

and Burning Their Books;" (2) right: "The Pig-Grunt religion is heterodox and is disseminated from afar. It is insulting to heaven and earth, and wipes away the cult of ancestor veneration. Even with a thousand arrows it would be difficult to clear them of their crimes;" (3) left: "Their bewitching, dog fart books reek of dung. They slander sages and worthies, and insult the immortals and Buddhas. All within the nine provinces and four seas equally hate them."

Back cover image by Thomas Allom (1804-72), who illustrated G. N. Wright's *China in a Series of Views* (1843). This image is Allom's rather romantic depiction of a Chinese "Rice seller."

Beating Devils and Burning Their Books

Views of China, Japan, and the West

Edited by Anthony E. Clark

ASIA PAST & PRESENT



Published by the Association for Asian Studies, Inc.
Asia Past & Present: New Research from AAS, Number 6

China and the Confluence of Cultures

Overcoming the East-West Mind-Set

Lionel M. Jensen

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the two shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of
the earth.

—Rudyard Kipling, 1890

In a self-conscious era of globalization in which the incessant circulation of goods and peoples threatens to dissolve the very boundaries of the “nation-state,” the persistence of the geopolitical category East-West is as curious as it is notable.¹ Max Weber's (1864–1920) bold question about the uniqueness of Western civilization is as good a place as any to start in establishing the evaluative ground on which the East-West dyad stands.

To what combination of circumstances should the fact be attributed that in Western civilization, and in Western civilization only, cultural phenomena have appeared which (as we like to think) lie in a line of development having universal significance and value? . . . Why did not the scientific, the artistic, the political, or the economic development there [in China and India] enter upon that path of rationalization which is peculiar to the Occident?²

The very manner in which Weber's questions are posed opens us to the evaluative force of “Western,” as developmentally precedential and thus superior. This is the East-West dichotomy that underwrites the persistent reassertion of a historical superiority in David S. Landes's *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, pithily summed up in his description of “the West and the rest,” or that assumes a more ominous manifestation in Samuel P. Huntington's “clash of civilizations.”³ All of the chapters in this volume began from a premise at odds with this once common contention, and yet we must be careful not to reoccupy the confines of the same argument by contesting Weber's claim, or

Landes's, by demonstrating that the East was instead superior to the West. Such scholarship of the counterclaim has been produced with great effect in the past decade, particularly in economics, and it has reoccupied the earlier rhetorical frame of admiration of Eastern civilizations found in Friedrich Max Müller's *The Sacred Books of the East* (1879–1910) and Joseph Needham's encyclopedic *Science and Civilization in China* (1954–).

Out of a concern that the cogency of such an approach is undermined by defensiveness and reaction, I prefer to question the usefulness of the East-West dichotomy by looking at specific historical moments when the geocultural division fails to illuminate, as I did in my earlier work, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, and as a number of others have done in the last decade.⁴ The arguments of these works succeed by operating against the grain of the common presumption that “East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet,” and from them one learns that this serviceable modification of Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) is a modernist fallacy, one appropriate to an era we have left behind and one that depended heavily on interpretative tendentiousness.⁵ What is disturbing to me in this dismissive reflex is how the din of its announcement at the height of the last century's imperialist experiment in Africa, Asia, and the tropics has deafened us to questions of value and moral commonality, which in our contemporary moment of “globalization” and global wars on terror we very desperately need to ask. It is difficult to understand why this errant cultural geography persists even after the relegation of “oriental civilizations” and “oriental studies” to the margins of scholarly repute.⁶ So, for this reason alone, it is necessary to question this framework made from the conceptual artifacts of the Great Encounter (1600–1900), a defining event of the world's modernity, but one that is intelligible only as history not as geography.

East-West remains a keyword in the vocabulary of culture contact perhaps because of its contribution to the language of modern, enlightened selfhood or perhaps because it is the most expedient, but increasingly inaccurate, means of marking the difference between the developed and developing nations of the world. It is worth noting, however, that such judgmental and romantic differentiation of West from East, commonly identified as orientalism, may also be found in the culture of certain developing nations, where an equal and oppositely intense judgmental romance is found in the form of occidentalism.⁷ Overcoming this stubborn, antagonistic logic of East-West represents a challenge for Occident and Orient alike.

Rather than exploring the possible reasons for its persistence, I seek in this chapter to reframe this East-West dyad. I suggest that we question our default orientation of the West and shift to an examination of how the

categories West and East are used in a Chinese context. Here, too, we find a judgment reminiscent of our West-East habit of mind but in reverse: the West as exotic, the East as known and thus unmarked. In addition, by way of several examples from the twentieth, seventeenth, and twelfth centuries, I will argue that in some cases the view of difference that may be observed in China is not destructive or violent. The point of the particular selection of texts will become evident as I proceed toward a conclusion that urges twenty-first-century citizens to honor the curiosity in the Other, while neutralizing the fear consequent on any encounter with difference. It has been possible in another time and place; it might be possible once again.

East-West in China

This coded geopolitical language of East-West has a history in China as well as in “the West.” For the cultural history of the geographic designations of East and West, one need only note that from highest antiquity, the ordinal points of the compass have always been symbolically loaded, even sacred, for Chinese. The *sifang* 四方, or four quadrates, measure the far points of creation and, from the earliest written records of the Shang period, organized the progress and worship of the ruling clan and enabled Shang rulers to chart the rising course of the baleful influences of winds and spirits.⁸

We observe a tendency toward a mythical metageography from early antiquity, such as in Warring States (fifth century BCE) works in which *Dongyi* 東夷, or “Eastern Yi,” referred to people southeast of the North China Plain who were identified as culturally inferior. By the Han period, the West was recognized as a region of mysterious majesty and millenarian magic.

In popular mythology, and particularly in millenarian sects, the Kunlun Mountains, the peaks of the Western Paradise in present-day Qinghai, were an incitement to curiosity. These mountains, the purported dwelling place of the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu, 西王母), marked a sacred territory, the *xitu* 西土 (western lands), as the farthest extension of civilization on the border of wilderness.⁹ In the popular sixteenth-century novel *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*Journey to the West*, more popularly known as *Monkey* courtesy of Arthur Waley's abridged translation), the West is an acclaimed site of pilgrimage, as well as of the picaresque wanderings of folk heroes (real and imagined) in search of religious treasure.

The powerful draw of the West was also attested to in the ethnographies, geographies, random jottings, and travelogues of medieval Chinese scholars, who found there all forms of the marvelous: the beautiful, beastly, and bureaucratic.¹⁰ Recasting the geographic paradigm in this manner from the

perspective of another beholder generates a moment of “defamiliarization,” as literary critics call it, once we recognize that Chinese curiosity about the West parallels quite nicely with the West’s exotic imaginings of the East.

The point of this incomplete catalog is to remind the reader that these entities are not actually geographic so much as figurative; indeed, they are metageographic, which occasions one to ask: where is east and west in relation to me? It must always be in relation to the knower, and it is in this perfectly necessary context that one understands the advantage and limit of the designation. The East and West orientation artificially flattens the actual dimensions of the planet. Treating East and West as culturally definitive and substantively different entities requires us to suspend our scientific understanding of the globe and its constant revolutionary and rotational movement, accepting at the same time the imposition of a two-dimensional grid. As Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen point out in their critique of metageography, this simply makes no sense.

[F]rom a planetary perspective, all East-West distinctions are clearly arbitrary. On a rotating sphere, east and west are directional indicators only and can be used to divide the entire planetary surface into distinct regions only if there is an agreed-upon point of reference.¹¹

According to our familiar impression, then, the earth, appropriating for a moment the title of Thomas Friedman’s popular work, is flat.¹² Of course, it is not flat, but the pull of such two-dimensional apprehension, even in the stark face of geographic fact, is tough to resist.

Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865–98) was arguably one of China’s most visionary and radical intellectuals and one who grasped the vital three-dimensional facts of late-nineteenth-century geography. His concept of *tong* 通 (communication, interconnection, penetration) will set the stage for the body of the chapter and its focus on the Sino-Jesuit interchange of the seventeenth century. The second half of the chapter will focus on cases in which Chinese make fine distinctions among each other and cases in which they embrace others. We’ll see protest over such embrace. Some outsiders—European Jesuits—come to be seen as virtually Chinese by some and as animals by others. The distinction, then, between East and West is just another example of the convenient, but sometimes deadly, barriers all peoples erect. In the end, these ruminations should encourage us to interpret the East-West dyad as an artifact of modernity that points to a record of transcontinental curiosity long joining the peoples of the planet, some of whom were east and west of each other. Although East-West is often marked as an *essential* difference, I will argue that it is a rhetorical one.

East-West Moments in a Global Reimagining

From around 1880 to the outbreak of World War I a series of sweeping changes in technology and culture created distinctive new modes of thinking about and experiencing time and space. Technological innovations including the telephone, wireless telegraph, X-ray, cinema, bicycle, automobile, and airplane established the material foundation for this reorientation; independent cultural developments such as the stream-of-consciousness novel, psychoanalysis, Cubism, and the theory of relativity shaped consciousness directly. The result was a transformation of the dimension of life and thought.¹³

This brief list offers a reminder of the sense of explosive possibility in the beckoning century and the promise that science could comprehend and transform the world. Such was the context for emergent conceptions of a planetary commonweal that inflamed the imagination of the Chinese reformer and revolutionary Tan Sitong, a historical figure whose vision of a new order of the world boldly proclaimed the limits of a geocultural dualism of East and West.

Writing 110 years ago, Tan completed a deeply passionate, visionary tract on the salvation of self and society that defied the established frameworks of East-West. He attracted considerable scholarly interest, as well as global popular attention, because of the spectacular events of his death by command of Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧 (1835–1908) in 1898. He was one of the luminaries of the *Wuxu bianfa* 戊戌變法 (Hundred Days Reforms), a liminal period of political experimentation that stretched from June to September of 1898, during which a small congress of political reformers from across the empire gained the ear of the Guangxu 光緒 Supreme Lord (emperor) (r. 1875–1908) and sought to convert the tyranny of Manchu overlordship into a constitutional monarchy. Tan was one of six reformers who were arrested and cashiered for their contumely act of defying the empress dowager by advancing, without her authorization, substantive procedural and structural reforms. He was sentenced to death by beheading, and, in a spectacular scene retold by an eyewitness, Hu Zhiting 胡至廷, he became a martyr for all time, one whose tragic end was indelibly etched into the fabric of twentieth-century revolutionary nationalism, if not the Chinese national character.¹⁴

There are at least two reasons for introducing Tan Sitong in the context of a challenge to the conventional understanding of the interpretation of the encounter of China and the West. The first is to offer tribute to the earlier work of Ronald Robel, who completed an inspired dissertation on Tan’s life

Life and Thought of T'an Ssu-t'ung" remains a work whose reading pays a worthy dividend for the curious, especially those drawn to the remarkable concatenation of international and Chinese domestic events in the interval from 1889 to 1905, during which Chinese activists obtained a global vocabulary of history, politics, science, and technology, from which they drew liberally in advancing solutions to China's crisis. Second, I wish to use Tan's most celebrated work as a touchstone for my inquiry into the possibilities of harmony and eradication of distinction.

In Robel's third chapter we learn of the missionary and scholarly conduit for the transmission of the latest ideas and inventions, as well as the transformative excitement of the fin de siècle in China, and how these effected in China's politically engaged intelligentsia an imminent sense of a world beyond nations joined in a unitary moment of science and spirit.¹⁶ Tan Sitong's "Renxue" 仁學 (The Natural Science of Love)—about agape not Eros—challenged contemporary understanding and revealed him to be a prophet of imminent global equality, an equality he believed inevitable yet attainable only by overcoming the distinction between the self and others. Tacking back and forth in the inspirational winds of his genius, one moment pushed by natural science and technology, the next by Buddhist phenomenology, but undeviatingly focused on equality, Tan delivers himself beyond the problematic dyad of our focus in several of the numerologically ideal twenty-seven explanations (*jieshuo*, 界說) that open the *Natural Science of Love*.

1. The most fundamental meaning of love is interconnectedness (*tong*). The terms ether (*yitai*, 以太), electricity (*dian*, 電), and mental power (*xinli*, 心力) all indicate the means of interconnection (*tong*). 2. Ether and electricity are simply means whose names are borrowed to explain mental power. . . . 7. Interconnection is expressed as equality. 8. Interconnection must lead to respect for the soul. With equality, body can become soul. . . . 13. The essence of love is that it can neither be born or destroyed. . . . 15. To be born is close to being renewed; to be destroyed is close to dying away. Because there is equality between renewal and dying away, there is equality between past and future. . . . 16. Both the past and the future exist, but the present does not; for both the past and the future are the present. . . . The phenomenal world, the world of the void, and the world of sentient beings are permeated with something vast and minute, the cohesive, penetrative, connective power of which embraces all things . . . ether.¹⁷

What seemed to inform Tan's interpenetration of the Western self in the Eastern Other was both the advent of the technoscientific moment of

and very poignantly in China, the steady disarticulation of social and political order that followed in the wake of the Opium Wars (1839–60). In the short interval from 1839 to 1895, China and its Manchu monarchy, the Celestial Empire, became, in the parlance of the day, "the sick man of Asia" (*Yazhou bingren*, 亞州病人). Indeed, China was sick: sick with opium addiction, sick with political corruption, sick with co-optation by foreign authorities, and sick with dependence on foreign countries. In this moment of humiliation and later in the bloody nationalistic struggles for political unification under the two major anti-imperialist parties, the Nationalists and the Communists, China's representation as "Asia" made it the Other that we, in the West, were not. It was described, with a pronounced hopelessness, in the voices of Tan's young generation of reformers as *wangguo* 亡國 (lost or abandoned nation).¹⁸

Less than a decade before the completion of *Renxue*, Tan's first manifesto (more like a *feuilleton*), *Zhiyan* 治言 (Words on Rulership), would have revealed him, by contrast, as a defensive cultural nationalist, angry and resentful over his nation's despair at the hands of aggressive barbarians from the West, but convinced that China's salvation rested in its ability to restore the integrity of its spiritual civilization. In concert with the essentialist polemics of his contemporaries, Tan imagined a judgmental geopolitical stratigraphy according to which the globe was comprised of three culturally uneven parts: (1) *Huaxia zhi guo* 華夏之國 (The "Sinitic Nations"), Burma, Korea, Tibet, and Vietnam; (2) *Yidi zhi guo* 夷狄之國 (The "Countries of the Barbarian Peoples"), the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, North America, India, Japan, Russia, and Turkey; and (3) *Qinsbou zhi guo* 禽獸之國 (The "Nations of the Beasts"), Africa, Australia, and South America. These nations were arranged in a descending order of material and cultural sophistication and so represented stages in evolution just behind China and its Sinitic partners.

The wealth of the barbarians is not enough to deplete us, and their strength is insufficient to make us helpless. The zeal, passion, and violent rise of the barbarians is not enough to make us decline. The secret schemes and recklessness of the barbarians is not enough to endanger us. But when their government gives an order the whole nation accepts it as if from God, and when a law is established the whole world accepts it as the standard. . . . Names and reality correspond as form and shadow like our ancient king's saying that the Dao is one and its influence is uniform.¹⁹

For Tan in this instance, modernization did not mean Westernization because the barbarian nations were just now coming into alignment politically with

generation said in reaction to the new technics and teleologies of Western expansionists, *guyi youzhi* 古已有之, "this has been known since antiquity."

However, following the incendiary effects of China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, such cultural chauvinism became indefensible. Tan Sitong and others traded their defensiveness for a new global vision. Tan rejected his earlier East-West determinism of limits in favor of a universal vision of human fulfillment in the longing to be loved, to be connected. Tan identified the suffering of the kind wrought by his emerging nation's sickness as a requisite condition for its complete emancipation. He could imagine so radical a view because he was convinced that contemporary natural science (*xue*, 學) had disclosed the empirical foundation of global interconnection. In any instant of the everyday, the infinite and the infinitesimal, past and present, were joined through the eternal psychic conduit of ether (*yitai*, 以太).

Throughout the realms of physical phenomena, empty space, and sentient beings, there is a substance, supremely great and subtle, which adheres to, penetrates, connects, and permeates all. The eye cannot see its color, the ear cannot hear its sound, and the mouth and nose cannot taste or smell its flavor or odor. Although there is no name for it, we shall call it "ether." As manifested in function, Kongzi at different times called it "humanity" (*ren*, 仁), "the origin" (*yuan*, 元), or "nature" (*xing*, 性). Mozi called it "universal love" (*jian'ai*, 兼愛). The Buddha called it "the sea of nature" (*xinghai*, 性海) and "compassion" (*cibei*, 慈悲). Jesus (*ye*, 耶) called it "soul" (*linggui*, 靈魂) and "loving others as oneself" (*airen ruji*, 愛人如己) and "regarding one's enemies as friends" (*qindi ruyou*, 親敵如友). Natural scientists call it "attraction" (*aili*, 愛力) or "gravity" (*xili*, 吸力); all of these are one substance. From it the realm of physical phenomena is born, on it the realm of empty space is established, and from it come forth all sentient beings.²⁰

In Tan's posthumously published masterwork, *Renxue*, "a heartbreaking work of staggering genius," a universal imagining of human self-fulfillment is revealed.²¹ Beyond nations and states, beyond empire, Tan conceived a world of immediate and enduring interconnection (*tong*), the realization of which depended entirely on the efforts of the knowledgeable to align themselves with the generative forces of modern industrial production and technical creativity.

Everyone is free and is the subject of no country. The boundaries between nations will disappear; wars will cease; jealousies will end; intrigues will be abandoned; the distinction between oneself and others will vanish; equality will prevail. Even though there may still seem to be a universe (*tiandao*,

天下), there will be none. The monarchy will be abolished, and the gap between the mighty and the meek shall be bridged. Once the universal principles are made known to all, people will share their wealth equitably. Within hundreds of thousands of miles (*li*, 里), there will be only one family, one collective self.²²

Geography in this context is real but merely contingent and certainly not determinative. But it may be more accurate to characterize geography as irrelevant. While postmodern critics may rail against the impulses of universalism/ecumenism as the romantic apprehension of a Western imagination seeking to recuperate some benefit from the disaster of the Enlightenment project, Tan Sitong here counters with a local, Chinese assertion of the equality of all peoples, the transcendence of all nations, beyond orientalism and not occidentalism.

Tan was a passionate—no, religious—convert to the universal and a future in which difference would be overcome through the all pervasiveness of "communication," a conscious overcoming of obstacles (what he commonly refers to as webs, *wangluo* 網) by "bursting through" (*chongjue*, 衝決) them.²³ In the preface to this work, he proceeds in his autocritique from local to universal, asserting that "one must burst through: the webs of vulgar learning (such as textual criticism and belles lettres), the webs of the world's learning, the webs of autocracy, the webs of human relations, the webs of Heaven, the webs of the all the world's religions," only to realize that for "those who genuinely can burst through the webs, there are really no webs."²⁴ The most inimical of these webs was the most fundamental and the most contrived, that of the distinction between self and other. Glossing *ren* 仁 as electricity conducted through the universal medium of ether, Tan asserts a fundamental ontology of human connectivity.

To fail to relate to others with commonality (*xiang'ou*, 相偶) and to regard oneself as superior is the opposite of *ren*; however, this kind of distinction is sui generis and results from segregating self and others, even to the extreme of there being others and the self within my own body.²⁵

From this unique activist vision of global equality through the human striving to overcome the trappings of convention, we now reverse direction to examine three instances in which the distinction between self and other is aggressively and judgmentally affirmed. These are offered as vignettes appropriate to examining the metageography, as it were, of Chinese identity. From these quick sketches we will circle back to two specific instances in which it will

and recall the rhetorical differences commonly made between opposing groups within a given culture.

The Rhetoric of Difference and Identity

In contrast to Tan Sitong's universalist example, I now turn to selected exemplars of Chinese argumentation that have in common an exclusionary ethic wherein "mine" and "true" cannot be "thine." My interest in these arguments is in how they operate to distinguish one group from another in situations in which such a distinction may be uncertain and difficult yet precisely necessary to the representation of identity.

The first selection is taken from chapter 126 of the *Zhubuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Classified Conversations of Master Zhu) of 1263 and is one of a great many doctrinal discriminations between Zhu Xi's (1130–1200) *ru* 儒 (Confucian) self and a Buddhist *fo* 佛 other.

Cao [a disciple] asked [Zhu Xi] about distinguishing between *ru* and *fo*. The teacher responded, "Simply take the doctrine 'What the ascendant (*tian*) bequeaths humanity is called nature (*xing*).' *Fo* do not understand this and stubbornly maintain that nature is empty consciousness. We *ru* (*wuru*, 吾儒) speak of real principles, and as we see it, then, the others (*ta*, 他) are wrong. They (*ta*) say "We will not be affected by a single speck of dust and will not jettison a single element of dharma." If they are not affected by a single speck of dust, how is it possible for them not to jettison a single element of dharma? . . . We *ru* only recognize a moral principle of real sincerity."²⁶

We (*wu*, 吾) are contrasted with others (*ta*, 他).

Borrowed from a 1990s discourse analysis of Han Chinese speech about Tibetan students in Southwest China, the second text reveals a similar, albeit more striking, indigenous differentiation.

We (*women*, 我們) didn't accept any classmates from Tibet. It (*ta*, 牠) is, that is, Tibet, it (*ta*, 牠) this nationality is very bad, apparently a lot of trouble. It (*ta*, 牠) in general, now it (*ta*, 牠) is a little better. But it (*ta*, 牠) is, the Tibetan nationality, it (*ta*, 牠) is Tibetan if we're talking about Tibetans, it (*ta*, 牠) in general, it (*ta*, 牠), this ethnic conception is very strong. I don't know why. Our school (*womende xuexiao*, 我們的學校) did not accept any, that is, did not take any in. But from what I know, that is, in general, Tibetan students, if she/he (*ta*, 他/她) wants to go to a school, in general in a provincial capital, she/he (*ta*) has an exclusive school, they designate a school they can enter, that exclusively designates a class. That's how it is.²⁷

Here the contrast is between we Han Chinese (*women*, 我們) and the Tibetan nationality (*ta*, 牠).

The third selection is taken from a contentious anti-Christian tract, the *Shengchao poxie ji* 聖朝破邪集 (The Sacred Dynasty's Collection Exposing Heresy), which appeared in Fujian in 1639. A little more than two decades ago, this tract served as the primary source for Jacques Gernet's arguable claim that Christianity and indigenous Chinese beliefs were ontologically distinct and their respective cultures in conflict.

This is what the barbarians (*man*, 蠻) teach: Zisi said: "Following the nature is what is called Dao." But what they (*ta*, 他) say is: "Overcoming the nature is what is called Dao. Before the nature was corrupted, following it was consonant with morality; however, today human nature is not what it was originally. Thus, it is impossible to attain the perfection of Dao without overcoming it." In the classics and commentaries that contain the tradition of our saints (*wusheng*, 吾聖), there is not a word that does not express the heart and nature. How can these beasts (*qinshou*, 禽獸) criticize this tradition and get it all wrong? I would rather not humble myself to make even the slightest comparison, but, in fear that the unwashed will be duped by these people, I am obliged to clarify these matters in both writing and words.²⁸

One observation that can be made about this diverse testimony is its instinctual, reflexive quality of the discrimination of we/they with the marked case of Otherness represented by the personal pronoun *ta* (they or them). Furthermore, a stratigraphy of evaluative judgment may be observed in the identification of "they" with *ta*. "They" gives way to *ta* (it) and, in the final text, *ta* is replaced by *man* (barbarians) and even *qinshou* (beasts). All three passages defend a sense of "us," the rightful subjects, yet the very ground that they are claiming as theirs—whether in the twelfth or seventeenth centuries or today—is not acknowledged as culturally diverse despite the evident variety of peoples dismissed by the term *they*.

From the above illustrations it is clear that difference is critical to the definition of rhetorical position and native identity. There is at work in each of these texts a logic of exclusion, of in-group/out-group distinction and the instinctual reflex of identity construction, of discrimination rather than conversation.

By juxtaposing these three very different passages, I wish to encourage reflection on the many meanings of Chineseness in order that we might see the folly of our interpretive commitment to the East-West dyad. It is not only the West that divides. It is not only the cultures of China and the West that have

effect rendering the one mystical and the other rational.²⁹ Chinese culture has elements of both ecumenism, as in Tan's work, and anti-Other essentialism, as in the three passages just quoted. There are cases of holding apart and coming together.

Differences between cultures (Chinese and Christian, Han and Tibetan, "Confucian" and Buddhist, and in a grander sense East and West) are differences in kind. As obvious as I will show this to be, such a claim is not allowed by Chinese essentialism, whether practiced by sinologists or Chinese, at least not since Tan Sitong. Something fundamental is conveyed in the above texts (whether the difference is "native" and "foreign," East and West, or "we" and "they"). These markers of difference are most pronounced where distinction is not immediately evident and requires dramatic rhetorical exertion to identify difference as cultural incompatibility. In other words, the closer people are the more strenuously they exert their distinction. However, there are also instances of differences glossed over, where "we" and "they" are claimed to be one.

The Divergence and Convergence of Inquiry on Chinese Ground

I turn now to a seventeenth-century text, the *Poxie ji* 破邪集 (The Compendium Exposing Heresy), and the Jesuit texts that were its silent disputational Other. In their rhetoric, we see a view of Chineseness (the essential culture and race of the East) as diverse rather than singular. This shakes up the "China" we have long known through the geocultural metaphor of East-West. Although we presume that Christianity is a doctrine culturally antithetical to the indigenous religious traditions of China, it is possible to observe impressive ecumenism in how Christianity was assimilated to Chinese social practice and intellectual habit following its introduction in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by Jesuit missionaries.

Although it seems that the *Poxie ji*, a heterogeneous compendium of memorials, litigation records, letters, and polemics in eight parts, supports the view of the fundamental incompatibility of Christianity and the cumulative traditions of the Chinese, and, although the work's publication was prompted in an immediate sense by the 1636–37 clashes between Franciscan missionaries and local authorities over public preaching, it was not exclusively a diatribe against the Franciscans.³⁰

The *Poxie ji* was a pastiche of sectarian fulminations against Christianity culled from several works composed between 1615 and 1637, which, in sum, offered evidence of an incipient organized resistance to Jesuit missionary

theology and practice that nonetheless demonstrated impressive and even intimate familiarity with Christian practice. The polemics, which compose three-quarters of the *Poxie ji* (*juan* 3 through 8), were produced by critics who usually identify themselves as either *ru* or *fo*. The Buddhists especially condemn the Jesuits for their misunderstanding and deliberate misrepresentation of the teachings of Kongzi 孔子 (Confucius) and his followers.

Although this work is an anthology of multiple interested interpretations and counterclaims, its essays are focused on three principal areas of rhetorical dispute with the Jesuits. The first of these is their accommodative theology, specifically the presumption that Chinese since antiquity had believed in the one god, the Heavenly Master (*tianzhu*, 天主), a term the missionaries appropriated from a peasant convert in 1583.³¹ The second issue is that of the priests' own Chinese fundamentalism. What was specifically disputed was the missionary assertion, first made by Matteo Ricci (Li Madou 利瑪竇, 1552–1610) in his Chinese catechism of 1603, the *Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實意 (The True Significance of the Heavenly Master), that the Jesuits of the China mission had obtained the transmission of the *xianru* 先儒 (primordial *ru*), a legacy from Kongzi that they called *zhengxue* 正學 (the "true teaching"). The final common area of dispute was the Jesuits' interpretations of certain classic texts such as the *Shang shu* (Book of Documents), *Shi jing* (Book of Odes), *Lunyu* (Selected Sayings of Kongzi or Analects), *Zhongyong* (Doctrine of the Mean), and their contention that the intellectual traditions, such as the *lixue* 理學 (learning of principle) and *xinxue* 心學 (learning of mind), common among sixteenth-century Chinese literati and presumed by them to be descended from Kongzi by way of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529), contradicted the "true teaching." In short, the authors of the *Poxie ji* refuted the substance of the Jesuits' arguments, which argued against the common orthodoxy of the day, and referred not to Christianity but to their unique possession of the genuine teaching of Kongzi, the revered cultural forebear of all Chinese scholar-officials.

The *Poxie ji* authors, especially aggrieved by the Jesuit claims that they had inherited the *zhengxue* of Kongzi, anxiously reiterated what they believe is the patent fallacy of this claim and ferret out its erroneousness through demonstrations of logical inconsistency or contradiction in the fathers' arguments, as in a selection from Chen Houguang 陳候光, in which *ta* marks the difference and error of the "Other."

Kongzi speaks of serving men and rectifying daily conduct. They (*ta*, 他), contrarily, speak of serving the lord on high (*shangdi*, 上帝) and filling the mind with fantasies. Kongzi speaks of understanding life and learning from

to stay in one's place. They (*ta*, 他), in contrast, speak of knowing death and winning favors in the next world. Kongzi takes the Supernal Ridgepole (*taiji*) as the directing principle of the cosmos, considering it to be truly venerable and noble. They (*ta*, 他), however, judge *taiji* to be dependent, low, and profoundly despicable. . . . Believing care for one's parents to be of little importance, they (*ta*, 他) reject fathers and in this way show that they are more culpable than Mozi. . . . Consequently, their obedience and respect for *tian* and *shangdi* are only a pretext for advancing their own deceitful ideas. The men from the far West, using *ru* as an ally, come into our land armed with weapons. Unfortunately, half of those who esteem their teaching are prominent figures and educated men. Thus, if humble men like myself decide to stand up and fight them, there are many who will spit on us and insult us.³²

Inasmuch as he states the problems with the Jesuits' interpretation, Chen also makes clear that they were able to represent themselves as fierce defenders of canonical ground and, more important, indicates that Chinese from the region were persuaded by the teachings of these foreigners. It is perhaps not an accident that this text originated in the southeastern province of Fujian, an area that had witnessed impressive growth in the popularity of accommodationist Christianity in the early decades of the seventeenth century, much of this due to the work of later missionaries such as Giulio Aleni (1582–1649), who were favored with both local and national attention from officials and were able to negotiate theological inroads into the kin-based ancestral cults that were the firmament of the Chinese religious universe.

Chinese of all classes, the *Poxie ji* texts complain, were much impressed with the curative effects of the Jesuits' holy water, the magical efficacy of the Latin language, and the ubiquity and omnipotence of *tianzhu*. They were particularly captivated by the poignant, filial image of the Madonna and child and assorted artifacts of Christian iconography, above all the crucifix, which Aleni permitted Chinese converts to use in conducting the familial cult of the dead so that the efficacy of prayer could be translated from the cross to the ancestral shrine.³³ Local critics were well aware of the growing presence of Christianity in Chinese life and measured it in several ways: the accumulation of more than one hundred European books in Zhangzhou and several thousands throughout the country; a total (in 1638) of seventeen Catholic churches throughout the provinces; and, according to the calculation of Huang Zhen 黃貞, the "tens of thousands of families" that had taken up the teachings of the Heavenly Master, *tianzhu jiao*.³⁴

One additional, but to date unremarked, aspect of these particular anti-Christian polemics is their authors' un-selfconscious command of Christian theology, the liturgy, the "New Testament," and the mysteries associated with the *passiones* of Christ and the early martyrs as displayed in these few excerpts: "the Sovereign on High takes no visible form, consequently he cannot be represented in images";³⁵ "they say to drink wine is to drink the blood of the Heavenly Master [and] to eat bread is to eat the flesh of the Heavenly Master";³⁶ "the sutra of the Heavenly Master says, 'Our Father who is in the ascendant'";³⁷ "sprinkling oneself with holy water and rubbing oneself with holy oil";³⁸ and "in the beginning, when the Heavenly Master fashioned the world by magic transformation, there was but one man and one woman."³⁹

The text fairly bristles with resentment of the popularity of *tianzhu jiao* 天主教 among both the educated and the uneducated, for example, "In the exalted ranks they have obtained allies among officials, while below they sow discord in the hearts of the common people,"⁴⁰ and "their poison is spreading everywhere and threatens to contaminate myriad generations . . . [so that] respected literati and people of reputation follow their views, printing books of the doctrine of the Heavenly Master and composing prefaces for them."⁴¹ Yet in these querulous reactions there is significant evidence of the foreign faith's convergence with the plural streams of local practice, if not a confirmation of Jesuit Chineseness, as they note the embrace of this new doctrine by officials and the socially exalted. Moreover, because the criticism is conveyed in the context of a common culture and language and in the very manner in which one would address the rhetorical weaknesses of any adversary in persuasion, we may read these exchanges as advocacy positions stated in a shared, though tempestuous, rhetorical context. I believe this is why in many *Poxie ji* texts the personal pronoun *ta* shifts indecisively with *man* (barbarian) and in some cases is replaced by it, as the critics of the *Poxie ji* labor mightily to exaggerate the distinctions between what is Chinese and what is not.

These concerned scholar-officials, in a spirit that recalls Sigmund Freud's (1856–1939) concept of "the narcissism of minor differences,"⁴² must "expose" (*po*, 破) Christian doctrine as heresy (*xie*, 邪) and "discriminate its teachings" (*bianxue*, 辨學; *bianjiao*, 辨教) from those native to China but, in the process, show that an accommodative Christianity was grafted onto the root of indigenous practice and was syncretically joined with certain traditions of *ru* discourse. Another passage offers a tendentious but telling explanation of how Li Madou (Ricci) in particular was able to invent a Christian doctrine that was consonant with Chinese tradition. Accusing Li of deceit, Huang Wendao 黃問道 holds that:

the words and sounds of his language were not like those of Chinese and [there was a] fear that his ideas would contradict those of our *ru*. Therefore, he invited some literati to teach him the Classics. Ignoring the abstruse in these works, he fashioned his own doctrine so that there appeared to be little difference between what he was saying and [what is contained in] the writings of Yao, Shun, Zhou Gong, and Kongzi. Yet in fact he was furtively inventing his own doctrine. Renouncing *fo*, criticizing Dao, and disparaging *ru*, he, at the same time, used Yao, Shun, Zhou Gong, and Kongzi to convey his teachings.⁴⁵

Huang could denigrate Li's motives, but there was no denying that the Italian missionary, with the assistance of very capable Chinese scholars, had made a Chinese Christianity that "complemented *ru* and banished *fo*"⁴⁴ and, according to some Chinese, was indistinguishable from *ru*. I consider these rhetorical discriminations to be the reflex of a persistent impulse to recapture the indigenous identity of *ru* teaching, for the Jesuits are never called by either of the official titles they assumed among the Chinese: *xiucai* 秀才 (cultivated talent) and *ru* 儒 (scholar). Instead they are *man* and *yeman* 野蠻 (barbarians) while, by means of a host of nativist neologisms such as *wu ru* 吾儒, (we *ru*, or our *ru*), and *wu rusheng* 吾儒聖 (our *ru* saints), the various authors of the *Poxie ji* seek, through conscious invocation of tradition, to reclaim legitimate, indigenous ground believed lost to the Jesuits.

At every turn, rhetorical phrasings punctuate the nativist sectarian syntax of "we" and "they," the most effective of these being use of the term *xuemai* 學脈 (scholarly streams) to designate the authentic intellectual traditions of China.⁴⁵ The expression is a homophonic pun on *xuemai* 血脈, meaning "artery," and, thus, proper teachings are distinguished by an appeal to anatomy, to the ultimately inalienable: blood. The symbolic capital, as it were, of *xuemai* exceeded anatomy, reaching from local self to authoritarian state, as it was a common late Ming reference to the waterways over which coursed the sustenance of the empire.⁴⁶ In this way, the narrow differences between Jesuit *ru* and Chinese *ru* were dramatized at the same time that anti-Christian critics sought to frame their invective as an appeal for official sanction against the foreigners in the name of "love of ruler and country."

Medieval Chinese Polemics of Self and Other

Aside from the occasional appeal to authorities for intervention, the denunciations in the *Poxie ji* were not unusual by comparison with the rhetorical practices of the day, and in fact, if we push the chronology farther back in time we will see that

from the prose and passion of the extended confutations of Chan Buddhist doctrine by Song era (1000–1300) followers of the "learning of principle." In the late Ming (ca. 1570–1640), Buddhists and Daoists were commonly criticized vigorously for their misleading teachings, and unspecified "people" were faulted for failure to discriminate properly between *ru* and alternative traditions, thereby coming under the sway of such heresy. However, as it was in the late Ming dynasty (between 1583 and 1645) that the Jesuits enculturated and became Chinese scholar-officials, thus occasioning the fierce debates over foreign and native identity and genuine and false teachings, it is best for purposes of illustration to take up a last text. This one is from an earlier time, one that was not complicated by the presence of an uninvited Christian "Other." Here we will observe a vituperative differentiation of true and false, native and foreign, very similar to those found in the *Poxie ji*.

During the Southern Song period (1127–1279), when the practices of Chan Buddhism were becoming increasingly popular, a new, *ru*-restorative fellowship (*daoxue*, 道學) produced disputational texts within which contestation of the "correctness" (*zheng*, 正) or "foreignness" (*yi*, 異) of a doctrine was argued and interpretive positions polarized with a vigor reminiscent of anti-Christian polemics. Responding to a question from one of his disciples concerning the differences between *ru* and *chan* 禪, Zhu Xi follows the nativist instinct and "disputes" (*bian*, 辯) the doctrines, saying:

That which we *ru* (*wuru*) nurture is humaneness, righteousness, rites, and knowledge. That which they (*bize*, 比則 [others]) nurture is only seeing, hearing, speech, and activity. For *ru*, within all of creation there are a great many moral principles each having its own distinction between true and false. They only see [the universe] as a chaotic dispersal of things and events utterly without specific segregation of true and false. For them, the horizontal is true, while the vertical is equally true; the straight is true and the curve is equally true. To see things in contravention of the principle is their very nature, as is seeing things in accordance with the principle. They are very confused and [their teachings are] without one iota of truth.⁴⁷

Zhu goes on to lament the popularity of Buddhist learning, complaining, in a language just as appropriate to anti-Christian polemics, that Buddhism "is injurious to human affairs" and "some contemporary *ru* erroneously follow in the steps of Buddhists."⁴⁸ Elsewhere, Zhu invoked nativist metaphors of place and antiquity when discussing the history of Buddhism's "sinification," the explicit injunction being that *fo* was alien.⁴⁹

The rhetorical similarity between this passage from Zhu Xi and Chen

differences in theory in a single culture appear as cultural differences. Just as Buddhism could be made Chinese, so could Christianity. Indeed, Buddhism was engulfed within Chinese practice and added to the symbolic fund of the Chinese imagination, one from which Tan Sitong liberally drew in reconceiving the meaning of love and advocating a singular resolution of the vectors of cultural difference in the universals of ether and electricity.

From Universal Particular to Particular Universal

Looking back, the diverse testimonies of the *Poxie ji* and Tan Sitong suggest that the currents of intellectual hybridity and boundary making moved in both directions, from west to east and east to west. Similarly, in the rhetorical battles of medieval Chinese scholars, with the elaboration of doctrine in offensive or defensive terms, there was imaginative movement across a broad cultural spectrum of China. The geography, East or West, East-West, was not very relevant.

We are drawn back to the “matter-of-fact usages” of late imperial Chinese to find a universe of possibilities in the particular, conflated as often as they are segregated, as when the Chan monk Tongrong 通容 (1593–1662) says of Li Madou, the harm he has done cannot be estimated. Let us try to confute his doctrines through appeal to our *ru* saints (*wu rusheng*). According to Mengzi, body and feelings are the ascendant nature.⁵⁰

In the heat of the discriminatory moment, vocabularies of one tradition bled indiscriminately into another so that, as in this instance, notions originating from the Chinese embodiment of a foreign Christianity were fused with traditional *ru* cosmology and articulated by a Buddhist. Even Lin Qilu 林啓陸, an outspoken opponent of Sino-Christianity (*tianzhu jiao*), could not see in his nativist criticism of Jesuit theology that the most pointed aspect of his critique bore the signal, conceptual traits of the foreign, when he said:

Every creature possesses the law of heaven. It is because each one can conform with heaven's principle and also comply with the law of the Sovereign on High that humanity can lord over the ten thousand things, govern the universe, remove the flaws of the world, and rectify present-day teachings. That is what we *ru* (*wuru*) call Heavenly Master (*tianzhu*).⁵¹

To accept that native and foreign could be so un-selfconsciously intertwined in seventeenth-century China is to understand two things. First, the Western and Chinese historical imaginations of four centuries ago were more disposed toward reasonableness and tolerance and capable of recognizing in the local and particular the prophetic intimations of the absolute that

are we. Second, *China* denotes an ecological complex of diverse collective representations wherein cumulative traditions such as *ru*, *fo*, *dao*, and *tianzhu jiao* were the products of a conscious selection among alternatives. Over the centuries of cultural intercourse, a common symbolic fund was created from which interpretive resources could be—and were—drawn. Christianity assumed its Chinese form through the distinct mediation of local structures, and both were enriched. The same can be said of Tan's ether (*yitai*, 以太) and electricity (*dian*, 電) as definitions of love and could just as well be extended to the circuits, virtual and real, that join the four hundred million mobile phone users accessing the Internet in China today. What holds in this contemporary instance holds for Tan and his Sino-Jesuit predecessors and even Zhu Xi; these distinctions occur in a framework of plural conversations.

Difference is the enabling condition of discourse, not its denial. East-West is the legacy of an early modern civilizing project and is meaningful only as a relation of contrast. My point in being critical of the geocultural impulse is not to argue against differences, but to emphasize that the identification of difference is the ground of all identity in cultures.

Is East-West a cultural or geographic construct? I would say that they are rather a synecdoche taking part of one for the whole of the other. This volume began with a questioning of the representational aptitude of these geocultural entities. Even in the most generous sense of a desire to expand the referents of the term *we*, there was, from the start of the exploration of the Asian Other, a misapprehension as East and West represented both geography and value. The West was what was best, and the errand into the wilderness was inspired by curiosity but transformed into contempt for the primitive.

These apparently geographic distinctions, insofar as they remain today, are the residue of the era of empires. Our academic culture today, as much as we may try to deny it, is in part an extension of past empire. It is important to recall that Asian area studies in the United States was formed in the postwar era as the handmaiden of imperial expansion, providing technicians the knowledge necessary to interpret the behavior of an inscrutable Other, in particular one in Southeast Asia with which we were at war. Area studies scholars are the between takers, entrepreneurs in acquiring local knowledge of the Asian Other and transporting it home. So this has largely been the legacy of the translation of Chinese and other texts and contexts into European languages begun more than four centuries ago.

However, rather than retracing the steps of the Sino-European cultural encounter, I have focused on the idea of difference as conveyed in the rhetoric of Chinese of various centuries. In trying to get beyond the East-West polarity,

wherein love (*ren*) is defined as electricity (*dian*), thereby including all peoples and faiths in a single moment of communication, like strings of lights along a series; and (2) the local history of rhetorical differences raised to the level of cultural opposition, an opposition just as fierce on the surface as that between West and East. In the end I hope to have shown that the longer history of "East-West" cultural contact has been construed from an ongoing mutual enhancement—exchange rather than conquest—just as has been the case in China from its long pluralistic past forward.

I conclude with a thought about the planetary arc of curiosity under which we stand today as interpreters of Asia, joining as legatees those about whom I have written above. Does our urge for the Other derive from emotion or reason? It is a question long struggled over in the history of Continental epistemology that I do not dare answer, although my hunch is that it is a divine proportion of both. Head and heart are the organs of curiosity, and it is curiosity that, since the sixteenth century, has drawn this conceptually flat earth closer together, all too often at the cost of misapprehension. Nonetheless, from this moment forward we might continue to discover, and in so doing to define and discriminate, with greater consciousness of the consequences of knowing well the world and its many selves and others. In this way perhaps we can carry forward, but not follow, the meaningful but misbegotten misapprehension of East-West.

Notes

¹ I have chosen to interpret the theme of this collection of essays, East-West, a self-conscious appropriation of the title of the third part ("East-West") of Salman Rushdie's story collection about identity in translation. See Salman Rushdie, *East, West* (New York: Vintage International, 2006), 123–211.

² Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribners, 1958), 13, 25. The posing of these questions by a figure whose "Protestant ethic" became a universal definition of modern development has provoked cultural defensiveness evident in decades of compensatory studies of the transformative rather than accommodative impulses of "Confucianism" that have posited a bedrock of "Asian values" responsible for this region's accelerated economic change. For examples of this compensatory anti-Weberian reading of the commercial productivity of Confucianism, see Tu Wei-ming, ed., *Confucian Traditions and East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); and Tu Wei-ming, ed., *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

³ David S. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor* (New York: Norton, 1999); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Free Press, 2002).

⁴ Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization* (Durham: Duke University Press 1997). See also Jack Goody, *The East in the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jack Goody, *Capitalism and Modernity: The Great Debate* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2004); Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); André Gunder Frank, *Re-ORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); and R. Bin Wong, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

⁵ Rudyard Kipling, "The Ballad of East and West," in *A Victorian Anthology, 1837–1895*, ed. Edmund Clarence Stedman (Cambridge: Riverside, 1895).

⁶ I can only imagine that this habit of mind is a consequence of the pull on our imaginations of an established framework of knowledge. Being an intellectual historian, I do not chafe at the prospect of covering grand expanses of the globe. It is as though the globe itself, its mass, matter, and physical reality, make no claim on my imagination. It is the ideas that drive me, and I am surprised often by the ease with which I travel the reaches of the planet in pursuit of intellectual curiosity. Yet these ideas are drawn for context as real as the physicality I neglect to acknowledge and yet

not in a deterministic way. Take some historical examples to provide an artifactual, as it were, friction by which we might slow the slippage into the competitive metaphorical landscape of East and West that has caused us so much grief in the past two hundred years. Modernist temper may enable us to overcome, or, if not overcome, more frequently acknowledge, the limitations while we seek to identify how one can be so different from another and yet not in conflict.

⁷ Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (New York: Penguin, 2004); Chen Xiaomei, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-discourse in Post-Mao China*, 2nd ed., revised and expanded (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

⁸ David N. Keightley, *The Ancestral Landscape: Time, Space, and Community in Late Shang China* (Berkeley: Institute for East Asian Studies, 2000); Sarah Allan, *The Shape of the Turtle: Myth, Art, and Cosmos in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 75–87.

⁹ The belief in Kunlun as an axis mundi joining heaven to earth as well as the instinctively paired association of Kunlun and Xiwang Mu, was well attested before the Han era in the text of the *Shanhai jing*. Moreover, by Han times this geographic imaginary was associated with the figure of Kongzi (Confucius), when an entry for *qiu* 丘 (hill), the putative given name of Kongzi, in the *Shuowen jiezi* (ca. 110 CE) offers a depiction of a hill as the sacred mountain Kunlun, marking the conjunction of Heaven and earth. See Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi* (N.p., n.d.), 169.1. See also Nancy Thompson Price, “The Pivot: Comparative Perspectives from the Four Quarters,” *Early China* 20 (1995): 93–120.

¹⁰ Liu Yu, *Xishi ji* (An Account of an Embassy in the West) of 1263; Zhao Rugua, *Zhufan zhi* (Description of Foreign Peoples) of 1225; and Zhou Qufei, *Lingwai daida* (Instead of Replies to Friends about the Southwestern Regions) of 1178 are just a few of the works that represent this medieval curiosity about the West and convey its significance as fantastic.

¹¹ Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 48.

¹² Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Picador, 2007).

¹³ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 1–2. A more detailed yet still incomplete catalog of the inventive technical production of this short interval would list the telephone, 1876; Edison’s gramophone, 1877; synthetic fiber, 1883; the steam turbine, 1884; photographic paper, 1885; the Kodak box camera and pneumatic tire 1888; the

Eiffel Tower, 1889; the cinematograph and gramophone record, 1894; Roentgen’s X-ray, Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams*, Marconi’s radio telegraph, the Lumière brothers’ invention of the movie camera, and the Curies’ discovery of radium, 1895; and Henry Ford’s quadricycle (the “Thin Lizzy”), 1896. Less than a decade later, the Wright brothers pioneered powered flight (1903) and Einstein proposed the special theory of relativity (1905) from which the energy and mass of the nuclear age would evolve. The story of these inventions and their tremendous aesthetic consequences is told in chapter 1 of Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New* (New York: Knopf, 1981).

¹⁴ It is reported that when the sentence was carried out the executioner’s blade was not sufficiently sharp to decapitate any of the six martyrs and so a saw was used. The grisly scene, as recounted by Hu—“but the skull was still connected to the neck and it was necessary to stretch the ‘criminal official’s’ neck out and saw it”—would be long remembered by Chinese revolutionary nationalists, deepening their resentment of the Manchus and the empress dowager in particular. Hu Zhili, quoted in Tao Juyin 陶菊隱, *Xin yulin* 新語林 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1930), 107. See also Timothy Richard, *Forty-five Years in China* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1916), 2–3. In the first installment of the wildly popular 1987 television special *Heshang* 河殤, “Deathsong of the River” (now banned), a photograph of Tan flashes across the screen in an instant of narration that calls attention to his plea for his fellow countrymen to “break through the webs” of illusion and suffering that preclude China’s opening to the world. See Zhang Yuanji 張元濟, ed., *Tan Sitong quanji* 譚嗣同 全集 (N.p., n.d.), 3–4.

¹⁵ Ronald Ray Robel, “The Life and Thought of T’an Ssu-t’ung,” PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1972.

¹⁶ One of the most memorable stories of this period is that of John Fryer’s 1896 introduction of X-ray images to Tan, who took the radioactive film as evidence of an accelerating ethereality of the human body that confirmed the eschatological vision of Mahayana Buddhism.

¹⁷ Chan Sin-wai, trans., *An Exposition of Benevolence: The Jen-hsüeh of T’an Ssu-t’ung* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1984), 61–63, 67.

¹⁸ The term *wangguo* would be uttered with greater despair in the years following the massacre of the 1898 reformers, but it achieved a powerful adversarial, condemnatory voice in 1902 in Zou Rong’s clarion *Geming jun* 革命軍 (The Revolutionary Army) (N.p., 1902).

¹⁹ Zhang Yuanji, *Tan Sitong quanji*, 103–7.

²⁰ Tan Sitong, “Renxue,” in *Tan Sitong chuanji* (Beijing, 1954), n.p.; Zhang Yuanji, *Tan Sitong quanji* 9

- ²¹ Dave Eggers, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius, Based on a True Story* (New York: Vintage, 2001). The title is an especially appropriate one to purloin as a description of *Renxue*, which remains to this day a work admired and repeatedly translated but not entirely understood. In this final respect, Tan's work endures without the limits of shelf life with which some believe Eggers's novel is burdened.
- ²² Tan Sitong, *Renxue*, n.p.; Zhang Yuanji, *Tan Sitong quanji*, 85.
- ²³ For readers familiar with contemporary Chinese simplified vernacular, *wangluo* 網羅 is instantly recognizable as the preferred term for the Internet and World Wide Web, which may be the most apposite realization of Tan Sitong's vision of *tong*.
- ²⁴ Zhang Yuanji, *Tan Sitong quanji*, 4.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.
- ²⁶ Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (rpt., Taipei: Zhongwen chubanshe, 1970), 8:4832–33.
- ²⁷ Quoted in Susan D. Blum, "Pearls on the Strings of the Chinese Nation: Pronouns, Plurals, and Prototypes in Talk about Identities," *Michigan Discussions in Anthropology* 13 (1998): 207–37 (special issue: "Linguistic Form and Social Action").
- ²⁸ Huang Zichen 黃紫宸, "Pixie jie" 關邪解, in *Shengchao poxie ji* 聖朝破邪集, ed. Xu Changzhi 徐昌治 (rpt., Hong Kong: Jiandao Shengxueyuan, 1996), 265 (hereafter *Poxie ji*). For an analysis of the text and its composition, see Douglas Lancashire, "Anti-Christian Polemics in Seventeenth-Century China," *Church History* 38, no. 2 (1969): 218–41. For a suspicious scholarly hermeneutics of the Christian mission that relies on generous excerpts from the *Poxie ji*, see Jacques Gernet, *Chine et christianisme* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1982); or Janet Lloyd's English translation, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). The *Poxie ji* was the first of several denunciations published between 1639 and the accession of the Supreme Lord Kangxi in 1662 that ultimately aimed at expelling the missionaries from China.
- ²⁹ Richard Rorty, "Relativism and Pragmatism," Tanner Lectures, University of California, Berkeley, January 31, 1983. What Rorty means by this term is that the concepts of cultures East and West presume a relativism that alleviates the need for empirical study or, as well, reflection.
- ³⁰ It does contain a reference to the infamous 1616 persecution of Christians on the order of Shen Que, vice minister of the Nanjing Board of Rites. See Ad Dudink, "Opposition to the Introduction of Western Science and the Nanjing Persecution (1616–1617)," in *Statecraft and Intellectual Renewal in Late Ming China: The Cross-Cultural Synthesis of Xu Guangqi (1562–1633)*, ed. Catherine Jami, Peter Engelfriet,

attack on the offices of the Jesuits in both Nanjing and Beijing for the damage they had allegedly caused to Chinese belief and practice. Twelve Jesuits and a few Chinese converts were arrested and tried for their heinous offenses (particularly the successful introduction of Western astronomical science at court), and by the winter of 1617 four of the fathers were, by imperial proclamation, banished from China.

- ³¹ The story of the invention of *tianzhu* by a young Chinese convert is reconstructed in Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 72–74, 324.
- ³² Chen Houguang 陳候光, "Bianxue chuyan" 辨學芻言, in *Poxie ji*, 244. See also the translation of this same passage by Gernet in *China and the Christian Impact*, 53. Chen actually slanders Li's (Ricci's) interpretation of *taiji* 太極 in this instance; Ricci merely pointed out Master, *tianzhu*. On the Jesuit contestation of the divinity *taiji*, see Li Madou [Matteo Ricci], *Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實意, in *Tianxue chubao* 天學初函, ed. Li Zhizao 李之藻 (rpt., Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1965), 1:406–7.
- ³³ This sort of magical efficacy of contiguity was common among the early missionaries and is described in Li Jiubiao 李九標, *Kouduo richao* 口鐸日抄 *Li Jiubiao's Diary of Oral Admonitions: A Late Ming Christian Journal*. Ed. Erik Zürcher. Vol 56 of Monumenta Serica Monograph Series (Institut Monumenta Serica, 2007). Aleni's encouragement of this practice is discussed in Erik Zürcher, "Giulio Aleni et ses relations avec le milieu des lettres chinois au XVIIe siècle," in *Venezia e l'Oriente*, ed. Lionello Lanciotti (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1987), 105–35. The Chinese fascination with holy water, Christian icons, and other mysterious objects of the missionaries is well documented throughout the *Poxie ji*.
- ³⁴ Huang Zhen 黃貞, "Qing Yan xiansheng pi Tianzhu jiao shu" 請顏先生關天主教書, in *Poxie ji*, 152.
- ³⁵ Chen Houguang, "Bianxue chuyan," 246.
- ³⁶ Xie Gonghua 謝宮花, "Lifa lun" 曆法論, in *Poxie ji*, 308.
- ³⁷ Xu Dashou 許大受, "Shengchao zuopi zixu" 聖朝佐關自序, in *Poxie ji*, 192.
- ³⁸ Huang Zhen, "Qing Yan xiansheng pi Tianzhu jiao shu," 152.
- ³⁹ Xu Congzhi 徐從治, Huishen Zhong Mingren deng fan'an 會審鐘鳴仁等犯案, in *Poxie ji*, 111.
- ⁴⁰ Li Weiyuan 李維垣, "Rangyi baoguo gongjie" 攘夷報國公揭, in *Poxie ji*, 292.
- ⁴¹ Huang Zhen, "Qing Yan xiansheng pi Tianzhu jiao shu," 152.
- ⁴² The term was first formulated in Freud's 1918 paper "The Taboo of Virginity" but more fully developed in Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961).

⁴³ Huang Wendao 黃問道, "Pixie jie" 關邪解, in *Poxie ji*, 267.

⁴⁴ This is the celebrated formulation, *buru yifo* 補儒易佛, of Xu Guangqi 徐光啓, Preceptor of the Hanlin Academy and a Christian convert. See Xu Guangqi, "Bianxue zhangshu" 辨學章疏, in *Tianzhu jiao dongchuang wenxian xubian* 天主教東創文仙續編 (Taipei, 1965), 1:25.

⁴⁵ See Huang Zhen, "Qing Yan xiansheng pi Tianzhu jiao shu," 150, 152.

⁴⁶ On the arterial metaphor for the fluid concourses that joined the imperial center and the bucolic periphery, see Frederic E. Wakeman Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 1:1–31.

⁴⁷ Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 8:4832–33. See also Li Jingde 黎靖德, ed., *Zhuzi yulei*, Chuanjing tang edition (N.p., n.d.), *juan* 126, 13b.

⁴⁸ Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, 12.6a–b.

⁴⁹ Zhu Xi 朱熹, "Shishi lun xia" 釋氏論下, in *Hui'an xiansheng Zhu Wengong wenji xuji* 晦庵先生朱文公文集續集, Sibu congkan chubian jibu edition (Shanghai: Shangwu chubanshe, n.d.), 10:1935.2–1936.1.

⁵⁰ Tongrong 通容, "Yuandao pixie shuo" 原道關邪說, in *Poxie ji*, 384.

⁵¹ Lin Qilu 林啓陸, "Zhuyi lunlüe" 誅夷論略, in *Poxie ji*, 282. Because *tianzhu* was at this time inextricably linked with the "men from the west" and their curious doctrine and practice, the appropriation of the term by an avowedly *ru* scholar-official such as Lin signaled how mutually entailed Chinese and Jesuit discourse on religious matters had become. *Tianzhu* was now a Chinese philosophical term liberated from its Christian religious context.

5

(Mis)conceiving the Self in Early China

Memory and Truth in Early Chinese Autobiographical Writing

Matthew V. Wells

The comparative study of early China and early Europe is often a specious enterprise. Though stimulating and at times illuminating, most scholars must admit that the relationship between early Chinese and European philosophy, literature, or history is both a tenuous one and largely academic. But the study of early Chinese autobiographical prose presents us with an opportunity for meaningful comparisons between two traditions of autobiographical writing, as the Western tradition has, over time, shaped our understanding of and approach to this body of literature in its modern and traditional forms. Scholarship of autobiography in both English and Chinese has been dominated by an expectation for a narrative that accurately discloses either the inner life or historical experience of a distinct, autonomous individual. This view of autobiography begins with the confessional requirements for an autonomous, historical subject found in the narrative of Augustine of Hippo (354–430), for whom the tropes of autonomy and individuality were paramount. For this reason we might regard Western autobiography at its core as Christian autobiography, for ultimately the kind of self-definition required of Augustine for his confession of faith has become, over time, the standard by which subsequent autobiographies are measured. Because our modern notion of autobiography is rooted in Augustinian religious discourse (be it accepted or rejected), it provides us with an opportunity for comparative study between early European, confessional autobiography and early Chinese autobiographical prose if only to explore how our understanding of the former has shaped and even distorted our interpretations of the latter. Conversely, early Chinese autobiographies also allow us to interrogate the tropes of individuality, agency, and verisimilitude that permeate the Western tradition of self-narrative. Such tropes are widespread among authors and critics alike, for they allow authors to lay claim to an individual identity that possesses considerable cultural capital in modern societies and they allow critics to reinforce false dichotomies between Western "individuality" and