

Global Approaches in European and Chinese Modernisms

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ABSTRACTS

THURSDAY, JULY 9

I CHINESE AND EUROPEAN WORLD PROJECTS:

1:30 pm: Wang Ban, *Literature, Nation, and Internationalism in Liang Qichao*

This paper examines Liang Qichao's engagement with Western literature and nation-building. The last section of Liang's novel *The Future of New China* (*Xin Zhongguo weilai ji*) brings poetry, geopolitics, cross-cultural sympathy, and international feelings into focus. Chinese nationalists, Huang, Li, and Chen, enthusiastically identify with the political passions of Byron's poems. Their nationalistic sentiments are connected with the "world" status of Byron's work. This link between the national and international is possible not because Byron is a global sign of literary modernity or the British Empire. On the contrary, the link is premised on the perception that one nation's pursuit of its autonomy and independence is meaningful and inspiring for other nations. Indeed, the cultural exchange and translation around Byron transcend the notion of nation-state defined by ethnicity, language, tradition, and history. The nation seeking equal status and mutual support among nations is eminently internationalist, distinct from vaunted capital driven cosmopolitanism. The nation-international spectrum entails a common ground for exchange and mutual learning, and offers justifications for a world culture. Rather than an arena of power rivalry where one national culture dominates others, world culture comes to be articulated on the basis of the equality and mutual respect among nations. Liang's poetic

nationalism, fueled by Byron's "world" poetry, suggests that a nationalistic pursuit is continuous with Kang Youwei's *datong*, the ideal of the great world community.

3:00 pm: Krajewski Markus, *Bureaucratic Visions of the World. How Globality Around 1900 Has Taken Shape*

Before Google and globalization, big-thinking Germans tried to bring the world closer together: In my talk I will explore a neglected part in the history of globalization by examining a selection of large-scale projects that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, shared a grand yet unachievable goal: bringing order to the world. I will show how media, technological structures, and naked human ambition paved the way for global-scale ventures that created the first "world wide web".

I will discuss the late nineteenth-century networks of cables, routes, and shipping lines—of junctions, crossovers, and transfers—merged into a "multimedia system" that was both, a prerequisite and an inspiration for conceiving a project with a global range. By example of the German chemist and natural philosopher Wilhelm Ostwald, who spent years promoting a "world auxiliary language" (in advocating for Ido, together with Louis Couturat), a world currency, and a globally standardized paper format (nowadays known as DIN A 4) as the basis of all thought, I will show how Internationalism was conceived as a result of certain media networks.

4:00 pm: Chiang Howard, *Sinophone as Historiography: Europe and Asia in the Making of Global China*

This presentation introduces the *Sinophone* as a useful framework of analysis for historians and other critics of the past. Pioneered by the literary scholar Shu-mei Shih, the Sinophone world refers to Sinitic-language communities and cultures outside of China or on the margins of China and Chineseness. I situate the heuristic value of the Sinophone in a historiographical trajectory that traces how "Europe" and "Asia" have operated in a mutually productive fashion in global accounts of Chinese history. After surveying the relationship between these two geopolitical signifiers in comparative history, circulation history, transnational history, and postcolonial history, I will show that these varying approaches culminate in the possibility of delineating the historical contours of what I call "Sinophone modernity." This project complicates China's global position in static binary formulations of the West and the rest, or Orientalism and Occidentalism. I conclude by pointing to three specific examples of how Sinophone modernity can be instructive in its application: the geopolitics of gender and sexuality, a comparative view of the Middle East, and the reframing of Republican-era Chinese history.

FRIDAY, JULY 10

II. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES IN SEXUAL SCIENCE AND MEDIA:

9:00 am: Fuechtner Veronika, *Writing a Modern Global History of Sexual Science*

Sexual science as it emerged in the late 19th century was an essentially modern and global phenomenon. It grew out of the preoccupation with ideas of the modern self and with the limits of science. Its protagonists were doctors, eugenicists, and activists and its methods were equally eclectic. Its journals were produced and distributed internationally, and sexologists and their knowledge travelled back and forth along global circuits. The main challenge in writing a global history of sexual science is that sexual science has been studied by different sets of scholars with little exchange: by European and US-historians, who have focused on the “West” as the “birthplace” of sexual science, by other regional historians, whose histories were also limited to local concerns or who described it as a case of “Western” influence, and by scholars in sexuality studies, who mainly traced the repressive (colonial) heritage of these histories. This talk presents a project, co-edited with historians Douglas E. Haynes and Ryan Jones, which seeks to integrate these different constituencies and their approaches. It argues that sexual science originated simultaneously in different parts of the world and that its knowledge transfers were multi-directional and co-constitutive.

10:00 am: Stan Corina, *The Lures of Polyphony: Socrates, Joyce, Schönberg*

Whether in Leopold Bloom Joyce created a compelling “ordinary man” has, for almost a century now, been a subject of scholarly debate. An awkward exchange between George Orwell and Henry Miller has the merit of spelling out the stakes of the question: while Orwell praised Joyce for having had the “courage to identify with the ordinary man”, and to admit that one is “an ordinary person for nine-tenths of the time, which is exactly what no intellectual ever wants to do,” Miller uncompromisingly claimed that Joyce made “Bloom, his ‘average’ man or double, the supreme object of ridicule,” revealing his own “inability to participate in the ordinary, everyday life of human beings.” These contradictory views suggest that modernist writers understood the ordinary as the measure of a writer’s capacity to intimate the communal as shared humanity, to weave a social space in times deeply fractured by history: Woolf’s “an ordinary mind on an ordinary day,” Eliot’s “doing the police in different voices,” E. M. Forster’s “only connect,” Orwell’s life-long obsession with the ordinary (from the tramps and dishwashers he evokes in *Down and Out in Paris and London* to the proles in 1984) are important expressions of the modernist investment in re-imagining and rebuilding community.

In this talk, I approach the question of the ordinary in *Ulysses* by examining how Joyce provides access through Leopold Bloom to a space of ordinary humanity. I will take as an example the “Sirens” chapter, in which this space is an eminently aural one: it famously features Bloom at

the Ormond bar waiting for the critical hour of Molly's betrayal, while listening to people in the other room who sing, gossip, and flirt with the mermaid-like bartenders. The contradictory quality of this moment contaminates Bloom's sociability: the company of other voices helps to fill time and distract him from the thought of his wife's adultery, yet this event is also affecting enough for him to want to ponder it alone, indulge it vicariously and take revenge by writing an adulterous letter. His is a form of unsocial sociability, as Kant would have it, in which music plays the role of a compromise: it is there as a necessity, yet Bloom writes it over. Critical readers of Joyce have argued over the significance of music in this chapter: are the sirens "mute," as Kafka once suggested in a short fable, and Joyce's text only a clever juxtaposition of rhetorical devices? Or is the text a transposition of music, more specifically a form of fugue? I argue, through close reading of key moments in the "Sirens," that it is difficult to isolate music as a pure "modality of the audible;" rather, the chapter explores the full range of sounds, reveling in gossip, the sounds of the city, the noises of the body, the echoes of various social and ideological texts and Bloom's meandering obsessions, in a writing unembarrassed by aesthetic or social cacophony. Like in Joyce's "The Dead," music is a way of affirming and celebrating community, but in the "Sirens" it is also part of a complex of seduction (I rely on Baudrillard's and Barthes' analyses of social myth here), in which Bloom's identity undergoes both dispersion and coalescence.

The modality of the audible, I argue, unfolds as a continuum of music-voices-noise whose complexity is best captured by the term "polyphony." The second part of the essay offers an analysis of this term as used by Nietzsche, by Russian formalists, and by several modernist musicians, showing that it is by no means a neutral notion denoting a plurality of voices: it yokes Nietzsche's attribution of the beginnings of the novel to Socrates' democratization of philosophical reflection through the inclusion of voices in dialog; Bakhtin's and Voloshinov's insistence on the ritualistic nature of dialog and its permeation by ideological discourse; and developments in modernist music that dilute the melodic line (the equivalent of the plot and the linearity of discourse) in favor of atonality (Schönberg's "polyphonic" music), the inclusion of multiple melodic lines and "voices" detached from context (Varèse's *musique concrète*), city-sounds (Pierre Boulez, Gershwin), objects (in Cage's "prepared piano") and even the undignified other of music, noise (Luigi Russolo to Stockhausen). I conclude that, in "Sirens," polyphony enables the horizontal and vertical organization of discourse following predictable patterns, and a capacious way of describing the emergence of community as a group of people whose living-together expresses itself in gossip, the full familiarity with the human and non-human sensorium, and an intimate knowledge of the trivial but fascinating ways of human imperfection. Joyce's delightful joke is to introduce this community as an orchestra attended to by a deaf waiter, insensitive to the noise of the world, and conducted by a blind tuner, immune to the seduction of the visible.

11:30 am: Kammer Stephan, *Evil Goes Global: The Criminal Mastermind in Early 20th Century Fiction*

Around 1900, true crime is local. First, this is true from the point of view of the young, but prospering discipline of criminology. Crime is lurking in the bloodline of the degenerate, it is hiding in the convolutions of a brain or in the outlines of a skull. Crime shows up (or it does not) in the natural-born criminal, this highly controversial scientific fiction of Italian psychiatrist Cesare Lombroso. Second, and if crime shows up, it unsettles local communities. May crime as such threaten society or even the human race, true crimes afflict particular milieus and neighborhoods.

Boundless is, in contrast, the knowledge of criminals and of crime. Criminology quickly establishes itself as a global science. But criminological knowledge did not overcome the borders of nation-states in theory only—and not only these borders. Around 1900, while international, cross-boundary policing almost exclusively focused on press and politics in the course of the century before, in its end global hunt for local criminals on the run was launched. Needless to say, the most sensational cases included new global media, especially the telegraph. But in the first decades of 20th century, a new sort of criminal masterminds comes to light—they are cosmopolites, such as Fantômas: »everywhere and always it is Fantômas I am looking for«, asserts Juve, the detective; they are international, such as Dr. Mabuse, whose gang benefits local border traffic at Lake Constance and who plans Eitopomar, a colony in Brazil; they are thoroughly fictional and readily crossing the borders of narrative media (novel, movie, serial). The question these figures raise and my paper tries to answer is: do they change—and if, how do they change—the understanding of crime and of criminological knowledge?

2:00 pm: Schaub Christoph, *Workers' Movement Modernism: Internationalism and Montage in the Weimar Republic*

The literature of Weimar's labor movement has often been understood in opposition to modernism, both in contemporaneous left-wing discourse and in later scholarship. In contrast, my paper argues that many texts of workers' movement literature articulated and adapted modernist aesthetics to represent proletarian modernity through a poetics of collectivity. Analyzing Franz Jung's *Joe Frank illustriert die Welt* and Anna Seghers's *Die Gefährten*, the paper zooms in on one particular aspect of workers' movement modernism: the interplay between montage aesthetics and internationalism in left-wing literary world-making. The paper closes with some remarks on how this tradition of internationalist literature can be employed to complicate current debates about world literature.

3:00 pm: Zhang Hui, *Loneliness and Tolerance in the Year of 1931: An Inquiry into Fengzhi's Self-Exploration in the Mirror of Rilke*

The year 1931 marks a pivotal turning point in the spiritual growth of the eminent Chinese poet Feng Zhi (1905-1993) who then had already turned into an empiricist poet by waving his last farewell to his "past self", namely that sentimental Romanticist stitching verses of solitariness in collections such as *Song of Yesterday* and *Tour Northward and Other Poems*. However, this particular time point says something even more important: Feng's thoughts and writing practice are both evidence for his exploration of a unique and rare category of "self" for the modern China. Unlike the other sort of "self" widely accepted by the mainstream of the modern culture, Feng's "self", upholding Goethe's concept "entsagen", declares his readiness to survive in the dark as well as his resolution to strive for the truth and a better life. Based on a mountain of proof, this essay is an inquiry into the poet's life journey of self-exploration mentioned above in the mirror of the German-language poet Rainer Maria Rilke, with an attempt to give a clear picture of the spiritual evolution of Feng titled as "the best lyric poet in China". His case may offer us a valuable perspective on the construction of self in the intellectual development of the modern China.

4:30 pm: Berman Nina, *Modernity and Globalization: A Comparative Reading*

How is the notion of modernism related to the idea of modernity, and how is modernity related to globalization? Are globalism, globality, and globalization replacements for or additions to the conceptual vocabulary that has been central to discussions of modernity? My paper will argue that globalization is a relatively neutral term that addresses developments under way across the planet since the late fifteenth century. Modernization, on the other hand, evokes qualitative changes with regard to the structures and values of societies. How do we think modernization and globalization together?

I will explore these questions by turning to late nineteenth and early twentieth century writings by Edward Wilmot Blyden, Qasim Amin, and Rabindranath Tagore. I intend to highlight dimensions of the contemporaneity of debates that are often associated with Europe in terms of their broader geographical reach. The comparative reading is not intended to make claims about a global modernity, but rather to highlight the limited usefulness of the term modernity.