

我的故事 ~ 25. 一半来自澳洲，一半来自中国



“既有东方的气质和教育，也有西方的教育和背景。这也是一种优势吧。”

我是2003年8月来的澳洲。

和很多80后出生的人一样，高中毕业后选择了出国留学。虽然我当时的高考分数也可以进入大学，但是一个二本的学校，恐怕毕业后在国内找不到理想的工作。

选择西澳作为留学地是我父母做的决定。我的父亲有个朋友在西澳工作，说是可以照顾我。直到现在，我都可以清楚地记得离开家的时候，我的情绪是多么低落。我是家里的独子，刚刚过完十七岁生日，从来没有离开过父母，孤身一人去一个离家一万多公里的地方，让我人生中第一次体会到什么叫做举目无亲的滋味。虽说有父亲的朋友照顾，但是家的感觉却再也没有了。

我最初的学校远在Fremantle，而我的住所却在珀斯最北边，每天都要换两趟公车、两趟火车再走路去上学。现在回想起来，虽然当时每天过得都非常辛苦，但我却因此收获了很多好朋友。有在火车上结识的，也有在学校认识的。感觉在这里交朋友还是很简单。所以我总认为和中国那些读2+2课程的同龄人相比，我最大的优势就是一年的读书时光让我对这边人的沟通方式和工作方式有了不少了解，可以比他们多认识些好朋友，而且不仅仅是同中国人和亚洲人交朋友，我已经可以完全融入澳洲的圈子，他们成了我一起学习和生活的好伙伴，等真正上大学的时候更加不会感觉到那是一个完全陌生的环境。初来乍到时的这种“人生地不熟”之感终于消失了。

一年之后，我正式进入大学。不过没想到的是，生活刚刚开始适应，其他问题又来了——大学的电脑科技专业，已枯燥到让我实在无力再继续。和父母交流之后，我在大二时改读了商科、会计和金融，这让我如释重负，空余的时间也渐渐多了起来。和大多数留学生一样，我开始出去打工。我喜欢尝试不同的东西。这期间，我做过服务生，洗过碗，后来也给人修过电脑，做过税务会计，送过报纸，做过问卷调查，卖过东西，再到后来给人做帐，现在在做财务会计。在这个过程中，我深刻体会到，打工一是会给你一份收入，让你在收入方面会独立些，会懂得珍惜，起码不会浪费你的金钱。二是在这个社会上人的主要目的是创造价值，这也是融入社会的一种方式。工作

的时候，大概几个星期之后，就可以和一起工作的同事成为朋友，工作时一起认真工作，休息时作一些交流，一起出去玩，还是蛮喜欢的。唯一感觉挺委屈的一件事是有一年我生日，生日那天正好是星期六，工作完已经十一点半了，当时坐公车回家，公车上只有一个人。就是我自己，然后给我妈打电话，说“妈”，电话那边说“哎，儿子生日快乐”，问我干嘛呢，是不是出去跟同学一起庆祝呢，我说没有，今天星期六，我刚做完工作正一个人坐公车在回家的路上呢。现在想想确实是很辛苦，但是当时既然被安排了工作，就应该去担当，就应该去努力工作，并且这边的人也对守时、负责任非常看重。在此过程中我也学到许多东西。

几年的读书、打工生活，让我经历了很多，当我开始在珀斯一所大学的财务部工作的时候，我更是经历了生命中最重要的事——我遇到了我的未婚妻。

她第一次见我的时候觉得我很奇怪，看上去是中国人，名字也是中国人的名字，却从来不说中文，所以留给她的印象一直不太好。一开始我们不在一个部门，我那时已经是财务部门的一个小小经理。后来我的部门刚好有个职位空缺出来，她就申请这份工作。一起共事之后，我们之间的了解渐渐增多，常常一起吃饭。她说她觉得我是个非常成熟的人，总是西装革履，办事情雷厉风行。我团队里的成员，其实每一个人的年龄都比我大十岁、二十岁以上，工作资历都比我老，但是我处理事情的方式非常成熟，团队里的人都很听我的话，都非常钦佩我。直到后来因为办公室恋情，我不得不辞职，团队里的人还跟她提起，说我是他们见过的最好的小经理，非常负责任。

我也从她那里了解了她来澳洲的经历。同我一样，她也是80后，比我小两岁。她来这里之前是天津外国语大学的学生，参加了2+2出国留学项目。初来之时，也和我一样遇到了各种困难。最直接的困难是她当时的雅思分数虽然足够读正式课程，但是上了第一节课后就因为根本听不懂老师的话，语言交流障碍而大哭。课后，她去找她的任课老师，问道：“老师我听不懂怎么办啊？”她的老师是一个澳洲本地老师，五十多岁的教授，看着一个女孩儿在那儿哭，尴尬得不得了，说话都有点磕巴了，说：“那你怎么办啊，你是想接着读啊，还是不想读了想换课什么的？”她说：“我想接着读，但是我就是听不懂，老师你帮帮我！”老师非常帮忙，安慰道：“你要冷静，不要担心不要紧张，你刚来，这种问题是很常见的！”然后就推荐她去见一个辅导老师，那个老师一方面辅导英语，一方面对像我们这样的国际学生，起到一个心理疏导的作用。然后她就跟那位老师聊，聊的时候也是一边儿哭一边儿聊，那个老师对她说：“你看你一边哭一边说，英语说得挺好的啊，你不要担心，你平常交流没问题的，可能上课的时候一些专业术语你不太懂，即使母语是英语的学生，刚接触一个新的学科的时候，肯定也会听不懂，这些都是正常的。”老师的鼓励，给了她很多信心，让她找到了自己的方向。

她来面试工作的时候非常紧张。当时有两个人面试，一个是ECU 财务部经理，还有一

个是商务经理。两个都是土生土长的澳洲人，说话很快，还有澳洲口音。她当时非常紧张，紧张得听不懂，于是就微笑着问他们能不能说慢点，他们也非常理解，就说慢了些。每次她不知道应该怎么说的的时候就保持微笑。没想到就这样通过了面试。之后她问过那个经理，那么多人应聘，肯定有很多优秀的人，为什么会选她。经理说因为他们看到她一直都在微笑，听不懂的时候还会请他们说慢一点，所以觉得她非常认真、非常自信。

我觉得，也许也是上天注定我会和她相遇吧。我和女友交往了一个月，就因为办公室恋情辞职了。辞职后没打算找工作，也是家里的影响吧，既然已经出来读书了，读了这么多年了，再辛苦几年，把所有读书的事情都做个了断，所以打算读博士。我的女友没有继续读书。她从实习开始，就开了一个小饰品店，她本科在天津学的是国际贸易，再加上大学教过关于商业的一些课程，就觉得这个东西应该实践一下，她利用假期回国的时间去了一趟义乌，进了大批的货。她的父母非常支持，虽然知道她的生意可能不会成功，却还是在资金方面支持她的实践。但是，她还要自己去申请摊位。我女友从小就一直生活在爸妈的保护之下，什么都不会，这些对她来说都是非常大的锻炼。这开店期间最大的波折因为做这个生意之前没有做好充分的调查，没有做功课，以为只要进点货，捣腾好了一卖，又不需要什么技术。结果进的货被海关给扣了，原因是货品上没有产品的来源，需要有一个标签，贴在每一个产品上，如果是从中国进的，必须要贴Made in China。我女友当时就傻了，进了几万个单品，于是赶紧给海关打电话。海关说给她一个星期的时间，把所有物品上都贴上Made in China。我女友租的房子里，整整大半个车库顿时都堆满了箱子，然后她赶紧召集了中国同学，让他们一有时间就帮着贴Made in China。贴到胳膊发酸，两眼发昏。总算在一个星期内贴完了。

我和女友来澳洲之后都各自经历了不少事，在面对是否要留在澳洲这个问题上都考虑过很久，下了一番大决心。毕竟独生子女，家人还是喜欢自己的孩子在自己身边，而且留在家里有更多的资源和优势，比在这里要从零开始简单很多。所以当时我的父母是希望我毕业之后，在这儿工作一段时间之后就回去。但是等做决定的时候我又对这边的生活方式、生活环境和工作环境有很深的眷恋，考虑很久，决定留在这里，在这里生活。

在澳洲无论做什么，只要实用就好。例如国内总觉得读书读得越多越好，读到博士，其实在国内读完博士出来以后除了教书，其他方面可能对工作也没有太大帮助。

澳洲社会是一个非常多元化的社会，但是它的社会主流还是白种人，可能有一些白种人会对亚裔或者说对非白种人有一定程度上的不认可，但是就我个人而言还好，没有过被本地人欺负或者歧视的情况。在我人生观、价值观还没有完全成熟的时候，有一个对新的文化的接触，好多事情都会从与原来不同的角度去看，可以取其精华，去其

糟粕。而且文化认同这东西跟你在哪个公司做有很大的关系，如果公司本来就是一个很多元化多民族化的，人也都是来自于各式各样的地方的话，它自然就对亚洲也好，中国的背景的人也好，都不会排斥。如果说工作的地方，或者你选择的职业本来就是很单一民族的职业，当一个新面孔，一种新文化搀和进去了，需要很长时间来适应。所有的团队也好，组织也好，都是求同存异的，如果说它整个团队的文化或者背景都跟你现在的背景不太一样的话，自然刚开始的时候会有一些文化上的冲突，这些都是可以理解的。

现在中国发展得越来越好，很多澳洲人或者说西方人，都愿意跟中国人交流。他们觉得中国的文化越来越厉害，不仅仅是中国文字，中国的传统文化，甚至武术、书法，这些他们都是很愿意去接触的。在这方面，我有很多西方的朋友非常羡慕我可以说两种语言，他们甚至希望今后他们有了孩子要找我学中文，我觉得这是我非常乐意看到的一个情况，这说明我们的祖国日益发达，我们的文化被整个西方所认同。在中国方面，我的优势是我有过西方的教育，我有语言上的优势。我说我有优势，但同时我也有弱势，就是虽然我有西方的文化，我的英语跟人正常交流非常流利，但要说到非常专业的术语，可能本专业的没问题，会计金融没问题，但是如果聊到医学、法律，甚至包括体育方面，我就觉得可能我个人交流起来不是说很吃力，但是是有障碍的。

在澳洲呆那么长时间，我觉得我和我女友现在最大的特点就在于：我们在西方人面前有东方的那一面，还保留着东方的价值观或者一些习惯，而在中国人面前，我们又有一些西方人的思想，刚好就在中间。还有一件非常奇怪的事就是，我们很多西方的朋友会问我们俩在家的时候是说中文还是说英文，我就会说那看情况吧，如果我们俩是聊生活方面或者情感方面，就说中文，如果牵扯到工作、学习上，或者跟澳洲社会上有关的一些东西，我们就会说英文。我们俩并不是说故意非得要说英文，真的是因为一些东西我们不知道用中文怎么说。因为第一次接触到这个事物的时候是在澳洲，像我们学会计学金融都是在澳洲学的，你真要问我这个英文这个东西在中国是什么，我还真不知道。如果我们将来回中国，那这就是我们的一些弱势。

我觉得这也是我们试图在西方文化，或者说在英语环境和中文环境间找一个平衡，因为平时沟通也好，工作也好，用英语的环境，都是讲究如何表达得更精确，如何让对方更直白地理解自己，这时候就把文化的韵味过滤掉了，有时候想起中文来，想起一句诗，一句词，想起来之前背的课文，当时背的时候很烦恼为什么要背这东西，但是现在想起来里面有很多用直白的话表达不出来的东西，这也是这边的人学中文的一个困难的地方，就是说他们看到那些东西，觉得每个词我都理解，但是放在一起他们很难理解里面的韵味，这要对中国文化有一定的了解，才能欣赏到的一些东西。

可能回国的时候，朋友或者家人会开玩笑说，外国人回来了，但是在澳洲，不管是中国人还是外国人，看到你，就知道你是中国人，你也不用装你是外国人。自己也不会

给自己一个定义说我是中国人还是我是澳洲人，我就是自己，我就是这样。因为接受的传统文化教育，包括为人处事，都是中国人的观点，但是生活环境是在澳洲，好多事情都是既有中国人的想法，又有这边人（澳洲人）的想法，你要问我是中国人还是澳洲人的话，这个要看什么定义吧。如果要是按在哪里居住，在哪里生活的时间最长，可能是澳洲，但是心底里你的文化在哪里，你希望别人怎么看你，那肯定是中国人的。

关于出身来源这样的问题，其实我们自己也会经常问别人。比如说我认识了一个新朋友，长着亚洲人的面孔，可能是新加坡人或者是马来西亚人，或者是越南的，我会问他“Where are you from?”他会说“I am from Perth.”我就会问他“Where are you originally from?”因为我觉得你长亚洲人的模样，你说你 from Australia那我可能会觉得很奇怪，因为我其实是想知道他的祖籍是哪儿，他是什么样的文化背景，但如果他说 from Australia不能满足我对他的好奇心，我是想知道你 originally from where还有些人可能会说在这儿生长的，但是他的父母是来自其他地方，更有人可能就非常不喜欢你问这种问题，会说“From Perth I was born here so what is your problem”

不过总的来说，我的感觉还算是挺融洽的，在我价值观人生观形成的过程中，我接受的有西方的有东方的文化，可能在成长的过程中我就会自动地取其精华去其糟粕。两种文化交融起来体现在我和我女友两个人身上，使我们既有东方的气质和教育，也有西方的教育和背景。这也是一种优势吧。

My Story ~ 26. Keep Your Nose To The Grindstone, You Will Be Successful In The End



“Take it easy, young people, you have so many opportunities ahead of you; keep trying and seize the chance I am sure you will succeed once in your life time.”

A young man born post 1990s came to Australia after graduating from high

school. In the five years after he arrived in Perth, he went through education, work, transferred from one school to another, and changed majors a few times; he got to know life better because of his own experience. One can sense the vitality, knowledge and drive of the younger generation after talking with him. He quickly adjusted to the life here, or to be more precise, it's not that he has been fitted into the Australian society; it is the Australian life style that has become part of his heart and soul.

I was born in 1991 and was called the “post-90s generation” in China. My hometown is in Jianhu County, Yancheng, Jiangsu Province. I attended high school in China. I still clearly remember those days when I and my schoolmates worked so hard for the university entrance examination. Well, during those days, I went to sleep at 3 a.m. and got up at 5 a.m. in the morning, only 2 hours sleep at night. Because of my families’ pressure I was under a great deal of stress. After that experience, all other hardships I faced later in life were not difficult to handle. With many relatives working in government positions, my parents actually hoped that I could work for the government too, just like them. So I decided to pursue politics and applied for law school. But I was not accepted by the university because some of my marks were a little low. Though there were other ways of getting into a law school by using the “Guanxi” of some relatives and paying some money, my parents gave up in the end because the cost would be the same as the costs of going abroad. So at the crucial point of university education, I ended up in this strange country.

Looking back, being unable to study at a Chinese Law School could be part of my destiny. My English was good and people used to make jokes about me by saying: “You are destined to go abroad with long hair all over you just like a foreigner.” My mom once went to a fortune-teller and was told that I would go overseas that year. Well, everything turned out to be true and I went abroad in 2009.

There were some incidents before we chose Australia. My father wanted me to go to Europe because my major was in literature which probably would help me to do economics or archaeology. But when it was time to make the final decision, a great recession had happened in Europe while Australia actually was unaffected by the global financial crisis. So we changed our destination from Europe to Australia. We didn’t receive any feedback about my visa application, so we were afraid that I had been rejected by the Australian immigration department. Thinking that the second pathway was also blocked, we went back to the agency

which suggested Russia. Well, to study petroleum at a famous oil school at a Russian university seemed a good choice, so we decided to apply for Russia. Just as we started to prepare the materials, I got my visa to Australia. Thus, after all those big and small incidents, I came to Perth on 3rd May, 2009.

My experience of schooling here is not that easy either. It seems that the bad luck from the university entrance exams was still with me, I failed the preparatory course at Taylor's College for engineering major of UWA, one mark too low, so I had to go to Curtin University. But I didn't want to go to Curtin and never gave up my hope of studying at UWA. Fortunately, I was eligible to apply for UWA after studying one whole year at Curtin. Finally I succeeded in transferring to UWA in the second year of my studies. Well, my choice of major had also gone through several setbacks. The first half year at Curtin I studied mining which was not available for the second semester and I had to study mechanics and engineering instead. After entering UWA, I majored in machining processing. Overall, my results at UWA turned out to be satisfactory.

Though there were small incidents at UWA, it was a rich and smooth life that included some pleasant surprises. I remember when I first come to WA, I was confused by all the strange things. Though I had registered a homestay when back in China but after I arrived, I was informed that it wasn't yet ready. So I ended up making contact with a brother from Nanjing and stayed with him for a week until I could move in with my homestay hosts, an Australian family, an elderly couple over 60 years old. Through conversation I found out that host was almost 40 years older than me but we had the same birthday! It was lucky coincidence and he treated me as a gift from Jesus and cared for me as if I were his son. I still remember the first dinner we had together. He was afraid that I would not be able to eat the beef steak even though it was thoroughly cooked. They learnt about Chinese food culture which is quite different from Australian cuisine. I have heard a lot about discrimination but my host family were really nice to me and other Australians were nice too. At least I have never met anyone with such attitudes.

Homestay continued for about a year, during this time I lived alone in this strange city but there was family love and friendship. I gradually became used to communicating with Australians. Later I began to understand that this experience of fitting into a new country within one year was actually quite important for me.

Compared to other classmates from China, who were unable to fit in and they felt increasingly lonely, ending up playing video games at home and becoming isolated and angry. It's such a pity to waste the opportunity of going abroad for further study.

In my spare time, I began to find part-time work which is uncommon for the domestic students. The first job was to help with planting trees in a park. They paid a petty salary so I resigned after one week. Then I was introduced to a Curry shop run by an Indian. It took me one hour by bus to get there. At first I was told to make hamburgers but my experience of cooking was limited so I had to start with French fries and gradually moved to other tasks of greater difficulty. I became quite familiar with all the different things to do in the shop within one year and helped the cashier and communicated with others. Well, my English improved but it was not an easy job at all. I was still studying at Curtin, at that time and I had to get up at 5:30 to catch the early bus for work at 7:00. Closing time was late, 11 p.m. at night and it was a hard job. But it was even harder to find a different job, so I could not leave. Such experience of working while you are still at school would not happen in China. I didn't do any cooking when I was at home with my parents but now I'm actually good at it after my work experience in Australia. I did various jobs those years which not only meant money in my pocket, but also helped me to learn about the skills of how to communicate with different people and to get to know myself. On the other hand, I earned money with my own hands which made me cherish everything. After hard work, I was actually not willing to go to class. But after calculation, class costs me about 140 dollars and with a salary of 20 dollars per hour, I had to work seven hours to earn it. I was supported by my parents' money back in China so I had no idea about costs and the sacrifice required. Now with no one teaching me, I got to know, through my own experience, about these things. Looking back, if I had gone to college in China, the life of an "ivory tower" will always end with "pretending sorrow with new poems". This was a great harvest, a significant result, of my being in Australia.

Another bonus was the exact position I have found for myself. Actually, it's not easy to underestimate the external gains and losses. For example, there're always people playing dirty tricks on you but on second thoughts, I didn't lose anything and no one gained at my expense. It's hard to persuade others, but it's even harder to persuade yourself. The most important thing is to find your place and

get to know what is gained and lost in your heart. Probably it's related to my reading of YiKing and Buddhist Scriptures and I gradually became aware that part of life's experience. No matter if I'm in China or abroad, I'm working, studying or communicating with others. Gaining some benefit is what matters. Once you have realized this, the more you have experienced and observed, the calmer you will become in dealing with various issues, the more you can temper yourself with a pure heart. Once your inner world has been enriched, there will be no need to pursue external beliefs.

Having lived in Perth for such a long time, actually my life circle has changed a lot. When I first came here, I lived near school and I got to know many Chinese friends of Chinese in this way. We all lived near the school and had similar life experiences, values, language and knowledge, so we hung out together and gradually formed a small group. Gradually this part of my life faded away. One reason was that I bought a car and didn't have to live so close to school; the other reason was that I wanted to stay in Australia so I felt the need to communicate more with local Australians, observe more and think more about the core values which are different from our Chinese values. I had to make careful observations of what other people were doing, what they liked and what they were stressing about. I had to adjust myself through communication. As a result, I changed but that didn't mean I completely identified with my observation. The least I could do was to know more about the differences and diversities and also the reasons for such differences. I may not always identify with them but the least I can do is to get to know and understand them. This is a kind of "harmony in diversity".

I'm planning to stay in Australia. I am changing and adjusting to life here. My identity of being a Chinese is becoming clearer and clearer, stronger and stronger. Maybe someday in the future my nationality will change, but I'm born with yellow skin, black eyes and black hair and that will never change. The personal example and teaching of my grandfather in the spring will always be in my heart. If you think about it, it's rather strange. Chatting with friends in China we will inevitably make criticism of various social phenomenons around us, as if your dream will be shortened if you don't do so. But the more I stay abroad, the more I want to criticize those who say bad things about China. When I'm in a Chinese class in Australia, I hear some Chinese students say bad things about China as if they are planning to tell everyone. I can't help interrupting them, not to deny what they say, but from my position as a representative of China. There is

already what they call a “Chinese Threat Theory”, and if there is more negative criticism about China, people will definitely not want to go to China. What China is like needs personal experience and these people just have no idea that their few bad words about China will scare potential friends away, which will in turn isolate themselves. Besides criticism, I am also sensitive to some guiding thoughts, whether it’s on purpose or unintentional. For example, sometimes the teacher will ask whether China will become the second America and some students say “Yes”. But I dispute this answer and tell them that we Chinese are taught “benevolence, justice, courtesy, wisdom and faith” and insist on peace. We will only attack if we are threatened. Even in the Tang Dynasty when China was most powerful, there was no aggression by the Chinese, this was also demonstrated when we showed our strong sea power by Zhenghe’s Voyage in the Ming Dynasty. Yes, there’s no history of active violence and colonial invasion in Chinese history. While on the other hand, it took America just 300 years to become the boss while the Chinese have thousands of years of evidence to prove our peaceful characteristics. Though quite intense, it’s only a classroom discussion. This identity and dependency on China is becoming deeper and deeper. Now I’m in a foreign land, but with money that I have earned through years of hard work, I have subsidized some domestic students, but I say to my classmates though I can’t help my country in a big way, at least I can support those poor people to realize their dream.

I’m graduating in spring and as I have told my parents, air is good and life is fine in Australia. They can come to visit, but are just too busy to spare the time. They are actually unwilling to listen when I tell them I’m staying here, especially mom and the older family members. The days that I have spent in China during my college years add up to only one month or so and seeing grandfather becoming older and older makes me sad but helpless. My parents are actually supportive of me and they are happy to leave me alone to make my own decision. The only thing that I’m waiting for is my parents to come and be present at my graduation ceremony, I hope they enjoy it. Well, the long term plan is to settle down here with my parents, which will be the biggest decision for the future. They were so worried about me and did everything possible to help out in the summer of 2008 but we never gave up. Finally we made it and even though faced with various difficulties and temporary failure along the way, the result was a rich and beautiful outcome, wasn’t it?

What has impressed me most and attracted my attention is the charming cultural diversity in Australia. People understand and respect each other in this cultural melting pot and are nice to each other. I also have a blueprint for my future and are about to transfer to a graduate course to make a change. Maybe I will become involved in business in the future and promote cultural communication if possible to help more people.

While you can dream big, I say to myself: "Take it easy and slow down". After all, I'm still young and there are plenty of opportunities to try and succeed. Be confident in yourself because you know yourself the best and you are the only one that can't avoid yourself. I want to look around in my spare time and transfer external life experiences into inner-life experiences. After all the final fortune in my heart can never be taken away by others."

我的故事 ~ 26. 锲而不舍，终能成功



“别着急，慢慢来，因为年轻，前面肯定还有很多机会。只要不停尝试，抓住机会，总有一次会成功。”

小伙子90后，高中毕业就来到珀斯，5年时间，经历了上学，打工，换学校、换专业，同时也以自己体验与思考，从他身上，可以感受到新一代年轻中国人的活力与思考，他很适应这里的生活，或许准确的说，并不是他融入了澳洲的生活，而是澳洲融入了他的生命和经验。

我是1991年出生的，在国内被称为90后，老家是在江苏省盐城市建湖县。在国内我一直读到高中，高考前拼命的样子到现在还记忆犹新。那时候基本上每天三点睡觉，五点就得起床，家里所有人都围着高考这件事打转，很辛苦，压力很大。当然经过这么一遭，后来的辛苦也就轻易扛过去了。家里亲戚有不少是公务员，所以父母也一直希望我能从政，于是高考就报考了政法学院，但高考结果出来后发现分数差了几分，虽然在当时也有机会找关系花钱能上，不过父母算了一下，花的钱都足够出国留学的花费了。就这样，在高考这样一个重要的关卡，我被这一系列偶然的事情推向了一个陌生

的国度。

其实回头想想，这种偶然似乎包含着冥冥中的暗示，我从小到大英语都学得很好，那时候还有人跟我开玩笑说：“一生长毛就是出国的命”，小时候我妈帮我算命也说我这年该出国，没想到玩笑变成了现实，2009年，真出国了。

选择来澳洲也有一系列阴差阳错，最开始我爸想让我去欧洲，因为高中学的文科，所以打算送我去欧洲学经济学或者考古，但08年真的开始做决定的时候却发现当时欧洲经济很不景气，而澳大利亚发展得不错，于是就打算送我来澳洲，但送出去的签证材料等了将近一个半月还没消息，当时很担心是被拒签了。这条路眼看着走不通了，我就去找中介，中介给出的建议是去俄罗斯，到普京的母校莫斯科的一所学院学石油，在无奈之时又开始准备去俄罗斯的材料。正在这时，澳洲的签证下来了，就这样，经历了大大小小的波折之后，终于尘埃落定，在2009年5月3号，来到了珀斯。

然而求学之路并非一帆风顺，先是在泰勒读预科，准备到西澳大学学工程，但好像上次高考的倒霉劲还没过去，考完之后就差一分，没办法，就去了科廷，但心里很不甘心。不过因为科廷有一年的冻结期，就在科廷呆了一年，又通过了西澳大学的考试，这才成功转入西澳大学读大二。专业的选择也是屡经波折，在科廷头半年读采矿，第二学期却没有开，不得不选择了机械工程，转到西澳大学，读的是机械方面的机艺，但不管如何，结果还是很圆满的。

在西澳的生活虽然也有小小的波折，但更多的时候充实而顺利，也不乏惊喜。记得刚到澳洲的时候，因为人生地不熟还不免心中惴惴不安，来之前在国内的时候就定了HOMESTAY也就是到澳洲家庭寄宿。到了之后却得知还没安排好，就又贸然的找到曾经网上联系过的南京过来的哥哥，在他家住了一个星期，后来就顺利搬到了HOMESTAY这是个澳洲家庭，房东是两个老人，已经年过六旬，去了以后一交谈才知道，我和男房东年龄差了四十岁，生日竟然是同一天，就觉得特别有缘，房东也一直说我是耶稣送给他的礼物，把我当儿子养。现在还记得他们做的第一顿饭，做的是牛排，他们怕我吃不下，特别给我做得很熟。他们真的是了解过我的饮食习惯和他们有很大差异。虽然来之前也听说过歧视什么的，但房东和他们的女儿真的对我如家人一般，在珀斯这边碰到的澳洲人也都挺好，至少我还没碰到过不靠谱的澳洲人，大家也都很友善。

HOMESTAY住了大概有一年时间，这一年我独自一人在陌生的城市生活，却收获了亲情与友情，同时也让我慢慢习惯了和澳洲人打交道，毕竟在整整一年的时间里我融入了他们的生活中，后来我才体会到这样的经历真的非常重要。而反观身边有些国内来的同学就是因为缺乏这样的经历，所以到这里很不适应，越来越孤独，然后就整天闷在家里打游戏，结果恶性循环，自闭而且有交际障碍。白白浪费了出国留学的机会，

真是得不偿失。

学习之余，我也开始尝试着打工赚钱，这在国内是没有经历过的。第一份工作是房东介绍的公园绿化，帮着种草，工资很高，不过做了一个星期就不做了。后来朋友介绍到一个印度人开的咖喱店打工，每天要坐一个小时的车，开始是在店里做汉堡，不过动手做食物的经验实在有限，就只好从最简单的炸薯条开始，从一开始跟着学到慢慢熟练，然后再转到复杂一点的工作，就这样，一年时间，店里的大小事务都能做得很熟练了，就有机会到前台收银，和各种各样的人打交道，在这个过程中语言也练得越来越好。这份工作做得很不容易，那时候还在科廷上学，有时候早上五点半就要起床，赶一个多小时的车上七点的班，下班时间还挺晚，有时晚上十一点才下班，很辛苦，但当时工作也不太好找，咬咬牙也就这样挺过来了。这样的半工半读的经历在国内是没有的，在父母身边的时候也没有做过菜，但到澳洲后反而学会了。这些年做过各种各样的工作，这些工作的经验对于我的意义不仅仅在于赚钱，更重要的是一方面我从中学会了和各种各样的人打交道，学会各种人情世故，更在和他人的交往中认识自己；另一方面，用自己辛苦的劳动换来的收入，更使我学会珍惜，有时候学习和工作辛苦交集的时候，真不愿意去上课，但算算账，一节课学费一百四十澳元，超市打工一小时才二十块钱，旷一节课七个小时就白辛苦了，在国内的时候花的是父母的钱，所以并没有对劳动的付出有多深的认识，现在，不用别人教，自己亲身体会，一下刻苦铭心地明白了。回头想想，如果在国内读大学的话，可能还在象牙塔里“为赋新词强说愁”吧。这也算是来澳洲的收获之一。

而另外一个收获则是逐渐找到了自己的准确定位，说实话，这并不容易，对于外在的所失所得并没有特别的看重，比如在打工的时候，碰到有人使坏，仔细想想，又能怎样，他没得到什么我也没失去什么，欺负就欺负吧，于是笑笑没放在心上。说服别人已属不易，说服自己就更难了，其实最重要的核心还是如何给自己定位，明白自己所得所失是在内而不是在外，这样就会安然很多。也许和我从小到大爱看《易经》、《佛经》有关，这些年的经历也使我逐渐明白，无论是在国内还是国外，不管是工作、学习还是人际交往，对于我来说都是一种修行——最重要的是内在的收获和体验，一旦你明白这个核心，那么你经历得越多，见得越广，对于外在就越能淡然应对，你就越能把自己的心磨练得晶莹剔透，而因为内在已足够丰富，也就发现并不需要外在的信仰。

在珀斯住的时间长了，生活圈子也在不知不觉之间发生着变化，刚来的时候为了学习的方便，住在学校边上。可能华人都有“学区”这样的认识，所以一般都在学校周围租住，再加上生活经历、价值、语言、见闻的相似，平时也多在一块组织各种活动，久而久之就抱成团了。尽管这样的交往很自在，但我已经逐渐开始淡出圈外。一个原因是有了车，出行方便很多，也不用非要一定租住学校边上，另外也想了想以后的发展和规划，还是想留在澳洲，那就需要多和当地人交流，多观察，多思考，特别在一

些价值观方面，自己的确与他们有一些不同，就要留心平时别人怎么做，喜欢什么，观察什么，在与他们的交往中，慢慢调整自己。在这个过程中，我也在慢慢变化，当然，也并不一定是他们全部的价值观念都认同，但至少我要了解其不同和多元性，我要知道为什么会有这样的价值和认识，或许我不一定会认可，但我至少了解并理解，这也就是一种“和而不同”吧。

尽管以后打算留在澳洲，并且自己也在改变和调整，但对于自己“中国人”的身份认同却越来越明确、越来越强烈。也许有一天国籍会变化，但是从出生时就被镌刻在身上的黄皮肤、黑眼睛、黑头发，以及小时候爷爷他们老一辈身体力行、春风化雨的教诲却永无法抹灭，心底永远有一份深深地牵挂。有时候想想挺奇怪，在国内的时候，和朋友一块聊天，免不了在高谈阔论之余对国内各种社会现象大加抨击，好像不抨击显不出自己的理想高远；但是到了国外，呆的时间越长，有时候听见别人说中国的不好时，却忍不住针锋相对，逐一反驳。特别是在上中国学课时，曾经听到一些中国人自揭其短，恨不得把国内所有的不好抖落出来，我就忍不住反驳他们，出发点倒不是为了否认他们说的事，而是总觉得出来就代表着中国，你添油加醋地说中国的不好，本来一直都有中国威胁论，你这样一说，别人就凭借你的三言两语判定了中国，好了，不敢再去了解了，敬而远之。中国到底怎么样，总要亲身体验了才能发言，而这些人可能没有意识到，他的几句话可能就赶走了中国的一个朋友，就在别人心中制造了疏远“中国人”的一道防线，对中国的形象没什么好处，还反过来孤立了自己。不仅是对于中国人的批评很敏感，对课堂上一些有意无意的导向我也会站出来反驳，在课堂上老师说中国会不会成为第二个美国，有人说会，我就说不可能，老祖宗教我们“仁义礼智信”，主张和为贵，我们只有在反侵略时候主动出击，在我们唐朝最强大的时候都没有主动侵略，而后在明朝郑和期下西洋，海上实力当时非常强大，但却并没有变成殖民和暴力入侵的历史。美国三百年变成霸主，我们用几千年早已证明自己和睦相处的品性。虽然听上去挺激烈的，但仅仅只是发生在课堂的讨论中，其实这份心底对中国的认同和依恋发生的却是隐秘而绵长，虽然身在国外，但这些年打工比较多，钱挣得多了，就资助一些国内的学生，我和同学说，虽然帮不了祖国，我只有帮助一些学生让他们来完成我未尽的心愿。

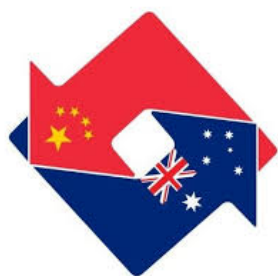
今年春天本科就要毕业了，之前一直对父母说，澳洲这边的空气很好，生活也不错，可以过来玩玩，但他们在上海的工作也很忙，一直没有时间。我也说过自己打算留在这边，他们很不舍，特别是妈妈，还有家里的老人，大学这几年回中国时间加起来大概一个月左右，而眼见着爷爷越来越老，很不舍，但又很无奈。其实父母还是挺支持我的想法，我历来都有自己的主见，他们也我也很放心。现在就等着毕业典礼的时候他们会过来感受一下我过了四年的生活，希望他们会喜欢这里。现在就设想以后等自己在这边立足下来，接父母到这里养老，这也许是我接下来这些年里最大的心愿了。想一想，08年的夏天，他们是多么担心，费尽心血，但我们都没放弃努力，最终，从

暂时的失败中嫁接出的果实其味道却不失甘美，仔细衡量，这份得失之间的思量其意味不是更丰富吗？

在澳洲生活的这些年感受最深的，当然也是最终吸引我准备常驻的，还是这里多元文化的魅力，在这个文化大熔炉里，人们理解并尊重彼此文化的相异，并友好相处。这也使我对自己的未来有一份设想，大学毕业后准备马上转到硕士课程，专业转换一下，以后做做生意，有基础了在找机会做中外文化的交流，去帮助更多需要帮助的人。

想法可以很大，我暗自对自己说：别着急，慢慢来，因为自己毕竟还年轻，还有很多机会不停尝试，总有一次会成功；要有信心，因为只有自己最了解自己，也只有自己无法逃避自己。我有空的时候还想四处看看，慢慢把生活转化成内在的体验，摸摸自己心口，最终的财富其实在这里，谁也无法夺去。

My Story ~ 我的故事 ~ Acknowledgement ~ 参加编写人员



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Interests And Difficulties In Understanding Chinese Culture: What To Prepare For When Communicating With Cultural Others



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Abstract

Because of the long history and richness of civilization in China (Leung, 2008; Liu, 2009; Hu, Grove, and Zhuang, 2010), as well as the complexity and diversity of Chinese culture in mainland China and in the Chinese community worldwide (The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987; Fan, 2000), the task of designing an introductory course on Chinese culture for Westerners presents certain difficulties (Luk, 1991; Fan, 2000). While the content of a comprehensive course on Chinese culture remains to be decided, the present study explores a 12-week

introductory course on four areas of Chinese culture. It was delivered to 16 Irish students who were doing a degree in Intercultural Studies. Each participant was asked to write a 500-word reflective journal entry every two weeks and an essay of 2,000–2,500 words at the end of the course.

The study aims to find out which area(s) and topic(s) might be of interest to or potential obstacles for Irish students in future participation in intercultural dialogue with Chinese people. Using the software Wordsmith Tools (Scott, 1996), the study identifies both the area and the sub-topic within each area that are of greatest interest yet previously unknown to Irish students.

The results show that the section on “love, sex, and marriage in China” was very well received and the most discussed topic in their journals and essays. The participants demonstrated fascination with the changing role of women in Chinese culture and identified shared ground in terms of marriage choices in both Irish and Chinese societies, which could help them to develop a deeper understanding of Chinese society and participate in intercultural dialogue from this perspective. A number of topics, such as martial arts films, the urban/rural divide, loss of face, etc., can be employed as prisms through which students can explore and understand elements of Chinese culture and its evolution over time.

The understanding of “face” in Chinese culture is perceived by the participants as being of great importance in intercultural and interpersonal communication, which could undoubtedly support engagement in open and respectful exchange or interaction between the Irish and Chinese. Interestingly, the participants indicated that it is difficult to understand that the use of linguistic politeness could lead to the speaker being perceived as “powerless” in Chinese society, which could mean that not being aware of this might lead to miscommunication between individuals with different cultural backgrounds. In general, the findings presented in this chapter may have significant pedagogical implications for teachers and students of intercultural communication, but may also be of interest to those with a practical involvement in intercultural dialogue. *Introduction*

Due to the complexity and diversity of Chinese culture in mainland China and in the Chinese community worldwide, in both the past and the present (The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987; Fan, 2000; Leung, 2008), it could prove difficult to define and establish the content of a course to introduce Chinese culture (Luk, 1991). Indeed, the selection of course content is also subject to the aims of the course and the needs of the target students. In the current study, the course “*Introduction to Chinese Language and Culture*” was designed to introduce four

aspects of Chinese culture to any student in an Irish higher education institute who has not previously learned about or been exposed to Chinese culture. This article will first explore the content of this 12-week introductory course. I will then analyse the reflective journals and essays written by the participants in order to identify which area(s) of and topic(s) on Chinese culture might be of interest to or present difficulties for Irish students. Using statistically significant words and excerpts from the participants' writing, this article investigates Irish students' understanding of cultural differences between Chinese and Western societies, and how this understanding might influence their participation in intercultural dialogue with Chinese people in the future.

Course Design

The 12-week course was divided into four sections according to these four themes: (1) love, sex and marriage in China, (2) Chinese core values in martial arts, (3) Chinese social hierarchy and development, and (4) Chinese "face" and linguistic politeness. The content of the course also focused on reflecting traditional Chinese values, communist ideology, and Western influence on contemporary Chinese culture in the People's Republic of China (Brick, 1991, p. 6; Fan, 2000). Core values of Chinese culture which are related to the four themes were also introduced in the course, because these values are likely to have remained stable in the development of Chinese history and can also be assumed to be shared by Chinese people in mainland China and worldwide (The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987; Fan, 2000).

The first theme, "love, sex and marriage in China", consisted of an introduction to Confucianism and traditional Chinese values such as filial piety, benevolence, loyalty, and the observance of hierarchical relationships in the family (The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987; Fan, 2000). Several linguistic terms were also introduced to explore the key concepts in this area: *huīyīn* (marriage), *xiǎojiě* (miss), *qìzhì* (disposition), and *tóngzhì* (comerade). In the second theme, "Chinese core values in martial arts", a series of martial arts literature and films were selected in order to present cultural values (e.g. trustworthiness, humility, harmony with others, sense of righteousness/integrity) that are essential in Chinese society even nowadays.

It also introduced Chinese philosophical streams such as Buddhism and Taoism that are mentioned or embedded in Chinese martial arts. Chinese words such as *wǔxiá* (knight) and *jiānghú* (rivers and lakes) were also discussed in class in order

to provide participants with an appreciation of the uniqueness of martial arts in Chinese culture. The third theme explored “Chinese social hierarchy and development”, concentrating on the shift away from the traditional Chinese hierarchy based on Confucianism and the social changes that have occurred in contemporary China, with a focus on the impact of communist ideology since the establishment of the P. R. China in 1949 and the influence of Western culture since the introduction of the open-door policy in 1978 (Leung, 2003).

This section of the course also examined core values such as benevolence, hard-work, solidarity, and patriotism, as well as the hierarchical ordering of relationships by status and the observance of this order in work situations. Concepts such as *hùkǒu* (household registration), *dānwèi* (work unit), and *tiěfànwǎn* (iron rice bowl) were employed to illustrate the development and changes in Chinese society. The fourth section of the course looked at “Chinese ‘face’ and linguistic politeness” in the past and in present-day China. Indigenous Chinese concepts such as “face” (*miànzi*; Leung, 2008) and *guānxi* (connection) were also investigated when examining the differences between Western and Chinese politeness.

Table 1. Breakdown of journal entries and essays according to four topics

Topic/Corpus	Number of Journals	Number of Essays	Total Number of Words
Corpus 1: Love, sex, and marriage in China	16	11	17,531
Corpus 2: Chinese core values in martial arts	16	2	13,271
Corpus 3: Chinese social hierarchy and development	16	3	15,971
Corpus 4: Chinese “face” and linguistic politeness	16	3	15,766
Total	64	16	62,546

Table 1. Breakdown of journal entries and essays according to four topics

Data Collection

The data used for the current study consists of 64 reflective journal entries and 16 essays drawn from the assignments for the course. This course aimed at providing students with a basic knowledge of Chinese culture in such a way as to facilitate intercultural communication when they have contact with Chinese people in the future. A total of 16 Irish undergraduate students participated in the course, of whom 4 were male and 12 were female. The journals were written over a period

of 12 weeks, with an average of 4 journal entries per student. Each student was asked to write a 2,000–2,500 word essay focusing on one topic that was of particular interest to him/her. *Table 1* provides a breakdown of reflective journal entries and essays by topic.

The size of a corpus is a key factor in determining its representativeness (Atkins, Clear, and Osteler, 1992; Biber, 1993). Flowerdew (2004, p. 18) points out that a specialized corpus is indeed subject to both the needs and purposes of the research under investigation, as well as “pragmatic factors such as how easily the data can be obtained”, etc. Since the present study focuses on exploring Irish university students’ attitudes towards four aspects of Chinese culture, 64 reflective journal entries and 16 essays were collected and employed for the purposes of data analysis. The total number of words varies across the four topics, but on average ranged between 13,000 and 17,000 per topic. The four corpora consist of a total of 62,546 words, with an average length of 15,637 for each topic-specific corpus. All the journals and essays were saved in separate .txt files by topic of Chinese culture. The KeyWords function of WordSmith Tools (Scott, 1996) was then employed to find the word frequency counts for each of the four topics. Through a comparison of each corpus with a reference corpus, any words that were statistically significant in the corpus were identified in order to establish common concerns and general attitudes towards each aspect of Chinese culture.

Results and Discussion

This research sets out to find quantitative information regarding attitudes towards four aspects of Chinese culture through corpus linguistic analysis and content analysis. Therefore, the results will be presented by topic.

Love, sex, and marriage in China

The five words which appear at the top of the KeyWords list in this category: marriage, Chinese, wedding, women, China. This reflects both the focus of the topic and the students’ interest on the role of Chinese women in marriage. The concordance tool (Concord) in WordSmith can be used to display these keywords in context. Concord shows that “marriage law” (N=25) came first in the list of most frequent clusters. Indeed, the Marriage Laws implemented in 1950 and 1980 have had a marked impact on Chinese society and have engendered a significant change in the role of Chinese women. This group of Irish students, which had a majority of females, showed genuine interest in this aspect of

Chinese culture.

After the P. R. China was founded in 1949, the new government started to restructure Chinese society and a series of marriage reforms, along with the enactment of the Marriage Law in 1950, were put in place in order to give equality to all Chinese citizens. These reforms aimed to, among other things, improve women's rights by making their social status equal to that of men (Ettner, 2002, p. 44). The law provided greater freedom, especially for women, in the choice of mate and in terms of seeking a divorce (Pimentel, 2000; Ettner, 2002, p. 44; Leung, 2003). It also officially marked the end of the feudal marriage system which had existed in Chinese society for thousands of years (Engel, 1984; Pimentel, 2000; Leung, 2003). The 1980 Marriage Law further abolished any elements carried on from the feudal marriage system, i.e. prohibiting "mercenary marriage and bigamy" (Engel, 1984, p. 956). It also further consolidated the freedom of marriage by specifying that the foundation of a marriage is mutual affection (Engel, 1984, p. 956; Xia and Zhou, 2003, p. 237). At the same time, and for the first time in Chinese history, a no-fault divorce was allowed, i.e. "divorce should be granted with complete alienation of mutual affection" (Xia and Zhou, 2003, p. 237).

While the 1950 and 1980 Marriage Laws legislate for the equality of men and women to some extent, Chinese women have occupied an inferior social position within the male-dominated cultural hierarchy for thousands of years (Zhang, 2002, p. 79; Leung, 2003; Liu, 2004; Shi and Scharff, 2008). Therefore, there is still a long way to go in order to raise the status of women and achieve sexual equality in contemporary China, which can be reflected in attitudes towards fidelity and sex. According to a study conducted by Zha and Geng (1992, p. 13), most of the male and female respondents insisted that female fidelity is more important than male fidelity. Interestingly, more women than men said that they would tolerate their spouses having an extra-marital sexual relationship.

Participants in the current study also demonstrated their awareness regarding the role of women in Chinese culture: *"Personally I think the tolerance of Chinese women to infidelity is fear of be [sic] left destitute if their husband leaves [. . .]"* (Participant no.1) *"[. . .] women have been devalued in Chinese society [and this] can be traced back to Confucianism, which is still highly valued and deeply rooted in Chinese history."* (Participant no. 7)

Even though a number of topics and some core values of Chinese culture were only briefly mentioned in class, the above comments show that the participants were able to see the connections between them. Furthermore, they even demonstrated an attempt to find the similarities between Chinese and Irish societies in terms of marriage choice: “. . . in the 70s and 80s, attitudes were much more conservative in Ireland. The dating culture was already prevalent, but parental approval would have been extremely important around this time. So already I can see a big similarity between Ireland and China.” (Participant no. 9)

Chinese core values in martial arts

The top five most frequently mentioned words in the participants’ writing are: martial, film(s), arts, Chinese, wushu. Although different representations of Chinese martial arts (e.g. a poem, historical records, fiction, etc.) were introduced in the course, the participants expressed particular interest in Chinese martial arts films, which seem to be what Chinese martial arts are most famous for. In spite of a long history of Chinese martial arts literature (Mok, 2001; Teo, 2009, p. 17), Western audiences tend to know martial arts through watching films, from the earlier movies starring Bruce Lee (word count N=24) and Jackie Chan (N=13) to the international success of “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” (N=30).

A variety of unique concepts are associated with Chinese martial arts, e.g. xia (xiá, knight), wushu (wǔshù, martial arts), and jianghu (jiānghú, as explained below), as well as a few core Chinese values, such as trustworthiness, humility, and sense of righteousness. It is inevitable that the meaning of “jianghu” (word count N=31) will be investigated when discussing Chinese martial arts. Jianghu, literally “rivers and lakes”, connotes a culturally specific imaginary world where martial arts are supposed to take place (Chan, 2001). It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find an equivalent word in English due to the term’s richness of connotation. Five participants explicitly mentioned the helpfulness of watching films in understanding martial arts-related concepts.

One participant stated: *“After watching the film my understanding of the concept of xia is much clearer [. . .] The other concept of jianghu can also be seen in the film. [...] [I]t can be confirmed that the film ‘Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon’ is indeed a wuxia film thus the concepts of xia and jianghu can be identified in the film.”* (Participant no. 15)

In general, films seem to be a useful and easily accessible way for Irish students

to contextualize and visualize martial arts: *“I think that after watching this martial arts film [‘Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon’] and researching the principle teachings of Confucianism, I now have a better understanding of the role that Confucianist [sic] beliefs have in Chinese society.”* (Participant no. 8) *“Also, what struck me, being somebody that has very little understanding of martial arts, the six scenes of battle [in the film] and where martial arts is being illustrated appeared to be more like a well-choreographed, exciting dance sequence than fighting.”* (Participant no. 6) *“I watched a recently released film entitled ‘Shaolin’ which I rented from a dvd store due to it being so recently released[.] Together with my friend from class we were able to share views and opinions on our understanding of how and why martial arts are used within the film.”* (Participant no. 13)

The participants also identified a few topics that are relevant to and can be seen in martial arts cinema. For instance, Chinese philosophy (“Confucianism” word count N=22, “Buddhism” N=18, “Taoism” N=25) was discussed in some of the participants’ journals. Five participants examined how Chinese martial arts films depict gender differences, which connects with the first section of the course. The clear interest in Chinese cinema as a means to understand the culture suggests that film can be employed to impart a deeper understanding of a target culture (Bueno, 2009; Zhang, 2010). Foreign language films have previously been used in the classroom for the purposes of developing intercultural communication (King, 2002; Pegrum, Hartley, and Wechtler, 2005; Starkey, 2007; Pegrum, 2008). Despite the extensive use of cinema in the classroom to promote European languages and cultures (e.g. Garza, 1991; Secules, Herron, and Tomasello, 1992; Dupuy and Krashen, 1993; Chapple and Curtis, 2000; Pegrum, Hartley, and Wechtler, 2005; Zoreda, 2006), there is a scarcity of studies on using Chinese films to increase understanding of Chinese culture (Zhang, 2010). This is potentially an area that merits exploring for future research.

Chinese social hierarchy and development

Since both traditional and contemporary Chinese social hierarchies and development were introduced in the class, it is unsurprising to see the most frequent words in the participants’ writing were: society, urban, rural, Chinese, danwei. The indigenous concept of danwei (dānwèi, work unit) obviously attracts the attention of Irish students. It is generally the space of the socialist work unit (Bray, 2005, p. 1), specifically referring to any state-owned or state-operated

factories in urban areas, public institutions, government departments, and military units (Solinger, 1995; Wang and Chai, 2009). It is defined as “an enclosed, multifunctional, and self-sufficient entity” and believed to be “the most basic collective unit in the Chinese political and social order” (Dittmer and Lu, 1996; Lu, 1997, p. 21). In terms of political order, danwei can be used as a mechanism to carry out governmental policies through the cadre corps working in the units. From the perspective of social organization, it provides a quasi-permanent membership entitling its members a variety of welfare supports, including housing, food, transportation, health care, etc. (Dittmer and Lu, 1996; Lu, 1997; Sartor, 2007, p. 48; Wang and Chai, 2009). For this reason, danwei means much more than a working place in Chinese society. Instead, it is even considered as an extension of the family which offers employment and material support for the majority of urban residents (Bray, 2005, p. 50; Sartor, 2007, p. 48). Therefore, the participants point out that this is a relatively “secure” (word count N=18) system.

However, the workplace is also perceived as representing a comparably “controlled” (N=19) and closed environment. Indeed, Bray (2005, pp. 34-35) has suggested that walled compounds have been used to define social space, e.g. danwei, and that rather than the enclosure or exclusion, the focus should be on “the spaces created by the wall and the forms of spatial and social practice which are inscribed within these spaces”. Interestingly, one participant realized the unique importance of danwei in Chinese society: *“In conclusion it was fascinating to discover more about the [d]anwei. At the beginning, I did find it difficult to comprehend but having looked at some elements more closely I realise my initial perception was too rash and that a greater understanding was required to fully understand what it meant and how it impacts on society. It was very interesting for me to read some direct quotes to see just how content the workers seemed to be, but also to realise that America would try to recreate some aspects of the community spirits to which they attached a great value.”* (Participant no. 3) The above quotation indicates that danwei is indeed a difficult concept for Westerners to understand. As Bray (2005, p. 3) has pointed out, there is no such an equivalent translation of this word and, consequently, the Romanized form of the word has been adopted in academic works. Nevertheless, it is possible for Westerners to acquire a better, if not full, understanding of this concept assisted by appropriate reading.

The economic reforms that have been introduced since the 1980s have brought fundamental changes to both danwei (Dittmer and Lu, 1996; Lee, 1999; Hassard et al., 2006; Wang and Chai, 2009) and the urban/rural divide, changes that have been observed by the participants. Rural and urban areas became officially divided in the P. R. China due to the rigid hukou (hùkǒu, household registration, word count N=32) system. It is employed to control population movement by restricting all Chinese citizens to their birthplace for life (Bian, 2002; Sicular et al., 2007). There have been reforms of the hukou system which have concentrated on loosening the restriction of mobility while maintaining socio-political stability (Wang, 2004). The rapid development of the Chinese economy and the possibilities for labour mobility have led to a number of issues relating to migrant workers, and the participants demonstrated their awareness of these workers' status in Chinese society, i.e. mingong (míngōng, peasant worker, word count N=48), who are usually people from rural areas that go to work in economically developed urban regions (Ngai, 2004; Chan and Ngai, 2009).

Chinese 'face' and linguistic politeness

Face, Chinese, loss, politeness, person: these were the five most frequent words in the KeyWords list for this corpus. The expression "loss of face" was ranked first in the list of frequent clusters in Concord (N=32), followed by "concept of face" (N=13). On the one hand, the result shows the participants' awareness of the importance of "face" in Chinese culture (Cardon and Scott, 2003; Dong and Lee, 2007). On the other hand, it also indicates the potential difficulties in understanding "face" when participants invest their writing time to exploring the concept (Haugh and Hinze, 2003).

The "complex" (N=18) meaning of face was pointed out in some journal entries: *"The concept of "[f]ace" or [m]ianzi is quite a complex concept to define and understand in terms of its meaning in Chinese society."* (Participant no. 16) *"The concept of face in China is very complex."* (Participant no. 10) Although all the participants were majoring in Intercultural Studies rather than Business Studies, their understanding of face and loss of face is often exemplified in a "business" (N=29) context. This result seems to indicate the participants' enthusiasm for applying the cultural information they acquire in the classroom. In fact, the high frequency of "person" in their writing reveals their tendency to provide examples to illustrate the concepts in context.

The participants were also interested in investigating the differences in the

concept of face between the “West” (word count N=25) and China: *“The concept of losing and giving face is extremely important in Chinese culture and differs greatly to the ideas of [W]estern culture.”* (Participant no. 14) *“The Chinese people are now aware of the way other business people from the [W]estern world operate, and because they deal with them often they are less likely to get loss [sic] face.”* (Participant no. 15) *“...it is first necessary to define ‘face’ in Chinese culture, as definitions differ between Western and Chinese cultures.”* (Participant no. 3) Some participants demonstrated their awareness of the association between linguistic politeness and “power” (N=18) in Chinese society.

Interestingly, it seems difficult for them to understand the employment of linguistic politeness as an outward sign of being “powerless” in Chinese society: *“I was really surprised to learn that in a social situation, the use of conventional polite terms would indicate inferiority. Especially when we learnt that in the context of a service encounter, such as in a shop, the customer should use polite language and the one working there should not, as they are in the position of power in the situation. This is the opposite of what happens in a service encounter in the Western world, where the motto ‘The customer is always right’ prevails, which means that the worker should do everything in their power to please the customer. Good manners are an essential part of this, proven by the fact that people would complain a lot if they were spoken to in an impolite manner in a shop or restaurant.”* (Participant no. 8) *“I found this topic [on power relations in terms of linguistic politeness] to be a very interesting one. It would no doubt be useful to know this if I ever go to China.”* (Participant no. 2) The politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) indicates that power is one of the three factors that influence the choice of politeness strategies. Studies in Chinese contexts (Pan, 1995; Feng, Chang, and Holt, 2011) confirm that power is still a significant factor in determining politeness behaviours in Chinese communication. Indeed, China is a society with high awareness of hierarchy and power relations (The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987; Leung, 2008).

Traditionally, linguistic politeness, such as the self-denigrating and addressee-elevating language promoted in Confucianism, was usually employed by both the speaker and listener to show humility and mutual respect (Kadar, 2008; Pan and Kadar, 2011). Pan and Kadar (2011) explain that the traditional linguistic politeness has been lost due to a series of political changes in China since the end of the 19th century. The foreign invasion of China in the late 19th century

brought with it advanced technology. It also raised doubts about traditional Chinese culture, including Confucianism, among Chinese intellectuals (Pan and Kadar, 2011, p. 1526). In addition, traditional polite expressions were further eliminated after the P. R. China was founded in 1949 and during the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976 (ibid.). A large amount of linguistic politeness has been lost in the past few decades. In contemporary China, the employment of linguistic politeness is considered as signalling powerlessness in communication (Pan, 1995, 2000; Pan et al., 2006; Sun, 2008). This has been evidenced in the domain of customer service. A customer is usually a person who needs help from a service provider, which positions him/her as powerless in the social interaction and consequently polite expressions are used in order to receive the service. As exemplified in the statements above, it was shocking for the participants to find out the association between linguistic politeness and powerlessness in Chinese communication since it is significantly different from service encounter interactions in Western cultures (Merritt, 1976, 1984). Therefore, it is very likely that Irish students would experience cultural shock from this perspective in social interaction with the Chinese.

Conclusion

Through the analyses of the writings of a group of Irish students who had not previously learned about or been exposed to Chinese language or culture, the study identifies both the area and the sub-topic within each area that are of greatest interest to them. Of the four sections that were focused on in the course, the section on “love, sex and marriage in China” was very well-received and the most discussed in their journals and essays. *“Throughout the course of this module, I have studied various aspects of Chinese culture. I have learned a lot from the classes and from the readings when completing the other reflective journals. I found the second lesson on ‘Love, Sexuality and Marriage in China’ [sic] the most interesting [. . .].”* (Participant no. 2) *“Throughout the course [. . .], I have discovered the different [m]arriage beliefs which are followed in China, and how they have changed over the years due to the Western influence one might say.”* (Participant no. 4) The current study found that the Irish participants were fascinated with the changing role of women in Chinese culture.

To some extent, they explored the existence of shared ground in marriage choices in both Irish and Chinese societies, which could help them to develop a deeper understanding of this particular topic and participate in intercultural dialogue from this perspective. Interestingly, it seems difficult for Irish students to

understand the association of linguistic politeness with powerlessness in Chinese society, which might lead to miscommunication between individuals with different cultural backgrounds. Despite the complexity and diversity of Chinese culture, the two quotations below show that the group of Irish students found the course a helpful and enjoyable way to explore and understand elements of Chinese culture: *"I enjoyed [it] very much as it allowed me to understand a new way of living, a new idea, a new view of females in China, and Taiwan.*

It allowed me to learn something new and discover new things." (Participant no. 1) *"I have now been studying 'An Introduction to Chinese Culture and Language'. We have had some very interesting lectures, and class discussions."* (Participant no. 9) The present study might be at the forefront of Chinese cultural education, and the pedagogical implications for teachers and students of intercultural communication are potentially significant. However, the fact that culture is not static could present a substantial obstacle to designing a course to introduce Chinese culture to Western learners.

China is currently experiencing hyper economic growth, with an average 9% increase in GDP every year since 1978 (Kuijs and Wang, 2006; Yuan and Liu 2009, p. 17). It is inevitable that a culture will continue to evolve and that people in this society will change their values and practices. In the current study, a number of core cultural values that have been researched and confirmed in Chinese society were introduced to the students.

In addition, a few indigenous concepts were employed in order to guide the Irish students through the historical changes in Chinese culture and society. The course also had to focus both on the mainland China and on Chinese culture as a whole. The dangers of over-generalization and ignorance of regional diversity are very real. It might be worthwhile for future research to explore pedagogical methods of teaching cultural differences within China and amongst Chinese communities worldwide.

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The History And Context Of Chinese~Western Intercultural Marriage In Modern And Contemporary China (From 1840 To The 21st Century)



Picture 1.8 The lovestruck Qian Xiuling and her Belgian Man, 1933

Source: <http://news.sina.com.cn>

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Appendix I: Interview Questions Guide

Appendix II

Abstract

Intimate relationships between two people from different cultures generate a degree of excitement and intrigue within the couple due to that very difference, however this also brings its own challenges. Intercultural marriage adds an extra set of dynamics to relationships. Although the Chinese culture is very different from Western culture, individuals from both nevertheless meet and fall in love with each other. The existence of intercultural marriages and intimacy between Chinese and Westerners is evident and expanding in societies throughout both China and the Western world. This thesis aims to present a true picture of Chinese-Western Intercultural Marriage (CWIM) with a focus on the Chinese perspective.

By employing a three-dimensional, multi-level theoretical framework based on an integration of theories of migration, sociology and gender and adopting a qualitative research paradigm, the main body of this study combines three theoretical approaches in order to explore CWIM fully using a panoramic view. The first part of the study is conducted from a macro-level perspective. It provides a historical review of intercultural marriage and transnational marital systems in Chinese history from the modern to the contemporary era through a discussion of the different characteristics of CWIM. The context and background of Chinese intercultural marriages in modern and contemporary China are also reviewed and analysed, such as the related regulations, laws, governmental roles, and so on.

The second section is conducted from a middle-level perspective. On the basis of the study's fieldwork, the demographic characteristics of the respondents are first disclosed, and different patterns are identified as occurring in CWIM. The approaches to and motivations of CWIM are examined, and a framework of CWIM Push-Pull Forces and a model of Resource Exchanging Layers are established to explain how and why Chinese people have married Westerners. The exchanges and Push-Pull force components operating in Chinese-Western intercultural marriages are also discussed.

The third section offers a micro-level examination of the research, and it moves on to discuss the family relations in Chinese-Western intercultural marriage, particularly with the entrance of a member of a different culture into the Chinese familial matrix. This part of the study focuses on cultural conflicts, origins and coping strategies in Chinese-Western intercultural marriage with an emphasis on the experiences of Chinese spouses. Five areas of marital conflicts are revealed and each area is analysed from a cultural perspective. The positive functions of conflicts in CWIMs are then explored. The six coping strategies and their frequencies of usage by Chinese spouses are further examined.

The final chapter will summarise the points examined previously and will unravel the factors underlying CWIM by recapitulating the symbolic significance, social functions and gender hegemony represented in Chinese-Western intercultural marriage. In this way this study will provide more than an anecdotal description of Chinese-Western Intercultural marriage, but will present a profound analysis of the forces underpinning this cross-cultural phenomenon.

Key Words: Chinese-Western Intercultural marriage, History, Cultures,

Motivation, Exchange, Marital Choice, Conflicts.

List of Abbreviations

CCP - Chinese Communist Party

CCW - Chinese Civil War

CH - Chinese Husband

CPC - Communist Party of China

CHWW - Chinese husbands & Western wives

CW - Chinese Wife

CWIM - Chinese-Western Intercultural Marriage

CWWH - Chinese wives & Western husbands

DIL - Daughter in Law

EU - European Union

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FS - Foreign Spouses

IC - Intensity of Conflict

KMT - Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party)

LS - Local spouses

MIL - Mother in Law

MM - Marital Migrants

PRC - People's Republic of China

ROC - Republic of China

TP - Third Parties Records

USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VC - Violence of Conflict

CWWH - Marriage of Chinese Wife and Western Husband

CHWW - Marriage of Chinese Husband and Western Wife

WPA - Western Physique Attraction