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The Exotic Country in the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns: Images of China in the Battle of the Books

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Abstract: Preceded by Renaissance, followed by Enlightenment, the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, as an important cultural and intellectual event in European minds, has not received the attention it deserves. The Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns which happened in 1690s England, also known as the Battle of the Books. In the battle about the superiority of ancient culture or modern culture in the West, China as an exotic country of the East was repeatedly mentioned, and in the polemical writings between Sir William Temple and William Wotton, China was given two entirely different faces: "Politically Prominent China" and "Pagan China". By analyzing the state of Chinese knowledge and the mechanism of image production in the polemical writings of British intellectuals, this paper discusses the role and ideological function played by the image of China in Enlightenment Britain, and then deliberates the construction of the British state, religious consciousness, and reflexive subject in the Early Modern period.

Key words: the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, the Battle of the Books, Images of China, Sir William Temple, William Wotton

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The term "the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns" was first used to refer specifically to the literary and aesthetic controversy within European intellectual community that lasted for more than half a century between the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries. And this term was later expanded to include from the Italian humanists of the 15th century to the present day.[1] Narrowly speaking, the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns erupted almost simultaneously in Paris and London, and was known in France as La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes and in England as the Battle of the Books. In European cultural history, the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, which preceded the Renaissance and followed by the Enlightenment, is an important cultural and intellectual event in European minds. As Leo Strauss puts it, "The Battle of the Ancients and the Moderns was not just a mere literary debate, it was fundamentally a debate between modern philosophy or science and ancient philosophy or science."[2]

1 刘小枫Liu Xiaofeng,《古典学与古今之争》Gudianxue yu gujinzhizheng [Clssical studies and the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns], 北京Beijing 华夏出版社Huaxia chubanshe [Huaxia Press], 2016), 67.

2 列奥·斯特劳斯Leo Strauss,《苏格拉底问题与现代性》Sugeladi wenti yu xiandaixing [Essays & Lectures o the Problem of Socrates and Modernity by Leo Strauss], 北京Beijing: 华夏出版社Huaxia chubanshe [Huaxia Press], 2016), 2.

Literally, the Battle of the Books was a great discussion about the superiority or inferiority of the ancients over the moderns. [3]The Battle of the Books, which took place in London, was spearheaded by Sir William Temple (1628-1699), who responded to the Frenchman Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657-1757) and the Englishman Thomas Burnet (1635-1757) with his essay "an essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning" (1689). The former proposed a theory of ancient history from the point of view of new natural scientists, and the latter used new philosophical principles to explain European history. In his essay, Temple highly appreciated the Chinese political system and moral minds, thus implying the irrationality of the existing western system. Temple's well-targeted counterpunch led to the war of words that stretched elsewhere. They were met by the English scholars William Wotton (1666-1727) and Richard Bentley (1662-1742), who, keenly grasping the implications of Temple's essays, regard Temple's quotations of the Chinese prominent political system as a provocation to the authority of Christianism. Drive the battle between the ancient and the modern from the political system to religion.

Some scholars believe that it was the emergence of "China" in the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns that triggered the quarrels of English intellectuals during the Enlightenment period, and then the war intensified and evolved into the Battle of the Books. [4]This is an inaccurate statement. It was not so much China that triggered the quarrel as it was knowledge from China that shaped and shook the imagination of European intellectuals. In this debate about the superiority or inferiority of Western civilisations, China, as a foreign country in the East, was given two distinct faces: "Politically Prominent China" and "pagan China". By analyzing the state of Chinese knowledge and the mechanism of image production in the polemical writings of British intellectuals, this paper will discuss the role and ideological function played by the image of China in Enlightenment Britain, and then deliberates the construction of the British state, religious consciousness, and reflexive subject in the Early Modern period.

I. Temple's Eastern Horizon: a Scholarly Political System that Impacts the Christian Narrative

Temple was an outstanding diplomat and politician who signed several alliances with the Netherlands on behalf of England and endeavoured to avoid several British-Dutch wars. In 1680 Temple resigned from his position as Privy Counsellor and returned to Moore Hall to concentrate on his writing, and in 1688 he hired Johnathan Swift as his private secretary to help compile an anthology of his writings. Their relationship lasted until Temple's death in 1699, when Swift was responsible for organising and publishing his posthumous manuscripts.

3 Joseph M. Levine, *Humanism and History: Origins of English Historiography*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University, 1987), 155-156.

4 Min, Eun Kyung, "China between the Ancients and the Moderns." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 45, no. 2, (2004) , 117.

As a diplomat who travelled extensively in Europe, Temple's knowledge of faraway China was significant, and even more valuable was his attention to the Chinese political system, which his biographer described as "the first English political commentator to hold the Chinese system of government in high regard"[5]. As early as 1672, Temple's "An Essay on the original and nature of government" contained assertions similar to those of Confucius. He linked the policy of ruling a family with the way of ruling a kingdom, arguing that "a family seems to be a small kingdom, and a kingdom is only a large family." [6]From there, he suggested that the rule of the king depended on the opinions and sentiments of the people, and that "monarchy is the safest and most secure of all forms of rule." [7]In 1689, in "an essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning", he even compared the moral thoughts of the East and the West: "The end of the Greeks seems to lie in the happiness of the individual and of the family, while the Chinese attach importance to the good state and happiness of the kingdom, or of the politics",[8] also summarized Chinese politics as "the politics of the scholars", and even further suggested the relationship between learning and governing: "I know of nothing that advances knowledge and learning more than strict moderation, a pure air, an atmosphere of equality, and a state or politics that is stable over a long period of time. We may justly give these advantages to those Eastern regions."[9]

Temple's affection for the East is even more evident in his 1690 essay "An Essay of Heroic Virtue". Although this treatise is devoted solely to the virtues of the worshipped heroes of antiquity, it covers heroes not only from Europe, but also from the "less frequented peripheries": China, Peru, the Tartar Empire, and the Arabian Empire. Temple "knew the great old Chinese empire" by heart: the Great Wall, the Imperial City, Fuxi and Confucius, the Four Books, the Five Elements, the Chinese characters and traditional Chinese medicine ..... Most important to him was the Chinese government and its officials, and how learning enabled the officials to run the country. Temple realised that Confucius was "the most learned, the wisest, and the most upright of the Chinese", and that his influence on later generations was so profound that, after the Qin dynasty, Chinese learning was limited by his works. He believed that the teachings of Confucius were intended to guide and regulate the moral character of man in life, family, and government work.[10]

Temple also alludes to his microaggressions about British politics at the time in this introduction to the politics of Chinese scholars. Speaking about Chinese politics, he elaborated on the source of the emperor's orders in China, where there was a monarchical and hereditary system,

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5 Woodbridge, Homer E., *Sir William Temple: The Man and His Work*. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1940), 276.

6 William Temple, "An Essay on the original and nature of government", in *The Works of Sir William Temple, vol.1*. (printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge, 1814), 1-30.

7 *Ibid., pp. 1-30*.

8 William Temple, "an essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning", in J. E. Spingarn eds, *Sir William Temple's Essays on Ancient& Modern Learning and On Poetry*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 1-50.

9 *Ibid., pp. 1-50.*

10 William Temple, "An Essay of Heroic Virtue", in *The Works of Sir William Temple, Bar. In Two Volumes, vol. 1*, (London, 1814), 191-232.

"but all the emperor's orders came from his advisers, from the advice and requests of specially constituted councils of counsellors. ..... All the important offices of the state were likewise appointed by the emperor on the advice of different committees, so that candidates could not count on the preferences of the monarch, the favouritism of his ministers, flattery, or corruption to come to power, but relied on their own merits, learning, and virtues."[11]

Those familiar with Chinese history will recognize the discrepancy between Temple's account and the political realities of the Ming and Qing dynasties, and Temple's concern with the role and selection of members of the emperor's council of counsellors is reminiscent of his own unhappy experiences as a privy councillor under King Charles II. as recorded in a short biography of Temple by a contemporary, "Some account of life and writing" (1728) recorded all this. [12]Charles II set up the Privy Council on Temple's advice, but nepotism and arbitrariness sapped Temple's enthusiasm for politics, and he soon gave up his position as Privy Councillor. American scholar Boyle suggests that it was Temple's lack of success that stimulated his quest for a better system of government. [13]Perhaps Temple, in a sense, held his utopian political ideals in the scholarly political China he envisioned.

This leads to the next question, how was Temple able to boldly use Chinese knowledge as argumentative material in the ancient and modern controversy that swept Europe? It is important to realise that in the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns in Paris, the main focus of both sides of the argument was European knowledge of the past and present. In the battle of books in London, why did the eastern civilisation represented by China become an important and indispensable material for both sides of the argument? To answer this question, it may be necessary to begin with Temple's sources of Chinese knowledge.

Temple never visited China in his life, and much of his understanding of China came from Jesuit travelogues and translations. According to Li Chunchang, the Chinese translator of Temple's collected works, Temple seems to have derived most of his knowledge of China from two Jesuit missionaries: Alvaro Semedo (曾德昭) and Gabriel de Magalhaens (安文思), the authors of *The History of the Chinese Empire* and *The New History of China* respectively. [14]In addition to this, "An Essay of Heroic Virtue" mentions the Latin edition of *the Works of Confucius* published in France by Jesuit missionaries. Some scholar speculates, based on Temple's words describing China, that he also read Joan Nieuhof's *An embassy from the East-India Company* (《荷使初访中国记》),[15] Numerous scholars have examined the etymology of the Sharawadgi-style Chinese

11 *Ibid., pp.191-232.*

12 *Ibid., preface.*

13 Boyle, Frank. "China in the Radical Enlightenment Context of the English Battle of the Books." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 59 no. 1, (2018), 7.

14 威廉·坦普尔William Temple,《论古今学问》Lun gujin xuewen [an essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning], 李春长Li Chunchang译, (北京Beijing: 华夏出版社Huaxia chubanshe [Huaxia press]), 2021, 59.

15 Stone, Donald, "Swift, Temple, Defoe, and the Jesuits." *Taiwan Journal of East Asian Civilisation Studies*, 8.2 (2011), 316.

gardens proposed by Temple. Temple's line of knowledge has been combed in detail. [16]Generally speaking, Temple travelled with several Dutch Jesuit missionaries who visited China during his stay in the Netherlands and gained vivid insights into China from them, such as Martinus Martini (卫匡国). One figure who may have had a major influence on Temple that has been overlooked in this informative index is the Dutch scholar Isaac Vossius (1618-1689). If the Jesuits brought original insights about China, Vossius brought Temple a way of thinking that broke with established Christian intellectual views.

Vossius came from a classical family and his father was a religious scholar fluent in Hebrew. Equally adept at classical languages, Vossius did not submit to established interpretations and became sceptical of the traditional narrative of the biblical calendar. Both Vossius and Temple shared an ineffable passion for China, particularly for its history and utopian political organization. In *Dissertatio de Vera aetate Mundi* (1659), by Vossius, he attacked the narrative body of the *Vulgate* translation of the Bible, and, with his knowledge of China, Vossius used the highly unusual argument that the Chinese were the most civilized people who ever lived, and that they preserved their own memorials, almanacs, and unbroken 4,500 years history, and that they were more ancient than Moses.[17] This viewpoint, which seems to be a commonplace one today, was clearly out of place in the 17th century, when kings and religious powers were in dispute. From the 13th century onwards, Europe had had uninterrupted access to information about China, and Vossius recognized the elephant in the room - 4,500 years of Chinese history proved that the chronological narrative constructed by the Bible was wrong, and that there was something older than the Bible's history, a distant, far-flung empire that was within our reach. The far eastern empires are within our reach. The title of the book alludes to Vossius's aim - *A Treatise on the True Age of the World* - as he seeks to shatter the illusion of the Christian chronological narrative and expose the "true" age, challenging the unquestioned authority of the Christian sacred narrative.

Some scholars have pointed out that Temple's "dangerous idea" of questioning the orthodoxy of the biblical narrative may well have been derived from Vossius. [18]In his *Response*, Wotton refers to the passion for China shared by Temple and Vossius as partners in perspective.[19] Johnathan Swift, on the other hand, in *The Battle of the Books*, visualises Vossius and Temple as the two warlords of the Ancients, and "in the end it was Vossius and Temple who led the Allies", and

16 Cf. Murray, Ciaran, "Sharawadgi resolved." *Garden History,* 26.2 (1998), 208-213. 张旭春Zhang Xuchun,《"Sharawadgi"词源考证与浪漫主义东方起源探微》sharawadgi ciyuan kaozheng yu langmanzhuyi dongfang qiyuan tanwei【"Sharawadgi" etymological research and the oriental origin of romanticism】,《文艺研究》wenyi yanjiu【Literary and art Studies】, (2017), 31-39.

17 Boyle, Frank, "China in the Radical Enlightenment Context of the English Battle of the Books." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 59 no. 1, (2018), 8.

18 Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 606.

19 Wotton, William, *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning. to Which Is Now Added a Defence Thereof, in Answer to the Objections of Sir W. Temple, and Others. With Observations upon the Tale of a Tub, 3rd ed. corrected* (London, 1705), p.137. Subsequent references to this work will be abbreviated "*Defence.*"

Swift's placement of Vossius ahead of Temple may suggest an ideological link between the two men, which is certainly evidenced. According to Boyle's disclosure, in 1679 Vossius published his most deviant work, *De Sibyllinis*, and Temple copied the manuscript to Swift in 1697.[20] Boyle frankly states that Vossius's writings, which expressed the meaning of the ancient Scriptures in the present day, were beyond the scope of Temple's comprehension of the judgement. However, Temple's article shows that not only did he understand the nature and meaning of the debate, he was in favour of embracing the unorthodox position.

> *Indeed, apart from the Biblical record of the origins and course of the Jewish people, the events in the rest of our world prior to the Trojan War are either extremely vague and ambiguous due to a lack of evidence and unknown authorship, making it impossible for us to make a judgement. The accounts of China, the remnants of Manetho on ancient Egypt, the narrative of Eustace on the Scythian Empire, and the descriptions of Herodotus and Diodorus on numerous other places are so far outside the period of time which the Bible gives us that we are not permitted to discuss them. After the Christianisation of a large part of the world, this inconsistency may have led to the oblivion of many ancient writers*.[21]

Temple does not shy away from referring to ancient pre-Christian civilizations and suggests that there are incompletenesses in the time period covered by biblical interpretation. A basic tenet of his argument is then revealed: that the acquisition of knowledge is cyclical and not dependent on divine providence, and that there is an older existence beyond the Christian biblical calendar. These seemingly mundane factual statements, made in Enlightenment England at a time when old and new ideas were colliding, had the added force of shaking traditional Christian intellectual beliefs.

II. Wotton's turn of mind: defending the Christian intellectual-faith relationship

Based on this analysis, it is easy to understand why Wotton, a clergyman, appears in the Battle of the Books. While the point of Temple's On Ancient and Modern Learning was not to attack the traditional view of Christian narrative head-on, he was writing to counter the presentist rhetoric of the Frenchman Fontenelle and the Englishman Burnet. [22]Nevertheless, Wotton and his allies were keenly aware of the unorthodox implications. Fan Cunzhong compared the Chinese

20 Boyle, Frank, "China in the Radical Enlightenment Context of the English Battle of the Books." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 59 no. 1, (2018), 4.

21 William Temple, "an essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning", in J. E. Spingarn eds, *Sir William Temple's Essays on Ancient& Modern Learning and On Poetry*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 1-50.

22 Burnet here refers to Thomas Burnet, who published the book *The Scared Theory of the Earth* in 1684. Not to be confused with Gilbert Burnet, who would be mentioned later.

material of Jesuit priests of the time with Temple's statements and found that Temple's discourse contained little insight. But Temple's light-hearted and polemical writings were undoubtedly more popular with the general public than the cumbersome and dull clerical books, and they did serve to introduce Chinese culture to the general public. [23]Temple's good character and concern for his country, as well as his diplomatic achievements in easing the British-Dutch wars, made his writings popular among the English public; in November 1690, Temple published a collection of essays, *Miscellanea, the second part*, which included "an essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning". Only two years later, in 1692, a third edition was published, in which Temple revised the text of "an essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning", which was reprinted the following year and translated into French. This shows the great influence of the spread of this article. It also explains why Wotton and his party pointed the finger at Temple rather than at Vossius, who was even more radical in his views and behaviour.

To meet this highly respected opponent, the young man Wotton published his 29 chapters, nearly 400 pages work *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* in 1694. Wotton's book appears to be a response to Temple's "an essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning", but in fact it covers a wide range of articles and refutes them in every way. Wotton devotes Chapter 7, "With an Account of Sir William Temple's Hypothesis of the History of Learning", to responding to the learning issue, from which we can get a glimpse of Wotton's idea of argument. First, we need to understand Temple's view of the history of learning.

Temple begins by distinguishing between knowledge and learning: knowledge is that which is recognised as true and reliable, and learning is the understanding of the widely differing and conflicting views of those who have gone before. In this sense, modern man proclaims nothing more than learning that has not been honed and evaluated over time, thus defeating the modernist view that "the present man certainly knows more than the ancients". Temple also used "the ancients could make use of their knowledge of the ancients and have recourse to living guides, while the moderns can only have recourse to the dead guides of books" to refute the learning path of the modernists. The living guide of which Temple speaks is the ancient and modern East. While the Greeks could trace their learning back to Egypt or Phoenicia, and perhaps to their prosperous dealings with the Ethiopians, Chaldeans, Arabs, and Indians of the East, China, with its traditional priestly system and historiographical records, is a living guide within reach of the modern Westerner. Temple thus turns to a discourse on Eastern character and politics.

Wotton did not continue Temple's idea of argumentation about Eastern knowledge, but rather adopted the usual tactic of the modernists in the ancient and modern controversies - "Drain from the bottom", by ignoring the discussion of the merits of the content and directly questioning the legitimacy of the argument's premise.

23 范存忠Fan Cunzhong,《中国文化在启蒙时期的英国》Zhongguo wenhua zai qimeng shiqi de yingguo[Chinese Culture in Enlightenment England], (南京Nanjing: 译林出版社Yilin chubanshe[Yilin press], 2010), 18.

Before I examine Sir William Temple's Scheme, Step by Step, I shall offer, as the Geometers do, some few Things as Postulata, which are so very plain, that they will be assented to as soon as they are proposed.

(1.) That all Men who make a Mystery of Matters of Learning, and industriously oblige their Scholars to conceal their Dictates, give the World great Reason to suspect, that their Knowledge is all Juggling and Trick.

(2.) That he that has only a Moral Persuasion of the Truth of any Proposition, which is capable of Natural Evidence, cannot so properly be esteemed the Inventor, or the Discoverer rather, of that Proposition, as another Man, who, tho' he lived many Ages after, brings such Evidences of its Certainty, as are sufficient to convince all competent Judges; especially when his Reasonings are founded upon Observations and Experiments drawn from, and made upon the Things themselves.

(3.) That no Pretences to greater Measures of Knowledge, grounded upon Account of Long Successions of Learned Men in any Country, ought to gain Belief, when set against the Learning of other Nations, who make no such Pretences, unless Inventions and Discoveries answerable to those Advantages, be produced by their Advocates.

(4.) That we cannot judge of Characters of Things and Persons at a great Distance, when given at Second-hand, unless we knew exactly how capable those Persons, from whom such Characters were first taken, were to pass a right Judgment upon such subjects; and also the particular Motives that biassed them to pass such Censures. If Archimedes should, upon his own Knowledge, speak with Admiration of the Egyptian Geometry, his Judgment would be very considerable: But if he should speak respectfully of it, only because Pythagoras did so before him, it might, perhaps, signifie but very little.

(5.) That excessive Commendations of any Art or Science whatsoever, as also of the Learning of any particular Men or Nations, only prove that the Persons who give such Characters never heard of any

Thing or Person that was more excellent in that Way; and therefore that Admiration may be as well supposed to proceed from their own Ignorance, as from the real Excellency of the Persons or Things; [24]

In Wotton's view, Temple's thesis has only a moral, empirical basis and no rational credentials based on experimentation or observation. Temple's reference to "learning" and "knowledge" is nothing more than the creation of a mystery. After refuting the notion that Temple's views lacked rational basis and created an illusion, Wotton moved on to a critique of Temple himself and the materials he used: Temple was not a scholar in the universal sense, but a retired politician, and

24 Wotton, William, "*Defence*." pp. 90-91. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A67135.0001.001/1:7?rgn=div1;. view=fulltext, 2023-8-9.

the Oriental politics he praised so much was second-hand material whose authenticity remained to be seen. Wotton also sarcastically depresses the fact that Temple's Oriental fervour was born out of ignorance, and that if Temple really possessed knowledge, then he should have worshipped the true God. Wotton's final stroke actually conveys what he sees as a legitimate knowledge-belief relationship: true knowledge is knowledge of a true person or god, and true belief arises from true worship. In his view, Temple's view is already outside the orthodox type of intellectual belief. It is also along these lines that Wotton directs the focus of his argument from the ancient politics of virtue to the question of the legitimacy of religious knowledge.

In fact, Wotton's rebuttal of Temple is not without merit; Temple's talents in classics are more limited, or he would not have been cowed on the question of the authenticity of the *Phalaris Papyrus*. As for the use of Chinese knowledge, some scholars have also pointed out that it was an anachronism for either Vossius or Temple to make such startling claims, and that they were as gullible about the history and figures of ancient China as they were about China's superiority to Europe in terms of its system of government, political philosophy, and medicine. [25]This can also be seen in Temple's idealisation of the role of the Chinese Emperor's Council of Advisors. The empirical versus scientific knowledge debate is not unlike the ancient versus modern debate that took place in Paris, and the core of Wotton's rebuttal to Temple should still fall on the defence of the traditional Christian relationship of intellectual belief.

Commenting on this argument between Temple and Wotton, the poet of the time, Thomas Rymer (1641-1713), was keenly aware of Wotton's intentions, "To subdue this popular antagonist, he [Wotton] well examined every word that seemed to be inconsistent with his own notions ..... But Mr Wotton lost his end, and it was his task to attack Sir William Temple." [26]Raymer was clearly on Temple's side. It also indirectly presents the problem Wotton faced at the time: how to defeat a popular foe, one of the most gentlemanly writers of the age? This clearly went beyond the doctrinal question of ancient and modern disputes and evolved from an intellectual battle to a personal attack on a conceptual battle.

The dramatic shift in the focus of the argument clearly did not depend on Wotton alone. Rather than Temple sparking a backlash from the clergy represented by Wotton, it was the Royal Society that controlled the key direction of the battle of the books. Wotton was 28 the year he published *Reflections*, and Bentley was 31 when he wrote *On the Brief of Pharalis*. Although one of them was a Fellow of the Royal Society and the other a Royal Librarian, both were more long on learning and short on politics. In Raymer's opinion, "Mr Wotton was employed by some friend or patron." Boyle, on examination, believes that the signatory behind them was Gilbert Burnet.

25 Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 604.

26 Rymer, Thomas, "An Essay, Concerning Critical and Curious Learning in Which Are Contained Some Short Reflections on the Controversie Betwixt Sir William Temple and Mr. Wotton, and That Betwixt Dr. Bentley and Mr. Boyle", *U-M Library Digital Collections*, pp.48-49. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A58018.0001.001/1:2?rgn=div1;view=fulltext, 2023-8-9.

This Bishop of Salisbury, seemingly far removed from the battle of the books, chose Wotton and Bentley as his spokesmen in religion and in public. [27]We can notice that some of Bishop Burnet's comments about Temple also magically appear in Wotton's criticisms, and these kinds of religious attacks provide Wotton with ideas.

III. Shifting the focus of the debate: the retreat of "China"

Wotton's essay actually needs to address this issue: reconciling the impact of Chinese history on an otherwise Christian belief system. Temple's introduction of Chinese history was intended to emphasise the politics of learning, but he inevitably brought with him the difficulty of clergy apologetics. This problem is obviously difficult to solve on its own. And so, once again, back to the question that confronted Wotton: how to defeat a popular foe? With the benefit of his experience in religious polemics and ancient and modern controversies, Wotton chose to "pull the rug out from under him": to attack his opponent's arguments and his opponent's own legitimacy.

In the year following the publication of "an essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning", Temple published another essay, "An Essay of Heroic Virtue", in which he went into detail about China, devoting a paragraph to a brief description of Chinese astrology, pharmacy, and alchemy, relegating them to the category of other learning that had been discarded or despised. However, Temple appreciates the Chinese doctor's expertise in taking a pulse and employing simple medicines. [28]This is all Temple has to say about Chinese medicine. Such idleness has become the focus of Wotton's attack on China.

Wotton uses Chapter 12, "Of the Learning of the Chineses", to demystify the superiority of constitutional China, focusing his argument on China's backwardness in medicine and mechanics. Perhaps he saw no need to argue, as the facts were plain to see, or perhaps it was a lack of understanding that led Wotton to compile six paragraphs on the five elements and the body from Andrew Cleyer's *The Chinese Physick*, and then to argue, self-refutingly, that Chinese medicine was absurd. He concludes that the Chinese may be the best of labourers, but it is hard to believe that they can be inclusive philosophers. [29]Wotton's attack was feeble, and attracted much ridicule, with the aforementioned Reimer suggesting that Wotton was 'quarrelling with him [Temple] over trifles of no consequence'. So in the second edition of Reflections in 1697, Wotton expanded the chapter to 'Learning about India and China', suggesting that his earlier scribbling about China had been refuted.[30]

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27 Boyle, Frank, "China in the Radical Enlightenment Context of the English Battle of the Books." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 59 no. 1, (2018), 8.

28 William Temple, "an essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning", in J. E. Spingarn eds, *Sir William Temple's Essays on Ancient& Modern Learning and On Poetry*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 1-50.

29 Wotton, William, "*Defence*." pp. 145-153.

30 Min, Eun Kyung, "China between the Ancients and the Moderns." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 45, no. 2, (2004), 123.

The attack on Temple's own beliefs proceeded more smoothly, with Wotton pointing to two major "proofs" of Temple's insults to Christianity: first, that Temple had allowed a "Sergian monk" to play a major role in Muhammad's education, thus tainting Christianity. The second is that Temple neglects to discuss Moses and Jesus in his praise of Confucius and other legislators. Wotton views Temple in the preface as "one of those who believe that Christianity should be nothing more than an empty form of words," intending to accuse Temple of questioning and undermining the biblical narrative of Christianity. Nonetheless, Temple's greatest harm came from Bishop Burnett, who claimed that Temple was "an admirer of Confucius, an atheist, and a corrupter of the Christian faith," misinterpreting Temple's advocacy of "natural reason" and associating him with naturalistic deists. The misinterpretation of Temple's advocacy of "natural reason" and his association with natural deists is truly sinister. Although in the long run the growing Church of God reinforced the power to subvert the Christian theocracy, it was not necessarily a good thing to be called a deist in England, where the regime and the theocracy were at loggerheads at the time. Thomas Burnet, who wrote *The Scared Theory of the Earth* in an attempt to reconcile the contradictions between the new philosophy and the Biblical calendar, was judged to have gained the endorsement of the naturalists, and lost his national priesthood. Forced to bear the name of "deists", Temple attracted the attention of true naturalists, who began to constantly interpret the implication of nature in Temple's writings, especially the "Garden of Epicurus", and they absorbed Temple's conception of nature, which was derived from Chinese politics, into their own system of exposition, and posthumously named Temple They incorporated Temple's conception of nature as derived from Chinese politics into their own discourse and posthumously named Temple as the spokesman of deists. Temple, who had been extolling the virtues of the Chinese political system, was now dressed up as a pagan.

The shift in the centre of gravity of the discourse may have forced Temple to abandon his previous line of argument. In his last work, "A Defence of Ancient and Modern Learning", he retained his admiration for the ancient system of government, but no longer explicitly referred to China or other Eastern countries. In spite of Wotton's attack, Temple did not change the subject of his argument, but continued his dialogue with the French Fontenelle and Perrault. Wearing the hat of "natural theist", Temple did not give up questioning the Christian discourse system, and by combing through the intellectual history of Christianity, he secretly left an indictment: "Christianity came to the earth without relying at all on the knowledge of learning to attach itself to elegance. ..... The first fathers who made use of learning ..... Using the learning that preceded them to defend the Christian faith against the heathen with the powerful weapons of the heathen themselves ..... This learning was too powerful, and it was used in abundance every time Christendom split."[31]

31 William Temple, "an essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning", in J. E. Spingarn eds, *Sir William Temple's Essays on Ancient& Modern Learning and On Poetry*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 1-50.

Temple and Wotton's ostensible controversy over ancient and modern learning, but actually a hidden struggle over beliefs, ended with the death of one of the parties, and the dispute between Charles Boyle and Bentley over the authenticity of the Phalaris*' Epistles* became a new centre of gravity, while China gradually withdrew from the ancient and modern controversy.

IV. China as "substitution"

The European imagination of the East, of China, has a long history and has not ceased to exist. In the long history and vast literature associated with it. Argumentative essays like Temple's and Wotton's are unique. Unlike the travelogues, geographies, and missionary accounts that were popular at the time, the intellectuals of the English Enlightenment manipulated a variety of images of China to reveal more directly and explicitly the impact of the newest knowledge on the traditional knowledge of their own country. In these texts, which either tinkered with or countered, the latest exotic knowledge was strangely integrated with the most traditional Christian material. And for the readers of these polemical texts at the time, the presence of this exotic information did not just add to their accumulation of knowledge systems, but also touched upon a transformation of intellectual structures in a shadowy way. Thus, the significance of the Chinese image in this debate between Temple and Wotton lies not in its specific utility or authenticity, but in how the intellectuals of the British Enlightenment metaphorically articulated the cognitive paradigms of the era.

The space of the exotic, starting from and delineated by Western Christian perspectives and scales, is de-realised and conceptualised, and the notion of the exotic within the framework of such narratives has been withdrawn from the vein of its specific meaning. The space of the exotic, as a manipulable content for Western Christian narrators, has been incorporated into the process of Europe's own subjectivisation even before Europe carried out a real political and economic colonial exploitation of the East. In this sense, the exotic as "being" is absent, present only in the way it appears and is appeared. In terms of the frequent appearance of China in the Battle of the Books, the content of the Battle of the Books debates is about China, but the identity preferences of the debaters and the sources of their Chinese materials are not at the centre of the critical intellectual stance. That is to say, the images of China that emerge and are portrayed in these debates are created according to the intellectual needs of Enlightenment British intellectuals at the moment, independent of the authenticity of their content.

What role does China/exoticism play in the Battle of the Books debate? Derrida's notion of "substitution" may be instructive.

In Derrida's view, the "substitute" has no essence and is ontologically unthinkable, but it can disturb the illusion of wholeness of the "origin", because without the "substitute" there is no "origin". "origin". At the same time, the "replacement" factor can not only disturb and dissolve the unity of "origin", but also make the self-consistency and stability of the "replacement" factor face the dilemma of self-structure. The "substitution" factor itself faces the dilemma of self-structuring

and stability. [32]The European reflective subject embodied in the polemics of Temple and Wotton (mainly embodied in the relationship of faith in Christian knowledge), in fact, also relies on its own "substitute" factor, that is, China, which has been invented as an exotic space. China as an exotic space played a role in the conflict of intellectual beliefs in Enlightenment England, and this exotic image was brought to the European readership by English intellectuals, who pruned, purified, and shaped it to force it into their own defended intellectual traditions.

However, China's otherness did disturb the subjective consciousness of European thought in the ancient-modern controversy, because China, as a "substitute" factor, could not be regarded as a presence (a complete and authentic embodiment), but at least it could not be regarded as a complete absence. This dilemma is reflected in the gap between description and discourse, that is to say, no matter how the British intellectuals of the time used the polemical material of "China", they could not ignore the existence of "China" as an anomaly. In order to make the discourse on China more reasonable, users had to resort to various means, such as blurring the focus, shifting the topic, making the most of what was small, and avoiding the focus, in order to undermine the integrity of the foreign world that had already arrived.

中文题目：

古今之争中的异国：英国书籍之战中的中国形象

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提要：前承文艺复兴，后接启蒙运动，古今之争作为欧洲思想界重要的文化思想史事件，却并未受到应有的关注。1690年代发生在英国的古今之争又被称为书籍之战。在这场有关西方古今文明孰优孰劣的论战中，作为东方异国的中国被反复提及，并在坦普尔和沃顿的论战中，被赋予了"政制中国"和"异教中国"这两个截然不同的面相。本文通过分析英国知识分子论战文章中的中国知识状况及形象生产机制，讨论中国形象在启蒙时期的英国所扮演的角色和发挥的意识形态作用，进而研究英国的国家、宗教意识和反思性主体在现代早期的建构。

关键词：古今之争 书籍之战 中国形象 坦普尔 沃顿

32 雅克·德里达Jacques Derrida,《论文字学》Lun wenzixue [Of Grammatology], 汪堂家Wang Tangjia译, (上海Shanghai: 上海译文出版社Shanghai Yiwen chubanshe[Shanghai yiwen press]), 2005, 456-459.