2006

THE KINGSBURY TALES: John so english

Ouyang Yu

Follow this and additional works at: http://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi

Recommended Citation
Available at:http://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol28/iss1/4
THE KINGSBURY TALES: John so english

Abstract
In Kingsbury, English is not the only spoken language Chinese, for example, is one of the many spoken, and written as well as read Languages in the early 21st century And in this language people discuss issues Such as the ability to speak English Badly and how this will un-Mayor a Mayor In John So. a man who hasn't got much else to un-recommend himself Except his ability to speak an English that brings out the worst In his political enemies C, my friend, used a simple analogy:
In Kingsbury, English is not the only spoken language
Chinese, for example, is one of the many spoken, and written as well as read
Languages in the early 21st century
And in this language people discuss issues
Such as the ability to speak English
Badly and how this will un-Mayor a Mayor
In John So, a man who hasn’t got much else to un-recommend himself
Except his ability to speak an English that brings out the worst
In his political enemies
C, my friend, used a simple analogy:

This is like a disability
If you want to throw him from the throne of Mayoralty
You blame him for being a cripple or a fat chin or a lopsided face
Or, simply, for pronouncing rice as lice
But that proves your own weakness
For jidan li tiao gutou (finding bones in an egg)

I have nothing to say except that
I admire John for being so english
That he has Chinesed it
To the degree of providing his opponents
With his strongest weakness
THE KINGSBURY TALES: the non-academic’s tale

Critics are not above criticism
They, of all the people, are the ones who deserve criticism, if not carping
What if they keep calling me Mr Bai, not Mr Li
Because my Chinese name is Li Bai and keep putting me under B, not L
In the bland and mostly blind bibliographies
If they know Bai in Chinese means White they are committing an even worse crime
Which I would call, not racism, but namism
And, believe it or not, critics can even pretend they know a language
That they don’t know at all but let me tell you how
If someone has written something on, say, a Greek poet
Let’s assume he is Cavafy
And has quoted him and included him in his footnote
Next time I quote the quote or the quoted I simply include the info. in my foot
Note as if I read it in the original
Isn’t that simple enough? Critics
Please stop this lazy practice
For you’ll be caught out one day
Even though no one will openly write about it
There are other critics who will write about one
As if they know everything
By relying on a fashionable theory that will one day become a
Theoretical stereotype
And by adhering to the merely publisheds
(ah, so much unpublished is so exciting but did they know that? Not a thing!)
But they can’t even ensure that they have got their facts right
Avoid, at any cost, the prevalent academic laziness
That I see on a daily basis
Regardless of what large amounts of quotations are quoted
And what a long list of reference books is compiled
For the fact remains that it’s a shoddy piece of academic business
That forever keeps me out of business
And forever helps people get to the top
Beware of academic businessmen and businesswomen
Who sell their ware successfully in refereed journals
That no one reads
That are only refereed
As another dead piece goes down
The drain history
THE KINGSBURY TALES: the shirt

Lying in a corner of my room, the shirt
Is a gray color
I shed it as soon as I put it on this morning for the Court
As my back, the back of my neck, and, in fact, my whole upper trunk
Started getting itchy
It's a strange shirt in that sense for it never fails to make me itch
Far as I remember it this is a gift shirt from Ming my brother in October 1999
Back then, he was alive (what a redundant thing to say)
Now, he is dead
Today, finally unable to take the itchy load, I stripped myself bare
Of the gift, the memory, along with the guilt
That by so doing I might have committed an act of betrayal
I said to my wife:
I'm going to dump this itchy shirt
I'm not even going to give it away to the Australian poor
For philanthropy
China-made, it should be Chinese-trashed
Good idea, she said
After putting on a different shirt, I remembered
Once again for the hundredth time
That Ming was tortured to death in a Chinese prison
On 20 August 2003
Because of his Falungong belief