

要精英也精华

张夏伟文集

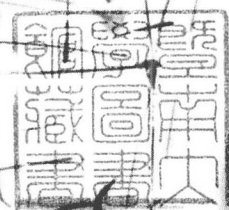
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献 给

翠萍、若帆、若萱、家彦与盈竹

并以此书纪念

已逝双亲张清镇和王清容

张夏炜1945年生于马来西亚芙蓉，在柔佛昔加末受小学、中学教育。1971年毕业于马来亚大学中文系，获硕士学位。70年代移居新加坡；曾当大学助教、教师、公务员、编辑、研究员、艺术行政等职；80年代曾为《海峡时报》写艺术评论，并担任该报《双语版》编辑兼翻译主任；90年代服务于新加坡国家艺术理事会，职务包括艺术发展、出版、研究等；今担任好藏之美术馆以及附设吴冠中美术馆馆长；曾与友人合著《石叻古迹》、合编《郭宝崑：风风雨雨又一生》、《波靖南溟：天福宫与福建会馆》，及编译即将出版的《留真：斯民摄影集——中国画名家像传》。

初识夏韩兄是在上世纪90年代初期。当时夏韩兄任职于新加坡国家艺术理事会。其时除了工作上的接触以外，交情只属泛泛。然而印象深刻。和一般行政官员不同的是；夏韩兄虽位居处长，为人却非常谦和并富有文人气质，一点也没有所谓的“官气”。

随着交往渐频，发现夏韩兄不止学贯中西（外），马来文造诣也高。更难得的是举凡在艺术（绘画），音乐，尤其本区域历史文化等方面都有一定的涉猎与研究。尤其在绘画鉴赏方面更是专家风范。自80年代开始在新加坡《海峡时报》发表画评至今荣任“好藏之”美术馆馆长，其权威及学养早已广受本地画界同行们的认同与尊敬。

近年来新加坡常常听到“精英”这个字眼。我总是半信半疑。但我可以肯定：夏韩兄绝对是真真正正的语言与文化“精英”。

本人才疏学浅，遵嘱为文，深感荣幸。敬祝夏韩兄的文集一纸风行。是为序。

写于2005年夏

潘耀田为新加坡作曲家

看一幅画，听一首曲，读一篇诗歌或文章，我有时还想知道一下这作者到底“人怎么样”。当然，那就可能会影响我对作品的看法。

如果您读这本书，不认识作者张夏炜，或者有兴趣听我谈谈我觉得他这个人怎么样，就请您往下读。当然，我所讲的会有极大的主观和片面性。

让我从怎么认识他谈起。那还只是不久以前的事。大约六年前，我很偶然地参与了国家艺术理事会的一项小任务，才碰到具体负责该项工作的他。开了几次小组会，除了觉得他相当有能力和友善之外，也并没有什么特别的印象。任务快完成时，我与组里的一位大人物不幸发生了点小纠纷。在解决问题的过程中，这位“负责人”竟没有按下踩上攀的“规矩”行事，反而选择了同情、支持和帮助我。我心里暗想：还真可以啊，这个人！于是便试着跟他交起朋友来。

近两三年里，我们（还有几个谈得来的朋友）久不久会抽空聚在一起，吃顿饭聊个天。我这才发现，原来夏炜兄平日所关注的事情还挺多挺广。特别是，对直接关系着社会发展大众心灵的意识形态、文化、语言、教育、媒体等课题，他探究得很多，思考得很深。另外对美术、音乐、文学、戏剧和民俗等领域，他都有浓厚的兴趣和丰富的知识。他本人的语言文化根底源于中、英及马来，他的学识则可以说是横越东

西和纵贯今古，所以他的思维是既扎实又开放的。他谈起东西来的那股激情，是背景、经历、阅读、思索，实践和情感的汇合，喜忧痛怒皆可动人。

夏帏兄又是一个你可以同他讨论问题的人。他并非威权或政治正确的立场和观点的辩护士，不是一切都有答案没问题的说教者，也不是绝对论和一元主义的信徒。他的言谈和篇章里有一个特别吸引我的特点，就是他善于列出不同的论点和说法，让你比较、分析和思考。例如，“美国人类学家宾尼迪克 (Ruth Benedict) 虽不谙日文，甚至连日本都不曾到过，也能写出介绍日本文化的经典之作《菊花与宝剑》”，这样一个论点单独地提出来，似乎有力地说明了语言与文化之间并无必然的联系；但是，加上以下这个疑问，即“如果她精通日文，又曾长期在日本生活过，她著作的内容会不会更可观，更具说服力？”就开拓了更大更深的思考空间。（《崇洋不等于思想开放》）又如，从一个“当然”的角度，不懂华文（的华人），会对缺乏用英文进行的对华族文化的研究觉得“可惜”；为什么不会对自己不懂华文觉得可惜呢？为什么这后一种可惜竟成了“另一个角度”呢。（《可惜还有另一个角度》）再如，社会上常听到的“担心”和“抱怨”，是说强调母语的学习会导致英语（第一语言）能力低落；一个对比的“可能”，即来自母语家庭的学生会因为努力学习英语而导致母语能力低落，把这一点提出来，对我们分析和考虑整个问题是很有必要的。（《两个不需要辩论的问题》）

在和夏帏兄的交往中，相互之间对某些问题意见不一，那是必然会发生的。我发现他的长处是，能够坚持己见而不强加于人；他更能倾听和考虑别人的不同的甚至相反的见解，还能以尊重和平等的态度与人进行建设性的争论。更令我佩服的是他的坦诚，他的内省精神，他的自我批判能力。当他谈起自身的缺点和过错时，比谈到任何他人他事，还要深沉。我就是以这样的对张夏帏的“认识”，来阅读他这部多年心血凝成的集子。

2005年7月

何自力是新加坡国立大学英文系高级讲师

Taken together, the essays by Teo Han Wue make up an engaging book, whose tone is critical but not cynical, serious yet lively – often even playful. How shall we characterize the ‘spirit’ that animates these essays?

Perhaps we can borrow an idea from one of Han Wue’s favourite writers, Edward Said, especially his view on what an *intellectual* is or should be. The term often refers to a person who is highly educated and is an expert in a particular field of specialization. However, Said refers to an “intellectual’s spirit as an amateur” rather than as a professional who serves an employer or client and whose work is thought of as “something you do for a living”. Interestingly, the word *amateur* is linked to *amour* (which means love or affection) and derived from the Latin words *amator* (lover) and *amare* (to love). For Said, amateurism as an attitude and activity is “fueled by care and affection rather than by profit and selfish, narrow specialization”.¹

To be sure, Han Wue has worked in professions such as journalism and arts administration. But we can certainly detect the attitude of an amateur rather than that of a professional in these essays. Without being a professional social commentator, the writer is motivated to enter into public debate because he cares passionately about certain issues and wishes to throw more light on them. Without being a professional art critic, he feels a special affection for the works of particular thinkers and artists and wants to share his enjoyment with us.

Readers who are unfamiliar with Han Wue’s writings may wonder why he is interested in issues concerning language and culture. To understand this, however, we must note that such issues regularly appear in public debates in Singapore. In particular, topics such as the following are frequently discussed in newspaper columns and in letters to the press: the importance of the mother tongue, the challenge of language learning, the transmission of traditional values, the influence of Western culture, and the status of different social and cultural groups.

Moreover, it should be noted such topics are often treated quite differently in English and Chinese newspapers, and the differences are most obvious to readers who follow the debates in the two languages.

Put simply, the differences demonstrate that a gulf still exists between the two major language groups among the Chinese in Singapore that have been known as the 'Chinese-educated' and the 'English-educated'. This is not the place to review the historical context of educational and language policies in Singapore. Suffice it to say that since Independence in 1965, English has been the dominant working language in Singapore, the language of administration, commerce, and science and technology – in short, the 'language of modernization'. Chinese has been emphasized as the mother tongue of the Chinese in Singapore, as a 'second language' in the school bilingual curriculum (especially as the language for the transmission of traditional values), and as the common language among Chinese from different dialect groups.

With the economic and political rise of the People's Republic of China on the global stage since the early 1990s, however, Chinese has been increasingly emphasized as a practical language for doing business. On the one hand, this has been the impetus for Chinese being taken more seriously by English-educated Chinese. On the other hand, many among those come from a predominantly English-speaking background in school and at home have found the learning of Chinese difficult. At the national level, the Ministry of Education has attempted to make the learning of Chinese easier for English-speaking students. Moreover, political leaders have emphasized that Singapore needs to develop a "Chinese-language elite". In light of this, one may ask why our multicultural society has not cultivated such a stratum of citizens and how the country might have benefited – and not only economically — from a significantly larger pool of the English-educated who were also more proficient in Chinese and other languages.

Against this larger background, Han Wue has provided a questioning voice in his essays written over the last three

decades. And he has done so not merely as a person who is effectively trilingual (in Chinese, English and Malay), but as one who cares deeply about culture and cultural diversity and who values learning from all sources. From this vantage point, he is critical of any sense of superiority among members of one group, harbouring prejudices against – and stereotypes of – another group, whose cultural background they hardly understand and make little effort to do so. At the same time, however, he does not think that any group that has to face prejudice and stereotyping should become more defensive and closed-minded. From Han Wue's vantage point, he is sensitive to the neglect and loss of valuable aspects of tradition. At the same time, however, he does not think that it is helpful to look back to the past in a superficial and romanticized way.

Han Wue, therefore, offers a more subtle and sophisticated approach to thinking about issues concerning language and culture. In particular, it is useful to highlight two interrelated themes that run through this collection of essays, perhaps implicitly rather than explicitly. On the one hand, the writer suggests that there is a need for deeper cultural dialogue, for communicating across boundaries. On the other hand, he suggests that there is a need to grapple with not only cultural loss but also cultural change; there is a need to connect between past and present.

Why are these two themes interrelated, and why are they relevant to contemporary society? To answer these questions, we can tap on the wisdom of two intellectuals whose ideas and contributions occupy a special place in this book: Edward Said and Kuo Pao Kun.

Edward Said has already been mentioned, but we can now turn to his important essay "The Clash of Definitions", which Han Wue also refers to in this book. In his essay, Said criticizes "the notion that civilizations are monolithic and homogenous" and "the unchanging character of the duality between 'us' and 'them'." In addition, he cautions against understanding a culture by looking only at the mainstream or official culture and disregarding the "sense of restlessness within each culture" and assuming "that there is a complete homogeneity between culture and identity".² When civilizations or cultures are regarded in this

way, there is little room left for genuine and open dialogue between individuals and groups from different backgrounds. Moreover, there is little room left for critical thinking about what we can inherit from the past and how we can meet the challenges of the present.

Kuo Pao Kun was an intellectual and dramatist who made a deep impact on the thinking of many of us in Singapore and across the world. Han Wue includes in this book not only his appreciative essay on Pao Kun's work but also his translations of three insightful essays by others – all four of which were written soon after he left us. There is so much to be said about his multifaceted legacy, but here we should draw attention to two points. First, Pao Kun emphasized and exemplified the importance of cultural dialogue across boundaries and through overcoming barriers – even language barriers. For example, in *Mama Looking for Her Cat*, an old Chinese woman and a young Indian man, attempts to communicate with each other – at first using their own languages but finally resorting to sign language and other ways to make oneself understood and to understand what the other is saying. And in *Sunset Rise*, there is a wonderful scene of a Chinese-speaker and an English-speaker reciting Hamlet's famous soliloquy which begins with "To be or not to be..." – each recites in his own language and yet in unison with each other.

Second, Pao Kun was also a thinker who profoundly understood the importance of remembering the past. He spoke of Singaporeans being "cultural orphans" and about "excavating our deeper memories". However, he saw a connection between memory, tradition, and art. He said: "Even to inherit tradition, you cannot do without art because tradition can only be inherited through a regenerative process. Without our own creative input, we cannot inherit what has come before us." When Pao Kun developed a new theatre training programme in 2000, he asked: "If we do not pursue the original, why engage in art? If we do not learn from the classics, how can we know that we are original?"³

Now we can attempt to show how the two implicit

themes of this collection of essays are related. In both the process of communicating across boundaries and the process of excavating memory or inheriting tradition, there must be some creative effort on the part of individuals. Such processes do not happen 'naturally'. Indeed, without creative effort, members of a group may tend to pigeonhole others under monolithic and homogenous categories without attempting to understand them. Without such effort, bearers of a tradition may tend to either forget about the past or cling on to tradition in a defensive and unquestioning way.

What kind of 'creative' effort is needed in communicating with others and in inheriting tradition? Perhaps one way of answering this question is to consider the kind of creative effort that is put into the process of translation. It can be said that translation can never be 'perfect' or 'complete'. But the translator makes the special effort to find the most appropriate way to render what is expressed in one language into another language, taking into consideration the cultural context of the original text and of the current readership. Translation requires not just language skills but also cultural knowledge. At times, a technically 'accurate' translation is not always the most effective or aesthetically pleasing translation. Translation carries risks but the effort to grapple with these risks can also bring about new ways of understanding the text or the 'Other' – and also new ways of understanding one's own cultural background and oneself. In this sense, we may not only say that translation is an art but that Art itself involves the kind of creative effort that is required in translation.

Now we can see why this kind of creative effort is so badly needed in contemporary society, which is characterized by cultural diversity and cultural conflict, by cultural loss and cultural change. Now we can see why it is no accident that the author of this book is also a translator and someone who cares about translation – and about cultural dialogue, memory, tradition, and art. And his affection for art goes beyond the written word to include music, painting, and even mime – a wordless language, a wordless art, which speaks volumes.

Ultimately, as Han Wue demonstrates in these essays, it is not

language *per se* that lies at the heart of our contemporary challenges. It is our will – or lack of will – to understand others and ourselves more deeply and more creatively.

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References:

1. Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*. London: Vintage, 1994, pp. 55 and 61.
2. Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000, pp. 572 and 578.
3. These words by Pao Kun are from various sources, but they are also found in the book, *Kuo Pao Kun: And Love the Wind and Rain*, that Han Wue and I co-edited with the help of a wonderful team of youthful and dedicated 'amateurs', who worked tirelessly to produce the book for Pao Kun's 100th day commemoration held at The Substation on 18th December 2002. Many writers and translators contributed to the multilingual book, which consists of quotations from Pao Kun and tributes by others written in Chinese, English and Malay.

总的来说,《要精英也精华》里的文章构成了一本引人入胜的书,其格调是批判的,但却不是冷嘲热讽的;严肃的同时也是生动的,还偶带戏谑的味道。我们该如何概括这些文章所体现的精神呢?

或许,我们可以借助夏忸偏爱的作家萨伊德(Edward Said)的说法,尤其是他认为谁是、或谁才算是“知识分子”的论点。“知识分子”这个词儿通常是指一个受过高深教育并学有专长的人。但萨伊德却把“知识分子”的精神归属于业余爱好者,而非受雇或以服务为营生的专业人士。有趣的是,业余爱好者(amateur)这一名词跟“爱”与“钟情”有关,并且源于拉丁字 amator“爱者”和 amare“爱”(动词)。对萨伊德来说,业余性质是一种态度,参与业余活动是出自关怀和爱心,而非为牟利、私心或狭隘的专业精神。虽然,夏忸曾经从事专职的新闻工作与艺术行政工作,但从这些文章里,我们感受到的肯定是其中的业余态度,而不是专业态度。他不以专业社会评论家身份自居,积极参与公开议论,就因为他热心关注某些课题,并希望能通过文字加以阐明、解读。他也不自认是专业艺术评论家,只是因对某些思想家和艺术家的作品情有独钟,而愿意跟大家分享个中乐趣。

不熟悉夏忸作品的读者也许会问为什么他对语文和文化的问题特别感兴趣。答案很简单,因为这些都是经常在新加坡公开论坛出现的辩论课题,尤见于报刊上的言论版及读者来信,包括:母语的地位、语文学习面对的挑

战、传统价值的传承、西方文化的影响、以及各社会与文化群体之间的关系。此外，华文及英文媒体也经常以各别不同的方式和角度来处理这类课题。对于有留意这些中英文争论的读者来说，其中差异是显而易见的。

简单地说，这种差异显示在新加坡的华族群体里，“受华文教育”和“受英文教育”之间，还存在着—道鸿沟。本文无意评论新加坡教育和语文政策的前因后果，但这里只需要说的是，自从1965年新加坡独立以后，英文成为主要的工作语文——行政、商业、科技的用语——简言之，即“现代化”的语文。华语却定为新加坡华族的母语、双语课程里的第二语文，华族方言群之间的共同语言。

随着中国经济和政治在国际舞台上崛起，华文自90年代起便逐渐成为商业的实用语言。这情况一方面促使受英文教育的华族更认真去看待华语，另一方面却也让更多来自讲英语为主的家庭和学校感到学华文的困难。教育部已作出努力让讲英语的学生，能更轻松学华文，而政治领袖也强调新加坡需要培育一批“华文精英”。面对如此情况，某些人或许会质问：为什么我们的多元文化社会未曾培育出多元文化的公民？新加坡过去该如何增加更多通晓华文和其他语文的受英文教育者，好让我们——不仅仅在经济方面——因而获益良多？

实际上，夏伟这些年来写的文章里发出一种质询的声音。他这样做并不只是因为他通晓三种语文——华文、英文和马来文，而是由于他对文化及文化差异