andaya, two of the foremost experts on SEA. In fact, one of their edited volumes, *The History of Malaysia*, is required reading for this segment of the course, as is Barbara Andaya’s *Other Pasts: Women, Gender and History in Early Modern Southeast Asia*. Let me mention the central place the Andayas have assumed in my research, scholarship and teaching on Southeast Asia.

I first met them last summer when I was accepted to the East-West Center and NEH Institute on “Southeast Asia: The interplay of Indigenous Cultures and Outside Influences.” The Andayas developed, organized, and directed the Institute in collaboration with other members of the East-West Center. Before 2005, Southeast Asia represented a newsworthy region because of its significance in Islamic history. It’s position as the region with the largest population of Muslims kept my

attention — but only from a distance. Becoming acquainted with the people and social history through participant observation and choosing to learn a local language — in this case, Bahasa Malay — was never a serious thought until 2005. That is, through the Andayas, I became enthralled with the region of SEA. In fact, seven weeks at the East-West Center convinced me that I wanted to follow in the intellectual footsteps of Barbara — and focus on gender in SEA — and avail myself to Leonard’s geographical and historical expertise in an effort to incorporate a landscape approach to my study of religion and the religious. Indeed, he helped convert this historian of religion to the reality that, “how religion develops, spreads and impacts on people’s lives [is] rooted in geographical factors and they can be studied from a geographical perspective.” Naturally, when I realized that the Andayas were integral resources for the Fulbright-Hays Project, I did not hesitate to apply, and was thrilled to learn I was accepted.

All of our encounters extended the knowledge of participants, but a few were especially noteworthy for my project. A post lecture conversation with Dr. K.S. Nathan, Senior Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, led to a small group visit to the Institute, discounts on resources purchased at the Institute’s bookstore, a private tour of the Institute’s library, and a personal invitation from the Institute’s director for me to apply to conduct future research as a Fellow. In addition to sharing some of her unpublished research, Dr. Patricia Martinez, Senior Research Fellow at the Universiti Malaya, agreed to meet with me on a future trip and to help me interview local Muslim women — starting with her research assistant. Both helped concretize for me the deep diversity of “Islams” practiced globally. Dr. Adeeba Kamarulzaman, President of the Malaysian Aids Council, was instrumental in introducing me to members of her organization, and to help me begin to conduct research on the impact of HIV-AIDS on Muslim women in the region. Moreover, the staff of MACEE personally transported me to and arranged meetings for me with a Shari’a law judge, with tudung (Malay for the traditional headcovering of local Muslim women) designers, and with interfaith activists. In fact, when I return to Singapore and Malaysia (in September to attend a conference in Singapore), they have already organized meetings for me with officials at Bank Islam and the Hajj Foundation. In addition, I will “shadow” the Shari’a judge during his court proceedings.

Undoubtedly, this experience has made a profound impact on my life and work on at least three levels: First, it contributed to my ongoing critical reflection on women and Islam. I am conscious of my intellectual limitations. Prior to this project, my research agenda has focused on gender and Islam with particular attention devoted to the lived realities of African American Muslim women. I choose to expand my field of study to include Southeast Asia because I hoped to expand my intellectual experience in the region populated by the largest global group of Muslims, while also drawing upon it. I desired, too, to select a comparative region that would bear much fruit as a contrast to the West in the experience of African American women. Participation in this Fulbright project has enabled me to better contextualize and historicize Muslim female life; a process that I intend to convert to learned and thoughtful expositions in publishable essays about the ways in which Muslim women who live in and have emigrated from Southeast Asia continue to creatively respond to the religious and cultural changes posed by living in “transnational diasporas.” By broadening my knowledge about Southeast Asian societies and their histories, I can begin to speak comparatively and more authoritatively about gender and geography in a manner that draws attention to the similarities and differences that exist within the “Muslim world.” Ultimately, the interdisciplinarity of this project will help me better position myself to authentically situate Southeast Asian Islam and gender politics within global discussions, while also recognizing religion and identity as “inclusive parameters” for encountering and engaging the world.

Secondly, my participation has expanded Beloit’s curricular offerings by supporting the study of Muslim women in Southeast Asia at the nexus of culture, religion, and identity politics. Herein emerges a pedagogical issue — namely the academic study of Muslim female life in Southeast Asia — that our current curriculum has yet to address. In fact, the development of RLST 200 “Islam in Southeast Asia” and future offerings, is enabling me to connect a current social issue — immigration — to my research and teaching by drawing attention to Southeast Asian Muslim women and the affects of U.S. immigration on their expression of gender and faith. These expressions can be most visible in what I characterize as the “differentiated body,” or the perceived self-selected identity markers these women add to their public identity and their private religious practice that distinguish their Western image from the persona they assumed in their homeland.

Finally, attendance at this Institute has greatly advance my sabbatical project, Encounters of Intimate Sisterhood?: Polygyny in the World of African
American Muslims. I readily appreciate the significance of Muslim women becoming producers of our own knowledge, rather than enabling the conventional practice of having knowledge produced about us. African American and Southeast Asian women represent the two largest groups of Muslim women in their respective regions. Colonization has affected the gender politics, identity formations and constructions of family life of women in both groups. Similarly, Islam is attracting an increasing number of adherents in both Southeast Asia and North America.

As a newly tenured faculty member at Beloit College, I have begun to articulate the two areas in which I hope to distinguish myself as an associate professor – teaching and research in the field of gender and Islam. I also took advantage of the opportunity to conduct research in the collections of the Hamilton Library. There, I was introduced to visual and textual sources that have found a home in my personal library, and will be instrumental in this lifelong learning process. In short, I carried back to Beloit College the beginnings of a critically reflective reading of the ways in which Southeast Asia’s social history shapes our understandings of Muslim female identity and are shaped by it.

Course Objectives

- Discover the cultures and societies of Southeast Asia.
- Increase knowledge of the countries of Southeast Asia, including their geographic and religious particularities.
- Understand and appreciate the significance of geography (or land, place) in the spread of religion, especially Islam as it emerged in Southeast Asia.
- Become familiar with the history and diversity of Islam and Muslim rituals and practice as they emerged from the 16th century to the present.
- Disengage “Muslim politics” from the history of a region that has experienced an unprecedented religious resurgence since the late 1970s, and boosts an aggregate Muslim population greater than the Arab Middle East.
- Encourage students to grapple with (1) the ethnic, religious, and linguistic complexities of Southeast Asia and their impact on Western perceptions of the region, and (2) the interlocking nature of American identity formation (e.g. privilege) as a response to the “otherness” we often impose on other peoples and societies.

Expected Outcome Goals

- Students will come to appreciate the impact of geography and societal realities on the nature of religion.
Students will understand the historical origins and development of Islam in island SEA.

Students will come to appreciate the similarities and differences between SEAn Islam and the practice of Islam in other parts of the world.

Students will become acquainted with the ordinary lives of people in the pluralistic environment of island SEA.

Students will be able to speak more consciously about the presence, practice, and influence of Islam in island SEA.

The Curriculum Project

Each of the four course segments (Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Brunei) will feature five dominant fields of discourse common to each of the four countries. These fields – the emergence and spread of Islam; institutionalization of Islam (including the dangers of generalizations); genderization of Muslim rituals and practices; definitions of Islam; Islamatization of space; and social/political responses to Islam – will underscore the course’s comparative religious approach. These fields may also articulate the varied roles religion can – and often does -- play in public life. The average weekly reading load for this sophomore level course is 100 pages. Through the course, I have assigned readings or offered resources with which I became acquainted during the Institute. For example, the volume edited by Aihwa Ong and Michael G. Peletz, *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and Body Politics in Southeast Asia*; and Peletz’s *Reason and Passion: Representations of Gender in Malay Society* are being employed as background resources for the study of gender. These texts appear to compliment two required texts: Barbara Andaya’s *Other Pasts* and Hjh. Nik Norjani Nik Badlishah’s *Islamic Family Law and Justice for Muslim Women*. The latter I was introduced to during a visit to the offices of Sisters In Islam.

One of the course’s six areas of evaluation is “the Muslimah autobiography.” For this assignment, students are required to assume the identity of a mythical island Southeast Asian Muslim woman, who has immigrated to the U.S. to attend and/or work at Beloit College. This means the student’s birthplace can be Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei or the Philippines. As such, the student may be married or single, and a member of any class appropriate for a Muslim woman from the selected region. His/her narrative should reflect knowledge of and research about gender and Islam in his/her chosen birthplace as well as what the student’s research indicates could be the experiences of a female Muslim who attends and/or is employed by Beloit. The class
will be strongly encouraged to interview a female Muslim affiliated with Beloit. The 1,500-word essay the students will submit will be evaluated according to a rubric that assesses the following criteria:

- Knowledge through research of the status of women in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, or the Philippines (including Brunei)
- Description of level of gender dynamics in birthplace, and expectations of and/or accommodations necessary to healthily navigate the Beloit College environment
- Understanding of Shari’a law in your chosen region and it impact on women
- Exploration of Muslim life on the Beloit campus
- The style, grammar, spelling, and punctuation of the submission
- Connection of sources to chosen topic
- Demonstrated employment of at least three sources
- Citations included according to Chicago Manual of Style
- Inclusion of bibliography (at least two non-internet sources must be included) on separate page

Before creating this assignment, I was not familiar with Susan Rodgers’ edited volume, *Telling Lives, Telling History: Autobiography and Historical Imagination in Modern Indonesia*. By integrating this newly discovered resource, I’m confident that students will gain deeper insight into the lived realities of Indonesians after independence, the challenges of identity formation, as well as the significance of autobiographical writing in the Malay archipelago. Students also will be able to appreciate the utility of autobiography in the “telling” of history. Our class also has the opportunity to experience the literature of SEA as “places of freedom” with such English translated novels as Maria Dermout’s *The Ten Thousand Things* and Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s *This Earth of Mankind*.

The Malaysia segment of the course opens the second half of the semester. As with the other themed segments, we begin our exploration with geography, thus, with a series of maps. I challenge students to choose a preference and explain what it teaches about the country that other maps do not. This exercise provides another opportunity to discuss the nature of power and the images promoted for our learning processes. I am particularly attracted to the interactive nature of the offerings on the Lonely Planet site (see [http://www.lonelyplanet.com/mapshells/south_east_asia/malaysia/malaysia.htm](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/mapshells/south_east_asia/malaysia/malaysia.htm)) I also employ images through PowerPoint, and audio with the voices of Muslim women captured during our visit.
Teaching aids such as these help establish the interrelated nature of religion, nationalism, culture, ethnic pride, and so on.

Our guiding objective for these three weeks is to consider Malaysia in terms of the emergence and spread of Islam (including the danger of generalizations); institutionalization of Islam; definitions of Islam; Islamatization of space; and social/political responses to Islam. (I have chosen to overtly focus on gender in the final two weeks of the course.) As primary reading, we will spend one-week interacting with the Andayas’ *A History of Southeast Asia*; chapter two of Jason F. Isaason and Colin Rubenstein’s edited work, *Islam in Asia: Changing Political Realities*; and an excerpt from Greg Fealy and Virginia Hooker’s edited text, *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia: Changing Political Realities*. (I purchased the latter while at Universiti Malaya, along with another useful text, Ahmad Ibrahim, et al, *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, excerpts from which are required reading throughout the course.) Collectively, these resources offer students a vision of the development of Malay life (and as distinguished from “Malay” life in Brunei) while at the same time they situate Malaysia in the larger context of heterogeneous Southeast Asia. They also point to the significance of a study of religion in SEA.

My background reading for this section includes Azmi Aziz & Shamsul A.B., “The religious, the plural, the secular and the modern: A brief critical survey on Islam in Malaysia,” which underscores the trajectory for the formation of “moderate” Islam in Malaysia. I was particularly drawn to this essay because of the attention devoted to the “embedization” of Islam in Malaysia and its interaction with three world civilizations — Indian, Chinese, and European. The significance of these civilizations comes into sharper focus when one acknowledges the ethnic tensions currently gripping Malaysia, and the marginalization often experienced by “Malays” who are Indian or Chinese.

Book Reviews


By concentrating upon how one great poet translates his vision and text from one language and culture to another, Prof. Chakraborti’s book raises issues of seminal importance to anyone who is interested in exploring _East-West Connections._

To what extent can a writer successfully negotiate the passage from one language’s grammar, syntax, and lexicon — and the world view or mind set that such structures allow — to those of another language? Linguists and literary historians are intrigued by the seeming facility with which the Polish-born Joseph Conrad was ultimately able to compose narratives in his adopted language, English, and by the complexity of the interlingual games played by novelist Vladimir Nabokov, whose earliest texts were composed in Russian, who wrote in French after escaping the Russian Revolution, but who turned to English after settling permanently in the United States. Rarer still are cases like Irish-born Samuel Beckett, who appropriated for his adopted language, French, the patter of the English-language music hall in his breakthrough play, _En attendant Godot,_ before translating his highly successful French text into English as _Waiting for Godot._

Polylingual Rabindranath Tagore’s translation into English as _Red Oleanders_ of his original Bengali drama, _Rakta Karabi,_ may present the unique case of a writer’s being able to translate his text into a target language and transliterate it into a radically dissimilar system of writing, in the process making conscious decisions concerning the representation of Bengali physical culture and spiritual vision that experience told him his British audience would have difficulty understanding and appreciating. Tagore’s translation was a missionary effort, for he was
convincing that the West was in dire need of the warning sounded in his play against the dehumanizing greed of industrialism. The original British reading audience’s widespread rejection of his effort — despite Tagore’s attempts to make his text as culturally accessible as possible — dramatizes not only the immediate British aversion to Tagore’s support of Indian nationalism (seen by British jingoists as a betrayal by someone who had accepted a knighthood), as Chakraborti points out, but the larger difficulty of translating religious values from a nature-based culture to a materialistic, heavily industrialized one.

Chakraborti is at his best when analyzing the “self-censorship” that Tagore practiced as the result of his awareness of how mechanistic Anglo-European society was in contrast to his native Bengal, and his suspicion of how indifferent the average English intellectual would be to the complex and deeply poetic conventions of Sanskrit theater. Significantly, Tagore translated his play for a Western reading audience, recognizing from the outset that the “total theater” experience of traditional Indian drama was, to a large extent, untranslatable for an Anglo-European audience. (Tagore himself presents an anomaly to Western criticism, which tends to focus upon the arts discretely and thus has difficulty assessing the production of an individual who is able to function simultaneously and with equal proficiency as a poet, playwright, composer, painter, educational theorist, social reformer, and religious thinker.)

Among the significant issues that Chakraborti analyzes are such small but telling instances of the difficulty of cultural translation as Tagore’s having the raja address Nandini as “comrade” in English (raising the distracting echo of communism to a post-World War II Anglo-American reader), whereas in Bengali his addressing Nandini by the more familiar form of her name, Nandin, reveals his intimate identification with a social inferior at the pivotal moment of illumination, and how Bengali syntax allows for the enactment of “the play of magic” in Nandini’s world, a syntactic maneuver impossible in English. Tagore decided to cut a brief exchange between Nandini and the voice of the raja (who remains behind a screen for the entire play) because, apparently, the words metaphorically suggest the “emancipation of the self from all bondage” to illusion, a religious concept unfamiliar to the English who would be more interested in the issue of social justice raised by the enslavement of the lower class. And, understanding that English readers would not be sensitive to the general significance in Indian culture of the frog as a creature that is ugly and detestable because it is content to remain in the mud, Tagore simply reduced the number of frog allusions.

Perhaps the most illuminating instance analyzed by Chakrabori is
Tagore’s translation of the play’s very title, which refers to the flower that Nandini wears and is symbolic both of her beauty and of the blood that must be shed in resisting the greed that drive the mine managers to exploit both the natural world and the local community. *Rakta Karabi* refers to the flower in the singular, whereas its translation as “red oleanders” is plural. The plural form, Chakraborti suggests, appeals to the Western sense of agency and its consequences, suggesting that others will follow Nandini in her resistance (apparently Tagore made the English version of the play more action-oriented). Conversely, the singular — in keeping with traditional Indian drama’s emphasis upon a particular *rasa* or “flavor” in every play — suggests the condition or state of passion as an act of political sacrifice in general. For the academic in comparative studies, this is fascinating material.

The one frustration that I have with Chakraborti’s book stems, ironically, from an issue relating to translation. Readers like myself who do not know Bengali must wish that Chakraborti would explain more often the meaning or color of a Bengali word before remarking upon how well it has been translated by Tagore’s English choice. Assessments of Tagore’s translation practices are often framed in impressionistic language (“economical,” poetically “beautiful”) without an accompanying analysis of the source of its beauty or of alternate word choices which would have been patently less economical. As compensation for American classroom instructors eager to take advantage of Oxford University Press’s paperback reissue of Ananda Lal’s well annotated edition of *Three Plays* by Tagore, however, Chakraborti’s study contains a useful survey of English language discussion of *Red Oleanders* and a persuasive argument of the success of *Red Oleanders* as an autonomous work of art, without any reference to its Bengali original. This makes his book a valuable addition to any library on whose campus Asian drama or, more generally, world drama is taught.

*Raymond-Jean Frontain, University of Central Arkansas*


In *Nobility & Civility* William Theodore de Bary takes up the questions of how nobility and civility developed in Asian traditions and their “relevance to how organized life today can be sustained in the face of the unprecedented violence that dominates so much of contemporary life.” The author’s primary strategy is to eschew definitions of the terms
nobility and civility while showing how China, India and Japan have each taken up the discourse of noble personhood and leadership for the common good within their own evolving cultural contexts. “Examination of these ideals,” he writes, “reveals both the commonalties and diversities within and among Asian traditions — enough commonalties so that one could conceive of shared Asian values even though one recognizes that historically there was little cross-fertilization between, say, Confucianism and Hinduism.”

De Bary shows the internal tensions within Confucianism concerning knowledge and virtue, self-cultivation and public authority. In a culture dominated by “family-styled leadership,” how may one take up the “heavy burden of public service?” His response: the interplay between the ruling elite and the public is based on “mutual remonstrations and reformation.” The advantage of this is “a participatory process that does not restrict the counseling function only to the elite.” While de Bary maintains that Zhu Xi’s community compact is relevant in offsetting the dangers of centralized power, he questions whether the idea of “rule by virtue” does anything more than “protect the superior authority of the Communist Party.” Can it be legitimately argued that tianming is identical to the revolutionary mandate?

De Bary’s explication of Chinese Buddhist conceptions of nobility and civility, however, is thin. The author’s focus on Theravada in India seems to have colored his reading of the myriad Mahayana traditions. The Chan tradition in China developed a repository of insights into ethics and leadership. While such texts as Extensive Record, Records of Equanimity, Records of the Fields, and Records of Things Heard, have partially disappeared, the surviving texts have been translated by Thomas Cleary in Zen Lessons: The Art of Leadership an anthology of significant teachings about human nature from Chan Buddhist communities that originally dates from the early twelfth century.

In his four-chapter study of Japanese conceptions of nobility and civility De Bary shows how the Japanization of Confucianism and Buddhism helped construct a unique version of the noble person and the common good. In much the same way he puts into question the CCP’s appropriation of Confucianism, he questions the ways in which the military in Japan has appropriated Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism to legitimize its abuse of power. It is de Bary’s contention that despite these problems, the elements of veneration for the emperor, the Japanization of Buddhism, the portrayal of the samurai as a Confucian junzi all show an impulse to the common good: the ideal of “transcending life and death.”
In his analysis of the *Dhammapada* as the representative text of Buddhist tradition and Ramayana for Hinduism, de Bary makes a convincing case for Indian “heroic nobility” that exemplified the conflict between local and universal values. In both traditions, nobility informs leadership only when the hero embraces a higher religious ideal. For the emerging Buddhist community, nobility is understood to be superior to political power and social rank; thus, nobility is a liberating practice based on self-restraint. In the *Ramayana*, the emphasis is on keeping one’s word even if it puts one at odds, as it does Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, with one’s kin: “true nobility means being true to oneself, not just good and loyal to one’s kin.”

In the “Epilogue” de Bary takes issue with those who proclaim that only westerners are concerned with “the status of the individual or person.” He writes, “most Asian religions and philosophies . . . have exhibited a self-awareness and a consciousness of individual responsibility predicated on a high evaluation of the human potential — variously expressed in language that affirms this value in relation to the different ends of life that might be served by, or serve, individuals.” Indeed, it is an important theme in the work that a culture is first and foremost a culture in tension with itself in an evolving context.

*Tom Pynn, Kennesaw State University*


The papers gathered in this collection concentrate on the symbiosis between text and ritual in early China, specifically during the period from the Eastern Zhou to the Han dynasty. Five of the papers were prepared especially for the international conference, “Text and Ritual in Early China,” that was held at Princeton University in October 2000. The editor requested that two of the contributors, Michael Nylan and William Boltz, offer more contextual anchor essays in order to provide a foundation for the other works.

Nylan’s essay offers an impressive array of observations about the ways in which texts played a role in classical ritual comparable to other ritual items. Texts were connected with the past and with memory; they often represented numinal power; they enjoyed greater authority with their use by successive generations; they provided framing interpretations for changes and happenings; and they were written in a style that came to be regarded as normative. Nylan shows that both the ability to write well and the skill to perform proper ritual were considered marvelous
techniques *shu* 術. She holds that texts became as important a component of ceremony as ritual gestures and dress. She goes on to argue that the power of text and ritual would have been diluted if indiscriminately employed by the masses to their own advantage, and thus there were frequent exhortations by leading thinkers confirming that such powerful techniques should only be undertaken as directed by a master. In fact, the *Rulin* 儒林 chapters in the Han histories present the Ru as experts in ancient rituals and writings. Nylan argues that the interplay of text and ritual became all the more important as officials undertook the art of public display which sustained the authority of an emperor by coupling the ideal of rulership expressed through text and ritual with the distribution of staggering amounts of goods and benefits to a wide public.

Boltz’s essay is a fine summary of what we know about the composite nature of classical texts and the contributions made by archeological finds to the relationships between recently discovered manuscripts and received texts. Boltz illustrates his points through the use of helpful tables such as the one that compares *Guodian* 郭店 A, B, C with the received *Laozi*. He demonstrates that although there is a strong similarity between the actual wording of the lines of the *Laozi* and the *Guodian* strips, there is a wildly divergent ordering of the building blocks by the editors. Among his conclusions are these points: 1) the ancient texts were built from blocks of materials many of which may have had their origin in ritual performance, although this original context may be obscured or lost when they are redacted into a text by an editor; 2) the texts are in process, not simply handed down in a fixed form from master to disciple; 3) the reordering and revising of the basic building blocks of the texts may easily have been an orally accomplished process, finding its written form only after the fact, if at all; and 4) some of the editing process may have taken place in conjunction with ceremonial practices in which the texts came to have a performative role. Many of Boltz’s points are familiar to us by now. However, the way in which he offers bits of evidence for the ritual context of some building blocks of the texts is an important original contribution that advances our understanding about possible lines of interpretation for those passages. I share Boltz’s ultimate conclusion that many of his remarks about the structure and evolution of the *Laozi* apply as well to the *Mencius*, *Zuo zhuan*, and the *Guoyu*. I would add the *Zhuangzi* to this list. And yet, he might make some assumptions that those of us who work on the literary criticism of the classical texts also are prone to do, but which may be questionable. I will mention only one. Boltz suggests that it is
significant that the Guodian Laozi lacks even the Dao and De division of the text. He couples this with the findings that the order in Guodian passages (building blocks) is very different from that of the received text. All of this leads him to conclude that the Dao and De division should be viewed as a later imposition and not an originally exclusive or intrinsic one. But what I think is perhaps too hastily assumed by all of those of us working in this area, Boltz included, is that the Guodian materials were meant to be a version or text of Laozi. I think that it is at least possible that these strips, found in a tomb as they were, may simply represent one person’s compilation of a private collection of material, a kind of abridged study book or inspiration text. If this is correct, then what source the owner of the Guodian strips had at his disposal, and the extent to which it might have been anything like the Mawangdui silks is still indeterminate. If the strips were such a study book, then both the absence of the Dao and De division and the differences in order of blocks of material might mean virtually nothing at all beyond the idiosyncratic interests of the complier.

Lothar Von Falkenhausen, whose expertise in early Chinese ritual is well established, contributes an essay on five bronze tallies (jinjie 金節) from Chu that are dated to 323 B.C.E. He shows that inscriptions on bronze vessels of royal decrees (wangming 王命) were used to extend the ruler’s communication to the numinal realm on the one hand, and to express the awesome force of the ruler on the other. Accordingly, inscribed bronzes did the work of ritual and also of political and economic transactions as well. This means that certain economic documents were invested with ritual power.

Joachim Gentz’s essay is one of the most valuable in this collection. Gentz makes an important difference between the use of texts in ritual and the ritual performance of composing a text (i.e., the text as a ritual act). Gentz discusses texts that function as exegetical commentaries of other works, reading them as ritual constructions. For example, he argues that the Gongyang zhuan 公羊傳 commentary on the Chunqiu 春秋 interprets that text to mean that Confucius’s composition of the Chunqiu is a ritually correct behavior in its own right. Under this reading, the textual form of the Chunqiu is determined by ritual objectives and these might supplement, or even supplant, the grammatical surface meaning of the text in its present context. Gentz concludes, “the commentarial assumption that ritual is a basic principle of text composition show a certain understanding of the nature of a text. The structure of the text becomes more complex and esoteric as the layers of meaning increase” (143).
Martin Kern offers a detailed and sophisticated textual account of the appearance of *Odes* fragments and quotations in the six excavated manuscripts from late Warring States and early Western Han periods. Kern offers evidence that the *Odes* was just as unstable before the bibliocauast as it was afterward. He argues that the written versions of *Odes*, like many other such early texts, were transmitted in a framework of oral teaching and ritual performance. They were not simply written texts traveling on the own in some environment of abstract reading or discussion between teacher and student. Indeed, one of the principal contributions of Kern’s work is his demonstration that the oral performance in the transmission of the traditions was not supplanted by their written form. The masters discussed *lun* 论, expounded *yan* 言, practiced *xi* 習, and explained *shuo* 説 *jiang* 講 the traditions, and the students expressed their mastery *zhi* 治 of them by reciting *song* 説 them. The written versions were actually neither the primary goal nor the principal vehicle of transmission, and this partly explains why a large number of textual variants, especially with respect to the *Odes*, is not as disturbing as we might first think.

Scholars interested in early Chinese history and political practice will find David Schaberg’s essay, “Playing at Critique,” both interesting and controversial. Schaberg examines “indirect remonstrance” *fengjian* 讽諷 as a sort of critical objection to the ruler’s policies that was a literary fiction. This activity had no actual history in practice. Whereas, ordinary remonstrance *jian* 諏 in the form of a speech delivered in court that did occur as early as the Eastern Zhou period. The indirect remonstrance texts tell of a ritualized protest that was designed to both entertain and offer moral admonition. He exegetes the common morphology of indirect remonstrance materials and provides numerous examples of those associated with legendary acts of remonstrance. The episodes feature the jester *you* 優 as presenting a deviation from the ritual code or moral justice in order to mirror a ruler’s failures with the goal that the ruler awakens and becomes mindful again of propriety and his mandate from heaven. However, Schaberg is critical of the view that such activities were among the regular duties of the *you* and also of the position that Chinese theatrical entertainment grew out of this kind of institution of critique. Schaberg shows that along with the development of these indirect remonstrance narratives there was a growing schematic of types of acceptable criticism, culminating in Liu Xiang’s five types of remonstrance in the *Shuoyuan* 說苑. Schaberg takes these tales of indirect remonstrance as the fictional literary invention of the *shi* 士, but he leaves little doubt about the ways in
which literary text and ritual performance were interwoven in each of
the legends.

Among the boldest of the contributions to this collection is Mark
Csikszentmihalyi’s treatment of “Establishing the Mandate,” or the
Liming 立命, an early Han silk manuscript found at Mawangdui which
speaks in the voice of the Yellow Emperor. Csikszentmihalyi argues
that the text of the Liming is probably an inscriptional composition
originally placed on a four faced image of the Yellow Emperor. The
incising of such remarks on lasting materials was associated with revered
figures from the past as a way of quite literally keeping the master’s
words always in front of you. Csikszentmihalyi deals with three sets of
inscriptions: the King Wu inscriptions, the Bronze Man Inscriptions
jinren ming 金人銘, and the Liming. If some later textual works contain
inscribed texts, as Csikszentmihalyi thinks, we may ask whether we can
understand the text without reading it back into its original medium
and context. While, Csikszentmihalyi thinks that reading a text without
its past connection does not necessarily destroy our ability to understand
it, this seems to be a problematic stand to take. The recomposition of a
text, and I deliberately do not say merely redaction of a text, puts material
in a context that may indeed give it new meaning. Csikszentmihalyi
certainly recognizes this difficulty, as is shown by his exploration of the
Mawangdui Laozi. He argues that the Laozi contains passages reminiscent
of the Liming and the Bronze Man Inscriptions especially in its forty-
four uses of first person pronouns wu 吾 and wo 我. He believes that
certain textual blocks from the Laozi may well have originated in specific
ritual objects and religious contexts before becoming decontextualized
in the form that is now familiar to us.

Ken Brashier’s “Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Stelae” is the final
essay in the collection. Brashier considers stele inscriptions from the
Eastern Han that included mnemonic devices to aid in the memorization
of their words such as cliché, exaggeration, “memory places,” and
“verse.” These stele inscriptions were, in many respects, descendants
of the earlier bronze inscribing process. This essay is a fine example of
detailed work. Brashier demonstrates that, although inscribed in stone,
the stele inscriptions were meant to be recited and ritually enacted in
oral performance. He provides the Shijing as an example of a culture
of memory, reminding us that it was often memorized by the age of
12 or 13. Likewise the Hanshu says that the classical poems survived
the bibliocaust of the Qin because they were memorized, recited, and
chanted and not merely confined to bamboo or silk. Like the poems of
the Shijing the stele verses were memorized, recited and exchanged as
well. Brashier believes that stele texts continued the functions of bronze vessels and their inscriptions. Brashier concludes that the Eastern Han stele demonstrate that text is ritual. The texts were meant to transform the psyche of those who memorized and enacted them in speaking.

No other work currently available takes as seriously the symbiosis between ritual and text as does this one. While recent literary study has brought to the forefront the composite nature of the early classical texts of China, this work asks us to rethink not only how many of these logia may have had their origins in ritual practice, but also how the assemblage of the texts themselves may have been ritual acts. Such a provocative horizon requires that we take seriously the possibility that much, if not most, of what has passed as commentary and guiding interpretation of these texts, may have been based on foundations that have finally been washed away by new excavated materials and findings in sinological archaeology.

Ronnie Littlejohn, Belmont University
2005 ASIANetwork/ASDP Conference Program
Whittier, California

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2005

2:00-6:00 p.m.: Conference Registration

6:00-7:30 p.m.: ASDP Reception

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2005

7:00-8:30 a.m.: Breakfast

8:45-10:15 a.m.: 4 Concurrent ASDP Panel Sessions 1-4

1. “Buddha’s Brain: an Interdisciplinary Approach to Buddhism and Cognitive Psychology” MP 110
   Co-Chairs & Presenters: Stephen J. Laumakis and Greg Robinson-Riegler, University of St. Thomas

2. “Reform and Revolution in China’s Interior: the Case of Shaanxi Province, 1949-2004” Board Room #1
   Chair: James Cook, Central Washington University
   Presenters:
   
   James Cook, Central Washington University; “Remaking Chang’an: Urbanization and Development in 20th Century Xi’an”


   Timothy Blocher, Central Washington University; “Rural Transformations: Modernization and Water/ Land Resource Dynamics in Rural Shaanxi”
3. “Experiencing South and Southeast Asia” Board Room #2
   Chair: George P. Brown, Slippery Rock University
   Presenters:
   
   Swasti Bhattacharyya, Buena Vista University; “Toward an American Hindu Perspective on Assisted Reproductive Technology”
   Shabeen Sultana, Calcutta University; “Indian and Global Issues with Special Reference to Communal Harmony in Modern Urdu Ghazals”

4. “New Works in the Field: Chinese Aesthetics and Literature, by Corinne Dale” MP 120
   Chair: Howard Giskin, Appalachian State University
   Presenters:
   
   Bettye Walsh, Piedmont Virginia Community College
   Fay Beauchamp, Community College of Philadelphia
   Harriette Grissom, Atlanta College of Art
   Respondent: Corinne Dale

10:15-10:30 a.m.: Refreshments

10:30-12:00 noon: 4 Concurrent ASDP Panel Sessions 5-8

5. “New Perspectives on Teaching about Asia” MP 110
   Chair: Terry L. Mazurak, Albertson College of Idaho
   Presenters:
   
   James E. Deitrick, University of Central Arkansas; “The Benefit and Ethics of Teaching Undergraduates to Meditate in the Classroom”
   Susan Clare Scott, McDaniel College; “Sacred Earth: Daoism as the Preserver of the Environment in Chinese Landscape Painting from the Song through the Qing Dynasties”
   Yi-Ching Huang, University of Buffalo; “A Case Study of a Teacher Study Group in Taiwan”
6. “Islam and Buddhism in the Malay Archipelago: Art, Architecture, Communities and History” Board Room #1
Chair: Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen, Oklahoma City Community College
Panelists:
Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen, Oklahoma City Community College; “Situating Islamic, Buddhist Material, and Spiritual Cultures in the Historical Past of the Malay Archipelago”
Joe McKeon, Central Connecticut State University; “Evidences for the Chinese Diaspora on the Malay Archipelago”
Sara Oral, Truman State University; “Architectural Diffusion: Mosques in the Malay Archipelago”

7. “Japanese ‘Space’ in History and Art” Board Room #2
Chair: Cynthia Ho, University of North Carolina, Asheville
Presenters:
Paul Dunscombe, University of Alaska Anchorage; “Oh, Meaningless Intervention!” Public Debate on Japan’s Siberian Intervention”
George Brown, Namiko Tsukidate, Brian Hoffman, Slippery Rock University; “Japan’s Changing Foreign Policy: the ‘Normal Country’ Military and Challenges to the Japanese Constitution”
Keiko Takioto Miller, Mercyhurst College; “Genkan and Yugen: a Disinterested Space in Japanese Architecture and Zeami’s Theatre of Nob”

8. “East Asia in the Undergraduate Classroom: Projects from the Expanding East Asian Studies Teaching Collaborative” Board Room #3
Chair: Heidi Johnson, Columbia University
Presenters:
Roberta Adams, Fitchburg State College; “Teaching Buddhist Elements in Journey to the West”
Liya Li, Rockland Community College; “Buddhism and Scroll Paintings in the Tale of Genji”
Barbara Seater, Raritan Valley Community College; “Social Science Meets Literature: Using Sawako Ariyoshi’s The Twilight Years and Japanese Short Stories in Sociology and Psychology Courses”
12:00–5:00 p.m.: 1/2-day AN-sponsored Field Trip, including stops for lunch and a tour at the Hsi Lai Buddhist Temple, and a visit to the Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena

Alternate schedule for those choosing not to go on the field trip:

12:00–1:30 p.m.: Lunch (for AN attendees, this meal is pre-conference; on your own)

2:00-6:00 p.m.: Conference Registration

2:00-3:00 p.m.: 3 concurrent ASDP sessions 9-11

   Board Room #1
   Chair: Paul E. Dunscomb, University of Alaska Anchorage
   Presenters:
   Li Qingjun, Belmont University; “Sentence and Solas in the Writer’s Craft of The Canterbury Tales and The Peony Pavilion”
   Ronnie Littlejohn, Belmont University; “The Daogu (Daoist socceress) of The Peony Pavilion”

    Board Room #2
    Chair: Ray Olson, College of Dupage
    Presenters:
    Ray Olson, College of Dupage; “Documentary Human Rights in China: the Search for Common Ground”
    Keith Krasemann, College of Dupage
    Stephan Johnson, City College of San Francisco

11. “Global Strategies in the Undergraduate Business Curriculum”
    Board Room #3
    Chair: Richard Mack, Central Washington University
    Presenters:
    Alan Gregory Cant, Central Washington University; “Student Perceptions of Global Management Competencies”
    Koushik Ghosh, Central Washington University; “Teaching World Economic Issues: An Interactive Approach”
12. “Community Service in Asia: Pedagogical Opportunities, Practical Concerns” Board Room #1
Chair: Sawa Kurotani, University of Redlands
Presenters:
Bill Huntley, University of Redlands; “May Term in Japan: Doing Community Service as Teachers of English”
Sheri B. Moore, University of Louisville; “Opportunities for Service Learning in Malaysia”
Xinyan Jiang, University of Redlands; “Teaching as Learning Experience: Reflections on the Redlands Students’ Service at Peking University”
Yasmeen Mobiuddin, University of the South; “Multi-Agency, Intercultural Service Learning in a Summer Abroad Program: Potential and Challenges, a Case Study”

13. “‘Reading’ Asian Literature” Board Room #2
Chair: Keiko Takioto Miller, Mercyhurst College
Presenters:
Brian Seymour, Community College of Philadelphia; “Angel Island: a Hidden Legacy of Structural Censorship in America”
Howard Giskin, Appalachian State University; “Reading and Rereading The Story of the Stone: What Students Need to Know”
Toni Culjak, Central Washington University “The Post-Apocalyptic World in Japanese Fiction: Reading Abe Kobo and Murakami Haruk”

14. “Chinese Cosmology: Creation, Resonance and Yinyang” Board Room #3
Chair: Jeffrey W. Dippmann, Central Washington University
Presenters:
Erica F. Brindley, University of Southern California; “Sound Phenomena: The Cosmic Power of Sound in Late Warring States and Han Texts”
Wenyu Xie, The International Theological Seminary in Los Angeles “Creation in Cheng: A Confucian Cosmology”
6:00-7:00 p.m.: AN/ASDP Dinner

7:00-8:00 p.m.: Keynote Address by Bruce Cumings, University of Chicago: “Decoupled from History: Korea in the ‘Axis of Evil’”

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2005

7:00–8:30 a.m.: Breakfast

8:45-9:45 a.m.: Plenary Session: Ballroom A
“ASIANetwork and ASDP Make their Introductions;”
Van J. Symons, Augustana College and Executive Director, ASIANetwork;
Betty Buck, Univ. of Hawai’i at Manoa and Co-Director, ASDP;
Ronnie Littlejohn, Belmont University

9:45-10:00 a.m.: Refreshments

10:00–11:30 a.m.: 6 Concurrent Panel Sessions ASDP Sessions 15-16

15  “Language and Culture Day Programming at the University: Opportunities and Challenges” MP 120
Chair: Joshua Nelson, Central Washington University
Presenters:

Joshua Nelson, Central Washington University; TBA
Yoshimitsu Khan, Gettysburg College; “Japanese Language for High Schools”

16. “Comparative Philosophy” Board Room #3
Chair: James E. Deitrick, University of Central Arkansas
Presenters:

Dennis Arjo, Johnson County Community College; “Of Unswerving Horses and Immortal Souls: A Comparison of Confucius’ Use of The Book of Songs and Socrates’ Appeal to Poets in the Meno”
Marthe Chandler, DePauw University; “Education and Poetry: Enemies or Allies? Two Classical Views”
Xiufen Lu, Wichita State University; “Understanding Mozi on the Foundations of Morality: a Comparative Perspective”
15. “Roundtable on Asian Communities: Origins and Migrations to the Americas” Ballroom A
Co-Chairs: Diane Clayton, Hamline University; Richard Bohr, College of St. Benedict/St. John’s University; and Gita Rajan, Fairfield University
Panelists: Robert Y. Eng, University of Redlands
Mary Hannemann, University of Washington, Tacoma
Juwen Zhang, Willamette University

16. “Teaching the Tigers: Approaches to Economic Development in Eastern Asia” MP 110
Co-Chairs: Tim Cheek, University of British Columbia, Vancouver; and Vibha Kapuria-Foreman, Colorado College
Presenters: Tim Cheek, University of British Columbia; “Teaching the Tigers: Approaches to Economic Development in Eastern Asia”
Vibha Kapuria-Foreman, Colorado College; “What’s Missing in Current Materials for Teaching the Tigers and Where Do We Find It?”
Kailash Khandke, Furman University; “Countries, Issues, and Institutions in East Asia: What to Include, What to Leave Out in an Undergraduate Economics Course?”
Dennis McCormac, Kalamazoo College; “Teaching the New Viet Nam — It’s a Country, not a War”

17. “Silk Road Connections” Board Room #1
Chair: Sam Yamashita, Pomona College
Panelists: Gail Ambuske, Hiram College; “The Value of the Inter-disciplines: Lessons from the Silk Road”
Susan Norris, Marymount College of Fordham University; “Chinese Archaeology from the Perspective of a Mesoamericanist”
Joan O’Mara, Washington and Lee University; “Expectations Met, Surprises Encountered along the Silk Road”
Sam Yamashita, Pomona College; “Reading ‘China’ Contrapuntally”
18. “Incorporating Women in the Teaching of China” Board Room #2
Chair: Paul Nietupski, John Carroll University
Panelists:
   Sherry Mou, DePauw University; “Images of Chinese Women in Chinese Films”
   Joseph Adler, Kenyon College; “Daughter/Wife/Mother or Sage/Immortal/Bodhisattva? Women in the Teaching of Chinese Religions”
   Stephen Udry, Carthage College; “Cooking the Five Grains and Heating the Wine: Guiding the Undergraduate Gaze”
Discussant: Paul Nietupski, John Carroll University

11:45-12:45 p.m. AN/ASDP Lunch

12:45-1:45 p.m. Keynote Address: Roger Ames, Univ. of Hawai’i, Manoa; “Xu Bing’s Book from the Sky: A Case Study in the Making of Meaning” Ballroom A

2:00-3:30 p.m.: 6 Concurrent Panel Sessions

ASDP Sessions 15-16

19. “Infusing Asian Values into a Team Taught Introductory English-Psychology Class” MP 120
Chair: Dan Bellack, Trident Technical College
Presenters: Dan Bellack and Katherine Purcell, Trident Technical College

20. “Asian Philosophy” Board Room #3
Chair: Marthe Chandler, DePauw University
Presenters:
   James Peterman, Sewanee, University of the South; “Predicaments of Contemporary Confucianism”
   Shudong Chen, Johnson County Community College; “Searching for Silence across Cultures: Does Silence Speak?”
   Terry L. Mazurak, Albertson College of Idaho; “The Diamond Sutra and the Logic of What is not Taught”
AN Sessions 5-8

   Chair: Hue-ping Chin, Drury College
   Panelists:
   - Vanessa Chio, University of Washington, Tacoma
   - Steven DeCaroli, Goucher College
   - Andrew Chittick, Eckerd College
   - Veena Deo, Hamline University
   - Diane Clayton, Hamline University

22. “Teaching about Islam in Asia” Ballroom A
   Chair: Zeki Saripotra, John Carroll University
   Panelists:
   - Bob Entenmann, St. Olaf College; “Chinese Muslims and Other Muslims in China”
   - Amina Steinfels, Mt. Holyoke College; “Teaching Indian Islam”
   - Mark Berkson, Hamline University; “The Challenges Facing Non-Muslims Who Teach Islam”
   Discussant: Zeki Saripotra, John Carroll University

23. “Koreans in Japan and Current Japanese Views on Koreans” Board Room #1
   Co-Chairs: Yoshiko Nagaoka, University of Evansville; and T. James Kodera, Wellesley College
   Panelists:
   - Young C. Kim, University of Evansville; “The Recent Foreign Policies toward Cultural Exchanges between Japan and South Korea”
   - Yoshiko Nagaoka, University of Evansville; “Japanese Perspective Changes on South Korean Culture: Examinations of Japanese Language Globalization Influenced by South Korean ‘Soft Power’”
24. “Vietnam Today” Board Room #2
   Chair: Alan Katz, Fairfield University
   Panelists:
   Alan Katz, Fairfield University; “U.S., Post-Normalization: Impediments to Better Relations”
   Nancy McHugh, Wittenberg University; “Philosophical And Ethical Issues in Agent Orange Cases in Vietnam”
   Ray Gunn, University of Utah; “Vietnam Then and Now: Changes since 1995”
   Jason Picard, University of California, Berkeley; “Themes Found in Contemporary Vietnamese Fiction”

3:30-3:45 p.m. Refreshments

3:45-5:15 p.m. 6 Concurrent Panel Sessions

ASDP Sessions 17-18

25. “Riding the Wind with Liezi: New Perspectives on the Daoist Classic” Board Room #3
   Chair: Roger Ames, University of Hawai’i at Manoa
   Presenters:
   Jeff Richey, Berea College; “I Robot: the Body as Machine in the Liezi”
   Jeffrey Dippmann, Central Washington University; “Reading the Zhuangzi in Liezi: Redefining Xian-ship”
   Suzanne Cahill, University of California, San Diego; “King Mu of the Zhou Visits the Queen Mother of the West on Mount Kunlun”

26. “The Application and Integration of Asian Culture in the Teaching of Business and Management” MP 120
   Chair: Jack Osborn, University of Redlands
   Presenters:
   Jack Osborn, University of Redlands; “The Utilization of Film, Poetry and Literature in the Teaching of Contemporary Business for China and Japan”
   Gregory Williams and Robert Marsel, University of Redlands; “Confucian Philosophy and its Application to Modern Business Ethics”
   Liu Wen, University of Redlands; “Sun Tzu’s Art of War and its Relationship to Modern Business Theory”
AN Sessions 9-12

27. “Incorporating Minorities in the Teaching of China” MP 110
Chair: Chia Ning, Central College
Panelists:
  Marsha Smith, Augustana College; “Case Studies in Identity: Comparing Gender Status, Ages, Religion and Ethnicity among the Naxi and the Uighur in China”
  Li-hua Ying, Bard College; “Encountering the Other: Writing about Ethnic Minorities in China”
  Brian Dott, Whitman College; “Un-Othering Minorities in Chinese History”
Discussant: Chia Ning, Central College

28. “Utilizing East Asian Library Resources in the Internet Age”
Board Room #1
Chair: Phyllis Larson, St. Olaf College
Panelists:
  Yunshan Ye, Carleton, Macalester, and St. Olaf Colleges
  Two other Asia librarians TBA

29. “The Hidden Empowerment of South and Southeast Asian Women: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives” Board Room #2
Co-Chairs: Veena Khandke, University of South Carolina Upstate; and Savita Nair, Furman University
Panelists:
  Savita Nair, Furman University: “May I Help You?: Indian Women Negotiate Space and Power”
  Tamara Valentine, University of Nevada, Reno: “Rattling the Gilded Cage: Bilingual South Asian Women Write”
  Veena Khandke, University of South Carolina Upstate: “Schooling and Empowerment of Indian Women”
  Ray Chandrasekara, Albany College of Pharmacy: “Gods of Small Things”

30. “2004 Freeman Student-Faculty Research Projects” (Poster Session) Ballroom A
Convener, Teddy Amoloza, Illinois Wesleyan University
Presenters: students from 6 Freeman-funded student-faculty teams who carried out their projects in 2004
5:45-6:45 p.m. Reception, at the Shannon Center, Whittier College

6:30-7:30 p.m. Tea Ceremony Demonstration by Akira Takemoto and students, Whitman College, at the Shannon Center, Whittier College

7:45-9:00 p.m. AN Dinner, Whittier College

9:00-9:30 p.m. AN Business Meeting, Whittier College

SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2005

7:00-8:30 a.m.: Breakfast

7:00-8:30 a.m.: AN Board Meeting

8:45-9:45 a.m.: Plenary Session: Ballroom A
“The AN/Luce Arts Consultancy Project: a Work in Progress”
Convener: Joan O’Mara, Washington and Lee University
Panelists:
Stan Mickel, Project Coordinator, Wittenberg University
Karil Kucera, St. Olaf College
Paul Nietupski, John Carroll University

9:45-10:00 a.m.: Refreshments

10:00-11:30 a.m.: 4 Concurrent AN Sessions 13-16

31. “Hong Kong, China: New Opportunities for Educational Exchange” Board Room #1
Chair: David Adams, Council for Int’l. Exchange of Scholars
Panelists:
David Adams, CIES; Fulbright Representative for NE and SE Asia; “Hong Kong, China and Fulbright Scholar Program Resources”
Glenn Shive, Hong Kong–America Center; “Hong Kong, China: New Opportunities for Exchange”
Wellington Chan, Occidental College; “Hong Kong’s Resources for American Students and Scholars Studying in China”
32. “Beyond the Four Walls of the Classroom: Learning through Doing in the First-Year Course on Japanese Language and Culture” Board Room #2
Chair: Joan Ericson, Colorado College
Panelists:
   Joan Ericson, Colorado College; “Creating New Ways to Continue Learning After Class Is Over”
   Jerry Switzer and Cecilia Gonzales, Colorado College; “Tearing out the Lawn: Creating a Dry Japanese Garden at Colorado College”
   Lexi Franks, student at Colorado College; “What I Didn’t Expect to Learn in College”

33. “Taking Asian Studies to the Students: Getting the Message across at Pacific University” MP 110
Chair: Tanya Storch, Pacific University
Panelists:
   Lu Jie, Pacific University; “Challenges and Strategies for Teaching Asian Film to Undergraduate Students”
   Greg Rohlf, Pacific University; “Asian Studies and Undergraduate Professional Education: Put Students in Charge!”
   Tanya Storch, Pacific University; “Using Local Communities in Teaching Courses about Asian Religions”

34. “From Admission to Orientation: a Four-Month Window for Asian Students to Start Crossing Intercultural Bridges” Board Room #3
Chair: Dorothy Guyot, Administrator, Pre-Collegiate Program, Diplomatic School, Yangon
Panelists:
   Yamin Htet, Pre-Collegiate Program, Yangon, and now a student at Furman University; “From Inside a Pharmaceutical Factory”
   Nyantha Maw (Seth) Lin, Pre-Collegiate Program, Yangon, and now a student at Carleton College; “Touchstones Discussions Aid Reasoning Together”
   Martha Butt, Administrator, Payap University, Chiang Mai
   Ohm Chanteyoon, Payap University, Chiang Mai, and now a violinist and student at University of Oregon; “A Thai Perspective on Crossing Bridges”
Peter McCagg, Administrator, International Christian University, Tokyo

Ayako Imai, International Christian University, Tokyo and now a student at University of California – Los Angeles; “A Japanese Perspective”

11:45-1:00 p.m.: Closing AN Luncheon
Registered Participants

Kamalakanta Biswal
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