

ENGLISH TEACHING IN CHINA: CONTRIBUTING TO AN ALTERNATIVE MODERNITY

Xiaoye You, Purdue University

Western ideas made it possible for late nineteenth and twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals to imagine new futures. R. Bin Wong¹

The spreading of English and English teaching in the world is commonly conceived as the result of European modernity and imperialism. A historical account of the globalization of the English language often starts from the Industrial Revolution in eighteenth-century Britain and Britain's subsequent global colonization in the nineteenth century, which was an integral part of the European modernization process.² When British colonial power stretched to different parts of the world, use of the English language followed the presence of the colonizers and became one of the tools they used to rule the local populace.³ The United States emerged as another menacing colonizer in the world in the second half of the nineteenth century. Without exception, English language and English teaching served this new master—to promote American values, introduce American-styled education, and cultivate pro-American local elites.⁴

Even within the post-colonial global context, English and English teaching are continually manipulated by the colonial masters, as illustrated by Robert Phillipson in his revealing book, *Linguistic Imperialism*.⁵ I agree that the spread of English and English teaching had imperialistic dimensions, but in this essay I will argue for an alternative interpretation of this phenomenon based on the theory of alternative modernity as exemplified by English teaching in China.

In traditional social theories about modernity or modernism, eurocentric views position European modernity as the sole model and argue that other countries will progress teleologically toward modernity by mimicking the European model. Thus other countries' modernization processes will be interpreted as either success or failure when compared to this model. A recent echo of such eurocentric reasoning can be found in Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*. In a Hegelian view of historical development, Fukuyama argues that the West became modern through both technological advancements and struggles for liberal democracy. By following a similar path, as he suggests, now the rest of the world is converging upon this historical mode as the common and ultimate end of history.⁶

However, when unbound from a eurocentric perspective of modernity, the development

¹ Wong, R. Bin, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 287.

² e.g., Howatt, A.P.R. [1984]. *A History of English Language Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). Crystal, David. *English as a Global Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

³ Pennycook, Alastair, *English and the Discourses of Colonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

⁴ Alberca, Wilfredo L. "English language teaching in the Philippines during the early American period: Lessons from the Thomasites." *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, 25, (1/2), 1994: 53-74. Yeh, Wen-Hsin, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republic China, 1919-1937* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990).

⁵ Phillipson, Robert, *Linguistic Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁶ Fukuyama, Francis, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Macmillan 1992), xii-xiii.

of modernity in China, whether seen as a historical period or a social project, can be understood at least as an alternative to the European model, rather than a total failure in any sense as some China critics have called it. In *Aesthetics and Marxism*, Liu offers an explanation for such a standpoint that, when Western capitalist modernity expanded from a local historical experience into a global movement, it spawned at once fragmentation and universalization, and opened up alternate possibilities. China's passage into modernity unquestionably constituted one alternative, with culture and aesthetics playing significant roles.⁷

I will argue that English teaching has played a pivotal part in China's struggle for its modernity in the area of culture and aesthetics. In this essay, I will first introduce a general view of the theory of modernity and alternative modernity. Next, I will examine how English teaching introduced a particular cultural practice that contributed to the aesthetics of Chinese education across three major politico-historical periods. Aesthetics is used here as a discourse of modernity, or a critique, to negotiate the intrinsic contradictions of modernity in concrete and "sensuous" terms. These contradictions of modernity exist in both political and social dimensions. For example, in the politic dimension, the generalities of reason are in constant conflict with the particularities of sense; and in the social dimension, individual autonomy, independence, and subjectivity are in odds with social absolutism.⁸

Modernity and Alternative Modernity

Modernity theories took shape as Western Europe began its industrialization in the seventeenth century. In the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, sociologists such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor Adorno developed theories to explain how modernization took place in Europe. Scholars generally agreed that modernity first occurred in Europe as a result of rapid economic progress and the formation and transformation of states. The Industrial Revolution enhanced social productive forces, but also dismantled the traditional social bonds among most family units that were living scattered in the country. Disconnected from both land and landlord, people migrated from rural into urban areas. The fluidity of population called for more central control and thus the modern states came into being. With a series of subsequent social-structural and intellectual transformations, modernity achieved its maturity, according to Bauman, "(1) as a cultural project—with the growth of Enlightenment; (2) as a socially accomplished form of life—with the growth of industrial (capitalist, and later also communist) society."⁹

The modernity theories tend to focus on the internal characteristics of the Western societies as the reason for achieving modernization. In these accounts, the difference between the Western and non-Western societies is seen as the cause of the latter's failure. The Western nations have historically provided stimuli for development, but underdevelopment persists in non-Western countries because of the function of native social, cultural, and personality factors that block development. With this most influential "challenge-response" thesis, Chinese modernity is doomed to be a failure because its modernization experience diverges significantly from the Western experience.

⁷ Liu, Kang, *Aesthetics and Marxism: Chinese Aesthetic Marxists and Their Western Contemporaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), xiii.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2000, 4.

⁹ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 4.

Postmodern and deconstructive worldviews that emerged after the Second World War, particularly beginning in 1960s, provided new lenses for social studies. These views enabled researchers to distance themselves from the subject of modernity and enumerate features that could define modernity.¹⁰ After tracing the history of state formation and economic transformation in both China and Europe, Wong has discovered important similarities in those areas and thus offers a counter-argument against the eurocentric perception of the Chinese modernity.¹¹ For example, China established an efficient state structure and nurtured official efforts to maintain the social order in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 205 A.D.), far ahead of state formation in Europe. In terms of economic development, capitalist production in China started from late Ming Dynasty (the early 17th century), almost the same time as the capitalist development in Britain. Refuting the assertion that China's modernization does not match Western standards and therefore is deviant, Wong calls for alternative perspectives in understanding modernity in countries other than the West. He explains that, Using explicit norms to predict change establishes the relevance of counterfactuals. By comparing two alternative predictive schemes, we can eliminate the dangers of explaining what didn't happen from one perspective only. State formation and transformation include both parallel and connected elements, but the combination of the two incompletely determines the trajectories of political change. The openness of possibilities is bounded by the repertoire of ideological and institutional resources that officials and elites can bring to politics.¹²

With a unique trajectory for Chinese modernity thus recognized, I will now explore how English teaching has mediated in Chinese politics, economics, and culture to unbind those “possibilities.” The course of English teaching in the Chinese modernization process will be delineated below in three historical periods: the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the Republic of China (1912-1949), and the People's Republic of China (1949- present).

Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911)

China was a powerful feudal empire developing on its own modern track before its confrontation with the British opium traders in late 18th Century. The sovereignty of the Qing Dynasty stretched east from the eastern part of present-day Russia to Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan in the west; and from Mongolia in the north to the South China Sea. The Qing government relied on an efficient state infrastructure to maintain the social order. Government officials were educated elites recruited through a thousand-year long keju (civil servant examination system), in which their knowledge of Classical Chinese books was tested. China's economy was well developed in comparison with neighboring centralized control of population, and some degree of industrialization, had already emerged.

However, a series of confrontations with the West, starting with the Opium War between Britain and China, altered Chinese development. The British began trading with coastal areas in south China in the late eighteenth century. Opium, produced in India, was one of their major items of trade. Unhappy with the proliferation of opium in the South and the massive outflow of silver into foreigners' pockets that resulted from illegal purchases of opium, the Qing government sanctioned a campaign to eliminate opium in south China in 1838.

¹⁰ Hall, Stuart et al, eds., *Modernity and Its Futures* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

¹¹ Wong, *China Transformed* , 291-294.

¹² *Ibid.*, 290.

The anti-opium campaign provoked the Opium War (1839-1842), which was followed by other conflicts between the Qing government and Western powers. These included the Second Opium War (1860-1862), and the Sino-Japanese War (1892-1894). In the end, China lost out in these conflicts and was forced to sign unequal treaties that opened coastal ports and leased territories.

The Treaty of Nanjing (1841) that ended the first Opium War was written in two versions, English and Chinese—but the versions did not entirely match, to China’s disadvantage. Zhu notes that all treaties related to war were written in English after 1862, creating a government demand for language translators who could make sense of the documents.¹³ Therefore, in the same year, the Qing Court decided to establish an institution called *Tong Wen Guan* (Foreign Languages College) in Beijing that specialized in training interpreters. Students were recruited from nation-wide civil servants examination; while teachers were mostly foreign missionaries.¹⁴

Despite the government’s political pragmatism, the establishment of the college soon made waves in the Chinese educational circles. Originally designed to provide training in foreign languages, the students could not master a Western language without any Western learning. Therefore, Western subjects such as Geometry, Chemistry, Law, Physics, Economics, and Astronomy were incorporated into the five or eight-year language training curriculum. The *Tong Wen Guan* became the first institution in China to align itself with Western education systems. However, the westernized curriculum immediately met with vigorous opposition from conservative officials in the Qing Court led by Woren, the Mongol Neo-Confucian moralist, tutor to the Emperor, and head of the Imperial Academy.

Western barbarian subjects were unfit in court-sanctioned institutions, where, Woren argued, attention should be focused exclusively on classical teachings of ritual sanctity intended to rectify the mind and pacify the realm. Western learning in astronomy and mathematics was of very little use in efforts to “establish a nation,” which required, above all, “propriety and righteousness . . . in the minds of the people.”¹⁵ Such vociferous opposition was gradually silenced after Woren’s death in 1871. Similar foreign language schools soon emerged in other major Chinese cities, including Shanghai, Wuhan, and Guangzhou.

The Western education system was further fortified when reformist officials in Qing Court entrusted national defense and economic development to Western technology. In contrast to conservatives like Woren, the reformists felt a pressing need to learn from the West in order to save the nation from foreign exploitation. Their slogan was the famous *ti-yong* dualism, or “Chinese learning as the essence combined with Western learning for practical use,” which aimed at distancing the internal contradictions of China’s modernization process. Western specialists helped to establish a variety of special schools to teach the application of military technologies, machine maintenance, and communication technology. Natural science and technology courses became the standard in those schools. The new emphasis on science and technology eventually polarized Chinese traditional education, which had for thousands of years taught students classical Confucian books and emphasized morality and social responsibility. After years of

¹³ Zhu, Minghui, “Why Chinese people learn English now?” In *Culture, Literacy, and Learning English: Voices from the Chinese Classroom*. Edited by Kate Parry and Su Xiaojun. (Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc, 1998), 112-116.

¹⁴ Li, Liangyou, Zhang, Risheng, & Liu, Li, *Zhongguo Yingyu Jiaoxue Shi* (A history of English language teaching in China)(Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1988), 18-19.

¹⁵ Quoted in Yeh, *The Alienated Academy*, 8-9.

petitions from the reformist officials, the Qing Court passed an act establishing modern schools to replace traditional schools in 1904, marking the end of the thousand-year old *keju* system.

While the introduction of a Western educational system opened the minds of Chinese intelligentsia to alternative visions of national development, foreign language education, particularly English teaching, offered them opportunities for direct exposure to Western thought. One prominent example was Yan Fu, who was sent to study in Greenwich Navy Academy in Britain by the Qing government in 1876. During the two years of his study, he traveled around Europe and was awed by the achievements that the West had made in its culture, education, science, and technology. He was also deeply attracted to the philosophy of Adam Smith, Lord Russel, Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, and Herbert Spenser. After returning to China, he published essays criticizing two thousand years of Confucian learning and advocated replacing the old feudal laws, ethics, and morality with Western democracy and science. His major contribution was his translation of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* in 1898, where he explicitly added his own interpretation of how Spenser's social Darwinism and Huxley's criticism could be related to China's current circumstance.¹⁶

Yan disagreed with Huxley's view that the cosmic process did not apply to the human society, and supported Spenser's contention that evolution was the motive force. Therefore, he warned the Chinese that the whole nation might perish if they did not struggle for survival. But, on the other hand, Yan opposed Spenser's assertion of "survival of the fittest" and aligned himself with Huxley's view that social progress is an ethical process, the end of which is not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest, but of those who are ethically best.¹⁷ So he called for the Chinese people to take concrete action to make China ethically fit to survive among the world powers. Thus his work, along with the Western thought introduced by other Chinese scholars, enlightened Chinese intelligentsia and forged a new worldview. In the political domain, Western thoughts kindled inspiration and determination among revolutionaries to end the Qing feudal regime. A series of political and military struggles finally led to the collapse of the Qing government and the establishment of Republic of China in 1912.

To conclude: for the Qing Dynasty, English teaching opened Western-style schools in China, and helped put an end to the civil-servant examination system that had impeded intellectual liberalism and the production of scientific talents. The introduction of Western thought in science and democracy inspired Chinese politicians and intellectuals to envision a modern China they had never seen before. Those visions, bypassing the *ti-yong* dualism, and actually expanded Chinese culture by integrating modern Western thoughts. The popularity of English teaching continued its inspirational effects as China entered the Republic period.

Republic of China (1912-1949)

The founding of a republic in 1912 had eroded the feudal system of the previous two thousand years in China, but the traditional attitudes did not evaporate overnight. The effort to establish a republic dissolved into chaos and for a few years, warlords dominated the Republic of China with regressive policies. They valued traditional Confucian ethical codes that were in direct opposition to those of the modernization theorists.

¹⁶ Wang, Xinhua, "Who is Yan Fu? How did he disseminate the Western evolution thoughts?" In *Zhongguo Lishi Sanbai Ti* (Three hundred questions about the Chinese history). (Shanghai: Shanghai Antique Books Press, 1988), 551-554.

¹⁷ Baumer, Franklin L., *Main Currents of Western Thought: Readings in Western European Intellectual History from the Mid dle Age to the Present* (3rd ed.) (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 561.

Modernizing intellectuals led a campaign from 1915 to 1919, called the New Cultural Movement. The most important leaders of the movement were Cheng Duxu, Hu Shi, and Lu Xun, radical democratic intellectuals who were determined to fortify the new Republic by uprooting the rotten thoughts, culture, morality, and ethics accumulated in the last thousands of years of feudal regime. They popularized a reformed style of written Chinese, known as *baihua* (“plain language”), which, based in part on western usage, promoted a more colloquial form of expression.¹⁸ The traditional writing style, using what today is known as Classical Chinese, was remote from daily usage and only served the educated elites, but the new style *baihua*, which expressed ordinary daily language, could be used by all. Therefore, the majority of intellectuals immediately welcomed it. By 1920, the Ministry of Education was stipulating *baihua* be used in all elementary and middle schools texts and in Chinese language classes.¹⁹

The easy acceptance of *baihua* as a new writing style among Chinese intellectuals could be explained by their contact with foreign languages such as English and led to further popularization of English teaching in both the secondary and tertiary education in China. Before the Qing Court ordered a nationwide restructuring of the old provincial academies in 1903, English and Chinese, science and classics were taught in separate institutions. After the restructuring, the two academic curricula were combined and offered in one education system, and all students had to learn foreign languages and science. According to Yeh, nearly all courses in university—science, engineering, medicine, business, education, economics, social sciences, and law—were taught with a heavy reliance upon English textbooks and reference materials.²⁰ The only exceptions were Chinese language, literature, history, and philosophy. College admission invariably required a foreign language, most commonly English. Many secondary schools, particularly schools in major urban centers, had therefore to train their students in English for the exam. English teaching thus offered crucial ammunition to the New Cultural Movement, whose effects extended far beyond the cultural domain.

English teaching came to China hand-in-hand with foreign evangelism, which itself was an important form of Western imperialism. Many schools were sponsored and staffed by English-speaking missionaries at that time. Nevertheless, the ramifications of English teaching in those schools extended far beyond nurturing “a viable humanistic Christian alternative on Chinese soil” as desired by the foreign missionaries.²¹ For example, St. John’s University in Shanghai, established in 1879 by Bishop I. J. Schereschewsky, a member of the American Episcopal Mission, aimed specifically at proselytization in the upper reaches of Chinese society. However, the cosmopolitan nature of Shanghai, where traditional Chinese culture mixed with the new colonial cultures, eventually modified the expected results, as Yeh explains,

The St. John’s ideal of Christian humanism was inevitably dissipated by the urban bourgeoisie’s eagerness to gain admission to a Western-oriented environment dominated by a concern for business profits. Scientific literacy and Christian belief were valued largely as symbols of cosmopolitanism and enlightenment. The ideas of Renaissance Christian humanism

¹⁸ Gunn, Edward, “Introduction,” *Rewriting Chinese: Style and Innovation in Twentieth -Century Chinese Prose* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

¹⁹ Li, Xinbao and Huangchu Gu, *Zhongguo Xiandai Yuwen Jiaoyu Shi* (The history of modern Chinese education) (Chengdu: Sichuan Education Press, 2000), 67.

²⁰ Yeh, *The Alienated Academy*, 10.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

continued to be invoked, but in reality what lay at the heart of the rise of St. John's as one of Central China's most exclusive and prestigious academic institutions was the program of "a Christian civilization of commerce and science," in the apt words of Griffith John, voiced at a time contemporaneous with the founding of St. John's.²² In such a setting, although English was taught and used as the primary medium of instruction, the students shared its utilitarian and vocational aspects more broadly.

The "Christian civilization of commerce and science" was best reflected in the variety of vocations St. John's graduates entered. By 1929, according to Yeh, of the 780 former St. John's students, 200 were working in education, another 200 in commerce; 20 were employed in industry, 100 in government service, and 80 in the medical profession; and only 30 were engaged in the field of religious and social service.²³ Evidently, an education with English as the media of instruction prepared Chinese elites for participating in the construction of Republic of China. Thus, English teaching assumed an important role in the multiple social dimensions of Republic of China.

Marginalized political groups, such as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and other democratic parties, also recognized the importance of English teaching, as well—even though it was administered by the Nationalist government in the Republic of China. Even in the midst of the war against the Japanese invaders, the CCP opened a foreign language school in its headquarters at Yan'an in 1941. This school later became the Beijing Foreign Studies University. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Zhou Enlai, future Premier of the People's Republic of China, instructed that the school should not only train military interpreters, but also produce talents in the field of diplomacy for a new China after the Anti-Japanese War.²⁴ At the beginning, because of the close ties with the Soviet Union, the school only provided Russian language training, but English teaching began in 1944 when CCP contacts with the U.S. military personnel became more frequent. The school was staffed by both Chinese teachers and international friends who were sympathetic with the Chinese Communist movement. Students were selected among young people of high political consciousness from both the Communist armies and colleges all over the country. After the Communist armies won the subsequent Civil War (1946-1949) and the People's Republic of China was established, those students naturally became the leaders in foreign language education in China.

People's Republic of China (1949 – Present)

After the Communist regime was established in 1949, the majority of Chinese embraced the Communist visions with immense enthusiasm. However, English teaching did not cease to play a role in the dynamics of cultural politics in China. English teaching and learning continued to engage the Chinese people in exploring the question of where their country should go and how to get there.

After 1949, the young People's Republic faced numerous daunting challenges—some left by the old social system and others caused by the inexperience of the new ruling party. With a large amount of national fortune withdrawn to Taiwan by the Chinese Nationalist Party, the national economy was close to bankruptcy after the civil war. Meanwhile, most of the world's

²² Ibid., 65.

²³ Ibid., 68-69.

²⁴ Fu, Ke, *Zhongguo Waiyu Jiaoyu Shi* (The history of foreign languages education in China) (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1986), 52.

powers refused to recognize the People's Republic and even besieged China's borders. Responses to those challenges were all of vital relevance to the development of Chinese modernity.

English teaching responded to those challenges through the educational sector. For example, the Beijing Foreign Studies University shifted its focus from training military interpreters, its original aim, to producing diplomats. Its contribution to the country's modernization was acknowledged and best summarized in a congratulatory telegraph sent by the Ministry of Education on the university's 60th anniversary: In the past 60 years, earnestly cared for by the Party and the government, the university abided by the correct educational direction. By producing a large number of foreign language specialists well-rounded in morality, knowledge and physical fitness for the socialist course, it has contributed to the economic construction and social progress of the nation, and the cultivating of friendship among all nations.²⁵ In similar ways, graduates of other universities have matriculated into various government functions and assisted in implementing the social visions of the Communist Party. They served in education, culture, diplomacy, cooperate businesses, trade, research institutions and so on—areas vital to the Chinese modernization in the second half of the 20th century.

Despite its social and political contributions, English teaching has also experienced ups and downs in the People's Republic, as determined by domestic and international politics and economics. After the new nation was born, Russian immediately dominated foreign languages teaching in China because the Soviet Union offered to assist with China's economic construction. The Russian dominance terminated in the later 1950s when bilateral relations were severed. Subsequently, English teaching reclaimed its popularity in the country. However, during the Cultural Revolution (1967-1976), English teaching, along with other foreign languages education, came almost to the brink of collapse. Foreign languages, foreign cultures, and foreign products were labeled as the “evil weeds of capitalism” by leftist groups in different political campaigns. Most foreign language schools were forced to shut down and foreign language education stopped for several years.²⁶ However, English teaching revived in 1978 when China initiated a new “open-door” policy for introducing foreign technology and investment into the country.

While English teaching largely served the Communist government, it also aided in social criticism after the Cultural Revolution. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong, the Chairman of CCP, intended to unify people's goals towards Communism through a series of cultural measures. “Mao's privileging of culture, as a way in its inception to counter the economic determinism of classical Marxism, was eventually turned into a “culturalist” determinism and essentialism.”²⁷ This “culturalist determinism” led to severe economic degradation and a multitude of political persecutions. After the Cultural Revolution had come to an end, however, English teaching and learning empowered opposition groups who were critical of the Chinese leadership or their policies. English also became a principal tool for communicating with overseas audiences. Dissatisfaction could be vented and the government criticized in English. After the Tiananmen Event in 1989, in which Chinese students and some workers launched a series of demonstrations against the government's corruption and lack of democracy, many Chinese intellectuals fled to the U.S. and other English-speaking countries. The

²⁵ Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China [2001] Congratulatory telegraph from Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China for the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Beijing Foreign Studies University, September 20, 2001. Retrieved Oct. 30, 2001 from: <http://www.bfsu.edu.cn/departmen/xqxw/xq/default.htm>.

²⁶ Fu, Ke, *Zhongguo Waiyu Jiaoyu Si* , 83-86.

²⁷ Liu, *Aesthetics and Marxism* , xi.

exodus of Chinese intellectuals to the West afterward manifested their disillusion with the Communist regime and demonstrated their admiration for Western democracy. English teaching empowered those intellectuals, most of whom were college graduates. They took the TOEFL and GRE tests, and went to the West as students or researchers.²⁸

For the majority intellectuals within the country, English teaching continues to provide new perspectives on Chinese politics, economics and culture. By listening to the VOA and BBC, and reading Western critiques of the Chinese government and society in English-language periodicals, Chinese intellectuals continue to enjoy opportunities to evaluate their entrusted socialist teaching—such as Communism, collectivism, the people’s democratic dictatorship—against the Chinese reality. They can now question whether socialism is in fact superior to capitalism.²⁹ As the Chinese economy rapidly gears towards capitalist development, they are keenly aware of how to integrate market economy into their egalitarian social ideal. Some intellectuals criticize the current Communist regime in public, thus are the vanguard agents for a democratic, civilized, and prosperous modern China.

Conclusion

Indeed China’s contact with various forms of Western imperialism in the past centuries generated confusion, humiliation, and challenges to Chinese society. But those challenges have not necessarily led to any negative metamorphosis of the Chinese culture; instead, as modern education took root in China, Chinese culture has been further enriched and expanded.³⁰ Neither does embracing the Western concepts of science and democracy entail a Chinese modernization trajectory modeled after the West. Rather, those concepts have forced generations of Chinese people to re-examine domestic issues, reflect upon different possibilities for a modern China, and invariably put those possibilities to test.

The manner in which English and English teaching has fostered modernity need not be interpreted solely from a eurocentric point of view. Granted that English did serve prevalently imperialistic functions for the colonial powers; it has also worked as a mediating force at the juncture of politics, economics, and culture in non-Western nations. Particularly it has helped to engage local people in the aesthetics of education and culture when their countries strive for modernization. The history of English teaching in China testifies to such an “other”ed interpretation.

²⁸ Rosen, Stanley, “Students and the state in China: The crisis in ideology and organization.” In *State and Society: The Consequences of Reform* . Edited by Arthur Lewis Rosenbaum. (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1992), 169-191.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Qian, Mu, *Zhongguo Wenhua Shi Daolun* (Introduction to the history of Chinese culture). (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1994).

Glossary:

keju—科举

Tong Wen Guan—同文馆

ti-yong—体用 (a shortened form of中学为体, 西学为用)

baihua—白话