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Thomas Fröhlich: *Tang Junyi: Confucian Philosophy and the Challenge of Modernity*. Leiden: Brill, 2018, 324 pp., ISBN 978-90-04-33014-6.

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There are books that require much time for reading. In contrast to most of the research published in our fast-paced world of academia, there are studies that demand their reader's attention, pondering, reflection, and perhaps even meditation. Using Nietzsche's terms, those texts and their authors are "friends of *lento*".[1] The book under review here – *Tang Junyi: Confucian Philosophy and the Challenge of Modernity* by Thomas Fröhlich – is such a book: a masterpiece slowly written (almost fifteen years) that invites us "to go aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow."

The book is primarily concerned with Tang Junyi 唐君毖 (1909–1978), a Hong Kong-based Chinese philosopher, often considered as a key representative of New Confucianism. Despite the title, the reader expecting an intellectual biography of the man will be unmistakably wrong. What Thomas Fröhlich has produced with this text assembling years of research and several articles previously published here and there in English and German, is a genuine work on political philosophy and an acute entry into the intellectual history of Modern China, and perhaps a reflection on political modernity as a whole. First, Tang is not the only protagonist studied; Fröhlich discusses in depth and sometimes at length some elements of other modern Chinese contemporary thinkers and activists, notably Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (1887–1969), Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1903–1982) and Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909–1995).[2] In so doing, he takes seriously the claims of Confucianism to global significance and engages with the political philosophies of those authors as constitutive sources of knowledge and debates. Furthermore, the study elaborates with much precision the intellectual and historical conditions under which they produced their works. Thomas Fröhlich does so without falling into the trap of arbitrating between their Confucian background and supposed Western philosophical influences. In fact, in my opinion, Fröhlich

1 Nietzsche 1997: 5.

2 In the early chapters of the book, Fröhlich gives notably much attention to the 1958 famous *Declaration to the World for Chinese Culture* co-signed by the four men. I would, however, tend to say that he sometimes considers this text too much as a genuine and sole production of Tang, without considering the input others may had had in it.

fulfills his self-set objective of challenging "the notion that modern Confucianism can be comprehended as the mere product of specific influence from Western or Chinese sources" (p. 36).

As he clearly states in his preface, Fröhlich endeavors "to do more than think about" Tang; he wishes to "think *with* Tang and, consequently, at times go beyond him" (p. vii). At some point, one could even wonder whether Fröhlich does not also think *against* Tang, notably when he exposes the omissions and problems within Tang's argumentation in order to bring the debate to a higher level. The author also rejects the attempt to reconstruct Tang's philosophy "as a closed system free from inner contradiction" (p. vii) and does not contribute to what Quentin Skinner had coined the "mythology of coherence" (p. 33). Tang's philosophy is not simply exposed and justified; it is questioned at its very core, and in its sometimes problematic articulations. Fröhlich clearly interrogates the thinker under examination, and ponders on the ramifications of his propositions on issues that he disregarded more or less consciously, or even on problems he did not have in mind. The concluding chapter on Tang's view on the totalitarian challenge, and notably the problem raised by the absence of discussion about the Holocaust and the Gulag in contemporary Chinese political philosophy reaches here an apogee. Fröhlich takes Tang Junyi seriously and handles his works as if they were parts of the classical canon of political philosophy.

As a matter of fact, and although the author does not make reference to cross-cultural or comparative political theory, as for instance understood by Fred Dallmayr[3] or more recently by Leigh Jenco in her attempt to engage seriously and creatively Chinese thought,[4] *Tang Junyi* is clearly a successful attempt to introduce New Confucian philosophers, in particular Tang, as global thinkers of modernity that ought to be read and discussed in a general conversation with more conventional western political philosophers.[5] After reading this study, and notably the dialogues instigated between Tang and Euro-American political thinkers – mostly German philosophers though – it leaves no doubt that Tang's *oeuvre* ought to be regarded as an essential part of the corpus of texts people doing political theory should have read. In this regard, I personally found illuminating the multiple parallels Fröhlich draws between Tang and Max Weber. The intersections and disparities he finds between them, hint toward a global revaluation of this exiled thinker of modernity.

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3 Dallmayr 2004: 249–257.

4 Jenco 2015.

5 It seems to me that this conversation has so far been very specifically oriented toward metaphysical issues. The abundant academic literature on "intellectual intuition" and the dialogue between Kant and Mou Zongsan is symptomatic of this.

Tang's ideas on religions and religiosity within modernity, as well as his manner of envisioning a form of ethical pluralism in democratic societies, transcend indeed the Confucian canvas on which they were formulated, and could be of interest for any political thinker questioning the place of religion in modern societies.

Fröhlich succeeds in the goal of engaging with modern Chinese philosophers, and bringing with seriousness and respect their arguments into a global discussion without falling into a decontextualized comparative philosophical approach; indeed he takes much time to contextualize the historical and social standpoints from which those philosophers took their stand, as well as the conceptual history of the vocabulary they deployed. However, the author has obviously another objective; this book embarks on the endeavor of saving Tang Junyi from his readers and commentators. As mentioned above, Tang has often been considered as a key actor of the New Confucian movement, a dynamic that led many of his readers to locate or even confine him within the analytical scope of Confucianism. Fröhlich clearly points it out: Tang has often been read as a proponent of Confucianism. As a consequence, many commentators have been seeing in his works a form of Confucian apologetics, without really taking the measure of his critical assessment of Confucian thought and its failure in modern Chinese society. But if read carefully, as Fröhlich does, it appears that Tang's works published in the 1950s clearly "attempted to move beyond Neo-Confucianism" (p. 46). On many elements, Tang's philosophy turned its back on classical Confucianism; here are several examples: Against the stereotype of the traditionalist Confucian thinker that would bring society to harmony thanks to moral cultivation and the transformative work of sage and saints, Tang conceptualized inner sagehood as a fleeting moment of moral intuition, a situation that implies that "an enduring, morally perfect human community cannot be attained and political reality cannot be turned into an earthly paradise" (p. 225). For him, "any hope that sages can or will intervene in historical reality is [...] futile" (p. 136). In fact, Tang relieved "politics from claims to a higher moral truth" (p. 236). Furthermore, Fröhlich clearly shows that Tang was "aware of the ideological dangers lurking around an apologetic approach to Confucianism under modern conditions" (p. 57). Notwithstanding the commonplaces of Confucian political tradition, Tang clearly conceived a separation between the spheres of politics and ethics. Aside from his faith in the original nature of humans being good, he also acknowledged the innate lust for power that motivates men in politics. "In abandoning the political tradition of Confucianism and its notions of benevolent rule by the superior individuals, Tang [...] conceptualized political

power in a way that [...] was never done in China's traditional political philosophies" (p. 213). He also had "no intention of establishing rigid moral standards for self-cultivation" (p. 149). He is not even defending a 'Chinese' culture clearly identified in Confucianism, against the West. In the end, with this portrait given by Fröhlich, Tang does not appear like a common traditionalist Confucian; there is much more complexity and subtlety in his defense of Confucianism than what has been said of him so far.

As already hinted, it should also be mentioned that Thomas Fröhlich takes in this book a very special interest in Tang Junyi's political philosophy – a topic hardly explored by previous studies except perhaps by Steven Angle and Thomas Metzger.[6] However, Fröhlich delves into texts ignored by the above mention researchers, which enables him to give a more accurate evaluation of Tang's philosophy and to contradict them on several key points. The not so plentiful Chinese research on the topic is also discussed thoroughly. What is redeeming in Fröhlich's work is that it takes Tang Junyi away from a strand of scholars who only read Tang as a thinker versed in metaphysical consideration. While focusing on the second part of Tang's life and work (1940s–1960s) – a period in which he didn't simply reflect on Chinese Culture as Umberto Bresciani implied[7] – he sides with Lee Ming-huei in rejecting the common opinion "that modern Confucian philosophers systematically confounded politics and ethics, as well as the subjective will and objective social relations" (p. 55). He furthermore clearly points at the fact that Tang Junyi should not be reduced to the supposed synthesis of nine spheres proposed in *The Existence of Life and World of the Spirit* (*Shengming cunzai yu xinling jingjie* 生命存在與心靈境界) written in 1977.

It would be impossible to summarize here all the elements put forward in the 12 chapters of this book. Indeed, despite its not being too long (roughly 300 pages), it should be said that it is a *very dense* book. Every page is filled with thoughtful details on Tang's texts and life. With every new paragraph, Fröhlich pushes the reflection further and engages with a vast literature written in Chinese, English, German and French. As stated above, this book requires a slow reading – Fröhlich's complex, sometimes too complex, prose makes it compulsory. Perhaps one could even complain that this study may be difficult to go through for someone not already a little familiarized with the debates concerning the Chinese experience of modernity and to some extent New Confucianism. A solid understanding of philosophy is also required, since Thomas Fröhlich discusses in depth Tang's argument and reasoning in

6 Notably Angle 2012; and several chapters of Metzger 2005.

7 Bresciani 2001: 308–309.

dialogues with important philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Nietzsche or Rousseau.[8] Also, despite the fact that he often restates his directing lines and his thesis – like when he repeatedly insists on the importance of Tang's exilic experience, his understanding of *liang zhi* and of sagehood as fleeting moments, or globally on what Fröhlich appropriately calls Tang Junyi's civil theology – he nevertheless does not linger on the numerous concepts, theories and judgments he agglomerated in the development of his arguments, forcing the reader to be very careful not to forget anything that may impede his understanding of later parts of the study.

In his preface, Fröhlich implies that the chapters could be read more or less discontinuously, and that some texts would even be of lesser interest for people not looking for a presentation of the political and historical context. One must agree with the author on the fact that some passages are more intellectual history oriented, while others lean toward political philosophy. However, there is nonetheless a clear movement in the way Fröhlich deploys Tang's philosophy; first it sets the problematic, then puts forward Tang's civil theology as an entry framework, and finally addresses Tang's political reflection.

After setting the scope of his study and presenting the challenge faced by Tang (chapter 1), the author ponders the main critical issues in research on Modern Confucianism (chapter 2). In this chapter, he also presents a brief overview of what has been written on Tang Junyi so far, a move that already gives him a possibility to specify his method of study and the points generally omitted in the research concerning Modern Confucianism. In a chapter 3, very rich in historic details, Fröhlich concludes his introductory chapters by reproblematizing the common perspectives on Tang Junyi's thought.

With chapter 4, Fröhlich really starts dwelling in the matter at hands by inquiring into the challenges and contexts in which Tang produced his works in political philosophy: exile. According to him, Tang was more than an exiled thinker, he was a philosopher of exile. "Tang conceptualized the exilic experience as a sort of prism through which one could not only grasp the nature of modernity, but also conceive of ways to cope with it" (p. 3). Chapters 5 and 6 then present Tang's civil theology and his moral philosophy. This part of the book is not only crucial because it expands on key loci of Tang's philosophy such as his appropriation and uses of the notion of *liang zhi* 良知 in contrast to earlier thinkers such as Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) or his understanding of ethical pluralism, but also because, as convincingly shown, they set the framework that made possible his philosophical undertaking. After all, Tang's

8 The text is always given in an English translation, but Thomas Fröhlich reproduced when needed the German or French wording used.

"political thinking starts from strong religious-metaphysical assumptions about the nature of man" (p. 215). I personally found chapter 6 very interesting because Fröhlich's reading of Tang invites us to call into question "a common assumption in research on Confucianism which posits that self-cultivation is quintessentially guided by *moral* concerns" (p. 150).[9] It is also in this chapter that the author opens a line of questioning about the problematic omission of psychoanalysis in contemporary Confucian philosophy and the challenge set by Freud to self-cultivation: "How can the ego authenticate his or her self-cultivating practices and distinguish them from the super-ego's oppressive rule?" (p. 151) – a question that appears to be often forgotten by the contemporary apologists of Confucian philosophy or self-cultivation practices.

Chapter 7 begins the last part of the book, which is properly dedicated to Tang Junyi's political philosophy and its theoretical consequences. First, Fröhlich shows how "profoundly Tang's thought differs from common [...] interpretations of Confucianism and its idea of man" (p. vii), notably by insisting on the importance accorded to the problem of lust or will for power, something that Tang considered "intrinsically related to the formation of moral subjectivity" (p. 178). Chapters 8 and 9 consequently question Tang Junyi's understanding and discussions of Statehood, and of what the place of Confucianism in a Chinese democracy yet to be realized could be. The very short chapter 10 continues with what a Civil Religion on a Confucian Basis could be for China. The last two chapters are finally dedicated to what Tang, probably improperly, called his "Philosophy of History" and to the problem of totalitarian regimes.

This very last chapter clearly goes *beyond* Tang. And its conclusion entailing the fact that "the reflection on the Holocaust sobers optimistic outlooks on modernity" (p. 286) such as the one put forward by Tang, sets a real challenge to contemporary Confucian political philosophy. Tang's – or other Chinese philosophers' – omission of the Holocaust cannot be justified by historical contextualization. If no Confucian philosophy can grasp the Holocaust and the Gulag as distinctive features of modernity as suggested by Zygmunt Bauman in his book *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), there is perhaps a serious challenge to tackle in order to establish a Confucian political philosophy of modernity as globally valid. In my opinion, by raising this aporia, Fröhlich takes very seriously the possibility of a Confucian philosophy of modernity, and he calls for substantive answer from the Confucian side. Indeed, the book's last pages establishing a connection between Tang and the Arendt from *Eichmann in Jerusalem* on the problem of the "moral responsibility for resisting socialization" appears a faint solution, if not a consolation prize.

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9 This is a point on which Fröhlich strongly disagrees with Metzger's understanding of Tang.

Amidst the dialogues Thomas Fröhlich has set between Tang and other philosophers, be they Western or Chinese, the final portrait given to us is the one of a man in "delicate balance between skeptical realism and critical idealism" (p. 205). The author succeeds in giving us a profound and well-documented presentation of this great thinker of modernity. Simultaneously, he really engages in a philosophical conversation with Tang Junyi, making this work more than a descriptive sinological study; it becomes a valuable work in philosophy. It is a book whose extensive remarks and developments will require careful and *lento* readers – a book on intellectual history as it should be written.

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Im Jahr 1970 reiste Michel Foucault auf die Einladung von Watanabe Moriaki, Professor für Französische Literatur und Übersetzer von Foucaults Schriften, nach Japan, um mehrere Vorträge an japanischen Universitäten zu halten.[1] Die Asahi Shinbun, die von der durch die französische Regierung geförderten Reise berichtete, konstatierte, dass Foucaults Bücher in Frankreich wie „geschnitten Brot" verkauft würden; damit sei er der erfolgreichste philosophische Bestseller seit Sartre. Allerdings hätten die Verantwortlichen schon ein bisschen die Befürchtung gehabt, dass Foucaults energisches Auftreten und gaudihafter Habitus – er trug eine getönte Sonnenbrille – eher an einen Sektenführer (als an einen Philosophen) erinnere, und man nicht wisse, was denn für ein Publikum angezogen würde.[2] Vier Jahre nach Sartres Japanbesuch 1966 kam so ein neuer Typ eines französischen Intellektuellen nach Japan, dessen Habitus sich kaum mehr von Sartre hätte unterscheiden können.

Simone Müllers Buch über die Diskursgeschichte des Intellektuellenbegriffs in Japan ist auf die Person und das Wirken Jean-Paul Sartres als „engagierter Intellektueller" zugeschnitten, genauer, auf Sartres Vortragsreihe „*Plädoyer für die Intellektuellen*", gehalten auf seiner Japanreise 1966. Dort rief Sartre seine japanischen Kollegen dazu auf, ihre eigene „Zerrissenheit" zwischen ihrem Denken und der Realität der „benachteiligten Klassen" zu überwinden und sich politisch zu engagieren. Nur so sei der Intellektuelle ein „wahrer Intellektueller" (*vrai intellectuell*) (4). Nun interessiert Müller eben, ob die japanischen Intellektuellen solche „engagierten Intellektuellen" im Sartreschen Sinne waren, oder erst in dem Moment der Sartre-Rezeption wurden, da „[...] mit Sartre [...] nach 1945 mit neuer Kraft der Prototyp des modernen, französischen, politisch engagierten Intellektuellen auf die Bühne [tritt], der mittels universalistisch-humanistischer Grundwerte [...] auf allen Fronten [...] kämpft". Denn „Sartre gilt vielen als *der* [sic] Intellektuelle des 20 Jhds." (80). Das Problem ist nun, dass Müller diese Fragen schließlich sehr knapp mit „nein" beantworten muss. So kann Müller keinen großen Einfluss Sartres im Literaturbetrieb, nach Bourdieu das „literarische

1 Foucault 1999: 115.
2 Asahi Jaanaru (12.10.1970): 7.

Feld", der späten 1960er Jahre feststellen (553). Auch im „politisch-intellektuellen Feld", in dem Sartre noch am ehesten rezipiert wurde, sinkt der gesellschaftspolitische Einfluss der Neuen Linken, und Strukturalismus und Poststrukturalismus („Foucault und Derrida") ersetzen den humanistischen Universalismus Sartres schnell (556, 557). Übrig bleibt die Bemerkung, dass dennoch „Sartres Plaidoyer [sic]" die „einzige selbst-referenzielle Debatte über die Aufgabe und Funktion des Intellektuellen zwischen 1920 und 1970" war, die „erstens durch ein Referat und zweitens durch einen Ausländer ausgelöst wird" (555).

Hier wird also Müllers Interesse und die explizite Fragestellung „inwiefern Japan über Intellektuelle und Gesellschaftskritiker verfügt" und welche Rolle „die Literatur für die Anleitung zum intellektuellen Handeln" (3) spielte, zugeschnitten auf die Ankunft Sartres in Japan. Die Analyse des „Intellektuellendiskurses" (*chishikijin ron*) zwischen 1920 und 1966 läuft damit, auch in der Operationalisierung, teleologisch auf Sartres Intellektuellenbegriff zu.

Diese ungelöste Spannung zwischen Untersuchungsobjekt und Fragestellung schmälert jedoch den grundsätzlichen Beitrag nicht, den Müller mit ihrer umfangreichen Quellenarbeit für ideengeschichtliche Untersuchungen geleistet hat wie ein Blick in das 67 Seiten lange Literaturverzeichnis zeigt. Abgearbeitet werden die Quellen, die aufgrund ihrer Relevanz für die jeweiligen Theoriedebatten ausgewählt wurden, in einem Hauptteil von acht Kapiteln. Kapitel zwei und drei beschäftigen sich mit dem Begriff „Intellektueller" in seinen nicht-japanischen und japanischen Varianten, Kapitel vier mit der „Vorgeschichte" des Intellektuellen in der Meiji-Zeit. Zentral für die Untersuchung ist nun die Analyse des Intellektuellenbegriffs in Kapiteln fünf bis acht, wobei mit drei Kapiteln die Vorkriegszeit stärker gewichtet ist. Kapitel neun bietet nun einen, mit elf Seiten sehr kurzen, Ausblick auf den Intellektuellendiskurs nach 1968. Kapitel zehn fasst schließlich ausführlich die Ergebnisse zusammen.

In Kapitel zwei fasst Müller den „russischen, marxistischen und französischen" Intellektuellenbegriff zusammen. Die Analyse des russischen Diskurses konzentriert sich v.a. auf Nikolai Tschernyschewski und Iwan Sergejewitsch Turgenjew, die beide den „Intellektuellen" als „Nihilisten und überflüssigen Menschen" verstanden hatten (44–46). Zudem stellt Müller fest, dass Marx zwar keinen eigentlichen Begriff des Intellektuellen beanspruchte (48), aber dennoch die positive Rolle von „Geistesarbeitern" in einer revolutionären Bewegung hervorhob (52). Auch bei Gramsci sei die Intelligenz als „organischer Verbündeter im Kampf um politische Hegemonie" verstanden worden (51), so dass erst bei Kautsky und Zetkin ein eher negatives Bild der Intellektuellen als „Berufsstand", der sich der proletarischen Bewegung unterzuordnen habe, entstand (58). Das Urteil der Autorin, dass Intellektuelle in den „marxistischen Theorien grundsätzlich negativ beurteilt" wurden (62), ist allerdings undifferenziert. Ganz anders, so Müller, jedoch der „französische

Intellektuellenbegriff, der weit stolzer daherkommt und dezidiert für universale Werte von Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit eintritt" (63) und seit der Dreyfuss-Affäre an Schwung gewann, um schließlich in den 1930er Jahren intellektuelle Debatten in das politische Zentrum der französischen Gesellschaft zu rücken (70). In der Nachkriegszeit entsteht, ebenfalls in Frankreich, der literarische Intellektuelle, vor allem, da er als „Akademiker für politische Aktionen ungeeignet" war (87).

Die Auseinandersetzung mit Maruyama Masao zu Beginn des dritten Kapitels verwundert jedoch etwas. So hätte Maruyamas Aufsatz „*Kindai Nihon no chishikijin*" (*Die japanischen Intellektuellen*) eigentlich in der Einleitung besprochen werden müssen, hat Maruyama doch ein ähnliches Ziel wie Müller, nämlich eine Genealogie des Begriffs „*chishikijin*" (Intellektueller) zu erarbeiten. In Absetzung zu Maruyama, bei dem Müller „gewisse begriffliche Ungenauigkeiten" sieht, hat nun die Autorin in ihrer Analyse sieben Begriffe von „Intellektueller" gefunden, von denen Maruyama aber nur vier deckungsgleich analysiert. Zudem komme das Wort „*interi*" nicht schon in der Taishō-Zeit auf, sondern erst in der Shōwa-Zeit. Warum Müller den Text Maruyama nicht auswertet, sondern aufgrund von oberflächlichen Divergenzen einfach *ad acta* legt, und zum Schluss dann doch als einen „der bis heute gehaltvollsten historischen Überblicke über die Begriffsgeschichte des modernen Intellektuellen in Japan" (561) lobt, bleibt unklar. Im zweiten Teil des Abschnittes stellt Müller mehrere japanische Begriffe vor, die alle die Begrifflichkeit von Intellektueller, Intelligenz oder intellektuelle Klasse transportieren. Dabei stellt sie starke begriffliche Absetzungsversuche des marxistischen Diskurses (intellektuelle Klasse – *chishiki kaikyū*) von nicht marxistischen Begriffen, wie Intellektueller (*chishikijin*), fest (103). Interessant ist zudem die Einführung des Begriffs „*bunkajin*" (Kulturmensch), der in den 1930er Jahren analog zum NS-Begriff „Kulturträger" benutzt wurde, um dann „schlagartig" in der Nachkriegszeit seine Semantik zu ändern (111, 112). Müller geht dem leider nicht weiter nach.

In der Meiji-Zeit (Kapitel vier) gab es zunächst keinen dezidierten Intellektuellenbegriff, dennoch gebildete und sozial engagierte Intellektuelle. Müller beschreibt nun die Bildung eines „autonomen intellektuellen Feldes" seit Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts, vor allem in der Auseinandersetzung mit einem zunehmend antiliberalen Staat (118–122), wobei in Japan, im Unterschied zu „Europa", vor allem im Literaturbetrieb ein „Rückzug aus sozialen Angelegenheiten" stattfand (129). Erst in der Taishō- und Shōwa-Zeit entsteht im Spannungsfeld der Moderne ein Intellektuellendiskurs, der in Japan „in erster Linie ein linker Diskurs" war (150).

Zum eigentlichen Hauptteil kommend setzt sich Müller in Kapitel fünf vor allem mit Arishima Takeo auseinander, dessen „*Manifest*" (*Sengen hitotsu*) von 1922 als Ausgangspunkt der Intellektuellendebatte gilt (157). Kurzgefasst drehte sich die „Klassenkunstdebatte" um die Frage, in welchem Verhältnis der

intellektuelle Künstler zum Proletariat zu stehen hat. Arishima ist laut Müller der „Grundtypus des engagierten Intellektuellen", da er „den Widerspruch zwischen Kunst und Praxis, Denken und realem Leben" (185) auf die Situation des Intellektuellen übertrug, und so der Literatur nur eine aufklärerische Klassenfunktion zusprach, während das Proletariat seine Politik selbst machen müsse (203). Damit war der Intellektuellendiskurs Anfang der 1920er Jahre geprägt „durch eine Suche nach einer sozialstrukturellen und funktionellen Verortung der Intelligenz" und ist „klar vom linken Feld dominiert" (226), in dem sich Literatenzirkel (*bundan*) und die proletarische Literaturbewegung im literarischen Feld, und Marxisten und Sozialdemokraten im politischen Feld gegenüberstanden (227).

Die biographische Rahmung Arishimas bleibt in diesem Abschnitt denkbar kurz, der politische Werdegang vor allem auf seine „humanistisch-sozialistische Gesinnung", seinen Selbstmord und die Landschenkung an seine Pächter reduziert. Diese verkürzte biographische Verortung zieht sich durch den Text. Meist werden die Debattenteilnehmer nur kurz als „der Literat X", der „Sozialist Y", „der Schriftsteller Z" eingeführt. Arishima und Ōsugi Sakae einfach als „Sozialisten" zu bezeichnen, ist zu kurz gegriffen. Hier hätte zum Beispiel die englischsprachige Forschungsliteratur stärker hinzugezogen werden müssen, wie beispielsweise Konishi (2013) oder Stanley (1982). Wesentlich präziser fällt Schamonis (1992) zehnseitige Analyse zum politischen Hintergrund von Arishimas Manifest aus, die seiner Übersetzung angehängt und Müller bekannt ist (183): Arishima (nach Konishi ein Anarchist) lehnte nicht einfach „die Intellektuellen" ab, sondern polemisierte konkret gegen die intellektuellen Führer der Gewerkschaftsbewegung, wie in der Yūaikai.[3] Das Ausbleiben eines Abgleichs der theoretischen Texte mit der Bewegungspraxis ist ein Manko der Arbeit, möchte Müller doch einen Beitrag zur Sozialgeschichte leisten (13).

Das folgende Kapitel sechs beschäftigt sich mit der Aktionsliteraturdebatte der 1930er Jahre, in der die soziale Verantwortung linker Intellektueller zu einer Zeit der zunehmenden Repressalien gegen die politische Linke und imperialistischer Expansion diskutiert wurde. Aufgrund der politischen Schwäche der Linken in den 1930er und 1940er Jahren liegt der Schwerpunkt in diesem Kapitel auf dem literarischen Feld. 1934 versammelte sich eine Gruppe um die Zeitschrift Kōdō und versuchte dort einen Mittelweg zwischen dem Utilitarismus der Proletarischen Literaturbewegung und den Ästhetizismus der Neuen Kunstfraktion zu finden, wobei sie sich vor allem an der französischen antifaschistischen „Association des Écrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires" (A.E.A.R) orientierten. Allerdings „verschwand [die Aktionsliteraturdebatte] ebenso schnell, wie sie

3 Schamoni 1992: 64–74.

entstanden war, obwohl sie im Grunde genommen konstruktive Ideen vertrat, ohne eine bemerkenswerte Anzahl von literarischen Werken zu hinterlassen" (223), wie Müller einschränkt. Wieso Müller das „Tanaka Memorandum" in diesem Kapitel als authentisches Dokument und als Mitauslöser der Besetzung der Mandschurei vorstellt, und nicht als Fälschung, ist unverständlich.

In der Nachkriegszeit, wie in Kapitel sieben beschrieben, liegt die Trennlinie zwischen den einzelnen Intellektuellenbegriffen immer noch in „Klassenkampf" versus „Kunst" und „Subjektivismus" (375). Die „Schriftsteller richten ihren Blick abermals auf Frankreich", sodass ein „politisch engagierter und sozialkritischer Typus des Schriftstellers [entstand] ... der sich seit Mitte der 1950er-Jahre in seiner Selbstdefinition stark am Sartreschen Engagementkonzept zu orientieren begann" (362), argumentiert Müller. Gleichzeitig verlor der „Kulturmensch [...] über Nacht seine nationalistische Färbung" und wurde zum „progressiven Kulturmensch" (363) während die Intellektuellendebatte, sei es in der Aufarbeitung des Kriegs oder des Subjektivismusstreits, „zerrissen [ist] zwischen Ideal und Praxis, [die] Marxisten zwischen Bourgeoisie und Volk" (390), wie Müller überzeugend argumentiert. Aber auch hier muss Müller sich die Frage stellen lassen, wieso weder Gayle (2003) noch Oguma (2002) hinzugezogen wurden, die beide in eine ähnliche Richtung argumentieren, obwohl letzterer durchaus bekannt ist und von Müller als „preisgekrönt" (447) bezeichnet wird. Das Kapitel wird abgeschlossen durch einen sehr kurzen Abschnitt über den Intellektuellendiskurs zwischen 1950 und 1966 (438–469), in dem Müller eine Wiederholung der Debatte um die Verbindung zwischen Intellektuellen und den Massen am Beispiel von u.a. Takeuchi Yoshimi und Yoshimoto Takaaki darstellt.

Die „Krönung" der Intellektuellendebatte in Japan, Sartres Besuch in Japan im Jahr 1966, beschreibt Müller in Kapitel acht. Die eigentliche Reise, die, wie Müller feststellt, auch der Bewerbung seiner Veröffentlichung im Verlag Jinbun Shoin diente, machte Sartre zu „einer Leitfigur des Widerstandes und der politischen Aktion" der studentischen Neuen Linken (472). Sartres Ansehen erreichte so ungeahnte Höhen, sei doch kein anderer „ausländischer Schriftsteller" so rezipiert worden wie Sartre. Müller belegt dies mit einer Datenbanksuche von „Fachartikeln" zu Sartre und konstatiert eine höhere Zahl seit 1945 als bei Nishida Kitarō (473). Warum Müller nicht noch andere „Schriftsteller" in den Vergleich einbezieht, verwundert doch sehr. Eine kurze Suche im Katalog der japanischen Parlamentsbibliothek zeigt, dass die Rezeption von „Ausländern", wie Karl Marx, G.W.F. Hegel, Aristoteles, Lu Xun, Martin Heidegger, Albert Camus, oder eben Michel Foucault wesentlich mehr, oder zumindest vergleichbar viele Texte generiert hat. Auch im literarischen Feld scheint die von Müller postulierte Dominanz der Sartreschen Literatur eher eingeschränkt gewesen zu sein. Zwar nennt Müller viele interessante Beispiele für die „antistalinistische

Literatur" der Neuen Linken (479), wie diese jedoch konkret mit Sartre zusammenhängen soll, bleibt unklar. Weiterhin zentral für das Argument, wieso Sartres Besuch überhaupt von herausragender Bedeutung für den japanischen Intellektuellendiskurs gewesen war, sind ein Diskussionsbeitrag von Ōe Kenzaburō, Abe Kōbō und Shirai Kōji im neulinken *Asahi Jaanaru* aus dem Oktober 1966, sowie ein Aufsatz von Yamazaki Masakazu in der *Chūō Kōron* aus dem Dezember des gleichen Jahres. Vor allem Ōe und Abe bescheinigt Müller nun, dass „keiner der Beiden [...] meines Erachtens Sartres sprachphilosophische Herleitung des Schriftstellers als Intellektueller adäquat kommentiert" hatte (519). Die Analyse wird geschlossen mit der Bemerkung, dass „beide Aufsätze [...] beinahe die einzige Form [bilden], in deren Rahmen japanische Schriftsteller konkret über Sartres Definition des Schriftstellers als Intellektueller diskutierten. In anderen von Literaten geführten Gesprächsrunden wurde das Thema kaum angesprochen" (520). Der Nachweis von Sartres zentraler Bedeutung um das Jahr 1966 bleibt damit aus. Müller fährt fort, dass trotz dieser vermeintlichen Fehllesung von Sartre sich in den 1960er Jahren der Intellektuellendiskurs unter Dominanz der Neuen Linken („progressive Intellektuelle") in Absetzung von den „Kommunisten" und den „Realisten" („Rechtskonservative") entwickelte (551). Hier stellt sich die Frage, wieso die Bezeichnung „progressive Intellektuelle" auf die Neue Linke angewendet wird, obwohl dieser Begriff im neulinken Diskurs eher abwertend auf die linksliberalen Denker der 1950er Jahre, wie Maruyama, angewandt wurde. Eingeschoben wird mit Kapitel neun ein „Ausblick" auf die Zeit nach 1968, der jedoch zwischen 1968 und 1989 hin- und herspringt, veraltete Literatur verwendet, und mit der Feststellung, „man" spreche seit 1989 vom Ende der sozialistischen Utopien (563), eher mit Gemeinplätzen aufwartet.

Zusammengefasst stellt Müller eine Verschiebung des Intellektuellendiskurses fest, vom marxistischen zum „französisch orientierten" Intellektuellen (573), dem sich politische und literarische Aufgaben „je nach ideologischem Standpunkt" (573) stellten. Die „Zerrissenheit" des japanischen Intellektuellen zeigte sich tendenziell nicht so sehr am Klassenstandpunkt, sondern in Bezug auf Modernisierungsprozesse (594). Auch der Begriff „*chishikijin*" verschiebt sich durch „Diskursverletzungen" (596) vom sozialstrukturellen zum funktionalistischen Begriff, von der Literatur zur Politik (597, 598).

Ob der durch Müller analysierten massiven Veränderungen der 1960er Jahre bleibt am Schluss die Frage, warum nun Sartre als Beispiel gewählt wurde, scheint doch seine Relevanz in Literatur und Politik eher eingeschränkt gewesen zu sein. Die Anekdote von Foucaults Aufritt kann so als Hinweis gelesen werden, dass historische Auftritte in Japan nicht auf ewig wirken, und erst recht noch kein Beleg für eine Rezeptionsgeschichte sind. Zusammenfassend lässt sich damit feststellen, dass Müllers Buch sowohl für die Ideengeschichte als vermutlich

auch für die Literaturgeschichte mehr hätte leisten können, vor allem da ein Anschluss an die ideengeschichtliche Forschung kaum stattfindet. Das ist bedauerlich, da Müller sich sehr ausdauernd und umfassend auf knapp 700 Seiten durch einen ausgesprochen großen Textkorpus der literarischen und politischen Geschichte durchgearbeitet hat. Für Studierende der Ideengeschichte ist die Arbeit an Müllers Buch daher fraglos zu empfehlen, da es als Handbuch einen breitgefächerten Überblick über die moderne linke Ideengeschichte bietet.

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In this publication, Andrew Shimunek aims to construct a scientific and comprehensive theory on the origin of the Mongolic and Serbi languages, an often-debated subject in the scholarly community. Prior to this study, he published a variety of works in areas such as Mongolian phonology and lexicology as well as the linguistic reconstruction of Kitan. This publication is based on the author's 2006–2009 fieldwork and the ensuing PhD dissertation (2013). Shimunek puts forth a new Serbi-Mongolic language family theory, named the "Serbi-Mongolic divergent language theory". He sets out to prove his theory based on methods of historical-comparative linguistics, combined with an additional careful philological reading of transmitted sources. The author also includes a great variety of materials, such as Chinese dynastic histories, Old Tibetan manuscripts, epitaphs written in Kitan script, and Mongol inscriptions.

The publication at hand is composed of ten chapters: 1. Previous Theories on the Origins of the Mongolic Languages (pp. 1–35), 2. A Brief Ethnolinguistic History of the Serbi-Mongolic Peoples (pp. 37–77), 3. Early Northern Frontier Varieties of Chinese (pp. 79–108), 4. Notes on the Phonology of Old Tibetan (pp. 109–119), 5. Taghbach and other Middle Serbi Dialects of the Northern Wei (pp. 121–168), 6. The T'u-yü-hun ('Azha) Language (pp. 169–196), 7. The Kitan Language (pp. 197–281), 8. Toward a Reconstruction of Common Serbi-Mongolic (pp. 283–382), 9. The Proto-Serbi-Mongolic Homeland (pp. 383–414), and 10. Conclusion (pp. 415–417).

Shimunek provides a careful and precise introduction to various theories on the origin of the Mongolic languages (chapter 1), which is especially useful for readers who are new to the field. Whenever he points out the weaknesses of some of these theories, he bases his criticism on solid arguments; on p. 13 for example, he states that the direct lineage theory of the Ancient Mongol Theory is no longer tenable, given the new materials and sources that have surfaced and as a result altered the current state of research. He formulates clear criteria for a comprehensive theory on the ethnolinguistic origins of the Mongols (pp. 32–34), and does not shy away from directly questioning established theories based on

earlier reconstructions of Old Chinese and Middle Chinese by scholars such as Karlgren (1957) and Pulleyblank (e. g. 1962a, 1962b, 1984, 1991). These and other newer reconstructions (e. g. Schuessler 2007) are often supplemented by his own approach, which has been strongly influenced by the work of Beckwith (e. g. 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2008, 2010).

The author also gives a brief overview of the ethnolinguistic history of the Serbi-Mongolic peoples (chapter 2) relevant to this publication, i. e. the Taghbach (also known as Tuoba), the Tuyuhun, and the Kitan. He furthermore discusses the phonology of the various languages and dialects used in his materials and involved in his reconstructions, such as Old Tibetan or Taghbach (chapter 3–7). A great amount of attention is given to the Kitan language (chapter 7). Its phonology, morphology, and syntax is analyzed in great detail and further complemented by clear tables and examples. He presents a revised romanization of the Kitan Assembled Script and a reconstruction of Middle Kitan phoneme inventories. The provided list of the Kitan lexicon will certainly serve as a useful point of reference for future research.

Despite its obvious strengths, this publication exhibits some shortcomings in its suggested etymologies for several Mongolian words. Some of the presented examples about potential loanwords from Old Chinese into Serbi-Mongolic languages are in need of further scrutiny. One such case can be found on p. 386: Shimunek claims that *aruγ*, which denotes 'basket, cage' in Middle Mongol but later on underwent semantic narrowing and in Modern Khalkha Mongolian *араг* now only refers to a specific type of basket used for collecting the dung of lifestock, is a loan from Old Chinese 簍 *lǒu* 'basket', which he reconstructs as *rʊʁ. Unfortunately, he is too quick to dismiss a possible etymology linked to Khalkha *ар* 'back, rear' Middle Mongol *aru* out of semantic and phonological reasons. Given the fact that such 'dung-baskets' are always strapped on one's back, a derivation of *aru* or possibly even an earlier unattested verb derived from *aru* by means of the common suffix *-γ-/-g-* to form nouns designating results of actions[1] seems far more plausible. Lastly, the similarity between the denomination for the dung-basket *араг* and the word for dung itself, *аргал*, as well as the verb 'to dry up', *аргах*, seems too striking to be left unexplained. Another example can be found on p. 404: Shimunek postulates an origin in Proto-Tibeto-Burman *ti 'water' and even Early Old Chinese *tî 'water' for Middle Mongol *čisu* 'blood'. Although he provides a detailed explanation for the later Mongolic innovation *-*sU* for loanwords, the etymology seems rather far-fetched for semantic reasons. This

1 Poppe 2006: 45.

is further corroborated by the Leipzig-Jakarta list of basic vocabulary,[2] where both 'water' and 'blood' exhibit a high unborrowed score and are therefore highly unlikely to be borrowed. Lastly, Starostin, Dybo and Mudrak[3] suggest that *čisu* is in fact of inner-"Altaic" origin going back to the Proto-Altaic form *či̯ŭnu. They further add that *-n-* is often lost before the nominal suffix *-su* which then gave rise to the form of *čisu*. Although the Altaic theory is hotly debated in its own right, an inner-"Altaic" or inner-Mongolian origin seems far more likely than a loan from Chinese for a basic concept such as blood. In view of this, Shimunek's etymology should be revised.

Another observation concerns the historical background on the Tuyuhun (p. 170), which neglects some of the available sources and deserves further elaboration. Shimunek's overview leaves the reader with the impression that the Tuyuhun were more or less under constant Tibetan control, when in fact they functioned as a widely independent political entity since the middle of the fourth century.[4] A close reading of transmitted historical sources indicates that Tibetan rulers as well as Sui-Tang China tried to gain influence among the Tuyuhun ruling elite through political marriage. During the rule of Nuohebo 諾曷鉢 (r. 635–672) for example, the Tuyuhun elite were probably divided into a pro-Tang and pro-Tibet faction and maintained marriage alliances with both sides.[5]

To conclude, Shimunek's publication has shown that systematic regular sound correspondences did exist among the Taghbach, Kitan, Tuyuhun, and Mongolic languages. Moreover, a rich system of shared functional morphology among the Serbi and Mongolic branches can be identified, thereby pointing towards a relationship between the two daughter branches of Proto-Serbi-Mongolic (chapter 8). In Shimunek's words (p. 416): "the current findings – the first rigorous and systematic, unified theory on the origins of the Mongolic and Serbi languages – add substantially to our understanding of the linguistic geography of early Eastern Eurasia, and to the ethnolinguistic history of the Mongolic peoples." In addition, this well-structured publication is a solid starting point for further investigation into the field, e. g. research on other excavated texts (such as several epitaphs for members of the Tuyuhun ruling family). It might prove an invaluable source for future reference on Serbi-Mongolic languages, possible reconstructions and etymology.

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2 Tadmor 2009: 68ff.

3 Starostin et al. 2003: 401.

4 Yao Silian 1973: 54/810; Molè 1970: 76.

5 Ouyang Xiu/Song Qi 1975: 221A/6226; Lin Guanqun 2011: 249; Yamaguchi Zuihō 1983: 671–676.

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As the editors of this volume point out, anecdotes are "part and parcel of the literary tradition of early China" (p. 2), but so far "have received surprisingly little scholarly attention as a distinctive form of writing" (p. 3). The contributions aim to remedy this shortcoming, setting about to demonstrate how anecdotes could convey philosophical arguments (Andrew Seth Meyer; Christian Schwermann); add a novel ideological hue to the portrayal of a philosophical patron figure (Lee Ting-mien); negotiate unstable notions of cultural identity and otherness (Li Wai-yee); convey nuanced judgements about virtue in politics (Sarah A. Queen); and reconcile diverging genre conventions in representations of the past (Rens Krijgsman).

Taking up broader issues of philosophical discourse, text formation, and historical changes in the utilisation of narrative material, the contributions also address non-deductive argumentation (Paul R. Goldin); questions of authorship and compositional techniques in an anecdote collection (Christian Schwermann); anecdote usage as diagnostic criterion for the identification of an entire work's ideological orientation and textual strata (Du Heng); narrative historiographic formats not centred on moralising, anecdotal narratives (Yuri Pines); and the declining significance of the ancient stock of anecdotal lore as a source of inspiration from the Eastern Han onwards (Paul van Els).

In all, the essays, including the editors' introduction, contribute to the understanding of early Chinese historiography and thought as well as to ongoing discussions about how the early literary heritage was remoulded and digested by authors and editors up to and including the Han.

Van Els and Queen's introduction discusses genre features of anecdotes as defined by historians of Western literatures (pp. 4–7) and as exemplified by early Chinese writings (pp. 7–24). The upshot is that anecdotes should be viewed as freestanding narratives with a specific setting, frequently, but not exclusively, staging historical personalities or incidents, and with a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end, which sometimes consists in a punch line (p. 8). Anecdotes are, furthermore, considered to be more salient elements in Chinese

than Western historiography (see, however, Pines's essay for an exception). They served to make philosophical points, though their meaning can be subject to modification depending on how they are framed, as van Els and Queen argue (pp. 1–2, 13–16).

Here, an alternative view might be pointed out. Newell Ann Van Auken argues that accounts accompanied by evaluative comments of a "noble man" (*junzi* 君子) in *Zuozhuan* 左傳 display a close interdependence between content and frame, which jointly guide the reader towards a particular moral judgement. In these cases, narrative and frame were likely introduced into the *Zuozhuan* as single textual units, though some of them show traces of further editorial manipulation.[1] There are, then, additional ways to conceive of the relationship between frame, narrative, and intended import other than the one envisioned by the editors of the volume.

Introducing common non-deductive modes of argumentation, Paul R. Goldin discusses instances of paradox, analogy, and appeal to example. Despite the prevalence of these rhetorical tools, deductions expressible in the formalisms of propositional logic are not absent from early Chinese thought (pp. 51–55). But, Goldin observes, they "are not easy to find; one can only surmise that they were not preferred." In Goldin's interpretation, Chinese thinkers rather leaned towards modes of expression the nuances of which have to be unlocked by sympathetic understanding. "Chinese philosophy, like literature, painting, or music, requires connoisseurship. If we lack the taste – even more so if we exempt ourselves from the task of developing it – we will miss most of what Chinese philosophy has to offer." (p. 55)

Two questions arise from this. First, in order to arrive at a meaningful comparison, how common was deductive argumentation in various strands of Western philosophy? It has been suggested that logic in its modern, technical sense has only limited purchase in everyday reasoning and colloquial argumentation.[2] Possibly, across different schools and centuries, philosophical argumentation as well may have been less strictly wedded to the rules of formal logic than the recent stress on such in analytical philosophy might lead one to believe. Second, how does one attain "connoisseurship", beyond mere exposure to Chinese philosophy? And is Western philosophy likewise open to a connoisseurial approach?

1 Van Auken 2016.

2 Mercier and Sperber 2017: 158–168.

Andrew Seth Meyer traces variant versions of the "sojourn narrative" (p. 64 *et passim*) about Confucius's hardship between the states of Chen and Cai, a body of material already insightfully analysed by John Makeham.[3] Meyer senses a fundamental interpretative shift in the early history of this cluster of narratives. In "the simplest version of the tale" in *Lunyu* 15.2 (p. 66), the story supposedly revolves around the fact that Confucius and his followers go "publicly hungry", "a clear sign of status degradation" for *shi* 士, "marking them as having fallen from the circle of 'gentlemen' entitled to a share of meat from the ancestral altars." (p. 67) But is the practice of sharing sacrificial meat relevant to the situation of a group of travellers?[4] More importantly, the *Lunyu* speaks of *junzi* 君子 (Meyer's "gentlemen"), not *shi*. The former term is generally understood to refer to a moral exemplar, the latter, initially at least, to a member of the lower aristocracy. It is not a foregone conclusion that starving in public, or poverty more generally, would automatically be taken to impugn someone's moral credentials. Early Chinese discourses on poverty and morality appear rather complex and in need of further research.[5] If *junzi*, however, should be taken as a reference to social status, this would require additional clarification.

Moreover, the dialogue hinges on the sense of *qiong* 窮: being reduced to extremity. Is *that* something which could happen to a *junzi*? Thus enquires a Zilu whose trust in the order of things is palpably shaken. One may consider this an invitation to ponder whether, or why, bad things can happen to good people; other versions have done just that, as Meyer shows. On this understanding, it is far from obvious that the *Xunzi* version of the narrative "shifts focus" (p. 69), as

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3 Makeham 1998.

4 On sacrificial meat as a medium to reinforce hierarchies as well as networks of mutual recognition and indebtedness among ancient Chinese elites, see Boileau 2006. Gifts of meat are part of a more comprehensive ritual system, and it is not obvious that the present context would be part of it.

5 To throw in some anecdotal evidence: In *Xinxu* 7.25: 970–974 (with parallels), a *shi* rather starves to death than accept food from a robber. Elsewhere, a man likewise refuses food because he feels he is being patronised. He dies as a result. A critical comment by Zengzi is appended: The man should have accepted his benefactor's apology and eaten the food. The protagonist's social status is not specified. (*Liji* 4.2, "Tan Gong xia": 298; see Boileau 2006: 766; cf. *Xinxu* 7.24: 967–970). In *Mengzi* 3B.10, Master Meng criticises a *shi* from a wealthy noble house who, out of an exaggerated sense of self-righteousness, refuses any presents from his family, going so far as to vomit up a gifted goose. Only an "earthworm", Meng sneers, could live like that (Lau 2003: 144–147). In another story, the poor Yuan Xian upbraids the ostentatiously wealthy Zigong, arguing that being true to one's moral and scholarly ideals is preferable to being rich, and happily accepting the epithet "poor" (*Hanshi waizhuan* 1: 36; tr. Hightower 1952: 19–21). In these narratives, it is not so much poverty itself that is at issue but the moral attitudes and sense of dignity espoused by those who experience it.

Meyer, claims, or whether "gentlemanly status" (p. 70) is at issue rather than the interdependence, or otherwise, of someone's fate and morality.

Likewise, one may quibble over whether the cluster of sojourn narratives addresses "logical problems" (p. 73). The adjective "logical" makes frequent appearances throughout the essay, but the questions at the heart of the sojourn narrative in its various incarnations seem concerned with aspects of metaphysics: Does moral excellence count for anything in the workings of fate? Or, in other words: Is the cosmos indifferent towards morality?

The final part of the essay is taken up by a comparison of "philosophical uses of narrative in early China and ancient Greece" (pp. 80–85). It consists largely of observations about Plato's *Euthyphro* and *Republic* as compared to an assortment of ancient Chinese narratives. The conclusion pits "Greek philosophers like Socrates", who were "in competition with priests like Euthyphro" and thus found themselves drawn into disputes about "pure reason", against "the authors of Chinese Masters' writings", who were "handicapped by their low [...] birth status" and therefore "had every incentive to maximally value the empirical knowledge gained from personal experience" (p. 85).

These observations lead rather far afield, thus I will restrict myself to brief comments. Euthyphro is never identified as a priest. But this detail aside, what reason is there to assume that priests were the main opponents of ancient philosophers rather than some of Plato's other bugbears, such as poets or sophists? Credible alternative visions of some varieties of Greek philosophy exist, for instance as path to wisdom through cultivation of certain ways of life, each informed and motivated by a particular philosophical outlook.[6] The notion of Chinese thinkers inclining towards empirical knowledge would benefit from some elaboration. This is not the place – nor do I feel qualified – to try and unravel long-standing debates about the respective nature of Greek and Chinese philosophy; about whether proto-scientific enquiry into the natural world was a distinctive mark of the former; or whether the latter should be termed philosophy at all. Suffice it to say that some strands of Greek thought put a premium on empirical investigation. Aristotle, for instance, famously engaged in meticulous observation of natural phenomena.[7] By contrast, one of the hoary clichés about Chinese thought assures us that Chinese thinkers were more interested in moral precepts than empirical issues, and less concerned with social reality than social ideals. In this light, some readers might ask for more additional evidence in order to be fully convinced.

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6 Hadot 2002; Cooper 2012.

7 For a captivating popular treatment see, e. g. Leroi 2014.

Like parts of the introduction (pp. 1–2, 11–16) and Meyer's and van Els's (pp. 334–348) essays, Lee Ting-mien's study of a narrative about Mo Di's 墨翟 successful intervention against an impending attack on Song 宋 by Chu 楚 focusses on a detailed comparison of variants of the same story. Unlike other renderings, the ending of the *Mozi* 墨子 version, Lee states, contradicts both the main body of the narrative and central ideas advanced elsewhere in *Mozi*. Achievements which benefit the people and agree with the will of higher powers such as heaven and the spirits should lead to illustriousness, according to the teachings of the *Mozi* (p. 98). But the *Mozi* narrates how Mo Di's good deed ultimately goes unrecognised and, at the same time, endorses this as an expression of Mo Di's activity in the sphere of the numinous (*shen* 神) rather than in the open (*ming* 明), an element which adds "Daoist tinges" (p. 106) to the story.

To plumb "cultural attitudes" toward "barbarians", Li Wai-yee addresses three themes as reflected in anecdotes: the contrast between *wen* 文 and *zhi* 質, "refinement" and "substance"; "tradition and transformation"; and "the rhetorical contexts of policy arguments and diplomatic confrontations." (p. 114) The stories discussed by Li illustrate the fluid and permeable boundaries between Chinese and others, the "notion that cultural difference is not immutable" (p. 134), but also the function of the non-Chinese "to question or reverse established perspectives" (p. 139). One may wonder, though, whether use of the term "barbarian" is still desirable, or even defensible.

Selecting *Shuoyuan* chapter nine, "Rectifying Remonstrance" (Zheng jian 正諫), as object of a case study, Christian Schwermann revisits questions about authorship, the composition of new writings from pre-existing materials, and the argumentative force of collage-style texts, which he has previously addressed elsewhere.[8] The essay contains a welter of additional insights, for instance on the reading of Liu Xiang's 劉向 (79–8 BCE) memorial upon the submission of the *Shuoyuan* (pp. 150–153); uses and meanings of the cognate verbs *shuo* / *shui* 說 "to explain" / "to persuade" (pp. 153–156, 167); and compositional techniques conferring a sense of formal unity upon the "textual fabric" of writings which, like *Shuoyuan*, were woven together from heterogeneous materials (pp. 148–150).

Schwermann concludes this wide-ranging investigation with the observation that Liu Xiang should be promoted from the rank of textual critic and editor to that of fully-fledged author: "The *Shuoyuan* was not only 'arranged' or 'compiled' but *composed* by Liu Xiang, who may even have conceived of himself as the author of the text" (p. 167; italics in the original). This view chimes with Bret

8 On the creation of new texts from old ones see Schwermann 2005, on authorship, see Schwermann's contribution and co-authored introduction to Schwermann and Steineck ed. 2014.

Hinsch's assessment of Liu Xiang's role in producing the *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳, which is, in turn, based on the exhaustive textual studies of Shimomi Takao 下見隆雄.[9] Hinsch concluded that Liu Xiang should be regarded "as both the author and editor of China's first collection of female biographies, although his original contribution to the work seems paramount."[10]

In a piece of textual scholarship which combines attention to detail with a treatment of broader questions, Du Heng identifies "patterns among the Confucius anecdotes" in *Han Feizi* and uses these to "map larger shifts throughout the text" (p. 193). The essay, which is based on Du's MA thesis, divides *Han Feizi* into three large blocks consisting of "univocal" expositions of Han Fei's teachings ("Cluster A": ch. 1–20), anecdotes ("Cluster B": ch. 21–23, 30–39), and "polyphonic" expositions ("Cluster C": ch. 40–51) (p. 195), with some chapters falling between these categories (ch. 40, 42, 43) (p. 219). The main objectives of the two types of exposition differ (pp. 196–204). Cluster A revolves around "the power struggle between the ruler and his subjects" (p. 196) and the often precarious role of the specialist in "laws" or "standards" (*fa* 法) vis-à-vis "rogue courtiers" or "villainous ministers" (p. 200). Cluster C, by contrast, "is enmeshed in polyphonic polemics" (p. 199) between *fa* specialists and "learned men" (p. 200), so that, instead of attempts at persuasion addressing the ruler, "a new type of game emerges, which is far more akin to intellectual debate" (p. 201). The collected anecdotes making up Cluster B, Du argues in some detail, assume a transitional position between the two. Here, diverging views are for the first time admitted, most notably in the "Nan" 難 chapters, which refute received opinion on historical events and personalities (pp. 205–216). Treatments of Confucius shift in character from being neutral or sympathetic to becoming more adversarial in the course of this larger transformation of rhetorical modes and intents, so they can be regarded as a diagnostic features of it (203–204, 211–214).

Du still hesitates to commit to any definitive interpretation of these larger changes as reflecting either historico-biographical developments affecting the author or, rather, later editorial choices (pp. 217–221). She stresses, however, that "these two possibilities are not mutually exclusive" and that "it is often difficult to separate functional design from diachronic development" (p. 217). It is to be hoped that she will continue her investigations into *Han Feizi* and, perhaps, also apply her skills as a textual scholar to decode the editorial rationale behind other compilations.

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9 Hinsch 2007: 5–7.

10 Hinsch 2007: 22.

As an exegetical work obsessively focussed on the wording of the *Chunqiu* 春秋 annals and their hidden significance, the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 is not typically read for its narratives. Sarah Queen investigates the "compliant and subservient vision of service" expressed in stories about "[f]ive types of Worthies (*xian* 賢) and their negative counterfoils" in *Gongyang zhuan*, in order to "understand the distinctive ethico-political ethos of these exemplary tales" (p. 232). Typologically, Queen divides these exemplary figures into "worthy protectors" (pp. 232–241) and "worthy avengers" (pp. 241–245) of their rulers, "worthy regents" (pp. 245–247), "worthy abdicators" (pp. 247–250) and "devotees of ritual propriety and trustworthiness" (pp. 250–252). In Queen's interpretation, as "indispensable exegetical tool" "the historical narratives added flesh to the bones of Confucius's judgments"; they "appear when the predominant praise and blame mode of explication tied exclusively to the wording of a given entry cannot fully disclose the ethical nuances of the judgment at hand." (pp. 252–253)

Yuri Pines investigates "history without anecdotes"—modes of historiographic writing which do not highlight narrative illustrations of political or moral points. Having identified narratives in the *Zuozhuan* which "differ from the moralizing histories of the Warring States and later periods" in that they are "detailed to the point of boredom" and "lacking" in "a clear-cut moral message" (p. 270), Pines then sets out to read the *Xinian* 繫年, a manuscript purchased by Tsinghua University in Beijing bearing a chronologically arranged historiographic text "composed [...] in the state of Chu" from "earlier sources" (p. 272), as a work with similar characteristics.[11] These writings, he avers, provided "historical knowledge for policymakers" and exemplify "an important yet neglected genre of non-didactic history" (p. 264). As Pines argues (pp. 274–281), such "non-moralizing" history writing in the "non-anecdotal" mode would have been suited to satisfy the demands of "leading policymakers, the ruler and his closest advisers, who were in need of working knowledge of the historical background for the current balance of power", perhaps in the form of a "brief resumé of major geopolitical shifts in the past rather than of detailed narrative." (p. 287)

Like Pines, Rens Krijgsman also discusses a text from the Tsinghua corpus. He argues that the *Bao xun* 保 [=寶] 訓, "Treasured Instructions", which he translates in full, instantiates an uneasy mixture of genres, the "documentary" mode of relaying public speeches of past rulers, most prominently encountered in the canonical *Shangshu* 尚書 but also found in the non-canonical *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書, and the anecdotal mode of narrative. This, Krijgsman asserts, "generates

11 For a full, annotated translation, see now Milburn 2016. See also Pines 2014 for a study of *Xinian* which makes some of the same points as the essay under discussion.

a fundamental tension between genre and argument", and "the *Baoxun* employs a number of strategies to mediate this tension." (p. 307) But aside from brief remarks on aetiological elements in the frame narrative (p. 313) and repetitions of formulas (pp. 315, 316–317), the discussion remains vague, and some attempts at conceptual clarification, like the introduction of characterisations such as "*predicative*" for documentary-type writings and "*attributive*" for anecdotes (pp. 306–307; italics in the original) seem downright obscure. One may also wonder whether the references to the past which are here dubbed "anecdotes" (pp. 314–315) are anything of the sort: they report summarily rather than tell, they have no punch line, and as condensed reports of purported historical facts about sage rulers from a "foundational period" (p. 315) they would not seem out of place in some chapters of the canonical *Shangshu*.[12] Does one find similar tensions, similarly resolved as posited here, in the *Shangshu* as well? It would bolster the plausibility of the argument if such cases could be pointed out. Lastly, the theoretical contextualisation of *Bao xun* by reference to supposedly universal features in ancient societies' ways of reconceptualising the past, as encapsulated in Jan Assmann's idea of cultural memory, is interesting (pp. 317–320). But it seems to this reviewer that such interpretations encumber the scant evidence of the *Bao xun* with too heavy a theoretical burden.

Concluding the volume, one of the editors, Paul van Els, reflects on why creative engagement with the stock of classic historical anecdotes that kept recurring in texts up to the end of the Western Han began to fade thereafter. By way of illustration, van Els first discusses no less than six variant versions of an historical narrative about Duke Wen 文 of Jin 晉 (r. 636–628 BCE) from writings up to and including the Western Han, noting that they represent distinct reactualisations deliberately composed to convey different arguments. Already in the Eastern Han, though, interest in the story was markedly

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12 Nylan 2001: 124 notes that "[o]nly a handful of chapters, including the famous Pan Geng chapter, intersperse rhetorical speeches with short accounts of specific deeds." Among such chapters is also "Yao dian" 堯典. References to past actions and events in direct speech occur as well. In "Gao Yao mo" 皋陶謨, Yu 禹 tells about the flood and how he saved the people (Gu and Liu 2005: 433; trans. in Karlgren 1950: 9, no. 9). In the same chapter, Yu is warned not to be arrogant like Zhu of Dan 朱丹 who "without water went in a boat" and "formed a gang of cronies" (Gu and Liu 2005: 463; trans. Karlgren 1950: 11, no. 16), and there are further references to past events and persons, for instance to the establishment of administrative units and a "foolish" Miao prince (Gu and Liu 2005: 463; trans. Karlgren 1950: 12, no. 17). In "Hong fan" 洪範, Prince Ji 箕子 recalls how Gun 鯀 caused disorder at the time of the flood and was killed as a result, to be succeeded by Yu (Gu and Liu 2005: 1146; trans. in Karlgren 1950: 29–30, no. 3). "Jiu gao" 酒誥 records a speech, probably made by King Cheng 成 (r. 1042/35–1006 BCE) or the Duke of Zhou in his name, which states how moderately people were drinking under the Shang, including various regional rulers (Gu and Liu 2005: 1403; trans. in Karlgren 1950: 45, no. 9).

diminished. Afterwards, early medieval texts such as *Liuzi* 劉子 and *Shuijing zhu* 水經注 still cite the story, but they no longer creatively engage with it. On van Els's interpretation, "the fall of the Western Han was the start of a new period that created its own anecdotes", for instance those illustrating the habitus of early medieval elites which found their way into the enormously influential *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語. So by that time "anecdotes about earlier Chinese historical figures had gone past their expiration date." (p. 352) But isn't this begging the question? What was it that made ancient narratives unpalatable to medieval audiences and liable to be thrown out for good? Why would readers marvel at the shenanigans of upper-crust figures in *Shishuo xinyu* rather than revisit the exploits of Duke Wen?

In sum, the volume establishes beyond doubt the central role of narrative accounts in intellectual debate. But, even at the risk of seeming pedantic, one might ask: Does the label "anecdote" equally fit all the texts under discussion? Does a narrative which, in translation, runs to almost two printed pages and contains a long speech which provides the frame for yet another historical narrative (pp. 116–117; Li Wai-yee) resemble in interesting ways brief reports which lack any discernible plot and only make up one to two paragraphs in English (pp. 314–315; Krijgsman)? Would either count as a typical anecdote?

As the editors note in their introduction, the earliest meaning of "anecdote" is that of a brief, pithy narrative left out and distinct in nature from the official record (p. 4). While more anodyne understandings of the term simply come down to an account of some past event, there is, in common parlance, often a hint of the illicit and subversive involved – the frisson of the embarrassing, revealing, or ironic. Such expectations are aptly captured by the editor of an anthology of literary anecdotes who, tongue-in-cheek, hearkens back not quite to Adam and Eve, but gets rather close: "The urge to exchange anecdotes is as deeply implanted in human beings as the urge to gossip. It is hard to believe that cavemen didn't practice their skills as anecdotalists as they sat around the fire."[13] Few of the accounts discussed in this volume bespeak a similar urge to share revelatory gossip, even though the example from *Han Feizi* discussed in the editors' introduction certainly does (pp. 1–2, 13–16). One may also wonder whether anecdotes proper were often used promiscuously to illustrate *different* points, since they rather seem to bring out features considered typical of a particular personality or situation. More generally, one could ask whether certain stories or narrative types were more closely tied to stable interpretations than others, as Van Auken suggests.

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13 Gross ed. 2006: vii.

Perhaps, then, the next logical step in the analysis of ancient narratives would be to look out for further genre categories which can be productively applied to the sources, whether these categories are to be developed out of Chinese or Western literary and historiographic traditions, or whether they are to be newly defined on some other basis to serve a particular research question. Pines's article alerts us to the fact that there is a need to capture hitherto neglected aspects of ancient narrative, and a more fine-grained classification may bring forth novel insights.

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