

## Introduction

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**Abstract** We are delighted to be able to introduce this second special issue of the Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences, on behalf of the University of Exeter, the College of Humanities, and the Departments of Modern Languages and English. This special issue selects articles revised from papers delivered at the inaugural Fudan–Exeter Colloquium, ‘Reading across Cultures: Global Configurations of Reception, Adaptation and Transmission’, held at Fudan University, Shanghai, from 23 to 25 June 2014, and further articles developed from collaborative discussions between Fudan and Exeter colleagues around this central set of concerns.

**Keywords** Exeter · Fudan · Global exchange · Transmission · Adaptation · Reception

We are delighted to be able to introduce this second special issue of the *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*,<sup>1</sup> on behalf of the University of Exeter, the College of Humanities, and the Departments of Modern Languages and English. This special issue selects articles revised from papers delivered at the inaugural Fudan–Exeter Colloquium, ‘Reading across Cultures: Global Configurations of Reception, Adaptation and Transmission’, held at Fudan University, Shanghai, from 23 to 25 June 2014, and further articles developed from collaborative discussions between Fudan and Exeter colleagues around this central set of concerns. Twelve academics from Exeter were hosted by colleagues in Fudan in June 2014. Twenty-six

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<sup>1</sup> A previous special issue from the Fudan–Exeter colloquium was published as volume 8:2 in March 2015.

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papers and two keynote lectures were delivered across eight themed sessions, and 3 days. The colloquium was a great success and cemented the relationship between Fudan and Exeter. It is one of many such collaborations between our institutions. Indeed another jointly held colloquium will take place in Exeter in October 2016.

In the globalised academic world of the twenty-first century, questions of reception and adaptation take on a new urgency. Scholars are investigating the ways in which the literature, visual, and cultural artefacts belonging to one time and place are received by new audiences and adapted by new practitioners, across geographical frontiers as well as across historical eras. In the colloquium, 'Reading across Cultures', the meeting of Chinese and European scholars gave us an opportunity to make comparisons between the various forms of reception and adaptation taking place within each of these centres of civilisation. We considered some of the ways in which the cultures of China and Europe have reached out to and influenced each other, as well as considering how reception and adaptation operate within each culture and across different mediatic forms. Questions that were addressed include: How are literary texts and theatrical performances altered as they enter the translingual spaces between cultures? How do Chinese and European notions of a 'classical' literature differ and agree, and what relations between classical, medieval, and later literatures can be traced in each culture? How and for what purposes have the cultural artefacts of the past been preserved for later generations, and what new significance have they acquired for contemporary audiences across the globe? What is the cultural significance of landscape art and architecture in China and in Europe, and how have the landscape arts and architectures of each culture been received and adapted in the other? How have art and literature in both China and Europe approached questions of the human body and of the relationship of the human to the animal? How do the concepts and the chronological placing of modernity compare across China and Europe, and in what ways has the modern literature of one culture been received by the other? As we explore these questions, we begin to build a new, globalised understanding of the processes of cultural reception, adaptation, and transmission. The papers gathered here approach these questions of reception, adaptation, and transmission from a variety of traditions and perspectives. Two articles focus on Chinese and European architecture as the public stages on which narratives of religion, race, ethics, or modernity are played out. Ulrike Zitzlsperger (Exeter) investigates the extent to which hotels and railway stations weave narratives that are at once personal and collective in her article, 'Reading Across Cultures: Global Narratives, Hotels and Railway Stations'. For Zitzlsperger, Friedrichstraße station and the surrounding hotels in Berlin form an inevitable part of several narratives: that of the First World War, for example, or of modernity. She argues that these public structures can be read as integral to the construction not only of national cultural and political histories, but of international histories as well. Yue Zhuang (Exeter) and Leonidas Koutsoumpos (National Technical University of Athens) contribute a co-authored article, 'Phronēsis and Dao: Cultivating Ethics and Wisdom in the Process of Making Architecture'. Zhuang and Koutsoumpos contend that traditional wisdom and personal cultivation are frequently neglected in architectural design. They trace a connection between the Chinese ideogram 道 (dao = way), and the Greek concept of φρόνησις (phronesis = practical wisdom). This reassessment of Chinese architecture is rooted in two central case studies: a historical Chinese garden (Sima Guang's 'Garden of Solitary Enjoyment') as a manifestation of Dao, and an educational situation from a

contemporary architectural design studio in a school of architecture, as a manifestation of *phronēsis*. From readings of static structures to interpretations of cultural objects: Chloe Paver (Exeter) traces the fascinating narratives of museum objects within and across national boundaries in her article, 'The Transmission of Household Objects from the National Socialist Era to the Present in Germany and Austria: A Local Conversation within a Globalized Discourse'. Paver insists that while many scholars of Holocaust memory stress its globalisation, less attention has been paid to the ways in which the local, national, and global are in continual dialogue. She focuses on historical exhibitions about the Nazi era in Germany and Austria, examining one particular set of museum objects: household possessions stored in homes since 1945. As Paver affirms, these objects are used to 'concretize abstract processes of remembering and forgetting, communication and silence, in the years from 1945 to the end of the twentieth century'. Continuing the theme of national memory and its encounter with the global, Clare Horáčková (Exeter) writes, 'A Transnational Witness to "Other" Stories of Suffering: Encountering Czech Memory in Selected Works by the French Novelist Sylvie Germain'. The French novelist Sylvie Germain lived in Czechoslovakia before, during, and after the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Horáčková examines Germain's retelling of the encounter with the (Czech) other in her texts 'through tropes of exile and dispossession, of the suffering or wounded body, and of illness'. Similarly, Xinmei Li (Fudan) explores the phenomenon of the 'other' through a consideration of Russian émigré culture in her synoptic article, 'An Overview of Russian Émigré Literature in Shanghai'. Li charts the exodus from Russia of aristocrats, officials, capitalists, and intellectuals after the October Revolution. Many of these migrants came to Chinese cities, including Harbin and Shanghai (the second largest centre for Russian émigrés after Harbin). This article provides an overview of the thriving cultural and literary production of Russian émigrés in Shanghai in this period, and offers some tantalising glimpses into their lives.

All these papers, as they present their new reflections on the theme 'Reading Across Cultures', have themselves been enriched by the cross-cultural and international dialogues that took place throughout the colloquium.

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