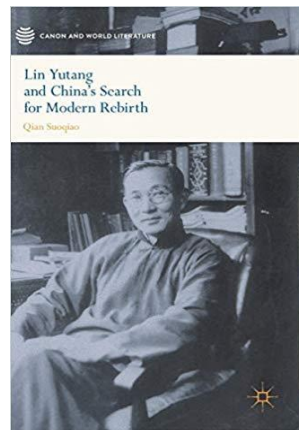


Chinese Cultural Rebirth: Lin Yutang's Blueprint

11-12am Wednesday 12 February 2020
Venue: ER140



Qian Suoqiao
Newcastle University

Abstract

The May Fourth and New Culture Movement in the 1910s outlines the mainstream strategy for China's cultural rebirth on the two basic tenets: to call for "Mr. Democracy" and "Mr. Science" on the constructive side while engaging in a Nietzschean iconoclastic deconstruction of traditional Chinese culture. However, Lin Yutang (1895-1976), a renowned writer, offers an alternative blueprint for Chinese cultural rebirth. From Lin's cross-cultural practices as meticulously demonstrated in *Lin Yutang and China's Search for Modern Rebirth*, a recent intellectual biography by the author, we can see Chinese cultural rebirth does not require a radical iconoclasm—in fact, it may very well produce the opposite effect. Chinese culture can and ought to be reconfigured to herald "Mr. Democracy" while still providing important cultural resources for a "new civilization" to be built by East and West together. This talk outlines Lin Yutang's blueprint in the following aspects - in terms of readjustment of Confucian and Legalist ideas, of Confucian and Taoist philosophy and aesthetics, of Chinese language and literature, and of religion.

Biography

Qian Suoqiao is Professor (Chair) of Chinese Studies at Newcastle University, UK. He received his PhD in comparative literature from University of California, Berkeley and had taught in a number of universities in the US, China and Hong Kong. He has published widely in Chinese studies in both English and Chinese, particularly on Chinese modernity and cross-cultural studies between China and the world. His most recent work *Lin Yutang and China's Search for Modern Rebirth* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) has had two Chinese versions with the same title 《林语堂传：中国文化重生之道》 in mainland China and Taiwan, with much critical acclaim.