

## 0. — Main Editorial: World Mutation or Epochal Challenge? 世界突变抑或时代挑战?

The year 2009 had not yet begun that scientific circles around the world were already busy preparing to celebrate two anniversaries: that of Charles Darwin's birth (1809) and that of his main work *On the Origin of the Species*, published in 1859. Probably due to this occurrence, both notions of "evolution" and "creation" have again entered into a new spat of older controversies. One should equally remember the early ages of the Darwinian Theory: the tentative explanation of the evolution understood it as a struggle for life, "the survival of the fittest", to quote Herbert Spencer. In the early twentieth century, this had been abusively applied by some Chinese milieus to the competition among nations towards modernisation. The study published by James Reeve Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Harvard University Press, 1983) has exposed these distortions in greater details.

Notwithstanding these misreadings, the present financial and economic crisis has manifested the multiple interconnections that have been building among nations. They give to the present predicament a global scope never experienced before since the Second World War. Should one suppose that the face of the world has "mutated"? The unforeseen result is that, in just one year's time, many millions of workers, particularly in China but elsewhere also, have lost their jobs. Along that line of reflection, financial specialists and economists would probably agree: the way capitalism has developed itself has reached a turning point. Since it is structuring many if not all the aspects of the world economy affecting the international community, a change is necessary, even if no solution is in view or at hand. This is the call given for a "Life after bankruptcy", to quote Jürgen Habermas. It addresses ethical issues more than financial matters.

Speaking of "mutation" in this case is yet misleading. In the evolution of the Universe, the world community is not tossing here and there as drifting on the earth like on a tiny "drunken boat", so to say by borrowing the metaphor from the French young poet Arthur Rimbaud. If there had been a distortion in applying Darwinian evolution theory to the growth of nations, as mentioned earlier, it was in mixing together what belongs to different levels of reality. In other words, between the evolution of life forms and the development of human history, there is a qualitative jump "of no return". The present age technological "interconnectivity" that has generated the actual predicament has by itself manifested more than ever before the "inner interrelationship" of the human community, including the poorest of its members. It is an open chance at all levels of the world civil society to grow up in solidarity. But would head of states, and politicians that advise them, be able to face the challenge of their leadership? This is another matter.

It is commonly said that history does not repeat itself because neglecting the lessons of history bears always heavier consequences. The two World Wars claim that truth by themselves. So do the global economic crises that have haunted the peace periods of the last century. It is therefore fortunate that in 2009 "the Darwinian theory gave opportunities to set up a new vision of nature, humanity and God. This vision is under the sign of history. [...] We have not yet exhausted all the resources included in this theory," as François Euvé writes to conclude his contribution. The year 2010 will follow in the same direction. In many places around the world, Matteo Ricci's spirit and his legacy of friendship among cultures will be commemorated in the quatercentenary anniversary of his demise (11 May 1610). As a starter for these festive celebrations, this issue presents the formative years of "the most outstanding cultural mediator between China and the West of all time" (W. Frankle).

## 1. — World Section

When Autumn settles down in the northern half of the Globe, Spring announces itself in its southern counterpart. Yet everywhere a calendar year is nearing its end. For the world as a global community, the year 2009 will certainly be remembered as the year of financial crisis and economic uncertain recovery that will affect the new century for generations to come. Leading and emerging economic powers have scheduled different gatherings in order to reflect on the causes of the crisis and to devise measures and remedies out of the damage already done which every nation has to face. This section offers two contributions that could help on different levels of reflections. The first, by Jose I. Duarte, lecturer in Economics at the University of Macau, presents a few considerations that would prevent ungrounded suspicions on certain factors of the crisis or unwarranted hopes for an easy set of local or global solutions. Not a few specialists would agree that structural problems of that global scale would need time, courage and creativity to be fixed. In an interview given in Germany that makes the second part of this section, the renowned philosopher Jürgen Habermas talks about the necessity of an international world order. But, before it could be successfully tested, improved and experienced for the better living of all, the challenges of a “life after bankruptcy”, as the title says, remain to be faced by many.

## 2. —Society Section

It is obvious for every one that the bigger is the population of a country, the heavier will be the human consequences of the global financial and economic crisis, absolutely speaking in number of persons and families concerned. The paradox at the same time is that not a few specialists would consider that one of the keys towards a global solution of the economic woes carried by the crisis would depend on the way China could help, through its economic policy coupled with its huge financial reserves, in solving the financial global predicament. Without entering into technicalities, this section offers two relevant contributions as far as the Chinese society is concerned. In the first, Liu Kaiming, founder of the Shenzhen Institute for the Study of Contemporary Society, documents in figures going by tens of millions the observations that he has gathered through interviews in villages. Such is the present fate of Chinese “farmer workers”: they are laid off because they are “migrant workers” and willy-nilly have returned home to till the land, a job for which they have neither past experience or any recent training... The job market pressure will not be alleviated by this new migration! On a more positive note, Zhu Jiangang, founder of the Institute for Civil Society, based in Guangzhou, relates how a civil society develops in China. Step by step, the imaginative creativity of some Non Governmental Organisations, like his own, associates research, formation and community involvement into a “concerting” ensemble where new local leaders train themselves to assume new responsibilities.

## 3. —Arts and Letters

The following articles looks at two art forms in China today, one an ancient form, the Hanju opera, and the other a more modern artistic expression, the cinema. Everyone has heard of Peking opera. The article by Yan Weiwan introduces the reader to Hanju opera, a form of Chinese opera that developed during the last half of the 17th century in the early Qing dynasty and which flourished for over 300 years thereafter. It therefore antedates Peking opera, which only appeared in the late 18th century and which was influenced by it, although today little about it is known by most people. It is surprising to read in her article that as late as the 1960s a good number of troupes of this form of opera were still active, but that they have almost vanished today. Su Qiqi, in what is a quite original approach, in his article compares the uneasy relationship of Zhang Yimou’s movies to the contemporary novels of major Chinese writers such as Mo Yan and Su Tong. He sees a major two-part development in Zhang’s films, in which the famous film director first adapted then abandoned these novels as a source of inspiration. Both the commercialization of Zhang’s movies and the recent lack of public interest in Hanju opera appear as reflections of a kind of modern life in China and the West that has little time for depth in art.

## 4. —History and Culture

Particularly in China but also in many parts of the world, the spirit of Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), who died in Beijing four hundred years ago, will be celebrated next year. As the day of his birth was on October 6, the Macau Ricci Institute considers that the forthcoming “Ricci Year” begins

on that day. It has been selected to be marked by the inaugural pipe organ recital given on the newly build monumental instrument installed in the Saint Joseph Seminary Chapel. Conceived in the same celebrative perspective looking both towards the past and the future, this section is enhanced by two complementary contributions. In the first, Gianni Criveller, currently based in Hong Kong, presents in great details with historical explanations the cultural background of Matteo Ricci, that is “The Shaping of his Intellectual and Scientific Endowment”. His formative years were lived in the midst of the Italian Renaissance, during which Galileo Galilei dared write, centuries before Stephen Hawking, that “Mathematics is the language in which God has written the universe.” Ricci did not stay long in Macau before entering China, but in the second presentation, Gary Ngai Mei Cheong, of the Macau Sino-Latina Foundation which he helped to establish, reflects on the role that Macau can continue to play in the world of today: it is fitting that the “harmony between civilisations” that is presented in this contribution may be considered as part of Matteo Ricci’s legacy shared both by China and the West.

## 5. —Thought and Humanism

Before this year gets to a close, it is fitting that this quarterly journal contributes also in the celebration of Charles Darwin (1809–1882). Two hundred years after his birth on February 12, his legacy remains a hot topic one hundred and fifty years after the publication of his master work, *On the Origin of Species*, published on November 24 1859. The event initiated the theory of the evolution, first in the animal world and later extended to all forms of life and farther afield up to include the entire Universe. Hence the tremendous impact such way of thinking continues to have in the self-understanding of humankind in the Cosmos. The first contribution of this section addresses itself to one aspect of the controversies that are lingering up to this time: does the notion of “creation” and more precisely the way it is presented in the Book of Genesis, chapter 1, in the Bible, contradict the theory of evolution? As an answer to this question, Christopher Hart, renowned writer and book reviewer, analyses the recent volume written by Andrew Parker under the title *The Genesis Enigma*. Parker shows that not only there is no contradiction, but on the contrary a remarkable convergence. Going beyond controversies, in the second contribution of this section, François Euvé, Dean of the Jesuit Theology Faculty at Centre Sèvres, Paris, explores “the impact of Darwinian theory on western thought”. “The Darwinian theory gave opportunities to set up a new vision of nature, humanity and God. This vision is under the sign of history. [...] We have not yet exhausted all the resources included in this theory.”

## 6. —Debates and Features

Cultural encounters are generally understood as happening on a very large scale, or at least as the confluence of long historical traditions. The feature presented in this section offers an instance that would open new vistas on such a topic. It describes how, on a much smaller scale, some very modest caritative and educational endeavours have merged and fostered artistic talents through which a “confluence” of Eastern artists and Western visual arts has developed that crosses over the limits of its intended objectives. Chen Yaowang, currently the director of the Shanghai Yousheng Biochemical -Technique Research Institute, commemorates how in the past century the Tushanwan Orphanage of Xujiahui, Shanghai, has given its many pupils, and particularly to Zhang Chongren (1907-1998) the basic education and artistic formation that changed their lives. Zhang Chongren became a Chinese artist and sculptor best remembered in Europe as the friend of Hergé, the Belgian comics writer and artist and creator of Tintin. The two met when Zhang was an art student in Brussels.