

# EURO-SINICA : The Past and the Future

## 歐洲的中國觀：過去與現在

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**關鍵詞：**中國—概念、歐洲思想家、十七—二十世紀、歐洲中心主義、中國中心主義、天啟教、相互接受

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§ 本文曾宣讀於 2003 年 11 月 1-2 日，由臺灣大學東亞文明研究中心、捷克布拉格查理斯大學蔣經國基金會國際漢學中心、喜瑪拉雅研究發展基金會聯合主辦之第六屆〈中華文明的二十一世紀新意義〉系列學術研討會：「中華文明與域外文化的互動與融和」。

## Abstract

I use Euro-Sinica to denote the European (re-)construct of Chinese culture. In historical perspective, the present constitutes the crystallization of the past and, at the same time, the foundation of the future. Within this framework, my paper has four parts: the first three parts analyze the historical stages from the 17th to the 20th centuries (inclusive) and the last part forecasts, based on past experience, possible future developments. We as scholars in the present should try to sow seeds and thus help influence future attitudes concerning intercultural perspectives between China and Europe so that some day, there will be a diversified humanity-culture, i.e., a true multi-cultural world.

In comparison, the past is easy to delineate. The first part can be called the Jesuit Epoch. Here I present the accommodation and the Figurist theory of the most influential Jesuit Fathers, as well as the discussions of those philosophers such as Leibniz and Voltaire who were sympathetic to the accommodation. The second phase can be termed the Protestant Epoch, because after the Rites Controversy it was mainly the Protestant philosophers, with a scattering of French (Roman Catholic) ones, who consciously or unconsciously used the Bible or their interpretation of it, to judge Chinese culture. Most of the philosophers in this category were German, including Herder, Hegel, Schlegel, and Schelling. They were followed by Protestant missionaries who entered China after the First Opium War. However, at the height of this period, about the time of the Boxer Rebellion, the orthodox and quasi-fundamentalist attitude began to change. In the third period, some Protestant missionaries, writers, and philosophers took a sympathetic view to Chinese culture. Schopenhauer, Richard Wilhelm, Bertrand Russell, and Martin Buber were prominent examples. Perhaps we can call this third period non-denominational, because these thinkers did not judge China based on orthodox religious views. These "inclusivists", of course, co-exist with the "exclusivists" such as Max Weber of the first half, and Julia Kristeva of the second half of the 20th century. Based on the "inclusivist" view, I shall propose a scenario (perhaps more than one) of possible future development. It is in part based on Karl Jaspers's initiative of putting Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, and Jesus Christ on equal footing so we can study them and their ideas as human beings. If we can respect all great personages who contributed to the formation of important cultures, then we shall have no need for utopias.

## 摘要

我用「歐洲-中國」這個詞來指稱歐洲對中國文化的(再)建構。從歷史的角度來看,現在是過去事件透明化後的組成,同時也構成了未來的基礎。在這個架構下,我的論文將由四個部分組成:前三個部分試圖分析從十七到二十世紀(包含二十世紀)的各個歷史階段。最後一個部分試圖在過去經驗的基礎上,預測未來可能的發展狀況。我們身為當代的學者,應該嘗試在現在種下種子,期待未來有一天這種影響將開花結果。就關注於歐洲與中國文化交流的觀點而言,終究會形成多樣多變的人類文化,例如說,一個真正多元文化的世界。

過去的事比較容易被描繪出來,第一個時期可以被稱作是耶穌會時期。在本文中我將呈現耶穌會遭遇中國文化時的折衷作法,以及其中最具影響力的創始人所提出的 Figurist 理論。此外,亦將呈現認同這種折衷作法之哲學家的討論,像是萊布

尼茲 (Leibniz) 和伏爾泰 (Voltaire) 等。第二個階段是新教階段；在中國的「禮儀之爭」(the Rites Controversy) 後，新教的哲學家，加上少數的法國羅馬天主教徒，有意或無意地以《聖經》或是他們對《聖經》的詮釋來批判中國文化。這類哲學家多數來自德國，包括赫爾德 (Herder)、黑格爾 (Hegel)、席力赫 (Schlegel)、和謝林 (Schelling) 等。他們多是在鴉片戰爭後隨著新教傳教士進入中國。然而，在此時期的顛峰時刻，也就是約莫在義和團之亂的時候，這種正統和類基本教義 (quasifundamentalist) 的態度開始改變了。一些新教的傳教士、作家、和哲學家開始對中國文化採取同情的看法。最為顯著的例子像是叔本華 (Schopenhauer)、李查·威爾瀚 (Richard Wilhelm)、羅素 (Bertrand Russell)、和馬汀·布伯 (Martin Buber)。或許我們可以把這個第三個階段稱做是非教派階段，因為這個時期的思想家再也不以正統的宗教觀點來批評中國了。這些「局內人」(inclusivist) 當然和「局外人」(exclusivist) 同時存在，像是二十世紀前半的馬克斯·韋伯 (Max Weber) 和二十世紀後半的朱利亞·克莉絲蒂娃 (Julia Kristeva)。以「局內人」的觀點為基礎，我會嘗試發展出一個 (或者更多) 未來發展的可能藍圖。一部份會以卡爾·亞思伯 (Karl Jaspers) 的初步嘗試為基底。採取他將蘇格拉底、佛陀、孔子和耶穌四人並置，並一視同仁研究他們的理念和作法。如果我們可以同時尊敬形成人類偉大文化的大貢獻者，那我們也就不需要去追求烏托邦了。

I use the term Euro-Sinica to denote the study of the European interpretation of Chinese culture since the early nineteen eighties. The product of the European (re-)construct of China I call "Chinesia". Lately, some American scholars have introduced the term sinological orientalism to relate China to Edward Said's orientalism, however, my studies<sup>1</sup> differ from this sinological orientalism in two substantial ways. The new term is based mainly on the study of English missionaries of the 19th century, particularly James Legge, and their vision of the Chinese culture, whereas I begin my analysis with 17th century. Moreover, the focus of my studies is primarily on philosophers, those writing in English, French, and German. The sinologists, who arrived on the scene much later, are rather on the periphery of my studies.<sup>2</sup>

My paper has four parts. In the first part, I delineate the interpretation of Leibniz which coincided with the accommodation of the Jesuits and the so-called Chinese figurism. I also describe Voltaire's position briefly. The second part deals with the "Chinesia" of Diderot and Herder who constituted the late phase of the Enlightenment. In the third part I examine the interpretation of John Barrow, an Englishman who visited China, and Nietzsche whose worldview went beyond Christianity. In the last part, I expand on the four pillars of human cultures, namely Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, and Jesus Christ, as presented by Karl Jaspers. Instead of studying them as individuals, as Jaspers did, I view them as representing four prototypes or paradigms of our cultures in order to sow the seeds of a multicultural universe in which the culture and the religion of the others will be accepted and respected. An infidel will then be a person who continues to insist on imposing her/his religion or way of life on others. McDonald's should not be the only kind of cuisine in the world.

### **Knowledge of China Disseminated by the Missionaries**

From the late 16th to the first half of the 18th centuries, a number of important books on China, written and compiled by missionaries, were published in

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<sup>1</sup> The present paper is a part of a study on the interpretation of Chinese culture by European philosophers. This project has been generously supported by Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation to which I would like to express my appreciation.

<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this paper is not to label some authors sinophiles and others sinophobes. Rather, it intends to present their interpretations of China alongside the framework of their views of themselves and the world so that the *raison d'être* of their thoughts could become evident.

Europe, marking the first time that informed publication of a scholarly nature on China was disseminated in Europe. The earliest major book is a compendium of diverse writings of missionaries edited by P. Gonzàles de Mendoza and published in Rome in 1585.<sup>3</sup> It was translated into seven languages and reprinted twenty eight times. The last edition appeared in 1663. Matteo Ricci's diary,<sup>4</sup> first published in 1615, was translated into six languages, and Alvarez de Smedo's book on the Chinese empire,<sup>5</sup> published in 1642, was translated into 5 languages. These three books transmitted fundamental knowledge of China to the interested intellectuals of that time. Then Martino Martini's vivid description of the conquest of China by the Manchu appeared in 1654. This book was a great popular success and within 50 years it was translated into 9 languages with twenty one editions. Thus Europe had both learned and popular information on China. When Athanasius Kircher's authoritative work known nowadays as *China illustrata* was published in 1667 in Amsterdam,<sup>6</sup> it summed up the knowledge on China. In 1735, Kircher's book was replaced by Jean-Baptist du Halde's monumental work of 4 volumes, generally known as *Description ... de la Chine*.<sup>7</sup> This became the main source book on China until the Opium War. The first major European philosopher who became interested in China was Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716). He was drawn towards Chinese culture through two books, the above-mentioned *China illustrata* by Kircher and Philippe Couplet's *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, published in 1687.

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<sup>3</sup> The title is: *Historia de las cosas mas notables, ritos y costumbres, del gran reyno de la China, sabidas assi por los libros de los mesmos Chinas, como por relacion de religiosos y otras personas que an estabo en el dicho reyno.*

<sup>4</sup> It was edited by Nicholas Trigault, S. J. and titled *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas suscepta ab Societas Jes, ex P. Matthaei Ricci eiusdem societatis commentariis ...* Augusta Vind. 1615.

<sup>5</sup> It is entitled: *Imperio de la China.*

<sup>6</sup> The full title is: *China monumentis qua sacris qua profanis, nec non variis naturae & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata.*

<sup>7</sup> The proper title is: *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie Chinoise ...*

## Leibniz's Interpretative Construction of China and Voltaire's *l'Orphelin de la Chine*

Today Leibniz is celebrated for his unique contribution towards the understanding between Europe and China, while Voltaire is recognized as a sinophile.<sup>8</sup> Without these two philosophers and the Jesuit accommodation, Sino-European intellectual exchange would have little positive results to show. In connection with China, Leibniz is probably most known for his book titled *Novissima Sinica*, whose first edition appeared in 1697. Because he wished to include in his book the image of Emperor Kanxi published in Joachim Bouvet's *Histoire de l'Empereur de la Chine* in the same year, which praised the Chinese emperor as a model for all princes, he had a second edition printed in 1699. Leibniz clearly recognized that Europe and China complement one another, but Europe was clearly superior in terms of theoretical disciplines such as logic, metaphysics, mathematics, astronomy, and warfare; but inferior, however, with regards to practical philosophy. Especially in the teaching of ethics and politics, it could learn from China. However, without grace and Christian doctrine, in his view the Chinese would not be able to be truly virtuous, even though they did succeed in oppressing the burgeoning shoots of wicked qualities. Leibniz saw the reason for the Chinese achievement in Emperor Kangxi, who sanctioned the freedom of Christianity so that European skills and knowledge could be introduced into China and he was perceived as a model of virtue and wisdom. He believed with Bouvet that the Manchu emperor was on the verge of being converted. Leibniz ended his introduction with an appeal that Europe should not ruin this opportunity by religious fanaticism or internal strife within Christian ranks, i.e., Catholics and Protestants should practice religious tolerance like the Chinese.

Considering that the authoritative Faculty of Theology of Sorbonne University condemned the accommodation method - e.g. tolerance within limits - of the Jesuits in China in 1700, we recognize the importance and the provocative timing of Leibniz's publication. Even though he was a Protestant, he was taking side with the Jesuits in the Rites Controversy, because he was hoping the accommodation method of the Jesuits and Emperor Kangxi's religious tolerance could be adopted in Europe to overcome the differences between the Catholic

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. A. H. Rowbotham, "Voltaire, sinophile," *Publications of the Modern Languages Association of America*, 19 (December, 1932), pp.1050-1065.

and Protestant sects. At this moment in time, France under Louis XIV, who annulled the Edict of Nantes of 1598, was persecuting the Huguenots, who had to seek refuge in Protestant countries. Even though Leibniz wanted Europe, especially France, to emulate China, we, nevertheless, have to be aware that Leibniz and the Jesuits in no way considered China to be Europe's equal. For they were convinced that Europe was favoured by God with the revealed religion, while China had only found its way to the natural religion which then became corrupted and mostly forgotten with the time. Nevertheless, praising a pagan country over Christian Europe was a daring act, with the potential of introducing a second Renaissance or persecution. Neither possibility happened, because his book was a private publication. The first version had only four printed copies<sup>9</sup> which he sent to his friends. It is not known how many copies the second version had, although it is estimated that both versions together had less than 50 copies.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, even though his *Novissima Sinica* is now a celebrated item in the Euro-Chinese history, it was only known to a very limited circle in the 18th century and was more or less forgotten until 1920.<sup>11</sup>

However, Leibniz's dream was shattered by the Rites Controversy and the papal bull of March 19, 1715 (*Ex illa die*) which categorically declared China a pagan nation. Eventually, even the Jesuit order in China was dissolved in 1772. Even though no harm came to Leibniz, the reaction of Protestant circles to his accommodation efforts in Europe could be seen five years after his death in 1716, when his pupil Christian Wolf gave the inauguration speech of his vice-chancellorship at the University of Halle in 1721. It was titled "De Sinarum Philosophia Practica" and later became known as "La belle Wolfienne". Halle, as we well know, was one of the strongholds of a Protestant sect known as pietism. Angered by the praise and propagation of natural theology, the pietist circles eventually convinced the Prussian king to banish Wolf from Prussian soil upon the pain of strangulation. He became a casualty of the Jesuits' and Leibniz's accommodation in Europe at the early stage of Enlightenment. This event

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<sup>9</sup> The copy in the library in Weimar, Germany, shows this number of copies.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Rita Widmaier, "Leibniz: verborgene Botschaft in den *Novissima Sinica*", in Wenchao, Li Hans Poser (eds.), *Das Neueste über China: G. W. Leibnizens Novissima Sina von 1697* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000), p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> It seems that F. R. Merkel was the first one to unearth Leibniz's booklet again. I checked this item with Dr. Rita Widmaier.

was so remarkable that Voltaire recorded it in the article “De la Chine” in his *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764).

The case with Voltaire (1694-1778), the sinophile, is slightly different. A major piece of evidence for his “sinophilism” is his play *L’Orphelin de la Chine* (1755), which was an adaptation of the Chinese drama *Zhaoshi gu-er* which was written during the Yuan Dynasty. For of this reason, Voltaire called the hero of his play Ghengis Khan. As the Mongols were considered to be Western Tartars, and the Manchu Eastern Tartars, the French philosopher and playwright saw nothing wrong in linking them together. As a matter of fact, Voltaire, who read meticulously the Jesuit publications on China, modelled his Ghengis Khan after the Manchu Abahai (1592-1643), the last monarch (Tian-zung) of Hou Jin and the first emperor (Chong-de) of the Qing Dynasty, for Voltaire's Ghengis Khan lived secretly in China for a lengthy time, just as Abahai had according to Martini.<sup>12</sup> Voltaire even created a romance with a Chinese woman for the Mongol.

We know that Voltaire wrote the play in part to refute Rousseau's contention that civilization corrupts. Since Rousseau had used China to prove his point. According to him the Chinese were so corrupted by their civilization that they had consequently degenerated into slaves and villains. Therefore, Voltaire wrote a Chinese drama to demonstrate the contrary by showing the natural superiority of reason and genius over barbarism. In the play, the emblem of raw power, Genghis Khan, is converted to Confucian virtue by Idamé, the wife of the Chinese Mandarin who tries to save the heir to the Chinese empire conquered by him. Both philosophers used China to prove their respective theories and in due course Voltaire emerged as the champion of China. Nevertheless he considered, on the other hand, the Chinese original play to be rather un-Chinese, criticising it for its failure to paint a picture of Chinese manners and customs. In other words, he criticised the characters in the Yuan play because they were not strange or exotic enough to be recognizable as Chinese. Thus despite his professed sinophilism, Voltaire concluded in the preface to the *Chinese Orphan* that in comparison to Europeans the Chinese, like other Asiatics, were still at an elementary stage of culture of development. It is true that Voltaire praised certain achievements of ancient China and considered many of these superior to European achievements. On many occasions he also defended Chinese culture against at-

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<sup>12</sup> As a matter of fact, in Chinese sources, this feat is usually attributed to Nurhachi, Abahai's father. Cf. Min-sun Chen, p. 166.

tacks from Montesquieu, Rousseau and others. This is particularly evident in Voltaire's *L'Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756). Nevertheless, it is also true that he was extremely critical of contemporary China (under the reign of Qianlong!) and believed that the contemporary Chinese were too backward even to imitate Europeans.<sup>13</sup>

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Europe became progressively dominated by the spirit of mercantilism and territorial gain, as symbolised by the British Admiral George Anson's voyage around the world in 1740-44. He landed at Macau and Canton, and his impressions of the Chinese were recorded by Richard Walter:

Indeed this much may undoubtedly be asserted, that in artifice, falsehood, and an attachment to all kinds of lucre, many of the Chinese are difficult to be paralleled by other people... I may not be thought too severe in ascribing to this Nation a fraudulent and selfish turn of temper, so contradictory to the character given of them in the legendary accounts of the Romish missionaries.<sup>14</sup>

Montesquieu (1689-1755) summed up the new European judgement of China very effectively in *L'Esprit des Lois* published in 1748: "La Chine est donc un Etat despotique dont le principe est la crainte [China is indeed a despotic state whose ruling principle is fear]." Thus he eliminated the association between honour and virtue in both China and with the Orient, i.e. India and Turkey. Heinrich Heine repeated Montesquieu's judgement in his satire on Prussia, crowning the reactionary Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV as the "Kaiser von China", whose German Confucius was the confused Schelling. The "Emperor of China" wanted to complete the construction of a tall Pagoda (alluding to Cologne Cathedral), to have all Jews baptised, and to make his subjects happy with the whip.

## **Diderot, Herder, and the Deconstruction of Jesuit's China**

Today we are used to the notion that China played a positive role in the

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<sup>13</sup> Leo Jordan, *Voltaire's Orphelin de la Chine in drei Akten* (Dresden: Gesellschaft für Romanische Literatur, 1913), p. 438.

<sup>14</sup> George Anson, *A Voyage round the World in the years MDCCVL, I, II, III, IV* (London: W. Strahan, J. Rivington and Sons, 1780), p. 506.

European Enlightenment. However, that view had to share the ground with the religious orthodoxy of both Catholic and Protestant circles; and it is this same orthodoxy which the philosophers of the Enlightenment tried to neutralize. We are well aware that thinkers like Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) and Voltaire (1694-1778) used the view China, promulgated by the Jesuits, as a positive example against the capricious rule of European princes and Christian fundamentalism. We should also remember that the Physiocrats such as Quesnay and Turgot used China to promote their politico- economical ideology of the primacy of agriculture.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the Enlightenment in France ended on a negative note as far as China is concerned. Rousseau took a stance contrary to China, firstly considering it corrupted by culture and hence degenerated; or as Montesquieu declared in his influential *L'Esprit des Lois* (1748) that China was not ruled by reason and wisdom, as depicted by the Jesuits, but by the rod. Secondly, he opined that both the climate and the history had made the Chinese into slaves. In the first instance, he was convinced that the perceived hot climate in China influenced the disposition of its people in such a way that they had become inclined to slavery. In the second instance, he opined that slavery was an integral nature of the Mongolian races. This natural tendency they brought to China with their repeated conquests of that empire. Both factors, in his opinion, confirmed that China was really ruled by fear. The final judgment of French Enlightenment on China was pronounced by Diderot (1713-1784) in his *Histoire philosophique et politique des deux Indes et Tableau de la Chine selon des détracteurs* (1772, the third edition was published in 1781). In twenty points, he refuted the major enthusiastic opinions and statements on China of his time. The first spear thrust was directed against the famous sinophile, Voltaire, who as we have seen above, praised the civilizing power of Confucianism because China had sinicized its conquerors, the Mongols and the Manchu. Diderot found this notion untenable. He pointed out that for every Tatar, there were 50,000 Chinese, so it was but natural for the minority to be absorbed. In addition, he claimed the fact that the Chinese had not adopted any of the conquerors' culture was again a natural consequence of events, because slaves, i.e., the vanquished Chinese, never cared who their masters were and what they thought or felt.<sup>16</sup> This argument shows

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<sup>15</sup> See René Étiemble, *L'Europe chinoise* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988).

<sup>16</sup> The spread of the English language and literature in former British colonies proves this theory wrong.

Diderot's indebtedness to Montesquieu. Because Europe, especially the Physiocrats, who propagated an economical system based on agriculture, was impressed by the immense population of China, Diderot pointed out that the phenomenon in question was actually a source of crime. A denser population increased the proportion of murders, arson, and pillaging committed. As a consequence, the police did not even bother to look for the criminals. Moreover, the parents, instead of treating their children with tenderness, as was natural with men and brutes, killed their children with impunity in various ways. Last, but not least, the large population impeded China in the development of their arts and sciences because all were preoccupied with their daily survival. As for the much praised Chinese enlightened despotism, Diderot, again echoing Montesquieu, considered it factually impossible. He claimed that the Chinese were treated by the authorities as other countries treated their animals. Consequently, they really suffered under a double tyranny, that of the family and that of the government, and the mandarins of such a system could not be of high principle or morality. All of them displayed their degradation and ignominy without a thread of shame. In his opinion, the general population was not less shameless, and in fact they cheated, whenever they could, especially the foreign merchants. This fact was reported, Diderot added, by all who had commercial dealings with China.

Diderot protested against the practice of certain philosophers, without doubt Voltaire and the Physiocrats, of humiliating Europe by idealizing China and giving the impression that wisdom could be found only in China. In reality, the only science which the Chinese had was the knowledge of their language which, however, did not have even enough terms to express their daily needs. In addition, those who were responsible for the morality were without honour and were entirely untrustworthy. Moreover, only an extremely depraved nation could have such a corrupt justice system as the Chinese. All Chinese individuals, from the emperor to the common people in China, were vultures who devoured each other. The last item which Diderot contested was the opinion of those who maintained that the Chinese loved the future generations as if they were already alive today. He opined that if there was a place where immortality and respect for the posterity had no meaning, then it had to be China. To sum up, Diderot denied each and every praise of his contemporaries for the Chinese. The readers, however, had to take his word for every counter-argument he presented against the eulogists. Probably he realized himself that he offered no proof to substantiate his counter-opinions so that he concluded his treatise with the hope that the Euro-

peans would some day gain more precise information concerning China. He hoped disinterested and judicious persons knowledgeable in the spoken and written language could live in Peking, be familiar with the provinces, and stay in the countryside for a considerable length of time. They could then inform Europe of the exact nature of the Chinese and their culture. Obviously the Jesuits were not considered disinterested and judicious.

In Germany, it was Johann G. Herder (1744-1803) who spoke the last word on China for this period. His *Ideen zur Philosophie der Menschheit* appeared in 1784 (Part 1) and 1785 (Part 2). As the summation of his religious and humanitarian convictions. For him the Bible was the first and oldest book of human record, and humanity was predestined, according to Herder, to higher existence. However, were two exceptions: the Kalmykians and Mongols,<sup>17</sup> because of the climate of their ancestral lands. As justification, Herder relied on the theory of the “great” Montesquieu,<sup>18</sup> who claimed that climate was the determining factor in the appearance and character of a people. He also considered that there was a second determining element which also formed the human species, the “genetic force” (die genetische Kraft), which he sometimes calls the “inner climate”; however it is never fully explained. Herder called the Kalmykians and Mongols “predators” amongst human beings and compared them occasionally to locusts.<sup>19</sup> They were supposed to have eyes, ears, teeth, neck, and the forehead of the beasts of prey,<sup>20</sup> and the Chinese were descendants of these “vultures”. The deformed organs impacted their taste and mentality, consequently their government and wisdom smacked of despotism and rawness, according to Herder. The other ugly peoples such as the Turks and the Persians had been transformed by moving to a more-favoured climatic and topographic zone. However, this natural law was denied the Chinese. Because their genetic character blocked any changes, they remained essentially, Mongolians even though they had moved to milder climates millennia ago. One might think that Herder bore a grudge against the Chinese. But a close reading of his views shows that he was actually trying to mediate between the over-positive statements of the Jesuits and the over-negative views of contemporary travelers and philosophers such as Rousseau. Herder’s efforts in mediation demonstrate how radically the tide had

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<sup>17</sup> Chapter 2, Book VII.

<sup>18</sup> Chapter 3, Book VII.

<sup>19</sup> Chapter 2, Book VII.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Chapter 2, Book VI.

turned against China.

Apart from the Mongolian origin of the Chinese, Herder could not forgive the Chinese for writing, in his perception, in hieroglyphs. In his view, language is an important component in God's plan for the human beings to advance from their present transitional stage to salvation. Speech is a gift of God which is predestined to wake up the dormant reason. But the Chinese spoiled the plan by having an over-developed sense of hearing,<sup>21</sup> so that their spoken language is made up of, according to Herder, 330 syllables or sounds while each in its turn had "five or more accents" or tones. A European, according to Herder (and his contemporaries) would never be able to pronounce these sounds and tones, and a European ear could not hear the difference anyway. Consequently, the Chinese were speaking a defective language. In addition, they had invented 80,000 hieroglyphs to further complicate the matter. Herder blamed the Chinese language on the Mongolian "organization" or mentality. This sickly imagination also produced dragons and monsters, the ugly mixture of their gardens, their giant buildings with minute details, the fireworks, and last, but not least, their manners. Consequently, the Chinese had no sense for tranquility, beauty, and dignity. Nature or providence had denied them the gift of producing any important inventions. In Herder's opinion, China had stopped developing thousands of years ago; and therefore his contemporary China did not have a living culture but only cultural ruins. Consequently, the China of Herder's epoch was supposed to be still in the childhood stage, as it would remain.

For him, the quintessence of China's childish culture was obedience. A Chinese person must always obey, in the family as well as in the state. He was perpetually performing a duty or carrying out an order without inner appreciation of its significance. Consequently, everything became an empty ceremony. It seems that all Chinese were automatons or wooden puppets, or perhaps they could better be characterized as mere children. Even their morality and laws were, according to Herder, incessant repetitions of the same hypocritical childish duties. He compared the Chinese Empire to an embalmed mummy decorated with hieroglyphs and wrapped in silk. It had the same vitality as an animal in hibernation. Because it was situated in a corner of the world, it was thus kept apart from the community of nations. However, the situation would change. The

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<sup>21</sup> Elsewhere, Herder had emphasized the importance of the sharpness of hearing to hear the voice of God. Cf. Chapter 3, Book IV.

fact that Chinese culture withstood the onslaught of the Manchu invasion meant nothing, because stronger conquerors would find the culture of childish slavery easy to vanquish.<sup>22</sup> Whence the new conquerors would hail needs no further explanation.

Herder tried very hard to say something positive about the Chinese. He professed that he honoured Confucius and the Confucian Canons like a Chinese scholar. He listed the achievements of China such as porcelain, silk, gunpowder, lead, the compass, printing, etc. In this respect he contradicted his categorical statement that the Chinese were not capable of inventing anything important. He even found some positive Chinese traits such as diligence, acumen, and artisanship. Nevertheless, the Chinese had no intellectual capacity to improve themselves. In addition, they were so blinded by their own Tatar arrogance that they despised the European merchants who left their homes to trade in foreign lands. Therefore, the Chinese took European silver and gave in return millions of pounds of tea to poison the Europeans.<sup>23</sup>

For Herder, God was supreme and had planned for the development of the world in all minute details. There appears to have been no doubt in his mind that Europeans were the most favoured of all peoples and consequently the most advanced. All the other continents, peoples, and cultures had to fit into this scheme as designed by God. Nevertheless, he also took sides with the weaker races, i.e., the Africans and Amerindians, passionately condemning human exploitation and cruelties. Nevertheless, his unquestioned belief in providence led him to discriminate against the peoples who were not connected with the Bible.<sup>24</sup> These were considered more heathen than all the other non-Christians. They were created ugly, and providence improved their lot on the way to salvation and immortality more slowly. China was the largest entity of this non-favoured group of nations. Consequently, they had never developed since antiquity, but remained children, even though their culture did bring forward some remarkable achievements. If none of them was capable of fundamental and creative thoughts, how could they advance to the next stage and then the ultimate - predestined - goal of all mankind? Providence must have decreed some people to give these helpless

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<sup>22</sup> Chapter 1, Book XI.

<sup>23</sup> Tea was considered by some to be harmful. In the 17th century, there was a belief that tea would render men infertile, while Herder believed that Asians used tea to weaken their digestion.

<sup>24</sup> Or behaved badly in it, such as the Egyptians.

children a helping hand. The Jesuits had tried to bring to the Chinese their version of the true religion. But Herder, as a pietist, disapproved of Catholicism. In addition, these missionaries disseminated a cultural China in Europe which ran contrary to the plan of providence as he perceived it. But in 1802, a year before his death, he paid tribute to the missionary efforts of the Jesuits in *Adrastea*, a journal which he edited.<sup>25</sup> He even re-translated into German about half of the Confucian canon *Zhongyong* from Latin, first printed in 1687,<sup>26</sup> and recapitulated in German some Chinese episodes published in French.<sup>27</sup> He recognized now the achievement of the Jesuit missionaries by calling them “learned mandarins”. The emperors Kangxi, Yongzhen, and Qianlong he no longer described as arbitrary despots, but as reasonable sovereigns. He blamed the failures of the China Mission on the ignorance, jealousy, and bigotry of the Mendicant Orders and the Pope. For Herder it was papal despotism against Chinese despotism. Although Herder never spelled it out, the fact that he praised the Jesuits after having ridiculed them in his *Ideen* seems to suggest he saw a China mission as a viable possibility of helping that nation.

### **John Barrow, Nietzsche, and the Re-Constructed Chinesia**

At the early stage, English thinkers took part in the discussion of whether the Chinese language had been the language spoken by Adam and Eve.<sup>28</sup> However, during the Enlightenment, English philosophers practically ignored China, while their German and French counterparts debated the phenomenon diligently, even heatedly.<sup>29</sup> Only at the beginning of the 20th century did China catch the attention of an English philosopher, namely Bertrand Russell, although the Brit-

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<sup>25</sup> The introductory part is reprinted in Adrian Hsia (ed.), *Deutsche Denker über China*, pp. 135-140.

<sup>26</sup> Phillipe Couplet, *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus sive scientia sinensis latine exposita, studio et opera prosperi Intocetta...* (Paris, 1687).

<sup>27</sup> The French translation is in volume 12 of *Mémoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les mœurs, les usages etc. des Chinois*, 1776 ff.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion on the subject, see Chen Shouyi, “John Webb: A Forgotten Page in the Early History of Sinology in Europe,” Adrian Hsia (ed.), *The Vision of China in the English Literature of the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1998), pp. 87-114.

<sup>29</sup> For a concise discussion of this phenomenon, see “Theorizing Sinism: An Analysis of Chinesia,” Adrian Hsia, *Chinesia. The European Construction of China in the Literature of the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998), pp. 7-22.

ish public had shown a pronounced preoccupation with the European phenomenon of Chinoiserie from its very beginning until well into the 19th century. The strongest British contribution to the Chinese fashion was the so-called Anglo-Chinese Garden. Nevertheless, when Lord Macartney was preparing to lead the first British embassy to China, he looked in vain for an interpreter on the British Isles. On the continent, after a long search, he finally succeeded at convincing two Chinese priests in training in Naples to accompany him. Although the embassy itself is irrelevant to the topic of our paper, we shall analyse the views of a member of his embassy, John Barrow, a man of letters and of science. Today, he is mostly remembered as author of *The Mutiny and Piratical Seizure of H. M. S. Bounty* (1831). He was first engaged by Sir George Staunton to teach his son mathematics. Through his patron, who was appointed the deputy of the ambassador, Barrow became the comptroller of the British embassy which was in China from 1792 to 1794.

As a matter of fact, quite a number of the members of the embassy published accounts of it, including an official one,<sup>30</sup> all of which were published before Barrow's, although the other authors did not advance far enough in life to have influence. In contrast, Barrow's first patron, Staunton, had a stroke shortly after the publication of the official account and died in 1801. After that Barrow became the protégé of Lord Macartney who took him to the Cape as his Private Secretary when he was appointed as governor. Even before the death of Lord Macartney in 1806, Barrow was made Second Secretary to the Navy by Lord Henry Dundas, First Lord of the Admiralty. Barrow remained in the Admiralty for forty years. As the first and only "Old China Hand" in the government, he

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<sup>30</sup> Compiled and written by Sir George Leonard Staunton: *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (London: Stockdale, 1797). The other accounts are: Aeneas Anderson, *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China in the Years 1792, 1793 and 1794* (London: J. Debrett, 1795); Samuel Holmes, *The Journal of Mr. Samuel Holmes, Sergeant-Major of the XIth Dragoon, during his attendance as one of the guards on Lord Macartney's Embassy to China and Tartary* (London: W. Bulmer & Co., 1798), and Johann Christian Hüttner, *Nachricht von der Britischen Gesandtschaftsreise durch China* (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung, 1797). There is a recent version, edited and annotated by Sabine Dabringhaus, Sigmaringen: thornbeck, 1996. Staunton's son Thomas, who learned Chinese on the voyage with his father to China, became in practice the Chinese secretary, despite his young age, of the embassy, copying British memoranda addressed to the Chinese government. He did not publish an account of the embassy, although he kept a journal; the first part of which is archived at Duke University.

was consulted regularly in British dealings with China. In addition, his book on the embassy<sup>31</sup> was popular enough to have a second enlarged edition in 1806, and his views on China were repeated in his memoir in 1847,<sup>32</sup> a year before his death. It goes without saying that his views were based on the conviction that the “real liberty exists only in Great Britain” and this was because of “an enlightened piety” in the people and in the sovereign.<sup>33</sup> He opened the discussion on China by exposing the Catholic missionaries in China. These were, in his opinion, “so warped by the prejudices imbibed with the tenets of their own religion that the accounts given by them are not always to be depended upon.” (423) The main reason for these anti-catholic prejudices, according to him, was the indignation of the missionaries in regard to the “near resemblance of their (i.e, the Chinese) dress and holy rites to those of their (i.e., Catholic) own faith” (422). Therefore they could not “bring themselves to speak or to write of the priests of China with any degree of temper or moderation.”(425) and consequently what they wrote regarding the origin of the Chinese, namely that China had been an Egyptian colony, was to be distrusted. His opinion that the Chinese wrote in hieroglyphics was not a conclusive proof that the two peoples were racially related. He also disagreed with the other current opinion that China had been peopled by ancient Hindus, either because of some similarities of their ancient legends or “by supposing the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and Indians, to be derived from one common stock, and that some of these people carried their religion and their learning into China.” (426) The physical differences among these peoples spoke against such theories. Physically, the Chinese and the Tatars were “scarcely distinguishable”. Also belonging to “the same common stock” (427) were the Malays (including the present day Indonesians) and the Japanese.

Besides physical features, the *Genesis* was also proof that the Tatars constituted the only “remnant of the old stock, to be the germ of future nations.”(428), because the heights of Tartary, being the highest place in the world, were “the last to be covered, and the first that was uncovered” (428) by the Deluge. In his opinion, Noah’s ark “first struck ground in that part of Tartary which is now inhabited by the Eleuths, as being the most elevated tract of country in the old world.” (432) Consequently, he agreed with the Jesuits that

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<sup>31</sup> The title is: *Travels in China* (London: Cadell and Davis, 1804).

<sup>32</sup> *An Autobiographical Memoir* (London: John Murray, 1847).

<sup>33</sup> John Barrow, *Travels in China*, p. 419. Page numbers for quotations from this book will further be given in parentheses in text.

“Noah...traveled with a part of his offspring into the east, and founded the Chinese monarchy; and that he is the same person as the *Foo-Shee*”. (423) He even used his knowledge of Chinese ideograms to support his theory. He wrote:

As a corroborating proof of the Chinese being of Scythic origin, it may be observed, that the adjunct character of Shee (to the family name Foo) is composed of a sheep, rice, and arrow and the conjunctive article also, from whence may be inferred that he united the occupation of shepherd, agriculturist, and warrior. (433/ footnote)

Certainly Barrow had done his homework, because the character really has these three elements or radicals, and these can in turn be interpreted as representing the three basic kinds of occupations. But husbandry, farming, and waging war themselves do not prove that Noah and Foo Shee (in today's transcription: Fuxi) were one and the same person. Besides, Barrow was not consistent in his theorizing, and was at times even quite fanciful. He insisted elsewhere that the inhabitants of Ceylon, known today as Sri Lanka, were of Chinese origin, because their manners and character resembled, in his opinion, those of the Chinese. The name of the country in Singalese, namely *Cin-hgo* or *Sinquo*, i.e. the “Kingdom of Sin (hence Sina, or China) were strictly Chinese words”. (53) A further proof was the Chinese name of Ceylon, namely “*See-lan*, *See-long*, or *See-lung*, the Western Dragon.” (53) For him, both pieces of proof were conclusive, and no further discussion was necessary. Even more fanciful was his assertion that a certain tribe in South Africa was also of Chinese origin. In his opinion, the physical features of the Hottentots and the Chinese agree in almost every point. The form of their persons in the remarkable smallness of the joints and the extremities, their voices and manner of speaking, their temper, their colour and features, and particularly that singular shaped eye rounded in the corner next the nose like the end of an ellipsis... They also agree in the broad root of the nose; or great distance between the eyes; and in the oblique position of these, which ... are dressed towards the nose. (48)

His personal experience constituted the unquestionable proof. Because when he followed Lord Macartney to South Africa after the embassy to China, his Hottentot servant resembled so much his Chinese servant in Canton in features, manners, and tone of voice that he inadvertently called the former by the latter's name. However, he did concede of one difference, the hair. Barrow's contemporaries were sceptical of this theory. In order to prove his point, he included in the second edition of his book the portrait of a Hottentot drawn by S.

Daniell and the picture of a Chinese sketched by William Alexander and juxtaposed them. The juxtaposed images are reproduced here.



*John Barrow: "I have no doubt that a close comparison of these portraits will convince the reader, as well as the reviewer, that the resemblance I remarked to have found was not altogether fanciful."*

Being descendants of Noah gave the Chinese no advantages. According to Barrow, of all ancient cultures (the Chaldean, Assyrian, and the Egyptian) China was the most inferior one. He compared ancient China to the Highlands of Scotland, which had been ruled by chiefs of different clans. The insignificance of China could be seen from the fact that none of the ancient classical authors "had the least knowledge of such a nation," (435) neither Homer nor Herodotus. Barrow even discredited the belief that the people known by the Romans as *Seres* were Chinese, because the xenophobic China would never have permitted any "intercourse with strangers". (436) He believed that in ancient times, "a colony of Jews" brought "the silk worm and the mode of rearing it", already well known "in the time of Solomon" (437), into China. These Jews had settled down "in the silk provinces" (438), and consequently so many Jews could still be found in *Hang-tchoo-foo* (Hangzhou Fu) who were still engaged in the silk trade. He gave the Chinese credit for tolerating the Jews instead of persecuting them because of their religion. On the other hand, they did not accept the religions of the Jews

either, although “a very great similarity is observable between many of the ancient Jewish rites and ceremonies, and those in use among the Chinese” (439). He seems to have believed that the rite of sacrificing to heaven “on the summit of a high mountain” (451) might be of biblical origin because Noah, after leaving the ark, also “built an altar on the mountain where it rested, and made a burnt-offering, whose smoke ascending to heaven was pleasing to the Lord.” (451) Moreover, the Chinese altars ( i.e., *tan*) such as “the *tien-tan* (*tiantan*) or altar of Heaven; the *tee-tan* (*ditan*), or altar of earth; and the *Sien-nong-tan* (*shengnongtan*), or altar of ancient agriculturalists, are erected upon artificial mounts within the walls of the palace” (453).

For Barrow, Confucius was the only Chinese thinker of any substance since Noah moved there. He gave the Chinese sage credit for his morals, but faults his metaphysics. Barrow thought Confucius’ commentaries to *Yijing*, “the supposed system of binary arithmetic by Leibnitz (*sic*), laid the foundation of consulting future destiny, at this day universally sought after by the Chinese” (453-4). However, Barrow doubted that Confucius “really believed in the doctrine of fatality” (454). But as prime minister of the state of Lu, he found it expedient to cater to the superstition of the common people. He also believed that the Chinese sage taught his people “to believe that the human body was composed of two principles, the one light, invisible and ascending; the other gross, palpable, and descending; that the separation of these two principles cause the death of man” (456). The light and ascending element, i.e. the spirits, of those who performed their duty in life, were permitted to enter the hall of ancestors to receive homage. Those descendants who did not perform the proper rites “would be punished for their neglect, after death,” (457) their spirits would be likewise deprived of such sacrifices. Barrow believed that the ancestor worship fostered the belief “in good and evil genius, and of tutelary spirits presiding over families, towns, cities, houses, mountains and other particular places.” (457) He further opined that the Chinese never personalized their deities nor gave “*the great first cause*”(457) any image or personification. He theorized that the Chinese word *tien* (= *tian*: heaven) may be derived from the Greek word (*thein*), meaning moving forward, “in allusion to the motion of the heavenly bodies, which the ancient Greek, as well as the Persians, worshipped”. (458) The Chinese, being unable to produce the “th”-sound, reproduced the Greek word as closely as possible. Moreover, the Confucians believed in the same cosmos system as the Stoics, considering

The whole universe as one animated system, made up of material substance and one spirit, of which every living thing was an emanation, and to which, when separated by death from the material part it had animated, every living thing again returned. (458)

It is apparent that Barrow did his best in relating the Chinese culture to the world of the Bible as well as the Greek and Roman antiquity. He even compared the rites of sacrificing to Confucius or other spirits to Roman rites:

Thus, in like manner, did the Romans, on their birthdays, offer flowers and fruit and wine, and burn incense to invisible spirits, whom they called the *genii*. (459)

Thus the original or ancient Confucian doctrine was sublime and metaphysically sound, (Barrow had obviously forgotten that he said that Confucius' metaphysics was unintelligible) but had become corrupted, as "was the purity of the Christian religion contaminated by the multitude of images that were invented in the monkish ages" (461). This was a direct attack against the Roman Catholicism. He believed that the corrupted state of Confucianism so much resembled that of the Roman Catholic Church that it was entirely incomprehensible that the Catholic missionaries should have accused the Chinese of superstition. He thought the veneration of the Virgin Mary and thousands of other saints was "more repugnant to reason" (462) than ancestral worship. It is obvious that Barrow was not targeting the Jesuits who interpreted the said worship as a social custom, but at their adversaries, the Dominicans and Franciscans. Nevertheless, he called the Chinese converted by the Jesuits "half Christians and half Pagans." (446) In other moments, Barrow forgot what he said and claimed that, were it not for the intervention of the Dominicans, the Jesuits "might have converted the whole nation, and Christianity would have become, in all probability, the prevailing religion, instead of that introduced from India." (449) Again and again, he deplored the Roman Catholic rites and their similarities with the Buddhist forms of worship. Both were, in his opinion, congenial to despotic countries.

Barrow tried very hard to present Chinese spiritual culture in a comparative perspective, although his description of Chinese social culture was less so. He characterized the Chinese as a "frowzy" people. From the emperor to the peasant, they rarely if ever changed their underwear, so that everybody was infested with vermin. According to him, the following scene was quite common:

The highest officers of state made no hesitation of calling their attendants in public to seek in their necks for those troublesome animals, which, when caught, they very composedly put between their teeth. (77)

He also did not like the fact that the Chinese did not carry handkerchiefs and blew their nose in pieces of paper. He also claimed that they spit “about the room, or against the walls like the French... They never make use of the bath, neither warm or cold...” (77) He also disliked Chinese architecture, claiming that in Yuanminyuan, the imperial summer palace designed by the Jesuits, a

great proportion of the buildings consists in mean cottages. The very dwelling of the Emperor and the great hall in which he gives audience, when divested of the gilding and gaudy colours with which they are dabbled, are little superior, and much less solid, than the barns of a substantial English farmer. Their apartments are as deficient in proportion, as their construction is void of every rule and principle which we are apt to consider as essential to architecture...

... In the different courts were several miserable attempts at sculpture, and some bronze figures, but all the objects were fanciful, distorted, and entirely out of nature... (124-5)

In his opinion, there was neither love nor respect in a Chinese family which is entirely “buried in silence”. (142) Consequently, a “Chinese youth of the higher class is inanimate, formal, and inactive, constantly endeavouring to assume the gravity of years.” (142) Filial piety was not a moral issue in China, but a precept, the tenor of which was to “labour for the father and the mother as long as they both shall live, to sell themselves into perpetual servitude for their support, if necessary, and to consider their life at their disposal.” (144)

As for women, it seems that they had nothing to do but to smoke: “Every female from the age of eight or nine years wears, as an appendage to her dress, a small silken purse or pocket to hold tobacco and a pipe, with the use of which many of them are not unacquainted at this tender age...” (143) When she grew older, she was sold “to the highest bidder.” (145) On the day of the marriage, she was packed into a sedan chair. “If, however, on opening the door of the chair, in which the lady is shut up, and of which the key has been sent before, he (the groom) should dislike his bargain (the bride), he can return her to her parents; in which case the articles are forfeited that constituted her price; and a sum of money... may be demanded, not exceeding, however, the value of these articles...” (145-6) And the men had other problems, he refuted the view of Mon-

tesquieu, whose theory on the impact of climate on human beings included the assumption that Chinese men, when unobserved, would not leave a woman unviolated, because the French philosopher believed that China had a hot climate which impacted “the vigour of natural propensities”;(147) and therefore the Chinese considered anybody who would not do that as “a prodigy of virtue”. In contrast, Barrow did not believe in the influence of climate because he knew that most of China was in the temperate zone. His theory was that

it is the effect of studiously pampering the appetite, nurturing vicious notions, considering women as entirely subservient to the pleasures of men; and in short, by fancying those pleasures in the head, rather than feeling them in the heart, that have led them to adopt a sentiment which does the nation so little credit. (147)

As a consequence, Chinese males seemed to like young men or boys. He described this with great sentiments of abhorrence:

The commission of this detestable and unnatural act is attended with so little sense of shame, or feeling of delicacy, that many of the first officers of state seemed to make no hesitation publicly avowing it. Each of these officers is constantly attended to by his pipe-bearer, who generally was a handsome boy from fourteen to eighteen years of age, and is always well dressed. In pointing out to our notice the boys of each other, they made use of signs and motions, the meaning of which was too obvious to be misinterpreted... (150)

In this regard, Barrow considered the Chinese to have sunk “many degrees below the brute.” He had a theory for this greatest violation of the laws of nature. He opined that “this unnatural crime prevails most in those countries where polygamy is allowed... The appetite for female intercourse soon becomes glutted by the facility of enjoyment...” (150-1) Obviously, he believed that if women were not easily available for sexual gratification, Chinese men would not turn to their own sex.

Since the family as an institution was not designed to promote kindness and affection between parents and children, or between the siblings themselves, the society was also not constructed to engender social interaction. Barrow seemed to have missed gentlemen’s clubs in China as they were found in London: “...they have no kind of friendly societies nor meetings to talk over the transactions and the news of the day.” (152) The reason was the lack of a free government in China. Even wine restaurants and tea houses, frequented by people of

lower classes, were rare. This lack of social communication was only redeemed by one fact, drunks could practically only be found in Canton when those Chinese employed by Europeans mingled with foreign seamen. The only pastime of the upper classes which Barrow seemed to be aware was the use of opium, because, at that time, it was too expensive for the commoners. He informed the readers that great “quantities of this intoxicating drug are smuggled into the country, notwithstanding all the precautions taken by the government to prevent the importation of it... Most of the country ships from Bengal carry opium to China; but that of Turkey sent from London in the China ships is preferred, and sells at near double the price of the other.” (153) According to Lord Macartney, the illegal contraband import of Indian opium amounted in 1792 to 2,500 chests with a value of £250,000.<sup>34</sup> He noticed a steady increase of the illegal opium trade and foresaw that problems would arise between the British Empire and China on account of this illegal trade. Barrow himself cited a proclamation by the governor of Canton:

Thus it is that foreigners by the means of a vile excrementitious substance derive from this empire the most solid profits and advantages; but that our countrymen should blindly pursue this destructive and ensnaring vice, even till death is the consequence, without being undeceived, is indeed a fact odious and deplorable in the highest degree. (153)

Neither Macartney nor Staunton made any moral judgment on the drug trade, whether legal or illegal. As for Barrow, he only ridiculed the governor of Canton who, despite his own proclamation, took “his daily dose of opium.” (153) Apparently, the governor was not better than the corrupt mandarins who, upon receiving a bribe, closed their eyes to the illegal import of opium. The bribe money was eventually spent on the purchase of opium for their own consumption.

Without further reflection on this question, Barrow went on to deplore other Chinese deficiencies in social matters, such as that the young lacked “assemblies for the purpose of dancing and exercising themselves in feats of activity... (and the lack of) fixed days of rest set apart for religious worship.” (153) Another moral deficiency of the Chinese was the lack of honour. Even though, most Chinese had engaging manners, but this was not the result of good breeding, but

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<sup>34</sup> J. L. Cranmer-Byng ed., *An Embassy to China. Being the journal kept by Lord Macartney during his embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien-lung, 1793-4* (London: Longman, 1962), p. 260.

of legislature. Hence the Chinese were “ceremonious without sincerity”. (177) In the same vein, “their warriors shew but few systems of bravery.” (178) In addition, the Chinese were the most timid people on earth. “The act of drawing a sword, or presenting a pistol, is sufficient to frighten a common Chinese into convulsions”. (178) The Chinese also lacked compassion. He described an accident on the water in which the passing ships did not help the drowning people, but were engaged in fishing for their belongings. A further proof of this was the infamous practice of infanticide. The cause of moral deficiency of the Chinese Barrow ascribed to the patriarchal system of government which treated its people as slaves. Slaves, of course,

cannot be dishonoured... (and) have no further ignominy or sense of shame to undergo.... A Chinese merchant (therefore) will cheat, where an opportunity offers the means, because he is considered to be incapable of acting honestly; a Chinese peasant will steal whenever he can do it without danger of being detected... and a Chinese prince, or prime minister, will extort the property of the subject, and apply it to his private use, whenever he thinks he can do it with impunity... the love of honour, the dread of shame, and a sense of justice, seem to the equally unfelt (by the Chinese). (179-80)

Up to now, Barrow was describing the Han Chinese. As for the Manchu, he had the following to say: “Those... who may think it better to be robbed openly than cheated civilly, will be apt to give the preference to the Tartar character.” (185-6) The following was Barrow’s conclusion of the general character of all Chinese:

The general character, however, of the nation is a strange compound of pride and meanness, of affected gravity and real frivolousness, refined civility and gross indelicacy. They have no proper sense of the obligations of truth. So little scrupulous indeed are they with regard to veracity, that they will assert and contradict without blushing, if it may best suit the purpose of the moment. (186-7)

The cause of this general character was China itself, because once the Chinese

emigrated to the Philippine Islands, Batavia, Pulo Pinang and other parts of our East Indian Settlement... they are not less remarkable for their honesty, than for their peaceable and industrious habits. To the Dutch in Batavia they are masons, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, shopkeepers, bankers and, in short, everything. Indolence and luxury are there arrived

to such a height that, without the assistance of the Chinese, the Dutch would literally be in danger of starving. (176-7)<sup>35</sup>

Within China itself, the only exception to the rule of depravity were the eight or ten Chinese merchants who were assigned by the government to engage in foreign trade. These “have always been known for their liberality and accuracy in their dealings with Europeans trading to Canton.” (180) Barrow did not explain how this exception came about.

Barrow fulfilled some of the conditions deemed desirable by Diderot. He visited China and knew some Chinese, and he was not a Jesuit. The image of China as presented by Catholic missionaries had been deconstructed. Together with the official report by George Staunton,<sup>36</sup> Barrow’s book became the alternative to Jesuit publications on China. His position was that it was better for the Chinese to become half Christians through the Jesuits than remain whole pagans. Moreover, the Chinese culture resembled Catholicism anyway. The belief of the early 18th century that the Chinese were superior in matters of practical morality was finally and irrevocably removed. The century was getting ready for the Opium Wars and gunboat diplomacy, through which the supremacy of European spiritual (i. e. both Christian sects) and material culture would soon be firmly established. From here we shall switch our attention to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) who made some interesting remarks on the Chinese. In a very concise way, these comments summed up the predominant public opinion on China and the Chinese in the second half of the 19th century.

Like most of his contemporaries, Nietzsche’s interest in China was peripheral, but he did have some knowledge about its culture. For instance, he was familiar with Laozi, comparing the language and concepts of *Daode Jing* to those of Sankhya in the *Antichrist* (KSA, 6-203-204). We also have on record that he ordered a copy of Lao-tse, *Tao-te-king, Der Weg zur Tugend* (Laozi, *Daode Jing, The Way to Virtue*), translated with commentary by Reinhold von Plaenckner. He had also ordered another book of the same translator, the Confucian classic,

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<sup>35</sup> Barrow continued his discourse as follows: “Yet the infamous government of that place, in the year 1741, caused to be massacred, in cold blood, many thousands of these harmless people, who offered no resistance...” (177).

<sup>36</sup> *An authentic account of an embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (London: Nicol, 1797).

*Ta-Hio. Die erhabene Wissenschaft (Daxue: The Superior Science)*.<sup>37</sup> There is also documentary evidence that he had read Joseph Kohler's *The Chinese Criminal Law: A Contribution to the Universal History of Criminal Law*,<sup>38</sup> which makes frequent references to *The Book of History* (Shujing), *The Rites* (Liji) and *The Rites of Zhou* (Zhouli). His knowledge was, of course, not limited to these books, especially because his mentor Schopenhauer was quite well read on China.

Nietzsche used the word 'China' in all possible derivations freely and frequently in his texts, seemingly without further reflection. This shows his familiarity with the subject matter and reflects what the educated European knew and felt about China at that time. Generally speaking, he used China and all words derived from it in two different ways: (1) as a geographical or national entity with little value judgement, and (2) as a symbol with many shades of valorised connotations. We shall analyse both usages and shall begin with the more or less positive traits of the Chinese. We were able to find two items. In 1884, in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse (Beyond Good and Evil)*, he cited the Chinese custom that the parents are glorified or shamed by the deeds of their children as an example of the "vormoralische Periode der Menschheit" (pre-moral period of human history) as opposed to the practice in Europe of today of judging an action by its motive (KSA, 5.50).

In describing Chinese customs, Nietzsche characterized the Chinese as an ancient race. Like an old man with one leg already in the grave, they were cunning, miserly, and cold (KSA, 11.56). For him, the European prototype of Chinese characteristics was Immanuel Kant. On several occasions and in various wordings, Nietzsche called Kant the Chinese man of Königsberg,<sup>39</sup> and his feeling for Kant was best expressed in the phrase: Kant is a scarecrow ("Kant ist eine Vogelscheuche", KSA, 11.263). In addition, both were associated by Nietzsche with senility.<sup>40</sup> However, the Chinese were for Nietzsche not only senile, but also cowardly; but then so were the Germans of the Reformation era

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<sup>37</sup> Translated by Reinhold von Plaenckner (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1875).

<sup>38</sup> The original German title reads: *Das chinesische Strafrecht. Ein Beitrag zur Universalgeschichte des Strafrechts* (Würzburg: Stahel, 1886). The book is still kept in the Nietzsche-Archiv in Weimar.

<sup>39</sup> For example "...der grosse Chinese von Königsberg..."(KSA, 5.144) or "...das Königs-berger Chinesenthum..." (KSA, 6.177)

<sup>40</sup> Cf. "Kants greisen- und chisenhafte Musik..." KSA, 10.646.

(KSA, 11.455)! They were just the opposite of “Übermensch” (KSA, 12.462) and could be considered as “reduced” (KSA, 11.72) or “castrated” (KSA, 6.367) human beings. In many ways, China served as the worst example of what Europe could become in the future (i.e. the 20th century). It was painted as a country where the capability to develop (KSA, 3.399) and reason (KSA, 9.452) had been lost. Repeatedly, Nietzsche emphasized that China was a country which had hardly changed in the last few thousand years. It was, therefore, still in the pre-moral stage, and it was also the home of mediocrity (“Vermittelmässigung”, KSA, 3.628), “Chinesery” (“Chineserei”, KSA, 3.628, it is probably equivalent to “oriental”), and slave mentality. The highest virtues were to submit absolutely and to serve unconditionally (“Unterordnung, Pietät”, KSA, 9.487; “sklavische Tugenden”, KSA, 11.45; “Bedienstetenseele”, KSA, 11.256). Thus calling somebody Chinese is meant to be an insult (hence the expression “Chinesery”). Alternately, the Chinese were mere “mechanical yea-sayers” and “marionettes” (KSA, 1.309) who repeated and did whatever the master wanted. They were really hardworking ants (KSA, 3.183) as opposed to individuals. If Europe developed as it was doing along the path of Christianity and democracy, then all it could establish was a kind of European “Chinesedom”, it would become a continent of mindless submissive castrates. Therefore, the last human would be a kind of Chinese.

Using arguments similar to those against Christianity, Nietzsche considered that Chinese civilization was wasting in a phase of “exhaustion of life” (KSA, 6.177). He said,

China is a country in which large-scale dissatisfaction and the capacity for change have become extinct centuries ago; and the socialists and state idolaters of Europe with their measures for making life better and safer might easily establish in Europe, too, Chinese conditions and a Chinese “happiness,” if only they could first extirpate the sicklier, tenderer, more feminine dissatisfaction and romanticism that at present are still superabundant here. (KSA, 3.399)

His typical and the most interesting remark is about a Chinese idiom is:

The Chinese have a proverb that mothers even teach children: *siao-sin* “make your heart small!” This is the characteristic fundamental propensity in late civilizations: I do not doubt that an ancient Greek would recognize in us Europeans of today, too, such self-diminution; this alone would suffice for us to “offend his taste.” (KSA, 5.220-221)

Nevertheless, Nietzsche thought that the Chinese “blood” could still contribute to European civilization because

they will bring with them the modes of life and thought suitable to industrious ants. Indeed, they might as a whole contribute to the blood of restless and fretful Europe something of Asiatic calm and contemplativeness and - what is probably needed most - Asiatic perseverance. (KSA, 3.185)

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The sarcastic comment is certainly not a compliment. In his final years when Nietzsche was entertaining the idea of writing the book, *The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*,<sup>42</sup> he produced a dozen outline drafts. One of the drafts, probably written down between 1885 and 1886 reads:

Critique of Indian and Chinese ways of thinking, as well as the Christian (as preparations for a nihilistic...) (KSA, 12.110).

Whether Nietzsche had abandoned the plan of analysing the Chinese way of thinking together with his book project of *The Will to Power*, we will never know. With all these fragmented, but nevertheless expressive statements of Nietzsche on China and the Chinese, one is tempted to confirm his sinophobia. However, a closer reading of his texts show that he did not hold China in any more contempt than he did other cultures. In his opinion, only because Europe had adopted the Jewish morality and perspective did it consider itself superior in culture and knowledge to the Arabic, Greek, Indian, and Chinese nations (KSA, 9.23); and Christianity was different from the Indian or Chinese religions only in its terminology. An Indian or a Chinese Christ would have expressed his messianic message through the philosophical concepts of Sankya or the Dao respectively (KSA, 13.164). Cultural development in Europe was not different than that in China or India in that moral values were raised to the supreme position (KSA, 12. 429). Confucianism facilitated the development of the herd mentality in China as did Christianity in Europe (KSA, 11.570). Therefore a critique of Chinese and Indian thought is as necessary as that of Christian morals (KSA, 12.109), because

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<sup>41</sup> The English translation was done by R. J. Hollingdale, *Daybreak* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 127.

<sup>42</sup> Nietzsche eventually abandoned the project. See Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 7.

all these systems had created a caste of the “Good and Just” to safeguard their respective moral values (KSA, 11.39). However, the Greeks did seem to excel over other nations in learning creatively from oriental peoples. (KSA, 1.804)

Nietzsche did not believe in the chronological improvement of quality.<sup>43</sup> A statement regarding the lack of cultural development of China in the last few thousand years was not necessarily a judgment concerning the inferiority of China. It was his expressed opinion that the development of superior human beings in ancient India, Egypt, and China was more pronounced than commonly assumed (KSA, 13.191). In any case, the European of the 19th century was in no way superior to or rather as low-born as his counterpart in China, because both have given up their individuality and adapted to their society (KSA, 11.516). Nevertheless, Christians, in Nietzsche’s opinion, were still easier to rule than non-Christians; and this had been the reason given by the Pope to the Chinese emperor for why China should be Christianised (KSA, 12.569). This was not the only time that Nietzsche evaluated Christianity lower than China.

If Nietzsche held any social group in less esteem than others, it would have been Christians. The Greeks seemed to be his favourite, and the Oriental peoples would be somewhere in the middle between these two poles. Nevertheless, Nietzsche’s description of China and its culture was illuminating in the sense that it reflected general opinions held by Europeans in the second half of the 19th century in Europe regarding China. He repeated them as given truths without further reflection. We can, of course, blame him for not being more critical of the common European concept of China at that time, but we have to admit that he was not particularly interested in China or any Oriental culture in particular. His focus was centred on Europe. If we put his remarks about Chinese culture in the historical context of the negative perception of China in the late 19th century, China is in a certain sense used merely as a synonym of “slave morality” for Nietzsche’s attacks on German idealism and Christianity.

The concept of China was becoming more complex in the 19th century. In the previous two phases, the European mental image of Chinese culture tended to be either nearly white (as with Leibniz and Voltaire) or quite black (as with Diderot and Herder). In the third stage, the interpretation of China became varied. For John Barrow, the spiritual aspects of Chinese culture were in one way or

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<sup>43</sup> Nietzsche opined, for example, that the cultural development during the Renaissance was superior to that of his own time. See KSA, 13.191.

other comparable to certain parts of its European counterpart. Even the infamous Chinese superstitions could be compared with the rites of Roman Catholicism. As social beings, of course, the Chinese were inferior. The cause was the restrictive and asocial nature of the Chinese political culture. Once they left China, they became model citizens, either under British or Dutch rule. Nietzsche took a different approach. The Chinese, the Indian, and the Judeo-Christian cultures were similar, as all three impose the morality of the herd upon all individuals. Chinese culture was by no means the worst. And it seems that quite a number of European intellectuals felt attracted to Chinese culture because of its non-religious nature: morality as a categorical imperative without involving revelation, providence, heaven, and hell. Nietzsche himself, of course, took exception to this. In spite of the last stages of European expansion, the infamous wars such as the Opium Wars, colonisation, and other forms of exploitation, the worldview had become diversified and many divergent perspectives became prevalent. Europeans also began to look for alternative models in other cultures, such as the Hindu. Schopenhauer's so-called Maya-philosophy became acceptable, especially in Great Britain. Certain aspects of the Chinese culture which were comparable to Hinduism benefited from this trend. Taoist philosophy became respectable. Then James Legge, the Scottish missionary turned Sinologue, began translating and publishing the Chinese Canon, and for the first time, the whole set became available in a European language. Although Legge himself insisted, until a few years before his death, on the supremacy of Christianity and considered Confucius as a minor philosopher, his translation made the Confucian canon accessible in a vernacular Western language. However, the real change came with another missionary who also became a Sinologue.

### **Richard Wilhelm, Karl Jaspers and the Future of Euro-Sinica**

Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930) was a missionary, but his Christian vision, deeply influenced by his mentor and father-in-law, Christoph Blumhardt, was neither militant; nor was he, like James Legge, associated in any way with the merchant-princes who had established their empire on opium trade. Wilhelm and Blumhardt both envisaged a united human religion and culture. It was a kind of extended German idealism or humanism shared in many respects by such illustrious persons such as Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Ideally, it saw humans as an entity, the division into nations and religious de-

nominations were considered arbitrary. Considering baptism as sectarian, Richard Wilhelm refused to baptize a single Chinese person during his missionary years in China. Besides personal conviction, the political background by this time was also different to Legge's. Even though Wilhelm was sent to the new German colony of Tsingtau (today's transcription Qingdao), the German Empire was short-lived.<sup>44</sup> The great European War and its disastrous results also influenced his perspectives on politics, history and culture. Thus we could at least distinguish two phases in Wilhelm's life, the colonial years and the post-colonial years. Here we are mostly concerned with his second phase, in which two factors refined his views: 1. as with Germany, China had, *de facto*, also lost the war;<sup>45</sup> and 2. the death of his mentor and father-in-law in 1919.<sup>46</sup> Most of his studies, apart from his translations, were written and published during this period. In addition, he spent several years as professor of European philosophy in Peking and came into closer contact with non-royalist Chinese intellectuals.

The major sources on Richard Wilhelm for this section are two books,<sup>47</sup> both of which have been translated into English.<sup>48</sup> In order to better understand Wilhelm's reception of Confucianism, we shall first describe Wilhelm's view of European culture. Incidentally, both factors contribute to his notion of a common human culture. He used two key terms to describe the essence and foundation of European culture since ancient Greece: power and mechanization. These two characteristics led to the development of a superior weapons technology on the one side and audacity of the philosophers on the other. Within this context, the Greek philosophy praised the titanic spirit which had wrung one secret after another from nature. Thus the Greek gained "the liberty of his soul in the face of

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<sup>44</sup> There are many facets of Richard Wilhelm's life which are still unknown. Salome Wilhelm's portrait of her husband (*Der geistige Mittler zwischen China und Europa*, 1956) is too partial to be objective. Lydia Gerber's book titled *Von Voskamps heidnischem Treiben und Wilhelms höherem China: Die Berichterstattung deutscher protestantischer Missionare aus dem deutschen Pachtgebiet Kautschou 1898-1914* has just appeared (Hamburg: Hamburger Sinologische Schriften, 2002). In addition, Ursula Ballin, a retired researcher of Academia Sinica, is preparing the first biography of Richard Wilhelm. Until this or a similar study is published, the spiritual development of Wilhelm will remain sketchy.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Lackner calls it "an alliance of losers", Lackner, p. 90.

<sup>46</sup> It seems that Wilhelm turned even more pro-Confucian after the death of Christoph Blumhardt.

<sup>47</sup> *Die Seele Chinas* (Berlin: Hobbing, 1926), and *Kung-Tse. Leben und Werk* (Stuttgart: Frommanns, 1925).

<sup>48</sup> *The Soul of China* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), and *Confucius and Confucianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931).

the entire world” which enhanced his confidence in his own powers and freed his individuality, while at the same time, the process caused “the fateful breach between mind and nature” in the breast of man.<sup>49</sup> In the sphere of religion, Jesus of Nazareth demanded “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and take harm in his soul?” Thus this emphasis of the soul “destroyed the entire cohesion of earthly and temporal manifestations of culture.”<sup>50</sup> Moreover, Jesus warned: “Whoso loves his father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me” and thus changed the fibre of the family. He also rendered the state insignificant by demanding “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s,” thus debasing the state to “the worthless Mammon”. According to Wilhelm, Jesus had also revolutionized the whole religious domain by dethroning the judging God of Justice who watched somewhere high in the universe by proclaiming: “Behold, the Kingdom of God is within you”. Thus Jesus “has created in man that inner attitude which alone is capable of giving him the ability to assume a sovereign position over the whole of external nature and culture ... Everything which in its deepest profundity is of value in the European spirit, is found to lie in the direction of this autonomous freedom of man who experiences divinity in himself.”<sup>51</sup> This sums up the quintessence of Western culture before the great European war. In the course of the 19th century, the machines of war and destruction had developed in leaps and bounds. Mechanical science excelled itself, and men became its slaves instead of mastering it. Thus “Europe tore its own flesh to pieces during the war.”<sup>52</sup> Consequently, autonomous freedom and morality collapsed, whereas the technology became increasingly developed. Richard Wilhelm hoped China would see the danger of the European example and not “sell herself body and soul to mechanical civilization” that was Europe. History, of course, has proved Richard Wilhelm wrong.

For him, Chinese culture never lost its bond with nature. He recognized two components of the Chinese culture, one is situated on the banks of the Yellow River, the other along the Yantse River, and both originated in Zhou culture whose quintessence can be found in *Yijing*. The most profound thought of the northern culture, i.e., Confucianism, was the harmony of all polar forces. It is the ruling principle of humanity and regulates all human relationships. Moreover,

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<sup>49</sup> Richard Wilhelm (R. W.), *The Soul of China*, p. 372.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 372.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 373.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 368.

everything is subject to the law of change. However, all transformations are channelled through order and harmony. This constitutes the human contribution, which must be guided by the accord between concept and reality. Together with heaven (the creative force in time) and earth (the receptacle in space), it constitutes the Chinese trinity and determines the course of the human world.<sup>53</sup> This, for Wilhelm, is the core of Confucianism.

In Wilhelm's view, Confucius was a reformer who salvaged what could be saved from ancient culture. He wrote that at the time of the *Shijing* the belief in the kind and almighty God was in decline. Wilhelm compared this period with the situation in ancient Israel during the times of political and economical changes.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, Confucius cleansed the religion of all superstitious elements and did away with the chthonic divinities. He preserved from the ancient culture those elements which lived up to reason and humanism.<sup>55</sup> Even the funeral rites were deprived of any religious overtones. In ancient times, it was believed that the dead could return as a kind of vampire and harm the remaining members of the family, and this could be prevented by certain sacrifices. Confucius dropped these practices; and funeral rites thus became a continuation of *xiao*, the filial piety. The prescribed mourning period of 27 months should be used to reflect upon the life of the deceased which then served as a mirror for the living. As far as Wilhelm was concerned, Confucius was a reformer who did not preserve the old, but created a new culture based on reasonable and humane elements of past periods.

Wilhelm also recognized that human beings were both more than animals and individuals, because they were imbued with the images or ideas of being. Deep in each person rests the unity of the individual and cosmic entities. While Daoism teaches the adepts to find and return to this cosmic entity, Confucianism goes a different way. From the consciousness of unity, one returns to one's individuality with a renewed sense of humanity. Consequently, one arrives at the principle of *shu*, which can serve as life's rule. Wilhelm translated this concept as the "consciousness of equality", thus emphasizing the common humanity. On other occasions, Wilhelm also used the Christian concept "Nächstenliebe", i.e., love for one's neighbour, as equivalent to *shu*. It is, therefore, small wonder that

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<sup>53</sup> C. f. R. W., *Kung-Tse*, p. 91.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p. 83.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p. 168.

Wilhelm argued against the consensus of missionaries that the Christian version, known also as the Golden Rule, is superior to the Confucian *shu*. He opined that the Golden Rule had both positive and negative form. Wilhelm gave an example of the positive - Christian - form which demands that one should do unto others what one wishes to be done unto oneself. If a missionary wished to convert heathens, he would imagine that if he were a pagan, he would wish to be converted at all costs. Consequently, he would impose himself on the pagans, pestering them day and night and painting before their eyes the horrors of hell in order to bring them to the path of grace. Thus he would prove himself to be a nuisance to his fellow beings.<sup>56</sup> This was not the only time that Wilhelm made fun of his fellow missionaries, and it seems that their missionary fervour unwittingly created comic situations.<sup>57</sup> Wilhelm found the negative - Confucian - form more practical and acceptable: do not do unto others what one does not wish to be done unto oneself. However, there is no rule which is valid at all times.

The translators of Wilhelm's book on Confucius and Confucianism, George H. Danton and Annina Periam Danton, gave the following description of Wilhelm:

He went to China as a missionary in 1899, but soon became one who imbibes Chinese culture, rather than one who seeks to superimpose Occidental ideals on the Orient. He was, as many conversations with him showed, an extremist in his attitude toward the Chinese ethos, and toward the impact of Western civilization on China, believing, to an extent rare even among the radically minded, in the right of the Chinese to intellectual, political, aesthetic, and social self-determination.<sup>58</sup>

These few lines confirm our description of Wilhelm. For him, China was equal to the West in every respect; he did not even have reservations in the matters of religion. His position is quite unique in the history of ideas in Germany and, I believe, also in Europe, surpassing even Voltaire or Leibniz. For Wilhelm, both cultures, the Chinese as well as the European, are equal, each being superior in a different area; thus they complement each other. The West excels in mechanical civilization and emphasizes individual liberty and achievement, while China leads in harmonizing culture and nature. In this aspect, Confucian-

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 94.

<sup>57</sup> As a matter of fact, Wilhelm devoted a whole chapter on missionaries in *Die Seele Chinas*.

<sup>58</sup> See "Translator's Preface", in: R. W., *Confucius and Confucianism*, p. iii.

ism is supported by Daoism which ensures that the former does not decline to superficiality and utilitarianism. Without rupture between humankind and the universe, the Chinese are well embedded in the higher organisms of family, state, and humanity. This ideal of harmony is built upon the conviction that order is the ultimate *raison d'être* of the cosmos and the society. In Wilhelm's opinion, the Chinese culture had not lost its innocence and the link with "the source of life".

Western civilization, which mechanized daily life, climaxed in the 19th century and proved irresistible. Wilhelm did not mean the military might, but the industrial products which make daily life simple and convenient. Who would still want to make fire the old way, by rubbing pieces of wood together? Therefore, wherever Western civilization went, the indigenous cultures disappeared. Mechanization meant industrialization and the development of capitalism, and they in turn brought along deracination of the population and emergence of the proletariat. Thus all differences in exterior appearances disappeared, the magnificent national attires were discarded and all proletarians wore the same ugly clothes everywhere. In addition to the aesthetic deterioration, the civilization of machines also produced weapons of mass destruction the result of which was the First World War which involved practically all countries in Europe. He did not foresee the Second World War and its aftermath, being only aware of his contemporary world in which Westernization had already become a global trend. Thus he lamented the Europeanization of the Chinese, as of other nations. They would imitate anything coming from the West, relinquishing not only their own national attire, but also their traditional manners and customs. For Wilhelm, the worst was that the Chinese even adopted American pragmatism and utilitarianism. Nevertheless, he proposed the development of the "humanity culture" and the establishment of the "human-land". Although this sounds very close to the Confucian ideal of *datong*, but Wilhelm envisioned an amalgamation of Chinese, representing Asia, and European culture. A representative of such a "human-land" should be a fully developed autonomous person who is equal to all challenges of the outside world, while he/she is also fully aware of one's inner tranquility and certainty, and is therefore strong enough to try to affect the outside world through integrity. In other words, such a person should recognize and try to influence the seeds in the evolutionary process without egotistical motives, i.e. practicing the Confucian *wuwei*. This envisioned "human-land" would be entirely non-sectarian and be the home of inhabitants of all countries and followers of all religions and their sects.

This amalgamation of Confucian ideals with Western humanism would be indeed an improvement on either Sinocentrism or Eurocentrism, because the new centre includes, as Leibniz would say, the two superior cultures on both ends of the world. However, the new vision is still sectarian in concrete terms. It is not yet human-land. In his study on the role models for humanity, the philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) came closer to the vision.<sup>59</sup> Of all human cultures and universal history, he identified four such models: Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, and Jesus.<sup>60</sup> To qualify as an exemplary human, one has to be an original thinker and has to hold sway beyond his own time and culture. Within this context, Mohammed was considered and rejected, because Jaspers thought his doctrine lacked originality and depth.<sup>61</sup> Karl Jaspers was thinking as an existential philosopher rather than in terms of cultural history. If he had included the founder of Islam, we would have a model of human-culture and human-land with five prophets. Nevertheless, Jaspers' choice of the four as role models of different backgrounds was quite an achievement. Socrates was not a problem, ever since the Renaissance the pagan Greece was accepted as a pre-Christian culture. Dante, for example, put the ancient Greeks, for example, in purgatory. However, every other orthodox Christian would at least have put Buddha as the founder of an idolatrous religion in hell. Confucius probably would be interned there too, because he was either perceived as an atheist or as a false prophet who led the Chinese away from God. But Jaspers recognized them both as exemplary humans. Moreover, he placed Jesus alongside them as another exemplary human, not as God or a part of the Trinity. In the Middle Ages, Jaspers would have been burned at the stake for blasphemy and the propagation of paganism. However, in the 20th century, he appears to be following the ideas of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) expressed in the drama *Nathan der Weise* and in the philosophical work *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (1780). Both went beyond ecumenism, and both went beyond religion. Jaspers de-mystified every one

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. Karl Jaspers, *Die maßgebenden Menschen. Sokrates, Buddha, Konfuzius, Jesus* (München: R. Piper & Co., 1964).

<sup>60</sup> Incidentally, Liang Gong in his recent book on Bible and European and American literature (*Shengjing yu oumei wenxue* [Beijing: Zhongjiao wenhua, 2000], p. 1) identified four different literatures as pillars of world of literature: Hebrew, Chinese, Hindi, and Greek. The four elements are the same as Jaspers'. Interestingly, Islam is also lacking.

<sup>61</sup> Of course, Mohammed was born much later than the so-called "Achszeit" (axial age), the time span when the four model personages were born.

of the four model personages and argued with success that none of the four considered himself to be God or to speak for God. This was one of Jaspers' conditions for an exemplary person.<sup>62</sup>

Jaspers compared and contrasted them as persons. Their first similarity is that each one of them lived in concrete time and space within a certain culture and tradition. With the exception of Buddha, the other three were all of common stock. Although three were married, none felt attachment to their families, but only to their followers. None of them was a typical prophet who communicated directly with God through visions, ecstasy, or hearing of God's voice. None of them claimed to have a mandate from God to spread his word, but they all felt filled by a missionary urge to preach or teach, to heal and to put a dysfunctional world in order again. They demanded radical changes, introduced new ways of thinking and living, but they did not think the transformation would be caused through continuous thinking and questioning, but should be carried out to fulfillment. All four wanted human beings to transform themselves. Socrates had wanted to bring about the change through meditation and the right life style, Confucius wanted to achieve life-time improvement through learning, and Jesus wished the metamorphosis to be realized through complete devotion to the will of God.

All four of them had a special relationship to suffering and death. Socrates died a painful, but serene death, neither enthusiastic nor fearful, dying quietly and undramatically. Exactly because of his plain death, his followers – especially Plato – were overwhelmed and recognized the greatness of their teacher. Jesus died a different death, cruel and undignified, and he abhorred it. Yet he accepted its inevitability as the will of God. Without this total submission, comparable to Abraham's, despite the terror of death, he would not have become Christ the resurrected savior. Both kinds of suffering and death inspired Europe. In the world of suffering, only activity could lead to betterment, so it seems, although not during the life time of the initiators. Socrates died an unsuccessful philosopher, and Jesus was a man who could find his place not amongst men, but only in God. The deaths of Confucius and Buddha were equally uninspiring, so it appears. Like Socrates, Confucius looked death straight in the eye so that it became meaningless, and like Jesus, though in an entirely different way, Buddha transcended death. In all four cases, it was overcome.

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<sup>62</sup> This may also be a reason that Jaspers decided not to include him in the group of four.

The attitude of the four towards life and the world was also exemplary. Socrates' way of finding the ulterior reality was through questioning to the point that no further question was possible. He sought partial knowledge, that which is knowable; and he accepted the limit of knowledge, that which is not knowable. He carried out his teaching without establishing a school or community. He himself was the institution, and he appealed to the reason of men, using dialectics of thinking and irony to teach, inspire, and convince. Buddha's goal was to leave the world of suffering and reach non-being or Nirvana by giving up all worldly activities and emotions. Without action, there would be no counteraction. Thus the law of causality would be made superfluous and the world would become immaterial. Buddha established communities of monks both to practice and to preach his doctrine: the abolition of the world. The followers, however, should not be impassioned or fanatic since there are both negative tenets which perpetuated the exterior world. Confucius emphasized education, which would restore order in the human world. Once the natural order of the world is regained, this became in harmony again with the cosmic order which is Dao. Usefulness and success in worldly affairs had no bearing in Dao. The restoration process could be effected through permanent education. Confucius established a school in order to supply the state with civil servants who would work towards the common goal. Confucius intended to create a new moral world in harmony with the cosmic order. Harmony meant avoiding extremes. Jesus preached the end of the world to save the world. Believing that the end of the world is in sight, the living would examine the deeds of their temporal lives according to eternal values. Thus the human ethos will follow the will of God. Preaching the repeated or permanent crisis was the way to achieve this goal. Naiveté, Passion, and ecstasy would be an asset and enhance the results. Moreover, Jesus was the only path to salvation. Buddha's way seemed also to be the only one. However, he was not preaching salvation, but rather Nirvana, and the claim of absoluteness seemed to be less absolute. The proposal of permanent self-education in order to approach cosmic harmony seemed even less absolute. Only Socrates did not show a path, only an obligation to truth. Of course, all four went beyond the world of appearances and appealed to invisible higher values. Moreover, none of them wanted to be founder of a religion. Jaspers claimed that the sentence, that he was the path, the truth, and the life was attributed to Jesus after his death. All four had acquired mythical dimensions in the course of time, and three were worshipped as divinities or God. Jaspers believed that each one of them incorporates a proto-

type of human situation and the possibility of human experience. In short, they represent humanity, each in a different way.

We have come a long way. Our journey began with the Jesuits who went to China to proselytise and discovered a culture not unequal to that of Europe. As they delved into the language and the traditions of the Chinese, they rejected the religious tenets of three teachings of China (i.e., Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism) and considered the moral aspects to be compatible with the Christian religion. Thus the Jesuit accommodation began. When the missionaries sponsored by the French king entered China, they brought with them the theory of symbolism or figurism with them. When they studied the Chinese tradition, they thought they had discovered remnants of a former monotheistic teaching as their colleagues in Europe believed in regard to Egyptian culture. It coincided with Leibniz's development of binary arithmetic. This won his support for the China Mission of the Jesuits. Moreover, both the accommodation of the Mission and the tolerant attitude of Emperor Kangxi towards all religions in China met with Leibniz approval. He wished Europe to emulate the example in China, although he did not give up the conviction that Christianity was the only true religion. However, his views on this had a very limited circulation and had therefore little impact on his contemporaries. His pupil, Christian Wolf, propagated the practical morality of Confucius more openly; consequently incurring the wrath of pietists, who eventually persuaded the Prussian king to banish Wolf. This episode ended the rapprochement between the German philosophers and Confucian China as presented by the Jesuits. Both Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottfried Herder did not value the Chinese and their culture very highly, and G. W. F. Hegel treated the subject with contempt. Incidentally, all these three philosophers were closely associated with pietism at least for a considerable period during their lives, and their eschatology is basically Christian. In France, the impact of the Jesuit interpretation of China followed a different path. The philosopher Nicole Malebranche (1638-1715), for whom no knowledge was possible without God, refuted the possibility of morality without divine revelation at the beginning of the 18th century. However, Voltaire relied on the reports of the Jesuits on China to create an alternative to French Absolutism and to establish a social order based on reason. The Physiocrats did likewise and propagated an enlightened society with an economy based on agriculture. However, the voices against the idealization of China by the Jesuits were also very strong. Both Montesquieu and Rousseau used China as a prototype of a corrupt society.

Diderot felt that Europe was humiliated by the idealization of China. The publications which resulted from Lord Macartney's embassy constituted a watershed of change. These first-hand and, above all, Protestant<sup>63</sup> reports superseded the reports of the Jesuits. However, even the Englishman Barrow sided with the Jesuits to condemn the more orthodox Dominican order and Rome. His position was also different from that of the German philosophers who discredited the Chinese and their culture on religious grounds. He took a secular perspective and blamed the corrupted state of China on its political culture: the Chinese were treated as slaves and therefore had no honour. This perspective was in addition to the perceived Chinese immorality. The Protestant missionaries, who arrived in Chinese scene at the beginning of the 19th century, continued on this line. James Legge, a missionary who became the first European sinologue who really mastered the Chinese language, and who translated the complete canon of Confucianism, considered the moral teachings of Confucius to be automatically inferior because the Christian teaching had to be superior. It was only in the last years of his life that he conceded that Confucianism and Christianity could enrich each other. For the Chinese culture to be regarded as equal to the European culture, we have to wait until the 20th century. Richard Wilhelm, the German missionary who also had become a Sinologue and a prolific translator of Chinese classical literature, did regard both cultures to be complementary to each other. Karl Jaspers took the global perspective and described Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, and Jesus as prototypes of humanity. Each was great and each represented different aspects of humankind. In my opinion, this could be the foundation of a human-culture, because Jaspers, deliberately or otherwise, elided the question of religion. I do not consider Confucianism or "ru-jia" a religion, because a religion needs a religious hierarchy, will never leave God undefined, and seeks salvation for its followers. This lack of a religious foundation lends Confucianism more flexibility to associate itself with other religions, if it is not denounced as atheistic. It co-existed with Buddhism in East Asia for over a millennium. Rightly or wrongly, Confucius was called the Chinese Socrates for hundreds of years, which demonstrates that the two are not incompatible. The revealed religions seem to pose a larger problem, because each one considers itself to be the only true one. The German writer and thinker, Gotthold Ephraim Less-

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<sup>63</sup> A common aspect is their view that Catholic and Buddhist rites were similar.

ing, created a parable of the rings to illustrate this problem.<sup>64</sup> History knows worse instances than the parable and the drama *Nathan der Weise* (the parable is narrated by Nathan, the protagonist of the play set during a crusade), such as the Holocaust, jihads, and the wars in former Yugoslavia. It is questionable if the dilemma could be solved by merely considering Jesus a Jew, as described by Jaspers, who lived according to the Old Testament and was made the founder of Christianity after his death by his followers. In our present world, conciliation between Jews and Christians seems to be conceivable. Thus Jaspers' model seems to include three fourths of humanity. I hope that a way can be found to reconcile the Christian and Islamic theologies. Proposals have been made to promote the symbolism of Abraham who is revered by all three monotheistic religions. Perhaps the magical power of all the rings of the three brothers (i.e, the three religions) created by Lessing could be restored one day. Perhaps they would not need the power of the ring to love and respect each other in some (foreseeable?) future. In any case, Jaspers showed us a model where most different cultures can co-exist without permanently opposing each other. Even though tolerance is still an unattained ideal, it is now time to sow the seeds for mutual acceptance and mutual respect.

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<sup>64</sup> In the parable, a father has a precious ring with magical powers which he should only give to his heir. As he has three sons whom he loves equally, he did not want to favour a special one. Therefore he has two other rings made and gives one to each of his sons. With this act, the special power of the ring to make the wearer loved by all, seems to be lost, and the three brothers are now engaged in perpetual quarrel. They go to a judge who says there is no true heir as long as each one loves only himself and no one is loved by the others.