

Viatcheslav Vetrov, *Instrument Metapher: Das Guanzhuibian im Licht der Manuskriptforschung*, ISBN: 978-3-643-12687-0, Berlin: LIT Verlag 2015.

Summary

A considerable part of the present study was dedicated to the reception of Western philosophy and literary criticism in the work of a Chinese intellectual, Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 (1910-1998). The study may be regarded as a reception of another reception, as an attempt to provide a new reflection of a Chinese image of the West. This occupation appeared meaningful mainly for the following reason: Qian Zhongshu's reception of the West is a complex statement about the spirit of the globalized modernity and addresses a number of intercultural problems.

The study was centrally concerned with the metaphor theory of Qian Zhongshu as it is documented in the manuscripts of his *Working Notes* (*Qian Zhongshu shougao ji: Rong'anguan zha ji* 錢鍾書手稿集: 容安館札記) and in *Guanzhuibian* 管錐編 (1979-1982.) The manuscripts, which according to Qian's wife Yang Jiang 楊絳 contain much of preparatory work for *Guanzhuibian*, were published as a three volume facsimile edition by Shangwu Yinshuguan in 2003. They bear testimony to Qian's acquaintance with many prominent Western theories of metaphor which he decided not to discuss in *Guanzhuibian*. These omissions deserve attention as the primary function of Qian's metaphor theory is to demonstrate the unity of thought in all human cultures. In view of the fragmentary form of his writings, where only little place is given to explicit personal arguments and much more is gained by suggestive chains of quotations from Chinese and Western classics accompanied by only quite scarce commentaries by Qian, the selection of illustrative material appears in itself as a most important rhetorical means.

Qian's assortment of the quoted material displays a well-considered positioning of his own metaphor-theory within a preexisting Western metaphor-discourse in which metaphor is increasingly divorced with metaphysical questions traditionally associated with it. Qian's attitude is reminiscent of Ivor Richards' criticism of Aristotle, of Stephen Bokenkamp's criticism of Pauline Yu, of Lakoff's/Johnson's polemics against some not quite clearly defined „objectivists". Qian's treatment of Western metaphor-theories with his constant reliance on thinkers like Richards and Lakoff, who show little sympathy with metaphysical matters, may be explained as a reflection of his personal taste. However, there is much irony at work, as the assertion of the global thought-unity thesis demanded that the West itself appear beyond metaphysics: Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Provenzal, Ricœur are not admitted to participate in the discussion of metaphor within Qian's voluminous work. Thus, both Qian's manuscripts and *Guanzhuibian* attest to the same crisis which provoked Alain Badiou to his *platonian gesture* and to the compilation of *Manifestos for Philosophy* in which he tried to demonstrate that metaphysics is still possible, that it is primarily concerned with man's personal experience, that it is still worthwhile to discuss the relationship of philosophy and poetry.

If for Badiou Hegel is the greatest philosopher after Plato, for Qian he is the most serious challenge, to which he reacts at the very beginning of *Guanzhuibian*. The fact that Hegel's statements – primarily those concerning some specific traits of German and Chinese languages – produced an alarming impression on Qian Zhongshu, cannot be regarded as only reflecting his personal taste, either: Qian was writing in an epoch of rising anti-colonialist sentiments, when political correctness had come to be a powerful and dependable means of separating fair from foul.

Political correctness is also a power which dominates the current academic research landscapes: assertions of the unity of African and Western thinking, of Chinese and Western

rhetoric, topics like „Before Religion” and „Before Philosophy”, projects like „Endangered Metaphors“ for the protection of a „rich conventional wisdom”, the omnipresent search for *family resemblances* structure the humanities just like Qian’s criticism of Hegel and the global thought-unity thesis structure *Guanzhuibian*. The present study was an attempt to analyze some basic elements of this structure. It shows that Qian’s presentation of the other according to his thought-unity program is necessarily accompanied by *modelling* of the other. Qian’s pursuit of political correctness turned out to be a constitutive principle of the presentation of the other. The global post-colonial frame of politically correct mutual representations of the other and of oneself could not be covered in the present study. It may be therefore considered as a preparatory step for further interdisciplinary research on this subject.