

Andrea Riemenschneider discusses political and intellectual expressions of auto-Orientalism in present-day China, which she explains to constitute a corollary to Occidentalism (i.e., extolment of the Occident), and an influential trope in intellectual reactions to encounters with the West, since the early 1920s. Riemenschneider focuses on three different aspects of Chinese Orientalism, which she terms “antagonist,” “hybrid,” and “excessive.” The first type is represented by exhortations of the “passive,” “backward” Chinese people, viewed to have been spoilt by circumstances of history from Confucianism to Mao. Peculiarly, this kind of auto-Orientalism can be found on the side of post-Mao Party ideologues as well as in intellectual counter-discourses, a paradox that accounts for the present crises of representation and reception of this “antagonist” type of Orientalism. In contrast, young Hong Kong artists are shown to refer to Orientalist themes in a “hybrid” mode, transcending the East-West axiology and postulating an intermediary space where an open process of negotiation of interests, values, and identities takes place. The third kind of Orientalism is represented by a recent work of novelist Mo Yan, which transfers excessive cruelties of feudal or mythical rulers into modern society and examines the psychology of collaboration with such excesses. Mo’s novel points to the Western-derived belief in progress as a strong motive to collaborate and thus asserts the interdependency of Oriental atrocities with Occidental ideologies, a reflexive quality that Riemenschneider misses in Orientalisms of the “antagonist” type.

Selcuk Esenbel undertakes a historical comparison of modern national identities in the Ottoman Empire/Turkey and Japan, which represent a “third,” “non-colonial” route of modern identity formation between the experiences of the West and of the formerly colonized world. His focus is on intellectuals and other privileged members of the two societies, whose modern experience he theorizes as a double tension: between the rational and the emotive (Elias), on the one hand, and between Western civilization and inherited beliefs and customs, on the other. While the concept of “double tension” remains somewhat abstract, Esenbel succeeds in showing that what he terms the “modern individual” of these societies was the product of a “hybrid bi-cultural environment” characterized by strong national self-confidence that accepted partial Westernization without the fear of being overwhelmed. The author views this kind of bi-cultural nationalism as a favorable condition for the development of democracy and civil society. Consequently, he is somewhat pessimistic about the future of democracy in Turkey, where a bi-cultural process of national identity formation has been ruled out by recent government bans on cultural phenomena associated with Islamism.

The chapters of this book represent an inspiring assortment of topics and approaches around the theme of “Orientalism,” some of them complementing each other, some of them related to each other by way of a fruitful tension. What is lacking is a more detailed introduction that might have helped the reader to trace these connections and tensions and to relocate the individual issues and theorems in the larger context of theories and debates, and might have clarified basic concepts like “auto-Orientalism,” “reverse Orientalism,” and “universalism.”

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MIEDER, WOLFGANG, Editor. *The Netherlandish Proverbs: An International Symposium of the Pieter Brueg(h)els*. Supplement Series of Proverbium Vol. 16. Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, 2004. xii + 241 pages.

Color plates, b/w illustrations, references. Hardcover US\$15.00; ISBN 0-9710223-8-0.

When I first saw the painting of “The Netherlandish Proverbs” at an exhibition in Tokyo several years ago, I thought what an interesting paper it would make, little realizing that as of 1999 at least 140 studies had been done. Now, my curiosity about Bruegel’s painting has been both satisfied and stimulated by this collection of papers occasioned by a celebration of the painting at the University of Vermont.

Alan Dundes writes about the identification and interpretation of visual proverbs. The interpretation can concern the painting as a whole, e.g., human folly, or focus on individual items. Dundes stresses the value of psychoanalytical interpretations and gives his own such interpretation. Starting with Melitta Schmideberg’s statement that “painting is derived from smearing with excrements” (24), Dundes probes Bruegel’s uses of brown color and anal images that portray a bottom-side up world.

Margaret Sullivan describes the proverb sources, notes earlier depictions of proverbs in art, and compares the paintings of father and son, suggesting that their differences may be attributed not only to the personalities and creative processes of the painters, but also to the patron for whom the paintings were done. The essays by Sullivan and Dundes serve to introduce the paintings and their interpretations.

The next four essays treat individual proverbs. Yoko Mori writes about the depictions of unfaithful wives and fooled husbands that appear in a number of pictorial versions under the title “Blue Cloak.” Mark A. Meadow argues that although the Bruegel proverb paintings were usually a way of making a proverb collection and puzzle for viewers, they can also be seen as teaching general moral precepts in their clusters, e.g., greed, worldly and spiritual orbs, wastefulness. According to Meadow, Bruegel’s paintings go beyond the individual precepts to make a judgment on a general situation, for example, the educational system. David Kunzle comments on the proverbs picturing people dressed in armor in a world upside down: “to bell the cat,” “one foot shod, the other bare,” and “warming one’s hand by the fire of another’s house.” The presence of armor gives a new force to the usual interpretations of the featured proverbs. Malcolm Jones focuses on images of a man groping a hen (indicating a gender-role reversal) which leads to a discussion of “stroking the plume”/“stroking the foxtail” and the resulting anti-Catholic satires of friars using “foxtails” to flog the backsides of nuns.

In conclusion, Wolfgang Mieder discusses the history of proverb collections, the specific study of “The Netherlandish Proverbs,” and the use of Bruegel’s painting in contemporary ads, cartoons, and proverb puzzles.

This is a satisfying book, though I wish the list of 93 “Flemish Proverbs” identified for the Adele Klapper 1610 copy by Pieter Brueghel the Younger had been included in an appendix or as a bookmark insert. The colored plates and black and white illustrations help understand the text (sometimes, though, you need a magnifying glass to get the details more clearly.) Among the colored plates is a painting done by Vermont grade school children who had been studying proverbs in their class. It deserves to be pictured with the Masters because the children, following the tradition of artists’ borrowing or parodying themes as outlined in Mieder’s closing essay, have grasped the spirit of the more famous proverb pictorial collections and have added their own enthusiasm and imagination.

The Netherlandish Proverbs engages the efforts of professionals well-established in the field to celebrate the loan of the Adele Klapper copy to the University of Vermont. Ordinarily this would have been a local affair with nearby scholars and graduate students reflecting on the painting and perhaps producing a department-sponsored monograph.

However, Wolfgang Mieder aimed high. He invited scholars from England, Japan, and various places in America and published the results in a respectable hard-bound volume. Always the teacher, in this publication Mieder has shown how “to kill two birds with one stone” and make the most of an occasion. Despite the erudition, the volume keeps a common touch by including the children’s painting and a German newspaper cartoon that Mieder’s father sent him after circling the recognized proverbs for the sake of his son, the noted proverb professor.

Read this book and the other books and articles of the presenters. If you have not paid much attention to proverbs before, *The Netherlandish Proverbs* will show you the fun and treasures you have been missing. (And to repeat a request made in similar reviews: let’s see more studies on Asian proverbs.)

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JAPAN

SUSAN L. BURNS. *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan*. Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2003. x + 282 pages. Appendix, bibliography, index. Paper US\$23.95; ISBN 0-8223-3172-1. Cloth US\$84.95; ISBN 0-8223-3183-7.

The book under review is a truly scholarly work, providing an abundance of information and insights—and it is not easy to read. The latter point is no fault of the author. The English is clear, and she announces again and again (34, 39, and so on) what she is going to discuss in the next chapter or passage. The opening passage of the *Kojiki* 古事記, which she uses to illustrate the different interpretations of its commentators, is given at the end of the volume in the original (*kanbun* 漢文) and in seven transcriptions in Latin letters. Misspellings are few, but they unfortunately occur also with Japanese names: Tanuma Okitsugu 田沼意次 is rendered Okitsuga on pages 22, 25, 28, as well as in the Index, and the evil deity Magatsuhi 禍津日 is at one point rendered Matatsuhi (93).

These minor flaws cannot diminish the great value of the work. The book deals with four Kokugakusha 国学者 (National Learning School scholars)—Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, Ueda Akinari 上田秋成, Fujitani Mitsue 富士谷御杖, and Tachibana Moribe 橘守部—who each have their own chapter. Three post-Restoration scholars of Kokugaku, Konakamura Kiyonori 小中村清矩, Haga Yaichi 芳賀矢一, and Muraoka Tsunetsugu 村岡典嗣—appear in the last chapter on the New Kokugaku. This appears already to be a pretty heavy load, yet I counted sixteen additional figures including, of course, all the famous Kokugakusha from Watarai Nobuyoshi 度会延佳 to Tsuda Sōkichi 津田左右吉, whose views are presented at greater length, plus an even number of minor references. The first two introductory chapters give an overview of the economic, social, and political background, and of the pre-Norinaga editions and interpretations of the *Kojiki*. In order to prevent readers from getting lost amongst all the different viewpoints, I would recommend they read the last chapter on New Kokugaku and the Conclusion first before turning to the Introduction and the main chapters.

Each reader will probably find different points of interest and will profit in different ways from this work. For this reviewer, who is not a specialist of Kokugaku, the most important insights were to see how many editions of the *Kojiki* have been published, how