

Report of the Research Committee on “Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature” (2016-17)

Since July 2016, the Research Committee on “Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature” has conducted the following activities to promote the spirit of and discourse on Scriptural Reasoning among Chinese scholars.

1. On May 30, 2016 Professor Roland Boer from the Newcastle University, Australia gave a lecture on “Between Romance and Momo: Love in the Modern World,” discussing the Marxist view of love in a global age.
2. On June 6, 2016, we help organize a special forum for the Ph. D. students sponsored by Confucius China Study Plan. These international students had a chance to reason with the Chinese students on similar topics. RUC professors offered helpful comments on the spot.
3. From July 4- 6, 2016, Professor Idit Alphandary from Tel Aviv University, Israel offered a seminar on the theme of “forgiveness” for students at RUC and other high institutions in Beijing.
4. On July 8th, 2016, Professor Kevin Hart from the University of Virginia, USA offered a lecture on “The Absolute Event of History: The Shoah and the outside”.
5. From July 10- 14, 2016, the Committee organized the 12th “Theology and Humanities” Summer Institute with a focus on “Rethinking Universalism”. We invited eight keynote speakers and 30 young scholars from mainland China, Taiwan, the UK, and USA, the Netherlands, and Israel to present papers and hold panel discussions at Beijing.
6. On September 22, 2016, Professor Peter Lampe from Heidelberg University offered a lecture on the topic of “Jewish Apocalyptic Literature: Does the Image of a Violent God Necessarily Entail an Ethos Oriented toward Violence”.
7. On September 24, 2016, Professor Martin Kern from Princeton University gave a lecture on “Old Books, New Questions: Methodological Perspectives for Studying Ancient Chinese Texts Today”.
8. On September 26, 2016, Professor Werner G. Jeanrond from University of Oxford offered a lecture on “Hermeneutics and Revelation”.
9. On October 28th, November 2nd, 4th, and 9th, 2016, Professor Paolo Santangelo from Oriental Institute, Sapienza University of Rome offered lecture series on the theme of “The Cross- Culture Comparison of Emotion”, discussing specific “emotion” terms in different civilizations.
10. On October 31st, November 3rd, 7th, and 8th, 2016, Professor David Jasper from University of Glasgow gave lecture series on the theme of “Comparative Literature and Comparative Religion”, tracking the history and current situation of comparative studies on literature and religion in the world.
11. On November 2nd, 2016, Professor Peter Hajdu from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Institute of Literature gave a lecture on “Magic in Ancient Rome and in Roman Literature”.

12. From November 12- 13, 2016, we help organize the Fifth World Conference on Sinology under the theme of “Sinologies in a Comparative Context: Tradition and Transformation.” This conference hosted about 89 international scholars from 16 countries to dialogue with Chinese scholars in the following panels and forums: “Sinology and China,” “Sinology and Western Learning,” “A Centennial Review of Sinology Journals,” “The Quarrel between Ancient and Modern Sinology Paradigms,” “Trilateral Common Vocabulary Dictionary Consultation Forum,” “Confucius China Study Plan Ph.D. Student Forum.”
13. On November 16, 2016, Professor Zhang Longxi from City University of Hong Kong offered a lecture on the topic of “East- West Comparative Studies: Challenges and Opportunities”, presenting the possibilities and problems of comparative studies, and had a lively discussion with students on the scene.

Apart from the conferences and symposia, we oversaw the successful publication of several works. With the help of Baylor University Press, the papers presented at the conference in April 2014 were collected into a book entitled *The Poetics of Translation Between Chinese and English Literature*, which came out in February 2016. *The Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* has upheld the spirit of Scriptural Reasoning in the choice of themes and articles. Issue 34 (published in November 2015), on the theme “The Significance of Hope”, reflects upon the current social and religious challenges on the basis of Jürgen Moltmann’s dialogues with Chinese scholars. Key terms such as “just war”, “just peace”, or “universal values” were discussed from different cultural and social perspectives. In such face- to- face dialogues, we were able to stimulate each other’s thinking, an interchange deeply rooted in the spirit of the Scriptural Reasoning movement. Issue 35 (published in May 2016) focused on the theme of “Post- modern Theology” and surprised the readers with the title of the editorial foreword, “Nonreligious Christianity and Atheist Religion”. This issue featured translations of four post- modern thinkers’ articles: G. Vattimo’s “Toward a Nonreligious Christianity,” J. D. Caputo’s “The Rose is Without Why: An Interpretation of the Later Heidegger,” Mark Taylor’s “Networking Religion,” and Graham Ward’s “Bodies: The Displaced Bodies of Jesus Christ.” Echoing the featured articles, some Chinese young scholars’ studies on post- modern thinkers such as Slavoj Žižek and Giorgio Agamben have been chosen to demonstrate the sophistication and originality of reflection upon these ideas within the Chinese context.

The Committee will keep promoting inter- disciplinary, inter- religious and inter- cultural studies in the future. In the next academic year, the committee will host at least three major conferences. July 10- 14, 2017 the Committee will hold the 12th Summer Institute, focusing on discussions of “Universalism” or “Universality”, a topic once discarded by the leading scholarship but persistently resurfacing in philosophy and literature. In October, 2017, the committee will help organize the fifth World Conference on Sinology with the theme “Sinologies in Comparative Context: Tradition and Innovation”. Issues 36 and 37 of the *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* will focus on the following three topics - “Does Tian (Heaven) Speak?” and “‘Ethics of Ultimate Ends’ and ‘Ethics of Responsibility’”. The

Committee has started a new project early 2017 by working with Brill and the editors of T'oung Pao , one of the leading academic journals on sinology worldwide, translating the best articles published in the past century into Chinese. In three- year's time, the project plans to publish seven volumes in all, aiming to provide some fundamental research materials for Chinese scholars so that the dialogue and reasoning activities between Chinese and Western scholars may reach a deeper level.

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