

## Globalizing Classics: Ovid Through the Looking Glass

### [1] “CHINA: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS”

Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fifth Avenue, NYC), May 7 – September 7, 2015.

#### [a] Goal:

“explore the impact of Chinese aesthetics on Western fashion and how China has fueled the fashionable imagination for centuries.”

#### [b] Introductory material:

“In Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871), the heroine enters an imaginary, alternative universe by climbing through a mirror in her house. In this world, a reflected version of her home, everything is topsy-turvy and back-to-front. Like Alice's make-believe world, the China mirrored in the fashions in this exhibition is wrapped in invention and imagination. Stylistically, they belong to the practice of Orientalism, which since the publication of Edward Said's seminal treatise on the subject in 1978 has taken on **negative connotations of Western supremacy and segregation**. At its core, Said interprets Orientalism as a **Eurocentric worldview that essentializes Eastern peoples and cultures as a monolithic other**. While neither discounting nor discrediting the issue of the representation of "subordinated otherness" outlined by Said, this exhibition attempts to propose a less politicized and more positivistic examination of Orientalism as a site of **infinite and unbridled creativity**. Through careful juxtapositions of Western fashions and Chinese costumes and decorative arts, it presents a rethinking of Orientalism as an **appreciative cultural response** by the West to its encounters with the East. The ensuing dialogues are not only **mutually enlivening and enlightening**, but they also **encourage new aesthetic interpretations and broader cultural understandings**. As if by magic, the distance between East and West, spanning perspectives that are often perceived as monolithic and diametrically opposed, diminishes. So, too, does the association of the East with the natural and the authentic and the West with the cultural and the simulacrum. As these binaries dissolve and disintegrate, what emerges is an **active, dynamic two-way conversation, a liberating force of cross-cultural communication and representation.**”

*\*note: emphasis is my own.*

### [2] “Globalizing Ovid: An International Conference in Commemoration of the Bimillennium of Ovid’s Death” (May 31- June 2, 2017) Shanghai Normal University.

CFP: <https://classicalstudies.org/scs-news/cfp-globalizing-ovid-shanghai-2017>

Conference: <https://sites.google.com/depauw.edu/globalizing-ovid-shanghai-2017/home>

#### [a] Conference panels:

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Teaching Ovid Across Time                                   | Psychology and Poetics           |
| The Spatial Turn  | Multimedia Ovid                  |
| Genre, Narrative, and Reading                               | Textual Traditions and Criticism |
| Memory, Empire, and Exilic Psychology                       | Metamorphoses                    |
| Visualizing Ovid  | Ovid and the Augustan Era Again  |
| Post-Classical Ovid II                                      | Post-Classical Ovid I            |
| Ovidian Reception of Earlier Literature and Intertextuality |                                  |

**[b] Plenaries & Keynotes:**

- “Graeco-Roman Classics in China: From Khanbalik to Shanghai”, F-H. Mutschler (U. Dresden / Peking U.)  
希腊罗马古典学在中国：从元大都到上海
- “Why Ovid? Translation and Globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, Laurel Fulkerson (Florida State U.)  
为什么研究奥维德：二十一世纪的翻译与全球化
- “A Globalized Reading of Ovid’s Creation”, J. Miller (U. Virginia) 奥维德创世叙述的全球化解读
- “Identity Politics: Women and Men, Reading Texts”, A. Sharrock (U. Manchester)  
身份政治：女性与男性、阅读与文本
- “Reception of Ovid in Twentieth Century China and Roundtable on Translating Ovid into Chinese with Commentaries” 二十世纪中国对奥维德的接受及奥维德汉译与注释圆桌讨论
- “Ovid and Qian Zhongshu”, Zhi Zhang (Xiamen U) 奥维德与钱钟书
  - “The "Ovid Project": Translating Ovid into Chinese”, Project members 奥维德项目：奥维德汉译
- “Secondary Exile and Ovid’s Retreat from Language in his *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*”, G. Williams (Columbia U.) 次流放与《哀怨集》与《黑海书简》中的语言避退
- “The Reception of Ovid in the High Middle Ages and Renaissance: New Manuscript Discoveries”, F. Coulson (Ohio State U.) 中世纪中期及文艺复兴时期对奥维德的接受：新抄本的发现
- “New Directions in Global Classicism” C. Francese (Dickinson College) 全球古典学之新方向

**[3] The Current Paper’s Five (→ Three) Themes:**

- Who Owns Classics?
- Access: Globalizing Ovid, the WWW, and us.
- International Intellectual Collaboration
- [The Promise of Comparative Literary Studies]
- [The Profit of Studying non-Classical Latin]

**[4] Who Owns Classics? Reflecting Narcissus And Snow White’s Stepmother****[a] Neo-Nazism: the threat of nationalist and racist possession**

K. Poulis, “Golden Dawn and the Classics” *Political Critique* [posted May 30, 2017, 1:35 pm]  
<http://politicalcritique.org/world/2017/golden-dawn-and-the-classics/>

Poulis quotes from the official journal of the Golden Dawn: “the presence of the swastika in Vergina is no coincidence. It confirms the high levels of racial realization of an elite portion of the Greek nation, which knows and honours its Aryan origins.”

**[b] Ovid’s fresh exile: trigger warnings and modern re-interpretations**

“**Trigger warning**” is the act of warning your students that material you will cover in class may elicit a deep emotional response, generally one of sadness, isolation, hopelessness, desperation, and self-annihilation.

K. Johnson, T. Lynch, E. Monroe, and T. Wang, “Our identities matter in Core classrooms” *Columbia Spectator* [posted April 30, 2015, 8:33 AM]  
<https://www.columbiaspectator.com/opinion/2015/04/30/our-identities-matter-core-classrooms/>

“Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* is a fixture of Lit Hum [Columbia’s core literature course], but like so many texts in the Western canon, it contains triggering and offensive material that marginalizes student identities in the classroom. These texts, wrought with histories and narratives of exclusion and oppression, can be difficult to read and discuss as a survivor, a person of color, or a student from a low-income background.”

J. Coyne, “Life Is “Triggering.” The Best Literature Should Be, Too” *The New Republic* [posted May 14, 2015] <https://newrepublic.com/article/121790/life-triggering-best-literature-should-be-too>

R. Goodman, “Ovid Had No Trigger Warning” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* [posted August 24, 2015] <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Ovid-Had-No-Trigger-Warning/232541>

K. Waldman, “Reading Ovid in the Age of #MeToo” *The New Yorker* [posted: February 12, 2018]  
<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/reading-ovid-in-the-age-of-metoo>

**[c] Ovid as the original PUA?\* the threat of misogynist possession** (\*PUA = Pickup Artist)

D. Zuckerberg (forthcoming: October 2018) *Not All Dead White Men: Classics and Misogyny in the Digital Age*, Harvard University Press

D. Zuckerberg, “Bang Rome: Ovid and the Original Sin of Pickup Artistry” *Eidolon* [posted Dec 21, 2015] <https://eidolon.pub/bang-rome-2214f4a3d5c5>

“The idea of an ancient Roman predecessor gives them [i.e. modern Pickup Artists] legitimacy by implying that the seduction community has deep historical roots. And if Ovid can be claimed as one of their own, his status as a brilliant and influential poet reflects well on the entire movement and gives it intellectual credibility. Embracing Ovid as the OG [i.e. foundational] PUA is a significant choice. The extensive similarities between Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*... and the advice given by PUAs reveal some of the most consistently problematic elements of PUA ideology—the erasure of female subjectivity, the use of sexual partners (often interchangeable and indistinguishable) to bolster status within a community of men, the near-total disregard for affirmative consent.”

## **[5] Access: The WWW As The Looking Glass Itself**

### **[a] Chinese translations and commentaries on the WWW**

Ovid Project: Translating the Complete Corpus of Ovid’s Poetry into Chinese with Commentaries

奥维德项目：奥维德汉译

Dickinson Classics Online (DCO): <http://dco.dickinson.edu/>

“Dickinson Classics Online publishes resources for Chinese students and scholars of the ancient Greek and Latin classics. At its initial launch in 2015 the site contains a Chinese version of the Core Latin and Greek Vocabularies from [Dickinson College Commentaries](#), DCO's parent site. This work was done by a team of distinguished Chinese scholars, all members of the DCO Editorial Board.”

### **[b] Open(ing up) Access: globalizing our own research**

Institutional repositories and websites

Humanities Commons (<https://hcommons.org/>)

Zenodo (<https://zenodo.org/>)

Academia\* (<https://www.academia.edu/>)

*\*Note: Unlike the others listed, Academia is a for-profit company that monetizes your work for their gain.*

## **[6] International Collaboration: Through The Looking Glass**

### **[a] Western Classics via China?**

“Crossing Boundaries: Ancient History Explores Its Future” (April 20-21, 2012) Center for the Ancient Mediterranean, Columbia University

→ M. Puett (April 20): ““Rethinking Ancient History from the Perspective of China”

### **[b] Globalizing Ovid, after Shanghai**

What did we take to the conference—and what will we take away from it? (*cui bono?*)

### **[c] “China Initiatives”**

Programs of exchange: intellectual Red Rover

Not Just STEM: recruiting Chinese-national students

B. Larmar, “Alienation 101” *1843* [posted April/May 2017]

<https://www.1843magazine.com/features/alienation-101>

T. Moore, “East Meets West(ern Classics), Dickinson Launches Groundbreaking Project To Bring The Greek And Latin Canon To Chinese Students And Scholars” [posted October 1, 2015]

[http://www.dickinson.edu/news/article/1766/east\\_meets\\_western\\_classics](http://www.dickinson.edu/news/article/1766/east_meets_western_classics)

*Citing C. Francese* “The West has a great deal to learn not just from the Chinese classics but from Chinese ways of reading and interpreting their own classics. DCO creates a venue for what we expect will be a very fertile intercultural dialogue, as Chinese scholars bring their own perspectives and ways of reading to the Western classics as well.”

## **[7] Comparative Studies: Through The Glass *Brightly*.**

*Cut from the present paper in the interest of time:*

Comparative Studies of Chinese and Greco-Roman Antiquity is a nascent field, but a growing one. Recent work has focused primarily on comparative history, such as Scheidel's *Rome and China* (2009). [Handout 7a] As Chinese scholars strengthen and renew philological and literary studies of Western Classical texts, we should begin to see more comparative literary studies [Handout 7b] like Handler-Spitz's *Symptoms of an Unruly Age: Li Zhi and Cultures of Early Modernity* (2017), which uncovers horizontal commonalities and recognizes China and Europe as co-participants in the making of modernity. Can this comparative literary approach be extended back to Classical Antiquity, East and West? Ovid may have claimed that Tomis was at the edge of civilization, but work such as Chin's current study of Silk Road narratives continues to correct perceptions of "antiquity [be it Greco-Roman or Chinese] as a sort of linguistic and racialized past," and demonstrate the high degree of interconnectivity, including literary cross-fertilization.

### **[a] comparative and integrative histories (select)**

W. Scheidel, ed. (2010) *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*, Oxford University Press

W. Scheidel, ed. (2015) *State Power in Ancient China and Rome*, Oxford University Press

M. Poo, H. A. Drake, and L. Raphals, edd. (2017) *Old Society, New Belief: Religious transformation of China and Rome, ca. 1st-6th Centuries*, Oxford University Press

N. Di Cosmo & M. Maas, edd. (forthcoming: 2018) *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity: Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca. 250-750*, Cambridge University Press

[note: this title presents an integrative, rather than comparative history]

### **[b] comparative literary and cultural productions (select)**

R. Handler-Spitz (2017) *Symptoms of an Unruly Age: Li Zhi and Cultures of Early Modernity* University of Washington Press

T. Chin (in progress) *The Invention of the Silk Road Idea*