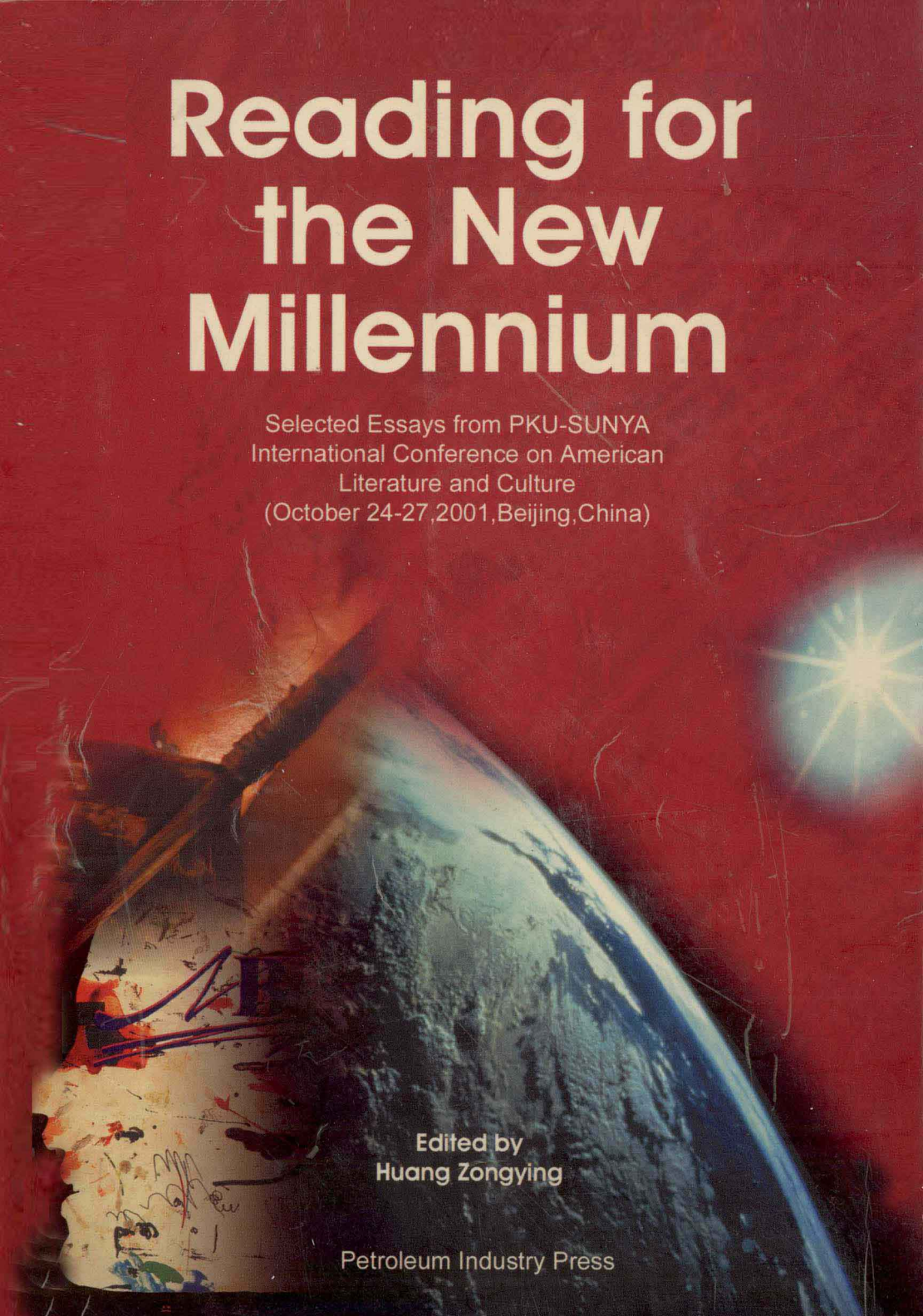


Reading for the New Millennium

Selected Essays from PKU-SUNYA
International Conference on American
Literature and Culture
(October 24-27, 2001, Beijing, China)

Edited by
Huang Zōngying

Petroleum Industry Press



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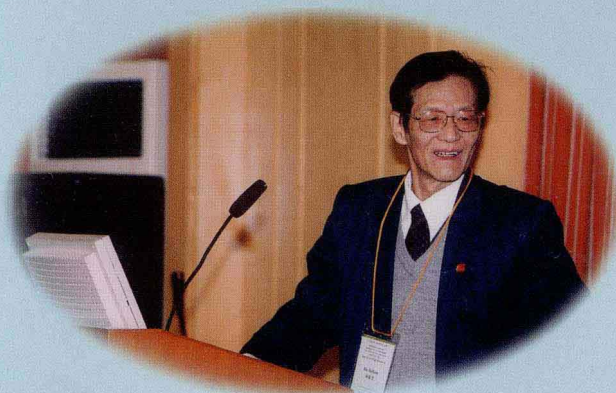
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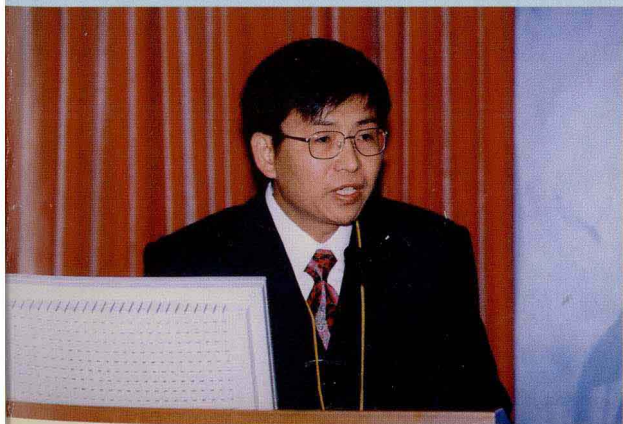
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Vice Dean Zhou Jinfu at
the Conference



Students' Performance at the Conference

Audience at the Conference



Memorable Smiles for the New Millennium

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Editor's Word:

Reading for the New Millennium: PKU-SUNYA International Conference on American Literature and Culture in a Time of Change

在一个时间上的变化

北京大学 州立大学 奥尔巴尼
Peking University and the State University of New York at Albany, with
the collaboration of Peking University Center for European and American
Literatures, China Association for the Comparative Study of Chinese and
American Cultures and the Office of Social Sciences of Peking University,
jointly sponsored the international conference on new approaches to the
study of American literature and culture in the new millennium during
October 24-27, 2001 in Beijing, China. The emerging technologies and the
global cultural and economic systems require a rethinking of the traditional
themes and texts and a redefinition of traditional notions of literature, arts,
and culture. The very way that meaning is made is changing, and this change
is reflected even in the basic academic disciplines. New critical methods and
new theories of literature and culture have appeared and are transforming
literary and cultural studies. In an important sense the disciplinary
boundaries are being redrawn, and new kinds of material enter into
traditionally well-defined fields. Literary texts are studied in relation to texts
from the popular culture, and both are studied in relation to the cultural
conditions that they reflect and to a broad range of philosophical theories.
We feel that it is time to meet and share our findings toward a more
comprehensive mapping of the twenty-first century literary and cultural
landscape. By looking backward to our rich histories, and beyond our present
contexts to what divergent models can offer us, we joined our efforts to
envision a new future for the reading of texts of all forms: theoretical, poetic,

narrative, dramatic, artistic, cultural, political, etc.

Many issues were addressed to from different perspectives at the conference: How are familiar texts of American literature and culture to be read in the new context of the twenty-first century? What are the common concerns of literary and cultural scholarship in China and the United States? What are the differences? How does technological innovation unsettle notions of what constitutes literature, art, culture, time, space, and humanity itself? How might globalization change notions of “national” literatures, arts and cultures? How should “literacy” be defined in a time when multimedia communications dominate our cultural landscape? How have literatures, arts, and thought been conceptualized and taught across cultures? How might literary and cultural scholarship and education contribute to shaping these vital changes? What perspectives on these issues might scholars from “the oldest civilization” and the “new world” offer one another? We attempted to open new avenues of cooperation and mutual understanding between two cultures that will play major roles in the history of the twenty-first century and between two academic cultures that can profit from continuing interaction.

More than 200 scholars from different parts of the world took part with great interest and enthusiasm in this international conference on American literature and culture. 121 papers were presented at 6 plenary sessions and 4 parallel sessions in 16 groups during the conference. On the opening ceremony on October 25, 2001 at Peking University, warm-hearted speeches were first offered by Professor He Fangchuan, Vice President of Peking University, Professor Hu Jialuan, Dean of School of Foreign Languages at Peking University, Professor Judith Barlow, Co-director of the Conference from SUNY at Albany. Two letter speeches (one from the Vice President and Provost of SUNYA and the other from Professor Randall Craig, Chair of the English Department of SUNYA) were then presented by Professor Judith Fetterley and Jeffrey Berman. Four Associate Deans of the School of Foreign Languages at Peking University, Professor Ren Guangxuan, Wu Xinying,

Liu Shuxiong and Zhou Jinfu attended the opening ceremony. Professor Wang Fengxin, Professor Liu Yiqing, Professor Wang Bangwei, Professor Ye Yiliang, Professor Zhu Bangfang and many other distinguished scholars from Peking University were also present at the ceremony. I felt greatly honored that I had been commissioned as the director of the conference and chaired the opening ceremony.

After the opening ceremony, Professor Shen Dan (Peking University), Professor Elizabeth Schultz (Kansas University), Professor Judith Fetterley (SUNYA), Professor Judith Barlow (SUNYA), Professor Judith Johnson (SUNYA), Professor Zhang Ziqing (Nanjing University), Professor Jeffrey Berman (SUNYA), and Professor Liu Cecilia H.C. (Fu Jen University) presented their papers at the first three plenary sessions as keynote speeches to the conference. Professor Qian Qing, Wu Bing, Guo Qiqing, Zhang Yun, Jin Li and Sun Youzhong from Beijing Foreign Studies University, Professor Liu Yiqing, Shen Hong, Liu Jianhua, Zhang Shiyun and Jin Hengshan from Peking University, Professor Chen Xilin (Sichuan University), Professor Gu Qinan (Nankai University), Professor Li Gongzhao (PLA Foreign Languages University), Professor Pan Jian (Hunan University), Professor Guo Yingjian (Henan Normal University) and many others distinguished Chinese scholars on American literature not only attended but also helped chair some of the parallel sessions of the conference. On behalf of the Conference Committee, here I extend my heart-felt gratitude to their great presence and their help to the success of the Conference.

My sincere thanks also go to the four hard-working and insightful Ph.D. candidates in the English Department at Peking University, Mr. Zhang Yaoping, Yan Kui, Ma Shige, and Sunjicheng, who helped prepare *NEWSLETTER* from each parallel session at the conference. Besides, the wonderful conference services were provided by members of the Staff Union of the School, Mrs. Shi Xiuzhi, Liu Jun, Xiao Shumin, Liu Ruixue, and by students from the English Department, Hai Yuanyuan, Meng Liang, Ma Naiqiang, Liu Xiaoqing, Wang Mian, Zheng Xi, Ou Yang, Jin Hongmei, Ma

Xiaofan , to name a few. The impressive Poetry Reading Party offered by Judith Johnson, Zhang Ziqing, Christopher Funkhouser, and Belle Gironda, students' performance of short plays directed by Sun Jianqiu, and the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the publication of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* directed by Professor Elizabeth Schults, all contributed to make the conference a memorable one.

“The groundwork for this conference,” says *UAlbany Update* on Oct.12, 2001, “was laid over for several years. It began with the arrival at UAlbany in 1998 of Visiting Professor Huang Zongying, an associate professor at Peking University...He planned this conference with Professor Tom Cohen, then Chair of the English Department at SUNY at Albany. He and Don Byrd are co-directors.” Academic dialogues between Peking University and University at Albany were followed up by a frequent exchange of visits between the faculty members from both sides. Professor Pierre Joris, Don Byrd, Lana Cable, and Randall Craig were successively invited to have their visits to Peking University before and after the conference. Professor Hu Jialuan, the Dean of School of Foreign Languages at PKU, with his assistant Professor Liu Shusen, visited SUNYA in May 1999, and Mr. Zhou Jinfu, Vice Dean of the School of Foreign Languages was then invited to visit Albany in 2002. And I have been invited to teach American poetry at SUNY at Albany every summer since 1999. We hope the sweet memory of the Conference will keep lingering in our minds and the global dialogue initiated at the Conference among all participants will continue forever.

May 15, 2003

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TRANSFORMING THE CANON

