who behave in a steady and diligent manner and those who do not); and the cultural boundaries (the different cultures of rural and the urban students in terms of manners, language, and appearance). How teachers learn from the technical aspects of assessment has been given detailed attention but the effects and consequences of the symbolic boundaries seem less explicit and would have benefitted from further illustration. That said, it is through the symbolic boundaries that Jiang digs deeper to expose the great pressure of high-stakes entrance examinations which permeates the story: Students from *shiyuan ban* were considered more intelligent with greater potential and thus teachers had higher expectations of them entering key secondary schools. And students from rural areas had to make every effort to work their way out of the cultural, moral, and intellectual boundaries by entering urban schools, and subsequently urban universities, to secure a decent job in the city. In this way, rural students could eventually live as urban residents and shake off the symbolic boundaries. However, the reader is left pondering the fate of the students in *putong ban*; what chances do the forms of assessment and teaching they encounter provide for a hopeful future? Jiang's book documents the ways student teachers learn through assessment, but perhaps even more importantly, it gives insight into a more critical social issue, which is pertinent to societies across the globe.

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Learning, identity and narrative in the late modern age: Towards a theory of reflexive learning. Zhao Kang. Hangzhou, China: Zhejiang University Press, 2014. 189pp., (paperback), ¥36, ISBN: 978-730-813-553-5.

This theoretical work has been written by a young Chinese scholar, mainly based

on the author's doctoral thesis. This book in response to two observations aims to explore personal identity at a conceptual level and the necessity of personal identity as a subject (p. 20). One observation is that the notion of identity is normally developed into such specific aspects that the nature of the identity itself tends to be overlooked. The other one is that personal identity is simply constructed in an objective and impersonal sense, rather than as a subject in terms of its ontological meaning.

The concept of identity has some problems in the view of Anthony Giddens and Zygmunt Bauman. Giddens suggests that these problems are owed to external changes, which create deeper anxiety by increasing uncertainties and breaking the continuity of identity. He also supposes that the individual has the reflexive ability to change living conditions. Different from Giddens, Bauman is focused on the ever-changing society which can be interpreted in terms of a kind of liquid modernity, and insists on transforming individuals into citizens who can protect their identity from being eroded by this liquid modernity.

In order to frame this research, the author introduces the ideas from Paul Ricœur and Charles Taylor. In Ricœur, identity is divided into two modalities, identity as sameness and identity as selfhood. Identity as sameness means individual continuity and consistency, while identity as selfhood refers to responses to others and to others' responses. Ricœur also contends that identity is not just an object of self, but also a being in the ontological lens. In Taylor, identity is not just explained at a conceptual level, but also includes the moral dimension, which means that individuals should take responsibility to acquire virtue and care for others like themselves.

Because personal identity is always accompanied by the anxiety and liquidity caused by external changes, learning, especially the reflexive learning, is very necessary to develop flexibility and reflexivity in relation to the ever-changing society. Learning is normally understood as acquiring skills and knowledge, but reflexive learning is regarded as developing one's understanding of oneself in one's response to others and others' responses (p. 136). The narrative is also indispensable owing to its roles in the learning. It particularly involves imitation, reflection, interpretation, mediation, revelation and transformation of personal identity in Ricœur, and in the meanwhile it is also concerning articulation, examination, interpretation, meaning making and argumentation of identity in Taylor (p. 156). Put simply, narrative involves interpreting and reconstructing a

biography to form persistence, integrity and meaning of identity against external ongoing changes.

This book has two strong points that make it distinctive among currently existed studies on identity. It is closely linked with social reality because its research question comes from the analysis of modernity and concentrates on solving identity problems emanating from our ever-changing society. This means that the study has significance for China, a society just experiencing dramatic changes. On the other hand, the framework of analysis is very clear. After exploring the identity problems, the author introduces the views of Ricœur and Taylor, and then takes reflexive learning and narrative as the means to protect and perfect personal identity.

As we can see, the theoretical framework of this book is mainly based on the thoughts of Paul Ricœur and Charles Taylor, scholars whose thoughts can seemingly be combined without any contradiction. In fact, it is also necessary to discuss why it is possible to combine them and make clear underlying tensions between them. As a key part of the theoretical framework, the concept of reflection has its own history, because it has been studied by Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Kant and others. This book will be much better if it introduces this, because this historical context makes it not very hard to understand why Ricœur and Taylor make such an effort to study this concept and make clear the advantages and disadvantages of their respective ideas.

In contemporary China, a serious barrier to education reform is that learning is still commonly understood as serving the acquisition of knowledge, affections and values for adapting to the changing society, but the implications of learning are underestimated. The author argues that learning, especially reflexive learning, not only means acquiring something already there, but also helps individuals develop their identity. Thus, an important lesson we can learn from this highly theoretical work is that education reforms and practices should pay attention to reflexive learning in the construction of personal identity.

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