

ART, DESIGN AND SOCIETY





GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

EDITORS

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Interpreting the Intangible Through the Tangible



Ways of Living Along the Silk Roads: Representation of the “Other” and Cross-cultural Encounters During the Second Millennium AD

Laura Yerekesheva



The paper aims at analysing the representation of social activities (that include trade and leisure, dance and sport) during the Great Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) from a prism of interpreting the intangible through tangible. Based on an interdisciplinary approach, methodologically it addresses the concept of the “Other” as discussed through interlinks between imperial China and the other world (mostly represented by cultures of neighbouring Turks and Iranians/Sogdians).

It is argued that the representation of “Us” and the “Other” was two-folded. On the one hand, it followed the general dividing lines of this concept, thus representing the “Other” through rather strict categorisation (what could be traced in the depiction of the features of the “foreigners” – mostly Sogdian traders).

On the other hand, the representation reflected the general context and specificity of time as well, marked by intensive trade and fertilising cross-cultural encounters along the Silk Road. The latter has been vividly and succinctly expressed in a magnificent artistic representation of the idea of connectivity – movement, process, action and pause, thus leading towards establishing links and melting the barriers between “Us” and the “Other”.

The paper addresses these issues while discussing exquisite and impressive terracotta/ terre cuite figures from the collections of the Musee Nationale des Arts Asiatiques (Musee Guimet), National Museum of India and National Museum of China.

Introduction/Methodological Stance

The paper attempts to analyse cross-cultural encounters and the image of the “Other” through artistic representation of social activities, or ways of living, such as trade and leisure, dance and sport during the second millennium AD. Methodologically it addresses the concept of the “Other” as seen through the system approach lenses and is based on an interdisciplinary perspective. From the history of arts prospect, representation of the “Other” provides bright evidences for tracing artistic exchanges and new themes evolving in the established traditional ways of expressive symbolism. Whereas from the theoretical sociology, sociology of art and cultural studies perspective the analysis of cross-cultural encounters could shed light on the nature, functions of culture, forms and results of interactions.

Chronologically the second millennium AD reflected significant changes in both geopolitical and cultural

spaces. Great migrations of the middle of the millennium, strengthening, dissolving of many empires in both east and west, or evolving new ones marked the map of that time and testified to the increase of interactions. Cross-cultural encounters could be vividly traced in the Great Tang dynasty of imperial China (618-907 AD) that provides an opportunity to analyse the variety of cultural patterns and styles existing at that time. This variety was due to the unprecedented openness of the dynasty to the “outer” world as a result of the height of the Silk Routes corridors that existed throughout east-west horizontal and north-south vertical dimensions, including cultural spaces such as in Central, South, East, West Asia and the Mediterranean world.

The concept of the “Other” is a multifold one, it was variously interpreted by thinkers from different branches of philosophy and other fields – psychology, religious, dialogical or conflict studies, gender, ethnic analysis, marginality, imperialism, colonialism and orientalism. However, irrespective of fields and approaches, the crucial main issue remains the same – how to perceive, communicate and interact with, understand and accept the “Other”. Aristotle, Hegel, Gussler and many other philosophers asked this primordial question – how to relate “Us” and the “Other”? In doing so, one axiomatic view should be highlighted stating that “I” and the “Other” are inter-related; the person needs the “Other” to better understand oneself.

The dialogical approach of Emmanuel Levinas highlights that ethics-based dialogue and relationship of conversation are the forms of transcendental, whereas the “Other” is the only guarantee of one’s own’s “I”. According to Levinas, this relationship is always an eternity, permanent dialogue and learning of each other, when the “Other” gives “I” even more than the latter can embrace.¹ For M. Blanchot the “Other” is equal to the stranger, who comes from another place and does not belong to our or any other horizon and so his place is invisible.² Whereas J. Derrida, also understanding the “Other” as the Stranger, highlights the idea of meeting as Hospitality (both conditional and unconditional).³

Thus, the phenomenological tradition of philosophy highlights the need for the “Other” not as an opposition to “I”, rather than

as its inevitable transcendental condition, continuation, able to provide knowledge to “I” about itself, and to replenish it. As a result, the knowledge and learning about the “Other” is a must– this helps to interact with the “Other” and also to understand oneself. The idea of how interaction with the “Other” takes place, which forms it acquires, and which results this reaps could be best understood from systems, lenses and using the art and expressive symbolism in general.

From the perspective of system analysis⁴, the concept of the “Other” could be explored as operating on equally important institutional, relational and cognitive planes, i.e. dealing with: (i) individual/group identity (cognitive), (ii) relations and links among individuals/groups (relational) and (iii) institutionalising and structuring identity-based ideas, actions, practices, traditions, institutions (institutional).

The systemic approach presumes the holistic nature of the studied object. This could mean that while analysing the “Other” there should not be strict categorisation in highlighting identity only; the “Other” should be seen through the prism of connectivity and links too, i.e. relational category; or through the lenses of certain existing institutional environment and policy frameworks towards the “Other”, that shape general structure and promote this or that set of ideas as normative ones.

In short, to understand a particular theme or historical period within which the arts and symbolism were expressed, there is a need to enrol all planes (cognitive, relational, institutional) and bear in mind inevitable links between the “Other” and “I” as intimate parts of the same whole and as a continuation of each other.

While the institutional plane could be best traced in history, religious or cultural studies, then the history of arts provides a splendid opportunity to better analyse the ways applied and forms expressed while addressing cognitive and relational categories of the “Other”. Undoubtedly, artistic individual expressionism and creativity significantly and visually contribute towards more comprehensive methodological analysis of this issue. Through creative mind and material objects which the artist creates while representing the “Other”, he/she subconsciously and consciously acts in a three-fold way: (i) conveying individual feelings



and impressions about the “Other” (cognitive plane); (ii) projecting them to the “Other”, thus linking oneself with one’s own vis-à-vis (relational plane); (iii) taking into account an existing attitude/stereotypes, established rules and norms, basic paradigms and set of ideas, prevalent in particular space and time (institutional or cultural plane).

Based on this, historical artifacts and expressive symbolism in general is a specific quintessence of the above-mentioned combination of all planes on the one hand, and of the individual and yet collective continuation of “Oneself” and its extension to the “Other”, on the other.

The latter moment, when it comes to cross-cultural encounters, acquires a profound and significant dimension and is based on various stages or results of interaction, starting from the lowest to highest, i.e. (i) seeing, acquaintance, adaptation, (ii) learning, understanding, knowing, (iii) acceptance, amalgamation, (iv) syncretism. These stages could also be described as a certain evolutionary way of interacting with the “Other” from so-called birth towards matureness.⁵ This may lead to the proposition that while discussing cultures and religions, there inevitably arises an issue of syncretism. In other words, there are no “pure”/“clean” cultures and religions, they are all the result of interaction and amalgamation that on the level of the cultural system led to a syncretism.⁶

The three-fold attitude could be best traced in mosaic cultures or cultures that develop profound links and exchange with other cultures, and be represented in both ways – when the artist is a foreigner working in a certain culture and society; or vice versa, when an artist working in his or her own cultural environment depicts foreigners or the “Other”. In both ways, there is a projection of one’s own characteristics and features to the subject/object of representation.

Therefore, the task is to trace how this methodological issue of three-fold based representation has been actualised in the history of arts relating to the social activity of the “Other”, as depicted during the second millennium CE, particularly, the Great Tang period.

By social activity here are understood those relating to various aspects of life – job, duty, court life, leisure (caravan

leaders, warriors, horse riders, polo players, dancers and performances). Social activity could also be named as ways of living, reflecting the multifaceted fabric of social life and culture in general. In the general canvas of social life of the imperial Tang, foreigners played a pivotal role due to the fact that the Great Tang dynasty was at the height of its development witnessing the intensive and productive peak of interactions along the Silk Road. So, for the discussed theme, the Great Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) was the most representative period, during which the flow and inter influence of goods, religions and cultures have been unprecedented.

The following eloquent characteristics of this period were recorded by its contemporary, Chang Yueh, the minister of state at the 8 CE. He was fortunate to witness history by writing the preface and introduction to the *Ta T’ang Si Yu Ki* written by Hiuen Tsang, the famous Buddhist monk who travelled from China to India in search of sacred knowledge. (Pic 1)



Pic 1: The Pilgrim Monk Under the Protection of the Buddha Ratnasambhava/Baosheng (Buddhist monk Hiuen Tsang?), second half of 9 CE? Tang dynasty (618-907), Painting on Silk, MogaoGrottes, Dunhuang, Musee Nationale des Arts Asiatiques–Guimet, collections from funds of Paul Pelliot, 1906-1909, EO 1141. Photo by Laura Yerekesheva.

Chang Yueh reflects the existing approach towards the “Other” that could be correlated to the institutional plane, by attributing the “Other” in a collective term– “the eastern barbarians bring him tribute; the western frontiers are brought to submission. He (Great Tang emperor – LY) has secured and hands down the succession, appeasing tumult and restoring order”.⁷

The broad intercultural context existed during the Tang dynasty provides a general institutional ground for analysing the three-fold ways of representing the “Other”. The next task is to analyse them in greater detail, starting with the broader context (fixed approaches and perceptions) towards more narrow individual impressions and feelings.

As an object of analysis there have been chosen small plastic forms – terracotta figures and figurines uncovered from the burial grounds in various places of imperial Tang China, mainly but not exclusively from modern day Xinjiang, Gansu and Shaanxi. They are currently displayed in various museums, such as the National Museum of China (Beijing), provincial museums of Shaanxi, National Museum of India (New Delhi) and Museum of Asiatic Arts-Museum Guimet (Paris)

Existing Attitudes and Stereotypes

This aspect can be seen in Hiuen Tsang’s famous *Records of the Western World (Si-Yu-Ki)*, that by definition and its content could be regarded not only as a travelogue or narrative relating to Buddhism. *Si-Yu-Ki* could also be defined as a textbook on exploring and depicting the “Other”. Numerous descriptions and explanations of the various cultures and their geography, administration, beliefs and myths are best practicum for understanding this.

Depiction of the “Other”, or the world outside the Great Tang empire, is conceptually Buddhism-centred. This postulates the unity of humankind living in the Sahaloka world under the spiritual authority of Buddha, on four continents, with mount Sumeru in the midst of the great sea, with seven golden mountain ranges, and a salt sea, inhabited by four lands/dvipas: on the east, Purva-videha; on the south, Jambudvipa; on the west, Godhanya; on the

north, Kurudvipa; with further details relating to mountains, rivers, lands and rulers of Jambudvipa.⁸

“On the south “the lord of elephants; the land here is warm and humid, suitable for elephants.

On the west “the lord of treasures”; the land borders on the sea and abounds in gems.

On the north “the lord of horses”; the country is cold and hard, suitable for horses.

On the east, “the lord of men”; the climate is soft and agreeable, and therefore there are many men.

In the country of “the lord of elephants” the people are quick and enthusiastic, and entirely given to learning. They cultivate especially magical arts...

In the country of “the lord of treasures” the people have no courtesy or justice. They accumulate wealth, cut their hair and cultivate their moustaches. They dwell in walled towns and are eager in profiting by trade.

The people of the country of “the lord of horses” are naturally wild and fierce. They are cruel in disposition, slaughter animals and live under large felt tents. They divide like birds (wandering randomly) attending their flocks.

The land of “the lord of men” is distinguished for the wisdom, virtue and justice of the people. They wear a head-covering and a girdle; the end of their dress (girdle) hangs to the right. They have carriages and robes according to their rank; they cling to the soil and hardly ever change their abode; they are earnest about work and are divided into classes.

With respect to the people belonging to these three rulers, the eastern region is considered the best. But regarding the rules of courtesy observed between the prince and his subjects, between superiors and inferiors, and with respect to law and literature, the land of “the lord of men” is greatly in advance. The country of “the lord of elephants” is distinguished for rules which relate to purifying the heart and release from the ties of life and death; this is leading excellency. With these things the sacred books and the royal decrees are occupied”.⁹



As seen from this piece, the existing attitude towards the “Other” has been sanctified by tradition, particularly, Buddhist cosmology, and has been based on local views highlighting the “we-other” dichotomy to a great extent. Therefore, existing markers draw invisible lines in the way of people’s thinking of that epoch and contributed towards spreading the fixed stereotypes as far as the depiction of representatives of these four lands were concerned.

Thus, the people from the land of the north or the land of horses, or northern barbarians have been mostly negatively depicted, and it was they whom the Chinese were afraid most of all, especially throughout the first millennium CE. At the same time, the famous horses that were bred by the people of the land of horses, have been mostly welcome and a desired item of trade. “The Han emperors attached great importance to the introduction and breed of fine horses from Central Asian regions to enforce the cavalry against the Huns. Horse breeding bases were built in Gansu areas, and the national standard for fine horse appraisal was published. The bronze model cast for identifying Dawan horses accorded with the standards in the Book of Horse”.¹⁰

In *Si-Yu-Ki*, Hiuen Tsang pays special attention to famous excellent horses while depicting the Kingdom of Kuche,



Pic 2: Horse Rider, 7-10 C.E, Stucco, Astana, Ast. III.2.015+013 (99/7/30+99/7/29) © National Museum of India. Photo by L. Yerekesheva

deliberately using myths on their creation: “The offspring (of dragons and mares – LY) is a wild species of horse (dragon-horse), difficult to tame and of a fierce nature. The breed of these dragon-horses became docile. This country consequently became famous for its many excellent horses”.¹¹ Almost all Chinese imperial dynasties treasured the horses of the “northern barbarians” which was reflected in the creative arts too. (Pic 2)

Linking Oneself with the “Other”

The institutional settings mentioned framed the general stereotyping of the “Other”. However, the need for the interaction with many other cultures, such as “northern barbarians” to trade their horses for silk, or with other immediate or extended neighbours caused more advanced results of interactions. Earlier there was mention of basic stages of outputs, ranging from adaptation and seeing, knowing the “Other” to the acceptance and amalgamation leading to the syncretism as an utmost stage. The patterns of artistic expressions showed that during the Great Tang period these stages were reached.

That was justified by intense intermingling and flourishing of trade along the Silk Roads that paved the way towards mingling of cultures, religions, traditions and people, the result being a composite social structure and new evolving cultural patterns. The power of art and expressive symbolism allows us to trace and find, to appraise and understand numerous manifestations of the past. Artistic snapshots of various lifestyles presented below excellently prove the relational plane of “We-Other” interactions, within which there is always a projection (linking) of oneself to the “Other”.

The art of burial figures (*Mingqi*)¹² provides us with material artifacts that sometimes reflects plurality and cross-cultural encounters more eloquently, dynamically and precisely than any other narratives.

The ancient Chinese idea of “treating the dead the same way as the living”, or the belief in the spirits of ancestors, that live in another world and protect their descendants, paved the way to the tradition, according to which the dead people should be given the same treatment and respect

as they had while living in this world. Based on this idea, the burial sites have been specially arranged to be suitable for the dead person to live in “that” world, have all the necessary things, products, treasure, articles reminding us of the person’s beliefs and previous occupation. It was believed all this could protect the deceased.

This ancient tradition has been also adjusted to and influenced by the cross-cultural nature of the Great Tang. For example, the painted tomb guardians of this period included along with traditional representation of the fantastic beasts, the statues of protectors which had the faces of the “Other”, mainly the Sogdians, who were the famous traders along the Silk Roads. (Pic 3)



Pic 3: Painted Pottery Tomb Guardians: Traditional Fantastic Beast (left) and the Sogdian (right). Tang dynasty (618-907), H: 55; W: 46 cm, Xian City Museum. From: Silk Road. The Surviving Treasures from Northwest China. Beijing: CIP, 2014, plate 197.

The representation of the Sogdians was based on the existing tradition, according to which beasts and phantasmagoric creatures with fierce expressions would be the best guardians and protectors. The protectors with Sogdian faces too generally followed this tradition – whether it relates to the posture, style, fierce expression on their faces and some fantastic details such as elongated ears. Inclusion of the “Other” within the local traditional iconography is a vivid

result of the amalgamation and syncretism that became a result of the cross-cultural encounters. It is interesting to note that this inclusion could be interpreted as the wish to reflect and keep the symbol of prosperity and wealth that was associated with the Sogdians who traded and flourished along the Silk Roads.

People

There are numerous painted terracotta figures of foreigners of different origins, among whom are “black men”, foreign ladies, Sogdian merchants and caravan leaders, even slaves and acrobats who transported from a distance. The symbolical expression of the “Other” was made using the classical canons according to which the foreigners were depicted vis-à-vis the Chinese in two ways. On the one hand, in a realistic manner; on the other hand, within the established local traditions. In the latter case traditional canons of beauty, harmony, status and knowledge influenced the normative character of depicting the Chinese people with particular symmetrical proportions, pacified (almost equal to religious) face and body expression.

Whereas the foreigners, the “Other” were represented in dynamic ways, with specially highlighted various expressions on their faces, in action, performing some activity. This static vs dynamic representation of “We-Other” dichotomy can explain a lot. First of all, the fact that the “Other”, foreigners played an active role in the traditional Chinese society, initially in the field of trade, as well as in other spheres too. This dynamism was crucial for traditional Tang society since it gave it a certain vitality, new waves and energy necessary to implement the far-reaching interactions with the “outside” world. Hence, the multiplicity and expression in depicting the “Other” also correlated with an old tradition according to which the unknown “Other” was given extra-characteristic qualities. Based on the primordial need to be protected against the stranger as a potential intruder, the “Other” was represented in an exaggerated manner. Thus, the Sogdians being a symbol of wealth and prosperity, yet still were given the features of a stranger who did not match the Chinese canons of beauty. In other words, they had protruding eyes, or prominent noses, with somewhat



surprising or angry expressions on their faces, with thick curly hair and conic hats, whose postures and high figures were sometimes represented in a grotesque manner. (Pic 4)



Pic 4: Foreigners as Horse Trainers and Caravan Keepers. 8 CE, Tang dynasty (618-907), Northern China, terracotta, traces of polychromie, Musee Nationale des Arts Asiatiques – Guimet, collections from funds of Jacques Polain, 1993 – MA 6110. Photo by Laura Yerekeshva.

Lifestyles

The tradition of socialising and entertainment was mingled with the amusement over the foreign lifestyles, from which stemmed the logical interest and desire to be associated with new fashions, associated with foreigners. Thus, the personification oneself with the foreigners took place through females wearing foreign costumes, or men's attire. We would say that transforming one's identity through linking oneself to or associating with new one was a typical feature occurring in mosaic societies which was the Tang dynasty in its heyday.

Court dances, music performances, horse riding and polo playing were among the popular ways of socialising during the Great Tang period. The burial figures *Mingqi* provides a vivid portrayal of what the styles of living might look like.

Of special interest was the fashion of performing the foreign music and dances. "There were ten types of national music with dance accompaniments, out of which the eight ones were from the western regions, such as Ten melody, Yang melody, Qing melody, Xiliang music, Indian music, Gaoli music, Qiuci Music and Anguo music".¹³

The dance entertainment too experienced its high peak during the Great Tang. Links with the western region what makes modern Xinjiang, resulted in the great popularity of the dances that the Chinese called a Huteng or "barbarian leap", and Huxuan, or "whirling barbarian". These types of dances are characterised by spinning, leaps and back flips, somersaults, originated in Central Asia, became popular among the Sogdian communities living in China, and then, consequently, among the Chinese. (Pics 5-6)



Pic 5: Gilded Bronze Figure of a Male Dancer, Tang Dynasty (618-907), H: 13,5 cm, Shandan County Museum, Gansu Province. From: Silk Road. The Surviving Treasures from the Northwest China. Beijing: CIP, 2014



Pic 6: Stone Tomb Gate with Huteng Dance Performance, Tang Dynasty (618-907), Door: L: 89, W: 43, Thickness: 5 cm, Ningxia Museum. From: Silk Road. The Surviving Treasures from the Northwest China. Beijing: CIP, 2014, plate 137.

On the other side, linking with the “other” has been reciprocal. The influence of Chinese entertaining culture, among which could be mentioned acrobatics, lions’ dancing has been spread in the western regions as well, involving even black acrobat performers, perhaps, former slaves who were taken to China along with trade caravans. In the Turkic-Sogdian “western” world the lion dance has been localised and transformed into the horse dance, which reflects the adaptational function of culture. (Pics 7-8)



Pic 7: Painted Pottery Figure Performing As a Lion, Tang Dynasty (618-907), L: 11,6; H: 13; W: 5,5 cm, From M336, Astana, Xinjiang, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum. From: Silk Road. The Surviving Treasures from the Northwest China. Beijing: CIP, 2014, plate 139.



Pic 8: Painted Pottery Figure of a Performing Horse Rider, Tang Dynasty (618-907), L: 10; H: 13; W: 5,5 cm, From M336, Astana, Xinjiang, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum. From: Silk Road. The Surviving Treasures from the Northwest China. Beijing: CIP, 2014, plate 142.



The other prominent feature of fertilising cross-cultural contacts of that epoch was the polo game performed on horses. This game is said to have originated in the nomadic culture, and it influenced the social style of people living during the Great Tang. (Pics 9-10)



Pic 9: Polo Gamer / Joueuse de Polo, Tang Dynasty (618-907), ceramique, terracotta, polychromie, H : 31 cm. © Photo Musee Guimet, Paris, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais /Ro. Asselberghs, 2016.



Pic 10: Polo Gamers / Joueuses de Polo, first half of 8 CE, Tang Dynasty (618-907), terracotta, polychromie, Musee national des Arts asiatiques – Guimet, collections from funds of Jacques Polain, 1993. Photo by Laura Yerekesheva.

Individual Feelings and Impressions About the “Other”

This category is linked with the cognitive plane and reflects subjectivity, personal attitudes and individual expressions. Identity becomes the basis for the dividing lines between “Us” and the “Other”. Hence, individuality and specificity both of the artist and the object of his/her creativity is essentially highlighted here.

At this plane the careful or schematic depictions, precise details or general strokes of colours, multiple shapes of forms and textures – all this contributes to the general impression of what the artist wanted to convey. In the case of cross-cultural encounters the amalgamation of styles and forms paves the way for the unique new patterns and symbolism, where attention to details and expressions on the faces and movements of the bodies, play of colours, shapes and forms represent new evolving patterns of creativity, amalgamation and syncretism.



Pic 11: The Sogdians Entertaining Themselves during the Camel Ride. Tang Dynasty (618-907), terracotta, polychrome, National Museum of China. Photo by Laura Yerekesheva.

It is from this perspective that the terracotta figures depicting the “Other” at work and leisure should be viewed. The composition of the group of the Sogdian and Chinese (or Turkic) riders sitting on the fully loaded camel with various trade items, and entertaining themselves, perfectly convey the importance of details and individual features. (Pic 11) Another artifact equally powerfully represents the lone camel rider sitting on the camel overloaded with various trade items. (Pic 12)



Pic 12: The Camel Rider / Chameau et son chamelier, Tang Dynasty (618-907), terracotta, polychromie, Chine du Nord, 43 x 36 cm, Acquisition 1999. © Photo R.M.N. Thierry Ollivier © Reunion des musees nationaux, Paris, 2007. Musee national des Arts asiatiques – Guimet.

These compositions deserve special attention and are much more than just simple objects. They are a realistic snapshot from the past, a glimpse into the history, a superb narration of the lifestyles along the Silk Roads. They are an artifact, yet they speak through details of shapes, forms and colours – about the amalgamated forms of interaction and cross-cultural encounters where the “Other” becomes oneself, where the links are established, and the attitudes are formed.

Other figures of the foreigners – camels, caravan keepers– give similar impressions of succinctly depicted characters, moods and efforts needed to keep the camel or horse in a proper way to lead the caravan and continue the ride. (Pic 3)

Here again, highly elaborate details and focus on the motions testify to the mastership and artistic height. It is a testimony of the compassion to the object of depiction, through which the individual feelings and attitudes flow naturally allowing to link oneself to the “Other”.

Therefore, in conclusion it should be highlighted that cross-cultural encounters are only possible through the dialogue with the “Other”, which, in its own turn, is subject to implementation of all planes. Based on the three-fold way, the dialogue involves amalgamation among institutional setting and context, relational links between “Us” and the “Other”, and cognitive subjective feelings and impressions. As a result of cohesion among all these planes, through details and feelings the dialogue with the “Other” becomes an understanding of oneself. The terracotta figures of burial tombs provides the possibility to better understand the art of living during the second millennium CE and the nature of cross-cultural encounters.

Endnotes

¹E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. (The Hague, Boston, London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1979) p. 51.

²M. Blanchot, “The Infinite Conversation”. Translation and Forward by Susan Hanson. *Theory and History of Literature Series, Volume 82*. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003 (4th edition)), p. 52.

³J. Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2000.) 160 p.; J. Derrida, “Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas”. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. *Series: Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 8.

⁴Systems theory, particularly, structural functionalism, has been most comprehensively developed by American theoretical sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) in the middle of the twentieth century and, irrespective of much criticism, continues to be significant for understanding the holistic processes on the so-called meta-level of theorising.

⁵Laura Yerekesheva, “Syncretism of Religious Beliefs in the Western Himalayas’ Lahoul”. *Südasiens-Chronik/ South Asia Chronicle*, 9 (2019): 89. DOI: 10.18452/20994 <https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/handle/18452/21749>

⁶Yerekesheva, *Syncretism of Religious Beliefs in the Western Himalayas’ Lahoul*, p. 89.

⁷Si-Yu-Ki. *Buddhist Records of the Western World*. Translation from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsang (629-645 AD) by S. Beal. Vol. I. (London: Keagan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1884. Reprinted: New Delhi: AES, 2003) pp. 8-9.

⁸Si-Yu-Ki. *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 9-13.

⁹Si-Yu-Ki. *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 13-15.

¹⁰*Silk Road. The Surviving Treasures from Northwest China*. (Beijing: CIP, 2014), w.p., part 2, ill. 38.

¹¹Si-Yu-Ki. *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p. 20.

¹²The meaning of the word *mingqi* Gilles Beguin translates as “objets lumineux” / lightening objects, or the objects to light the content of the burial grave. In Beguin Gilles. *Le petit peuple des tombes*. Paris: Paris Musees, 2010. 72 p.

¹³*Silk Road. The Surviving Treasures from Northwest China*. – (Beijing: CIP, 2014), w.p., part 4, ill. 134.

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