

On the Defense of Confucius Institutes:
At the University of Chicago, For Example

Marshall Sahlins

This concerns certain arguments supporting the Confucius Institute at the University of Chicago that have been raised in connection with the proposed renewal of its contract in 2014; and more generally with the defense of The Confucius Institute project of the PRC by Professor Edward A. McCord of The George Washington University,¹ written in response to the article I published in November, 2013 in *The Nation*.²

On Governance of the Confucius Institute

In *The Nation* article, I wrote: “Although official documents describe Hanban [The Office of the Chinese Language Council International] as ‘affiliated with the Ministry of Education,’ it is governed by a council of high state and party officials....Simply put, Hanban is an instrument of the Party State operating as an international pedagogical organization.” (p.36) Likewise in another context I noted that the head of the CI Board of Directors at the University of Chicago, “thought, wrongly, that Hanban was ‘under the direction and auspices of the Ministry of Education’ —an impression that Hanban officially conveys in English-language documents by its ‘affiliation’ with that ministry, instead of the council of government officials to which it in fact reports.” (p.43)

Professor McCord objects that: “This conflation of ‘affiliation’ with ‘governance’ suggests an attempt to hide actual state control behind a façade of claimed ‘affiliation’ with the Ministry of Education. Sahlins’ source for this expose, however, is the ‘Constitution and By-laws of the

¹ <http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/files/response-to-sahlins-6.pdf>

² Marshall Sahlins, “Confucius U”, *The Nation*, v.297 no.30:36-43, November 18,2013 (<http://www.thenation.com/article/176888/china-u>)

Confucius Institutes,' a public document on the Hanban website.”(p.2) Moreover, Professor McCord finds this “suggestion of subterfuge puzzling,” arguing sophistically, as is his wont, that the Ministry of Education is also ”an instrument of the party state.”(Ibid.)

In fact, upon opening the official Hanban website in the Chinese version, one reads this anodyne description of the Confucius Institutes (in Google translation): “Hanban is directly under the Chinese Ministry of Education and Institutes around the world are committed to providing Chinese language and teaching resources to satisfy the needs of overseas Chinese learners, for the joint development of multiculturalism, to contribute to building a harmonious world together.”³ Likewise in the “About Us” link of the English version: “Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters, as a public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education, is committed to providing Chinese language and cultural teaching resources and services world wide...”⁴ Or else, Google will direct you to the Australian version: “Hanban is a non-profit organization affiliated to the Ministry of Education of China...,” etc.⁵ This version also appears when one follows the link to the Confucius Institute Headquarters on the website of the Confucius Institute of the University of Chicago.⁶

Clearly it is this self-representation that has resulted in the near-universal presumption that Hanban is under the control of the Chinese Ministry of Education, and accordingly that it is fundamentally a pedagogical initiative, engaged generously (as a “non-profit organization”) in meeting the great demand abroad for Chinese language instruction.

³ <http://www.hanban.edu.cn/>

⁴ http://english.hanban.org/node_7719.htm

⁵ <http://www.hanban.org.au/english/index.htm>

⁶ <https://confuciusinstitute.uchicago.edu/>

This description of its “affiliation,” hence implication of its mission, is general in press reports outside of China, and even in professional ethnographies.⁷ Nor was the head of the Board of Directors of the CI at the University of Chicago the only person of responsibility to so identify Hanban’s auspices. In March 2014, the Board appointed three faculty members associated with the CI to conduct faculty-wide public consultations with a view toward recommending whether or not the University’s contract with Hanban should be renewed. In their call to the faculty, the Committee described Hanban as “ a non-profit agency affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education.”

(Parenthetically, the Ad-Hoc Committee was thus acting as judge and jury in its own case; indeed one prominent member was known to be an outspoken advocate of the Confucius Institute.)

The issue is not the conflation of “affiliation” with “governance,” as Professor McCord says, but rather their distinction. The functions and interests of the Chinese State Council and the Politburo are not the creation through education of a harmonious multicultural world in partnership with all the other peoples. Yet it is the State Council that selects the Governing Council of the Confucius Institutes, appointing a member of the Politburo as its Chair, in the present instance, Vice-Premier Liu Yandong, and other high state officials as Vice-chairs and members of the Executive Council. This Governing Council sets the annual agenda of Hanban and receives its reports. The executive director of the Confucius Institutes, Madame Xu Lin, is a member of the third rank of this governing body, the last-named of thirteen Executive Council members. The CEO of Hanban is thus a lesser official of the State Party bureaucracy that governs its operations. Professor McCord is correct in saying this is all on the internet. With two or three links from Hanban’s home site, one comes upon this table of organization (with photos):

⁷ See Marshall Sahlins and James L. Turk, “Confucius Institutes,” *Anthropology Today*, v.30(1):27-28, 2014.

Chair
Madame Liu Yandong, Ph.D
State Councilor
People's Republic of China

Vice Chairs

Mr. Yuan Guiren, Minister, Ministry of Education

Madame Li Haifong, Minister, Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of
the State Council

Madame Jiang Xiaojuan, Ph.D, Deputy Secretary General of the
State Council

Mr. Zhang Shaochun, Ph.D. Vice Minister, Ministry of Finance

Executive Council Members

13 members, most of them Vice Ministers, as of Foreign Affairs,
National Development, Education, Culture, Finance, and
Commerce, the last on the list being the Chief Executive of the
Office of Chinese Language Council International Headquarters
(Hanban), Madame Xu Lin, Ph.D.⁸

Hence the argument in *The Nation* piece that Hanban is an instrument of the Chinese Party State in the form of an educational enterprise. In apposition I cited the an abbreviated notice of an article in the *People's Daily*, organ of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, in which Confucius Institutes appeared as an integral part of Chinese global-political competition with "the West." In full, it reads:

People's Daily, overseas edition, published an article titled China's Diplomacy, the Rise of an Awakening Lion. The article states, "The rise needs power and we have the power." It cites the annual growth rate of 8%, the fact that China is the second largest economy in the world, its technology and military power, China's regular presence at major international summits, and its 331 Confucius Institutes throughout the

⁸ www.chinese.cn/conference11/node_37099.htm

world. It asks, “Why is China receiving so much attention now? It is because of its ever-increasing power. ... Today, we have a different relationship with the world and the West: we are no longer left to their tender mercies. Instead we have slowly risen and are becoming their equal.”⁹

Professor McCord objects to the reading of this text as proof that Confucius Institutes have a political propaganda function and that they are known to the CCP as important factors contributing to China’s rising power. This is illogical, he says, since the causality is clearly the other way around: “namely, that increased demand for the offerings of CIs around the world is the result of China’s rising global profile. Reflecting the commonly observed pleasure many Chinese take in the fact that foreigners take the time to learn their language,” he writes, “the article seems mainly to be feeding the national pride of its readers in China’s growing stature.” (p.4) Maybe, but this article was published in the overseas edition of the *People’s Daily*, thus for English speakers, to whom it is defiantly presented as a challenge.

The native Western distinction between real-politics and symbolic cultural forms which informs Professor McCord’s objection seems symptomatic of the working misunderstanding that is generally involved in the ready adoption of Confucius Institutes by American colleges and universities. I am no Sinologist, so correct me if I am wrong, but even a superficial knowledge of Chinese history suggests that to distinguish cultural transformation from political domination would be, in that context, a category mistake. Where there is Chinese culture, there is Chinese power—inasmuch as the culture is an emanation of the power. The acculturation of the other, assimilating the other into (Chinese) civilization, has long been a means and index of Chinese hegemony, as by all appearances it is in the *People’s Daily* article. Accordingly, the resources and attention the Chinese government is giving to Confucius Institutes are best understood as an integral aspect of a global competition for political supremacy. Confucius Institutes are embedded functionally in Chinese world-political ambitions in the

⁹ <http://chinascope.org/main/content/view/3306/106/>), 8 February 2011

same way and to the same extent they are embedded structurally in the governmental apparatus of the Chinese Party State.

Teaching

Professor McCord and CI advocates at the University of Chicago question the assertion that Confucius Institutes are given autonomous control of courses in Chinese language and culture under their auspices. He writes: “China’s capacity to make effective use of CIs in this matter is attributed to the position of CIs as ‘autonomous’ entities in universities, which, as Sahlins notes, gives Hanban ‘the right to supply the teachers, textbooks, and curriculum of the courses in its charge.’ The clear implication is that American universities have willy-nilly handed over their China-related courses to Chinese party apparatchiks who transmit the party line in classes under their control using party-approved content. But can this ‘right’ (a very strong term!) be shown either in the documentation involving CIs or in actual practice?” (Ibid.)

While the Constitution and By-Laws of the Confucius Institutes as well as the model agreement with host schools specify that Hanban will supply the latter with trained teachers, textbooks, and other course materials, Professor McCord apparently objects that this doesn’t mean these teachers need teach Chinese language and culture in the way they were trained or use the texts provided for their courses. The host institutions are at liberty to defy in practice the stipulations and intentions on these matters in the agreements they sign with Hanban. Fair enough, although the possibilities and inclinations for doing so must decline precipitously in the smaller universities and colleges that are largely or wholly dependent Confucius Institutes for their Chinese language offerings, let alone the numerous “Confucius Classrooms” in secondary and primary schools—even in the US, not to mention what goes on in Tanzania and other countries. As for what is stipulated in the contracts with particular universities, consider the agreement to establish a Confucius Institute at the University of Chicago, signed on 29 September 2009 by the aforementioned Executive Director of Hanban, Madam Xu Lin, and a Vice President of the University, David Greene. According

to Article 1, “the purpose of this agreement is to identify the rights and responsibilities of the [Hanban] Headquarters and the University of Chicago in the establishment and management of a Confucius Institute at The University of Chicago.”¹⁰ Among the relevant clauses are the following:

--In Article 4, "Scope of Activities", the Confucius Institute at the University is charged with the following "according to the Governing Documents":

"1. Teaching Chinese language and providing Chinese language teaching resources;

2. Training Chinese language instructors...

--In Article 6 "Obligations", the Head Office of Hanban is charged,

2. "Upon launch of the [Chicago] Institute to provide the Institute 3000 volumes of Chinese books, teaching materials, and audio-visual materials on a one-time basis.

3. To provide teaching materials, courseware, and other books, and to authorize the use by the Institute of online courses depending on need and upon mutual consultation.

3 [sic]. To provide \$200,000 in start-up funds to the University of Chicago ...

4. "To send sufficient numbers of qualified instructors based on the Institute's requirements of teaching and pay for their air fares and salaries."

Of course, in practice at the University of Chicago these clauses are ignored, and assurances to that effect by responsible University authorities are meant to satisfy whomever it might concern that we are preserving our academic freedom and integrity. We are assured that the courses taught by teachers

¹⁰ Note that as the reciprocal of “rights,” “responsibilities,” have the same obligatory force. The Hanban teaching function, as assigned to the local Confucius Institute, is described in the Agreement as an “obligation” of the Beijing Headquarters.

provided by Hanban, as included in the regular offerings of the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, conform to standards of that department in matters of textbooks, curriculum, courseware, and all else. Hence a good part of the agreement signed with Hanban is null from the get-go, simply ignored by the University insofar as it does not comport with its own principles. Aside from treating a contract as not worth the paper it was written on, however, there are other issues of apparent bad faith, as well as questionable legal practices, entailed in the University's contractual relations with Hanban. Further, there is the general problem of what hypocrisy in the service of academic integrity can mean for the character and reputation of the University.

One issue concerns the statutes of the University itself, which require that the establishment of any entity with teaching responsibilities be approved by the representatives of the faculty in the Council of the Senate. The Confucius Institute was never brought to the Council for a vote. The only vote was the unanimous approval by the China scholars of the Center for East Asian Studies on the project in proposal form, as presented by Professor Dali Yang, then head of the Center and initiator of the Chicago CI. Although the Japan and Korea scholars of the East Asia Center were excluded from the decision, along with the faculty at large, Professor McCord finds this appropriate because the China faculty would be "the very people one might assume most qualified to evaluate the agreement." (p.5) Indeed, since the agreement would include funds for their own research in China, who could be better qualified to approve it on behalf of the entire University faculty?--not to mention how a negative vote might otherwise jeopardize their research opportunities. Leaving the decision exclusively to the China scholars was a precedent in administrative techniques of "faculty governance" for the present Ad Hoc Committee of CI-associated faculty,

set up to make recommendations about the renewal of the contract—by consulting, this time, with the less-qualified faculty at large.¹¹

Although the CI agreement gives Hanban the right to provide teachers for language courses, the University of Chicago, we have been told, fully controls the hiring process. According to Dali Yang, as reported in *The Nation*, “The University is fully engaged in the hiring process for Chinese teachers, not just a right of refusal” (p.43). However, as also pointed out in *The Nation*, on the authority of the Chicago person in who manages the University’s role in the hiring, this is not true: “We don’t choose, “ she said. “They recommend and we accept.” (Ibid.) Further inquiry evoked the comment that we do have a right of refusal, although it has never been exercised. Professor McCord’s refutation of the significance of this intervention of Hanban in University instruction is exemplary of the default sophistry that runs through his critique: “Saying a university is ‘fully engaged in the hiring process’ is hardly an assertion that the university has an actual role in ‘choosing’ the teachers who will be offered to the CI. The statement that ‘they recommend, and we accept’ does not deny that the university has a right of refusal.” (p.7). Yes, but the Chicago claim is that that the University is “fully engaged in the hiring process for Chinese teachers, not just a right of refusal.”

Then there are certain disturbing legal issues raised by Hanban’s selection and training of CI teachers. By the standard terms of agreement, the Confucius Institutes are supposed to operate under the laws of both China and the US; but when it comes to questions of free speech and prohibitions on discrimination in hiring, this is an obvious impossibility, since the relevant laws of the two nations contradict one another. In such matters as advocating democratic

¹¹ I take Professor McCord’s point that one could have learned the standard features of the CI agreements with universities from the Hanban website. In that regard there is no excuse for the general ignorance—which still prevails in the Chicago faculty--about Hanban’s privileges under the terms of the agreement. However, the signed agreement between Hanban and the University, which includes these terms, has not been publically disclosed. As of this writing it was not known to members of the faculty’s representative body, the Council of the Senate.

reforms or adhering to Falun Gong, Chinese law criminalizes what American law protects. It follows that allowing Hanban to determine the selection of teachers in American classrooms can make the host US institutions complicit in discriminatory hiring. As is well known, this sort of thing did happen in Canada, in the case of Ms. Sonia Zhao, who in 2012 left her post at McMaster University because, she said, her employment forced her to hide her belief in Falun Gong. When she brought the complaint against McMaster to the Human Rights Tribunal, of Ontario for “giving legitimation to discrimination,” it thus put the Canadian University in the position of defending Chinese law.

Professor McCord offers three spurious objections to these implications of the legal dilemmas:

--Although the clauses regarding the laws of the two countries are indeed awkwardly worded, he allows, “the Chinese government in the end has no legal standing, and has in fact never attempted to enforce Chinese laws in regard to the activities of CIs ‘in the countries in which they are located.’ ”(p.6) Probably not, but the argument is irrelevant to the primary problem occasioned by the CI agreements: the problem is the selection and training of teachers by Hanban in China according to Chinese laws—which then makes the host university that hires them vulnerable to legal sanctions in its own country.

--If American universities were to be held responsible for the hiring practices of the universities of countries from which they accept visiting professors, Professor McCord says, it would have drastic effects on faculty exchange programs. For “it would present the unprecedented requirement that American universities reject any ‘visiting professors’ from other countries unless the hiring practices in these countries were fully congruent with all the requirements (federal and local) applicable to the host university.” (p.8) This is again off-target because visiting professors in American universities are uniquely selected and hired by these universities, not by institutions in their countries of origin (as in the CI case); hence only US laws and practices are pertinent.

--The Hanban-supplied teachers are not actually “hired” by their host schools, Professor McCord asserts, but continue to be members of faculty in

their own Chinese universities.(p.6) Even University of Chicago administrators have dismissed that one—as in the claim to be “fully engaged in the hiring process”—inasmuch as the Chinese instructors are given standard lectureship titles together with all the privileges thereof, not to mention additions to their Hanban salaries and the usual faculty perquisites.

Censorship

When interviewed in connection with the McMaster case, Ms Zhao spoke about how she was trained to handle questions that are politically sensitive in China. “If my students asked me about Tibet or other sensitive subjects, I should have the right to express my opinion—I was not allowed to talk freely. During my training in Beijing they do tell us: ‘Don’t talk about that. If the student insists, you just try to change the topic or say something the Chinese Communist Party would prefer.’”¹² Since the reference to that report in *The Nation*, I have been informed of a study by the anthropologist Jennifer Hubbert that echoes Ms Zhao’s statement in the actual practices of a Confucius Classroom.¹³ For purposes of confidentiality, Professor Hubbert identifies the ethnographic site by the pseudonym “Marymount,” and identifies it as a Catholic, co-educational secondary school on the West Coast of the US. Most pertinently here, she reports that the several teachers of Chinese at Marymount (she interviewed nine) have been trained by Hanban to divert discussions of sensitive political topics when they arise in the classroom, thus confirming Ms Zhao’s statement to that

¹² *China Digital Times*, “Controversy continues over Confucius Institute,” 22 June 2012 (<http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2012/06/controversy-continues-confucius-institutes/>).

¹³ Jennifer Hubbert, In press: “Ambiguous States: Confucius Institutes and Chinese Soft Power in the American Classroom,” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*.

effect.¹⁴ Further, Professor Hubbert describes incidents of this kind that where the teacher's response to a student's queries on such topics range from a stony stare followed by silence (on Tibet) to an evasive changing of the subject (on Tiananmen). Regarding the latter, a "particularly telling example" came up in a conversation with two sophomores who complained about the lack of classroom discussion of the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown on public dissent:

Carly: When Tiananmen Square comes up in class, we all look at each other. The teachers talk about it as this beautiful square, a nice place to visit. But it's like, "Wait, hold on, we're missing some context."

Lindsey: If you ever get into these issues in the class, it gets steered away. "Wait, there's no Tiananmen Square. Let's talk about fluffy bunnies." (Hubbert, ms.)

Tiananmen often came up in similar ways in talks with students, but in this connection as in relation to other off-limits topics, the teachers' trained avoidances had a blow-back effect rather the opposite of what the tactics were designed to achieve. Rather than helping promote the perception of a peaceful, beautiful, and harmonious China, the conspicuous silences and explicit evasions of the teachers, as also of the Hanban-supplied textbooks, reinforced the notions of a repressive Chinese political regime that for many of these American students antedated their experience of the Confucius Classroom.¹⁵ This reaction could be mitigated in particular instances of teachers' open-mindedness and connection

¹⁴ Professor Hubbert footnotes some examples of teachers' handling of controversial topics with the explanation that, "Hanban instructed teachers to follow such diversion tactics in their training sessions."

¹⁵ Eight of the nine CI teachers used the Hanban-supplied textbooks (Hubbert, personal communication). One, who had been teaching Chinese for over a decade (in the US?) was highly critical of the Hanban materials and rejected them in favor of textbooks published by a Boston firm. Professor Hubbert notes that a Chinese History text used in an advanced-level course had only one chapter on the PRC era—including discussion of "U.S. Aggression in Korea," the theme of an earlier CI video for primary schools, since withdrawn (see *The Nation* article p. 38).

with the students' interests: with the rather paradoxical effect, Professor Hubbert concludes, that the more the students' ideas of the Chinese state are disaggregated by the teachers' personable behavior, the better the PRC achieves its soft-power objectives. On the whole, however, the good news is that the CI project is not a very effective way of promoting the political influence of the People's Republic. And that is partly a function of the bad news: that censorship with regard to controversial topics potentially embarrassing to the PRC regime is structurally inscribed in the Confucius Institute project, as a matter of teachers' training and classroom performance.

So much for the frequently voiced argument, also rehearsed by Professor McCord, that after all a course on Chinese language and culture has little or no place for discussion of the status of Taiwan or the blood spilled at Tiananmen, the errors of the CCP or the jailing of dissident democracy advocates. In effect, the argument is: there is no censorship, because we never talk about such things.¹⁶ That is likewise the policy of Hanban and indeed of a recent Chinese government edict proscribing the discussion of a number of such subjects in Chinese universities. Apart from courses taught by Hanban instructors, it is also a guiding principle of the lectures, conferences, research projects, and performances sponsored by Confucius Institutes in their host universities—what the Deputy Director of the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Chicago, Ted Foss, referred to as “a certain amount of self-censorship.”

In the end, Professor McCord, in a veritable tour de force of specious reasoning, manages to legitimate the censorship practices of Confucius Institutes on the grounds of academic freedom. His argument is that critics of CIs would deny the right of visiting Chinese professors to voice their opinions, hence

¹⁶ I do not exaggerate. See, The Diplomat. “Confucius Controversy,” 7 March 2011 (<http://thediplomat.com/new-embassy/2011/03/07/confucius-controversy/>), and, Canada.com, “Has BCIT sold out to Chinese propaganda?” 2 April 2006 (<http://www.canada.com/vancouver/news/westcoastnews/story.html?id=179b4e77-f0cf-4608-a8b7-a9943116f489>).

deprive them of the privileges of free expression that are fundamental to the academic enterprise. Whereas these critics purportedly want to prevent the presentation of the PRC position on Tibet, for example, “Our willingness to allow a range of views to be expressed in the classroom,” Professor McCord perversely rejoins, “is ultimately connected to the belief that our students will have multiple sources of information that will allow them to draw their own conclusions.” (p.10) In other words, just what the Hanban-supplied teachers are trained not to do—specifically not to willingly allow a range of views to be expressed in the classroom—even as the same restraint inhabits Confucius Institute programs in general. Of course that censorship, whether self-imposed or externally required, is what the critics of CIs seek to exclude from the precincts of the university, precisely on the grounds of academic freedom. They are not objecting to visiting Chinese professors expressing their own views; they are objecting to them preventing the expression of other views.

Professor McCord could hardly have come up with more disingenuous examples of the supposed attacks on academic freedom by those who oppose the establishment of Confucius Institutes. For another one, his reading of the opponents’ objections to known attempts by Confucius Institute administrators to prevent the Dalai Lama from speaking on campus. By Professor McCord’s reading, the critics of the CI administrators are denying the right of free speech to the people who want to ban the Dalai Lama from speaking freely. Of these people who want to silence the Dalai Lama, he asks, “But should their right of free expression be denied?” (p.14) Of course, that is not the question at issue. The question is whether the right of the Dalai Lama to speak should be denied? And what kind of university is it where the Dalai Lama is prevented from speaking on political grounds?

Likewise for the incident at Waterloo University, where the Chinese co-director of the Confucius Institute mobilized her students to carry out a campaign of protest against the coverage in the local media of the Chinese suppression of a Tibetan uprising. Should we suppose these students were merely dupes of one charismatic professor, asks Professor McCord, or might some of them have

actually agreed with her? (p.10) No doubt they might, but what was the alternative?

Then again, the same contradiction is explicitly built into the title of Professor McCord's rejoinder: that is, in the relation between the main title, "Confucius Institutes in the U.S.", and the old Maoist subtitle, "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom; Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend." Confucius Institutes are hardly intended to let a hundred schools of thought to contend. And one might well ask, Professor, where have all the flowers gone?

While it is sometimes admitted by advocates of Confucius Institutes that speakers such as the Dalai Lama and politically controversial topics such as the notorious "three Ts" (Tibet, Taiwan, and Tiananmen) cannot be entertained in their CIs, they attempt to minimize the implications for academic integrity by pointing out there are other places on campus where these can be heard. At the University of Chicago we are told that what is not politically appropriate at the Confucius Institute can always be sponsored by the Center for East Asian Studies. By that reasoning, there could be permissible censorship in every department, institute, and center in the University, so long as there was one where all viewpoints could be freely expressed. The problem with permissible censorship in a university is something like that of an unwanted pregnancy: you cannot have just a little of it.

The Confucius Institute and Academic integrity

The kinds and number of compromises of its own intellectual and pedagogical principles entailed by the participation of the University of Chicago in Confucius Institutes must have regrettable effects on its academic integrity as an institution, let alone its general academic standing and reputation. Here by way of summary are several of the most evident of such breaches of principle, as manifest in the statements or actions of responsible University of Chicago parties:

--The University in 2009 committed itself to an agreement with the Confucius Institutes which included clauses on the teaching of Chinese language and culture. By these provisions, Hanban was contracted to train, supply, and pay the teachers, as well as provide textbooks and teaching materials, for courses within the University's own Chinese language program. The University signed the agreement in bad faith, as it never intended to give Hanban control of the texts, teaching materials materials, and thereby the course curricula. This merely added an element of hypocrisy to the problematic provisions of the agreement with Hanban, several of which are noted in the following.

--The University violated its own statutes by not submitting this contract, inasmuch as it included teaching provisions, for approval by the representatives of the faculty in the Council of the Senate. Instead the University claimed that a vote by the China scholars of the Center for East Asian Studies constituted faculty approval.

--The University repeated this violation of faculty governance by appointing a Confucius Institute in-house Committee of three professors, all of whom are China specialists, to hold hearings and make recommendations on the renewal of the CI contract.

--The University falsely claimed to be "fully engaged" in the hiring process of teachers supplied by Hanban. At most it now claims a right of refusal it has never exercised.

--The University ignored the fact that Hanban is guided by Chinese law in selecting the teachers it sends, including laws that criminalize forms of belief and free speech protected in the US. As a result, the University becomes complicit in discriminatory hiring practices.

--The University ignored the fact that the teachers sent by Hanban to host institutions abroad are trained to avoid or divert discussions in class of subjects that are potentially politically embarrassing to the PRC .

--The University admitted that " a certain amount of self-censorship" is involved in the activities of its Confucius Institute. It offered the compensation that politically controversial topics could be sponsored by other units of the

University, thus sanctioning the principle that censorship is permissible in any academic unit so long as it does not apply somewhere else in the University.

--The University, affirming in official statements that its CI, like all others, was “affiliated” through Hanban with the Chinese Ministry of Education, thus failed to take or give notice that the Governing Council of the Confucius Institutes, which sets the agenda of Hanban and receives its reports, is chaired by a member of the Politburo and composed by high officials of the PRC, including members of the State Council and the Ministers or Vice-Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Education, National Development, Culture, Commerce, and Finance.

--The University accordingly considered it inconsequential that research projects on Chinese development proposed by Chicago faculty and students are submitted through its CI to Hanban, which makes the final decisions for approval and funding.

--Indeed, the University also ignored—perhaps because it was considered impractical and unenforceable--that according to its own Constitution and By-laws (Chapter 6, Article 36b), Hanban reserves the right to take punitive legal action for any activity sponsored by a local Confucius Institute without its approval.

These dubious aspects of Chicago’s Confucius Institute notwithstanding, many affiliated faculty as well as University officials are quite content with it, citing the freedom in practice from the contractual restraints on teaching Chinese, the quality of the Hanban teachers, the conferences on family economics undertaken with our Department of Economics, and the research opportunities the CI opens in China. This local satisfaction, however, involves the University in compromises of its own academic principles on a much greater scale. I noted this in *The Nation* article, but as the editing necessarily compressed it, I spell out the point here. For it needs to be considered that the interests of Hanban and particular American universities are different in scale and character. As an instrument of Chinese government policy, Hanban’s interests are global and real-political. Its mission is to spread the influence of the Chinese state

worldwide, particularly in strategically consequential regions, and above all the United States. Accordingly, with this larger objective in mind, the Beijing Head Office is ready to make case-by-case accommodations to American academic sensibilities: especially to prestigious universities--*pour encourager les autres*. The apparent loss Hanban takes in one local engagement may be an overall gain for the program world-wide. By contrast, the American universities for their part are concerned only with their own parochial welfare as academic institutions. Interested in the short-term economic, teaching, or research benefits, they are inclined to ignore or dismiss the unsavory political aspects of Confucius Institutes, which is to say the larger implication of their own participation, so long as they get a good deal. The larger implication is that their participation lends support to a project that is inimical to the academic integrity of other institutions even as it compromises their own.

When the establishment of the CI at the University of Chicago was announced, one distinguished professor emeritus objected in a communication to the executive body (Committee of the Council) of the faculty legislature (Council of the Senate):

“I do not doubt that, regardless of its own statutes on these matters, the Confucius Institute has given broad assurances of academic integrity and freedom to the University of Chicago officials and teachers. I do not doubt it because the value of enlisting the prestige of the University of Chicago in the cause of the international success of the CI initiative would make any such concessions worthwhile, even if they were more than nominal. This, then, is the ultimate concern: that we are lending our good name to a political project that by its own by-laws infringes on our traditions of academic freedom at the same time it transgresses on our ideals of human rights, and in so doing we help spread these effects to other institutions that are less able to refuse the financial inducements that accompany them.”

The Dean who negotiated for a Confucius Institute at Professor McCord's own institution, The George Washington University, pointed to the University of

Chicago as an example. “I think we saw other top universities taking on Confucius Institutes,” she said, “and that increased our comfort level.”¹⁷ The moral is: no matter how liberal or beneficial the terms of its own participation, the University of Chicago, by hosting a Confucius Institute, becomes involved in a world-political struggle in a way that contradicts the intellectual and ethical values on which it is founded.¹⁸

In the event, there is a direct relationship between the global development of Confucius Institutes and the impairment of the University of Chicago’s good name. Judging from the adverse comments reported from many universities in the US and a number in other countries, the damages to the reputation of the University attendant on its establishment of a Confucius Institute are tracking the spread of the Hanban project. In the shadow of Hanban’s success come expressions of disappointment, dismay, and incredulity that an institution so well regarded for its intellectual quality and academic probity should become involved in such a dubious initiative of such an illiberal regime.

Coda

A significant development of note since the publication of “China U.” was the resolution passed by the governing council of the Canadian Association of

¹⁷ This notice appeared in the “China U” article of *The Nation*, where there are no references. The quotation is from: *The GW Hatchet*, “New Institute Comes with Questions of Chinese Influence,” 17 January 2013 (<http://www.gwhatchet.com/2013/01/17/institute-comes-with-questions-of-chinese-influence>).

¹⁸ When I asked Dean Richard Saller, the instigator and initial director of the Confucius Institute at Stanford, why he didn’t just jettison it, he replied, “because my faculty find it valuable, and because our contract means that Hanban has no influence on the Stanford Confucius Institute. None of the objections you cite on pp.20-22 in the case of Chicago is applicable here. Indeed, we have had three visits from the Dalai Lama since we signed the agreement.” (personal communication)

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University Teachers (CAUT) “calling on universities and colleges in Canada which currently host Confucius Institutes on their campuses to cease doing so, and those contemplating such arrangements to pursue them no further.”¹⁹ In an accompanying statement, James Turk, the Executive Director of CAUT, observed: ““In agreeing to host Confucius Institutes, Canadian universities and colleges are compromising their own integrity by allowing the Chinese Language Council International to have a voice in a number of academic matters, such as curriculum, texts, and topics of class discussion. Such interference is a fundamental violation of academic freedom.”²⁰ “Our interest in Confucius Institutes,” he explained in another communication, “comes from our concern about universities and colleges entering into arrangements with third parties—governments, industry, donor foundations—where the university agrees to abandon factors on which its uniqueness and credibility is based—academic freedom, academic control of academic decision-making (curriculum, hiring), etc.”²¹ The Canadian Association of University Teachers represents some 68,000 faculty and staff in over 120 colleges and universities across the country.

¹⁹ www.caut.ca/news/2013/12/17/universities-and-colleges-urged-to-end-ties-with-confucius-institutes

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ personal communication.