Preface

For the past two or more millennia, the operation of a set of mental capacities defined variously as knowledge, wisdom, rationality, and more generally as intelligence, has tended to dominate not only the Western intellectual landscape but many general considerations of the human condition. Attempts to define an essence of humanity have focused on intelligence; in name at least, *homo sapiens* is taxonomically distinguished from the other hominids by the capacity to *know*.¹

This book is about a mode of intelligence or way of knowing that is easier to recognize than to talk about—a mode of knowing that falls into the lacuna between the kinds of knowledge we formally acknowledge and those we recognize in social practice and everyday language. This mode of intelligence embraces a set of skills and men-

¹In both etymology and general usage, the terms *knowledge*, *wisdom*, and *intelligence* describe a complex set of faculties: the ability to recognize, discriminate, or perceive significant differences and think, learn, or reason about them. *Knowledge* often refers to a particular domain of expertise, and in this sense *intelligence* is more general and refers to broader capacities, which include having knowledge, sagacity, and the ability to *know*. It is in this sense that we make a distinction between stupidity as lacking intelligence and ignorance as lacking knowledge. But the broader meaning of *knowing* refers to wisdom, the exercise of sound judgment, discernment, and the ability to perceive. Wisdom entails skill (which may include skill in magic or the occult arts), expertise, knowledge, and learning. In this broad sense, *to know* means to be aware, cognizant, versed, or skilled. The English root *know* of *knowledge* is cognate with the Greek **gnō*. *Wisdom* and *wit* derive from the Indo-European roots **woid-* and **weid-* (to know) and **wid-* (to see). Thus wit is the seat of consciousness, thinking, and the faculty of reasoning. Cognates include Greek *oida* (to know), Latin *videre* (to see) and German *wissen*.

tal attitudes that range from wisdom, forethought, keen attention, and resourcefulness to subtle indirection, craft, deception, and cunning. It relies on skill, strategy, and a general knack for handling whatever comes along. It is the intelligence not of Apollo but of Athena, an intelligence best associated in the Western tradition with the wily and resourceful Odysseus.

The importance of practical wisdom, sagacity, and cunning are widely acknowledged in practice, but we must move from philosophical discourse to everyday language to find a nonpejorative language in which to talk about them. Even so, English has no equivalent for what the Greeks called *mētis*. The range of English words for wisdom and cunning provides an example of this tension. In positive terms, we say someone is wise, knowledgeable, sagacious, subtle, prescient, foresighted, or expert. The same individual may be negatively described as cunning, crafty, slippery, underhanded, or devious. Several terms are ambiguous in their moral weighting, for example, clever, canny, wily, and sharp. Yet for all their different nuances, these terms may all be applied to the same type of individual. This lacuna between the knowledge we recognize in official discourse and that which we recognize in ordinary language and day-to-day activities is reflected in linguistic practice as a tension between “wisdom” and “cunning,” virtuous and vicious intelligence.

In a germinal study, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*, in which they investigate what they call “practical and cunning intelligence,” Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant argue that there is a polarity in Greek culture between two modes of knowing: speculative reason and *mētis*. Suggesting that *mētis* operates as an independent mode of intelligence with its own logic and methods, they describe it as a way of knowing, with complex but coherent mental attitudes and characteristic intellectual behavior, typically applied to shifting, ambiguous situations that are not amenable to rigorous logic or calculation. They argue that the principal types of individual within Greek society relied on *mētis*. Their investigation not only demonstrates the nature and importance of *mētis* within Greek society but also suggests its importance as a universal type of human intelligence.

In this book I examine the applicability of what I call *metic intelligence* (from the Greek word *mētis*) to the culture and language of early China.² By using indigenous issues within the Chinese intellec-

²The word *mētis* is related to the verbs *mētiaō*, “to consider, meditate, plan,” and

tual tradition, I examine the provenance of metic intelligence in classical Chinese culture and society. As in the Greek case, metic intelligence tacitly informed many aspects of early Chinese society, including both personal and social morality, military strategy, and statecraft. I draw upon representative Warring States philosophical, historical, and military texts and late Ming historical-fictional texts to establish the continuing importance of metic intelligence in China, and I then compare the problems of metic intelligence in China and Greece.

In the first part of the book I examine early Chinese understandings of wisdom, knowledge, craft, and cunning from the viewpoint of early Chinese theories of language. Within the domain of Chinese studies, I argue that Chinese views of the nature of language and knowledge were fundamental to other considerations not usually associated with the question of language and its relation to thought. These include statecraft, warfare, and a variety of questions of personal and social morality.

Chapter 1 concerns the problem of Chinese textual sources for the investigation of metic intelligence. In chapters 2 through 5, I examine the key word *zhi* in representative texts from the Warring States period of early China (403–222 B.C.E.) by using groups of significant and representative philosophical, historical, and military texts to illustrate Warring States period reflections on the nature of wisdom and intelligence. In chapter 2, I describe the uses of *zhi* in two pre-Confucian texts, the *Shu jing* and three classical Confucian works, the *Lunyu*, or *Analects*, of Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.) and the works of Mencius (380?–305? B.C.E.) and Xunzi (340?–245? B.C.E.). In chapter 3, I examine the epistemology of the Mohist canon; in chapter 4, the Taoist texts attributed to Laozi and Zhuangzi; and in chapter 5, two works on military strategy and persuasion, the *Sunzi bingfa*, or *Sunzi's Art of War*, and the *Zhanguo ce*, or *Strategies of the Warring States*.

The second part of the book shows the centrality of metic intelligence to the construction of two novels from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644 C.E.), the *Romance of Three Kingdoms*, or *Sanguo yanyi*, (fourteenth century) and the *Journey to the West*, or *Xiyou ji* (sixteenth century). Both works combine elements of history, fiction, legend,

mētiómai, “to contrive.” The term *metic intelligence* is totally unrelated to the word *metic*, which refers to the *metoikoi*, foreign-born, “second-class citizens” of Athens, who paid a tax (*metoikion*) for the privilege of residing there but enjoyed no civil rights.

religion, and philosophy and deal with prominent figures within Chinese history. Both novels feature metic characters and illustrate characteristic modes of action of metic individuals. Each work draws on the history and the rich philosophical debates of the Warring States period.

In chapter 6, I look at the role of metic intelligence in the *Romance of Three Kingdoms*, where it is the *modus operandi* of the historical strategist-general Zhuge Liang, probably the locus classicus for the person of *zhi* within the Chinese tradition. In chapter 7, I examine metic intelligence as a central element in the quest of the *Journey*, especially in the fictional construction of the historical figure Xuan Zang (probably the most famous Buddhist cleric in Chinese history) and his wily double, best known as Monkey. Chapters 6 and 7 provide evidence of the construction of metic characters and the preservation of the semantic field of consistent usages of *zhi* in Ming works.

In chapters 8 and 9, I compare the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and the *Journey to the West* and argue that metic intelligence informs five broad themes common to all these texts: force and guile, kings and kingmakers, representation of the hero, designing women, and like-mindedness.

A broader goal of the book is to show the relevance and importance of the Chinese philosophical tradition to contemporary issues in philosophy of language, linguistics, anthropology, and poetics. I argue for the relevance of early Chinese debates about knowledge and language to a variety of questions of contemporary interest and for the importance of comparative inquiry. The first half of the book may be of particular interest to philosophers and specialists in the intellectual history of early China. In these chapters I seek to reposition and clarify the relation of knowledge and language within early Chinese philosophical inquiry and to argue that metic intelligence is not only discernible in the culture and philosophy of early China but is actually central to several issues vexing that philosophical tradition. In the second half of the book, I include material of specific interest to students of classics and comparative literature, and I use a comparison between certain aspects of the Chinese historical-fictional tradition and the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to address broad themes of heroism and recognition that are more typically addressed only in the context of epics composed in Indo-European languages.

In cases where I use my own translations, I have tried to provide references to alternate translations of Chinese works. The bibliogra-

phy contains a list of a variety of translations of classical works. The Pinyin system of romanization is used, except where a Westernized name (for example, Confucius) or a Wade-Giles romanization (for example, Taoism) is already in general use. Direct quotations preserve the transliteration system used by the author or translator. In one particularly difficult case, Tao and *dao*, I use both forms.

I am indebted to more people than it is possible to acknowledge here for the help they have given me. I am especially grateful to Anthony Yu both for early guidance in the formulation of this project and for insights, details, and generosity over the years. The timely interventions of Gregory Nagy and Stephen Toulmin have shaped this book in diverse ways. Angus Graham, Anne McLaren, Victor Mair, Andrew Plaks, Kidder Smith, and Lothar Von Falkenhausen have read various versions of this work and have generously provided detailed comments and corrections. Roger Ames, Francisca Cho Bantly, David Keightley, Lee Yearley, and Yu Chun-fang have generously provided access to unpublished materials. Finally, I am grateful to Alison Johnson for meticulous and intelligent editing of my manuscript. Part of the research for this project was conducted with financial support from the Committee on Asian Studies of the University of Chicago.

LISA RAPHALS

Cambridge, Massachusetts