Missionaries and Chinese Classics

传教士与中国经典

Journal for the Study of Christian Culture

基督教文化学刊

第26辑·2011秋

Missionaries and Chinese Classics

传教士与中国经典

Journal for the Study of Christian Culture

基督教文化学刊

第26辑 · 2011秋

编者絮语

文化身份的"动词性"逻辑

——传教士的身份、认同及其游移

杨慧林

随着人们对单一主体的质疑,"文化身份"几乎已经成为辨析种种价值理想的决定性前提。然而如果"身份"只是"被建构"的结果①,那么"被建构"的"身份"必有其生成、选择,甚至游移的过程。如果"身份"是"名",那么其生成、选择和游移则必会编织起一套"命名"也"被命名"的结构。就此而言,传教士对中国经典的译解及其译解活动对其自身产生的可能影响,当为我们提供最为典型的注脚;其中的"身份"已经并非一个确定的名词,而显然包含着一种"动词性"逻辑。

"动词性"逻辑对于"普遍常识"的挑战是不言而喻的,在宗教学领域尤为如此。按照德里达(Jacques Derrida)的说法:"我们要讨论宗教的问题的时候,要回到宗教这个名词的生成和它的语义。"②它的生成是动态的,生成是个过程;它的语义是在使

---

① 德鲁兹(Deleuze)关于"被构成的主体"(the subject always being constituted)之讨论,见 Alain Badiou, "The Event in Deleuze," trans. Jon Roffe, in *Parrhesia*, no. 2 (2007): 37 – 44.

② Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002), 57.

用当中才有的一种语义,而不是一个放在那里的、等待我们去解释的名词。

卡普托(John Caputo)进一步提出:即使上帝也只是一个"我们用来指向与上帝之名相关的事件的名字",而这一事件又是"处于正在发生之中的发生,永远不能被正在发生的东西完全表达"。因此主体是"被构成的"(-constituted)而不是"构成性的"(constitutive),上帝同样应该是非人格化的(a-personal);任何价值理想都是"生成性的可能"(an enacted probable),宗教同样应该是"演绎和生成"(attempted performance/attempted enactments)。由此卡普托引述了一位犹太教拉比的命题:上帝是一个动词。①

回到中国自身,我们会发现将"identity"翻译为"身份"或者"认同",始终包含着不同的侧重。如果说动词性的"认同"是描述一个过程,那么名词性的"身份"大约意味着某种定格。不过仔细追究,这两层内容恐怕是相互成全的:缺少"认同"的过程,"身份"缘何而定?没有"身份"的定格,"认同"又通向何处?因此我们所需要的,其实是从名词当中发掘动词性的逻辑,在动词当中把握名词性的样态。这一意义上的"identity",可能既非"身份"也非"认同"。

进一步追究,"identity"之"名"(to name and to be named)还应当涵纳"施动"与"受动"的双重意味。以传教士对中国经典的译解为例:他们在"西学东渐"乃至"中学西传"之初的独特"身份",未必是清晰、连贯的,未必没有微妙的游移;当他们试图借助西方的概念工具为中国思想"命名"时,同样也使中国思想进入了西方的概念系统。因此才有论者对基督教传教士理雅各(James Legge)作出这样的描述:"他……首先要向自己的西方

---

① John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 31.

同胞传教，首先要为西方学者和传教士译介东方的思想"①。

的确，理雅各终其一生的主要成就，似乎并非向中国人传播基督教，却是将中国古代经典翻译为英文。尽管其基督教立场始终明确，传教的目的无可置疑，留在其墓碑上的两种"身份"却对比鲜明："赴华传教士及牛津大学首任中文教授"。②

作为传教士的理雅各与作为汉学家的理雅各，是否见证着一种身份的游移？坚守基督教信仰的理雅各与熟读四书五经的理雅各，其从事译解活动的"身份"究竟是"施动者"还是"受动者"？换言之，理雅各的"身份"究竟取决于直接的信仰表达、还是多少也体现于他所留下的译注文本？

中国人相信"文如其人"，实际上"人"亦在其"文"。因为作者的功能可以变化，作者的权威可以丧失、作者的角色可以终结或者死去③，文本仍然会延续。写作尚且如此，又遑论读经？"经"之于"读"的限定性，愈甚于"文"之于"人"。无论理雅各本人原初的立场如何，其翻译、解释、研究，或者哪怕是批判中国经典，都已经注定了所译之经对于译经之人的潜在影响。

"书有书的命运"，作者留存给读者的，注定是"敞开"的文本；经典的译解，不仅要求译解者持守"以意逆志"的底线④，甚至会更多地有赖于经典本身。用伽达默尔（Hans-Georg

---

① Lindsay Ride, "Biographical Note" for the third edition, see James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, *with a Translation*, *Critical and Exegetical Notes*, *Prolegomena*, *and Copious Indexes* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2001), 10.

② Ibid., 9.

③ Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", Michael Foucault, "What is the Author", Umberto Eco, "The Role of the Author," see *Modern Criticism and Theory*: *A Reader*, ed. David Lodge & Nigel Wood (New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2000), 146 – 150, 174 – 187, 207, 288.

④ 理雅各用《孟子·万章上》的名句作为《中国经典》英译本的题记："不以文害辞，不以辞害志；以意逆志，是为得之。"James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, *with a Translation*, *Critical and Exegetical Notes*, *Prolegomena*, *and Copious Indexes* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc.), 2001.

Gadamer)的话说:"虽然一个文本不会像一个'你'那样对我讲话,我们这些寻求理解的人必须通过我们自身使它讲话。"①

　　神学家卡尔·巴特(Karl Barth)对《圣经》也曾有同样的期待:"无论代价如何,要使文本开始发言"。② 也许是因为基督教神学在"圣言"(the Word of God)与"人言"(the words of man)的绝对区分方面特别敏感,卡尔·巴特进而涉及的,恰恰是"游移的主体"(moving subject)。其间的"身份"已经不是主体所能选择,却在相当程度上受制于"开始发言"的《圣经》文本。

　　以"人言"表达"圣言"如是,神学家注读基督教经典如是,传教士译解中国经典亦复如是。这一线索几乎必然通向"身份"的"动词性"逻辑及其不可避免的游移,而游移并非"以今日之我,攻昨日之我",因为作为一种"被构成的主体"(the subject being constituted),"我"本身正是游移所生成的结果。

　　在"西学东渐"的浪潮中,"中学西传"的过程也得以展开。理雅各所代表的传教士群体,为中西之间的文化互释与思想对话留下了宝贵的线索。他们各自的成就有所不同,对中国经典的"误读"在所难免,信仰立场和文化态度也或有差异,但是他们都已经成为"身份"游移的生动个案。重读这些传教士、重读他们对中国经典的译解,或许更容易了然于巴丢(Alain Badiou)对"身份政治"的质疑③,也将有助于我们反思以"立场"一锤定音的荒诞。

---

　　① 伽达默尔[Hans-Georg Gadamer]:《真理与方法》[Truth and Method],洪汉鼎译[trans. HONG Handing],上海:上海译文出版社[Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House],1994,第484-485页。

　　② 卡尔·巴特[Karl Barth]:《〈罗马书〉释义》[Der Römerbrief],魏育青译[trans. WEI Yuqing],香港:汉语基督教文化研究所[Hong Kong: Institute of Sino-Christian Studies Ltd.],1998,第16页。

　　③ 参阅杨慧林[YANG Huilin]:《何谓"神学的事件"》["What is a 'Theological Event'?"],《基督教文化学刊》15辑[Journal for the Study of Christian Culture 15],2006春,第1-22页[Spring (2006):1-22]。

　　易则动、动则生、生则衡、衡则和,这应当是基督教与中国文化共同分享的古代智慧。而无论基督教神学的"already but not yet"还是《周易》的"既济"与"未济",其落点可能都在于游移中的生成。

　　杨慧林:中国人民大学副校长,中国人民大学文学院比较文学及宗教学教授

参考文献 [Bibliography]

西文文献 [Works in Western Languages]

Badiou, Alain. "The Event in Deleuze." Trans. Jon Roffe. In *Parrhesia*, no. 2 (2007): 37 – 44.

Barth, Karl. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Caputo, John D. *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005.

Derrida, Jacques. *Acts of Religion*. Ed. Gil Anidjar. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. Trans. Joel Weinsheimer & Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed. London & New York: Continuum, 1989.

Legge, James. *The Chinese Classics, with a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes*. Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2001.

Lodge, David & Nigel Wood, ed. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2000.

中文文献 [Works in Chinese]

伽达默尔:《真理与方法》,洪汉鼎译,上海:上海译文出版社,1994。[Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. Trans. HONG Handing. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1994.]

卡尔·巴特:《〈罗马书〉释义》,魏育青译,香港:汉语基督教文化研究所,1998。[Barth, Karl. *Der Römerbrief*. Trans. WEI Yuqing. Hong Kong: Institute of Sino-Christian Studies Ltd., 1998.]

杨慧林:《何谓"神学的事件"》,《基督教文化学刊》15 辑,2006 春,第 1 – 22 页。[YANG Huilin. "What is a 'Theological Event'?" In *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* 15, Spring (2006):1 – 22.]

Editorial Foreword:

The "Verbal" Logic of Cultural Identity:
Shifts in Missionaries' Identity and Sense of Identification

YANG Huilin, translated by ZHANG Jing and Chlöe STARR

As suspicion towards the single subject increases, "cultural identity" has pretty much become the decisive premise for clarifying a range of values and ideals. However, if "identity" is merely the result of "being constituted"[①], this "constituted identity" must have its own process of emerging, choosing and shifting. If "identity" is a "name", its emergence, choice and shifts must be able to create a set of structures of "naming" and "being named". In this regard, missionaries' efforts to translate the Chinese Classics and their translation activities have a probable effect on the missionaries themselves, providing for us a particularly typical commentary on the effect, here where "identity" is not a fixed noun, but clearly entails a type of "verbal" logic.

The challenge of "verbal" logic to "common knowledge" is obvious, especially in the area of religious studies. According to Jacques Derrida, whenever we deal with the problem of religion, "we

---

① For fuller discussion of Deleuze on "the subject always being constituted", please see Alain Badiou, "The Event in Deleuze," trans. Jon Roffe, in *Parrhesia*, no. 2(2007): 37 – 44.

will have to return to the emergence and the semantics of this noun 'religion'."[1] The emergence of "religion" is dynamic; it is a process. Its semantics can only emerge with usage. It is not a noun sitting there, awaiting our interpretation.

John Caputo goes further and argues that God is only "a name we use to point to the Event related to the name of God," and that "the Event … is that which happens within what is happening but is never captured by what is happening." For this reason, subjects are "constituted", not "constitutive", and similarly God should be "a-personal". Ideals and values are all "an enacted probable"; and religion should similarly be an "attempted performance/attempted enactments". Caputo accordingly quotes a proposition from Rabbi Cooper: God is a Verb.[2]

Returning to the Chinese Self, we discover that the English word "identity" can be translated as a noun *shen fen* (身份, one's social status) or a verb *ren tong* (认同, to be identified as), and has throughout incorporated these different emphases. If the verbal "identity" (*ren tong*) is used to describe a process, "identity" (*shen fen*) as a noun refers to some kind of fixed pattern. If we investigate more deeply, we can see that these two layers of content are complementary: Without the process of "identifying", how can "identity" be determined? Without a fixed pattern of "identity", where will the process of "identifying" lead us? What we need at this point is to uncover the logic of the verbal from within the noun, and to grasp the dynamics of the noun within the verb. The meaning or sense of this

---

① Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002), 48.

② John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 31.

"identity" should be neither "*shen fen*" or "*ren tong*".

If we look further into this, "identity", to name and to be named, should include within the term the double sense of "subject/agent" and "object". To take the example of the missionaries' translations of Chinese classics: their distinctive identities from the period of "Western learning spreading to China" to the beginning of the "Chinese learning being transmitted to the West" period were not necessarily clear or consistent, not necessarily without the slightest vacillation. When the missionaries attempted to borrow the conceptual tools of the West to "name names" within Chinese thought, they simultaneously brought Chinese ideas into western conceptual systems. And so commentators could say of the Protestant missionary James Legge: "He was... going to be a missionary to his own people and race first; he was going to translate and explain the learning of the East to the scholars and the missionaries of the West." [1]

It seems, indeed, that the major achievement of James Legge during his lifetime was not his spreading of Christianity to the Chinese people, but his translation of the Chinese classics into English. Although his Christian standpoint was always clear, and his aim of evangelism undoubted, the balance of the two "identities" engraved on his tombstone is also quite apparent: "Here Rests in God/James Legge/Missionary to China/and First Professor of Chinese/in the University of Oxford/Born 20th Dec. 1815, Died 29th Nov. 1897." [2]

Did James Legge the Missionary and James Legge the Sinologist, witness a kind of vacillation, or shift, in identity? Was the "identity"

---

[1] Lindsay Ride, "Biographical Note" for the third edition, in James Legge, *The Chinese Classics, with a translation, critical and exegetical notes, prolegomena, and copious indexes* (Taibei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2001), 10.

[2] Ibid., 9

of Legge in his translation activities, the Legge who both steadfastly upheld the Christian faith and knew thoroughly the Four Books and Five Classics, that of "subject" or "object"? In other words, does the "identity" of James Legge draw ultimately on his direct expression of faith, or to what extent is it also embodied in the translations and commentaries left to us?

The Chinese believe that a person's writing exemplifies his or her character (*Wen ru qi ren*); that, in fact, the "person" is also in his or her "writings". The function of the author may change, the authority of the author may diminish, and the role of the author may be radically challenged[1], however, the texts will still continue on. If this is true for writing, how much more so when it comes to the reading of classics? The limitations of "reading" with regard to "the classics" is even greater than that of "person" with regard to "writing". No matter what James Legge's personal stance was at the outset, his translations, interpretations, studies, and even criticisms, of the Chinese classics had already destined the latent influence that the classics he translated would have on him as a translator.

"Books have their own destinies." What the author leaves to a reader is fated to be an "open" text. The translation and interpretation of the classics requires not only that the interpreter or the translator hold onto the underlying principle of not "doing violence to the intent

---

[1] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," Michael Foucault, "What is the Author," Umberto Eco, "The Role of the Author," in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge & Nigel Wood (New York: Pearson Education, Inc. , 2000), 146 – 150, 174 – 187, 207, 288.

with the meaning", ① but also requires an even greater reliance on the text itself. In Hans-George Gadamer's words, "It is true that a text does not speak to us in the same way as does a Thou. We who are attempting to understand must ourselves make it speak. "②

The theologian Karl Barth held the same expectations for reading the Bible: "it is a last and deepest cultural event to make the texts speak, at whatever cost. "③ Perhaps because Christian theology is especially sensitive to any absolute distinction between the "Word of God" and the "words of man", what Karl Barth has touched upon is precisely this "moving subject." Here "identity" is no longer something which the subject can choose, but, to a certain extent, is subject to the biblical text that has "started to speak".

So "the word of man" expresses the "Word of God" in this way; theologians annotate and read the Christian scriptures in this way; and

---

① James Legge quoted a famous saying from *Mengzi* as the colophon for *The Chinese Classics*: "Therefore, those who explain the odes, may not insist on one term so as to do violence to a sentence, nor on a sentence so as to do violence to the general scope. They must try with their thoughts to meet that scope, and then we shall apprehend it. " See James Legge, *The Chinese Classics, with a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc. , 2001).

② Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. HONG Handing (Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1994), 484 – 485. English version see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer & Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Continuum, 1989), 370.

③ Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief* (Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1945), 12. The German text reads as follows: "Dass es Texte gibt, z. B. die des Neuen Testamentes, die zum Reden zu bringen, koste es, was es wolle, eine letzte und tiefste Kulturangelegenheit, um es einmal so zu nennen, ist?" The popular English translation is: "Do they not perceive that there are documents, such as the books of the New Testament, which compel men to speak at whatever cost, because they find in them that which urgently and finally concerns the very marrow of human civilization?" [See Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford University Press, 1965), 9.] The author thinks the English translation by Hoskyns is not the same as the original German, and thus the English translation here is based on the Chinese translation and the German text. See Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief*, trans. WEI Yuqing (Hong Kong: Institute of Sino-Christian Studies Ltd. , 1998), 16.

this is the way in which the missionaries interpreted and translated the Chinese classics. This thread leads almost inevitably to the "verbal logic" of "identity", and its unavoidable vacillations, and these vacillations are not "an attack on my former self by the self I am today", because, as a "subject being constituted", "I" myself am produced as a result of this vacillation.

With change there is movement, with movement there is emergence, with emergence there is balance, and with balance there is harmony: this should be an ancient wisdom shared by Christianity and Chinese culture. And no matter whether the "already but not yet" of Christian theology or the trigrams "Ji ji" (既济) and "Wei ji" (未济) in the Book of Changes (*Zhou Yi*), their point of impact is for both that which is produced by vacillation (the " emergence-in-movement").

In the wave of "West Learning Spreading East", the process of "Chinese Learning Spreading into the West" was also launched. The missionary groups, represented by James Legge, have left behind important clues for intercultural understanding and philosophical dialogue between China and the West. Their individual achievements differ, there were unavoidable "mis-readings" of the Chinese classics, and there were also discrepancies in their faith viewpoints and cultural attitudes, but they have all become vivid case studies of vacillating "identities." If we re-read these missionaries, and re-read their interpretations of the Chinese classics, perhaps it will help us understand Alain Badiou's suspicion of "identity politics" [1], and help us to reflect on the absurdity of making a snap decision based on

---

① See YANG Huilin, "What is a 'Theological Event'?" in *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* 15, Spring (2006): 11 – 22.

"stand point".

YANG Huilin, Vice-President of Renmin University of China, Professor of Comparative Literature and Religious Studies at the School of Liberal Arts, RUC.

基督教文化学刊(第 26 辑·2011 年秋)

Journal for the Study of Christian Culture

传教士与中国经典

Missionaries and Chinese Classics

中国人民大学基督教文化研究所　主办