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Spiritual Foundations and Chinese Culture: A Philosophical Approach

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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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Introduction

The various articles in this volume emerge out of an international conference held at the Fujen Catholic University in Taipei, Taiwan on 13-14 December 2013. Whilst the themes treated by these articles are quite diverse the conference at which they were presented shared a common purpose with the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. The Council aims to bring scholars from different cultural and religious traditions together in order to pursue the goal of mutual understanding oriented towards helping cultures and religious traditions to flourish. In the particular case of this conference, the relationship between spiritual foundations and Chinese culture as considered from a philosophical perspective was the focus. Using a variety of philosophical methods the articles attempt to investigate the various ways the spiritual dimension is present in Chinese and western cultures. Some of the contributors took a comparative methodological approach, comparing and contrasting a Chinese and a western thinker or system of thought. Others took a more intercultural approach seeing the interpenetration of systems of thought today as enabling and contrasting, and not merely as comparing between different cultures. Still others consider the analytical division between Chinese and western thought as in some ways inadequate. Whether because posing the Chinese and western binary immediately illicit the question what about the rest? The dynamics of globalisation seem unhappy with the singling out, perhaps artificially, of two particular cultures for comparison. Or, because in some ways the notion that thought happens in hermetically sealed cultural vacuums that can be compared or contrasted is itself problematic. As the canonical texts of world literature are now read in all cultures of the world there is a real sense in our present age that we have become a global culture sharing in a great diversity of classical texts. If this is indeed the case, then the reading of these canonical texts in different cultural contexts raises various hermeneutical questions, originating in ancient thought and developed in modern times that several scholars in this volume consider.

Perhaps it is precisely because of globalisation that the question of the nature, scope, and place of the 'spiritual' has become so widespread today. There is now a clear sense that all particular

cultures and religious traditions are in one way or another limited. The mutual interaction between these itself points to a certain transcendence beyond any one culture or religious tradition. Whether this aspect of transcendence is seen as simply a regulative ideal of thought, an awareness of the limitation of one's own horizons, or as the realisation that a certain global consciousness is emerging there is certainly a significant change happening in this respect. Previously tried formulas of 'inclusivism', 'exclusivism', and 'pluralism' seem inadequate to capture this new awareness. Rather, it seems as if in order for each tradition and culture to move forward a certain deeper dialogue is required. Such a dialogue is by no means easy to foster. The tendency of rather polite and often ineffective encounters has been to leave many dissatisfied with dialogues that seemed more about affirming what one already believed rather than about venturing into the unknown.

But in considering the question of the 'spiritual' in the context of Chinese culture, a new opening seems to be emerging as China itself struggles to find its own pathway to modernity. As the evident economic progress of China is there for all to see so also is a quest to find a way in which this progress can remain in harmony with traditional values. But tradition and modernity are often difficult bedfellows. In the western world the story is not dissimilar. Nor, for that matter, is it much different in the Islamic world as it faces the same challenges of how to modernise and to remain faithful to its core values. It appears as if each part of the world is faced with the dialectical adventure of attuning itself to an emerging relation between tradition and modernity in this global age. This is why the 'spiritual' as a problematic has taken its central place in global reflection. As horizons enlarge, parameters increase, and our capacity for information storage and manipulation expands exponentially, we need a new compass with which we can direct ourselves. This new orientation, this desire for some way of discerning the better way forward at both personal and civilizational levels, is the spiritual question of our time. Whether the metaphor of "foundation" is the most appropriate for this is a matter for the reader to decide. One might also consider the metaphor of "horizon" as a way to describe the place, scope, and nature of the spiritual. The spiritual also provides a way of charting a direction in which the movement of progress should be heading and of generating a yardstick to assess,

and hence to criticise, wrong turns and cul-de-sacs in the dynamics of modernisation. This is a way to think of the role of the 'spiritual' in Chinese culture and indeed in all global cultures today.

The hope of this set of essays is that from the various perspectives of the authors, something of this role of the 'spiritual' may be discerned. Partial, fragmentary, and no doubt in need of further revision, the contributions presented here are honest and engaged explorations which earnestly seek to foster mutual enrichment and mutual understanding: themselves core values of the 'spiritual' in our days.

Part I. Spiritual Foundation in Chinese Culture

Chapter I, "Spiritual Foundations and Chinese Culture" by Robert Cummings Neville, proposes an ecological mode to explain the dynamic spiritual development of a culture. This article argues that the biological model of an evolving ecosystem better articulates how any given eco-harmony, such as of a spiritual sort, which is dependent on some conditions and independent of others, adapts in order to flourish.

Chapter II, "Interpretation of Chinese Spirituality in an Intercultural Context—Methodological Considerations" by Vincent Shen, focuses on the methodology of interpreting Chinese philosophical and religious texts, especially those with spiritual implications, in the context of interculturalism. Proposing three levels of a dynamic contextualism, he argues for a hermeneutic approach as a better way for mutual understanding and mutual enrichment among different spiritual traditions.

Chapter III, "The Daoist Sage in Modernity" by Edward McDougall, provides a middle way between complete seduction into modern life and an extreme ascetic or Luddite rejection of it. Thus, far from being simply out-dated, the ideal of the Daoist sage still remains relevant within westernised modernity. The author believes that in an age increasingly homogenous based on Europeanisation, it is important to look more deeply and seriously at such alternatives and to consider classical Daoist thought as a living tradition.

Chapter IV, "Reflections on the Philosophical Foundations of Culture" by Corazon T. Toralba argues that differences found in cultures are a reflection of the wealth or poverty of (wo)man's

understanding of her/himself and her/his world: the anthropological foundations of culture. The author uses the cultural matrix of Chinese history and thought as the means to expound this thesis.

Part II Spiritual Horizon in Western Culture

Chapter V, "The Spiritual Horizon of Philosophy in a Global Age: On the Intellectual Friendship between Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas" by Anthony J. Carroll, explicates the spiritual horizon of philosophy and culture in our global age by exploring the intellectual friendship between Jacques Derrida (JD) and Jürgen Habermas (JH). The paper argues that the common theme of both of these philosophers, despite their differences, is a shared commitment to the spirituality of action which embodies the principles and values of justice, solidarity, and dialogue.

Chapter VI, "A Catholic Theology of Energies in Terms of Bernard Lonergan's Transcendental Method" by John Cheng Wai Leung, attempts to demonstrate the possibility of developing a Catholic theology based on the concept Qis, which derives from ancient Chinese culture and philosophy, and examines the validity of this Catholic theology of Qis with Lonergan's well-known methodology.

Part III. Comparative Study between East and West

Chapter VII, "People are Born Religious: Perspectives from the Concept of Piety of John Calvin and the Sincerity of *The Doctrine of the Mean*" by Feng Chuantao and Zhao Weihua, carefully analyse the concepts of "Piety" and "Sincerity," and explicate the nuances of these concepts respectively from the perspectives of John Calvin and *The Doctrine of the Mean*.

Chapter VIII, "Comparing Christian and Buddhist Doctrines of Ignorance: Seng-chao and Nicholas Cusanus" by Ding Jianhua, provides a comparison between Christian and Buddhist Doctrines of Ignorance. This article concentrates on Nicholas of Cusa's doctrine of "learned ignorance" and Seng-chao's doctrine of "prajna ignorance." After illustrating the commonality and differences between the two, the author concludes that Nicholas of Cusa and Seng-chao both denied in an apophatic way knowledge in order to emphasize its

limitation, yet neither of them completely abandons this knowledge as empty.

Chapter IX, "Similarities in "Sheng-Sheng," Meet in "Love": Confucianism and Christianity" by Eum Jin Taik, suggests that the idea "sheng- sheng" in Confucianism and "love" in Christianity are similar to each other in many respects. Through a consideration of these concepts, the article argues that Christian thought and Chinese native Confucianism can further communicate with and accommodate each other.

Chapter X, "Confucius' Cosmology That Integrates "The Way of Heaven" and "The Will of God": A Comparison with the Concept of Creation in the Bible" by Lam Yuet Ping, focuses on the Neo-Confucian concept of "the Way of Heaven" (tiandao 天道) and the creation theory of *The Bible*, and tries to show that these two theoretical systems are almost identical.

Part IV Spiritual Manifestations in Aesthetics

Chapter XI, "On the Influence of Phenomenological Aesthetics in Contemporary Chinese Aestheticians from the Mode of Thought - Taking Ye Lang, Zhu Liyuan and Zeng Fanren as Individual Cases" by Dong Huifang, discusses the work of certain Chinese aestheticians who are greatly influenced by Western phenomenological thought. With their focus on the subject-object relationship in aesthetics, these Chinese aestheticians' inspirations, gained from a phenomenological approach, are investigated.

Chapter XII, "Listening to Silence: John Cage and the Zen Buddhist Spirit" by Shang-Wen Wang, investigates John Cage's controversial work 4'33" (1952) and the influence of Zen Buddhism. This article provides a way of seeing just how it is that different spiritual foundations can be encountered in a piece of music.

Chapter XIII, "Created Truth and Remade Reality in Painting: From Jin Hao (833-917) to Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005)" by Katia Lenehan, compares the painting theory of Chinese painter and theoretician Jin Hao with that of Paul Ricoeur. This article emphasizes that, even though these two theories emerged in completely different cultural contexts, the texts of Jin Hao and Ricoeur provide us with very similar insights into painting. She argues that while there exist

subtle differences in their respective writings, these differences do in fact complement rather than contradict each another.

Each of these articles in their own way seeks to contribute to a more profound thinking about the spiritual foundations of culture and the many forms of encounter between Chinese and Western cultures. The dialogue between diverse cultural-spiritual foundations, which a volume such as this represents, is part of the process of many ongoing encounters in our global age. The hope of this volume is that, at least in a modest way, these intellectual enquiries will contribute to the promotion of fruitful and harmonious encounters and processes of mutual learning that can be of universal benefit.

Part I
Spiritual Foundations in Chinese Culture

1.

Spiritual Foundations and Chinese Culture

ROBERT CUMMINGS NEVILLE

Introduction

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to address this conference on spiritual foundations and Chinese culture and will take the opportunity to treat the subject as seriously as I can. Both “spiritual foundations” and “Chinese culture” are ambiguous phrases and my intent is to sort out some of the most important ambiguities.

To begin with “spiritual foundations,” the phrase can refer to the many foundational conditions for spiritual life that themselves are not especially spiritual in a religious sense. Among these are having a sufficiently settled life with food, safety, supportive companions, and a reasonably intact culture within which to articulate spiritual matters. Most of us can take these things for granted; but if we lived in Darfur right now, we would not expect much subtlety or depth of spiritual life because the foundational conditions are largely absent: we would be praying just to get through the night. I will say more about the non-spiritual conditions for spiritual life in a moment, with illustrations from Chinese culture.

“Spiritual foundations” also refers to the conditions for ascending to greater heights of spiritual development, getting deeper into the spiritual and its mature forms. Proximate levels of spiritual development are foundational for more ultimate ones. Here the languages, practices, and scriptures of a tradition are themselves spiritual but are really foundational for deeper levels of spiritual development. Most religious traditions, including the Chinese and Christian, mark stages of spiritual development each of which is foundational for the stages subsequent to it. Some forms of Buddhism distinguish 52 Bhumis, or stages of enlightenment.

Finally, “spiritual foundations” refers to the role that various forms of spiritual life fulfill as foundations for other things, such as the arts and high culture, even for vitality in a whole society. Many people in the West—I won’t speak for Taiwan—complain that Western societies have lost their spiritual foundations and hence are more than usually unsure about the ground of obligation, about what human integrity

means, about attitudes toward significant others, about the meaning of life, and about the life-and-death contingency of existence, collapsing into nothing more profound than consumerism.

The phrase “Chinese culture” has analogous distinctions to be made. What are the conditions within historical Chinese culture that make the specific cultures of Chinese spirituality possible? Confucius complained that they were absent in his time and he tried to rectify that. The Marxists in the Peoples’ Republic complained that those conditions were too powerful, keeping China in an unjust feudal state justified by bad spirituality, and tried to eliminate those aspects of Chinese culture that supported traditional spirituality. Chinese culture has also been fertile “foundational” soil for the “foreign religion” of Buddhism, which was the dominant Chinese spiritual culture during the Tong Dynasty. Some sociologists believe there are 130 million Christians in the People’s Republic today, making it one of the largest Christian nations in the world, even though Christianity is still a small percentage of the overall population.

“Chinese culture” secondly can mean its specifically spiritual dimensions as developed in Confucianism and Daoism with shamanistic and Buddhist influences and manifested in popular Chinese religion. Chinese spiritual culture, in ways I shall articulate shortly, is extraordinarily complex and multi-dimensional. The question of the compatibility of Chinese spiritual culture with Christianity has been an issue for a half-millennium. Surely, for Chinese Christians, Chinese Jews, and Chinese Muslims, their own spirituality is a special version of Chinese culture, however much it also contains different historical roots as well.

Third, “Chinese culture” includes those aspects of culture in China that themselves depend on various spiritual dimensions of culture but that are not themselves particularly religious, such as art, moral practices and ideas, and many other things made possible by religion. It is difficult to assess these aspects of contemporary Chinese culture that are not themselves religious but that depend on other dimensions of culture that are religious. This is due to the suppression of religion for so many decades by the Communist government causing religion to take disguised forms. However, there are many examples from earlier periods. The most famous examples are those instances of Confucian moral and political policies that justified, to a limited extent, the claim that Confucianism is not a religion at all, but only a

moral way of life. Wang An-shih (1021-1086) was famous and influential as a political thinker, even though he was somewhat distant from the spiritual dimensions of sageliness and the cultivation of the Heavenly Principle associated with Neo-Confucian spirituality.

Fourth, "Chinese culture" also refers to the influences and continuities of Chinese culture outside of China, and that in two senses. First, Chinese spiritual culture became very important, even dominant, in Korea, Japan, and southeast Asia, whose native cultures including racial ethnicity and language roots were very different from that of the Han Chinese. What was there in the native cultural foundations of Korea, for instance, that made it particularly hospitable to the Neo-Confucian spirituality of Zhuxi, whereas the cultural foundations of Japan made it more hospitable to the Neo-Confucian spirituality of Wang Yangming? The mixture of Chinese Buddhism and Confucianism that went to Japan gave rise to the deep spiritual and martial code of Bushido. However, very little like that happened in Korea where Chinese Buddhism and Confucianism were equally important.

I have offered these illustrations of non-religious culture providing foundations for spiritual culture, of lower levels of spiritual culture providing foundations for higher levels, and of spiritual culture providing foundations for non-spiritual elements of culture in order to distinguish three meanings of "spiritual foundations" and how they might be exemplified in the Chinese case. Now I want to offer a more formal model of how to think about these things, and then return to discuss each one.

The Ecological Model

The basic model I want to present for considering spiritual foundations in the three senses mentioned comes from biology, and it works for most, although not all, of what needs to be understood. Consider this analogy: Suppose there is a pond in the woods. The pond is a complex biological ecosystem containing, among other things, the bacteria and other micro-organisms in the water, the plants growing on the bottom and on the shores (that line being variable with the water level), the fish, frogs, leeches and other animals living in and under the water, and the insects of many kinds that live on and about the surface, feeding on things in the water and reproducing on

adjacent plant-life. Each of these species is what I call an ecoharmony. A living ecoharmony has members with life-cycles of their own that reproduce and carry on their various activities in the larger pond ecosystem. Every ecoharmony has two kinds of components in terms of which it needs to be understood. First it has “conditional components” that consist of all that the individuals in the species need and receive from the larger ecosystem. For instance, fish need not only to have food in the larger ecosystem, but also the right conditions of temperature and water chemistry, places to breed, and so forth; different species of fish in the pond might need different conditional components. Second, every ecoharmony has “essential components” that make the species what it is; we usually think of DNA in this regard. Many different species can exist in the same pond because, although they have many of the same conditioning components, they have different essential components. Not all the species of fish eat the same things, however, or reproduce in the same places, and so differ with regard to their dietary and reproductive conditions. I call these *ecoharmonies* because each species is a harmony of its essential and conditional components. Prior to modern biology Aristotelian science was inclined to think of species in terms of their essence alone, making the conditions for them secondary. Now we should reject substance thinking and consider things to be harmonies, with their conditional components relating them to their environment being just as important to them as their essential components.

I’ve been speaking of the species as an ecoharmony, but each individual within the species in the pond is also an ecoharmony; for the moment we can neglect this distinction. We should note that each component in an ecoharmony is itself an ecoharmony. The little fish or the plants eaten by big fish are themselves species with ecoharmonic structures even when they function as conditional components in the big fish. Each species of fish has an internal organic structure with substructures, each of which is an ecoharmony down to the molecular structure of the DNA. Put in another way, each species is a component of the larger ecosystem of the pond. The pond itself is an ecoharmony. It has its own “essential components” of the various species within it, but exists with the conditions of being in the terrain it is, with the chemical and biologic run-offs from the wider environment, depending on the chemistry and wildlife of the forest in many ways, and on the larger geology and climate of the area.

The pond itself can be called a complex ecosystem, an ecoharmony with some integrity of its own, containing conditions from beyond the pond, but also containing many ecoharmonies within it. The ecoharmonies within the pond are more or less compatible with one another to the degree the pond's ecosystem is stable. Each ecoharmony is dependent on some other ecoharmonies in the pond, but perhaps not all; some ecoharmonies can disappear without all the others disappearing. The asymmetries in the dependence relations are what are of interest when using the biological ecosystem as a model for understanding what is foundational about spirituality in the larger culture. The best way to understand the asymmetries is through the evolutionary dimension of the ecosystem.

Imagine that a long time ago the pond was formed when a retreating glacier left it as a pocket of water over mainly bare rocks. Initially the pond water contained only primitive micro-organisms that could have survived under the glacier and also in a warmer climate. The micro-organism ecoharmonies that required the cold of the glacier died out. Grasses and grass-feeding animals moved into the surrounding area and their decayed remains and droppings entered the pond. This changed the chemistry of the pond water so that more species of micro-organisms which washed into the pond found the conditioning components they needed to survive as ecoharmonies, and their presence provided conditions for yet more things. Spring flooding allowed fish and other marine animals and plants to wash into the pond, insects from neighboring ponds flew in and birds dropped new seeds. The forest developed where there had been only grasses and more species of animals with their droppings and decay surrounded the pond. Most of these adventitious new pond ecosystems did not find the conditions they needed, but some did, and the pond grew in biological complexity. More particularly, within the pond spores arose with slightly different DNA than typical in their species. Some of these found the conditions they needed to survive, and so a new species emerged. This new species provided new conditions for yet other new species to survive and so some species unique to the pond evolved. With the new conditions in the pond, some of the ecoharmonies that previously flourished could no longer survive and died out. The other ecoharmonies that depended on them also died out. So the pond was constantly changing its internal

ecosystemic complexity, with some old ecoharmonies dying out and adventitious or emergent new harmonies coming in.

Adopting this model for understanding spiritual foundations and culture, we can say that human societies and individual life are rooted in nature, a point Chinese culture has understood far better than Western cultures that think nature is made for humans to use for their own purposes. At any given time, human life is set within a vast complex ecosystem including the conditions of geography, climate, the flora and fauna local to specific places, some of which are necessary conditions for human nutrition, the kinds of social ecoharmonies necessary for human survival and flourishing, all nested within one another, and the cultural systems, religious traditions, economic conditions for material life, food production systems, educational systems, and systems of the architectural milieu. Please supplement this list with your favorite systematic conditions necessary or important for the flourishing of your spirituality. But don't think of your spirituality only on its own terms. What you are likely to bring to mind as your spirituality's own terms are only its essential components. Its conditional components, all those other ecoharmonies on which it is dependent, all the way down to basic biology and climate, are just as necessary to its identity as the essential components. Your spirituality's true "own terms" include all those conditions systematically functioning in the complex ecosystem of life as well as the essential features by which you would ordinarily identify it.

Now a crucial distinction needs to be made about the ecoharmonies in the complex ecosystems of human life. A given ecoharmony is dependent on certain conditions in its environment and not on others. Some other ecoharmonies can cease to exist and the given ecoharmony can still flourish, so long as the conditions on which it is dependent remain. Therefore, relative to other ecoharmonies, a given ecoharmony can be dependent or independent. For instance, human beings evolved in equatorial Africa, dependent, among other things, on that climate. But without changing their DNA they could migrate to colder climates by inventing warm clothing, snug dwellings, and the like. The colder climatic conditions, however, allowed for the evolution of new balances of DNA, such as reduced melanin in the skin. So we would say that the human species is dependent on a range of climatic conditions, but is independent of any

one of them, given the means to adapt. In matters of religion, the great missionary traditions always need some culture to inhabit but are independent of any one of those cultures in the sense that they can find other habitations. Buddhism, for instance, even died out in India, its birth-culture for centuries, while flourishing elsewhere. Of course, those other cultures allowed for all sorts of new forms of the religion, and in fact required some new forms for the religions to penetrate deeply into the new cultures. It is an interesting question whether the religions changed their “essential components” when migrating from one indigenization to another. Many people argue that Confucianism cannot migrate because it is too much defined by its East Asian roots—though I have argued to the contrary in *Boston Confucianism: Portable Tradition in the Late Modern World*.

As is obvious in the biological examples, ecosystems of ecoharmonies are dynamic and constantly changing, with different forms evolving to take account of changes in their conditional components. The same is true of religious practices including those associated with spirituality, although we frequently entertain the romantic notion that we are preserving the “ancient” or “pure” or “original” forms.

Religion and Spirituality Defined

My argument cannot move farther without paying attention to how to mark off religion and spirituality within the great ecosystem of human life. Defining religion is extremely controversial today and I am going to offer only a heuristic definition, that is, one that is useful for making distinctions appropriate to talking about spiritual foundations and culture. *Religion is the human symbolic engagement of ultimate realities in cognitive, existential, and practical ways.* By cognitive engagement I mean the gamut from myth and legend to sophisticated theology and philosophy, in many different forms in different cultures. By existential engagement I mean how individuals’ ultimate identities are formed in relation to what is ultimate in reality. By practical engagement I mean all the practices, both communal and personal, by which relations with what is ultimate are expressed and steadied.

The heart of the definition, of course, is the reference to ultimacy. Let me quickly present my hypothesis about this, though without

much defense. The ultimate reality is an ontological creative act that creates everything that is determinate. No matter what you or anyone else believes the world is made of, from yin-yang vibrations to atomic particles, and no matter who turns out to be right, it has to be determinate. Anything determinate is contingent on being made. It is what requires the ultimate ontological creative act. That act is not determinate in itself apart from its creating the world. It has been symbolized in the West with metaphors of the person, from the frankly anthropomorphic imagery within the Bible to transcendent concepts such as the One, beyond any determinate distinction, and Thomas Aquinas's notion of God as the pure Act of To Be. South Asian religions similarly stretched metaphors of consciousness creating its content to symbolize the creative act. East Asian thought developed metaphors of spontaneous emergence such as the Dao that gives rise to a determinate world made up of yin-yang configurations or changes. I'll quote the basic text because it is so important for Chinese spirituality. It is from Zhou Dunyi, the 11th century Neo-Confucian:

"The Ultimate of Non-being and also the Great Ultimate! The Great Ultimate through movement generates yang. When its activity reaches its limit, it becomes tranquil. Through tranquility the Great Ultimate generates yin. When tranquility reaches its limit, activity begins again. So movement and tranquility alternate and become the roof of each other, giving rise to the distinction of yin and yang, and the two modes are thus established. By the transformation of yang and its union with yin, the Five Agents of Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth arise. When these five material forces are distributed in harmonious order, the four seasons run their course."

The point is, from that which has no character of its own, the Ultimate of Non-Being and the Great Ultimate, arise all the things that do have character.

The notion of an ontological creative act that creates everything determinate is very abstract, but also fruitful theologically. Any determinate thing has to be determinate with respect to something else. Therefore for there to be a determinate world there has to be a multiplicity of things. Each thing is a harmony of components that relate it to the other things with respect to which it is determinate, and of components by virtue of which it integrates these into its unique self. The former components are conditional and the latter are essential. We've seen examples of this in the discussion of the

conditional and essential components of ecoharmonies. Every determinate thing is a harmony of components with four traits. The harmony has a form or pattern in which the components are arranged; it has the plurality of components that themselves have to be fitted together; it has an existential location relative to the other harmonies with respect to which it is determinate and from which it gets its conditional components; and it has the value-identity of getting these components together with this form in this existential location. Let me emphasize again that there could be nothing determinate, no world at all of any kind, that does not have form, components formed, existential location, and value-identity. These four are ultimate conditions for any world and for the ultimate ontological creative act: there could be no creative act without creating something determinate. So there are five ultimate realities: form, components formed into a harmony, existential location, value-identity, and the ontological creative act.

Set aside the complete generality of this picture and consider the world from the standpoint of human beings, acknowledging that there are many different cultural ways in which that world has been symbolized with considerable pragmatic truth. Human beings face the ultimacy of form in the guise of alternative possibilities with respect to which we have some control and among which we must choose. Often these possibilities differ in value and we lie under obligation to choose well, creating our moral character as we do so for better or worse. Every religion has the complex problematic of moral righteousness, deliberation, choice, failure, guilt, punishment, redemption and the like, because facing possibilities of different value is an ultimate condition of human life.

Human beings face the ultimacy of having components in making up the overall patterns of their life, which involves coming to terms with the important components and integrating them in ways that respect their integrity. The ultimate ideal with regard to components is wholeness. Suffering and brokenness in body and spirit are the result of problems in finding wholeness. Because life is a complex of things needing integration, the quest for wholeness is a problem for every religion.

Human beings face the ultimacy of being existentially located with respect to others who also are creatures of the ontological creative act just as much as themselves. From a selfish point of view, and with

regard to evolutionary adaptive advantage, it is tempting to regard other people and the natural environment only in terms of how they help or hinder one's own advantage, or that of one's in-group. But the Axial Age religions all agree that because "all are under heaven," to use the Chinese slogan, all should be respected for what they are. All religions present the challenge of compassion and justice for all things, however diversely they interpret the implications of that and however imperfect the practice of universal love and justice is.

Human beings face the ultimacy of having value-identity insofar as they cope with their nearly always ambiguous value in light of what life is supposed to mean or add up to. How do human beings fit into the larger picture of creation, given their value-identities? Sometimes this has manifested itself as the quest for security in existence, framed in terms of immortality or reincarnation. In more modern times this problematic appears as the search for meaning in a cosmos that seems to have none. All religions have some problematic of the meaning of value-identity.

Human beings face the radical contingency of existence on the ontological level act in the shock of recognizing such a contingency, as distinct from the ordinary contingencies within the flow of life. Such a shock is often associated with the encounter with death. In some way or another the deep ultimate question is whether to affirm this contingent existence or deny it, to be fundamentally grateful or fundamentally hateful. In some way or other, most religions advocate consent to being in general, gratitude, and union with the act of creation and its radically contingent product, however filled with suffering and death.

I have now listed five ultimate boundary conditions for human life that both separately and together, in various combinations establish the problematics of religion: lying under obligation, the quest for wholeness, engagement with others, the search for meaning, and the question of consent to being in general. Every religion has socially constructed categories for engaging these five ultimates and to this extent historicism is true. The religions by no means say the same things regarding these conditions. But these ultimate conditions to be engaged are part of the nature of reality, necessarily characteristic of any world within which human beings might live, any world that is determinate in any way. Therefore, religion is just as much a response

to reality for any culture as its response to the climate; the responses differ, but that to which they respond is ultimately real.

You might have been amused to find that, when you ask a sociologist what religion is, the answer is a set of functions within society, as in Durkheim's claims about legitimation of solidarity. Ask an anthropologist if religion turns out to be elements of culture that can be passed down. Ask a psychologist if religion is a coping mechanism for psychological problems. Ask an historian if religion is a major category for the continuity of identity of a group through time. Ask an evolutionary biologist if religion is what does or does not contribute to genetic adaptive advantage. Each of these disciplines has as its subject matter certain ecoharmonies that serve as conditions for the engagement of ultimacy. Religion always has a social setting and takes social forms, even for hermits. Religion always requires cultural elements as venues within which it pursues the five religious problematics. Religion always arises within psychological states and in turn modifies them. Religious engagements are always parts of larger stories. Religions affect adaptive advantage for better or worse. But I recommend that we bear in mind that the religious dimensions of society, culture, psychology and the rest are only those that involve the engagements with the ultimate realities. The fact that a society has institutions that have functioned to engage ultimacy does not mean that those institutions always do so, and when they do not they should be understood simply in social, not religious terms. Cultural traditions, such as Confucianism and Christianity, can have powerful social effects and be of historical interest even when they are religiously dead and are not venues for engaging ultimacy. All these things can be potential conditioning components of religion, but when the engagement of ultimacy is lacking, the essential components of religion are missing and those potential conditions are to be understood on their own, non-religious, terms. Nevertheless, when considering religion, it is not to be understood in terms of its essential components alone, but also in terms of all the conditioning components that make it possible, such as society, cultural traditions, psychic make-up, and the rest.

I'm sorry to have burdened you with such a quick sketch of a whole theory of religion. But such is needed to make much progress toward understanding how Chinese culture, or any culture, can be a foundation for spirituality, how a culture's spirituality has more and

less foundational elements, and how spirituality itself conditions the larger culture. Fortunately, spirituality is not the whole of religion. Rather, spirituality as that term has been used in the West, refers mainly to the problematics of the quest for wholeness and union with the ultimate creative act itself. To be sure, the issues of righteousness, engagement of others, and the quest for meaning bear upon spirituality and vice versa. But spirituality most prominently means one or both of two things, getting oneself together in the quest for wholeness, giving oneself over to engaging the ontological creative act itself.

I want now to discuss how Chinese culture provides foundational components for these two senses of spirituality, wholeness and union with the ground of being. I shall discuss both Confucian and Christian forms of spirituality relative to these Chinese foundations, focusing on the Confucian to the neglect of other Chinese religious traditions. And I shall deal first with the Chinese cultural foundations when they are intact, and then when they are in disarray. I apologize for the complexity of this discussion and for the fact that I must presume that you already know quite a lot about the forms of culture and spirituality that I mention.

Chinese Culture Intact

Like all mature religious cultures, Confucianism has elaborate ways of dealing with all five religious problematics. Regarding the ultimate condition of underlying obligation, Confucianism has both the metaphysics of Li or Principle, as manifested in each thing as a kind of coherence or harmony, and complicated ways of learning discernment and perfecting action on the basis of learned choice. Regarding the ultimate of engaging others, it has a complicated theory of “love with differences” and the ideals of Ren or Humaneness. Regarding the ultimate of the meaning of value-identity, it has the problematic of finding the Mandate of Heaven.

With regard to the two spiritual problematics, the greatest emphasis in Confucianism is on the quest for wholeness, which it has elaborated as the life of the sage. The sage is required to make a commitment to self-transformation that goes through stages. Although obviously involving the discernment of righteousness, cultivating the most effective love of others, and fitting in with a sense

of Heaven's Mandate, the sage focuses rather on the integration and perfection of the self into what Roger Ames calls a "consummate person." Emblematic of this is Confucius's perhaps most famous and oft quoted statement: "At fifteen my mind was set on learning [the commitment to become a sage]. At thirty my character had been formed. At forty I had no more perplexities. At fifty I knew the Mandate of Heaven. At sixty I was at ease with whatever I heard. At seventy I could follow my heart's desires without transgressing moral principles." [Analects 2.4]

What are the cultural conditions for the spiritual discipline of Confucian sagehood? Among the most important are two: family, and a particular ritual structure. By family the Confucians did not just mean the nuclear biological family, but an extended family with three or perhaps four generations. Moreover, the family was understood to be in a village where related families also lived, the in-laws of every generation, so that just about every possible relation is exemplified. In this context a person grows up being loved in just about every relational way, and learning to love back. This is an important and perhaps necessary set of conditions for a person to conceive of the task of becoming a sage. In Confucian spirituality, the quest for wholeness finds its most important setting in a person's being loved and learning to return the love in a wide range of human relations. Without this family setting, in one guise or another, a person would not have the conditions necessary for undertaking the self-cultivation necessary for the spirituality of sagehood. The Confucian family thus is not merely in the family of direct touch, but also in its ancestral history. The loving virtues inherited in the family today come from the achievements of its ancestors. This solidarity of family sacrality has resonance in any culture in which family or tribal identity is important, but is developed very deeply with little dependence on tribalism in Chinese culture. Filial piety is an important condition of being spiritually alive in the world.

As to ritual, many layers of social life are dependent on rituals that habituate behavior so as to carry out every-day moral decision-making and relating to other people. But rituals are like formal dance steps that interweave people's activities so that new levels of social reality emerge. Most social realities are not possible without the rituals that are their conditions. Regarding spirituality, the contents of the rituals are not particularly important except when the social realities

themselves are spiritual. But how one plays the rituals, how one individuates them, how one makes them one's own, is indeed a matter of ultimately gaining integrity in a complex social situation in which hundreds of rituals are being played at once. Apparently, most of Confucius' teaching was instruction in rituals and how to invest oneself in them. Having important rituals to play is an important kind of condition for the spiritual task of learning to invest oneself in the matrix of life's rituals with integrity. A sage is a ritual master.

Although sagacity, a prominent Confucian theme, is the Confucian ideal for the spiritual ultimate of the quest for wholeness, no equally prominent theme exists for the Confucian approach to the spirituality of union with the ontological creative act. The ancient Confucians, especially Xunzi, commented on awe at the inexplicable majesty of the heavens, but there seems to have been little spiritual focus on addressing that majesty in the ancient world. With the development of Chinese Buddhism, however, Confucianism learned the vocabulary and practices of meditation. You will remember that the Chinese metaphors for the ontological act of creation have to do with spontaneity of things arising from nothing, from emptiness. The Neo-Confucians stressed this kind of meditation a great deal, although in ways critical of Buddhism. Buddhist meditation on emptiness led to complete vacuity, the Neo-Confucians thought, which in turn led to quietism. The Neo-Confucians meditated on the Ultimate of Non-Being that spontaneously gives rise to the determinate world, and in the human case to action. For the Neo-Confucians, what I have called union with the ontological act meant identification of that act as the inner heart of oneself ready to move into action. For the Confucians of all periods, the ultimate ground of things is to be found already in the human heart. To be in touch with the ground of being meant, not the Buddhist retreat from the world into monasteries for the contemplation of nothingness, but rather the enhanced readiness to act.

So much for the Chinese cultural roots of Confucian spirituality, however briefly outlined. Reflect now for a moment on the Chinese cultural roots as foundational for Christian spirituality. Christian spirituality is different in a great many ways from the Confucian. But Matteo Ricci, the great 16th century Roman Catholic missionary to China recognized the great potential of Chinese cultural roots for Christianity. He saw the Confucian spirituality of sagehood with its

roots in family and ritual as being a close analogue to the educated Christian aristocrat. So he learned Chinese, dressed as a Confucian literati, and engaged the Confucian intellectual circle as a quite respectable sage. Such success as he had came in large measure from the fact that he was respected as a sage. Ricci also thought that he found a Chinese cultural condition for union with God in the ancient Chinese concept of Shang-di. Shang-di was a storm god, the high God of the earliest dynasties with anthropomorphic properties rather like the early renditions of Yahweh. Here he was less successful with the Confucian literati. They knew that the anthropomorphic conception of Shang-di had been given up for the most part in sophisticated Confucianism for the non-anthropomorphic notions of Heaven and the Ultimate of Non-Being and the Great Ultimate. Ricci's mission failed in the long run, however, not because his Chinese version of Christian mysticism did not catch on, although that was a problem. The real problem was with Rome, which rejected the Chinese dependence on the family as a condition for virtue and sagehood. Chinese veneration of ancestors was taken to be idolatry incompatible with Christian monotheism and Ricci's missionary strategy was forbidden. In actual Chinese culture, the veneration of ancestors was never taken to be incompatible with meditative engagement of Heaven, the Dao, or any of the other symbols of the ontological act. Rome never saw the irony in the analogy between Chinese veneration of ancestors and Christian veneration of saints, angels, and the Blessed Virgin, a condition of Roman Catholic piety that Protestants at the time did believe to be incompatible with the spirituality of monotheism.

Chinese Culture Not Intact

Step back with me for a moment and reflect with a critical eye on the spiritual ideals of Confucianism and Christianity and their relation to the Chinese cultural traditions that are their conditional foundations. I've spoken of spiritual ideals because the ideal is so rarely achieved, either in Confucianism or Christianity. And the reason for that is usually that the conditions required for them rarely obtain. If the problematic of becoming a sage depends on having a family of great extension and close connection with ancestors worth venerating going back generations, then the fact that most families are

dysfunctional makes the project of spiritual sagehood seriously unrealistic. And is it not the case that most families are dysfunctional, especially if you look beyond the immediate nuclear family that might be effective? Psychotherapists will tell you that families that function with the ritualized authority structures advocated by Confucians and many Christians are common covers for traumatic abuse. Too many relatives are criminals, or moral failures, or seriously incompetent at playing the idealized roles required. Confucian culture idealizes an ancient time when it was imagined that families stayed on the family plot of land for generation after generation. But in fact such peasant cultures suffered frequent dislocation. The times of genuinely stable government in all the world's cultures have been infrequent and brief. In the United States most of the population are descended from immigrants who left their ancestral families behind; a significant minority are descended from slaves whose families were wholly broken. The Native Americans were mainly nomadic and generally at war with one another. A family seriously intact for more than three generations is very rare indeed. In ancient China, the very motivation of Confucius's work was to respond to what he took to be a serious breakdown in civilization, including government and the economy, but also the family and the required ritual structure. Although he appealed to the past, that was a fiction and in fact he was inventing the future. Irony of ironies, for Confucius, it required sages to rectify conditions so that family life and harmonious rituals supporting the institutions of high civilization would be possible.

One of the most important differences between Christianity and Confucianism lies in their attitudes toward families. Whereas most of Second Temple Judaism out of which Christianity was born shared the Chinese sense of identity being formed by kinship relations, Jesus said only negative things about families. He required his disciples to leave their families, even when they should be attending to mourning the dead; he said he came to bring a sword to family relations, not peace; when his own family were ashamed of him and tried to get him to stop healing and teaching, he said his true father was God and his true siblings were believers, not blood kin. When Jesus was on the cross he told his mother to take the Beloved Disciple as her son and asked him to take care of his mother, even though he had plenty of siblings to do that. The early Christian communities were not built up out of kinship groups but focused much on the widows and orphans,

the outcasts, those who had no families. Congregations became substitutes for families, and other family-substitute social organizations such as monasteries and religious orders developed because families could not be counted on. After all, Adam, Eve, and their children were not an auspicious beginning for family life. Despite what some religious conservatives say today, Christianity is a religion that is explicitly independent of family functionality, whatever other social orders and conditions it depends on. Therefore Christianity has great appeal in East Asia today where traditional societies, that understand themselves to be tied to land and extended generational families, find themselves at a loss. In China people are being moved from the country to the cities en masse. Modern technology makes jobs dependent on merit and mobility. Therefore, Christianity has great appeal in China because it offers an alternative to a deeply eroded if not always functional family structure. Islam is likely to offer the same thing, because it too creates an alternative to the family. Buddhism offered the same thing a millennium and a half ago in the chaos between the Han and Dong dynasties.

It therefore becomes an interesting question whether the relative success of Christianity and other non-family oriented religions in China would develop forms of social life that in turn can become conditions for something like the Confucian sage. Certainly within Christianity there have been saints who look something like such sages, although much careful comparative work would have to be done to establish how similar they are.

Functional rituals are also crucial for a Confucian sage, as well as for many of the institutions of high civilization. We live, as did Confucius and Jesus, in times of great cultural pluralism where the rituals of any one group could hardly be generalized beyond that group, and few inter-group rituals existed. Most forms of Christianity that are now flourishing in China are of the conservative sort that foster Christian ingroups. But Christianity also has an anti-ingroup strain of hospitality to all. In fact, the original Christian paradigm shift, manifested in St. Paul, was the transformation of the promises God made to Israel in the Sinai covenant to be applicable to all the Gentiles as the New Covenant. This means that, if conditions in China stabilize, partly through the emergent contributions of Christianity, perhaps some saint/sages will emerge who can shift ingroup Christian defensiveness to a more liberal hospitality that develops rituals for

engaging larger segments of the population. I personally believe that would be a more authentic form of Christianity.

One more comparative point needs to be made here, although I obviously have already simplified an extremely complex ecosystem of spirituality in culture. In traditional, intact, idealized Confucian culture, it is supposed that Heaven or the ground of being, the ontological creative act in my language, is within us as our motivating heart. Therefore people do not need saviors from the outside, only sagely models, usually ancestral, to motivate spiritual efforts toward either personal healing and wholeness or union with that ground. Christianity has a vague analogy to that Heaven-centeredness in its idea of the image of God in each person, but in the ordinary Christian worldview this is rendered impotent by original sin and an external savior is necessary. In Christian spirituality, the more advanced one is, the more the conditions are right for the next steps in spiritual maturity, and the more internal God in Christ is seen to be. For Augustine, for instance, God is discovered to be closer to us than we are to ourselves, rather like the Confucian model. But where the conditions for higher spiritual advancement are missing and the culture or one's personal psyche is in disarray, the appeal of an external savior is very great. Perhaps that accounts for the current appeal of conservative Christianity in China which offers an external savior who can help the helpless. If that contributes to more highly developed and stable cultural conditions, then perhaps the more internal divinity strain of Christian spirituality will become common, as well as the Confucian spirituality of sageliness.

I ought to apologize, I suppose, for leaving the discussion in such an unfinished state. But I don't, because the discussion is genuinely unfinished. I hope I have argued persuasively for the following points:

1. Religion is not just one thing, such as the simple pursuit of salvation, but at least five: the pursuit of righteousness, wholeness, compassionate engagement of others, ultimate meaning, and union with the act that creates all determinate things.
2. Spirituality focuses on the second and fifth of those, namely personal wholeness and perfection on the one hand and union with the ground of all things on the other, often both at once.
3. Every stage or level of spiritual achievement is an ecoharmony that depends on certain other conditions obtaining for its conditional

components. Therefore we can ask what cultural, social, psychological, and personal elements are necessary for each kind of spiritual achievement to be possible.

4. Within spiritual development itself, there are stages that are conditions for one another, often in some kind of hierarchy of achievement. Higher stages of spiritual development might depend on new non-spiritual conditions, such as a newly stable society, as well as prior spiritual achievements.

5. Spiritual achievements themselves become conditions for new achievements in culture, society, and so forth.

6. Whereas it is tempting and traditional to think of high civilization and high spiritual achievement on the model of a hierarchy of stable conditions, in fact all the conditions are in flux. Therefore the biological model of an evolving ecosystem is better, articulating as it does how any given ecoharmony, say of a spiritual sort, is dependent on some conditions and independent of others, constantly adapting to flourish or perish.

7. I hope to have illustrated all these points in discussing the spiritual foundations of Confucianism and Christianity in the cultural conditions of Chinese culture. Leaving the discussion where I have illustrates the dynamic complexity of an evolving spiritual ecosystem. Thank you.

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Interpretation of Chinese Spirituality in an Intercultural Context: Methodological Considerations

VINCENT SHEN

Introduction: An Approach in Intercultural Philosophy

Today's philosophizing, and even that related to spirituality, should have an intercultural dimension, going beyond the scope and nature of comparative philosophy. In the past, comparative philosophy was limited to the study of similarities and differences between two or several philosophers, philosophical systems or traditions. Even if doing comparative philosophy in this manner could lead to a kind of relativism in philosophy, and thereby de-absolutize the truth of any philosophical discourse, it would not really help self-understanding, not to say mutual understanding, and would not contribute much to the practice of philosophizing itself. Quite often comparative philosophy was done in the service of a nationalism that claimed the superiority of its own philosophy over those of other nations. Through the looking glass of an orientalism that imposed its own conceptual framework on the scholars of the colonized areas, these scholars were to look at their own cultural and philosophical conceptual traditions in the light of the colonizing tradition.

Nowadays, different cultural and philosophical traditions are meeting each other in the process of globalization. I define 'globalization' as "a historical process of border-crossing, in which human desire, human interconnectedness and universalizability are to be realized on this planet as a whole, and to be concretized in the present as global free market, trans-national political order and cultural localism."¹

This historical process pushes all peoples of the world beyond themselves to meet many others. In fact there is no place where many

¹ Vincent Shen, "A Book Review of Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri's *Empire*" in *Universitas: Monthly Review of Philosophy and Culture*, Number 361 (Taipei, June, 2004), 109-112.

others are not present. In this situation, we should work toward a dialogue of/for mutual understanding and enrichment. Without these things, we may well find ourselves in situations of vehement conflict and violent confrontation, with all the suffering that this entails.

We live now in an age of global multiculturalism, in which there is an urgent quest for cultural identity and respect for cultural difference, which needs, as Charles Taylor proposes, a 'politics of recognition.'² Indeed, multiculturalism means for me, at the outset, that each and every culture has its own cultural identity, and that each should respect the other's cultural difference; then, it should mean, above all, mutual enrichment by cultural exchange and the unceasing search for the universalizable elements embodied in various cultural traditions.³ As I see it, Charles Taylor's "mutual recognition" presupposes the idea of intersubjectivity which itself is the extension of the philosophy of subjectivity so much cherished by modern European philosophy. For me, it is now time to move from the minimalist "mutual recognition" to an optimal "mutual enrichment." Knowledge of the different ways of doing philosophy in different cultural traditions could enrich our vision of the multi-layered and multi-faceted nature of reality. Any philosophy capable of facing this challenge has to include within itself an intercultural dimension. In view of the times in which we live, then, it is now proper to move from comparative philosophy toward intercultural philosophy.

The real objective of doing intercultural philosophy is to contrast rather than simply compare different philosophical traditions,⁴ so as to find the universalizable elements within them and to lead to their mutual-enrichment. I understand 'contrast' as the rhythmic and dialectical interplay between difference and complementarity, continuity and discontinuity, by which universalizability could be

² Charles Taylor, "Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism*, edited and introduced by A. Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25-36.

³ Vincent Shen, *From Politics of Recognition to Politics of Mutual Enrichment*, in *The Ricci Bulletin* 2002 (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies, number 5, February 2002), 113-125.

⁴ I have worked out a philosophy of contrast in my works, especially in my *Essays in Contemporary Philosophy East and West* (Taipei: Liming Publishing, 1985). There, 'contrast' was defined as the rhythmic and dialectical interplay between difference and complementarity, continuity and discontinuity, which leads eventually to the real mutual-enrichment of different agents, individual or collective, such as different traditions of religion or philosophy.

made manifest. For example, ancient Greek philosophy concerns itself more with theoretical universalizability (*theoria*), while Chinese philosophy concerns itself more with practical universalizability (*praxis*). Nevertheless, both of them try to go beyond particular interests and to transcend the limit of particularity towards a universalizable value. In a certain sense, both of these philosophies target universalizability, and in this light *theoria* and *praxis* might be seen as complementary.

In this paper, I define spirituality as “theories and practices of self-cultivation towards human perfection that deal with the human desire for meaningfulness and its fulfillment through relation with ultimate reality.” Spirituality is thus defined in terms of the Ultimate Reality with which one is interacting, and thereby forms a process of self-cultivation in getting closer to one’s perfection. Usually those theories and practices are recorded in the philosophical/religious texts of different traditions.

Epistemological Strategies Useable in Intercultural Philosophy and Dialogue

Let us now consider the epistemological strategies we can adopt in order to achieve an effective intercultural philosophy and intercultural dialogue. I will propose two consecutive strategies here: language appropriation and strangification.

First, language appropriation means learning the language or discourse of other philosophical traditions. From early childhood, learning language leads to the construction and understanding of meaningful worlds. As Wittgenstein says, different language games correspond to different life-forms. Therefore, the appropriation of another language would give us access to the life-form implied in that specific language. By appropriating the different languages of different cultural/philosophical/religious traditions, we can enter into the different life-worlds of many others and thereby enrich the construction of our own world.

By the second strategy, *waitui* 外推 (strangification), I mean the act of going beyond oneself to many others, from those with whom one is familiar to strangers, from one’s cultural/philosophical world to

many others' cultural/philosophical worlds.⁵ Strangification could be practiced on three levels: linguistic, pragmatic and ontological, as I have developed elsewhere.⁶ On each of them, I conceive "dialogue" as a process of mutual strangification.

These two strategies could help us to avoid both radical relativism, which amounts to a contradiction in affirming validity by claiming that everything is absolutely relative; and absolute universalism, which doesn't work in the human world constituted by historicity. In the historical process, what one can do is extend the universalizability implicit in one's own tradition and look for mutual enrichment by way of language appropriation and strangification.

In the context of intercultural philosophy, I conceive philosophical dialogue as a process of mutual *waitui* 外推 (strangification). This proceeds on three consecutive levels, as follows: On the level of linguistic strangification, cultural/philosophical tradition A (abbreviated as TA) should translate its propositions or ideas/values/belief system into a language understandable to cultural/philosophical tradition B (abbreviated as TB). Meanwhile, TB should translate its propositions or ideas/values/belief system into language/discourse understandable to TA. If they are still valid there, this would mean they have larger universalizability. In the case that one's ideas/values/belief system becomes absurd or unintelligible after the translation, then one should examine one's own principle and methods, rather than hold that others are wrong.

On the level of pragmatic *waitui* 外推 (strangification), TA should draw its propositions, supposed truths/cultural expressions/value/-religious beliefs out from its own social, organizational contexts and put them into the social, organizational context of TB, to see whether they could still work there. Meanwhile, TB should draw its propositions, supposed truths/cultural expressions/value/religious

⁵ Given this term means the act of reaching out to strangers, even if it looks a bit strange in English, I still want to keep it in honor of the root "stranger" in it.

⁶ These three strategies, originally developed by F. Wallner for the use only in the area of interdisciplinary research, have been extended and developed by myself to the areas of intercultural exchange and religious dialogue. See my *Confucianism, Taoism and Constructive Realism* (Vienna: Vienna University Press, 1994), and my *Duibi, waitui yu Jiaotan* (Contrast, Strangification and Dialogue) (Taipei: Wunan, 2003); and *Kuawenhua Zhexue yu Zhongjiao* (Essays on Intercultural Philosophy and Religion) (Taipei: Wunan, 2012).

beliefs out from its own social, organizational context and put them into the social, organizational context of TA. If they can still work there, this would mean they have larger universalizability. In case they become unacceptable and cannot work, one should examine them rather than hold that others are wrong.

On the level of ontological *waitui* 外推 (strangification), TA should make an effort to enter into TB's micro-world, cultural world or religious world through the detour of his experience with Reality Itself, such as a person, a social group, Nature, or the Ultimate Reality. Meanwhile, TB should also make an effort to enter into TA's micro-world, cultural world or religious world through making a detour from one's own experience of Reality Itself.

Dialogue in the form of mutual *waitui* 外推 (strangification) is more fundamental than Habermas's notion of communicative action as argumentation. For me, the Habermasian argumentation presupposes a previous effort of *waitui* 外推 (strangification) in expressing one's proposal(s) in the other's language or in a language understandable to the other, without which there will be no real mutual understanding and no self-reflection in the process of argumentation. Habermas's four ideal claims of understandability, truth, sincerity and legitimacy will not work in the real world without previous mutual *waitui* 外推 (strangification): I think I'm sincere, but you think I am a hypocrite; I think I'm telling the truth, but you consider that absurd. Because a commonly acceptable norm doesn't exist yet, or because the law to legitimize is still an issue under debate, there is no mutually accepted legitimacy.⁷

Chinese Philosophy encourages strangification, as we find in the Confucian concepts of *shu* (恕) and *tui* (推), Buddhist concepts of *geyi* (格義) and *huixiang* (迴向) and the Daoist idea that "the more the sage gives to others the more is his life enriched." We also find the idea of "many others" in Chinese philosophy, instead of the concept of "the Other" expounded in the philosophy of Lacan, Levinas, Derrida, Deleuze etc., that presupposes an implicit dualism between Self and

⁷ See also Vincent Shen, *Chuantong de zaisheng* (Rebirth of Tradition) (Yeqiang Press, 1992). 78-79, where I point out that Habermas' argumentative consensus presupposes a pre-linguistic, tacit consensus; and *Duibi, waitui yu jiaotan* (Contrast, Strangification and Dialogue) (Taipei: Wunan), 172-173, where I argue the effectiveness of Habermas' communicative action presupposes the act of strangification in order to achieve mutual understanding.

Other. The Daoist idea of “milliard things,” the Buddhist concept of “all sentient beings,” and the Confucian idea of “five relations” are all telling us that we are born into and grow up among many others.

A Hermeneutics in the Context of Intercultural Philosophy

How should one interpret philosophical texts in general, and Chinese philosophical texts in particular, in the context of intercultural philosophy? My hermeneutics for interpreting philosophical texts is based on what I call a “dynamic contextualism” that takes the meaning of a term, a sentence, a paragraph in the context of its relation with other terms, sentences and paragraphs, and the situation of a term in the sentence, the sentence in the paragraph, and the paragraph in the texts...etc., in the dynamic unfolding of the meaning of a text. In a certain sense, this is inspired by Schleiermacher’s concept of the “whole-part” circle, wherein the more one understand the parts, the more one understands the whole; and the more one understand the whole, the more one understands the parts. Thus, the second canon of Schleiermacher’s grammatical interpretation reads “the meaning of every term in one paragraph should be determined in terms of the context in which it appears.”⁸ For example, when reading Plato’s dialogues, the more one understands each word, sentence, paragraph etc., the more one understands the whole dialogue; while the more one understands the whole dialogue, the more exactly one understands the meaning of each word and sentence. And again, if one understands other works of Plato, and even when one is able to extend one’s understanding to other works related to Plato, then one’s understanding of a particular dialogue of Plato will be even better.

For me, the acts of both writing and reading belong to the process of expressing and interpreting, and can therefore be seen as a pragmatic movement. While an author creates a meaningful piece of work, his readers interpret its meaning. However, both writing and interpreting should allow the movement of words, sentences, paragraphs, sections and the whole text involved to develop a

⁸ F. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwriting Manuscripts* (Montana: Scholars Press, 1977), 127-129.

dynamic process of meaning unfolding in a dialectic of whole and part.

This way of reading the movement of a text differs from the reading by key words, key concepts or key sentences. The latter way of reading picks out some major concepts and propositions that proceed to dominate or at least to lead the reading of the whole text. However, when attention is paid only to some key concepts and key propositions, the pragmatic movement of the text is somehow neglected, and attention is not paid to the different layers of the textual meaning. In order to avoid this situation, key words, key concepts or key sentences should first of all presuppose the acting of reading in term of dynamic contextualism.

Dynamic contextualism applies also to the process of translation, which is an urgent issue in today's globalizing world, and indeed crucial for the mutual understanding and mutual enrichment envisaged by an intercultural hermeneutics. Originally, *hermeneuia*, the Greek term for interpretation, means: to say, to explain and to translate. To say is to mediate between thought and language. To explain is to mediate between what is said and the reason why it is said. To translate is to mediate between one form of language and another form of language. It is true that any meaningful expression, be it in the form of images, sounds, writing or speech, always involves some basic activities of understanding and interpretation. In the case of translation, a language other than the original (for example, English) is used to tell its understanding and interpretation of the original language (say, Chinese) in order to make it understandable to people in another linguistic and cultural context. The exchange between peoples of different languages and cultures requires a dialogical process that involves what I call "language appropriation" and "mutual strangification" by which a person goes beyond the language and culture that is familiar, to learn to express his or her ideas/values/beliefs in a language understandable to others, and others should do likewise with regard to them. Thus I understand "translation" as an essential component of strangification.

First Level Principles: Four General Principles of Interpretation

I will now discuss the four general principles of interpretation that belong to the first level of principles, before entering into hermeneutic

principles of a more specialized nature. The following four general principles of interpretation, applicable to all philosophical texts of the East and the West, are to be practiced consecutively, which means that the latter rules presuppose the former:

First, the principle of intratextuality and intertextuality, where the principle of intratextuality precedes that of intertextuality: the meaning of a text must be completely contained within, and extractable from, the text itself and only that text. Taking the *Zhuangzi* as an example, all possible meanings of the texts in the *Zhuangzi* should be read only from the text present to us, not to be imposed on the text by theories or views outside of the text. In the case of a corrupted text that invites revision or correction, this should be done only with support from other texts, either newly discovered ones or texts from other contexts. For me, only with the support of intratextuality can we proceed to what J. Kristeva calls "intertextuality," which means the vertical and horizontal relations of a specific text with other texts.⁹ I agree with Kristeva that each text is constituted from its reference to many other texts and is itself an absorption and/or transformation of other texts. Each text results from a continuous dialogue among its author, its ideal readers and external texts, that could be read horizontally (author and readers) and vertically (previous textual traditions). However, the decisions about intertextuality and the proper horizontal and vertical relations always depend on the intratextual meaning constituent of all texts thus concerned.

Second, the principle of coherence: a philosophical work should have its own coherence. This so-called "coherence" means that, on the negative side, a text should be able to avoid holding self-contradictory or self-oppositional views; on the positive side, the concepts, ideas and propositions proposed in the work should constitute a reasonable whole. We may presume that a philosophical text with a higher degree of coherence is philosophically more significant and valuable than a text with a lesser degree of coherence. A great classical philosophical text with lasting impact must be a text of great coherence. On the other

⁹ Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," in *The Kristeva Reader*, edited by Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 36-37. Notice Kristeva says, "À la place de la notion d'intersubjectivité s'installe celle d'intertextualité, et le langage poétique se lit, au moins, comme *double*". Cf. Julia Kristeva, «Le mot, le dialogue et le roman," in *Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969), p. 146.

hand, a text, fragmentary or not, containing inconsistency and contradiction, though it might still have great historical value, does not have great philosophical value. Of course, we should leave texts as they are; if there is contradiction, let them be read as contradictory; if there is incoherence, let them be read as incoherent. If indeed a text is found illogical, contradictory and incoherent, let it be read as such. Thus, even though it may have great historical value, it should accordingly be deemed as having less philosophical meaning, except where the text is playing with dialectics, such as Laozi's notion that right words can be said in seeming contradiction, or when contradiction is shown among the appearances to illustrate the absolute otherness of the Ultimate Reality. Except in the case where the text itself is contradictory or fragmentary (intratextuality), or is shown to be thus by other texts (intertextuality), a deliberate reading of a text as contradictory or fragmentary is against the principle of charity.

Third, the principle of minimum amendment: when reading a text, Chinese or otherwise, there should be no impulsive correction of the original. In case the text says things that differ from our own theory or our imagined view of the text, it is our theory or view that needs to be corrected in light of the text, rather than correcting the text to conform to our theory or view.

Fourth, the principle of maximal reading: when all the principles described above, that is, the principle of intratextuality and intertextuality, the principle of coherence, and the principle of minimal amendment are all followed, we may maximize our reading of the meaning of the text in question and interpret the text in a way so as to obtain a maximal degree of meaningfulness. The degree of meaningfulness of a philosophical text is judged according to the principle of meaning saturation. This is to say, when we have read the reading of a text intratextually/intertextually, coherently, and with minimal amendment, we may try to obtain the maximal degree of saturation of meaning in interpretation. It is in the nature of human beings to be always hungry for meaningfulness, and to aim for the most satisfactory answers that can be obtained critically through philosophy. If we are doing research into the history of philosophy, the first three principles (intratextuality/intertextuality, coherence, and minimal amendment) might suffice. However, if we are doing

philosophical interpretation and philosophizing on a text, the principle of maximal reading is needed.

Second Level: Respect the Special Nature of a Philosophical Tradition

Besides the first level principles applicable to all texts, when we deal with Chinese philosophical texts, we have to respect their special nature. Generally speaking, in comparison with Western philosophy's preference for conceptual analysis, Chinese philosophy employs the use of metaphors; in contrast to Western philosophy's concern with argumentation, Chinese philosophy uses narratives to communicate its ideas. Since metaphors and narratives are all put into words in the pragmatic process of speaking and listening, writing and reading, in which meaningful discourses are produced, they must be understood also in terms of dynamic contextualism.

Spirituality is defined specifically in terms of the Ultimate Reality with which one is interacting, and thereby form a process of self-cultivation in getting closer to it. Ancient Chinese philosophers, when seeking enlightenment and insight into Ultimate Reality by speculative reason, tend to form a kind of Original Image-Ideas, something between Pure Idea and Iconic/sonoric Image, such as *tian* 天 (heaven), *dao* 道 (the Way), *xin* 心 (Heart),...etc., keeping thereby the holistic character of the manifestation or the intuitive reception of Reality Itself. These Idea-Images are seen as expressive and evocative of, though never exhausting of, the richness of Reality Itself and therefore are given the status of metaphor. Chinese artistic creativity, by means of *poietic* transformation and creative imagination, would render the Idea-Image into a sort of concrete Iconic/sonoric Image and thereby materialize it. In moral and ethical actions, the practical function of reason would bring the Idea-Image into the judgment of events and the intervention of one's own action into the course of events and thereby takes responsibility. In narrating histories, the function of historical reason is to reveal human historicity and existential meaning implicit in the historical events, and their plots in the historical account. Indeed, telling our own stories to others and listening to others' stories bring us hope that they may reveal to us the meaning of existence and eventually Ultimate Reality, though always in a metaphorical way. Compared with the Original manifestation of

Reality Itself, these three ways of realization in Idea-Image possess an *As*-structure, in the sense that they allow us to see Reality Itself *as* Idea-Images, the latter thereby serving a certain metaphorical function.

By contrast, in Western philosophy, as I see it, the pre-Socratic philosophers such as Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus etc., still keep a very intimate relation with the original Ideas-Images, in relating, for example, the ideas of *Arché* and *Physis* with regard to water, to the unlimited, to the air, to the fire,...etc. However, mainstream Western philosophy since Parmenides and Plato consists in turning the Idea-Image into pure idea, and then, with intellectual definition, conceptualizing it and relating one concept with other concepts in a logical way. Concepts are detached deliberately from images, things and events, and are defined and related one to another logically in descriptive and argumentative sentences and discourses. By this detachment, concept and argumentation could help the human mind to develop the critical function of human reason, in not limiting itself to the particularity and materiality of images, things and events, and by paying attention to the abstract universalizability of concepts and the rigor of their logical relation. Even if the validity of concept and argumentation might be absolutized, claiming universality and rational structure *per se*, in fact, they can only allow us to see Reality and its structure in an abstract way. On the other hand, metaphors, mostly related to one another by poetic verses and stories, are different from abstract concepts and well-structured argumentation, yet still keep an intimate relation with images and events.

Third Level: Hermeneutic Principles of the Philosopher/School under Discussion

Each philosopher or school of philosophical thought may be said to have offered their own view of language and guidance for interpreting texts. This is true both for Confucians and Daoists. I should point out that my dynamic contextualism is, first of all, much closer to the Daoist spirit of letting texts show their own meaning in the movement of reading, before it starts to highlight the essential part of the texts and construct meaning thereupon like Confucianism.

Example One - Classical Confucianism: Confucius and Mencius

Confucius, in interpreting texts, prefers a way of reading that highlights some key words or key sentences. This is different from what I call dynamic contextualism and it tends to neglect the pragmatic movement of the text. Confucius' "appropriation of meaning by cutting/selecting text (*duanzhan quyì* 斷章取義)" or "featuring key verses" way of reading is very similar to the reading by way of key concepts or key propositions that exists today. For example, in the bamboo slips of *Konzi Shilun* 孔子詩論 (*Confucius on Poetry*), we find Confucius commenting on poems by highlighting a certain key verse(s) to represent the whole poem. For example, Fragment 6 reads,

[The *Qingmiao* says,] "Great is the number of the officers, assiduous followers of the virtue of King Wen." I pay my homage to this. The *Liewen* says, "What is most powerful is being the Man." "What is most distinguished is being virtuous." "Ah, the former kings are not forgotten." I am delighted by all these. [The *Haotian You Chengming* says,] "The Heaven made its determinate mandate, which our two sovereigns received." They are indeed highly honored and powerful. The Songs..."¹⁰

Here Confucius puts together a group of key verses of different poems in the *Songs* to emphasize the idea that the admirable morals and ethical power of the person of King Wen consist in his virtues, seen as the surest assurance of the Mandate of Heaven bestowed upon him.

Again, Confucius' saying that, "All three hundred odes can be covered by one of their sentences, and that is, 'Have no depraved thoughts'" is itself an exemplary case in which Confucius appropriates meaning of poems by creative selection and interpretation. Originally the verse "Have no depraved thoughts" is from the poem entitled "*Stallions*" in the *Lu Songs*, which is sung when

¹⁰ *Konzi Shilun* (Confucius on Poetry), in *Shanghai Museum's Chu Bamboo Books of the Warring States*. Vol.1. edited by MA Chenyuan (Shanghai: Shanghai Museum, 2001), p. 133.

someone is pasturing horses,¹¹ where the term “si 兮” is merely an auxiliary term and the whole verse says something like, “Ah, don’t go astray.” Yet Confucius uses the term “si 思” to denote “thought” and reads the whole verse as “thought without depravity.”

Cutting a verse to its appropriate meaning concerns mostly the users of poems, yet the hermeneutic criterion of the readers or listeners is left untouched. Later, Mencius proposes to “trace the expressed intention by understanding” (*yiyi nizhi* 以意逆志). Mencius says, “Therefore he who interprets *the Odes*, should not be stuck by words in detriment of a sentence, and he should not be stuck by sentence in detriment of earnest thoughts. If one can trace back to the earnest thought by understanding, he then is said to have caught its meaning.”¹² Using one’s understanding of a poem to trace back to its author’s original and earnest intent could mean something very similar to what Wilhelm Dilthey says about the function of understanding in historiography. According to Wilhelm Dilthey’s historical hermeneutics, human life is teleological in the sense that it tends to the creation of meaning by expressing its creativity in words, deeds and works, which, in their turn, can be understood by enacting this process of creative expression in a sympathetic understanding. While the process of creativity goes from the dynamic teleology of life to meaningful expression in words, deeds and works, the process of understanding goes inversely from the expressed words and deeds to trace back to the dynamic and creative process of life via the intelligible structure of words, deeds and works in question. When added to Confucius’ “hermeneutics of author,” Mencius’ “hermeneutics of reader” can be seen as having completed the circle between author and reader in classical Confucian hermeneutics.

I should say that the Confucian hermeneutics of key concepts not only makes an essential selection of words and texts, but also creates new meanings. This is to say that the Confucian method of interpretation can lead to a creative reading of texts, which could be a

¹¹ The *Stallions* reads, “Fat and large are the stallions, on the plains of the far-distant borders. Of those stallions, fat and large, some are cream-coloured; some, red and white; some, with white hairy legs; some, with fish eyes; All, stout carriage horses, Ah, how they are without depravity; He thinks of his horses, and thus serviceable are they.” Legge, James, trans., *The She King*, in *The Chinese Classics*, vol. IV (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc. 1994), p. 613.

¹² *The Mencius*, 5A: 4. My translation.

better way for systematic construction in philosophy. However, prior to that, we probably need a spirit of “letting be,” that lets a text speak for itself by the reader paying attention to the movement of text, allowing the text to unfold its pragmatic movement and its meaning fully. Here dynamic contextualism is better for doing interpretation, whereas Confucian hermeneutics is better for doing systematic construction. However, systematic construction should presuppose an act of reading by way of dynamic contextualism.

Example Two - Classical Daoism: Zhuangzi

A theory of language is offered in the *Zhuangzi*: the discourses used by Zhuangzi are summed up by himself into three types: metaphorical discourse, hermeneutic discourse and de-constructive discourse. Among these three, the metaphorical discourse is the most fundamental, because there must be first of all an extension of experience that emancipates the human spirit from the constraint of sensible perception and logical reasoning so that there may be revelation of truth by the hermeneutic and de-constructive discourses.

I take these three discourses as representing Zhuangzi's view on textual meaning in general, and his *chongyan* 重言 (hermeneutic discourse) as his view on interpreting traditional texts in a narrow sense. Zhuangzi's hermeneutic discourse, the *chongyan*, consists in quoting and interpreting texts recording the deeds and discourses of a certain previous time, either of a venerable old man or in the tradition.¹³ Two essential points to be noted concerning Zhuangzi's hermeneutic discourse: first, the hermeneutic discourse talks about words that have already endured over time either belonging to a venerable old man or a traditional scripture. Second, hermeneutic discourse must interpret these words of the venerable old man or of traditional scripture in order to obtain credibility by reason of their endurance over time.

Here is an important hermeneutic problem: when someone proposes an original discourse, how should he/she render justice to

¹³ “Seventy percent (of metaphorical discourses) consists of quoting and interpreting that which has been said before. Those quoted are the venerable men of old.” *Zhuangzi jishi*, edited by Guo Qingfan (Taipei: Dingyuan Cultural Press, 2005), p.949

discourses belonging to tradition or proposed in the past? Zhuangzi quotes texts and words of the past in order to reveal truth. However, truth does not mean making a copy to the extent that we can verify them word for word. On the contrary, they must be submitted to the creative interpretation/transformation of the author. Tradition contains in itself truth to be revealed through creative interpretation, resulting from a certain kind of "fusion of horizons," as Gadamer calls it. A true understanding of the past must have, in a certain sense, taken over the horizon of meaning constituted in the tradition that overlaps with one's own horizon of meaning.

It is in the form of a dialogue that human beings realize this sort of fusion of horizons, as clearly exemplified by Zhuangzi's hermeneutic discourse. That is why most of Zhuangzi's *chongyan* are constituted of dialogues of two or more persons. Those dialogues between venerable old persons in historical records or traditional texts are put in the context of his metaphorical discourse and reconstructed through his creative interpretations, and thereby obtain fusion of horizons in the form of dialogue. The truth of hermeneutical discourse does not consist in its corresponding to a given content, but rather in revealing the dynamism of truth in time.

The third kind of discourse used by Zhuangzi is *ziyan* (卮言) which, without presupposing any pre-established thesis, responds to an interlocutor according to the situation and topic involved, and, in referring to Dao, pronounces the truth that is implied in the situation, and eventually deconstructs it before returning to the original silence. In this way, one can always keep one's creativity without being limited by any achievement or discourse of one's own; as Zhuangzi says, "without the daily de-constructive discourses to harmonize with the measure of Heaven, who could endure long?"¹⁴

Words of Conclusion

It is undeniable that Chinese philosophical texts have their own specific characteristics, and are thus in need of special principles of interpretation, such as the second level principles and the third level principles. However, these should not contradict the general principles applicable to all Eastern and Western philosophical texts.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.949-950

This means that understanding and interpretation are universalizable in all forms of human communication and therefore in need of some general principles. This does not mean the four principles I propose are already universal principles in an absolute sense. They are only the most universalizable principles for the moment and still need to enhance their universalizability through the further effort of strangification. The same applies to the second and third level principles. Both the characteristics of a specific tradition and the principles adopted by a philosopher or a school of philosophy should be examined in the process of strangification in order to extend their universalizability. Hopefully the dialectics of the general and special principles and their further extension through the process of strangification could bring Chinese and Western philosophies and other philosophical traditions to mutual understanding and mutual enrichment.

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3.

The Daoist Sage in Modernity

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This fourth-century BC Chinese philosophy is relevant not only to its own time and place but to all times and places and particularly the global situation of mankind in the 1970s [or in the 21st century]*—Arnold Toynbee, *Mankind and Mother Earth*¹

Daoism is an ancient, philosophical and religious tradition, which has its origins in the Warring States period China around the fourth century B.C.E. During this period it coexisted alongside a number of other schools of thought, such as Mohoism (Mo Jia, 墨家)—a school which taught universal ethics and Legalism (Fa Jia, 法家)—a school which held that human nature was inherently evil and as such needed to be held in check by strong leadership. Early Daoist thinkers, like the other schools of Chinese philosophy, sought to respond to the condition of life during that period, particularly the problem of continual warfare. However, the scope of Daoist thought extended beyond immediate concerns of the Warring States era and elements of Daoism have survived since that time to the present day, often existing in combination with Confucianism or Buddhism, while still retaining distinctive elements. Daoism might be defined basically as a combination of certain ontological principles such as Dao—道 (roughly translated into English as “way”) an interpretation of existence, as well as qi—氣 energy, together with the yin yang as a balance of opposites, and also a way of life focused on the practice of wu wei—無為 (action-less action) and ziran—自然 (naturalness and spontaneity). Historically, Daoism has been a loose-knit and diverse movement. An important distinction exists between the two commonly confused schools of philosophical Daoism, on the one hand, (Dao Jia, 道家), generally associated with the writings of thinkers such as Laozi, Zhuangzi, Leihzi and subsequently Huannanzi, and

* Note words in [] - indicate my addition to the text.

¹ Arnold Toynbee, *Mankind and Mother Earth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976,) p. 220.

religious Daoism, on the other hand, (Dao Jiao, 道教), identified with later figures such as Zhang Dao Ling. Historically and in popular culture these two forms of Daoism have often been combined. However, at a philosophical level it is important to differentiate them. These two approaches differ most directly over the role of personal immortality, with religious Daoism advocating the use of various elixirs and practices aimed at transcending human mortality, whereas philosophical Daoism proposes a simple reconciliation with the condition of human mortality. There are other areas of disagreement, as well some areas of continuity, between the two forms of Daoism, which it is not possible to discuss here. The focus of this paper will be on philosophical Daoism (Dao Jia), particularly as expressed through the writings attributed to Laozi and Zhuangzi,² seeking to demonstrate how such writings can be read as a response to westernisation, showing their continued relevance.

For over a century now, Chinese culture, along with other East Asian cultures, has been under Western influence. This has led to an uneven relationship, where contemporary Chinese philosophy has been influenced by Western thought, but this process has not been reciprocated in the West. Early Chinese thought, in particular Daoism, although it has influenced a number of important Western thinkers, notably Martin Heidegger and Carl Jung, still remains a fairly fringe discipline in most Western universities. The aim of this paper is to challenge such a situation by showing how Daoism can provide a basis for confronting Westernised modernity and is thus relevant in providing a guide for responding to contemporary life. This will demonstrate how Daoism, rather than being simply an archaic school of Chinese thought, can be understood as a response to what Heidegger held to be the condition of modern Western nihilism.

² It should be noted that it is generally acknowledged that the historical Zhuangzi did not write all of the book commonly attributed to him, but only the so-called inner chapters (the first seven chapters of the book of Zhuangzi). For the purposes of this paper all 33 chapters of the work of Zhuangzi will be considered as they all provide relevant philosophical development of Daoist ideas, although some show influence from other schools too. For more information please consult the works of Karyn Lai and Brook Ziporyn amongst others.

Heidegger, Daoism and Europeanisation

The marginalisation of Daoist thought in the contemporary world should be understood as part of a process that Heidegger called Europeanisation in his "Dialogue between the Japanese and an Inquirer" written in 1959, where he states that "Europeanization of man and of the earth attacks at the source of everything of an essential nature. It seems that these sources dry up."³ By this claim Heidegger means that the process of Europeanisation has already developed so far and in such a way as to effectively block off any alternative mode of existence. Such a notion of Europeanisation represents a controversial and complex process, which can roughly be understood as the universalisation of a Western notion of progress to the exclusion of any substitute. It can take different forms in different countries and it is important to note that it should not be linked with one side or the other in the cold war. At least in the way that Heidegger interpreted it, Europeanisation will take place under both free market capitalism and state socialism. Europeanisation might be understood as having started during the nineteenth century, when it was linked with Western imperial expansion in Asia. However, Europeanisation need not imply direct imperial conquest. Hence, the contemporary rise of mainland China need not be seen in itself as an end to the process of Europeanisation.

Such a universalisation of the Western notion of progress has made Daoism often seem under-developed or irrelevant to modernity in the sense that, from a western enlightenment or Hegelian perspective, it would be natural to assume that such an ancient view of the world, with its emphasis on a mystical sense of nature and life, has been surpassed. Hence, Daoist claims such as Laozi's famous statement at the beginning of the *Dao De Jing* that "dao ke Dao, fei chang Dao" (道可道, 非常道), roughly translated by Keping Wang as "the Dao that can be told is not the constant Dao"⁴ appears by definition to defy rational explanation and thus should simply be ignored or be dismissed by the project of modern Western thought. This is because

³ M. Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," (*On the Way into Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz and Joan Stambaugh (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1971), p. 16.

⁴ Laozi, "Dao De Jing," *Reading The Dao: A Thematic Inquiry*, ed. and trans. Keping Wang (London: Continuum Press, 2011), p. 1.

Daoism appears to lack a logical and systematic explanation of things. Therefore, it would seem Daoist thought can contribute little to what has arguably been the central project of at least Western enlightenment thought. Thus the ascent of the West must appear to entail the decline of Daoism, with the writings of thinkers such as Laozi and Zuangzi preserved as aesthetic poetry, but excluded from philosophical consideration.

However, such an ascendance of the dominance of European thought based on a Hegelian ideal of “the march of reason” has been challenged by a number of modern thinkers, notably in Heidegger’s later thought and that of his Japanese contemporary, Nishitani Keiji. Both of these thinkers were influenced by Nietzsche’s notion of “European nihilism,” by which is meant the loss of the metaphysically foundational principles of western thought, signifying not only Nietzsche’s often quoted claim that “God is dead,”⁵ referring to loss of the western monotheistic notion of the divine, but more generally a loss of transcendental Platonic values. Nishitani, from an East Asian perspective states that, “European nihilism teaches us to return to our forgotten selves and to reflect on the tradition of oriental culture.”⁶ Along such lines, Heidegger’s thought, precisely by highlighting the crisis of the modern Western world, provides an opportunity for a renewal of East Asian thought. In consideration of this, Blocker and Starling take a somewhat idiosyncratic metaphor, borrowed from H.G Wells’ *War of The Worlds* comparing Westernisation to the Martian invasion of that novel, where “the earthlings [East Asians] are invaded by a seemingly unstoppable foe, but the Martians [the Westerners] are finally stricken where they stand by a microbe within [nihilism].”⁷ In this way, Heidegger’s thought, with its critique of Western philosophy, offers a unique historical chance for a far-reaching dialogue between East Asian and Western thinking. The rest of this paper will seek to present a Daoist response to modernity in the light of Heidegger’s critique.

⁵ F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (Random House, USA, Vintage Books Edition, 1974), p. 180.

⁶ Nishitani Keiji, *The Self Over-Comeing of Nihilism*, trans. Graham Parks and Setsuko Aihara (New York: State University of New York, 1990), p. 179.

⁷ H.G. Blocker and C. I Starling, *Japanese Philosophy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), p. 163.

Why Look to Daoism?

Even within the relatively limited study of classical Chinese philosophy in the West, Daoism appears comparatively overlooked. It appears natural for example, when discussing the historical relationship between China and the West, to refer to “Confucian values” and “Western values”. Such an approach implicitly equates all Chinese thought and culture with Confucianism leading to, in some measure, a one dimensional view of Chinese philosophy, which marginalises all non-Confucian tendencies, including not only Daoism, but Buddhism too. However, such a view of Chinese thought is clearly historically inaccurate, since throughout Chinese history Confucianism never existed as a singular, unopposed system. Hence, the movement, or rather group of movements conventionally called Neo-Confucianism (Song-Ming Lixue, 宋明理學), which came to dominate China particularly under the Ming dynasty, while taking Confucianism as its nominal ethical foundation, borrowed heavily from both Buddhism and Daoism. Equally, it is hard to deny the contribution Daoist philosophy has made to the arts in China, notably, poetry and painting.

Daoism therefore represents an important aspect of classical Chinese thought, while at the same time, it often had an oppositional character in Chinese history. This paper will utilise certain oppositional or critical characteristics of Daoist thought to challenge dominant tendencies in the Westernised world, just as the Daoists once challenged the conventions of Confucian society.

Ziran and Wu Wei

Ziran in Daoism, which has been translated literally as “so of its own,” is associated with “naturalness,” “freedom,” “spontaneity,” both in people and in beings in general. Ziran might be understood roughly as “everything being able to be as it is.” Ziran links with wu wei as the ultimate aim for the Daoists. The central consideration of Daoist “actionless action” is therefore, in Qingjie Wang’s words, “how ‘I’ can behave in such a way the other’s ‘it-self-so-ing’ will have

maximum room for growth and realization".⁸ The notion of "ziran" is exemplified by the tree in the village shrine that Zhuangzi discusses, dismissed by the carpenter as "a worthless tree,"⁹ but to whom the tree later responds that being of no use is "of great use"¹⁰ to itself. This means that being of no use to humans, the tree is able to preserve its own ziran, precisely because it does not get used up by being cut down. Such a way of life appears radically removed from any society in the twenty first century, either in the East or West, where it would seem that any notion of ziran would be abandoned in favour of economic optimisation. However, rather than being a basis for dismissing Daoism, it should be looked to as a potential alternative for the excesses of modernity, in particular, the economic optimisation of resources, understood by Heidegger as a defining feature of modern nihilism that he associated with technology.

The defining feature of such an approach is that it reveals beings, and particularly the earth, "as the chief storehouse of the energy standing in reserve."¹¹ Thus, what it means to exist in such a world is to be a resource. Hence, within such a system, a forest, for example, will be revealed primarily as a supply of wood. A cultivated plantation forest is, in practice, grown entirely for this purpose. It is therefore essentially the character of the way that beings are disclosed within the framework of modern technology, that they are there as resources. The resources have merely fulfilled their purpose as used up in the flow of technology. Heidegger even goes further in his view of modern technology, seeing this principle of the reduction of beings, including humans, to resources, as extending further into every aspect of modern life, stating, "the current talk about human resources gives evidence of this."¹² Hence humans become a supply of labour or consumption, in the same way that a hammer in a blacksmith's workshop primarily shows up as an implement. Elements of this

⁸ Qingjie Wang, "'It-self-so-ing' and 'Other-ing'," *Comparative Approaches to Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Bo Mu (UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001), p. 233.

⁹ Zhuangzi, *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings*, trans. (Burton Watson: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 63-64.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹² M. Heidegger, "Question Concerning Technology," *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. Williams Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 18.

approach can be seen in the treatment of higher education in many societies today, where there is a general assumption that its only function ought to be to train a future generation of workers. Such a way of relating to beings reductively as resources, with the ultimate aim being their economic optimisation, clearly appears to deny the *ziran* or spontaneity of such entities.

Heidegger controversially treats such a way of life as having its origins within the development of Western metaphysics, but as having been spread around the world through Europeanisation or Westernisation, to now become the dominant overarching system. In this way it is possible to see that the contemporary rise of mainland China may not fundamentally alter the process of Europeanisation, at least not in this respect, as such a development still clearly rests on this technocratic way of life. Indeed the development of mainland China may work out in such a way as to extend and further universalise such a way of life. While it is not possible to enter into a full discussion of Heidegger's interpretation of technology at this point, it is clearly the case that now economic optimisation of resources is a driving force in the world, just as competition between the rival states was a driving force at the time when Daoism first emerged. In both cases the condition is a threat to *ziran*.

Clearly, therefore, the Daoist ought to resist such a system. Certain passages in the *Dao De Jing* may appear to be putting forward such an ideal of a non-technological society along the lines of utopian primitivism. Section 80 states:

Let there be a small state with few people. It has various kinds of instruments,

But let none of them be used. Let the people not risk their lives,
and not migrate far away. Although they have boats and carriages,
Let there be no occasion to ride them. Although they have armor
and weapons,

Let there be no occasion to display them. Let people return
to knotting cords and using them.

Let them relish their food,

Beautify their clothing, Feel comfortable in their homes

And delight in their customs.

Although the neighbouring states are within sight of one another,

And the crowing cocks and barking dogs

On both sides can be heard
 Their peoples may die of old age without even meeting each other¹³

This passage appears to present a view of Daoist thought that is similar to Richard Rorty's claim about the later Heidegger, that "Heidegger's utopia is pastoral, a sparsely populated valley in the mountains."¹⁴ Such an idyllic rural utopia based on *ziran* may easily appear cut off from modernity, suggesting that Daoist thought now would simply entail opting out of, rather than engaging with, contemporary society. Such a reading would therefore present Daoism as providing little more than a distant rural utopia radically isolated from the concerns of modernity, which therefore becomes in effect, unreachable. Heidegger states "technological advances will move faster and faster and can never be stopped."¹⁵ While given that such a way of life is based on a fundamental state of mind, it would appear that even were a Luddite government to attempt, by whatever means, to stop the progress of modern technology, the fundamental technocratic mindset would still remain. Returning to such a pre-technological society, barring a major catastrophe dramatic enough to cause a breakdown in modern civilization, seems impossible or at the very least appears to be a rather impractical and extreme response to modernity, comparable to swimming against an inconceivably strong current. However, such a view is an over-simplification of Daoist philosophical practice. In general, Daoist thinkers do not advocate such an extreme rejection of technocratic development. For one thing, imposing a violent Luddite revolution would be acting radically against the Daoist principle of *wu-wei*. At the same time Daoism does not simply resign itself to the status quo, with only a distant hope of rural utopia. Rather Daoist practices of self-cultivation are aimed precisely at living within a world that is corrupted or denies the possibility of absolute *ziran*. How is this achieved?

The following section of the paper seeks to show how it is feasible to look again at the Daoist ideal of the sage, showing how such an

¹³ Laozi, "Dao De Jing," *Reading The Dao: A Thematic Inquiry*, ed. and trans. Keeping Wang (London: Continuum Press, 2011), p. 173.

¹⁴ R. Rorty, *Heidegger, Kundera and Dickens: Essays on Heidegger and Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 75.

¹⁵ M. Heidegger, "Memorial Address," *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), p. 51.

ideal can be relevant to the modern world by looking at both Zhuangzi's thought and that of Heidegger. It will show how the approach set up for responding to life in Warring States period China can be applied to life in westernised modernity.

The Daoist Sage

Zhuangzi uses the term *zhen ren* (真人) literally meaning "true person." Religious Daoism later mythologised this term to imply a state of supernatural power. However, *zhen ren* can be more accurately described as a type of sage, who has a particular type of skill and awareness which enables a kind of liberation from the forces of regularity and conformity. Through this skill Zhuangzi's sage is able to undo layers of convention in order to recover what, in Karyn Lai's words, is "a more spontaneous and seemingly intuitive expression of self."¹⁶ It is along the lines of this awareness and spontaneous expression that Benjamin Schwartz states that the "problem" for Zhuangzi's "men of gnosis is how to avoid government,"¹⁷ in that they are detached from the demands made by hierarchy and no longer hold to the legitimacy of established institutions. Such a man, for instance, sees no value in seeking a higher position within the official bureaucracy. The use of the word "gnosis" for the kind of intuitive awareness that Zhuangzi is seeking is in itself problematic, although as will be seen, there is a sense in which it may be called mystical. It is, however, correct to say that it is through this awareness of *wu wei* and cultivation of *ziran* that Zhuangzi is, in a sense, seeking to escape from subordination to convention associated with the Confucian rules of morality or the legalist state hierarchy. Such a mode of self-cultivation was set up for living in societies like the militaristic, expansionist Kingdom of Qin, or the ritualistic, strongly Confucian Lu Kingdom in Warring States period China. Such kingdoms do not appear to closely resemble the previously mentioned Daoist utopia any more than does modern society. How can this ethos, developed in a different time, still be applicable now?

¹⁶ K.L. Lai, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 156-157.

¹⁷ B. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 232.

In order to show that such an approach can be applicable to life in Westernised modernity, it is helpful to combine it with a similar approach taken by Heidegger, which he called the “Shepherd of Being” (or “Guardian”). Zhuangzi’s sage can be understood as a model for Heidegger’s “Shepherd of Being” in that both apply non-doctrinal religion in different settings; Heidegger responding to modern technocratic nihilism, Zhuangzi confronting the Confucian bureaucracy. However, despite their different contexts, both of these approaches share an underlying similarity. In both cases, the Dao and Being as *Seyn*,¹⁸ are seen as obscured. In Zhuangzi’s situation this is done by the hierarchical power structure and conformity of the Confucian system, whereas for the later Heidegger this occurs because of dominance of technocratic and calculative reason. However, both Zhuangzi and Laozi seek to cultivate an attitude towards the Dao or *Seyn* that can be manifested in a number of possible ways, thus resisting the claims of technocrat or bureaucrat to absolute authority.

Hence, just as Zhuangzi could see the Confucian bureaucracy as itself a manifestation of the Dao, so too does the Heideggerian perspective see modern technology ambiguously as both a destiny of Being and as an impoverishment in the disclosure of *Seyn*. Such positions appear problematic for both the Daoists and Heidegger in that, while both Confucian bureaucracy and modern technology are seen as obscuring the Dao or Being, these two ontologies are taken as all-encompassing, even encompassing that which appears to be opposed to them. Thus, both Confucianism and modern nihilism are thought to remain in relation to the Dao or Being, in that they appear as manifestations of the Dao or Being. They are, however, both deeply impoverished. The Confucian bureaucracy or modern technology, while they may become dominant, are both taken as only one possible way that the world can be, without the claim of absolute justification. Zhuangzi implicitly undermines the traditional Chinese notion of the mandate of the Confucian ruler from heaven (*tian*, 天), stating that “the petty thief is imprisoned but the big thief becomes a feudal lord

¹⁸ *Seyn* in Heidegger’s later thought means Being in an ineffable sense. It is not possible here to enter into a full discussion of *Seyn* in Heidegger’s thought. However, it might roughly be understood as comparable with *chang Dao* (常道) of Daoist thought, representing the un-graspable flow of all beings.

[or ruler]."¹⁹ As a result, the authority of the ruler for Zhuangzi is no longer seen as being justified and based on a mandate from heaven, that may be corrupted or lost, but is taken as being corrupt in its foundation, with the ruler being compared to a criminal. Heidegger's thought might be said to undermine a mandate of Western technocratic progress, such as the Hegelian ideal of the "march of reason" through history that ultimately culminates in modern Western rationality. Such an idolisation of western rationality is referred to by Heidegger, in "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," as the proclamation of reason "as goddess".²⁰ The aim of Heidegger's thought, particularly his reading of the history of western philosophy, is in part to undermine such hubris. In this way, Heidegger's thought undermines the absolute legitimacy based on either divine right or human progress.

Both the Confucian ruler and the modern western world have their absolute legitimacy taken away from them by the thought of Zhuangzi and Heidegger. They are both possible ways in which the Dao or Seyn can be disclosed. Crucially, however, they are not the only viable ways in which disclosure of being or Dao can occur. Hence, Zhuangzi's sage or Heidegger's Shepherd both remain open to other possible manifestations. Thus, Zhuangzi's sage may attend the court of the Confucian emperor, but still remain open towards the more chaotic way of the mountains in the wilderness, while the Heideggerian Guardian may still use technological gadgets, although remaining attuned to the deep mystery of the forest. Thus, the disciple of Zhuangzi would care less about attaining a high rank within the civil service of the Confucian state; and the truly Heideggerian Guardian should be less concerned with the acquisition of the latest electronic consumer device. In both cases, such attainments lose their significance as worthwhile projects. These figures are, however, not required to completely detach themselves from official life at court or from the use of technology. What matters is that they remain open to various senses of the sacred that stay outside technocratic reason or Confucian rules. It is this openness or attunement, combined with the

¹⁹ Zhuangzi, *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 332.

²⁰ M. Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer," *On the Way into Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1971), p. 16.

undermining of the absolute foundations or legitimacy, that keeps Zhuangzi's sage or Heidegger's Shepherd from being completely incorporated within the Confucian hierarchy or the flow of resources.

Thus, neither Zhuangzi's sage nor Heidegger's Guardian should be thought of as a strict ascetic or Luddite in the sense that neither of them advocates a complete renunciation of involvement with the Confucian or technological world. Such an approach, therefore, differs from the practice of complete, extreme non-attachment to the world, as practiced by the Jain ascetic or the Schopenhauerian renunciation of the will. Zhuangzi refers disparagingly to the emphasis put on simplicity by the Mohists,²¹ who, while criticising the Confucian hierarchy and social order, advocated a life of extreme renunciation, going so far as to hold that there should be "no singing in life" and "no mourning in death".²² This form of denial Zhuangzi held to be inhuman, stating that "to make men anxious, to make them sorrowful—such practices are hard to carry out, and I fear they cannot be regarded as the Way [Dao] of the sage."²³ In this way, Zhuangzi rejects all forms of extreme ascetic renunciation, while Heidegger states that "the flight into tradition, out of a combination of humility and presumption, can bring about nothing in itself other than self-deception and blindness to the historical moment."²⁴ As a true Heideggerian, therefore, one is not required to live away from modern society in the forest, just as the true Daoist is not required to live in the mountains.

Instead of adopting such extremes of asceticism, the Daoist sage or Heideggerian Shepherd is able to set himself free from the Confucian bureaucracy and from technocratic thought. They see the worlds of Confucianism and technology as only one possible manifestation of the Dao or Seyn, and they develop an openness towards a sense of the sacred that lies outside of these traditions. They are able to enter and live within such places without being completely absorbed by them.

²¹ The Mohists rejected Confucian rites and hierarchy, taking this view to the extreme conclusion of rejecting all ceremony and aesthetics. Hence they even held basic ceremonies such as the funeral rite to be superfluous and over ostentatious.

²² Zhuangzi, *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 365-366.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ M. Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977,) p. 136.

Nor should they be understood as Nietzschean *Übermenschen*, laying down a new set of values, while shattering the old law tables. This is because, along the lines of non-doctrinal religion, neither Zhuangzi's nor Heidegger's thought should be understood as an alternative set of rules of behaviour or creed to replace the Confucian or technocratic valuation of life. Hence, Zhuangzi does not seek to set out a rigid alternative set of a Daoist programme of rules of conduct to replace the Confucian rites (*li*, 禮), while Heidegger's thought should not be understood as a systematic doctrine of Being to replace western metaphysics. In both cases, such efforts would be counter-productive, in that they would be in danger of merely creating another way in which *Seyn* or *Dao* could be obscured. Therefore, there can be no Marxist-style revolutionary programme or manifesto, since neither Zhuangzi nor Heidegger offers a systematic schedule of how to abolish the Confucian bureaucracy or technology and *Gestell*; nor do they offer a new systematic world view to replace Confucianism or technology.

However, this apparent lack of a structured revolutionary programme or methodical new paradigm, should not be read as a conservative acceptance of the tradition or status quo, in that, without directly seeking to implement any kind of new order upon the world around them, the Daoist sage and Heideggerian Shepherd are able to free themselves. The ethos of the sage of Zhuangzi or the Heideggerian Guardian can look back at the prior development of tradition, whether this is the development of Confucian customs or the history of western metaphysics, while their critiques deprive the prior tradition of its authority and legitimacy. Thus, through this process of critique and subversion, the sage or the Heideggerian Guardian are thereby able to set themselves free from the weight of previous traditions. In this way, Zhuangzi and Heidegger may both, to a certain extent, be seen as iconoclasts in the sense of undermining traditional authority. The sage thus stands at a distance to demands of both modern technocratic and Confucian societies because they were recognised, in David Cooper's words, as "a component in a perspective on the world that should not pretend to objective correctness."²⁵

²⁵ D.E. Cooper. *Convergence with Nature* (Dartington, UK: Green Books, 2012), p. 78.

However, there is no violently iconoclastic command to “shatter the good and the law tables of the good.”²⁶ This means there is no recommendation that the whole preceding world and tradition ought to be swept away. There is no need for any such direct or violent iconoclasm on the part of Zhuangzi’s sage or Heidegger’s Shepherd, because they are able to view previous traditions from a distance that undermines their authority, but at the same acknowledges and even respects aspects of the sacred within them.

Conclusion

Thus, Daosim provides a middle path between complete seduction into modern life and an extreme ascetic or Luddite rejection of it. This is done through preserving an ironic distance from modernity, so that the Daoist sage effectively takes a step back whilst remaining within modernity. Hence, when viewed from such a position, Europeanisation or westernisation no longer appears as the only and absolute model for the development of East Asian traditional thought, which may otherwise simply be dismissed as backward. This approach can potentially also be applied more broadly to a more collective level in providing a basis for nations with non-western traditions to relate to “the Europeanisation of the Earth and Man” that Heidegger referred to in the “Dialogue Between a Japanese and an Inquirer”. This provides a model to which countries can potentially relate, including Western influence, without becoming completely Westernised, while at the same time not returning to pre-nineteenth century or Boxer-rebellion-style isolationism. It is therefore possible to adopt aspects of modern western life while preserving the religious sensibilities associated with the Daoist sage, thus taking a step back from uncritical westernisation and the idolisation of technocratic progress.

Thus, in conclusion, far from being simply out-dated, the ideal of the Daoist sage still remains relevant within westernised modernity. Such a tradition ties in with the later Heidegger’s project of not being completely absorbed into the flow of resources as a passive producing and consuming human resource, while at the same time not cutting oneself off completely. In an age of increasing homogenisation based

²⁶ F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Classics, 1969), p. 230.

on Europeanisation, it is therefore important to look more deeply and seriously at such alternatives and to consider classical Daoist thought as a living tradition.

There is, however, a residual danger that this type of approach, particularly when focused on the ideal of the spiritual cultivation for the lone, isolated sage, could lead to a somewhat elitist focus on the cultivation of a few individuals who are able to become attuned to *Sein* or the *Dao*. Such an approach may thus easily appeal to a minority of relatively privileged intellectuals, while excluding the majority of humanity, who are not in a position to contemplate the *Dao* or *Sein*, thus being left as human resources standing in reserve. Hence, in focusing on the contemplative spiritual cultivation of a few isolated individuals, the Heideggerian Shepherd or Zhuangzi's sage both appear disengaged from political life in the modern world. The cultivation of such a way of life, focusing on inner attunement, could therefore be seen as evasive and, in the terms of Sartre's "What is Literature," to be lacking in political responsibility and commitment. Therefore it may be necessary to consider modern Daoism from a wider political perspective as well. However, such a discussion goes beyond the immediate scope of this paper.

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Reflections on the Philosophical Foundations of Culture

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I

Culture has various meanings. The term itself originates from two Latin words: *cultus* and *colere*. The former refers to worship, while the latter to the act of cultivation, specifically the tilling of the land.¹ Western contemporary understanding of culture includes (1) the general state of the mind, having close relations with the idea of perfection; (2) the general state of intellectual development in a society as a whole; (3) the general body of the arts; and lastly (4) a way of life.² It can also be defined according to elitarian, pedagogical, and anthropological concepts. The first refers to a great quantity of knowledge, as when we refer to a person who is very cultured. The second sense indicates education, formation, and cultivation of man through which man comes to the full maturation and realization of his own personality. The last signifies the totality of customs, techniques, and values that distinguishes a social group, a tribe, a people, a nation.³ Culture is commonly understood as the combination of symbols, attitudes, and values expressed in conduct that imply a form of adaptation to the natural and social conditions within which the life of man unfolds. It also refers to the particular manner of adapting those conditions to human needs and adapting man to the world around him, hence the reciprocal relationship between man and his immediate milieu.

The most popular definition of culture is that of Edward B. Tylor: "Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law,

¹ *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed February 3, 2014, <http://www.etymonline.com/>.

² *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, accessed September 2, 2013, <http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/>.

³ Battista Mondin, *Man: An Impossible Project? Philosophical Anthropology* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1991), pp. 145-146.

custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."⁴ This definition includes cultural and civilization aspects. Culture is differentiated from civilization in that the former refers to man transcending himself, becoming better in the process, while the latter refers to the way in which man adapts the environment to his needs.⁵ Civilization comprises the whole legal and political relations in any given society. It includes the whole range of relations embodied in constitutions, laws, and legal and political practice.⁶ Both culture and civilization are man's creation prompted by the need to live harmoniously with the physical world that he inhabits.

Human being is said to be a cultural being, not simply a natural being. He is cultural in two senses: as a creator of culture, and as a prime receiver of culture in its subjective sense (formation of the individual) and objective sense (society's spiritual formation). The primary aim of culture is to form man in as much as he is an individual, that is, as a unique and unrepeatable example of the human species. At birth, he has the bare minimum to survive and live as a human being should. He has the task of making and forming himself so as to fully realize his being. The whole of man is a product of nature and culture.⁷ Man is not born existentially perfect, but perfectible; hence, he needs to "cultivate" himself. He attains his existential perfection through self-transcendence, by confronting his given environment to meet his needs and by wrestling with himself so as not merely to conform to what is already there.⁸ Culture is something acquired and created. It is a personal creation that simultaneously creates and recreates the person.

⁴ *Dictionary of Anthropology*, accessed November 7, 2013, <http://www.anthrobase.com/Dic/eng/>. Another inclusivist definition is UNESCO's "Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs."—*UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, accessed November 7, 2013, <http://portal.unesco.org/>.

⁵ José María Barrio Maestre, *Es posible un dialogo entre culturas*, accessed September 4, 2013 <http://es.catholic.net/temacontrovertido/326/2780/>.

⁶ Yves R. Simon, *Work Society and Culture* (New York: Fordham UP, 1971), p. 156.

⁷ Mondin, *Ibid.*, pp.146, 148.

⁸ Maestre, *Ibid.*

In the West, culture, in a broad sense stands for the cultivation of the spirit, of the intellectual life and this is carried out largely by studying what other people have learned and done. The cultured person is one who has organized his knowledge and increased it with the help of others. His intellectual work is systematic and fruitful. Through study and reflection the intellect is enriched and the life of the spirit becomes more fertile; man is raised, so to speak, beyond his own personal limitations, viewing everything from the wider perspective of a culture, which is the fruit of the work of many other people. All this stock of knowledge—properly assimilated, judged, and reflected upon—creates a personal attitude towards events and so generates new ideas and new conclusions, which in turn add to the general patrimony of human culture. No wonder then that culture is associated with the act of tilling the land—agriculture—because the task of farming involves working what is already there: the land. Man has to understand this physical reality that he has to cultivate, find out what will thrive best in that parcel of space, plant the appropriate seed at the opportune time, and wait until it could be worked on further. Necessary interventions are put in place until the produce is ready for harvest and for serving his needs. The cultivation of the soil is akin to the cultivation of the mind. Cicero talks of philosophy as the cultivation of the mind: “this it is which plucks up vices by the roots; prepares the mind for the receiving of seeds; commits them to it, or, as I may say, sows them, in the hope that, when come to maturity, they may produce a plentiful harvest.”⁹ In contrast, Orientals do not limit culture to the cultivation of the intellect but include the correct action and good relationship with others starting from family members, hence the holistic development of the person.¹⁰

Culture does not happen by chance; it is something intended, hence the importance of education in its development and transmission, with the family playing a key role.¹¹ Culture is also a

⁹ Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, accessed February 3, 2014, see <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14988/14988-h/14988-h.htm>.

¹⁰ Confucius, *Analects Section 1 Part 1*, accessed November 12, 2013, <http://classics.mit.edu/Confucius/analects.html>. Henceforth *Analects*.

¹¹ T.S. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture in Christianity and Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949), pp. 115-16.b. See also Alberto Bisin and Giorgio Topa, *Empirical Models of Cultural Transmission*, accessed February 4, 2014, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.153.2700>.

result of the person cultivating his faculties, talents, possibilities etc. in a way that is imprinted in external symbols (arts and languages) and in moral attitudes and social institutions. Human culture is the different manifestations of thinking and living that can be reflected in symbols, moral attitudes, and social institutions. It is constituted subjectively through human activities that express and in some way reveal humanity, and objectively through work and its accompanying transformation of the world to the extent that such conforms to human nature and the objective order of nature. The development of culture then is "intimately linked to the understanding of the human being as a self—a person: a self-determining subject...Culture develops principally within this dimension, the dimension of self-determining subjects. Culture is basically oriented not so much towards the creation of human *products* as towards the creation of the human *self*, which then radiates out into the world of products."¹² The importance of philosophical anthropology in the creation and development of culture comes to the fore because this discipline determines *who* and *what* man is. So, what is man?

II

"Operari sequitur esse." Operation follows being, so goes the medieval adage. An extended application of this could be that the product is determined by the one who created such. Man's regard for himself is born of the consciousness of his being that resulted from his interaction with the physical world, which includes the social relations he has forged. In fact, self-image is largely influenced by how one is regarded by others and by the becoming of those things that one has willed to be.

What is man? Contemporary man's condition is unfortunately that of "fragmentation." Man is now ordinarily identified with only an aspect of his being. Some identify him with his actions, others with his appetites, a few with his will, a modicum with his intellect, and a good number with his body.

Awed by the achievements of physical science that concentrated on the material dimension, man has forgotten his spirituality. Bereft

¹² Karol Wojtyła, "The Person: Subject and Community," *Person and Community Selected Essays* Theresa Sandok, OSM trans. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993) p. 265.

of his spiritual moorings, he strives to build an earthly paradise isolated from the transcendental, including the supernatural. Political systems built on any of these fragmented ideologies enact laws that promote such a reduced understanding of his person. Thus, the culture that led to man's apparent inability to discover the full truth about himself prevails.

This development is due to modern philosophy's change of focus from knowing *what* to knowing *how*, from being cosmocentric and theocentric to being anthropocentric. On the one hand, this shift paradoxically led to the proliferation of anthropological studies enhancing modern's man self-understanding at the expense of certainty of knowledge. On the other hand, it also led to "immanentism," an attitude that makes man shut off from external influences. The methodology that ushered in modern philosophy reveals how it is beholden to the achievements of physical science, and it thus shuns the possibility of knowing those realities that cannot be doubted, resulting in its divorce from sense data, religion, and traditions. Following a mathematical model, it asserts that the only thing man could be certain of is his thinking, and by thinking, he exists, as in the famous *cogito ergo sum*. The existence of all other beings is dependent on the human mind's clear perception of them. As a consequence of such philosophy, God and the world became postulates of reason, which were later on also subjected to doubt. Detached from the rest of reality, man was left to his own devices.¹³

As stated in the foregoing, awareness of his existential condition prompts man to create products to answer his needs. Man's self-transcendence propels him to improve his lot. Man is not usually satisfied with *status quo*; he wants something more of life: better living conditions and faster ways of doing things, while longing for stability and security. These desires reflect the complexity of man. It also gives us an insight into *what he is*. The quality of response and satisfaction of desires and needs is affected by his self-esteem, which in turn is developed through interaction with the immediate physical and spiritual environment. He whose self-identity is as that of a composite being with corporeal and spiritual components, and whose actions are

¹³ Corazon. T. Toralba, "The Response of Fides et Ratio to the Educational Task," *Thomism and Asian Cultures Celebrating 400 Years of Dialogue Across Civilization* Alfredo Co and Paolo Bolaños eds. (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2012), pp. 306-307.

answerable to a Being higher than himself would be more likely to create products that exalt the noble aspects in him. Consequently, they would enrich not only the person but also the community's cultural patrimony. On the other hand, a person who regards himself as simply material and whose existence ends with his death makes products that satisfy ephemeral desires, hence the speed by which products are replaced without leaving a trace.

Self-knowledge comes by reflecting on one's own actions, while knowledge of the physical world comes from immediate contact and experimentation. Man tests the possibilities and limits of the material world, so much so that he learns how to live harmoniously with nature, that is, he discovers the laws that govern the use and misuse of a particular object, orients his life accordingly, and then projects its possible uses. In the knowing process, man simultaneously improves his world and is improved, refines the tools at his disposal, and becomes refined in his ways.

How does man improve his world? Man makes the physical world serve his needs through work, that "human effort which creates goods, that is to say, the effort which puts itself at the service of a piece of work, a creation of labor, itself destined for humanity, an effort personal in its origin, but fraternal in its ends."¹⁴ Work could also be defined as the "totality of human activities necessary as means and technically recognized as such, by which men transform the world to suit their needs, render service to society, and perfect themselves as persons."¹⁵ The production of useful and pleasant goods propels the person to work. Man works not only to satisfy his physical needs but also his desire for perpetuity. Work enables man to establish a family—whose maintenance he will support—and build a society of mutual help.¹⁶ Through his children, he leaves a legacy that may be immortalized through certain ways of doing things, hence the existence of family traditions that are preserved through family rituals.

¹⁴ Etienne Borne and Francois Henry, *A Philosophy of Work* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1938), p. 96

¹⁵ Tomas Melendo, *La Dignidad del Trabajo* (Madrid: Rialp, 1992), p. 104.

¹⁶ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 10 accessed February 4, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jpii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens_en.html.

Work reveals another aspect of man's nature: his sociability and cultural being. He works not only for himself but also for others. Because no one has all the tools needed for a fulfilled survival, one needs others to live contentedly. Other human beings, at times, could be the end of his actions, the company that will keep him safe, and the mirror through which one can truly see oneself. The last situation is true of friends who are alike in virtue.¹⁷

Acceptance by persons outside the family circle is an essential human trait. It is one of the elements that complete the happy man.¹⁸ However, the fulfillment proper for man is that which corresponds to the activity of the highest faculty of man, which is contemplation,¹⁹ thus the need for leisure to "cultivate" the mind. Leisure here is understood not as being unengaged but as having time at one's disposal to contemplate, to know one's immediate world, and ultimately to know the self. Leisure is a disinterested inner communion with truth, beauty, and goodness.²⁰

III

Why are there cultures of different places and different periods of history?

The key could be in that indisputable fact that while all human beings are essentially the same, they are existentially different. "By nature, men are alike. Through practice, they have become far apart."²¹ Essence here is understood as that which makes all human beings human, that is, their constitutive difference from all other beings, which makes any human being a proper member of that species called *homo sapiens*, hence an abstracted concept. Existence refers to a concrete mode of being, that is, to be in a particular time and space interacting with other beings. It refers to who the person is and has become through his actions. Human acts define the person to be *this* rather than *that*.

¹⁷ Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics" 1161b 27-30 *The Complete Works of Aristotle Vol. II* J. Barnes, ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984). Succeeding quotations are based on this collection.

¹⁸ Aristotle, Rhetoric 1360b 10-1362b 25.

¹⁹ Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics" 1177a 11-17.

²⁰ Josef Pieper, *Leisure the Basis of Culture* (London: The Fontana Library, 1965).

²¹ *Analects* Section 4 Part 17.

Essentially, all human beings are a composite of the body and a life-giving form called soul.²² It is man's corporeity that is responsible for his situatedness in a particular period of history and a definite location where he unfolds his life. The events that impacted his life and on which his life leaves an impact is the subject of one's personal biography. However, that personal biography is not made up solely of physical existence but also of man's becoming, his transformation from a helpless infant to a mature individual who leaves an imprint of his being on his world. Man's interaction with the physical and social world transforms him as he transforms that world. That mutual interaction between the person and the environment creates a way of life that is a particular response to the present stimulus, whether it is a challenge to be surmounted or a need to be met. The physical environment is experienced by everyone who inhabits a particular time and space and is challenged by the same limitations. Meeting the same circumstance or answering a need is specific to that circumstance and becomes a distinctive culture created for that particular person or group of persons.

This communal consciousness becomes the nurturing culture of any member of that society. That particular culture shapes his personality and his outlook in life, which in turn influences his worldview and his interaction with that nurturing culture.²³ Culture is not static; it is dynamic. Its dynamism lies in the persons who created and lived by that particular culture. Culture could change for the better or for the worse. The change could be conscious or unconscious on the part of the community members. Conscious changes are brought about by a purposive and deliberate intent, with one influencing the others for the need to change. The direction that such changes are heading in is determined by what the leader thinks is worth pursuing, which in turn depends on his self-esteem, as stated above. Development of culture takes time and effort, as much as it does to either preserve or change it. For the preservation of culture, an appreciation of its worth is necessary, hence the effort to transmit in word and deed that which can be emulated. This idea is encapsulated in Geertz's definition of culture, which states: "Culture is a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of

²² Aristotle, "De Anima," 402a5-10.

²³ Eliot, *Ibid.*, p. 93.

inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."²⁴

While the education community has its fair share of nurturing and developing culture, it is still the family that greatly influences the intellectual and moral development of people.²⁵ Intellectual development is not limited to the inquisitive and critical function of the intellect but rather involves the pursuit and acceptance of truth about oneself and the world that one inhabits. Truth is perceived not only through rationalization but also through its intuitive grasp in action.²⁶ While the mind could independently pursue the truth, nevertheless it is not functioning like a *tabula rasa*. The grounds for the method of discovery and its consequent acceptance have been laid in the family setting with the trust and confidence that is fostered in and by the parents. This relational aspect of learning makes a person secure in the acquisition and acceptance of culture.²⁷ This aspect factors in as another distinguishing feature for cultural developments. Likewise, its transmission, which constitutes tradition, starts with the family.²⁸ It is no wonder that when the ruling class wishes that their constituents think and act in a revolutionary way, the future generations—the youth—are schooled in the ideology that fosters the state's interest.²⁹

As discussed previously, development of culture is the development of the intellect of the persons that inhabit that particular

²⁴ Clifford Geertz, *Religion as a Cultural System*, accessed October 30, 2013, <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic152604>.

²⁵ Iffat Naomee, *Role of Families on Early Childhood Development and Education: Dhaka City Perspective*, *The International Journal of Social Sciences* Vol.11 No.1, accessed February 5, 2014, <https://www.academia.edu/3624185>.

²⁶ Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985).

²⁷ Charles Dhanaraj, Marjorie A Lyles, H Kevin Steensma and Laszlo Tihanyi, Managing tacit and explicit knowledge transfer in IJVs: The role of relational embeddedness and the impact on performance *Journal of International Business Studies* (2004) 35, 428-442, doi:10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400098, accessed February 6, 2014, <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/jibs/journal/v35/n5/abs/8400098a.html>.

²⁸ Steven Wolin and Linda Benette, "Family Rituals," *Fam Proc* 23:401-420, 1984, accessed February 5, 2014, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1545-5300.1984.00401>.

²⁹ John Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed*, accessed October 30, 2013, <http://dewey.pragmatism.org/creed.htm>.

world. The highest form of achievement a man is capable of is to be a sage, and the highest achievement of the sage is the identification of the individual with the universe. The universe is understood as the world of human relations and the physical world.³⁰ Thus, it becomes a major challenge to cultivate and provide the optimum conditions for that formation to take place. It is worth considering that the highest expressions of culture, shown in the works of arts and the literature of the period, correspond to those periods in history when there is relative peace and prosperity brought about by leaders who have a clear vision of who they should be as a people. The highest points in Chinese history—Han, Tang and Soong dynasties—were examples of this ideal. Moreover, those periods were characterized by the presence of persons whose deeds were commended not solely for their brawn but also for their brains. While these dynasties were established by force, their relative stability and prosperity were brought about by competent persons on the job, because they were installed through civil service examinations.³¹ On the contrary, those so-called low periods are marked by persons who have questionable character and pursue selfish goals. Clearly, the development of cultures is dependent on the self-knowledge of those who live and breathe that particular culture.

Another angle worth considering is the intellectual and moral formation of the leading promoters of culture and how their visions were forged. While most of the influential rulers in the distinctive periods of Chinese history were warlords. They nevertheless ruled with foresight and moral uprightness to pursue their goal. Duke Huan and Guan Zhong of the Spring and Autumn Periods attest to this claim.³² The same period was most noted for advances in philosophy, poetry, and the arts, and saw the rise of Confucian, Taoist, and Mohist thought.³³ Confucius's "primary concern was a good government and harmonious human relations. To this end, he advocated a government

³⁰ Yu-Lan Fung, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: McMillan Press, 1948), p. 6.

³¹ *Ancient Encyclopedia History*, accessed October 29, 2013, <http://www.ancient.eu.com>.

³² *Spring and Autumn China (771-453)*, accessed October 29, 2013, http://www.indiana.edu/~g380/1.7-Spring_Autumn_Narrative-2010.pdf.

³³ *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, accessed October 29, 2013, <http://www.ancient.eu.com/>.

that ruled by virtue and moral example, rather than punishment or force. His criterion for goodness was uprightness, as opposed to profit. For the family, he particularly stressed filial piety, and for the society in general, proper conduct."³⁴

Ideologies and behaviors that the person observed and assimilated could promote an encouraging or deviant behavior. A case in point is the study conducted among the Chinese youths who are influenced by liberal ideologies and are deemed to be losing their Chinese identity.³⁵ On the other hand, it is remarkable that Chinese government has mandated a duty that was once a distinctive feature of Confucian societies—respect and care for the elders. Concretely, the central government mandated that children visit their parents. This was prompted by the disturbing news that:

The decomposing bodies of an elderly couple were found in their rented home in Louyang, Henan province, on September 18, a day before the Mid-Autumn festival. Despite being the parents of three grown-up sons, the elderly couple died more or less unattended. The tragedy once again highlights the “empty nest” problems facing the rising population of aging people in China.³⁶

The quoted news article shows a changing regard for cultures and tradition that hold the moral fiber of a family. Whereas the family is the privileged place for the transmission and preservation of culture, weakening family ties would account for the degradation of worthwhile culture. The family is one of the greatest influences in a person’s life. History is replete with examples of how kingdoms rise and fall with a member of the family having a positive or negative influence in the running of the government. Take the consolidation of the dynasties quoted in the above as examples.³⁷

³⁴ Wing Tsit Tsan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 15.

³⁵ See Jui-shan Chang, “*Sexual Revolutions in Chinese Societies: Are Young People Becoming Less Chinese,*” accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.tasa.org.au/conferences/conferencepapers05/.../ethnicity_chang.pdf.

³⁶ “Elderly need better care,” *ChinaDaily.com.opinion*, 26 September, 2013, p. 9. Print.

³⁷ Ancient Encyclopedia History, <http://www.ancient.eu.com>, 29 October 2013.

In the same way that ideological underpinnings have an effect on culture's formation, so too does religion because the underpinning of culture is spiritual in nature.³⁸ The physical aspects are external manifestations of man's touching base with his inner world, an expression of himself.³⁹ However, while in the West, religion's emphasis is visible in its liturgical function and rites, the Chinese are more concerned with the practice of the virtues. This does not mean that Christianity does not regard noble deeds; Christians insist on following the examples of Christ who is the paragon of how virtues are lived harmoniously. The external homage due to God, expressed in the Western culture through rites, is observed in China by the way the Chinese honor their ancestors.⁴⁰

IV

Culture is a reflection of a person and his community's spiritual heritage developed through intellectual and moral formation that has external manifestations. The artifacts mirror man's regard for himself and his harmonious relationship with his immediate milieu, which he tries to understand so that it could serve his needs for survival and improve his lot. In the process of answering his needs, he transforms his physical environment, while he is also transformed by the interaction, such that a reciprocal relationship exists between them. Observable differences could be traced to man's existential dimension that makes him inhabit a particular time and space, which influences his interacting with the physical environment.

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³⁸ Clifford Geertz, *Ibid.*

³⁹ Wojtyla, *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Confucius, *Ibid.*, Section 1 Part 3.

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Part II
Spiritual Horizon in Western Culture

**The Spiritual Horizon of Philosophy in a
Global Age:
On the Intellectual Friendship between
Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas**

ANTHONY J. CARROLL

Introduction

The importance of the apophatic spiritual tradition for western philosophy has until recently been very much neglected.¹ The current interest of the French phenomenological tradition of western philosophy has again brought back into the philosophical agenda the place of the mystical in reflection on the nature and extent of rationality. Thinkers such as Jacques Derrida (JD), Michel Henry, Jean-François Courtine, and Jean-Luc Marion have engaged with this tradition of spiritual experience and reflection in order to uncover hidden and perhaps overlooked aspects of western thought. This recent French philosophical tradition is well known today for its interest of the so-called “negative theology” tradition. Of no less significance, to my mind, is the interest of the German critical theory tradition for negative theology. Whilst thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas (JH) have been well-known for contributing to social and political reflection, the importance of the spiritual dimensions within their thought has been more cautiously received.² Yet, what I believe both of these traditions of philosophical reflection demonstrate is that there is an underlying spirituality to philosophical reflection today.

¹ See, for example, Gregorii Nysseni, *De Vita Moysis*, edited by Herbertus Musirillo, Leiden, Brill, 1964. The version introduced and translated by Jean Daniélou in Sources Chrétienne No 1 bis has a very helpful introduction and range of footnotes, see Grégoire de Nysse, *La Vie de Moïse ou Traité de la Perfection en Matière de Vertu*, introduction, critical text, and translation by Jean Daniélou SJ, fourth edition (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1987).

² A good anthology of the importance of spirituality for the Frankfurt School can be found in Eduardo Mendieta (ed.), *The Frankfurt School on Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

In considering the topic of spiritual foundations and Chinese culture it seems to me that this apophatic spiritual tradition in the West may have a good deal of relevance to considering the place of the spiritual within Chinese culture. Often associated with the very rational mind of some western theological speculation, western spirituality can seem to be entirely distinct from Chinese traditions. However, highlighting the importance of the apophatic tradition for western philosophy can help to bridge the perceived divide between Chinese and western cultures. Other articles in this volume speak of this possible bridge between western and Chinese traditions of thought and experience in the apophatic tradition and, in this article, I would like to say something that is perhaps both more modest and at the same time more radical.³

In this article, I want to say something about what is a significant influence on some contemporary philosophy that I believe will have echoes in the Chinese philosophical context. Specifically, I will reflect on the intellectual friendship between two of the most significant Western philosophers of recent times, JD and JH. As both of these philosophers have been well received by philosophers in China, it is perhaps a misnomer to designate them as “Western philosophers”. As the excellent article by Vincent Shen in this volume argues, philosophical and theological reflection should have an intercultural dimension, which transcends merely the comparative philosophical project of outlining distinctions. Rather, using an intercultural methodological approach, one should seek to discover the universalizable dimensions of each tradition, which can lead to the mutual enrichment of all traditions. I contend that in the intellectual friendship of JH and JD something of universal significance is discoverable which, as a consequence, should not be classed as simply a Western philosophical approach but rather has universal implications beyond any one particular culture, philosophical perspective, or religious tradition.

My focus here will be on the importance of explicating the often hidden currents of spirituality which lie beneath the surface of contemporary philosophy. Typically, philosophers, especially so-called “secular philosophers,” will consider it a given that the

³ See, for example, the discussion of the similarities between Nicholas of Cusa and the thought of Seng-chao and Nāgārjuna on the doctrine of ignorance in the article by Ding Jianhua in this volume.

relationship between philosophy and theology, and certainly between philosophy and spirituality, have little to do with academic philosophy in the modern “secular age”. They hold that whilst there may have been a relation between philosophy and theology in classical and medieval times, since the inauguration of modern philosophy, this is no longer the case. I consider this assumption to be incorrect at several levels.

Firstly, it is historically inaccurate, as recent historical research in philosophy has shown.⁴ Lack of historical knowledge is the chief reason for this inaccuracy. It is not the only one, however. There is also a common normative assumption in significant areas of philosophy today that to do *good* philosophy is to do it *tabula rasa*: to do it without religious or spiritual assumptions, presuppositions, and prejudices. The identity of secular philosophy is grounded upon this set of givens, and so it is no wonder that resistance to revising them is slow to come in the academy. But it is on the way. John Cottingham’s recent work is one example,⁵ and one will find similar developments in the philosophical traditions of not only most Western schools but also in the various philosophical traditions of Asia.⁶ The reasons for this emerging change are many, and here I can only state some of what seem to be generally the most important ones.

The first reason is without doubt the crisis in the self-understanding of modernity as developing necessarily according to Western cultural and social dynamics. The former view, in much theoretical reflection, was that there is only one single model of modernisation, which *de facto* has originated in the Occident. Furthermore, as modernity is understood to be singular, it is therefore also universal in its application to any other society which wants to modernise. As a result of this conception, Western modernity was

⁴ See, for example, Stephen A. McKnight, *The Religious Foundations of Francis Bacon’s Thought* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2006); Jorge Secada, *Cartesian Metaphysics. The Late Scholastic Origins of Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Kim I. Parker, *The Biblical Politics of John Locke* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2004); Maria Rosa Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation. Reason and Revelation in the Seventeenth Century*, translated by Gerald Parks (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

⁵ See, for example, John Cottingham, *The Spiritual Dimension. Religion, Philosophy, and Human Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁶ See the articles in this volume for examples of this.

seen as the model to be exported anywhere which chose to develop from being an undeveloped to a modern society. Woven into the fabric of this worldview is the constitutive self-understanding of the Western conception of modernity that views its own social and cultural dynamics and frameworks as necessarily structured along secular lines.

This former view of modernity and the processes of modernisation have relatively recently undergone significant revisions, as modernisation has been found to have occurred in all major world civilisations, and often much earlier, and in a much more advanced state than in the West; as the case of China illustrates, for example.⁷ Moreover, as the *actual* rather than the *presumed* structures and dynamics of patterns of modernisation and modernity have been studied in different parts of the world, it is now clear that there are both shared and overlapping features of these developments, and also distinctive features of modernisation in each civilisation. The question of singularity and multiplicity does not result in a simple either/or answer, but rather includes features of both in the analysis of historical and actual world civilizational investigations.

To further complicate matters the assumption of hermetically sealed civilizational developments has also been revealed to be problematic, as very early interpenetration and fusions within the major world civilisations have been found to have occurred. Research on the silk roads, for example, has found both material and intellectual levels of contact and, indeed, mixing to have occurred between the Greek, Chinese, Indian, and Near Eastern Civilisations in the first millennium BCE.⁸

Finally, the view that secularity is the necessary logic of modernisation has also been questioned as part and parcel of the current revisions of the classical secularisation thesis. Recent work done on the Axial Age has revealed a much more textured and nuanced understanding of the pathways of religious development

⁷ For a systematic study of the intellectual connections between major world civilisations, see Randall Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies. A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁸ See, for example, the work done by the International Dunhuang Project. Available at <http://idp.bl.uk/>. I am also particularly grateful to Professor Vincent Shen for helping me to see this point with greater clarity than I was able to prior to visiting China and Taiwan.

than the earlier nineteenth-century inspired classical secularisation theories of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber.⁹ Whilst these foundational theories continue to be of great use and inspiration, they are not adequate as stand-alone accounts, given the current state of knowledge that we now have of world civilizational developments.

The second reason for the change from a classical secularist Western understanding of philosophy to the emerging intercultural account, which sees religious dynamics as still intimately connected with socio-cultural developments, is the current geo-political significance of religion. One needs only to read the newspaper or turn on the television in any part of the world to see the influence of religion on geo-political events. Whether it be in matters of security and the threat of terrorism, or in the dynamics of social change and even revolution, as in the case of Russia and the Ukraine, for example, or in the new and increased visibility of religions in the modern world through the advent of the many types of social media, there can be little doubt that the classical secularist understanding is inadequate to provide a convincing account of the place and dynamics of religions in the modern world.¹⁰

Also, within the many affluent cultures around the globe, there is the rise of the so-called 'post-materialist' societies which are in search of new spiritualities to fit our times. The prosperity of many, and one should emphasise here, by no means all, have resulted in, at least in the socio-economic middle classes and upwards a desire for a more meaningful and holistic life and lifestyle. As a result of this desire, the pursuit of pathways of realisation, which formerly were the monopoly of religious institutions and understood as roots of salvation, now have been opened to competition and ultimately compete, so to speak, in the market place of contemporary spiritualities. This has resulted in a plethora of combinations of spiritual visions. For example, in any part of the world today a not inconceivable menu of

⁹ See, for example, Robert Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution. From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 2011); Robert Bellah and Hans Joas (eds.), *The Axial Age and Its Consequences* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 2012); S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1986).

¹⁰ On this point, see José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

options might include attending an institution of collective worship on the respective Holy Day of the week, taking part in Yoga or Tai Chi group exercises, and practicing Vipassina meditation alone or with a friend at home. Moreover, the current transformation has resulted in new combinations of individual and institutional allegiances which have been mapped in a number of studies in the sociology of religion. The “believing without belonging” of Grace Davie,¹¹ the “spiritual not religious” of Linda Woodhead,¹² and the “pilgrim and Convert” typology of Danièle Hervieu-Léger¹³ are just some examples which have provided a helpful vocabulary in which to express these transformations.

In other words, whilst, for some, spirituality is seen to be an enclave of theology, I argue that, on the contrary, in order to understand better what is going on in contemporary philosophy, one needs to uncover the spiritual ‘tectonic plates’ which lie underneath its surface. That contemporary Western philosophy has created a narrative of its own secularity is interesting and indeed highly instructive in this respect, and it indicates the very roots of the spirituality from which it draws its inspiration, namely, Protestantism.¹⁴

¹¹ Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945. Believing Without Belong* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1994).

¹² Linda Woodhead and Paul Weelas, *The Spiritual Revolution. Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004).

¹³ Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Le Pèlerin et le converti. La religion en mouvement* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999).

¹⁴ Whilst Judaism has undoubtedly had a significant influence on contemporary western philosophy (Buber, Levinas, and Derrida, for example), in terms of the formative influences on modern Western philosophy, Protestantism has been the dominant tradition. This is due to a combination of factors such as the institutionalisation of Protestant universities in Germany, the anti-modernist and anti-democratic spirit of the Catholic Church until the Second Vatican Council, and the anti-Semitic history of Europe which persecuted its Jewish communities and prevented Judaism from institutionalising in the educational sphere so that it could have the deep cultural influence that Protestantism has had. On this point, Anthony J. Carroll, *Protestant Modernity. Weber, Secularisation, and Protestantism* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2007), pp. 229-254; and Anthony J. Carroll, “The Importance of Protestantism in Max Weber’s Theory of Secularisation,” *European Journal of Sociology*, 50 (1, April 2009), 61-95.

The Protestant Roots of Modern Western Philosophy

Modern Western philosophy, with some notable exceptions, such as Novalis, Heidegger, and the Catholic Modernists¹⁵ has been fundamentally shaped by its relation to Protestantism. Let me explain this general statement by drawing on the work of Max Weber, the great German nineteenth century philosopher and social scientist. Weber, like so many of his nineteenth century companions, was a highly complex individual with both a distaste for, and even rejection of, conventional bourgeois religion, and at the same time a sense of being trapped within this worldview. In seeking to articulate a discourse of modernity, Weber drew upon the best cultural resources available to him at the time and that meant Protestant ones. These included the Protestant philosophy of Kant and the Neo-Kantians, the Protestant exegesis and theological scholarship of the great German Universities such as Heidelberg and Berlin, and the *Kulturprotestantismus*, the cultural Protestantism which Bismarck had employed to provide a social cement to the newly formed German nation of 1870/71. When secular Germans thought, they thought within a Protestant worldview even, and perhaps especially, when they rejected Christianity as many did, including, Nietzsche. The origins and progress of the modern world for these great thinkers was in the Protestant Reformation and its eventual liberation from the 'mythology' of religion into the sure ground of scientific certainty. But the legacy of Protestant individualism and scientific rationalism, the focus on the word rather than on the image, the championing of the anti-hierarchical spirit of democracy, and on what Charles Taylor calls, the "affirmation of the ordinary,"¹⁶ structured the framework

¹⁵ For theological and philosophical developments in the Catholic tradition, see Thomas F. O'Meara O.P., *Romantic Idealism and Roman Catholicism. Schelling and the Theologians* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982); Thomas F. O'Meara O. P., *Church and Culture, German Catholic Theology, 1860-1914* (Notre Dame and London: Notre Dame University Press, 1991); and Anthony J. Carroll, "The Philosophical Foundations of Catholic Modernism," in Oliver P. Rafferty (ed.), *George Tyrrell and Catholic Modernism* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), pp. 38-55; and Anthony J. Carroll, "The Importance of Protestantism in Max Weber's Theory of Secularisation," *European Journal of Sociology*, 50, 1, 2009, pp. 80-95.

¹⁶ See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 211-302.

within which the architecture of modern *scientific* philosophy and social science were thought.¹⁷

Uncovering this implicit metanarrative underneath the so-called “secular modern discourses” has, until now, penetrated the self-understanding of many contemporary philosophers only marginally. But with the “turn to religion,” in so much contemporary philosophy now it is an opportune moment to turn the gaze of philosophy from simply considering religion as an external object of analysis to focusing rather on the spiritual foundations, or as I prefer to call it, the spiritual horizon of contemporary philosophy itself. Whilst clearly the influence of Protestantism on the worldview of modern philosophy has been chiefly a Western phenomenon, nevertheless, through the globalisation of modern theory, this Protestant influence has been exported to other cultures around the world without, as is also the case in the West until recently, the implicit confessional metanarrative underlying this framework being made explicit.

After these formal and procedural remarks, let me turn now to more substantive matters. Here, I will analyse the intellectual relationship between JD and JH as an illustration of what I consider to be the pervasive and powerful force of the presence of the spiritual dimension in contemporary philosophy.

The Uneasy Friendship between Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas

I came across the work of Habermas as an undergraduate student in the 1980s by reading the books on the shelf of a postgraduate student who was doing his doctorate in that area. Looking for a systematic philosophy myself, at the time, I used the books on the shelf of my post-graduate roommate to indicate the steps at an undergraduate level that I would need to take to one day understand Habermas at a later stage and in greater depth. On discovering that for Habermas, philosophy needed to be done in tandem with the social sciences, I too moved in the same direction. Later, in post-graduate studies, I entered what today would be called the “team Habermas camp”.

¹⁷ Limitations of space prevent me from developing this point but I have already done this at length in my *Protestant Modernity. Weber, Secularisation, and Protestantism* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2007).

Habermas stood for enlightenment reason and rationality, German rigour, the “Vorsprung durch Technik” philosophy that has made the car manufacturer Audi such a lot of money! In the other camp were the French and their allies. In this camp were various types of postmodernists who poked fun at the universality of reason and who saw the Enlightenment project as the continuation of the ideology behind the death camps of Auschwitz. The atmosphere was rather polemical, to say the least.

And such an ambience was fuelled by the early literary, but not personal, encounters between Habermas and Derrida, which were combative. In 1985 Habermas published his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, in which he constructed a philosophically sophisticated binary narrative of the discourse of modernity, which opposed the categories of the rational and the irrational, of communication and domination, and of the normative and the instrumental, in the developmental logic and historical dynamics of modernity. The resulting irrationality, structures of domination, and the inappropriate extension of the instrumental rationality was, in his account, the consequence of reducing reason to the subject-centred philosophy inaugurated in the modern era by thinkers such as Descartes. Habermas viewed this form of reason as the cause of reducing some groups of people to the status of objects in the developmental, institutional dynamics of modernity. Power relations of domination, subjection, and objectification inevitably followed and manifested themselves in what he personally lived through in the Nazi atrocities of World War II. According to Habermas, part of the failure to think beyond this barbarous account of reason lay in the very tradition within which Habermas himself was situated, namely the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. Horkheimer and Adorno, two of the founders of the School, had themselves, according to his narrative, fallen prey to this subject-centred or instrumental reason. They had abandoned the Kantian tradition of the Enlightenment’s goal of liberation through reason in favour of the flight into the mystical Other of Adorno’s negative dialectics. This left the only moment of critique and secular salvation to be found in the aesthetic dimension of mimetic thinking.¹⁸

¹⁸ For two excellent introductions to the thought of Adorno, see Gillian Rose, *The Melancholy Science. An Introduction to the Thought of Adorno* (New York: Columbia

Habermas, by temperament situated within the Protestant tradition, is a defender of the Law, and hence of reason in a Kantian sense, and in a typically Protestant Barthian-sense, is both quite anti-religion, as itself a form of idolatry, and against the Catholic correlationality tradition of analogical theology which is grounded in the correspondence between faith and reason and ultimately in the *analogia entis* of Thomist metaphysics.¹⁹

This rejection of the capacity of reason to liberate, so emblematically expressed in the clarion call of the Kantian Enlightenment motif of *Sapere Aude!*, is for Habermas the source of the problem. Rather than abandon reason in a fanciful flight to the “other of reason,” he argues that the unfinished project of Enlightenment rationality needs to be re-kindled and embodied in the democratic institutions of modern society.²⁰

Derrida also shares in this Kantian understanding of the liberation of humanity through philosophical reason. He draws his inspiration from Kant’s phenomenology as read through Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger. But contrary to Habermas, Derrida, views the suppression of the Other of reason, of the attempt to deny the instability of our grasp of phenomenal reality and meaning, which he holds to be part of the “logocentrism of Western metaphysics,” to be the real philosophical problem of modernity.²¹ Also, a supporter of the Kantian moral law, his account of universality is of the universality of

University Press); Simon Jarvis, *Adorno. A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998).

¹⁹ See Rodney A. Howsare, *Hans Urs Von Balthasar and Protestantism. The Ecumenical Implications of His Theological Style* (London: T. and T. Clark, 2005), pp. 77-99.

²⁰ See his *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Oxford: Polity Press), 2 Volumes, 1984 and 1987; and *Between Facts and Norms. Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1997).

²¹ Derrida is of the opinion that written language has been subordinate to the spoken language, and that written language has been viewed (wrongly for him) as merely the representation of spoken language. Rather than language simply expressing an original pre-linguistic meaning (as in the representationalist epistemology of the seventeenth century, such as in John Locke, for example), Derrida believes that all meaning is linguistically constituted and open to multiple interpretations as it is received by different dialogue partners. This has resulted in a logocentric conception of western metaphysics from Plato onwards. His own method of deconstruction is meant to free Western thought from this illusion of absolute, objective, given, rather than linguistically constituted, meaning.

the instability of meaning, of the pathological tendency to foreclose the law in a realised eschatology of an ideological account of Enlightenment reason. True to his secular-Jewish roots, and shaped by his difficult upbringing as an excluded Jew in Algeria, eager to outdo colonial France in its Vichy-inspired anti-Semitism,²² Derrida was suspicious of any attempt to suppress the voice of the other by imposing an ideological interpretation on the plurality of meanings and to see the law as something which closes down and excludes. On the contrary, he viewed the law as a regulative principle of the need to infinitely expand the circle of inclusion and so to defer any temporal temptation to conclude that it has been fully realised. In Derrida, it is the Kantian conditions which still predominate, but unlike the traditional reading of Kant it is no longer the phenomenal conditions of possibility but rather the conditions of impossibility which become the focus of his philosophy. Whether in reflecting on hospitality or the gift, or knowledge of God, or forgiveness, it is the phenomenological fact that we cannot fully do any of this which interests Derrida.

So, for example, for Derrida, we cannot be fully hospitable to each other. For, as soon as you say to your guest, "make yourself at home," you are entering a 'performative contradiction'. Saying, "make yourself at home," makes evident the fact that you are not at home, that you are the guest, that you are a stranger in the home of another. Yet, we are constantly caught up in these double binds in life, and crucially at those moments in life which we value most: friendship, hospitality, and love. All these experiences are for Derrida examples of the paradoxical situation within which we find ourselves. It is never possible to truly welcome a guest, because to do so would be to deny the guest as guest. The guest would have to become the host and the host the guest, and so a guest can never be welcomed in this logic. Charity is the "impossible possibility," which always finds us lacking, and by which we are nevertheless called, by being itself, to react to the best of our abilities. Phenomena themselves, in a Heideggerian sense, reveal the nature of being in this respect. We never get behind them to the origin, to the Kantian *noumena* of things in themselves (Das Ding an Sich) but are always presented with the partiality of phenomena, that are endlessly interpreted by us as the world. But this, what we

²² See Lasse Thomassen (ed.), *The Derrida-Habermas Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 1-7.

might call, “Derridean reading of the Kantian moral law,” impels us to always open out to the excluded, the suppressed voices, the marginalised, just as he was excluded at the age of 12 from his Lycée in Algeria for being the other, for being a Jew.

As we are caught in this paradox we need to find some way of negotiating our way through life without the former security of the now post-Nietzschean illusions of absolute and objective meaning. In Derrida’s philosophy this task is performed by his account of the “deconstruction of Western metaphysics” and in the often quoted parallels of his thought with the tradition of negative theology.²³ In his 1993 book, *Sauf le Nom* (Except or Without the Name), it is the call of the O/other which invites always to move beyond; to include rather than to exclude which is never embodied in any one tradition, but which always, in a quite Pauline way that has become so popular today, grounds the universal in transcending the limits of any one perspective and tradition.²⁴ All fall short of this law and all are subject to its critique, including any static conception of reason and rationality. Religion for Derrida is thus both a problem and a possibility.²⁵ It is a problem in that it wrongly interprets itself as the singular-universal, it is a possibility in that it rightly opens the way to the deferral of transcendence, which is the trace of *the* universal in history. This is a key point to his later reconciliation with Habermas.

After an initial *frosty* start to their relationship, in polemics and tribal rivalries, during an encounter after a lecture that Derrida gave in the late 1990s at a party at the Northwestern University in Evanston, just North of Chicago where they both held teaching posts, Habermas suggested that they have a “discussion”. This discussion, which later took place in Paris, reminded Derrida of that haunting saying of Nietzsche in *Daybreak*, “How greatly the thinker loves his enemy. — Never to hold something back or conceal from you that which can be

²³ See, for example, John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida. Religion without Religion* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997).

²⁴ Cf., Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul. The Foundation of Universalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

²⁵ For a good insight into Derrida’s understanding of religion, see Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (eds.), *Religion* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998). In Derrida’s own contribution to this volume entitled “Faith and Knowledge: the Two Sources of ‘Religion’ at the Limits of Reason Alone,” one can again see the influence of Kant on his thinking.

thought against your thoughts! Promise yourself! It is essential to the highest level of the honesty of thought. And every day you must also conduct your campaign against yourself." (*Daybreak*, 370).

This *breakthrough* encounter gave rise to an intellectual friendship in which they would send each other pieces that they had written, which mentioned the other, prior to publication, and also jointly signing a number of petitions and manifestos (on Algeria, for example). Both were greatly troubled by the 9/11 disaster and held a distaste for the Bush-government's "War on Terror". They also shared concerns and wrote in newspapers about the difficulties of the European Union and of the need for a common foreign policy in the face of mounting sectarianism and the rise of nationalism in Europe. Both of them also subscribed to a common concern for the development of a post-national politics, and an outward looking European Union, and a stronger United Nations which would play its part in the Kantian cosmopolitan politics that inspired them.²⁶

It was in this shared concern for the other, for the ethico-political, for the grounding of community in ever expanding circles of dialogue, solidarity, and justice which brought Derrida and Habermas into an intellectual friendship that helped to dispel the destructive tribal loyalties of their various supporters in the 1990s. Such an emphasis on the need to always seek to include the other has characterised the spirituality of contemporary philosophy. In philosophical terms this has meant a shift from the former privilege held by theoretical rationality (born in the Greek contemplative tradition of *Theoria*, which lay behind spirituality viewed as a passive union) to the predominant place now held by practical rationality, or *Praxis*, in the philosophical account of reason and rationality.²⁷ Philosophy

²⁶ For Habermas and Derrida on each other, see Lasse Thomassen (ed.), *op cit.*, pp. 300-308.

²⁷ Vincent Shen in his article in this volume notes that "ancient Greek philosophy concerns itself more with theoretical universalizability (*theoria*), whilst Chinese philosophy concerns itself more with practical universalizability (*praxis*)". In recovering the other tradition emerging out of Greek experience and reflection, namely, the apophatic mystical tradition beginning with Gregory of Nyssa this more practically oriented universalizability can be seen to be equally present in the western tradition though often placed in the shadows by the more positive *kataphatic* theology. The emphasis on love rather than on knowledge as a way to God in the apophatic tradition, a tendency often expressed by the use of

originally spurned the *vita activa* as a mere propaedeutic step on the philosophical pathway to enlightenment, in favour of the *vita contemplativa*, the so-called contemplative life, which found its fulfilment in the contemplative vision of the good (as recounted in Plato's *Republic*, for example). However, philosophy, like many forms of spirituality, has shifted the emphasis from the aristocratic *leisure-based* model of *contemplation outside of the world of daily life* to the more democratic *praxis* model of personal and social transformation *within the world of daily life*. The site of the spiritual, in both philosophy and theology, has shifted from the static passivity of being outside of the world of changing history, to the dynamic transformation of the world of daily life from within it: *simul in actione contemplativus* (contemplative likewise in action) as the Jesuit Jeronimo Nadal will coin the phrase in the sixteenth century. Mystical union, as for Gregory of Nyssa, who draws on St. Paul's "stretching out ahead" in Philippians 3: 13, is here viewed as the continual and dynamic emergence beyond oneself to the O/other, as in Gregory's doctrine of the *epektasis* (the continual drawing out of the soul in dynamic union which never ends).²⁸

Habermas, in his way, also has had a long engagement with negative theology.²⁹ His article on the German philosopher-theologian Michael Theunissen reveals an often overlooked formative background in Habermas's thought.³⁰ The horrors of Nazi Germany have seared into Habermas's soul the dangers of giving up on universal reason as a safeguard against the partial power-dynamics of ideologies and mechanisms of exclusion. Law, for Habermas, is the safeguard that such barbarism and terror will never again come to dominate as it did in the Germany of his youth. He also realises that the engagement with and for the other, especially the vulnerable and

various verbs which express 'unknowing', is a chief characteristic displayed in the writings of thinkers in this tradition.

²⁸ See Anthony Meredith SJ, *Gregory of Nyssa* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 22.

²⁹ Habermas speaks, in his own postmetaphysical framework, of the transition of the site of the spiritual in terms of "Transcendence from Within. Transcendence in this World. See, Jürgen Habermas, *Religion and Rationality. Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), pp. 67-94.

³⁰ See "Communicative Freedom and Negative Theology. Questions for Michael Theunissen," in Jürgen Habermas, *Religion and Rationality. Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), pp. 110-128.

the marginalised, is an ethical imperative that has been bequeathed to Europe through the Judeo-Christian tradition.³¹ Like Derrida, the spirituality of Habermas is the philosophical-spirituality of seeking the O/other which never reveals its name, because it is never confined in any one religion or spiritual tradition, but is the ground and horizon of the ethico-political imperative, which is imprinted in our consciences and, in which, the spiritual finds its dynamism: Do good and avoid evil; and which manifests itself in the various religious and indeed secular forms of the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would like to be done by.

Conclusion

This is the shared spirituality of Derrida and Habermas. The former originating in the excluded Jew, growing up in North Africa like so-many *piéd noir* of the French colonial times, and the latter in the pietistic concern for private religious devotion and public morality, suspicious of too affirmative theological statements, and viewing deeds rather than words as the *true religion*. With a Jewish and Protestant suspicion of hierarchy, a Rabbinic and puritan love of debate and intellectual confrontation, a centrality of the “other” in all ethical pronouncements, and a deep distrust of idolatry in all its forms (both religious and secular), Derrida and Habermas represent two philosophical currents, emerging out of the philosophical discourse of modernity, which have translated the theoretical rationality of many modern spiritualities into the practical rationality of the ethical-political spiritual concern for the O/other. At the height of their intellectual carriers, and with enough recognition to foster the elusive goal of intellectual humility both thinkers recognised in the other their rival, their enemy, if you will, actually, their closest intellectual friend who embodied their Nietzschean call to honesty (*Redlichkeit*).

Different in temperament in many ways, Derrida and Habermas found in one another their nemesis. Competition to be the best, to occupy the pole position, possibly played a role in their early relations. However, as the maturity of life set in, both realised in the other a call to honesty, to recognise that alone one is never complete but that only

³¹ See J. Habermas and J. Ratzinger, *Dialektik der Säkularisierung. Über Vernunft und Religion* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2005), p. 31.

by recognising complementary, and even contradictory, voices can one come to reconciliation with oneself. This strangely familiar story of needing to come to reconciliation with one's own other is told in so many cultural forms that it is now so familiar to us. Whether recounted in the *Book of Changes* as the harmony of Yin and Yang, or in the epics of the Brothers Grimm fairy tales, or danced in the rivalry between the black and white swans in Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, or analytically outlined in the scientific discoveries of Freudian and Jungian psychology, and the Rousseau-like depiction of the manipulation of desire in Lacanian psychoanalysis,³² the motif of union with one's shadow-side is an all-too-familiar theme in contemporary culture.

The unconscious, in which our shadow-self manifests itself, reveals another side to ourselves in our dreams, in our fears and nightmares,³³ and in those moments, perhaps during the daylight hours, when it seems as if we are no longer in control of ourselves. In these moments, these manifestations of being overpowered in the "sleep of reason," opportunities for a deeper integration of the self can occur, if we are able to allow it. In ceding the place to the other, the guest and the host change places for that moment and invite the prospect of relinquishing oneself, that is an important stage of spiritual transformation.

Both Derrida and Habermas share in this spiritual desire for integrity and justice in a time in which, after the death of the metaphysical conception of God, the former easy answers to the God question no longer work. Whilst it may not be uncommon for traditional forms of religion and secular movements to perpetuate metaphysical representations of God, the majority of people, not tied to these institutions, no longer find these ways of thinking of God helpful. The resultant "spiritual homelessness" of many has led to the search for new forms of living out the spiritual life, which traditional religious traditions often struggle to cope with and indeed which

³² See Juliet Flower MacCannell, *Figuring Lacan. Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious* (London and New York: Routledge, 1986); and Juliet Flower MacCannell, "Drawing Lines from Kernberg and Haraway to Lacan and Beyond," in *Konturen* 3, 2010.

³³ Goya's 1799 print of *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* represents both the beauty and the terror of this and is often seen as a transitional piece in western art between the Enlightenment and Romanticism.

sometimes seem to undermine their formerly secure power base and monopoly.

In all these various developments, philosophical and practical, the centrality of dialogue, of justice, charity, humility and, above all, anti-idolatry in all its manifestations, has traced out a set of pathways along which spirituality has flowed underneath the philosophical developments of recent times. Characteristically absent, the presence of the spiritual is felt only as a trace in the philosophy of Derrida and Habermas, lest it become an idol servicing the idolatry of a false universal which both have spent their life's work fighting against. Even for a rationalist, such as Habermas, the sleep of reason is manifest in the dark night of death, of suffering, of impotence and of the lack of charity, which should never stop us from doing what is right!³⁴ The spirituality of modern philosophy like the spirituality of the most creative spiritual movements of our times, is uncompromising in its search for integrity, for authenticity, and in its search for the O/other. The history of spirituality shows how the resulting tensions between institution and charisma, between spirituality and traditional religion, are seldom absent in times of enormous change and uncertainty. It also reminds us that despite or perhaps precisely because of these tensions and contradictions new forms of living the spiritual life can be generated out of this uncertainty.

The spirituality underlying the contrasting but overlapping philosophies of JD and JH is perhaps but one form of a new way of living out the spiritual life today. It may talk of God more through negation and absence and seem to contradict more recently-dominant *Kataphatic* traditions of *God-talk*, but in reality it is a recovery of a deep and richly varied tradition of spirituality which has never been content with the simple positivity of presence. Moreover, dissatisfied with the individualistic orientation of many currents of philosophy, theology, and indeed spirituality, the socialisation of subjectivity in inter-relationality with the O/other is the re-emergence of an understanding and expression of community and communion which

³⁴ See J. Habermas, *An Awareness of What is Missing. Faith and Reason in a Post-Secular Age* (Malden: Polity Press, 2010), pp. 15-23. Habermas's successor in Frankfurt, Axel Honneth, also speaks of this in his account of secular forms of consolation in the face of experiences of finitude. See, Axel Honneth, *The I in the We. Studies in the Theory of Recognition* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2014), pp. 232-238.

has been eclipsed in many modern societies. In the story of the Derrida-Habermas relationship, both deep currents of the intellectual pursuit of truth, authenticity, and justice and the spiritual quest for a union that never ends, come together. Not confined to the western philosophical tradition, but rather through globalisation, these two contemporary thinkers have spread a philosophical-spirituality within which both Chinese and western thinkers can better understand themselves. Perhaps in thinkers such as Habermas and Derrida, we see the deeply held and often practiced beliefs and values that underpin our world-civilisations today. Not confined to any particular philosophical, cultural, or religious tradition, these enacted beliefs are perhaps the emergence, or more accurately the re-emergence, however faint, of a spiritual horizon for our new global intercultural age.

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A Catholic Theology of Energies in Terms of Bernard Lonergan's Transcendental Method¹

JOHN CHENG WAI LEUNG

Introduction

Rev. Professor Bernard J. F. Lonergan (1904-1984), a Canadian Jesuit priest, has been well known as one of greatest Catholic thinkers in the 20th century. Countless Christians and non-Christians have benefitted from his systematic thought, in particular his transcendental philosophical-theological method for doing theology.² On the other hand, the author of this paper has written several books on Catholic Theology of Energies or *Qis*.³ However, these theological

¹ Translated by the author himself, this English version is a summary of the longer Chinese paper presented during the conference entitled "Spiritual Foundations and Chinese Culture: A Philosophical Approach" organized by the Fu Jen Institute of Scholastic Philosophy and Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. This Conference was held at Fu Jen Catholic University from Dec. 13 to Dec. 14, 2013. The original Chinese paper written by the author Cheng John Wai Leung (鄭維亮) is found in the official Conference Proceedings, pp. 273-301.

² Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Second edition (New York, NY: Herder and Herder, 1973).

³The author has written five English books as follows: *Energy and Environment: The Spiritual-human-material nexus* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993); *Carriers and Radiators of Divine Energy* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995); *A Comparative Study between St. Thomas Aquinas's Concept of Ipsum Esse Subsistens and the Concept of Qi in the Guanzi's Four Daoist Chapters* (Sinjuang, Taipei: Fu Jen Catholic University Ph.D. Thesis, March 3, 2008); *Radiation of the Holy Eucharist* (Toronto, Ontario: Grace Institute Press, 2010); *From Energy to Energy-Being: An emerging metaphysical paradigm shift in Western philosophy* (Toronto, Ontario: Grace Institute Press, 2010). Further, the three Chinese books by the author are: Cheng Wai-leung (鄭維亮), *Zhongguo Qi Shenxue Fazhan zhi Chuyi* (Development of Chinese Theology of Qis: A Proposal 《中國氣神學發展之芻議:綱要》) (Sinjuang, Taipei (台北縣新莊市): Fu Jen University Press (輔仁大學出版社), 2003); Cheng Wai-leung (鄭維亮), *Jidu Qilun Chuyi* (Christology of Qis: A proposal) 《基督氣論芻議》 (New Taipei City (新北市): Fu Jen University Press (輔仁大學出版社), 2011). Cheng Wai-leung (鄭維亮), *Xin Fuchuan: Wusuo*

works, in retrospect, were composed without the explicit use of any method.

Improvement of any piece of writing is always needed. Therefore, in terms of Lonergan's well-recognized method, the author would humbly examine or re-visit the process of Divine Energization. Being the spiritual foundation or cornerstone of this Theology, this process may represent what this Catholic Theology is all about to a significant extent. In this way, the author would see more clearly specific room for improvement as regards the future development of this theology.

Hence, after the present introduction, in section 1, a brief summary is provided regarding the Divine Energization process in a Catholic Theology of Energies or *Qis*,⁴ this expedition is followed with a summary of Lonergan's transcendental method. The fourth section will be a review of this Catholic Theology according to Lonergan's method. Then section are summarized in concluding comments.

The Divine Energization Process

To define this Catholic Theology of Energies or *Qis*, one may begin by saying that all the energies or *qis* in the universe can be divided into two categories, i.e., the Uncreated and the created. Thus, being faithful to the Magisterium, or teaching office of the Roman Catholic Church, this Theology may be defined as a Catholic study of the dynamic relationship between God's Uncreated Energy or Energies⁵ and God's

buzai de Jidu (New Evangelization: The omnipresent Christ) 《新福傳: 無所不在的基督》(New Taipei City (新北市): Fu Jen Bookstore (輔大書坊), 2013). For further information, please visit <http://catholic-church.org/grace/aitea-index.htm> and click on theology.

⁴ Due to varying nuances in the meaning and history of "energy" in the West on the one hand, and the counterparts of "qi" in China on the other, it may be important to point out that the intercultural translation of Energies as *Qis* or *Qis* as Energies is not perfect and may never be perfect. However, it seems that, out of these imperfections, scholars today are increasingly recognizing that such an intercultural translation can be tolerated and accepted accordingly. To be sure, these two terms and their relationship need an ever clearer or much clearer definition.

⁵ God's Uncreated Energy or Energies is understood in the sense of the Eastern Orthodox tradition of God's Uncreated Divine Energy or Energies. Accordingly, both the singular and plural number may be used for God's Uncreated Energy. For further references on Eastern Orthodox theology, consult the following

created energies, such that the latter, in particular human beings or human energy-beings⁶, would be increasingly filled with God's Uncreated Energies, even forever in Heaven.

One may further say that Heaven is when and where created energy-beings are forever filled with God's Uncreated Energy. Hell is when and where⁷ created energy-beings can never be filled with God's Uncreated Energy. Purgatory is when and where created energy-beings are given additional purgation as demanded by divine justice, before their entire energy-beings would be forever filled with God's Uncreated Energy. Finally, earth is when and where created human energy-beings are given a chance to choose from moment to moment whether or not they would be increasingly filled with God's Uncreated Energies.

The salvation process pronounced in Christianity, therefore, may be described as a process of Divine Energization progressing in three

bibliography: Petro B. T. Bilaniuk, *Theology and Economy of the Holy Spirit: An Eastern approach* (Bangalore, India: Dharmaram, 1980); Georges Barrois, "Palamism Revisited," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 19 (1975), pp. 211-231; David Coffey, "The Palamite Doctrine of God: A new perspective," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 32 (1988), vol. 32, 329-358; John Paul II, Pope. "Ut unum sint (That all may be one)," May 25, 1995, in: *The Pope Speaks*, vol. 40, pp. 295-343. John Paul II, Pope. "Orientale lumen (The light of the East)," May 2, 1995, in: *The Pope Speaks*, vol. 40, pp. 357-379; Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1976); Vladimir Lossky, *The Vision of God* (Bedfordshire: Faith, 1973); George A. Maloney, S.J., *A Theology of Uncreated Energies* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Marquette University, 1978); John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 2nd edition (Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire: Faith, 1974); Kallistos Ware, "God Hidden and Revealed: The apophatic way and the Essence-Energies distinction," *Eastern Churches Review*, 7 (1975), pp. 125-135; Christos Yannaras, "The Distinction between Essence and Energies and its Importance for Theology," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 19 (1975), pp. 242-245.

⁶ Human energy-beings are simply human beings who, like any created beings, are filled with created energies.

⁷ The belief that Heaven is a physical place is accepted by many or most Christian theologians and followers of Christ, as it is our whole being, i.e., soul and body, which goes to Heaven at the time of our resurrection, following the example of the ascension of Christ and the assumption of the Mother of God. However, whether Hell and Purgatory are physical places remains a debatable issue. Here, the author is taking both Hell and Purgatory as some space which accommodates the very being of a person, in his soul at least, when he is living in the state of Hell and Purgatory.

simple stages in this Catholic Theology of Energies: $\circ \rightarrow \odot \rightarrow \textcircled{\odot}$. In general, as seen on the left side of this simple diagram picturing the whole salvation process in three stages or three processive figures, the circle symbolized by \circ represents the Triadic or Triune God⁸, i.e., the Most Holy Trinity, who is infinitely filled with God's Uncreated Energies (Lights or graces as understood in Eastern Orthodoxy). Then, moved by divine love, the Triadic God reached out *ad extra* in eternity to create the whole created universe symbolized by the small circle \circ , so that He may share His Uncreated Energies with all creation.

Hence, $\textcircled{\odot}$ —as seen in the middle of the diagram—represents the whole creation being surrounded and permeated by the infinite omnipresence of the Triadic God symbolized by the big circle \circ . Obviously, $\textcircled{\odot}$ is not \odot . \odot on the right side of the diagram represents the eschatological fulfillment of the Triadic God *ad extra* in Heaven in which all creatures, except those in Hell, are immensely filled with God's Uncreated Energies forever. On the other hand, $\textcircled{\odot}$ at the middle represents the already-but-not-yet reality of such an eschatological fulfillment, i.e., it is still struggling or ceaselessly on earth, to be ever more realized.

This is where this Catholic Theology of Energies may come in, as it intends to help people to understand and partake increasingly in this omnipresent self-sharing of the Most Holy Trinity who is reaching out to share with all creation Its Uncreated Energies, in the salvation process depicted as the process of Divine Energization.

Lonergan's Transcendental Method

Lonergan believes that human knowing is a dynamic structure.⁹ Therefore, epistemologically speaking, one may say that the whole of Lonergan's transcendental method is a dynamic cognitional theory developed from four universal, self-transcending, successive human patterns of operation, namely, experience on the empirical level (in

⁸ Theologically, according to the tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy, the term "Triadic" is more dynamic than the term "Triune." In general, while the Christian East prefers "Triadic" to describe the ongoing interpersonal relationship among the Three Divine Persons, Western Christianity traditionally has been using "Triune."

⁹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Cognitional Structure," *Collection* (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967), pp. 223-224.

which one has to be attentive), understanding on the intelligent level (in which one has to be intelligent), judgment on the rational level (in which one has to be reasonable), and decision on the responsible level (in which one has to be responsible).¹⁰ From these four fundamental human operations, Lonergan then distinguishes eight distinct interacting functional specialties in one's process of doing theology or any serious scientific thinking properly, i.e., research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications.¹¹

Presupposing that each human being is created as a wonderful image of God the Truth, but damaged by sin, Lonergan is convinced that one's "genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity. It is attained only by attaining authentic subjectivity."¹² Existentially, it is by "his own acts the human subject makes himself what he is to be, and he does so freely and responsibly; indeed, he does so precisely because his acts are the free and responsible expressions of himself."¹³ However, to attain such authentic subjectivity, "the fruit of truth must grow on the tree of the subject."¹⁴ In other words, one has to keep on transcending oneself by means of varying necessary intellectual, moral and religious conversions, striving to mature ever more from one level of consciousness to another.

As Lonergan has pointed out, there are six related levels of consciousness for a person to grow through in his processive self-transcendence, "something that each person, ultimately, has to do in himself and for himself,"¹⁵ i.e., (1) the unconscious; (2) a minimal degree of consciousness and subjectivity; (3) experienced consciousness; (4) intelligent consciousness; (5) rational consciousness; and (6) rational self-consciousness.¹⁶ Indeed, one may say that self-transcendence promotes progress towards the truth or reality about being. At the same time, "the notion of being is not

¹⁰ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 13-20; Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A study of human understanding* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1973), p. 375.

¹¹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 149-368.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 292.

¹³ Bernard Lonergan, "The Subject," *A Second Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 79.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹⁵ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 14.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80; cf. Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 322-324. These levels of consciousness will be briefly explained later.

abstract but essentially dynamic, proleptic, an anticipation of the entirety, the concreteness, the totality that we ever intends...It intends everything about everything.”¹⁷ Therefore, one may employ Lonergan’s transcendental method to study any concrete subject, helping him to mature through various levels of consciousness accordingly.

Examining a Catholic Theology of Energies in Terms of Lonergan’s Method

What follows are attempts to examine the present form of Catholic Theology of Energies or *Qis* in terms of the eight distinct interacting functional specialties spelled out in Lonergan’s transcendental method. As mentioned, these eight distinct, dynamic, interrelated, self-transcending tasks are required in one’s proper process of doing theology or any serious scientific thinking, i.e., research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications. In turn, the author has discovered that there are at least two major fields in which great improvement can be gained with regards to the future development of this Theology. The first area would effectively help a person to improve his or her strategy in helping others to experience and partake in God’s omnipresent Divine Energies. The second area would help this Catholic Theology of Energies to progress systematically on safe and solid grounds in its future research and development.

Encountering God’s Omnipresent Divine Energy More Effectively

The following strategic approach is grounded upon Lonergan’s eight self-transcending tasks aforementioned:

1. *Research of Related Experiences with respect to God’s Divine Energy:* It is vital to know that each individual person on earth, without exception, is living right within God’s universal process of Divine Energization, inescapably so. In positive words, God’s Divine Energy is everywhere ceaselessly inviting our increasing awareness of, and participation in, its transforming presence. As a result, countless

¹⁷ Lonergan, “The Subject,” *A Second Collection*, p. 75.

individuals, Christians or not, have already experienced God's Divine Energies to varying extents, consciously, subconsciously or unconsciously. Hence, as the first step to initiate God's Divine Energy and Divine Energization to others in the present age of information and experience, it is crucial to invite them to do an attentive research or recollection from their reservoir of personal experiences, i.e., searching for their previous personal countless encounters of God's all-permeating Divine Light, Energy or grace.

2. *Interpretation of Related Experiences as regards God's Divine Energy:* As ambassadors for God's omnipresent Divine Energy, we should thus interpret the personal encounters of God's Energy or grace experienced by our respectable clients in terms of comparable experiences found in the Holy Bible and the sacred Christian tradition. Such face-to-face or subtle encounters with God's Energy may vary in vast degrees, i.e., from St. Paul's dramatic experience of Christ's radiating Light (cf. Acts 9) in which he was converted to Christianity in just a few days, to St. Augustine's uncountable times of frustrating encountering with God's grace during his long, tortuous, doubts-filled journey of eventual conversion.

On a more ordinary scale, in view of the universal fallen, sinful, corrupt human nature, even the day-to-day ability of an individual to choose to see, think, act and walk in God's light should be graciously examined in terms of God's all-pervading Divine Energy, Light or grace. In particular, we should encourage people to give thanks to God's omnipresent Light as regards their drastic conversion(s) or any gradual change in behavior. It includes their ability to free themselves from becoming a slave to a bad thought, instinct, inclination, discernment, decision, habit, lifestyle, etc., to enjoying the wonderful glorious freedom of a life or way of living truly pleasing to God and their true self. As we know, God is Light, in whom there is no darkness (cf. 1Jn 1:5). Besides, the Creator deeply desires everyone to be saved (cf. 1 Tim 2:4, 2 Pet 3:9) from all sinful darkness and walk constantly in His splendid Light or Divine Energy (cf. 1 John 1:5-7; etc.).

In this way, the understanding of the personal experiences of God's Energy by the people we help would be appositely connected with the Christian God and the time-tested experiences of His faithful followers.

3. *History of God's Divine Energy:* In order for novices to arrive at a more reasonable judgment, it is pertinent at this point to introduce

history to them about God's Divine Energy or grace. On the one hand, we should familiarize newcomers with the history of salvation in terms of God's continuous process of Divine Energization of all creation. On the other, we should also show them the Church's historical teachings on God's Divine Energy or grace. In this way, the mind of the newly initiated would be more broadened and deepened, able to make a sound judgment about the historical reality and concept of God's Divine Energy or grace.

4. *Dialectic of God's Divine Energy*: Dialectic is a discourse between two or three people or positions holding differing points of view about a subject, with the aim of establishing the truth of the matter by reasoned arguments. As expected, novices often would be confused about many aspects or positions of God's Divine Energy. This is where the method of dialectic is to be employed adequately. It is meant to help them to establish the truth of matter and choose the correct position responsibly for themselves with regards to God's all-present Divine Energy in the process of Divine Energization of all creatures.

5. *Foundations of God's Divine Energy*: As the present Theology of Energies is by nature Catholic, it is only logical to help the newly aspired to further establish and ground their understanding, faith and participation in God's Divine Energy or grace on the Catholic foundations. For example, we can show them that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a Sacrament in which our sinful energy is washed away through the Divine Blood-Energy of Christ; and that each moment spent before the radiant Holy Eucharist—in which Christ the Light Incarnate is fully present—is a personal moment of exposing ourselves to Christ's ceaseless radiation of His supernatural grace, healing and transformation.

6. *Doctrines of God's Divine Energy*: The examples shown above about the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist are only two doctrinal aspects of Sacramentology interpreted in terms of God's Divine Energy. There are many other sacred doctrines of the Catholic Church which need to be interpreted or understood coherently and comprehensibly in light of God's grace or Divine Energy. In this way, novices to God's Divine Energy and the salvific process of Divine Energization would be convinced as never before about their present right understanding and sound judgment with regards to the sacred doctrines of the Church to whom they have long belonged, loved and appreciated.

7. *Systematics of God's Divine Energy*: If possible, the whole system of the Catholic Church, doctrinally, theologically, spiritually, hierarchically, historically, eschatologically, sociologically, politically, economically, etc., in all their perfections and imperfections, has to be understood intelligently and accepted maturely in terms of God's Divine Energy. This is the only reasonable way which can intelligently satisfy and assure Catholic novices today of the paramount importance of God's Divine Energy and the transformative process of Divine Energization working in and through the Catholic Church. In this way, they would feel more comfortable, confident, proud and responsible for their newly acquired understanding.

8. *Communications of God's Divine Energy*: For novices who have continued to grow and mature considerably according to the seven Lonerganian tasks listed, i.e., research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines and systematics, it becomes natural for us to encourage them to further reach out, communicate and share with others about the Good News of God's omnipresent Divine Energy in the ongoing process of Divine Energization. As mentioned, such a process is occurring everywhere for all people without ceasing, awaiting the ever keener awareness and participation of each global villager.

As newcomers are being led from one Lonerganian task to another, they would gradually grow from one level of their consciousness to another. All in all, they would progress through the following six stages:

- (1) the unfortunate unconsciousness, regarding God's ever omnipresent Divine Energy;
- (2) a minimal degree of their subjective consciousness, as regards such a divine omnipresence;
- (3) some experienced consciousness of this divine omnipresence, through reflections on their personal experience;
- (4) significant intelligent consciousness, upon further understanding of similar experiences recorded in the Holy Bible and the sacred tradition of the Church;
- (5) rational personal consciousness, in their respective reasoned judgment;

(6) living in confident rational self-consciousness, as a consequence of having made a responsible decision to be open to experiencing such a wonderful omnipresence of the Creator, both for themselves and others.

Having thus delved⁴ into the region in which others are being helped to encounter God's omnipresent Divine Energy more personally and effectively in the universal process of Divine Energization, the following section would seek to help the present Catholic Theology of Energies to evolve more systematically in its future research and development.

Systematic Development of a Catholic Theology of Energies

"To put method in theology is to conceive theology as a set of related and recurrent operations cumulatively advancing towards an ideal goal."¹⁸ Following Lonergan's eight special functions listed above as a series of interdependent sets of theological operation, this section attempts to show how Catholic Theology of Energies or *Qis* in the future could be better developed systematically. Dividing the eight theological specialties into two phases, Lonergan calls the first phase 'mediating theology' (research, interpretation, history and dialectic) which seeks to introduce us to knowledge about the Body of Christ. At the same time, the second phase is called 'mediated theology' (foundations, doctrines, systematics and communications), seeking to help the Church and even the world to deal with current and future problems effectively in God's ongoing process of Divine Energization of humanity and the world, based on the knowledge and experiences acquired from the first phase.¹⁹

1. *Research of Experiences as regards Various Energies*: One may say that this is the textual criticism subscribed to by the present Catholic Theology of Energies, in an attempt to research and collect various energies experienced by people. In the broader picture, as we know, the present Catholic Theology of Energies studies not only God's Divine Uncreated Energy, but also various forms of created energy,

¹⁸ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 125.

¹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 135, 144.

such as human energy, diabolic energy, angelic energy, sinful energy, virtuous energy and material energy in the context of God's Divine Energization of humanity and the world. Hence, the future research of this theology should take time to critically research and collect as many terms as possible, not only from the texts of the Holy Bible and the Catholic tradition, but also traditions from non-Catholic religions and cultures. As a rule of thumb, the more energy terms this theology can carefully analyze and collect from Sacred Scriptures and varying traditions and cultures, the more interest such an approach to theology can inspire among today's scholars and followers of Christ, whether or not they are Catholics.

2. *Interpretation of Various Energy Terms*: This is the hermeneutics of this Catholic Theology of Energies which seeks to analytically and faithfully interpret the energy terms collected, i.e., in accordance to both the Catholic tradition and God's salvation process understood as God's Divine Energization of humanity and the world. As the list of energy terms being collected could be literally endless, as well as immensely confusing and disorientating to scholars and non-scholars correspondingly, this task is quite crucial in establishing the very focus and undertaking of this energy approach to Catholic theology.

3. *History of Various Energy Terms*: Each energy term can involve a long history of its own, e.g., the history of God's Uncreated Divine Energy in the Eastern Orthodox Church, the history of human *qi* in Chinese history, and the history of energy in Western civilization. Hence, much time may have to be spent in investigating the specific history of each energy term. Besides, such a history should also be examined in the context of the history of the Catholic Church as well as that of God's Divine Energization of humanity and the world. Otherwise, as mentioned, the very focus and undertaking of this Catholic approach to theology would easily be disoriented and destroyed in the process of doing this Theology.

4. *Dialectic of Various Energy Terms*: As we know, dialectic is a series of intelligent communications between varying positions about a subject under discussion, with the goal of establishing rationally the truth of the matter via reasoned arguments. In the course of studying various energy terms, people interested in this Theology may be confused about many aspects or positions of certain energy term(s). Hence, the method of dialect should be employed as often as required to help Catholic scholars to establish the truth of the matter and choose

the appropriate position responsibly for themselves and for the future development of this Catholic Theology.

Dialectic, therefore, can be conducted at least in three general ways, i.e., discussing dialectically (A) the appropriateness of a specific energy term itself, for example, the correct use of diabolic energy in this modern age or whether such an energy of the evil spirit does exist; B) the appropriate use of a specific energy term in the context of some other energy term(s), such as the proper use of diabolic energy concomitantly existing along with angelic energy within a human soul; C) the rightful use of some specific energy term(s) for a certain subject or context, e.g., the use of Divine Energy as grace for one's Catholic faith and practice.

5. *Foundations of Various Energy Terms*: Since this is a Catholic Theology of Energies, the mere existence and employment of various energy terms themselves must be decisively integrated, anchored or justified in terms of the Catholic faith and practice, according to their traditional foundations, historically, philosophically, theologically, doctrinally, canonically, morally, spiritually, sacramentally, soteriologically, etc.

6. *Doctrines of Various Energy Terms*: As the whole of Catholic faith and practice are ultimately rooted in and grounded upon Catholic dogmas or doctrines, to further connect the appropriate use of various energy terms by this Catholic Theology of Energies with the Catholic faith and practice, historical developments of Catholic doctrines related to various energy terms must be carefully studied. For example, the historical doctrinal development of the Catholic use of 'grace' must be ecumenically integrated with and seen in light of the sacred tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy.

7. *Systematics of Various Energy Terms*: Systematically, it appears that in the long run, each branch of Catholic theology, if possible, has to be re-interpreted or re-described in terms of various energy terms. Such a huge effort may be simply compared with looking at the same respectable tradition with a new angle or renewed vision.²⁰ Hopefully, a new or renewed faith, hope and love of Catholic faith and practice would be reignited as never before for the blessing of many in this age in which the traditional concept and reality of each 'being' or 'thing'

²⁰ Marcel Proust (1871-1922) once said: "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes." http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/marcel_proust.html

is understood increasingly in a dynamic manner similar to that of 'becoming', 'event' or 'energy'.²¹

8. *Communications of Various Energy Terms*: In order to communicate such a renewed Catholic faith and practice to a larger audience, we should share with others not only the various branches of Catholic theology systematically renewed, but also a pastoral theology or practicable spirituality re-described in terms of various energy terms. In this way, both theoretically and practically, this Catholic Theology of Energies would be spreading far and wide for the evangelical purpose of God the Triadic Light, who is reaching out to share with all people on earth His all-pervading Divine Energy, Light or grace.

From one Lonerganian specialized function to another, this Catholic Theology of Energies is moving toward a more systematic developments. As a result, people interested in this Theology would gradually move to more solid theological grounds, from one level of consciousness to another. Overall, with regards to God's all-present Divine Energies, they would progress from (1) an ill-fated unconsciousness; to (2) a minimal consciousness; to (3) experienced consciousness; to (4) intelligent consciousness; to (5) rational consciousness. Finally, they would be living confidently with (6) a profound rational self-consciousness, gushing forth from their intelligent study, conscious reflection, and prayerful experience with respect to God's Divine Energies and His process of Divine Energization of humanity and the world.

Concluding Remarks

The salvation process pronounced in Christianity may be described as a salvific process of the Triune or Triadic God's Divine Energization of humanity and the entire universe, proceeding in three simple stages in Catholic Theology of Energies: $\circ \rightarrow \odot \rightarrow \ominus$. In this process of Divine Energization, God's Divine Light or Energy is everywhere inviting our keen participation. At the same time, energistically speaking, it seems that un-Godly darkness in various forms, e.g., diabolic energy, sinful energy, unsanctified human and

²¹ Cf. John Cheng, "An Emerging Metaphysical Macroparadigm Shift from Being to Energy-Being," *Ultimate Reality and Meaning*, vol. 25, no. 4 (December, 2002), pp. 314-330.

material energies, is also engulfing, binding and preventing us from seeing clearly and partaking bounteously in this glorious divine omnipresence. Therefore, the more we know about the real blessings and obstacles *vis-à-vis* the current ongoing Divine Energization initiated by God the Divine Light, the easier, indeed even more personally and effectively, we would begin to walk in His all-permeating Light, able to appreciate and partake increasingly in this amazing invitation.

It was, hence, the hope of the author that by doing an examination of the present form of Catholic Theology of Energies in terms of Lonergan's transcendental method spelled out in eight specialized functions, practical improvements would take place in the current development of this Theology. Consequently, it is discovered that, as shown above, two major advancements may be made accordingly for this developing Theology, i.e., (1) how to help others to experience and partake in God's omnipresent Divine Energy more personally and effectively in the process of Divine Energization; (2) how to help this Catholic Theology of Energies to be better developed systematically in its future research.

Apparently, the eight Lonerganian specialties or specialized functions are here to guide a person, and even a theology, to grow and mature through their processive 'self-transcendence' which is something that they have to do in themselves and for themselves.²² As indicated, the two major advancements of this Catholic Theology of Energies would only help more people to grow from one level of consciousness to another. In due course, many would grow, in so far as God's omnipresent Divine Energy and His Divine Energization are concerned, from (1) the unfortunate unconscious state; to (2) a minimal degree of consciousness and subjectivity; (3) experienced consciousness through significant experience; (4) intelligent consciousness through proper understanding; (5) rational consciousness through sound judgment; and finally to (6) confident rational self-consciousness.

In view of the present metaphysical paradigm shift in the West, in which 'being' is understood increasingly in a dynamic manner, e.g., in terms of 'becoming', 'event', and 'energy-being',²³ it is also hoped

²² Cf. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 14.

²³ Cf. John Cheng, "An Emerging Metaphysical Macroparadigm Shift from Being to Energy-Being," *Ibid.*

that the present examination of this Theology of Energies or *Qis* – which is grounded upon the reality or phenomenon that every ‘thing’ is or appears to be ‘energy’ or ‘*qi*’ – would also help many to welcome and accept such an inevitable metaphysical paradigm shift sweeping gradually across the entire global village, for the blessing of many in the present and future generations.

In addition, let us not forget that God has been viewed analogically as dynamic energy or related to ‘energy’, not only in the sacred tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy, but also in that of Western Christianity. In the words of Armand Maurer, C.S.B. (1915-2008), a famous Thomist: “The identification of God with pure *esse* warns us that, for St. Thomas, being is not the mere fact that a thing exists, or its presence in the world. In fact, *esse* is dynamic and energizing act... *Esse* is dynamic impulse, energy, act—the first, the most persistent and enduring of all dynamisms, all energies, all acts.”²⁴ As we know, to St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), God is not only *Ipsium Esse* (Act or Act of Existence Himself), but also *Ens a se* (Being by Himself). Hence, created in the image of *Ipsium Esse* and *Ens a se*, each created being, in particular a human being, resembles to some extent the Uncreated ‘dynamic impulse, energy, act’, whose ultimate fulfillment takes place only in and through God, ‘the first, the most persistent and enduring of all dynamisms, all energies, all acts.’

In truth and reality, the living Most Holy Trinity, being the transradiant Triadic or Trinitarian Light present everywhere in the whole universe, has been ceaselessly inviting each human being on earth to participate more and more in its awesome omnipresence since the moment of creation. How are we going to express appropriately this most loving divine invitation taking place everywhere constantly, i.e., in terms of our beloved Catholic faith and practice? This, then, is a truly challenging ‘steering question’ to us intent on doing a reliable method for this Catholic Theology of Energies or *Qis* properly. Obviously, in so far as the future or near-future research is concerned, the answer, to a significant extent, consists in the more explicit and appropriate employment of Bernard Lonergan’s reliable

²⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, translated with an Introduction and Notes by Armand Maurer, C.S.B., second edition (Toronto, Canada: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1968), pp. 18-19.

transcendental method, which is explicated above in terms of his eight functional specialities or distinct tasks of doing theology properly.

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Part III
Comparative Study between East and West

**People Are Born Religious:
Perspectives from the Concept of Piety of
John Calvin and the Sincerity of
*The Doctrine of the Mean***

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Introduction

The ideas of man as a rational or social animal were often discussed in the history of philosophy. Nevertheless, the investigation of man's religiousness also has a long history the phrase *homo religiosus* was often used to describe the human religiosity that humanity inherently possesses. Theories about it can be traced back to the age of the Enlightenment.¹ One big concern about this concept was often given to the relationship between the human and the divine. From this point, we can say that such ideas as the "knight of faith" of Kierkegaard, the "absolute dependence" of Friedrich Schleiermacher, the "ultimate concern" of Paul Tillich and, in the most direct way, the *homo religiosus* of Mircea Eliad can be counted as interpretations of this concept. Together with the discussion about "what is religion," the question of "*whether or not Confucianism is a religion*" recently came into the horizon of Chinese studies. Emphasis was often laid on the comparisons between Confucianism and the diverse characteristics a religion has, especially Christianity.² The work always concluded

¹ Mark Lilla, "Kant's theological-political revolution," *The Review of Metaphysics* 52, no.2 (1998), 400. Lilla also made a point that "modern theories of *homo religiosus* originally arose out of dissatisfaction with *homo Christianus*" (*Ibid.*, 397).

² Many scholars maintain that the debate on the question of *whether or not Confucianism is a religion* goes back to the time of Matteo Ricci. Cf. Li Shen, "Confucianism is a Religion" in *Confucianism and the Religion of Confucianism (RuXue Yu RuJiao)*, ed. Li Shen (Chengdu: Sichuan University Press, 2005), 113. Lin Jinzhou, "Confucianism is not a Religion," in *Collected Papers on the Question of whether or not Confucianism is a Religion (RuJiao WenTi ZengLunji)*, ed. Ren Jiyu (Beijing: Religion and Culture Press, 2005), 164-5. Scholastic discourses on the accounts of this question, see Li Shen, "Studies on the Question of Confucianism

with the similarities and differences between them, without giving much focus on the legitimacy of this kind of comparison, that is to say, how this comparison is even possible.

Human religiosity could provide a common place for discussion for both sides who work in Confucianism. The question is, how can the religiousness play this role? To answer this question, it is impossible to bypass examinations on the following questions: what is the religiousness that man has? And how does this human religiosity connect with human existence and in what ways?

Through the investigation of Piety and Sincerity from Calvin and *The Doctrine of the Mean* respectively, this essay first tries to argue that religiousness was revealed through these concepts and was defined as one's reverence for, and faith in, God or Heaven. This is unfolded in the contexts of the theology of Calvin and *The Doctrine of the Mean*. The religiousness that man has is not a metaphysical presumption, but an existential reality, which is to say, it is the starting point of human life. It was called by Calvin the "Sense of Divinity," and was endowed by God to the human conscience. While in the context of *The Doctrine of the Mean*, it was revealed in "Sincerity," which is originally from Heaven. Second, this paper intends to illustrate that the connotation of religiousness bridges the human starting point and end point: the goodness that man pursues. According to Calvin, reverence and love, which constitute Piety, not only reveal human religiosity, but also pave the way for seeking the good. This is also true for the concept of Sincerity. Because, on the one hand, religiousness was shown in one's emotions of "pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy" with "Sincerity." On the other hand, these emotions drive people towards goodness.

Piety and the Sense of Divinity

To clarify questions of how human religiosity was revealed in Piety, and how this religiousness connects with human existential reality, the meaning of Piety should first be investigated in the context of Calvin's theology.

in Recent Twenty Years," in *Collected Papers on the Question of whether or not Confucianism is a Religion (RuJiao WenTi ZengLunJi)*, ed. Ren Jiyu (Beijing: Religion and Culture Press, 2005), 470-479, and Li Huawei, "The Carrier and Influence of the Revival of Confucianism as Religion in Contemporary Mainland China," *Journal of Religious Studies* 60, no.3 (2013).

Before that, the reasons why these two concepts, that is, Piety and Sincerity, were selected for comparison should first be explained. It is well known that, when Piety was talked about in the comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy, two classical examples were often mentioned: Euthyphro's charge against his father for murder in Plato's dialogue of *Euthyphro*, and Confucius' discussion about filial piety in *Zi Lu Pian* of the *Analects*. For Plato, the ethical implications between father and son, which is filial piety, was magnified in Piety. Nevertheless, piety points heavily to the relationship between the human and the Divine, since it connects with justice discussed by Plato.³ Piety is the key to understanding the knowledge of God and self-knowledge in Calvin's context. In the *Analects*, however, Confucius' understanding of "uprightness" is different from that of the neighbor of the Duke of Sheh.⁴ Zhu Xi interprets this concept as "the way of Heaven and people's natural emotion for the father to conceal the misconduct of the son, and vice versa."⁵ From this viewpoint, the uprightness that Confucius held is the relationship between son and father that follows the order of Heaven, which was often called "filial piety" (*xiao* 孝). It is, therefore, the relationship between the human and the Divine that Piety dealt with, whereas filial piety usually dealt with ethical relationships among men. From this viewpoint, it is inappropriate for us to compare Piety and filial piety since they focus on different topics. The Sincerity of *the Doctrine of the Mean*, however, not only has its origin in Heaven, but also is the foundation for one's life in becoming a gentleman (*junzi* 君子).⁶ Piety has similar functions in the theology of Calvin, as will be

³ For Plato, one thing for sure is the idea that the meaning of Piety relates to Justice, "One should only watch whether the killer acted justly or not; if he acted justly, let him go, but if not, one should prosecute, if, that is to say, the killer shares your hearth and table". Plato, *Euthyphro* (4B). Cf. Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

⁴ *Analects*, *Tsze-lu* (13:18). James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*. Vol.1. Confucian *Analects* (HK.1861).

⁵ Zhu Xi, *Commentaries on the Four Books (Sishu Zhangju Jizhu)*, ed. Li Jingde (Taipei: Zhengzhong Press, 1962).

⁶ Sincerity as the "interconnectedness" between human beings and Heaven, between what was called by Shen as "the true Reality itself and the true self" is a traditional understanding of it. Cf. Vincent Shen, "Some Thoughts on Intercultural Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 30, no.3&4 (2003):365.

illustrated later. In essence, therefore, it is the religiousness shown in these two conceptions, and the similar role they play in the relationship between the human and the divine, that makes these two conceptions appropriate foci for our analysis.

By "Piety" Calvin means "reverence joined with love of God which the knowledge of his benefits induces" (I.2.1).⁷

What is Calvin's purpose in proposing the concept of piety? As we can see, Calvin, at this place, tries to respond to Socrates and Plato in answering these two questions that have puzzled philosophers for centuries. In the Dialogue of the *Minos*, with Socrates, Plato held the idea that "man is living for good."⁸ This principle for one's living raised two kinds of questions. First, what is man? That is to say, questions about man's originality, nature and living condition. Secondly, how can man search for the good? That is to say, questions about goodness, and the ways to goodness. Socrates thus devoted his life to the investigation of the "knowledge of self." In the context of Christianity, especially after Augustine, these two questions transformed into questions about sin and justification. Calvin's twofold divisions about human knowledge, the knowledge of God and self-knowledge, correspond to his classification of the existential situation man lives in. According to Calvin, the situation that man lives in was divided by the fall of Adam into two parts. Calvin believes that there are two parts of "self-knowledge," which is, man's "lack of abilities," as Calvin described, "what we were given at creation" (II.1.1), and "the purpose for which he was created," "the nature of his duty," as Calvin said, "zeal for righteousness and goodness" (II.1.3). These two issues echo the question of what is man and how can one get to the fulfillment of goodness. What is special for Calvin is his concept of Piety in uniting these two questions and revealing human religiosity.

Through the "sense of Divinity," Calvin clarified his understanding of Piety and inquired about its relation to one's religiousness.

⁷ *Institutes* II.2.1. Cf. John Calvin, Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion. Trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Ed. John T. McNeill, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960). The reference of the quotation from the *Institutes* will be marked in the form of II.1.1 in the main text of this paper hereafter unless otherwise specified.

⁸ G. X. Santas, *Socrates* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), Ch.6 especially.

First of all, Calvin assumes that people are born with the sense of Divinity⁹ (*Divinitatis sensum*) which was implanted by God himself into the human heart (I.3.1). Our question is, why was Calvin saying so? As we shall see, he intends to prove man's religiousness through his own answering of the traditional question of the existence of God, and his interpretations of "revelation."

For one thing, according to Calvin, human existence correlates closely with the belief in the existence of God. Calvin is not going to avoid the question of whether God exists or not, which is controversial in the history of theology, but, rather to demonstrate it through its linkage with human existence. For Calvin, the existence of God is not an ontological presumption, but an existential reality. As Calvin has put it, "What is God? Men who pose this question are merely toying with idle speculation. It is more important for us to know that God is and what is consistent with his nature" (:2.2). At this point, Calvin follows his way of thinking which was clearly stated at the very beginning of his *Institutes*. The knowledge of God cannot be separated from self-knowledge. It is obvious that, later on, Reformed theology's emphasis on the grace of God and the faithful response concerning earthly things, is the mainstream of Reformed Christianity, and begins with Calvin's two distinctions about human knowledge.¹⁰ The sense of Divinity thus was framed by these two dimensions: "existence of God" and the belief in it.

Calvin believes that there is a firm conviction in the human mind "from which the inclination toward religion springs as from a seed" (I.3.2). To those who deny the existence of God, Calvin continues, the "vengeance of divine majesty" strikes their conscience. This existential reality itself implies that "some conception of God is ever alive in all men's minds," even to Gaius Caligula, the Roman emperor who

⁹ Battles believes that for Calvin, the sense of Divinity can be interchanged with "seed of religion," which is the moral response to God. *Institutes* II .3.1.note2.

¹⁰ Scholarship in this area always focuses on this point. In his analysis on the comparison between Calvin's understanding of the concept of revelation and that of Richard Niebuhr's, Ottati depicts the main charter of Reformed Christianity in this broad way: "For Reformed Christianity, then, emphasis falls on a life oriented toward God and God's encompassing reign," "It is a reflective enterprise that tries to help us envision God, the world, and ourselves in relation". Cf. Douglas F. Ottati, "Reformed Theology, Revelation, and Particularity: John Calvin and H. Richard Niebuhr," *Crosscurrents* 59, no.2 (2009):129.

despised the gods in the boldest way (I.3.2). As to what kind of reality this existential is, Calvin at this point echoed Augustine who divided human existence into two parts: before the Fall and after the Fall of Adam. When Adam was created, God bestowed “uprightness” on him, in which there was “reason” and “emotion.” At this time, according to Calvin, “emotion” was led by “reason” to knowledge of God (I.15.3). After the Fall, the uprightness transformed into the sense of Divinity which consists in what Calvin called the conviction of the existence of God. What is meant here is that without the sense of Divinity, there is no human existence. In this sense, we call the sense of Divinity the starting point for one’s living. The existence of God for Calvin, therefore, is not an ontological presumption, but an existential fact. In short, the way in which Calvin addressed the question of the existence of God is through its connection to man’s inhabited nature: the “sense of divinity is by nature engraved on human hearts” (I.4.4).

However, though people are born with the sense of Divinity, not all of them have a sense of it, especially those who live after the Fall. Calvin, on one hand explains reasons for this phenomenon. At the same time, he points out that, as channels in receiving God’s revelation, reason and faith, which were included in Piety, are the two factors that make this sense of divinity visible in one’s mind.

Calvin said that no real piety remains in this world (I.4.1). Believing in man himself, rather than God, is the reason for this. For those who deny the existence of God - the atheist, Calvin made reference to the fool in Psalms (I.4.2) and the Roman emperor Gaius Caligula (I.3.2). The concept of “conscience” was used by Calvin to analyze the reasons those people give for their negative attitude to the existence of God. Battles claims that the “sense of divinity” and the “seed of religion” have identical implications, and both of them are closely connected with “conscience,” which refers to “a moral response to God” (I.3.1.note.2). But Calvin also maintains that through human reason, by which good and evil were distinguished, a judgment of what is right or wrong was made (II.2.12), which is an essential element of the image of God (II.2.17). In this light, conscience, therefore, not only refers to the response to God about good and evil, but also implies the measurement based on which judgements about right or wrong are made.

The fundamental reason for Gaius Caligula’s impiousness, thus, would be this: he always gave full trust to his own ideas about good

and evil, right and wrong instead of following orders from God. When people like him have the experience of the shortage of their natural ability, they will investigate the criterion itself based on which judgments were always made. The result of this examination would be, just like what Calvin vividly called “a strike” on their conscience (I.3.2). Power, ability, and ideas they always relied on become powerlessness, non-ability and helplessness. What is left for the conscience would be fear of Almighty God. The people who live in this hopeless situation will be startled at “the rustle of a falling leaf” (I.3.2). In this respect, we can say that the reverence of God comes after one’s experience of one’s own limitations or what Calvin called “lack of ability” (II.1.3), and it thus constitutes one of the dimensions of human religiosity.

On the other hand, with the help of reason and faith, God’s “revelation” comes into the realm of human knowledge. One’s conscience, which is the “sense of divinity,” is thus awakened. Two kinds of “revelation” were distinguished by Calvin: general revelation and specific revelation. The term ‘general revelation’ was not used in a clear way in the *Institutes*, but one thing that is certain for Calvin is that knowledge of God can be known through God’s sovereign and universal reign among his creatures (I.4.), even though whether Calvin approves of natural theology or not is debatable.¹¹ The way that God reveals himself through creatures, parallel to his “specific revelation,” can thus be called “general revelation”. There are two places in the *Institutes* that clearly mention two kinds of divisions about God’s revelation: “besides the specific doctrine of faith and repentance that sets forth Christ as Mediator, Scripture adorns with unmistakable marks and tokens the one true God, in that he has created and governs the universe, in order that he may not be mixed up with the throng of false gods” (I.6.2.p.41); and “indeed, the knowledge of God set forth for us in Scripture is destined for the very same goal as the knowledge whose imprint shines in his creatures, in that it invites us first to fear God, then to trust in him” (I.10.2). As for general revelation, emphasis falls on the reason which God reveals.¹²

¹¹ Cf. Emil Brunner, Karl Barth, *Natural Theology: Comprising “Nature and Grace” by Professor Dr. Emil Brunner and the Reply, “No!” by Dr. Karl Barth*. 2nd. Trans. Peter Fraenkel, ed. Eugene (OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002).

¹² We are not going to give a full discussion here to the meaning of “reason,” how it works in knowing God, and questions about “Holy Spirit Certainty” (HSC).

Calvin acknowledges that God's revelation can be known by human reason, as expressed by him, the revelation which is explicitly shown in the creatures is knowable in "art" and "science."¹³ Works and wisdom of God are knowable to all people, but it requires a comparatively high intelligence to know how it works (I.5.2). God's specific revelation, however, refers to such spiritual doctrines as Trinity, Incarnation or the "specific doctrine of faith and repentance" (I.6.2). It centers on faith in opposition to general revelation's focus on the human reason. At this point, Calvin maintains the certainty of biblical teachings up to the self-authentication of the Holy Spirit. The assumption of this idea is that "truth proves itself to be true." What is needed for this self-proven truth is one's faithful confirmation of the words of Scripture. Calvin said "truth is cleared of all doubt when, not sustained by external props, it serves as its own support."¹⁴ In short, we thus can see that reason and faith, by the different roles they play, by "general revelation" and "specific revelation," can lead to get to know and trust in God. With these, the human conscience develops and the sense of the divine becomes known, the seed of religion which was once buried in the heart begins to grow up, and human religiosity finally becomes visible to one's knowledge.

Secondly, piety contains reason and faith by which the sense of the divine shows itself. Moreover, it is the purpose for the fallen person to pursue. This means that piety, as the starting point of human life, which was called the sense of divinity, meanwhile is the purpose for one's devoted living. After one's fear of God, it always comes with full trust and complete dependence on the truth and God, which is another dimension that frames human religiousness. Two fundamental elements of piety, which are reason and faith, bridged these two endings of one's faithful life to God. Based on Calvin's distinctions on the human living condition, as pointed out by him when discussing self-knowledge, "this knowledge of ourselves is twofold: namely, to know what we were like when we were first created, and what our condition became after the fall of Adam" (I.15.1). Calvin gives "piety" three different names for various

For more details, see Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 65ff. Paul Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 255-7.

¹³ *Institutes* II .2.13-6.

¹⁴ *Institutes* I .8.1.

concerns: uprightness before the Fall (I.2.1), sense of divinity or seed of religion, as the beginning of one's life after the Fall (I.3.1), and the renewed image of God or the Piety, as the end which one's life searches (I.15.4). The sense of divinity or seed of religion originates from "uprightness" which was clearly defined by Calvin when talking about the "image of God": "accordingly, the integrity with which Adam was endowed is expressed by this word, when he had full possession of right understanding, when he had his affections kept within the bounds of reason, all his senses tempered in right order, and he truly referred his excellence to exceptional gifts bestowed upon him by his Maker" (I.15.3). Emotions or "affections" and "reason" are thus two distinctive parts that harmoniously constitute "uprightness," and both of them guide people in glorifying and knowing God (I.2.1). As observed by Calvin, reverence and love to God, which is pious and emotional recognition of the reality of God, leads people "first to fear God, then to trust in him" (I.10.2). "Emotions" and "reason" were not lost with the Fall of Adam since the image of God remains in human beings. But the sense of divinity was dimmed or obscured by sin, and reason leads to emotion instead of glorifying God, to "atheism," "superstition" or "idolatry." People give their trust to themselves rather than believing in God, and forget the reason why they come into this world and where they originally come from (II.1.3). As Calvin said, they always confuse the Creator with creatures. But this way of living ends with fear of God, or the awakening of a sense of divinity since the foundation they basically once relied on now collapses. Nothing is left but the fear of God and fear always correlates with the submission of one's authority of judgment to the thing feared, which is God in the context of Christianity. As noted by Calvin, "the knowledge whose imprint shines in his creatures...invites us first to fear God, then to trust in him" (I.10.2). The understanding of fear for Calvin echoes with that of St. Thomas, who defines fear in this way while working on clarifying the relationship between fear and wisdom: "man must first of all fear God and submit himself to Him: for the result will be that in all things he will be ruled by God." He continues "the fear of God is compared to a man's whole life that is ruled by God's wisdom, as the root to the tree."¹⁵ Foundation they once

¹⁵ ST II-II, q.12, a.7. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Ed. Benziger Bros. (CCEL.1947), 2825.

depended on for their ethical and rational judgements of good or evil, right or wrong, now transfers from their own reason and belief to dependence on God, which is the renewed image of God or Piety. Therefore, it is by reason and faith which were included in the Piety, that the dimmed "sense of divine" becomes visible in the image of God, and dependence on God thus becomes the other dimension of human religiousness.

In a nutshell, the reality of God lies with the self-authentication of truth or the word of God, and in its correlation with the sense of the divine. The seed of religion was planted by God in the human heart, but it was obscured by human self-righteousness. Man always give his full trust to his own reason or beliefs, and most of the time this will result in the observing of one's conscience regarding the human limitations of both one's ability and knowledge. That is to say, the final result of people placing their trust in themselves (which was called by Calvin the "carnal judgment") is the beginning of knowing God in fear, which is the submission of oneself to God (divine judgment).¹⁶ God reveals himself in ways of "general revelation" and "specific revelation," through which people get to know God. Trust in God as a natural result comes after one's recognition of one's own "lack of abilities" (II.1.3) in the examination of oneself. Fear of God and dependence on him thus would be the implication of human religiousness in the context of the theology of Calvin.

Sincerity and Heaven

It is recognized that two main questions have been examined through the history of philosophy, namely, what is man, and how can man seek goodness. There is no exception for Confucianism, especially for the Pre-Qin period. In the Chinese context, these two questions were discussed in the following forms: *whether human nature is good or evil*, and *how can one be sanctified or to become a gentleman- a good person*. They are effectively connected with each other till the appearance of Sincerity of *the Doctrine of the Mean*. Man who lives according to the Mean was described as one whose life is in accordance with Heaven in the *Confucian Analects*.¹⁷ Confucius also

¹⁶ *Institutes* II.1.3.

¹⁷ When Confucius was asked about the nature of Rite (Li 禮), he concludes it with the statement of the Mean according to Zhu Xi's interpretation. "Lin Fang

claims that “by nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be very different.”¹⁸The “nature” (*xing* 性), however, was not given much emphasis. Considering the time in which Confucius lived, it is “humanity” (*ren* 仁) and “rite” (*li* 禮) that was focused on by him.¹⁹ This left room for further interpretation on the question of *how* “reason” or “knowledge” (*zhi* 知), which is the way to the Mean, and “nature” are connected with each other.²⁰ It seems routine that the following texts from *Mencius* and *the Doctrine of the Mean* were compared when “Sincerity” was talked about: “There is a way to the attainment of sincerity in one’s self: if a man does not understand what is good, he will not attain sincerity in himself. Therefore, sincerity is the way of Heaven. To think how to be sincere is the way of man;”²¹ and “sincerity is the way of Heaven. The attainment of sincerity is the way of men.”²² Much scholarship deals with the similarities and differences of “to think how to be sincere” (*sicheng* 思誠) and “the attainment of sincerity” (*chengzhi* 誠之). Considering the question we are discussing here, which focuses on human religiousness, however, this essay offers a comprehensive survey of “sincerity,” through which human religiousness was revealed, from two angles, namely, “sincerity” as containing the driving forces for one’s path to the good,

asked what was the first thing to be attended to in ceremonies. The Master said, ‘A great question indeed! In festive ceremonies, it is better to be sparing than extravagant. In the ceremonies of mourning, it is better that there be deep sorrow than in minute attention to observances’”. *Analects* (3:4), 155-6. Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi) gives his explanations to these words in this way: “It is better for the ceremonies to be accordance with the Mean” (*liguidezhong* 禮貴得中). (Zhu Xi, *Commentaries on the Four Books*).

¹⁸ *Analects* (17:2), 318.

¹⁹ “If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with the rites of propriety? If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with music?” *Analects*, 155. *Li*, was often refers to the “feeling of reverence.” *Ibid*.

²⁰ Pang Pu maintained that “It is Confucius that advocates teachings about humanity in Chinese history, but he did not raise the question of ‘why people can become humanity’ and the answer to it in serious way”. Cf. Pang Pu, “Commentary on *Wu Xing-Pian* (*Wu Xing-Pian Shuping* 五行篇述評),” *WenShiZhe*, no.1 (1988):4. The question Pang mentioned looks like in an epistemological way, but as a matter of fact, it is trying to figure out where man’s ability of reasoning comes from.

²¹ *Mencius*: Li Lou I:12. James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (HK.1861).

²² *The Doctrine of the Mean*. James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*. Vol.1. (HK.1861).

and “sincerity” as the starting point for one’s life and also the end pursued for one’s entire life.

Questions remain in comparing this with Calvin’s “piety”: *how human religiousness was disclosed through “sincerity,” with how can “sincerity” be the beginning of human life, and at the same time, the end for one’s living, and how do these two endings get together?*

In the first place, “sincerity” is the starting point for one’s living, and its origin, which is Heaven, reveals human religiousness. “Sincerity” is the initial endowment from Heaven according to the teachings of *The Doctrine of the Mean*, and it becomes the ultimate criterion by which judgments about good or evil, right or wrong were made because of the oneness between Heaven and Humanity (*tianrenbuer* 天人不二).²³ The self-authentication of Heaven reflects people’s complete trust in the way of Heaven, making that one of the dimensions of human religiousness. Some presumptions about Heaven were proposed at the very beginning of *The Doctrine of the Mean*: “what Heaven has conferred is called Nature; accordance with this nature is called the Path of duty; the regulation of this path is called Instruction.”²⁴ The meaning of Heaven, however, was not further explained. A very possible reason for this is that the author supposes it a self-evident prerequisite which was widely accepted at that time. As Pang has mentioned, “What on earth is Heaven, and what is Fate (*ming* 命), how was Fate gifted to people by Heaven, and in which ways does Nature come from Fate”. The reason why these “fatal” questions were not further explained at that time is because “they are not really questions at all (at that time)”.²⁵ Therefore, two questions should be investigated at this point, based on what that people believes does “sincerity” come from Heaven; and what is the meaning of this presumption of Heaven?

²³ The phrase of the unity between Heaven and Human (*tianrenheyi* 天人合一) was often used to indicate the ultimate goal for one’s life. The word “oneness” (*buer* 不二) was borrowed from Xiong Shili, and the differences between Heaven and Human are going to be mainly focused on instead of paying much attention to the “unity” between them in traditional way.

²⁴ *The Doctrine of the Mean*.

²⁵ Pang Pu, “The era from Confucius to Mencius: the Position of *Chu Bamboo Manuscripts of Guodian* lives in the History of Chinese Thoughts (*Kongmengzhijian: guodianchujian de sixiangshi diwei* 孔孟之間—郭店楚簡的思想史地位),” *Social Sciences in China (Chinese version)*, no.5 (1998): 91.

Heaven is not a metaphysical presupposition, but the foundation of man's existence. The way of Heaven is the source of humanity. The choices man makes that comply with it are the ways of man. Thus, we can say that sincerity originates from Heaven. Evidences from classical texts suggest that there are three sources and theories about heaven: *The Book of Poetry*, *Analects*, and correlative parts in the *Five Elements* (*wuxing* 五行) of *Chu Bamboo Manuscripts of Guodian*.

For one thing, the last several chapters of *Zhongyong* mostly either begin or end with some quotation from *The Book of Poetry*, which indicates that the author not only tries to find some foundation for his arguments, but most likely tries to interpret those quotations from the viewpoint of Sincerity. With reference to the discussions about Heaven in *Sacrificial odes of Zhou* (*shijing, zhousong* 诗经·周颂), "the ordinances of Heaven, how deep are they and unremitting," the author of *Zhongyong* shows what is the situation in which sincerity lives. "Without any display, it (Sincerity) becomes manifested; without any movement, it produces changes; and without any effort, it accomplishes its ends."²⁶ This situation is nothing but the way of Heaven. Thus the author used the word "co-equal" of earth and Heaven to describe the oneness between Heaven and the Human. This relationship between them is not a creation which was often understood as from nothing to something in Christianity, but an everlasting process. As interpreted by Zhu Xi, "originating in Heaven and owned by the human." Thus, we know that in *Zhongyong* Sincerity is a ceaseless process and it complies with Heaven.

What is more, the way in which the relationship between sincerity and Heaven was dealt with in *Zhongyong* resembles that of Confucius, who focuses on the "awe of the ordinances of Heaven".²⁷ People's ultimate dependence on Heaven was thus manifested through the sentiment of "awe" or "fear." But *Zhongyong* takes a further step in explaining the "fear" stated by Confucius and attributes it to "vigilance in solitude" (*shendu* 慎獨), and thus established a correlation between "fear" and "Sincerity": "the path may not be left for an instant. If it could be left, it would not be the path."²⁸ Last but not the least, the related parts of the *Chu Bamboo Manuscripts of*

²⁶ *The Doctrine of the Mean* 26.

²⁷ *Analects* (16:8).

²⁸ *The Doctrine of the Mean* 1.

Guodian are also the direct sources for the *School of Si-Meng*, and ideas about Heaven from them directly influenced *Zhongyong*'s understanding of Heaven. *Zhongyong* summarized previous and fragmentary discussions about Heaven at the very beginning. Some scholars have grasped that the treatment of Heaven in *Zhongyong* is the summary of related texts from the *Chu Bamboo Manuscripts of Guodian*: "The first sentence of *Zhongyong*, 'What Heaven has conferred is called Nature,' is actually the integration of these separate elements, there is Heaven and the ordinances, Nature comes from the ordinances, and the ordinances were bestowed from Heaven".²⁹ Sincerity is close to Virtue in the *Five Elements* (五行). "Virtue is to receive" (*dezhedeye* 德者,得也) is the original meaning of "virtue," and it shows that what Heaven has bestowed upon man is "virtue," based on which judgements were made. "Virtue" therefore unites one with Heaven.

To sum up, first, it is Heaven where sincerity originally comes from, and the state of Sincerity is different, yet united as one with Heaven. Sincerity lies with the endless succession of the ordinances of Heaven. Heaven and Sincerity, on which man makes judgments about good or evil, right or wrong, shows people's ultimate dependence on Heaven. What is more, only through the emotion of "fear" which comes from Nature bestowed upon man by Heaven can people get some knowledge of Sincerity. Human religiousness thus was manifested by Sincerity as fear of Heaven but trust in it.

Second, Sincerity is also the purpose that people pursue through reflection on themselves. It is "Sincerity" that makes for the two endings: Heaven and the Good, come together. "Sincerity" was implanted into human heart by Heaven, and it is also the basis on which judgments are made. It is therefore the starting point for living, and from this viewpoint we say that dependence on Heaven constitutes a dimension of human religiousness. Meanwhile, "the attainment of Sincerity," which is the way of humans, is the return to human nature. A question would be, how these two goals connect with each other through "Sincerity?"

"The attainment of Sincerity" is one's path to goodness and the human way. The goodness which one pursues is not something

²⁹ Pang Pu, "The era from Confucius to Mencius: the Position of *Chu Bamboo Manuscripts of Guodian* lives in the History of Chinese Thoughts," 91.

outside oneself, but inside, and it is actually the return to one's original condition, which is Sincerity. The situation of "Sincerity," according to Zhu Xi's explanation, is "reality and honesty, this is the Reason of Heaven" (*zhenshi wuwang, tianli zhi benran* 真實無妄, 天理之本然).³⁰ This implies that "Sincerity" itself has the quality of "self-completion" (*chengji* 成己) and "completes others" (*chengwu* 成物). This quality was called by modern scholars the "creativity" of "Sincerity." Mou Zongshan (牟宗三) interprets "the unceasingness of the ordinances of Heaven" (*tianmingbuyi* 天命不已) as the "unlimited effect." This effect is nothing but the "creativity" of "Sincerity," which results in the disappearance of a "personal God" in the traditional understanding of Heaven.³¹ This concept later on was given further interpretation and emphasis by Tu Weiming and Roger T. Ames.³² The "creativity" was contained in both Heaven and "Sincerity," and is the impetus that forces people to the way to goodness. "Choosing good" is the very first action made by man. "He who attains to Sincerity is he who chooses what is good, and firmly holds fast to it."³³ The "creativity" in the "Sincerity" makes this choice happen. To the people who seek good, it was called on "emotion" (*qing* 情), in which "pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy" were included.

These emotions are people's experience of "Sincerity," and fear of Heaven was revealed through them. How the relationship between "emotions" and "nature" was dealt with in *Zhongyong* is similar with that in the *Chu Bamboo Manuscripts of Guodian*, where it says, "the Spirit (*qi*) (氣) of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and sadness is nature (*xing*) (性)...the way or Tao originally from emotion, and emotion comes from nature (*daoshiyuqing, qingshengyuxing* 道始於情, 情生於性)".³⁴ Before the emotion was excited, what shows in "Sincerity" is the way

³⁰ Zhu Xi, *Commentaries on the Four Books*.

³¹ Mou Zongshan, *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Book of Changes* (*zhouyi zhexue yanjianglu* 周易哲學演講錄), ed. Lu Xuekun (Taipei: Lianjing Press, 2003), 133.

³² Cf. Tu Weiming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness* (New York: SUNY Press, 1989). Roger T. Ames, David L. Hall, *Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong* (University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 30-37.

³³ *The Doctrine of the Mean*.

³⁴ *Chu Bamboo Manuscripts of Guodian · Nature Comes from the Ordinances of Heaven* (*xingzimingchu* 性自命出):1. Penghao, *Chu Bamboo Manuscripts of Guodian* (*guodianchujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡) (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 1998), 179.

of Heaven, the situation in which Heaven and Sincerity are united as one. There are no such emotions as “pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy” since “Sincerity” at this time is the starting point for living in the “reality and honesty” of Heaven. These emotions, therefore, are indirectly pointing to Heaven through “Sincerity.” The emotion of fear of Heaven, thus, is similar. “Reason” or “knowledge” (*zhi* 知), however, is not a part of “fear.” Similar to Confucius’ understanding of “the knowledge of the ordinances of Heaven” (*zhitianming* 知天命), “reason” was understood as the manifestation of “Sincerity,”³⁵ and it is a judgement about “Sincerity” and the result of the creativity of Sincerity. In this regard, only when the process of “self-completion” and “the completion of others” was finished, can Sincerity live in the situation of “reality and honesty.” It is better to say that one has no choice but to accept sincerity as the starting point for one’s life than make this choice based on one’s own “reason.” “Vigilance in solitude” comes after this choice since these judgments about good and evil, right and wrong, should first be checked as to whether or not they comply with the “nature” one already has, which is “Sincerity.”³⁶ Therefore, in order to acquire “knowledge of the ordinances of Heaven,” one should ceaselessly make one’s judgements at present to contrast with “nature.” It is the manifestation of Sincerity itself that drives people to good. Meanwhile, the way to good is the process of “Vigilance in solitude” and therefore the return to “Sincerity.”

Religiousness: Piety and Sincerity

Back to the questions we raised at the beginning of this paper. We can say that the similar understandings of human religiousness for both Calvin and *Zhongyong* pave the way for discussions about the questions of Confucianism. There are important and broad commonalities between Piety and Sincerity with regard to human religiousness. First, both of them are the starting point for one’s living

³⁵ “The possessor of sincerity does not merely accomplish the self-completion of himself. With this quality he completes other men and things also. The completing himself shows his perfect virtue. The completing other men and things shows his knowledge”. *The Doctrine of the Mean*.

³⁶ There is nothing more visible than what is secret, and nothing more manifest than what is minute. Therefore the superior man is watchful over himself, when he is alone. *The Doctrine of the Mean*

in a context and reveal the emotion of fear toward God or Heaven, as well as ultimate dependence on God or Heaven. This comes after the experience of the limitations of one's abilities. Fear and dependence on God or Heaven thus are the two basic elements of human religiousness both for Calvin and *Zhongyong*. According to Calvin, at the time of creation, man has the image of God, which he called "uprightness," and in which these two parts, namely, emotion and reason were included. Based on the emotion of reverence, reason leads people to know and glorify God. The Fall of Adam, however, disturbed the original compatible order between reason and emotion. Self-righteousness and ingratitude began to play the leading role in one's mind, and reason is no longer a guide to know God. But Calvin also mention that this will lead people far away from God, and one's conscience will suffer, since people's own understanding and emotions, instead of direction from God were considered as the only criterion one relies on. People forget the reason why they were created and the place where they came from. At the same time, the sense of divinity is discerned through the general and specific revelation of God. As to the ethical and rational judgments man makes, reason and emotion are not going to work anymore. Once God's revelation is discerned nothing is left but one's reverence and love toward God, which is actually "piety." Human religiousness is thus disclosed in Piety as fear and trust in God. In *Zhongyong*, human religiousness was interpreted through Sincerity, the central conjunction at which Heaven and people's path to goodness are connected. According to *Zhongyong*, the attitude to Heaven is the emotion of fear. This is obvious in Confucius in his treatment of the phrase, "fear to the ordinances of Heaven."

What is more, as the purpose for one's living in each context, both "Piety" and "Sincerity" contain elements to connect the starting point and ending of one's life. For Calvin, people show their reverence and love, which is Piety, to God's revelation, and through this the sense of divinity is transformed to the "renewed image of God." As analyzed above, "reason" and "emotion," which were originally included in "uprightness" before the Fall, still remain in the "sense of divinity." But the structure when combined becomes disorder. The result of that is the experience of one's limitations, since self-righteousness, instead of God's word, play a fundamental role in making one's judgments. Fear of God then comes into the horizon of self-knowledge. This

means that the criterion, which once was one's own understanding and belief now becomes order of God. The trust in God, or ultimate dependence on him, plays the main theme of the melody of one's life. "Emotion" and "reason" now return to their original neat order. Thus these two elements of the sense of divinity give the connection between the beginning and end of human existence. Compared with Piety, Sincerity in *Zhongyong*, plays a similar role. According to *Zhongyong*, the judgments one makes should be based on Sincerity. But at the same time, the target one pursues is to return to what one originally is, which is also Sincerity. Therefore, one's way in pursuing goodness is just the manifestation of Sincerity itself, forced by its own "creativity." While for Calvin, the sense of divinity is clouded by sin. Fear of Heaven is revealed through the emotions of "pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy," and these make the connection between Heaven and one's way to goodness possible.

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Comparing Christian and Buddhist Doctrines of Ignorance: Nicholas Cusanus and Seng-Chao

DING JIANHUA

Religion, as a unique facet of culture, reaches for its own ultimate goal. Both focusing on this “ultimate goal,” Eastern religion and Western religion each have their own doctrines supported by different logic. As the representatives of Eastern religion and Western religion, Christianity and Buddhism each have their own doctrinal systems. Both have attracted many philosophers and monks who devote themselves to studying and discussing such doctrines. But as these religious systems develop there is a tension between theory and practice, rationality and faith. For example, Augustine advocated that one should develop faith first, then understanding, while Chan Buddhism suggested not relying on the written word. One question of great concern is how to regard learning and knowledge. When it comes to religion, is knowledge necessary to achieve realization? This question has garnered much attention, and has been a key point of religious philosophy both historically and in the present day.

As a representative of Christianity, Nicholas Cusanus attempted to answer the question of whether or not knowledge is of benefit to religion through his doctrine of “learned ignorance.” Nicholas Cusanus is “an important person in the Christian world, and one of the most knowledgeable figures in Christian history.”¹

Nicholas Cusanus studied philosophy, theology, natural science, mathematics, astronomy, and so on. Scholasticism was drawing to a close and the Renaissance was gradually rising. At the time, Nicholas was one of the most brilliant philosophers and Christian theologians. Nonetheless, such an important Christian theologian was overlooked by Chinese researchers. This occurred for many reasons. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Marxism and Hegelian philosophy had a great influence on the study of philosophy in China. Philosophers from the

¹ Heinrich Ott, *Das Reden vom Unsagbaren*, Lin ke translated (Beijing: Sanlian Bookstore, 1994), p. 4.

Middle Ages to the Renaissance were not elevated. In addition, researchers lacked knowledge of Lain, which, when combined with Chinese politics' sensitivity to religion, caused Nicholas Cusanus to be neglected for a very long time.

Seng-chao, a Buddhist monastic born about 1000 years before Nicholas Cusanus, wrote many works, the most famous of which is *Prajna Ignorance*. In this book, Seng-chao explained prajna from the perspective of the Mādhyamika School. Like Nicholas Cusanus, Seng-chao also lived at the end of an era. The metaphysics of the Wei and Jin dynasties were in their final years, and the Mādhyamika understanding of prajna and emptiness was introduced during the Han dynasty. "After Master Zhao, Buddhist thought began to spread to the South. Then the Nirvana and Satyasiddhi schools followed and rose to prominence. Though the Nirvana school rose out of the Prajedweool, its philosophy developed into 'wondrous existence and true emptiness'... But Seng-chao was 'foremost in explaining emptiness' and his works followed the questions of existence versus non-existence and essence versus function to their peak. There were some other masters who followed him, but they can scarcely be compared to Master Zhao."²

In 2004, German Sinologist Karl-Heinz Pohl published the essay "Nicholas Cusanus and Chinese Philosophy: Parallels and Differences," which compared Nicholas with Chinese Taoism, pointing out the many similarities and differences between Nicholas and Chinese thinkers. Pohl found that Nicholas' *Learned Ignorance* and *The Hidden God* had a very Eastern flavor.

Although both Nicholas Cusanus and Seng-chao advocated some sort of "ignorance" to deny human understanding and knowledge, their views are built on the massive religious frameworks of Christianity and Buddhism. To call their views similar based simply on their literal expression would undoubtedly be too hasty. But if we regard them as completely irrelevant to one another because they come from different religions, then neither theory will be able to assist the understanding of the other. Such a one-sided view is not helpful to research or personal religious development. But we must admit that both Nicholas Cusanus and Seng-chao are somewhat obscure.

² Tang Yongtong, *Han, Wei and Jin Dynasty Buddhist history* (Hebei People's Press, 2000), p. 254.

Searching for parallels and differences between the two could serve to help promote a better understanding of both.

What Is Ignorance? Learned Ignorance and Prajna Ignorance

Nicholas Cusanus stated that humans understood the world by comparing things they do not know, to things they already know in order to make judgments. Therefore, everything unknown was understood as an analogy with something known: "People always make judgments by comparing an uncertain object with an identified object which is already known. The judgments they made according to this method are just similar; therefore, every discussion is a method of comparison and analogy."³ But this method creates a dilemma because the method only works when the compared objects are relatively similar. It is only an appropriate method of learning when there are few differences between objects. Because God is infinite he is far beyond our range of previously known objects, so every comparison by analogy would be invalid, and that "due to this fact, we cannot recognize infinitude. Since it is unlimited, it is beyond every comparison, and above all comparison."⁴ Human understanding cannot comprehend infinity, and, as a result, a human being must face his own ignorance, even though he is constantly amassing knowledge. This is the basis of Nicholas Cusanus' concept of learned ignorance: "Because our natural desire of pursuing knowledge is not without purpose, its direct object is our own ignorance. If we could fully realize this desire, we'll achieve learned ignorance."⁵

The opening words of Seng-chao's *Commentary on Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra* clearly state his purpose and main theme:

The Incredible Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra is full of absolutely subtle changes, reaching a name of wonderful position. Its theme is deep and sophisticated, indescribable with language or images. Its truth is

³ Nicholas Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, Yin Dayi translated (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2009), p.3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.5.

beyond the three kinds of emptiness, neither Mahayana Buddhism nor Hinayana Buddhism can discuss it. It is above all names and performances, leaving behind the realm of understanding, it is far-reaching. It has no artificial events but dominates everything. I do not know how this is so, it is truly incredible. Why? Because the sage's wisdom is not dependent on the knowledge to detect and analyze all things. The Dharma body does not have a fixed appearance, but shows different forms to adapt to what is needed for enlightenment. These wonders are without words and abound in mystery. Without seeking, they unify all things.⁶

According to the wise, twentieth-century Buddhist monastic Taixu, the theme of the *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra* is a karmic relationship: acquiring prajna wisdom is the cause and attaining a pure Buddhahood is the effect. According to the Buddhist concept of cause and condition, the cause of prajna wisdom and the effect of a pure Buddhahood are not completely separate. They have the relationship of being "not the same and not different." The theme of the above passage from Seng-chao's commentary includes prajna, or could even be said to be prajna itself. In the passage, Seng-chao says that one outstanding quality of the sutra is that it surpasses words and images, which is beyond the realm of what an ordinary person's mind can reach. It is incredible that the sagely wisdom of non-duality may seem like ignorance, but that it is capable of understanding all truths. Therefore we can conclude that Seng-chao's "holy wisdom of ignorance" is for sages. Mr. Lv Cheng considers the wisdom described by Seng-chao to be the prajna of eighth stage Bodhisattvas: "Prajna as described by Seng-chao in *Prajna Ignorance* was the level above the eighth stage Bodhisattva who attains wisdom after practice."⁷

The doctrine of the "holy wisdom of ignorance" advocated by Seng-chao and "learned ignorance" advocated by Nicholas Cusanus are quite different, although both take a negative view of human knowledge within religion. There are essential differences between these two kinds of ignorance, including the two aspects of object

⁶ Seng-chao, *Commentary on Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, Taisho-pitaka 38, p. 327.

⁷ Lv Cheng, *Chinese Buddhist Origins* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2011), p. 107.

description and object negation. Specifically, they answer these questions differently: "Who is ignorant?" and "Who is not ignorant?"

In answering "Who is ignorant?" Seng-chao described the ignorance of a sage: "Holy wisdom is subtle and deep, so it is difficult to measure. Because it is neither a form nor a name, it is difficult for any words or images to describe. Just try to describe the world imagined from a holy heart in so-called crazy words. Can we even say we are capable of discerning the holy heart?"⁸ Nicholas Cusanus said that ordinary people were ignorant, specifically as they seek God: "The deeper he knows himself to be ignorant, the more knowledge he can obtain. I just remember this point to remind me to undertake the task of briefly discussing learned ignorance."⁹

In answering "Who is not ignorant," Seng-chao's description of prajna ignorance depicts the sage as having no ordinary or illusory understanding, that is, ordinary knowledge is "ignorant" when compared to prajna wisdom. Nicholas Cusanus' learned ignorance states that ordinary people do not have knowledge of God and truth, but only have ordinary knowledge.

In summary, Seng-chao's view of prajna ignorance is that sages lack ordinary knowledge (which is false and individual), while Nicholas Cusanus' view of learned ignorance is that ordinary people do not have knowledge of God. Thus it can be seen that both want to express the relative relationship between aspects of knowledge. Both of them wish to express that ordinary knowledge is not "knowledge" in the presence of God or prajna.

Why Ignorance? Emptiness and God

Both Seng-chao and Nicholas Cusanus state that human knowledge is the same as ignorance before religious truth, but both of their doctrines are grounded in the complete religious systems of Buddhism and Christianity, respectively. In Buddhist and Christian history, there were others who put forward similar or contrary propositions, but in each case their theories conformed to the larger religious system of Buddhism or Christianity. Otherwise, their doctrines would be regarded as heresy. So how did Seng-chao and

⁸ Seng-chao, *Chao-lun*, Taisho-pitaka 45, p. 153.

⁹ Nicholas Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, Yin Dayi translated, p. 5.

Nicholas Cusanus use their religions' doctrines to express their ideas of "ignorance"?

Seng-chao describes prajna as ignorance because he claims that a sage's prajna wisdom is different from an ordinary person's knowledge: "Prajna is a Sanskrit word which means 'wisdom.' With no wisdom one could not attain knowledge through objects. Ordinary people think prajna is just like the wisdom from knowledge obtained through objects. But this latter kind of knowledge has attachment. With attachment, it cannot understand how to transcend the world of delusion. The prajna that I discuss is real wisdom—without attachment or object-oriented knowledge. This prajna grasps the holy truth, but it is not attached to the holy truth, thus it is called ignorance."¹⁰ Ordinary people have knowledge attained from objects, which is the result of partial, illusory understanding. Such knowledge distinguished between what exists and does not exist, and what can and cannot be attained. Prajna does not distinguish between objects that exist or do not exist, or can and cannot be attained, nor does it have partial, illusory understanding. In this sense it is "ignorance," but because it knows ultimate truth it is a sort of "knowledge." Based on this understanding, Seng-chao presented the concept of "ignorant but knowing:" "A man who knows all still has some ignorance. But if he has a holy heart's ignorance, it can know all. The knowledge of ignorance is knowing everything."¹¹

Seng-chao's concept that prajna ignorance is the same as complete knowledge is grounded in the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness. Prajna is the understanding of emptiness: that there is no duality between ultimate truth and emptiness. Seng-chao defines holy wisdom by saying, "We may say it exists, but it is without shape or name. We may say it is non-existent, but it sanctifies the spirit. It sanctifies the spirit, and therefore it is silent without giving up manifestation. It is without shape or name, and therefore it is manifest without giving up silence. It is manifest without giving up silence, and therefore it is among all things but does not cease. It is silent without giving up manifestation, and therefore it is in accord with everything as they change. Therefore, the function of holy wisdom cannot be nullified; but if we want to find it in any shape or object, we will never attain it."¹² This passage

¹⁰ Yuan Kang, *Commentary on Chao-lun*, Taisho-pitaka 45, p.174.

¹¹ Seng-chao, *Chao-lun*, Taisho-pitaka 45, p.153.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.153.

described holy prajna wisdom as neither existent nor non-existent. Because it can manifest all things, it is not non-existent. Because it lacks a real shape or name, it is not existent. Not existent means it lacks self-nature. Not non-existent means it arises due to causes. The precise meaning of “emptiness” is dependent origination and the emptiness of nature. Based on this concept, “prajna ignorance” means prajna is constantly silent and manifest, and is without distinction between subject and object or between knowledge and ignorance.

In the world of emptiness, there is no difference between subject and object. The distinction between subject and object is a false phenomenon that arises from the delusion of ordinary people. In the eyes of ordinary people, all phenomena seem to actually exist, when, in fact they are false and based on attachment to the self. Of course the knowledge gained through the false understanding of ordinary people is not real. As one can see, the concept of “prajna ignorance” is grounded in the doctrine of emptiness. Though prajna denies that one is able to acquire knowledge, this is the knowledge of ordinary people, not the sage’s prajna wisdom.

That is how the world of emptiness is without the distinction of subject and object. In addition, Seng-chao further explains how “prajna ignorance” is the same as “complete knowledge” from four perspectives, including name and form, and life and death. The reason he used four perspectives and nine arguments to explain is because ordinary people could not understand how ignorance and complete knowledge could coexist. Ordinary people consider that ignorance and knowledge cannot coexist in the same way that light and darkness cannot coexist. The root of this way of thinking lies in ordinary people’s sense of self. The attachment to phenomena lies in the existence of a self.

The Buddhist doctrine of emptiness helps to remove the false understanding that arises from attachment to the self. In the world of emptiness there is no distinction between subject and object, no difference between things and knowledge of things, no opposition between living and dying, no contrast between real essence and name. Buddhism considers this world, the world of emptiness, to be the real world. Prajna is not different from holy truth and emptiness. They are one.

In addition to *Prajna Ignorance*, Seng-chao also analyzed these concepts deeply from different perspectives in the works *Objects Never*

Move and Unreal Emptiness. *Objects Never Move* is regarded as a Chinese interpretation of the *Treatise on the Middle Way's* Contemplation of Going and Coming Chapter. The two are similar in that they both analyze the meaning of emptiness by observing the movements of objects. Ordinary people use the self as their foundation to see and understand things, therefore they see movement. Sages use emptiness as their foundation to see and understand things, therefore they do not see movement. *Unreal Emptiness* discusses what is real and unreal from the perspective of emptiness. "Real" is defined as possessing self-nature. "Unreal" is defined as being based on dependent origination and the emptiness of nature. Thus all phenomena do not exist, because they do not have self-nature. However, all phenomena are also not non-existent, because such qualities as "true existence" or "true non-existence" are a sort of self-nature. Instead, they are empty.

Although three books are mentioned above, the doctrine of these three books only varies by the perspective they examine. *Objects Never Move* examines the perspective of movement, *Unreal Emptiness* examines the perspective of existence, and *Prajna Ignorance* examines the perspective of understanding. In each case, the meaning of emptiness was the theoretical foundation of Seng-chao's writing.

Through the concept of "learned ignorance" Nicholas Cusanus expressed his doubt that absolute truth can be encompassed by human understanding: "It is clear that whatever we know about the absolute truth, according to its nature, we are never able to fully know it."¹³ The knowledge possessed by people is "ignorant" in light of absolute truth: "the absolute truth has enlightened our darkness toward ignorance in a way that we cannot understand. That's exactly what we have been seeking - learned ignorance."¹⁴ In his opinion, the absolute truth is God: "God, You are the infinite one who meets my only pursuit during my constant seeking. Except knowing the fact that this infinitude is infinite, I cannot know it closer."¹⁵ In a sense, the cause of this ignorance is God. It is from this ignorance of God's infinitude that Nicholas Cusanus bases his concept of "learned ignorance."

¹³ Nicholas Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, Yin Dayi translated, p. 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.100.

Why can't people know God? Because the nature of God is unspeakable. To say nothing of God's true nature, God is sometimes called "infinity," "oneness," "greatness," and so on. This view is expressed in a short but snappy dialogue to some pagans in *The Hidden God*, "I worship God, but not the God you mistakenly think or know; in fact it is God Himself, who is unspeakable truth."¹⁶ This God of truth is different from the God worshipped by others. The important difference is that the God worshipped by Cusanus is eternal, absolute, pure, unspeakable truth itself. The God worshipped by the pagans mentioned in the passage is not absolute truth itself, but instead their truth is to be found in God's creation.

The reason why God cannot be known or explained by language is because God is absolutely great and nothing exists which is his opposite. Whatever language is used to describe God, it will result in a dualistic contradiction: "Because any word is always special, it marks a difference and implies its opposition."¹⁷ "There is not any name in line with infinity, because any name can have an opposite side. But there is no name which can also contain its opposite."¹⁸ For example, if we say that God is truth, the opposite is falsehood. An infinite God would also contain falsehood. If we described God with virtues, the existence of vices are implied, and so on. Cusanus declared that God is beyond everything that we know: "What I have already known is not God, and what I have concluded is not similar to God, but rather God far transcends those things."¹⁹ "He is the only origin and prior to any formed thought related to Him"²⁰

Both concepts of ignorance are grounded in the idea that the ultimate existence of Buddhism and Christianity transcends contradictions. Seng-chao and Cusanus agreed that relative language could not recognize or describe ultimate existence. However, the two differ greatly on what they understand ultimate existence to be. Cusanus regarded truth as God. The truth, as he stated it, actually has many similarities to how the holy truth of Buddhism is expressed, most especially when God is compared to emptiness.

¹⁶ Nicholas Cusanus, *De Deo Abscondito*, Li Qiuling translated (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1996), p.6.

¹⁷ Nicholas Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, Yin Dayi translated, p.52.

¹⁸ Nicholas Cusanus, *De Deo Abscondito*, Li Qiuling translated, p.92.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.7.

Cusanus wrote, "Only absolute greatness is infinite, while compared to it, everything else is finite and limited."²¹ Finite existence and an infinite God are opposites. Things with a beginning and end must arise from infinite existence, because another finite existence could not provide a beginning or end. "The beginning and the end of every finite thing is inevitably absolute greatness."²² Cusanus regarded the universe as great, the same as God, but the universe was secondary and God was primary: "The universe cannot truly be infinite because, although it covers everything, it does not include God," "It [the universe] is created, so of course it obtains its existence from the absolute existence that is God."²³

As a created thing, the universe is not as complete and perfect as God. This is very different from the equality present in the world of emptiness. Cusanus' view is similar to the Buddhist view of "original non-existence" which Seng-chao was critical of. The doctrine of "original non-existence" states that all things begin with non-existence. Tan-ji described this as "Non-existence comes before change, emptiness is the beginning of all objects, thus, it is called non-existence."²⁴ In this sense, "non-existence" can be understood as the infinite existence from which many finite existences are derived. Seng-chao found this theory inconsistent with the Buddhist understanding of prajna, and criticized it in this way: "Regarding original non-existence, the more we talk about it, the more we will feel non-existence. This is not existence, because existence is also non-existence. It is also not non-existence, because non-existence is also non-existence. Those who seek say existence is not real existence, and non-existence is not real non-existence. But why say that existence is being existence, and non-existence is being non-existence? Such a discussion of non-existence is in line with the ways of the mundane world."²⁵ Seng-chao considered the view of original non-existence to have a preference for non-existence, and to explain emptiness as the non-existence that all things come from and ultimately return to. This view is opposed to the prajna view of emptiness explained earlier, and was thus criticized by Seng-chao.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.12.

²² *Ibid.*, p.12.

²³ Nicholas Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, Yin Dayi translated, p.65.

²⁴ Tan-ji, *Biography of Famous monk*, Manzizoku-pitaka 77, p.354.

²⁵ Seng-chao, *Chao-lun*, Taisho-pitaka 45, p.152.

How To Do? Apophatic Theology and Exposition by Negation, Touching Truth and Contemplating God

Human knowledge is nearly powerless in the pursuit of religious goals. Nicholas Cusanus and Seng-chao both articulated doctrines of ignorance to illustrate this point. Their intention was not to deny the possibility of humans seeking religious goals, but to show the right way to pursue such goals.

Based on his doctrine of learned ignorance, Nicholas Cusanus articulated an “apophatic theology,” a theology of negation, as an approach to seek God: “Holy ignorance teaches us that God is unspeakable, because God is infinitely greater than anything which could be expressed by words. Since this is true, if we want to be closer to the truth about God we must adopt the method of elimination and the proposition of negation.”²⁶ Apophatic theology supposes God is “not something” rather than God being “something,” in order to better understand and describe God through language, and assist one in seeking God.

Cusanus believed apophatic theology was as important as positive theology, and that it should not be neglected. Without apophatic theology, God will not be seen as truly infinite and as a result God may become an idol in the relative world. Also, when compared to positive descriptors, negative descriptors are more reflective of reality: “In theology, a negative descriptor may make you wonder how it can be true, but a positive descriptor will be insufficient.”²⁷ Why is this so? Negative descriptors are more sufficient because God transcends language and thought. Any recognition of God is just a one-sided description of God. As previously stated, this is problematic because it causes an infinite God to also be described by its opposite, while apophatic theology avoids these problems.

Through apophatic theology, Cusanus discusses how to seek God: “God Himself is *theos*, that is, contemplating and running. He is watching everything, existing in everything, and is running over everything. Everything is watching Him, as they would watch their King. Everything moves and runs according to His instructions. Even if they have the goal of rest, their goal is to run towards Him.

²⁶ Nicholas Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, Yin Dayi translated, p.59

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Therefore, everything is *theos*. *Theos* is the origin from which all things flow, the center of which we are in, and which all things return to.”²⁸ Through contemplating and running, Cusanus describes God as closely related to all things, stating that all things are formed and return to God as their origin. In addition, Cusanus explains other ways to seek God, including seeking God through humanity. For example, one looks to see if there are any similarities between humans and God, and in finding none, “You conclude that God as the reason of your rational soul, the origin and the light of life, which transcends all things.”²⁹ This is the embodiment of apophatic theology: by denying oneself as a human, everything in the universe comes closer to God.

Compared to Cusanus’ principle of apophatic theology and other ways to seek God, Seng-chao did not specifically deal with how to attain prajna in *Prajna Ignorance*. However, in discussing prajna as “ignorance and complete knowledge,” he showed the Buddhist approach to attaining such “ignorance:” giving up the self, i.e., losing egocentrism. Various Buddhist schools each have different ideas about how one loses egocentrism. For example, the Consciousness-Only School’s “five principles of consciousness-only,” the Tiantai School’s “one mind with three perspectives,” and the Chan School’s “illuminate the mind and see one’s nature,” and so on.

Similar to Cusanus’ apophatic theology, Seng-chao also was good at using the Buddhist method of “exposition by negation.” For example, he describes prajna by describing what it is not: “The holy heart is subtle without form, it cannot be regarded as existent. But as it has many functions, it cannot be regarded as non-existent.”³⁰ Prajna is formless, thus you might call it non-existent, but it functions to constantly give rise to existence, so you might call it existent. When it comes to formlessness, prajna ignorance does not refer to how an ordinary person has knowledge of objects. Seng-chao took it one step further and said that prajna ignorance is both ignorant and complete knowledge. Because prajna functions to constantly give rise to existence, thus it is complete knowledge.

In summary, these two approaches of “apophatic theology” and “exposition by negation” are the same insofar as they explain things

²⁸ Nicholas Cusanus, *De Deo Abscondito*, Li Qiuling, p.21

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.32

³⁰ Seng-chao, *Chao-lun*, Taisho-pitaka 45, p.153.

through negation. But we should also be aware of the differences between them. Exposition by negation is not a way to attain prajna, but is a Buddhist method of explanation. Cusanus' apophatic theology is a way to explore God. This approach itself is "learned ignorance."

Cusanus' approach to knowing God through examining the universe and humanity is similar to what Seng-chao calls "touching the truth."³¹ This means to experience the emptiness that is the true form of all compounded phenomena. This view is consistent throughout Buddhism. The Huayan School's doctrine of "no obstruction between principle and phenomena," the Chan School's "without feeling but with characteristics," and other such views are different extensions of this same concept.

Because of the fundamental differences between God and emptiness, the similarity of these approaches is superficial. To attain "prajna ignorance and complete knowledge" you must lose egocentrism, as the knowledge of ordinary people is illusory and partial and shouldn't be pursued. In contrast, in seeking God, one continues to look into one's own human knowledge and see it as ignorance. In this sense, this process increases the sense of self, though the final goal is to grasp the truth, that is, clear perception of God. Nicholas Cusanus said, "except through truth itself, how can the truth be grasped? If there is a grasper then there is an object to be grasped."³² Though the process is completely different, the end is the same: abandoning the smaller self for the greater self.

Conclusion: Limitations of Knowledge

After a comparative analysis of Nicholas Cusanus and Seng-chao's doctrines of ignorance from three aspects, we can see that ignorance is not a lack of knowledge, but rather a negation of knowledge in the face of absolute truth. What is the basis of this negation? The need to negate the "knowledge" of how things are. In this sense, religious ignorance does not instruct us to go back into blindness, but seeks to help us understand the limitations of human knowledge.

In Buddhism, the meaning of language, understanding, and knowledge are all the same: they are the illusions and delusions of

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Nicholas Cusanus, *De Deo Abscondito*, Li Qiuling, p.4.

ordinary people. Buddhism has always declared the limitations of language, but at the same time it does not completely abandon language. *Prajna Ignorance* contains a famous passage: “Concerning language, though it [the truth] cannot be spoken of with language, if there were no language, nothing would be passed on.”³³ This concept Seng-chao derived from Nāgārjuna, the founder of the Mādhyamika School. Nāgārjuna declared in the *Treatise on the Middle Way*: “If you do not depend on worldly truth, you will not obtain the highest truth. If you cannot obtain the highest truth, you will not obtain nirvāna.”³⁴ Qingmu considered language a worldly truth, and if we do not depend on worldly truth, the highest truth cannot be spoken.

The type of prajna discussed by Seng-chao is the “prajna of true reality.” Prajna is variously classified into three kinds of prajna or five kinds of prajna. For example, one type is the prajna of language. In this method of prajna one’s language is pure as “the explanation of meaning and content of the sutras and so forth.” Zibo Zhenke, one of the four eminent monks of the Ming Dynasty, considered the first stage of prajna to be the prajna of language, followed by the prajna of contemplation, then finally the prajna of true reality. If we hope to attain Buddhahood immediately but blindly exclude language and knowledge, such is just as much an illusion as drawing a picture of a cake to allay hunger.

If we discard knowledge because of its limitations, that is like giving up eating for fear of choking. From their own experiences, we can see that both Nicholas Cusanus and Seng-chao were learned persons. And the more learned a man is, the more he will have a profound understanding of the limitations of knowledge, just as Aristotle knew himself to be ignorant. This is the real meaning of religious “ignorance.”

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³³ Seng-chao, *Chao-lun*, Taisho-pitaka 45, p.153

³⁴ The *Madhyamaka-sāstra*, Taisho-pitaka 30, p.33

Similarities in “Sheng-Sheng,” Meet in “Love”: *Confucianism and Christianity*

EUM JIN TAIK

Introduction

Christian thought is based on the relationship between God and man, and accepts transcendental theology as the foundation. The thought of “unity of heaven and human” is the highest realm of Christian thought; ethics is an important component. Confucianism is based on ethics, emphasizing natural isomorphism and “Harmony between heaven and the human.” This thought has the tendency of pan-moralism.

Ding Guangxun said, “God is love, and this is the most important fact in all facts in the whole universe.” Unlike Ding Guangxun, Wang Weifan¹ found that the meeting point between Christianity and Chinese culture is *sheng* (生: giving birth) — giving birth, keeping active, being positive in the cycle of life.

According to Luo Guang², “*sheng-sheng*, the first ‘*sheng*’ means giving birth, which resulted from intercourse of Heaven and Earth, the performance of Yin and Yang. The last ‘*sheng*’ means all living things.” “Intercourse of yin and yang is the concept of *dao* (道) in which the nature is obtained.”³

Li Chenggui⁴ said, “*sheng-sheng* became an intrinsic dimension of Confucian thought; because not only was it the fundamental concept

¹ Wang Weifan, born in Taizhou, Jiangsu Province in 1927, professor, priest, theologian, and theological educator of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. He first advocated the theory of “*sheng-sheng* theology”. He is the author of *Encyclopedia of China• Religion Volume*, etc.

² Luo Guang (1911~2004), born in Hengyang, Hunan Province. His other name is Zhuozhao. Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Sacred Theology of Pontificio Università Urbaniana, Roma. Doctor of Judicial Science of Pontificia Università Lateranense. He is the author of *Outline of History of Chinese Philosophy*, etc.

³ Luo Guang, *Confucian Philosophy of Life* (Taiwan: Taiwan Studentbook Press, 1995), pp.101-103.

⁴ Li Chenggui, born in Wannian, Jiangxi Province in 1963, professor of Philosophy Department of Nanjing University, member of Academic Committee,

of Confucianism, but it had the richness of a basic idea for all Confucian views and thoughts. It not only clearly presented the *sheng-sheng* concept of Confucianism, but also fully described its meaning. The basic idea of *sheng-sheng* thought is as follows: 1) to create *sheng*, 2) to cultivate *sheng*, 3) to maintain *sheng*, 4) to become *sheng*, 5) to cherish *sheng*, and 6) to fulfill *sheng*.⁵ This idea focused on the process of generation, change, development and extinction which is stressed in *the Book of Changes*. The opposition and the extinction become the possibilities of another important cycle of generation and development. At the same time, it is found that death is the reason for the desire for life.

The Meeting Point of “Sheng-Sheng” Thought in the Holy Bible and the Book of Changes

Popular Belief of the Folk: Eight-Trigram (八卦) in the Book of Changes and the Cross in the Holy Bible

The eight-trigram (八卦) in *the Book of Changes* is widely spread and became a popular folk belief. People adopted the eight-trigram schematic as the sacred flag, and believed that it could expel demons and guarantee safety and happiness. It is similar to the cross which is recognized as the symbol of the Savior of mankind in the Western Christian world. The cross includes the entire Christian truth, the gospel of the Savior Jesus Christ, and the symbols. The schematic of the cross is simple, and it contains only two writings on one horizontal line and one vertical line. The cross schematic is similar to the basic two parallel lines in Chinese two primary forms (两仪) of the supreme Ultimate (太极) schematic.

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⁵ Li Chenggui, “*sheng-sheng*, Intrinsic Dimension of Confucian Thought,” *Academic Research*, vol 5 (Guangzhou: Guangdong Social Sciences Association, 2012), pp.3-8.

The Title of Human “Father” – “Heaven” and “God”

In Christian doctrine, the God who created everything in the world is not only called “God,” but also there is another title, that is, “heavenly Father.” For example, in Matthew, the verses are as follows: “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” (Matthew 6:14-15).

Confucianism declared “heaven” as the common source of all things in the universe, in fact, that could be said to announce the organic integrity of the natural world. What we can find is interesting because Confucianism is similar to Christianity, for Confucianism usually called the “father” for “heavenly,” as in “Heavenly Father, Earthly Mother.”⁶

Mankind’s Initiative among Heaven, Earth, Human

The idea of the harmony between Heaven, Earth and the Human in *the Book of Changes* is apparent. Interestingly, the condition of realizing harmony between human beings and nature in *the Book of Changes* is human initiative.

The Holy Bible also recorded that human ancestors - Adam and Eve - ate the fruit which could let them know what is good and what is evil so they were driven out of the beautiful Garden of Eden. So the eventual attainment of unity between heaven and the human depends on human initiative, and from this point of view, there is some similarity between *the Book of Changes* and *The Holy Bible*.

The Process of “Sheng-Sheng” is “Changing” - the Intercourse, Dynamic and Organic Cycle of Yin and Yang

The principle of life in *the Book of Changes* is hidden in the changes. Change results from events in the universe following upon each other. The nature of the universe is always unceasingly moving and

⁶ *Shangshu, Zhoushu, Taishi* I said, “Only heaven and earth could be father and mother of all things; only human beings could be superior to all things. Your temperament is wise and if you could be Lord of the nation you should be father and mother of citizens.” (《尚书·周书·泰誓上》：“惟天地万物父母，惟人万物之灵。亶聪明作元后，元后做民父母。”)

changing because of this push-over principle. The Yin and Yang principle is described as follows:

The sun is gone and then comes the moon; the moon is gone and then comes the sun. The sun and the moon are pushed over each other and make the day and night. The winter is gone and then comes the summer; the summer is gone and then comes the winter. The winter and the summer are pushed over each other and make the year.”
(*The Book of Changes*, the Survey Part I: Chapter 2)

The power of the things in the universe is not endless. When power reaches the extreme, it needs to recuperate in order to recover the natural state of infinite cycle.⁷ *The Holy Bible* also shows an operating regularity of all things in the universe, and this regularity never stops in the world. The circulation changes are expressed as follows:

Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course...What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; here is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one can say, “Look! This is something new”? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time.
(Ecclesiastes 1:4-10)

The Holy Bible also states how to get the portion which was gained by your hard labor under the sun when you were young. The statement is as follows:

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, “I find no pleasure in them.” (Ecclesiastes 1:1, 13, 14)

⁷ Kim Min-Soo, *Study on Life Philosophy in the Book of Changes* (Seoul: Sung Kyun Kwan University, 2010), pp. 2-3.

The Old Testament of the Bible is a fall and restoration of the history of mankind.

The Praise for Life.

The Book of Changes has another important characteristic—the praise for life. *The Book of Changes* uses the virtue of heaven to describe the accessibility of life and the inheritance of life. For example, Tai Hexagram (泰卦) and Xian Hexagram (咸卦), which blend between Yin and Yang, represent the symbolic meaning of life creation. While Pi Hexagram (否卦) and Bo Hexagram (剥卦), which do not blend between Yin and Yang represent the bad luck signs foretelling the dying life.

It was recorded in Genesis of *the Holy Bible* that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” There was always an evaluation sentence after God’s everyday creation — “And God saw that it was good.” (Genesis 1: 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). After the sixth day’s creation of human, there was a conclusive evaluation — “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31). Here the word “good” is “well,” and the Hebrew word is “טוב” (transliteration word is towb, in English is “good,” “well”). The word of “well” or “good” has appeared 558 times in the Bible. This expression “טוב” in the Bible is similar to the expression of “goodness” in *the Book of Changes*. In *the Book of changes*, the verses are as follows: “The intercourse between yin (阴) and yang (阳) could cause reproduction, which is called *dao* (道). To continue *dao* is ‘goodness’.”⁸ (*The Book of Changes*, Survey part I: Chapter 5).

The Source of “Sheng-Sheng,” “Tai chi” and “God”

The first sentence in the Bible is, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1). The fifth verse of the twenty-first chapter of the last book of the Bible is, “He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’” (Revelation 21:5) Corresponding with God’s first action “to create,” it is not “to destroy,” but “to renew.”

⁸ *The Book of Changes*, Survey part I: chapter 5, “一阴一阳之谓道, 继之者善也.”

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation, 1:8) This means that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" "the crucifixion of Jesus," "His resurrection" and "the new heavens and new earth." The word "I" just represents the God who can implement endless creation and a virtuous cycle.

This expression in the Bible is similar to the expression of life reproduction and enlargement in *the Book of Changes*: "The changes have the supreme Ultimate. The supreme Ultimate gives birth to primary forms (yin and yang), the two primary forms give birth to the four basic images (greater yin, greater yang, lesser yin and lesser yang), and the four basic images to the eight trigrams. Changes of the eight trigrams can determine good fortune or disaster. Determination of good fortune and disaster can help people accomplish great causes." (*The Book of Changes* · the Survey I, Chapter 11). ("God created the world," "the crucifixion of Jesus Christ," "His resurrection," "new world," "supreme Ultimate," "eight trigram," "good fortune or disaster," "great causes.")

In the opinion of Wang Weifan, to realize the Bible in the thought of the unity of creation and salvation is an inevitable conclusion of traditional Chinese dialectical thought. This is quite different from the Western dualism theory, which keeps God's creation and salvation separated and even opposite. Wang Weifan's "endless *sheng-sheng*" view of God is the theological explanation of the image of God with Chinese culture characteristics. He described God with the character of endless *sheng-sheng*, and in this way he made the image of God fit better into the Chinese culture perspective. Thus it could be more easily accepted by Chinese Christians. His conception of God is based on his understanding of Chinese culture.

His view of God endlessly giving birth perfectly fits the "cosmology of constant reproduction change," that is the "intercourse between yin and yang to cause the constant reproduction to be the essential concept of change." "Intercourse of yin and yang is the concept of *dao* (道)." (*The Book of Changes*, the survey part 1, Chapter 5). He realized that *dao* has endless continuous creation ability, and everything now is rooted in *dao*. "The *dao* produced One; One produced Two; Two produced Three; Three produced all things." (*The Dao De Ching*, 42).

The first verses of the Gospel of John in the New Testament said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” (John, 1: 1, 2, 14). This Word is Jesus, the Jew from Nazareth, the son of a carpenter. The above “Word” in those verses is *logos* meaning “word and principle” in Greek (Hellas). All English, Korean, and Japanese versions of the Bible translated it into “Word”,⁹ but only the Chinese version of the Bible translated into “*dao* (道).” I think this is the influence of *dao* thought in *the Book of Changes* and *the Dao De Ching*. So the Bible translator thought the Chinese concept of *dao* is similar to the basis of the Christian God.

One of the Principles of “Unchanging,” the Moral Centrality

The Qian Hexagram in *the Book of Changes* said, “The superior man works tenaciously all day long and keeps vigilant at night. There is a danger but no harm.” The Six at the fourth line of the Kun Hexagram said, “He keeps silent as if a sack was tightly fastened at the mouth, and he can avoid harm and does not expect honor.” It means that the fate of humanity can be changed according to their noble virtues of introspection and self-cultivation.¹⁰

The Qian Hexagram symbolizes heaven which manifests itself in the four virtues of origination, prosperity, harmony and perseverance (The supplement of the Qian Hexagram). These four virtues in Confucius have been explained as “benevolence, rites, righteousness and intelligence.” All the images of the Hexagram have explained the road of life to becoming a gentleman. And from this point, we can see

⁹ Eng (NIV, John1:1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Chinese (简体) 太初有道, 道与神同在, 道就是神.

Korean (개역개정) 태초에 말씀이 계시니라, 이 말씀이 하나님과 함께 계셨으니, 이 말씀은 곧 하나님이시니라.

Japanese (spoken language) 初めに言があった。言は神と共にあった。言は神であつた。

Greek (hellas) Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος

¹⁰ Chui Young-Jin, *Philosophy Pursuit of the Thought in the Book of Changes* (Seoul: Sung Kyun Kwan University graduate school, 1989), p. 18.

that the purpose of the change of Yaoci in *the Book of Change* is to generate and develop all living things in nature.

The Holy Bible also emphasizes the Law. *The Holy Bible* has recorded that Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the Ten Commandments. In the New Testament, a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." (Matthew 19:16-17. An expert in the Law, asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it, "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:36-40).

A Comparative Study between Confucian "Benevolence" and Christian "Love"

Both Confucianism and Christianity attach great importance to life and morals, especially "benevolence" and "love." So I will compare Confucian "benevolence" and Christian "love" from the view of *the Holy Bible* and *The Analects of Confucius*.

The Essential Source

The basic meaning of "benevolence" is as follows: (1) the friendly relationship of family members; (2) the thoughts of "pan-loving all men," "the benevolent people love all men" and "nothing is not loved by the benevolent people" shows a friendly attitude towards all men according to the way of treating family members; (3) "the benevolent people love all men" performed by a ruler is to have a loving heart towards the citizens. The government ruler should adopt benevolent governmental supervision, taking part in the worries and joys of the citizens.

The Holy Bible says, "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1John 4:8). "For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, [Or His only begotten Son] that whoever

believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16). Finally, when Christians talk about the connotation of “love” there is a very important word “Agape, “which means “God Himself is love,” and there is no any requirement to pay back as conditions.

The Approach for Its Realization

The approach for realization of “benevolence” is reasonable and logical — the natural development of divinity in human nature.

Its specific performance is “to exercise self-restraint and resume the rules of propriety” and “to love all men.” The Master said, “To exercise self-restraint and resume the rules of propriety will mean benevolence.” (*The Analects of Confucius*, Yan Yuan).

Because the source of Christian “love” is God, the approach to its realization could not be separated from God. I think the approach is embodied in the word of “Immanuel.” In *the Holy Bible*, “Immanuel” has at least two meanings:

“Emmanuel” is the name of Jesus, and Jesus was born by a virgin named Mary upon whom the Holy Spirit comes. He is a complete man (born by a virgin) and a complete God (conceived by the Holy Spirit). Incarnated Christ Jesus is an absolute perfect model of “unity” of heaven and humanity, and they find Him the “ladder”¹¹ through which a sinner could return to God.

“Emmanuel”¹² has another meaning of “God is with us” which indicates that only when God is with man, the Agape “love” could transform reality. As Jesus said, “On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. (Unity of heaven and human). Because if a man is apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 14:20, 15:5)

Jesus said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (*Luke* 9:23).

¹¹ Wang Weifan, “Full of Grace and Truth,” *Jinling Theological Review* (Nanjing: Jinling Theological Press, 1999(2), pp. 14-16.

¹² *The Holy Bible*, Matthew 1:23, The Virgin will be with Child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel — [Isaiah 7:14] which means, God with us. Immanuel (im: with, manu: us, el: God, God is with us).

The Specific Performance

The Aspect of "Loving Relatives." Confucianism is a humanistic religion. During its process from the lower level unto transcendence, there is not any stable natural instinct basis; "love" is almost impossible and unless this "loving relatives" which is built on the basis of family radiates gradually, then it will not reach the extent of "loving all men."¹³

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you." (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16). Besides, *the Holy Bible* counts that the basic performance is to "love relatives" when love of God acts on man. "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8).

The Aspect of "Loving All Men." So we can see that in the view of Confucianism, "serving one's father" and "loving relatives" could generate naturally moral feelings and behaviors of "serving his prince" and "respecting his rulers," i.e., moral feelings and behaviors of respecting nation and family ancestors.

Secondly, from one side, Christianity approved the human relationship based on blood ties of "loving relatives" but at the same time, it denied this from another higher level, because in the view of *the Holy Bible*, God's house is a group that goes beyond blood ties, and people need to love one another much more than "love all men". In *the Holy Bible*, someone told Jesus, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? Here are my mother and my brothers, for whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (*Matthew 12:47-50*).

Here we can see that the relationship Jesus valued is far beyond human relationship based on blood ties, and it seems that such relationship is even more transcendental than human relationship. Because Jesus had put forward a higher requirement for human group to have a vertical relationship with God.

¹³ Zhu Hong, and Xun Ling, "Meeting in Love," *Journal of Ningbo University*, Volume 18, No. 4 (Ningbo: Liberal Arts Edition, 2005), p. 31.

Summary

Through comparison of specific performance of these two kinds of “loving relatives” and “loving all men,” we can see that Confucian love is mainly to practice self-cultivation, to improve social life, and to gain acknowledgment from others. So they could “love relatives,” and “love all men.” At this point Confucian “benevolence” is wonderfully equal to Christian “love.”

But they could not love the enemy or the avenger who they think doesn’t deserved to be loved. Because if they love them, it is a compromise to others and it is against the realization of “benevolence.” No wonder the Master said, “It is only the virtuous man who knows how to love and hate.” (*The Analects of Confucius*, Neighborhood).

Conclusion

In this paper, we have seen that “sheng- sheng” and “love” are similar to each other in many aspects. The priest Fang Zhirong¹⁴ said, “we do not have to prove how many similarities or implications there are between *the Holy Bible* and *the Book of Changes*, we only need to understand how *the Holy Bible* could help people to understand *the Book of Changes*, and how *the Book of Changes* could help people to understand *the Holy Bible*.”

We need to find out the essence and to explore the origin. If we wish Christianity and Confucianism to be accommodated to each other and that they achieve mutual benefit, we need to look forward a time when *the Holy Bible* and *the Book of Changes* may be able to know each other and be in dialogue. We hope that Christian thought and Chinese Confucianism might communicate and accommodate with each other further and finally realize an integration of Christianity and Confucianism.

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Confucius' Cosmology Integrates "The Way of Heaven" and "The Will of God": A Comparison with the Concept of Creation in the Bible

LAM YUET PING

In the terminology of Otto, the modern philosopher of religious phenomenology, "Heaven" (*tian* 天) is indicated as "the Sacred One" (*shenshengzhe* 神聖者) and it is believed that the foremost premise of all religious faiths is to "awaken" this Sacred Entity within one's own heart.¹

"The Will of God" (*tianming* 天命) of *The Analects of Confucius* 《論語》 refers to the will and decisions of "the Sacred One" mentioned above, including the separate, individual existential callings of the individual located in the human world; it is a force that cannot be swayed by human power. The "Way" (*dao* 道), from a philosophical point of view, is the basic governing principle of events and objects. Therefore, "the Way of Heaven" (*tiandao* 天道) is the essential cosmic governing principle of generating and operating in the universe.

It was certain that Confucius had fully inherited the "Three Generations" of the ancient traditions. Similarly, that religious thought appeared in ancient literature is also an indisputable fact. In *the Book of Shangshu* 《尚書》, the concepts of "Heaven," "the Will of God," "the Way of Heaven" in a religious sense, and "impartial justice" (*Zhongzheng* 中正, the highest goodness)—a moral ontology of "Heaven," [X1]their earliest recording in *the Book of Yushu • Da Yu Discussion* 《虞書•大禹謨》. The opening passage of the *Da Yu Discussion* recorded the discussions between the Emperor Shun 舜, Bo Yi 伯益, Da Yu 大禹, and Gao Yao 皋陶. They reminded and encouraged one another to obey "the Will of God," to practice "the

¹ (Germany) Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (Chengdu: Sichuan People Press, 1995), p. 29, trans. Cheng Qiong 成窮, Zhou Bangxian 周邦憲. Quoted from Zhao Fasheng 趙法生. 2011. "Confucius' Concept of the Will of Heaven and Transcendence Ideology." *Journal of Tsinghua University*. Vol.26, no.6, p. 81.

Way of Heaven,” to operate “impartially” (*Zhong* 中) and to be good and kind towards people:

(Bo Yi encouraged Shun), “Great ‘Heaven’ cared (Yao 堯); ‘The Will (of God)’ made (Yao) the king of the world within the four seas.”

...

(Yi encouraged Shun), “Ah! Be watchful! Warn yourself from mistakes! Don’t give up laws and regulations...don’t break ‘the Way (of Heaven)’ to get compliments from people...”

...

(Shun praised Gao Yao), “The application of punishment makes people suitable for ‘impartiality.’ This is your credit, you really did well!”

...

(Shun encouraged Yu), “People’s hearts and minds are dangerous, and ‘the Way (of Heaven)’ is imperceptible, but concentrate yourself carefully, be sincere and single-minded to keep ‘impartiality’...Be respectful! Treat your emperor’s throne carefully. Devoutly cultivate virtues, have pity on poor people within the four seas and make them live peacefully, then your throne will be blessed by ‘Heaven’ forever.”

...

(Yi helped Yu), “Only virtues could move ‘Heaven’, there is no one else could reach farther than virtues. Pride hurts, modesty benefits. This is ‘the Way of Heaven.’”

Confucius “was enamored of *The Book of Changes* in his later years.” The writers of *The Jing Series* 經部 of *the Book of Changes* 《周易》 were Emperor Wen Wang 文王 and Zhou Gong 周公. Both the concept of “Heaven” and the concept of “Way” expressed by them in *The Jing Series* similarly had a religious sense. The virtue of “impartiality” with personality traits was one of the core ideas of *The Book of Changes*. “Heaven” appeared three times in *The Jing Series of the Book of Changes*, respectively in *Dayou Hexagram* (大有卦), *Kui Hexagram* (睽卦), and *Gou Hexagram* (姤卦). *Dayou Hexagram* Yao Ci 爻辭, ‘Heaven’ blesses those who practice virtues, making them harmonious and prosperous without bad fortune or disadvantages.” “The Way” appeared one time as the meaning of “natural law,” *Fu Hexagram* (復卦) Gua Ci 卦辭 said, “...Repeatedly after seven days, *Yang Qi* 陽氣 returned according to the ‘natural way’ , thus it is helpful to go forward.” The

signs which implied a religious sense appeared three times in *Xiaoxu Hexagram* (小畜卦), *Lv Hexagram* (履卦) and *Sui Hexagram* (隨卦). *Lv Hexagram* Yao Ci said, "Nine-Two: Those who are hindered and in danger could modestly decline and keep 'impartiality' to obtain the blessing to relax." The positive expressions of prosperity beyond illness and disasters because of keeping 'impartiality' and practicing righteousness appeared in seven signs, which are *Song Hexagram* (訟), *Tai Hexagram* (泰), *Jiaren Hexagram* (家人), *Yi Hexagram* (益), *Guai Hexagram* (夬), *Feng Hexagram* (豐), *Weiji Hexagram* (未濟). *Song Hexagram* Gua Ci said, "Even if there are obstacles and difficulties, if one has sincerity and is alert to practice 'impartiality' then he will gain blessings and fortunes." *Weiji Hexagram* Yao Ci said, "Nine-Two: If one gains harmonious and prosperous blessings, it is because he has practiced 'impartiality.'"

The "Way" was born from the "Will" (*ming* 命), namely Confucius' integrity thought of "the Way of Heaven" and "the Will of God". "The Way of Heaven" in ancient literature was directed at the principle by which "the Way of Heaven" operates in the world, that is, "impartiality," the virtue of the Dominate Personality (人格主宰). Confucius considered that "the Way of Heaven" manifested itself through the motions of all terrestrial objects and so "rite" (*li* 禮) was the specification of persons and events according to the embodiment of "the Way of Heaven". Again, as noted above, Confucius "was enamored of *the Book of Changes* in his later years." It conveyed a deep understanding of the virtue of "impartiality" with respect to the Dominant Personality. He regarded "the Way of Heaven" as the creation of heaven and earth, which developed this comprehension of of the consciousness of the universe. This comprehension of "the Way of Heaven" was more complete and mature.

The Process for Confucius from His Personality-Dominated Concept to Cosmology That Integrates "The Will of God" and "The Way of Heaven"

*Confucius' Personality-dominated concept in His Early and Later Years:
"Respecting Ghosts and Gods, but Keep a Certain Distance from Them"
(jinguisheneryuanzhi 敬鬼神而遠之)*

Confucius' Concept of "the Will of God" in His Later Years. Confucius' feeling of "the Will of God" was very strong in his later years; he himself stated "at fifty, I comprehend the Will of God." (*The Analects of Confucius* · Wei Zheng (為政)). The earliest reference in literature was documented in Ding Gong 定公 Twelve Year (498 BC). At the time Confucius was 54 years old, Gong Boliao 公伯寮 was jealous of Zi Lu 子路. Confucius said, "Will the Way of Heaven operate in the world? It is God's Will to determine. Will the Way of Heaven terminate in the world? It is also God's Will to determine. What can Gong Boliao be if God's Will is determined?" (*The Analects of Confucius* • Xian Wen (憲問)) At the age of 56, he visited Nan Zi 南子, the wife of Weiling Gong 衛靈公. Zi Lu displeased and criticized him. The Master swore, saying, "Wherein I have done improperly, may Heaven reject me! May Heaven reject me!" (*The Analects of Confucius* • Yong Ye (雍也)). When he was 57 years old, he left Wei 衛 and went to Cao 曹 and then Song 宋, Si Ma Huan Tui 司馬桓魋 of Song Guo hated Confucius and threatened to do harm to him, he said, "Heaven produced the virtue that is in me. Huan Tui - what can he do to me?" (*The Analects of Confucius* • Shu Er (述而)). At the age of 60, when he was crossing the Yellow River going west towards Zhao 趙, he heard Zhao Jianzi 趙簡子 had killed the officials Dou Mingdu 甯鳴犢 and Shun Hua 舜華, so he decided to go back and he thought it was God's will, sighing at the edge of the Yellow River, he said, "What beautiful water, magnificent! I (Confucius), could not cross, it's God's Will!" (*Shiji* 《史記》 • *the Biography of Confucius (kongzishijia 孔子世家)*). When Confucius was 70 years old, Yan Yuan 顏淵 died. He was very sad and said, "Heaven is destroying me!" (*The Analects of Confucius* • Xian Jint (先進)). In the spring at 71 years of age, Shu Sun Shi 叔孫氏 hunted a Chinese unicorn. Confucius thought it was an ominous sign to him shown by Heaven. He said, "My hope of practicing the Way is gone!" (*the Biography of Confucius*) Sighing with lamentations, the Master said to Zi Gan 子贛², "Alas! No one understands me...But there is Heaven -

² I agree with *The Analects of Confucius* Dingzhou Han Bamboo-slip Script 《論語》定州漢簡本. Gong 貢: contributions; Gan 贛: grant. Han Dynasty *Xipingshijing* 熹平石經, Tang Dynasty Lu Deming 陸德明, Five Dynasties Xu Kai 徐鍇, Song Dynasty Hong Mai 洪邁, Qing Dynasty Duan Yucai 段玉裁 and Liu Baonan 劉寶楠 all agreed with this version, and Dingzhou Han Bamboo-slip Script confirmed this.

it understands me!" (*Xian Wen*). At the age of 73, he was very sick; Zi Lu asked, "Could I pray for you?" The Master said, "My praying has been for a long time." (*Shu Er*). Therefore, if we believe it is because Confucius "was enamored of *the Book of Changes* in his later years" that he tended to a naturalistic view of "the Way of Heaven"; or we think "the Way of Heaven" in *the Book of Changes* was a kind of natural way; both are difficult to establish.

Analysis of "Respect ghosts and gods, but Keep a Certain Distance from Them." It is noteworthy that Fan Chi 樊遲 asked what constituted wisdom. The Master said, "Lead the people to justice; respect souls and spirits but keep a certain distance from them." This also happened in his later years. Fan Chi was born in Lu 魯 and he was 36 years younger than Confucius. According to what Confucius answered, we could see that Fan Chi was involved in politics. When Confucius lost political advantages and left Lu, Fan Chi was only 19 years old and could not be an official or have the responsibility of "leading the people to justice". Fan Chi made contributions by suppressing Qi 齊 with another disciple Ran You 冉有 in Ai Gong 哀公 Eleventh Year (484 BC), so Ji Kangzi 季康子 welcomed Confucius to return to Lu. This implied Fan Chi had already reached the upper status. And if so, the earliest time this dialogue occurred was after Confucius spent 14 years traveling around nations and came back to Lu at the age of 68.

What Confucius said in *Li Ji* 《禮記》·*Biao Ji* (表記) was in line with his ancestors. The Master said:

The principle of the Xia 夏 Dynasty was the fear of God's will, serving ghosts (*gui* 鬼), respecting gods (*shen* 神), but keeping a certain distance from them, the most important thing was to teach people faithfully. The principle of the Zhou 周 Dynasty was the fear of rites, serving ghosts, respecting gods, but keeping a certain distance from them, the most important thing was to teach people faithfully.

The Korean Version of *The Analects of Confucius* recorded what Zhai Hao 翟灝 said in *the Book of Si Shu Kao Yi* 《四書考異》, "The sentence

‘to teach people faithfully’ is equivalent to the meaning of ‘lead the people to justice.’³

As for the doubt of serious conflicts within Confucius’ thoughts, we could solve the confusion with the different concepts of “God” (*di* 帝), “god” and “ghost” in pre-Qin Dynasty. In addition, to investigate Ji 季 the family’s excessive sacrifice at that time will also help us to understand the reasons. Guo Moruo 郭沫若 and Wang Guowei 王國維 considered the Chinese character “God” was like a flower stalk as the source of life.⁴ Oracle bone script “God” was , Xu Zhongshu 徐中舒 said in *Oracle Dictionary* 甲骨文字典:

Put up or bundle wood to burn sacrifices for heaven worship...Later, the meaning was extended from Heaven worship to God worship. In the concept of the people in the Shang 商 Dynasty, the Sacred One, also known as God, dominated the wind and rain and the human future and destiny.⁵

Ye Yusen agreed and believed that “stacked wood or bundle of wood” was indeed a sign of a sacrificial altar.⁶ What Xu and Ye said were coordinate with *Liji* “rearing a burning pile to God.” Thus it is obvious that the concept of “God” was from “Heaven,” the figurative expression of abstract “Heaven”; both “Heaven” and “God” have the same etymology. It is clear that “Heaven” has originally a religious implication. Regardless of whether the ancients adopted the symbolic meaning of “flower stalk” or they “put a bundle of wood to burn sacrifices for Heaven worship” to express their concept of God, both illustrated the ancient people’s progressive religious thought about “God” with a “metaphysical” nature.

³ Huang Huaixin 黃懷信, ed., *Collected expositions on the Analects of Confucius* 《論語彙校集釋》, Zhou Haisheng 周海生 and Kong Deli 孔德立 participated in the writing. Vol.1 (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Press, 2008), p. 521.

⁴ Kang Yin 康殷, *Analysis of Words Origin* 《文字源流淺說》 (Beijing: Beijing Rongbaozhai Press, 1979), p. 593.

⁵ Xu Zhongshu 徐中舒, ed., *The Oracle bone script Dictionary* 《甲骨文字典》 (Sichuan: Sichuan Dictionary Publishing House, 2006), p. 7.

⁶ Liang Yancheng 梁燕城, *Reconstruction of Chinese Philosophy* 《中國哲學的重構》 (Taipei: Cosmic Light Holistic Care, 2004), p. 234.

Li Ji • Ji Yi (祭義) recorded:

Zai Wo 宰我 said, "I have heard the names of ghosts and gods, but I do not know what they mean." The Master said, "The spirit is the main feature of gods; the soul is the main feature of ghosts." He also said, "All the living creatures must die, and after death, what returned to the ground is the body from which the soul and spirit separate. The bones and flesh are buried below and covered by soil in the wild. Their spirits could reach the realm of glorious brightness. The fumes ascending are mixed with sweet and disgusting smells among these are the good ones and evil ones of the spirits. The most splendid ones among all the spirits upgrade to gods whereas the ordinary souls and spirits are ghosts. "

[X2]

So we can see that Confucius' concept of "god" was a purified "spirit" with a higher grade essence; these two things were also produced from human variation. This idea originated from his ancestors. We can get evidence from the character 神 ("god"神) in *The Analects of Confucius • Ba Yi (八佾)* of the Dingzhou Han Bamboo-slips Script Version:

□□□□□as if it was present.⁷ He sacrificed to the gods 神
, as if the gods 神 were present...⁸

In the Bamboo-slips Script Version, the Chinese character "神" was constituted of two Chinese characters: "申" with the meaning of changing fantastically and unpredictably, and the character of "鬼".⁹

⁷ Bamboo-slip words are incomplete and cannot be identified; the number of words cannot be determined. *Dingzhou version* noted by symbols of "..."; in order to distinguish from the ellipsis in this paper, so here write "□" to replace it.

⁸ Hebei Cultural Relics Research Institute Bamboo-slips of Han-Dynasty Tomb in Dingzhou Organizing Group, *Dingzhou Han Tomb Bamboo-slips - The Analects of Confucius* (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1997), p. 17.

⁹ "God" (神) is an associative compound of Chinese characters. It was constituted by two Chinese characters "示" and "申". The bronze inscription (*jinwen* 金文) of "申" is a lightning shape in the sky. The ancient people considered

Oracle bone script of “ghost” (*gui* 鬼) was ; Xu’s explanation was as follows:

The abnormal shape was like a monster with human body but a giant head, and was used to represent difference from a living human being...Guo Pu 郭璞 annotated *Er Ya* 《爾雅》 by quoting *Shi Zi* 《屍子》, “The ancient people called the dead men (*gui* 鬼) were those who returned (*gui* 歸) to the ground.” The concept of the people in Shang Dynasty had considerably developed. The character *gui* was derived and transformed from the character *ren* 人 illustrated ghost is derived from human being.¹⁰

From bamboo-slips Chinese character “,” we could see that the concept of ghost and god in the pre-Qin period implied that, in addition to “god” being the purified vital essence from “spirit,” there was also another layer meaning to the trait of changing fantastically and unpredictably; this was the same as the Chinese word “immortal” (*xian* 仙),¹¹ which was so-called “celestial being”. “Becoming immortal” means the “spirit” and “soul” upgraded to a “god” with a fantastical and unpredictable essence.

lightning in the sky was powerful and changing fantastically and unpredictable, so they referred lightning to represent gods with the trait of changing fantastically and unpredictably. This is different from the understanding that “god” “generated all things” in *Shuo Wen* 《說文》. In ancient Chinese literature, the one who “generated all things” was “God” (上帝) but not “god” (神).

¹⁰ Xu Zhongshu, ed., *The Oracle Dictionary* (Sichuan: Sichuan Dictionary Publishing House, 2006), p.1021.

¹¹ The associative compound of Chinese character, it was written as “僊”. The right side means someone climbs to a higher place for the bird’s nest, and the left side adds a character of “人” to show a person could reach higher to be immortals. *Shuo Wen* said, “Immortals, live long and move to a higher place.” The first ancient literature that directed “immortals 仙” as “god 神” was *Lie Zi* 《列子》 • *Huang Di* (黃帝). That passage said, “There is god in the mountain, who breathed wind, drank dew and did not eat grains. His heart was like the flowing fountain and His shape was like a virgin; He was not dependent on others and did not love others; immortal saints were His servants.”

"Lead the people to justice; respect ghosts and gods but keep certain distance from them." Fan Chi asked what wisdom was. Confucius answered from a political perspective and his answer seemed as if his choice between "benevolence and righteousness" and "ghosts and gods," or between "reality" and "emptiness" (religion). But it was definite that *Shu Er* said clearly, "The things on which the Master exercised the greatest caution were: sacrifice, war and sickness". *Li Ji*• *Li Qi* (禮器) even recorded:

Confucius said: "to recite a poem three hundred times is not more worthy than to offer a gift of sacrifice, a gift of sacrifice was not more worthy than offering Da Xiang 大饗, the grand sacrifice of Da Xiang, is not more worthy than offering Da Lv 大旅, (Zheng xuan 鄭玄 annotated: "Da Lv," was a sacrifice to worship Five Emperors) Da Lv completed but is still not sufficient to satisfy God."

When the Duke granted him a gift of fresh meat, he would have it cooked, and offered it to the ghosts of his ancestors; on a sudden striking of thunder, or a violent wind, he would change countenance. (*The Analects of Confucius* • *Xiang Dang* (鄉黨)). These records revealed Confucius was in fear of God, and attached great importance to sacrifice. Then why did Confucius's words sound self-contradictory? It was said in *Li Ji*• *Li Yun* (禮運), "Confucius said, 'It was by those rites that the ancient kings sought to inherit the Way of Heaven, and embodied it in everyday life. Therefore he who neglects or violates them may be spoken of as dead, and he who obeys them, as alive. They extend to funeral rituals, sacrifices...Thus the sages made these rites known to it / the sages made these rites to illustrate it? (the Way of Heaven), and so that the kingdom, with its states and clans, to reach its correct condition by rites.'" Also *Li Ji*• *Jiao Te Sheng* (郊特牲) said, "Heaven hangs out its brilliant figure, and the sages imitated them. To sacrifice to God in the suburb of the capital is to illustrate the Way of Heaven." Therefore, what he pursued was "the Way of Heaven" embodied in the sacrifice ceremonies.

However, the unjust sacrifice of the Ji family was perpetrated to obtain status, to seeking blessings through flattery. Then what was the content of "the Way of Heaven" embodied in the sacrifice ceremonies?

Li Ji • Yue Ji (樂記) said, "Similarity and union are the aim of music; difference and distinction, that of rite." Zheng annotated: "Similarity or union is called the coordination of likes and dislikes; difference or distinction is called discrimination between the noble and the humble ones." *Li Yun* said:

The reason that they sacrificed to God in the suburb of the capital was to establish the throne of heaven. The reason that they sacrificed to the god of land in the state was to consecrate the benefits derived from the earth. The reason that they sacrificed in the ancestral temple was to show their fundamental sentiments of humanity. The reason that they sacrificed in the hills and streams was to mark their respect to the gods and ghosts.

Li Ji • Zhong Yong (中庸) also said, "Suburb sacrifice is to serve God; the sacred core of the ceremony is to worship their ancestors." This echoed Confucius' thought of ghosts and gods to a certain extent, and he considered that "the Way of Heaven" showed the "order" (*zhixu* 秩序), that was the core value of the "Rite" of Confucius. It was in response to the confused and disordered political situation in the late Spring and Autumn (Chunqiu 春秋), that Confucius stressed that the sacrifice ceremonies of superiority and inferiority must be clearly distinguished respectfully. Furthermore, *Li Qi* said, "The point of ritual is to return to its source and to learn not to forget its origin." "Not to forget their origin" is thus a tribute to the origin of life.

Confucian disciples collected the circumstances of the Ji family's sacrifice, as well as Confucius' criticisms and edited them into *The Ba Yi*. The head of the Ji family, which could only be seen and enjoyed by the monarch, Confucius said, "If this can be bearable, what may not be bearable?" As the chief of the Ji family was about to sacrifice to the Taishan 泰山, Confucius said, "Alas! Will you say that the Taishan is not as discerning as Lin Fang 林放 and that he will accept the Ji family's sacrifice?" The three families of Lu sang *the Yong ode* 《周頌·雍》, which was only sung by the emperor while the oblations were being removed at the end of the sacrifice. The Master said, "In attendance are the princes; the son of heaven looks profound and solemn' - what application can these words be in the hall of the three families?" Unauthorized the chief of the Ji family took the monarch's

high "imperial ancestral sacrifice ceremony" to ancestors (*Dili* 禘禮). The Master sighed and said, "I can't stand this anymore and I have no wish to look on."

Confucius encouraged Fan Chi to "*jin gui shen er yuan zhi*." It was in the context of the false sacrifice of the Ji family. Confucius put forward this statement to point out that the Ji family didn't have concern for superiority or inferiority, but rather habituated to luxury and idle living by self interests. Therefore, when Lin Fang asked what the most important element of ceremonies should be focused, the Master replied, "In sacrifice ceremonies, it is better to be sparing than extravagant. In the ceremonies of mourning, it is better to be in deep sorrow than to make extravagant exertions." "If a man is without kindly virtues, how will he perform the rites with propriety? If a man is without kindly virtues, how will he deal with music?" "In positions of honour with no generosity; ceremonies performed without reverence; mourning conducted without sorrow—how can I meditate upon such ways?"

Fan Chi, was powerless to prevent the inordinate sacrifice of Ji family. And, when he enquired concerning the nature of wisdom, Confucius encouraged him to "lead the people to justice," not in the manner of the Ji family's pompous and extravagant pretense of worship, by which they thought they could obtain greater blessings by unjust and immoderate sacrifice; but on the contrary, it was only by the practice of justice that one would necessarily gain blessings from God. By "justice" is meant the "proper" way, if one could do things properly, he was practicing the Way of Heaven and of course he would obtain blessings from Heaven; if people could understand justice, they would then freely offer proper sacrifice to satisfy the "Rite". From the vantage point of people, "*jin gui shen er yuan zhi*" was the wisdom of obtaining blessings from above; from Fan Chi's perspective, "lead the people to justice" was the political wisdom of governance. This saying can be further explained by two more passages of Confucius. In the passage of *Wei Zheng*, Confucius speaks of both inordinate sacrifice and justice again, "For a man to sacrifice to ghosts not belonging to his ancestors is flattery; to see what is right but not to do it is cowardice." "Ghosts," according to the interpretation of the above words, referred the souls of the deceased. Hence, he called someone a coward who would offer flattering sacrifices to other people's ancestors in order to seek blessings rather

than to obtain these by practicing “the Way of Heaven”. In *Silk Manuscript of Chapter Yao* 帛書《要》篇, Confucius more directly says, “People who lack virtue attend to the gods, people lack wisdom tend to practice divination.” Again, he said, “The noble should seek blessings by practicing virtue, so that little sacrifice is necessary.”¹²

Wei Zheng also comments on, “Sacrifice to ghosts who do not belong to his ancestors”. This lacks the word “gods,” while in *Yong Ye* “ghosts” and “gods” are included. That was because the lower officials and common people had no right to offer sacrifice to “God” and “gods”. (To sacrifice to God was only the right of the monarch; to sacrifice to gods who governed mountains and rivers was the scope for feudal dukes.) They did not have the authority to sacrifice to both God and gods. According to excavated Dingzhou Han bamboo-slips version, *Yong Ye* said, “*jin gui er yuan zhi*.”¹³ Here the word “ghosts” with no word following “gods”. Accordingly, controversy and confusion of “respect souls and spirits, but keep a certain distance from them” can be dealt with to a further degree and thus bring resolution. By examining the meaning of “respecting ghosts,” we can affirm that Confucius believed “ghosts” were in existence. Hence, it can be established that Confucius was not an atheist. In the above paragraphs we discussed the differences between “God,” “gods” and “ghosts”. “Ghosts” and “gods” were the souls and spirits of the dead, consequently, they were not the objects of Confucius’ Personality-dominated belief. What Confucius believed and ultimately respected was “God,” in this way, his words did not derive from an understanding of his religious beliefs. The reason why interpreters in later ages had misunderstood was probably because the version of *The Analects of Confucius* passed down recorded “respect ghosts and gods, but keep a certain distance from them” while *Shuo Wen* recorded that “god” was the one who “generated all things.” These records were combined and became misleading.

Now let us analyze *The Biao Ji*, “The principle of the Xia Dynasty was the fear of God’s will, attending to ghosts, respecting gods, while

¹² Liu Bin 劉彬, *Research on Collected expositions on the Silk Manuscript of Chapter Yao* (Beijing: Beijing Guangming Daily Press, 2009), pp. 29, 46.

¹³ Hebei Cultural Relics Research Institute Bamboo-slips of Han-Dynasty Tomb in Dingzhou Organizing Group, *Dingzhou Han Tomb Bamboo Slips-“The Analects of Confucius,”* p. 28.

keeping a certain distance from them, and that the most important thing was to educate people in loyalty. The principle of the Zhou Dynasty was respect for the Rite, attending to ghosts, respecting gods, while keeping certain distance from them; the most important thing was to teach people loyally." Here from Confucius' words we can see the following. First, the Xia Dynasty and Zhou Dynasties were the best examples of personality-dominated belief, "respect ghosts and gods, but keep a certain distance from them" did not come from the prevailing religious belief. Second, the "Will" of Xia Dynasty and the "Rite" of Zhou Dynasty were in reality the same thing; the "Rite" came from the "Will" and this confirmed Confucius' integrated concept of "the Will of God" and "the Way of Heaven," which followed and modelled itself upon the predecessors of the Three Generations. His concept of "the Way of Heaven" was not naturalism. Third, "fear Heaven (God)," "respect gods" and "attend to ghosts" were observed by nobility as well as common people, and these were well regulated services. Both ghosts and gods came from transformed living humans, and so cannot be compared to God, who is the origin of creation and the spring of impartial justice (the highest goodness). As a result, "God" to be regarded as the object of respect and the model to follow. Confucius did not mention the principle of the Shang Dynasty. This is because there were abundant examples of improper sacrifices to ghosts and gods in the Shang Dynasty. In that case, "*jin gui shen er yuan zhi*" was because of respect for the Will and Rite. The goal of the Will and Rite is to faithfully illustrate the Way of Heaven / the Will of God to the people. Illustrations of the Way of Heaven has as its aim to reveal the degrees of rank in a model society by God, gods and ghosts. Blessings for man come from respect of the Will and Rite, but not from inordinate sacrifices and flattery for ghosts and gods. This was in line with the theme of *Yong Ye*, *Wei Zheng* and *Chapter Yao*. But why did Confucius speak of "respect for ghosts"? Just as Liu Baonan explained in *Explanatory Note of the Analects of Confucius* 《論語正義》, "To attend to also consists of 'respect for'"¹⁴ In addition, Confucius mentioned only "ghosts" to Fan Chi but stressed to "keep a certain distance". He used the word "respect" to show that he did not mean we should be deficient in respect shown to our ancestors.

¹⁴ Huang Huaixin. (ed.), *Collected expositions on the Analects of Confucius*, Part I, p. 522. choreography

In a word, the meaning of “*jin gui shen er yuan zhi*” is: We should respect our ancestors but keep aloof from inordinate and providing sacrifices, by which people seek their own good and purposes by serving their own, or even not their own, ancestors’ souls. The proper interpretation should be: “respect our ancestors and keep aloof from false sacrifices.” This was Confucius’ expostulation of bringing order from the chaos brought about by the extravagant and improper sacrifices of the Ji family.

Confucius’ Personality-Dominated Concept in His Early Years. Confucius’ personality-dominated concept can be traced by to his 30th year. This was the first year in the reign of Qi Jing Gong 齊景公 who came to Lu and consulted Confucius with the principles of governance. Confucius “had his mind bent on learning at fifteen” and “stood firmly at thirty”. The documents recorded that Confucius was obsessed with the “Rite” and he aspired to learn with great enthusiasm. “The Master, when he entered the grand temple, asked about everything. Someone said, ‘Who say that the son of the man of Zou knows the rites of propriety! ’...(before the age of 25)” (*Ba Yi*). Besides, *Zhao Gong Seventeenth Year* 《昭公十七年》 recorded, “In autumn, Tan Zi 郟子 visited Lu and Zhao Gong, and held a feast for him. Zhao Gong asked, ‘Why has Shao Hao Shi 少皞氏 used the name of a bird as the official name?’ Confucius heard that Tan Zi could answer such questions so he paid a visit to Tan Zi to learn from him (27 years old).¹⁵ Confucius began to take office as a lesser officer when

¹⁵ Qian Mu 錢穆 explained and analyzed the passage of “entered the grand temple,” “we are not sure in which year this happened, but we assure that at that time Confucius had already been in politics so he got the right to enter the grand temple to be an assistant for sacrifice ceremonies.” (Qian Mu, *The Past Masters in Pre-Qin Dynasty Scheduled by year* 《先秦諸子系年》) Liu Fangwei 劉方煒 further analyzed that Confucius was called “the son of the man of Zou”. It must be before he was famous for knowledge of rites. “The son of the man of Zou” indicated that (at the age of 17) he was recently recognized as the son of Shu Liang He 叔梁. But people were used to calling him “the son of the man of Zou”. At that time, he would have been promoted as civil officer with higher rank from the original positions of “Wei Li 委吏 (officer in charge of grains)” and “Cheng Tian 乘田 (officer in charge of animals).” When he was 27 years old he asked for advice about the ancient official system from Tan Zi, who was the king of Tan. Between the age of 21 and 25 marks his “entering the grand temple”. Liu Fangwei,

he was 21 years old and at the age of 25 he received promotion to enter the grand temple as an assistant of sacrificial ceremonies. At that time he was questioned whether he knew the rites of propriety. When he was 30 years old, he was asked by a Duke of a powerful state about the political issues connected to the rites. It can be said that until then Confucius' knowledge and career were firstly approved and that he became famous among the feudal dukes. Confucius himself goes on to say that, "At thirty, I stood firmly."

Zhu Xi 朱熹 says of Confucius' statement: "At thirty, I stood firmly," "if one could establish his own moral belief, keep it fast and not change it."¹⁶ And so it can be seen that Confucius' had a firm belief in The Way and the Rite from the founding of his career. In 522 BC, Zhao Gong was in his Twentieth year, and Jing Gong of Qi and Yan Ying 晏嬰 came to Lu. Jing Gong asked why Mu Gong 穆公 of Qin 秦 could seek political dominance as a small nation, Confucius answered, "although it is small, Qi's ambition is great; although its geographic location is remote, it practices 'impartiality'...These merits more than warrant him to be a king (*the Biography of Confucius*). This "impartial justice" is the virtue of goodness granted from Heaven. *Shangshu*•*Shang Shu*•*Tang Gao* 《尚書•商書•湯誥》 spoke of this when he said, "Heavenly God who grants 'zhong' 衷 to common people." Kong Anguo 孔安國 commented: "'zhong' is goodness." Kong Yingda 孔穎達 explicated, "Heaven raised a large population and gave them five constant virtues (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity)." *Shangshu*•*Zhou Shu*•*Lu Xing* 《尚書•周書•呂刑》 said, "To govern citizens by upright acts...There are glorious blessings in fulfilling 'impartiality' (*zhong* 中)." Kong Anguo annotated and said, "The wise man shows by deeds and serves 'impartial justice' in five constant virtues." *Li Ji*•*Zhongni Yan Ju* (仲尼燕居) records Confucius' explanation of "impartiality" thus, "The Master said, 'Shi 師 was too excessive while Shang 商 was too insufficient.' Zi Gan crossed the mat, and responded, 'could I ask by what means it is possible to secure impartiality.' The Master said, 'By means of Rite! It is those rites which

Confucius Ji: The Gateway of Academic Thought and the Creation of Cultural System (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2009), pp. 69-70.

¹⁶ Huang Huaixin. (ed.), *Collection of Correction and Interpretation of the Analects of Confucius, Part I*, p. 112.

define and determine ‘impartiality.’” In Confucius’ opinion, although Mu Gong of Qin was the leader of a small nation, he could practice the virtue of “impartial justice” granted by the Heaven. So by this virtue, it was more than enough for him to be a king. Hence we can say it was as clear as if it were in front of us that Confucius’ personality-dominated concept was well-formed by the age of 30; we can return to basic assertion that “at thirty, I stood firmly”.

*Confucius Was Enamored of the Book of Changes: Personality-Dominated
Concept of the Way of Heaven*

The Transition from the Personality-Dominated Concept to the Philosophical View of the Way of Heaven. The Biography of Confucius recorded as noted above, that “Confucius was enamored by *The Book of Changes* in his later years... *The Book of Changes* was read so many times by Confucius that the rawhide ropes linking the bamboo slips repeatedly broke. It also records Confucius as having said, ‘If I could live for several years more, I would have followed the thought and essence of *the Book of Changes*.’” *Silk Manuscript of Chapter Yao* also recorded this event, “When Confucius became old, he was enamored by *The Book of Changes*. When he was at home, the book would be on his bed; when he was on the journey, he would carry along the book in his sack.”¹⁷ “When he was on the journey” referred to his experience of traveling around the territories at the age of 55. But Confucius had already understood the Will of God at fifty. “To understand” had transcended purely perceptual belief. If this is so the the question then becomes when did Confucius begin to have interest in the rational investigation of the philosophical aspect of “Heaven”? It is worth noting that *The Silk Manuscript of Chapter Yao* supplements our explanation of why Confucius was enamored by *The Book of Changes*:

Formerly I was fortunate and lucky (and so I had no time to study it, when the mishaps began in my life, then I explored it more) (*qiao* 巧 → *kao* 考). The one who examines the essence of the book will not go against the virtue of *The Book of Changes*. ...I was not only at ease with

¹⁷ Liu Bin, *Research on Collected expositions on the Silk Manuscript of Chapter Yao*, p. 29.

its spirituality but I was also pleased with {the words in it}.¹⁸

As for "formerly I was fortunate and blessed, when the mishaps began in my life, then I explored it more (*qiao* 巧 → *kao* 考), Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, Liao Mingchun 廖明春, Chen Songchang 陳松長 and Tomohisa Ikeda 池田知久¹⁹ all agreed on the explanation of "formerly I was fortunate and blessed and lucky... Now I suffered many mishaps in my life."²⁰ At the end of 40 years old, Yang Hu 陽虎, the servant of the Ji family, seized power day by day, so that Confucius called him "under secretary to the officers of the state," (*The Analects of Confucius* • Ji Shi (季氏)). *The Biography of Confucius* recorded, "as under secretaries of the great officers gathered in the powers of the state, Confucius quit politics and retreated to his studies Shi 《詩》, Shu 《書》, Li 《禮》 and Yue 《樂》." When he was 50 years old, Gongshan Buniu 公山不狃 rebelled against the Ji family and occupied Fei 費 city. He then sent for Confucius. "Confucius followed and practiced the Way (of Zhou Dynasty) for a long time but his talents still were suppressed everywhere and nobody appointed him... When he was going to Fei city, Zi Lu was displeased." It is thus clear that the translation of "Confucius was enamored of *the Book of Changes* in his later years" should be about the end of 40 years old.

¹⁸ Liu Bin, *Research on Collected expositions on the Silk Manuscript of Chapter Yao*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²⁰ Qiu noted: "That word that appeared after 'formerly' (*qian* 前) and 'mishaps' (*fu* 弗) might be interpreted as 'lamb' (*yang* 羊). *The Silk Manuscript of Xi Ci* 系辭, second part of Line 45 recorded, "Good fortune is lamb (present version is blessing (*xiang* 祥)). The word 'lamb' is the same shape as the pictographic character ... There is another doubt that these two words of 'lamb' might be read as 'contrary' (*ni* 逆). This still needs to be further confirmed." The word "explore" (*qiao* 巧) is the same as "research" (*kao* 考), with the meaning of exploration. *Shi Ming · Shi Yan Yu* 《釋名·釋言語》 said, "to explore, is actually to research. To research different elements and integrate them together." Wang Xianqian 王先謙 annotated and supplemented Wang Qiyuan 王啟原 said, "In ancient times, the word 'explore' is the same as 'research'... In *Shiji · the Biography of Lu Zhou Gong* (魯周公世家), the word 'research' was written as 'explore'. Such was the proof." Guo Yi, 2004. "A Textual Research on Chapter Yao of Silk Manuscript," *Studies on the Book of Changes*. Vol. 66, no.2, 47.

It is also noteworthy that, Confucius himself once said “At forty, I had no doubts.” *Silk Manuscript of Chapter Yao* recorded Zi Gan doubted Confucius, “I heard from you before, ‘people who were humble and practiced righteousness would have no doubts.’” That was because Confucius once said, “People without the virtues tend to the gods”. But now he became “doubtful” and was enamored of *the Book of Changes*. When did Zi Gan hear the words? Zi Gan was 32 years younger than Confucius. If he heard this when Confucius was 40 years old, he was only 8 years old at that time. If we calculate that the time when “he suffered many mishaps in life” was at the end of 40 years old, it is clear that the statement what Zi Gan heard from Confucius was advocated in his beginning of the interim of 40 years old. Then “to be humble and practice righteousness would have no doubts” was Confucius own annotation for “at forty, I had no doubts”. Therefore, Sun Chuo 孫綽 explained in *Huang Kan Yi Shu* 《皇侃義疏》, “At forty, I had no doubts” seemed to be Confucius’ voice from the heart, “In his 40 years old, be strong and acquired greater achievement in career, it is because the ten years’ learning and practicing virtues after 30 years old led him to be successful and an outstanding talent in his state and to put forward his aspiration in politics as a result of his firm belief of *dao*.²¹

Personality-Dominated Concept of the Way of Heaven In the previous part of this paper, we noted that Confucius followed the Three Generations of ancient sages and analyzed “Heaven” with a religious sense in *The Jing Series of the Book of Changes*, “Way” and “Impartiality” virtuous thought. In 1973, *The Silk Manuscript of Yi Zhuan* 帛書《易傳》 was unearthed and this version really complemented important evidence for study on Confucius’ personality-dominated concept of the Way of Heaven. *Silk Manuscript of Chapter Yao*²² recorded:

Confucius said, “There is the Way of Heaven in the philosophy concept of *Changes* 易, the sun, the moon, and the stars cannot cover all, so these can be summarized by the concept of *Yin* 陰 and *Yang* 陽; there is the Way of Earth...so these can be summarized by the concept of

²¹ Huang Huaixin. (ed.), Huang Huaixin 黃懷信, ed., *Collected expositions on the Analects of Confucius*, Part I, p. 113.

²² Liu Bin, *Correction and Interpretation of Silk Manuscript of Chapter Yao*, p. 1.

Firm and Yielding (*gangrou* 剛柔); there is the Way of Human...so these can be summarized by the concept of Noble and Low (*shang-xia* 上下(尊卑)); there is the change of four seasons...so these can be summarized by the concept of *Ba Gua* 八卦...there is the Way of kings..."²³

Confucius summarized the whole universe in Five Ways 五道 of Heaven (*Tian* 天), Earth (*Di* 地), Human (*Ren* 人), Time (*Shi* 時) and King (*Jun* 君). "The Five Ways" exactly reflected Confucius' personality-dominated concept of the Way of Heaven. Because Earth, Human, Time and King contained time, space (material world) and human (including administrators (kings) and subordinates (citizens) of the whole universe; the Way of Heaven, with attributes of personality, is the principle of other four Ways of Earth, Human, Time and King.

First of all, Confucius regarded "the sun, the moon, and the stars" on behalf of all things. He believed behind them is "the Way of Heaven" which operates in the mode of the continuous intercourse of *Yin* and *Yang*. His concept of astronomy had already gone beyond the perspective of lives, it shows a relatively complete conception of the universe. Thus it can be seen that Confucius aimed to explore the origin of the whole universe and he considered the paradigm of the operation of the universe to be *Yin-Yang*; also he believed *Yin-Yang* had personality traits granted by God. *Silk Manuscript of Yi Zhi Yi* 易之義 recorded:

Confucius said, "The essence of *the Book of Changes* can be understood well. *Jian* 鍵 {*qian* 乾} Hexagram and *Chuan* 川 {*Kun* 坤} Hexagram are the gateway of *the Book of Changes*. The *Jian* Hexagram is an image of *yang* objects and states; the *Chuan* Hexagram an image of *yin* objects and states. When *yin* and *yang* are in harmoniously intercourse, they give birth to all creatures that bear firm or yielding nature in which are incarnate concretely the creation of Heaven and Earth, and exemplify the miraculous virtue of God. ... (*Yin and Yang*) are of natural instinct of benevolence and righteousness and that is why they are the examples

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-64.

of all things whether in traits of firm or yielding in the universe.²⁴

Confucius believed that the key truth of *The Book of Changes* relied on *Qian-Kun*. *Qian-Kun* was the entrance to comprehend *The Book of Changes*, because *Qian-Kun* respectively belongs to *Yang and Yin*. *Yin-Yang* was the basic governing principle of the universe. The intercourse of *Yin-Yang* derive all things with trait of firm or yielding, and thus exemplify the miraculous virtue of God. Then what is the virtue of God? *Yi Zhi Yi* provided very important supplement, “(*Yin-Yang*) and the natural instinct of benevolence and righteousness” and this was regarded as the model of the Way of all things. Since it was said that *Yin-Yang* is born from God, then the virtue of God is benevolence and righteousness which is indisputably the necessary condition of personality. Accordingly, Confucius’ personality-dominated concept of the Way of Heaven admitted of no doubt.

Also *Silk Manuscript of Er San Zi Wen* 《二三子問》 recorded Confucius explaining the *Qian Hexagram*:

The Dragon is grand. The shape of dragon is transformed from *Yin-Yang*, and it submits itself to God, as if a virtue of God.²⁵

The dragon submits itself to God. The reason that the dragon is considered as the vehicle of the virtue of divinity is because “God”

²⁴ In *Yi Zhi Yi*, there is one paragraph from “and □ can keep silent” to “then brilliant talent are Trustworthy” (「又口能斂之」至「則文其信於」) after the paragraph of “in which incarnate concretely the creation of Heaven and Earth” (「以體天地之化」). Guo Yi considered it may be in lost of some bamboo-slips here and put forward his adjustment suggestion. Figuring out the meaning of the passage, Hu Zhihong 胡治洪 indicates Guo was almost right. However, he points out that *Silk Manuscript* would not be in the situation of losing words like the *Bamboo-slips* version, unless it transcribed from the *Bamboo-slips* version, as a result the incorrect *Silk Manuscript* version spread. Hu Zhihong, “The View of Morality between Human and Heaven of Four Passages in *Silk Manuscript of Yi Zhuan*,” *Studies on the Book of Changes*, p.23.

²⁵ According to Liao Mingchun and Chen Songchang’s version. See Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Study on Taoist Culture* (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Press, 1993), Vol. 3, p.424.

grants it the virtue of divinity.²⁶ Confucius pointed out, "Virtue of dragons...²⁷ The one who grants it is called the virtuous man; be watchful for changes and respect unity; accurate, pure, tender and peace....so it is called a virtuous man." By means of the metaphor between the Dragon and God, God as the origin of virtue was revealed. Confucius also explained The Sixth Chapter Yao Ci of *Kun* Hexagram, "Stepping on frost, the icy day is just around the corner." He explained as follows, "The virtue begins with the Way of Heaven and certainly follows the five elements." The "five elements" are the five virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity. It can be confirmed by the *Five Elements* 五行 stated in the unearthed Guodian's bamboo-slips 郭店 of Chu Guo 楚.²⁸ This is another confirmation.

In fact, the term "five elements" appeared just three times in *Shangshu*. The first time it appeared was in *Shangshu*•*Xia Shu*•*Gan Shi* 《尚書•夏書•甘誓》：

The Emperor said, "I told you that Hushi 扈氏 was proud and insulted five elements; also he idled and abandoned three righteousness." Kong Anguo annotated, "The virtues of five elements are inherited and adopted by the emperors."

The meaning of "five element" was of virtue's basis. Subsequently, the "Five Constant (Virtues)" in *Shangshu* took the place of the "five elements" in virtues. The second and third times it appeared were in *Shangshu*•*Zhou Shu*•*Hong Fan* 《尚書•周書•洪範》：

In ancient time of Gun 鯀, Yin 堙 (River was blocked) and the regulation of flood was out of the Way. (The Heavenly God) exposed his five elements. Kong annotated,

²⁶ Hu Zhihong, "The View of Morality between Human and Heaven of Four Passages in Silk Manuscript of Yi Zhuan," p. 24.

²⁷ Here original version was written "said □□□□□ changes □□□□□". Chen Guying, *Study on Taoist Culture*. Vol. 3, p. 425.

²⁸ See Gou Dongfeng 苟東鋒, 2011. "Interpretation for 'Five Elements' of Guodian Chu Bamboo-Slips." *Journal of Ancient Books Collation and Studies*. Vol. 4, pp. 35-42.

“Exposed his five elements, equals ‘was proud and insulted five elements’ “in *Gan Shi*.

This means the Heavenly God exposed that Gun’s performances were not meeting the standard of the virtues of five elements. The meaning of “five element” still was of virtue’s basis, however, it was continually recorded:

The Heavenly God granted *Da Yu* 大禹 nine laws to regulate flood. The first law was called “Five Elements” “Five Elements”: the first was water (*shui* 水), the second was fire (*huo* 火), the third was wood (*mu* 木), the fourth was gold (*jin* 金), and the fifth was earth (*tu* 土).

To transfer the virtues of the "Five Elements" into five basic elements of the physical world signifies the thought in *Shangshu* that all substances are formed because of “virtues” as the origin. This is the strong theoretical basis for Confucius’ personality-dominated concept of the Way of Heaven.

Actually, *Jing Series of the Book of Changes* was essentially used for divination. “God” is the established object of their inquiry and prayer. Emperor Wen Wang and Zhou Gong of Zhou were the authors and both of them were with clear religious thought. Confucius also said in *Chapter Yao*, “I can do divination with 70 percent accuracy.”²⁹

The Silk Manuscript of Yi Zhuan was unearthed and it testified that Confucius fully understood and inherited the following ideas in *Shangshu* and *The Book of Changes*: “Heavenly God who grants goodness to common people,” the personal thought of “the Way of Heaven,” the essence in the Hexagrams in *the Book of Changes*, the Hexagram descriptions, and discipline of changes of different Hexagrams. He first advocated the philosophical theory of “Yin-Yang,” indicating the two Hexagrams of *Qian* and *Kun* had with the properties of “Firm and Yielding” respectively. He summarized these as “the Way of Heaven” concept that born from the Dominant

²⁹ Liu Bin, *Research on Collected expositions on the Silk Manuscript of Chapter Yao*, p. 41.

Personality gives birth to all things.³⁰ Based on heaven-human relationship of "Only God grants goodness to common people," he advocated the theory of "the Way of Heaven" which was shown in Earth, Human, Time and King. So we can find that Confucius' comprehension of the Dominant Personality and "the Way of Heaven" was sublimated from perception in his early years to rationality in his later years. That discerns his universal consciousness and the further development of his cosmological vision.

Further Analysis of "At fifteen, he had his mind bent on learning" to "At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired"

Confucius "at fifteen, had his mind bent on learning" and "at seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right" (*Wei Zheng*). That was a step-by-step progression of life. Confucius "had his mind bent on learning at fifteen," "strive hard in learning rites from below and pursuit of understanding the truth on high" (*Xian Wen*), and "at thirty" he became famous among the feudal dukes and thus built up his career. Believing "virtues were granted by Heaven," he also stood firm on the "Way" and "rite" as his basic principle for holding steady. Furthermore, at the age of 34, Confucius was sent to pay a formal visit to Zhou to inquire about rites; when he was 34-35 years old, he became a retainer of Gao Zhao Zi 高昭子 of Qi. During that period, an expanded epistemology broadened his life horizons, Confucius served the powerful state with his lofty

³⁰ There is no record of "Yin-Yang" as a term in *the Book of Changes*. "Yin and Yang" firstly appeared in *Poetry·Daya·Gongliu* 《詩經·大雅·公劉》, "see its Yin-Yang," meaning the south and north of the mountain. Another book was *Shangshu·Zhoushu·Zhouguan* 《尚書·周書·周官》, "(Cheng Wang 成王) established Taishi 太師, Taibao 太保 and Taifu 太傅, these three masters discussed the way of governing the state, and the coordination of various (Yin-Yang) departments." Then Yin-Yang comprises the meaning of "various" and "relatively". "Yin-Yang" appeared just once in *the Book of Odes* 《詩經》 and *the Book of Shangshu*. The ancient record was that because Cheng Wang was going to inherit the throne, so Zhao Kang Gong cited *Gongliu* to warn him to care the citizen matters; *Zhouguan* was written by Cheng Wang. So the time of these two passages were close but *Gongliu* was a little earlier. According to *Silk Manuscript of Yao, Yi Zhi Yi* and *Er San Zi Wen*, it was confirmed that Confucius was the first one who summarized this concept of "Yin-Yang" as "the Way of Heaven" concept that born from the Personality Dominate gives birth to all things.

ambition while to be “humble and practice righteousness.” He guarded further staunch beliefs as a result of the deeper experience and understanding of the “Way” and “rite,” thus he said, “at forty, I had no doubts”.

Confucius at 40 years old, began to suffer many mishaps and torments, he started to ponder the Impartial Entity that could reach not only the benevolent ruler but also be sovereign over all things in the universe by granting individuals a unique mission and significance. It was “at fifty, I ‘comprehended’ the Will of God” that he enter into rational philosophical thought. Another recorded, “The Master said, ‘Without recognizing the Will of God it is impossible to be a superior man.’” (*The Analects of Confucius* • Yao Yue 堯曰) When Confucius was 21-25 years old, “he had entered the grand temple and asked about everything”; then he was laughed and questioned whether he really understood the rite or not. He made defense, “This is a rite of propriety.” Bo Niu 伯牛 was only six years younger than Confucius, but he died at an early age. When Bo Niu was sick in bed, Confucius was in his prime of life. Confucius was confused by Bo Niu’s sickness and questioned the Will of God, “That such a man should have such a sickness?” (*Yong Ye*). However, when he was in the capital of Zheng 鄭 at the age of 57, he lost contact with his disciples; and during his helpless situation, he was laughed at and was “as panic-stricken as a stray dog” (*The Biography of Confucius*). Confucius accepted with pleasure and answered, “Indeed you are right; indeed you are right!” (*Ibid.*). He said, “I comprehended the Will of God.” On the other hand, he found the principle of creation of heaven and earth displayed in *the Book of Changes* was “the Way of Heaven,” the “Way” was born from the “Will”. This was Confucius’ integrated cosmology concept of “the Will of God” and “the Way of Heaven”.

“My ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth” and “I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right” were obviously developed from “I comprehended the Will of God”. When he reached 60 years old, he began to comprehend that Heaven was absolute perfection, the perspective of Heaven was higher than the human. During his period of going through trials and tribulations, he was willing to accept the gain, loss, anxiety and suffering that resulted from practicing the Way of Heaven and obeying the Will of God. Therefore, “at sixty, my ear was an obedient

organ for the reception of truth." When Confucius planned to move west to Zhao at the age of 60, he heard some virtuous officials were killed by Zhao Jianzi when he arrived at the bank of the Yellow River. Confucius clearly understood that he should not serve a lord without virtues and he regarded it as God's hope for him to practice impartiality. Although he could still go forward to cross the Yellow River, he chose to go back. This could be called "at sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth." "The ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth" indicates listening and comprehending the Will of God and being obedient to it willingly. Confucius promoted from "comprehend" to "obedient" because he comprehended "the Way of Heaven" so he got a further understanding of "the Will of God" and obeyed it (*shun* 順).

After another ten years, Confucius had already thoroughly understood "the Way of Heaven" so he was sincerely convinced and accepted "the Will of God". As a result, he could "follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right". From "obedient" to "follow what my heart desired," it was integrity of the Will of God and the Will of Self, "submit to Heaven and be content with the Will". The former is willing to surrender, the latter is a combination of Heavenly freedom release and satisfaction without excess of rites and principles which embodied "the Way of Heaven". This was called "follow what my heart desired".

Hence, Confucius developed from "stood firmly" to "had no doubts"; his personality-dominated belief of "virtues were granted by Heaven" was advanced from "believe" (stood, *li* 立) to "conviction" (had no doubts, *buhuo* 不惑), from "had no doubts (conviction)" to "comprehend (*zhi* 知) the Will of God", and as for "the Will of God," from "comprehend" to "obey" (*shun* 順) then to "follow what my heart desired" (*congxin suoyu* 從心所欲) it can be said that the progress of perception is from religious belief to religious philosophy, and the exploitation of cosmology, the sublimation from perception to integrity of perception-rationality, and this is a grand scroll of the realm of life with multi-layers.

A Brief Discussion of Comparison between Confucius' Personality—Dominated Cosmology Concept and Concept of Creation in the *Bible*

Comparison between the Name of the Creator in the Bible and the Chinese Concepts of "Heaven" and "God"

There are many names for the Creator in the *Bible*. The first appearance for the name was in the *Bible-Genesis1:1*. The original Hebrew word was "אֱלֹהִים," pronounced "E-lo-him," meaning "Sovereignty, Almighty (Power)". In English it adopted this meaning and was extended as universal usage for "God," the highest sovereignty and power in the universe. "אֱלֹהִים" was a plural word, in line with the doctrine and the concept of creation in the *Bible* that Holy Father 聖父, Holy Son 聖子 (that is Jesus, also is called "Way" (English translation is 'WORD')), Holy Spirit 聖靈 "Trinity 三位一體". Also there are some scholars who interpret it according to Hebrew syntax as "He is the Power (singular) over powers (plural)." ³¹ The *Bible-Exodus 3:14* recorded another name which was positively stated by the Creator Himself: "Self-existent and Everlasting 自有永有" and its original Hebrew scriptures were "I AM THAT I AM 我是所是 (אֲנִי אֵלֶּה אֵלֶּה אֲנִי אֵלֶּה)," which is ancient Hebrew first person pronoun. Greek translation is "I am Self-existent 我是存有者"; English translation is "I AM WHO I AM". "AM" indicates to exist forever and everlasting without beginning or end. In addition, in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), the third person proper pronoun "הוּא" was frequently used, and it was cited 6,828 times. Its pronunciation is "Yah-weh," composed by four Hebrew letters (from right to left): "Yodh," "He," "Waw," and "He," "YHWH" for short-hand. "HWH" indicates Eve who was the first woman in the world referred to in the *Bible*, the original Hebrew word comprises the meaning of "life". "Yodh" is the third person pronoun, so "YHWH" could be interpreted as "He makes life," "He causes life" or "He is life".³² In the previous part of this paper, we discussed that ancient Chinese "God" was "origin of life,"

³¹ Mark S. Smith, "God in Translation: Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World," p.15. (Books.google.com.au. Retrieved 2011-12-05)

³² Chan Tak-Kwong 陳德光, "Ex 3:14a—State of the Question and a Possible Chinese Mystical Interpretation," *Fu Jen International Religious Studies*. Vol. 5 nr.1 (Summer 2011), pp.4-9.

which is synonymous with "Heaven" as original source of all creations in the whole universe. Its meaning has connection with "YHWH" in the *Bible* and "God" in the English version of the *Bible*. The earliest version (published in 1919) and Chinese Union Version 國語和合本 which is used most widely among Chinese people are respectively "God 帝" version and "god 神" version, because different Christian factions don't have a final conclusion of using "God" or "god" to name the Highest One in the *Bible*. Then it is apparent that early missionaries mistook the concepts of "God" and "god" and resulted in this phenomenon. Chinese Union Revised Version 和合本修訂, which was newly published in 2010, has already unified standard "Shang Di 上帝" in contrast with "god 神". In addition, the transliterated term "Ye He Hua 耶和華" is also used. Accordingly, the "God" traditionally believed by Chinese people is basically the same as the essence of the Creator in the *Bible*.

Comparison between Concept of Creation in the Bible and Creation of the Universe in Confucius' Cosmology Concept

The creation of the universe manifested in the *Bible* was significantly different from Confucius' concept. The Creator declared in the *Bible* directly created the world from the "Trinity" of Holy Father, Holy Son and Holy Spirit. However, Confucius regarded that it was such a God who was based on "benevolence and righteousness" as ontology that granted the nature of "benevolence and righteousness" to *Yin-Yang*. Then "*Yin-Yang*" derived all things by the way of being opposite to each other and complementing each other. *Yin-Yang* is "the Way of Heaven," but there is still a dominant "God" beyond "the Way of Heaven". (*Genesis 1:1-3*)

In the beginning God (E-lo-him, plural of Father, Son and Spirit) created the heaven and the earth...And the Spirit of God (Holy Spirit) moved upon (English Version is "move") the face of the waters. And God "said" (Holy Son (word)), Let there be light: and there was light.

In the previous passage, we revealed that the Holy Son is Jesus, who also is called "the Way" (Word). The *Bible* claims that "the Way is God":

In the beginning was the “Word,” and the “Word” was with God, and the “Word” was God. (“太初有‘道’，‘道’與上帝同在，‘道’就是上帝”。) (*John 1:1, KJV*)

Besides, the “Way” created the heaven and the earth:

All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. (這“道”起初與上帝同在，萬物借著他而被造，凡被造的，沒有一物在他以外而被造。) (*John 1:3, KJV*)

Psalms 33:9 also said, “For He (God) spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. “The creation by speaking the “WORD” is a declaration of ontology with will and authority, also a display of direct “command” and “stood fast” life relationship between the creatures and the Creator. This was basically different from Confucius’ view that all things were indirectly created by interactive derivation of *Yin-Yang* (Qi 氣). The process of God’s creation narrated in *Genesis* has now been recognized and widely accepted by scientists. The “big bang cosmology” theory about the formation of the universe nearly totally corresponded with it.³³

Comparison between Sacrifice and Law in the Concept of Creation in the Bible and Sacrifice and Rite in Confucius’ Cosmology Concept

The sacrifice and the law in the *Old Testament of the Bible* were richly recorded in *Exodus* and *Leviticus*. The Law which was put in the Ark by the Israelites was “testimony” (見證 (תְּעוּדָה)) as the original Hebrew word. The English version Bible translated it as “testimony” (*Exodus 25:21, KJV*). It is thus evident that the Creator in the *Bible* grants human “Law” in order to “testify to” His Holy nature and the law and principle of the creation system in the universe. Therefore, Confucius considered “Rite” was the principle thought of all people and all things embodied by “the Way of Heaven” on Earth. This was substantially in agreement with the *Bible*. The difference is, the law in the *Bible* and the detailed regulations for Israelites on sacrifices was

³³ Wu Jiawang 吳家望. 2008. “Genesis and Science-Creation.” *Overseas Campus Magazines*. Vol. 89.no.6, pp.87-92.

actively granted by the Creator. In the content of sacrifice and the concrete rules, "God's perfect," "Redemption" and "Reconciliation of God and man" are the core symbolic significance. This is based on the Creator's Holy essence and His complete love for all creatures; the argument proved above shows us that Confucius regarded sacrifice as an action to show worship to God and respect to gods and ancestors, was a sincere tribute to the origin of life. Moreover, Confucius considered different superiority or inferiority should sacrifice corresponded to God, gods and ghosts with different degrees for the sake of order in "the Way of Heaven". In conclusion, the sacrifice concept in the *Bible* is the reconciliative relationship between God and human from up to down, while Confucius' sacrifice concept is the sincerity and respect to God, spirits and ancestors from down to up.

Conclusion

Confucius' personality-dominated cosmology concept developed layer upon layer, showing his advancing and mature thought in "the Will of God" and "the Way of Heaven." Guo Qiyong 郭齊勇 said in the preface of the *Study of the Thought of Bamboo Slips at Guodian Chu Tomb* 《郭店楚墓竹簡思想研究》, "Since the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, Chinese philosophy and culture always paid close attention to the life of the human and the life of the universe which are their basic focus." Confucius' enthusiasm to pursue the truth about the universe sincerely and deeply has represented the ancient sages and philosophers from the pre-Qin Dynasty, He explored and understood the ontology of the universe in the whole Chinese culture on the basis of observations from heaven down to earth, He showed the Chinese positive spirit for the pursuit of understanding the self and care for the value and significance of all life.

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Part IV
Spiritual Manifestations in Aesthetics

**On the Influence of Phenomenological
Aesthetics in Contemporary Chinese
Aestheticians from the Mode of Thought:
Taking Ye Lang, Zhu Liyuan and Zeng
Fanren as Individual Cases¹**

DONG HUIFANG

The great influence of phenomenology in the modern world has a close relation with the revolution of its mode of thought. Inheriting the spirit, method and mode of thought of phenomenology, aesthetics is divided into numerous western aesthetic groups in the 20th century. Having come into the vision of Chinese scholars for more than 30 years. Phenomenological aesthetics has been profoundly recognized by Chinese scholars as of great significance to the Chinese academic community. In 2001, Xu Dai thought one of its revolutionary significances is “bridging the gulf long-standing between subjective and objective with the notion of intentionality.”² In 2005, Zhang Yongqing published *On the Significance of Phenomenology to the Construction of Chinese Aesthetics in the New Century from Viewpoint of the Mode of Thought*, considering that phenomenology has brought shock and revolution to traditional ideas in at least two aspects as follows. First, it contributes to breaking with the tradition that beauty is a kind of entity. Second, it reinterprets the tradition that beauty is a kind of knowledge.³ Both remarks are from the angle of modes of thought of phenomenology and phenomenological aesthetics. Contemporary Chinese aestheticians also learn from its mode of

¹ The article belongs to Social Science Youth Project of China Education Ministry “On Mikel Dufrenne Aesthetics’ Mode of Thought”(13YJC720009) and Social Science Youth Project in Liaoning Province “The Influence of Western Literary Theory’s Thinking Mode on the Construction of Contemporary Chinese Literary theory”(L12CZW006).

² Xu Dai. 2001. The Aesthetic Methods of Phenomenology, *Fujian Forum*, Vol. 5.

³ Zhang Yongqing, “On the Significance of Phenomenology to the Construction of Chinese Aesthetics in the New Century from the Mode of Thought,” *Academic Monthly*, 2005, Vol. 10.

thought when they accept phenomenological aesthetics. In fact, the aestheticians who consider the construction of contemporary Chinese aesthetics from the angle of modes of thought have already become a noticeable group, among which many recognize that studying beauty should not follow the pattern of subject-object dichotomy, but adopt an approach beyond the opposition between subject and object, such as Ye Lang, Zhu Liyuan and Zeng Fanren et al. Although the establishment of their modes of thought is usually affected by several ideas, the influence of modes of thought of phenomenological aesthetics is obvious.

*"Beauty lies in the image" of Ye Lang and Mode of Thought of
Phenomenological Aesthetics*

Influenced by Liang Qichao, Wang Guowei, Cai Yuanpei, Zhu Guangqian, Zong Baihua and other contemporary Chinese aestheticians, Ye Lang pays much attention to learning from western aesthetics. According to the aesthetic thought presented in his work *Principle of Aesthetics*, Ye Lang's core idea can be summarized as "Beauty lies in image." This theory is constructed on the basis of traditional Chinese culture, mixing with contemporary western aesthetic achievements, especially achievements in phenomenological aesthetics. In the process of western aesthetics' development lasting for more than 2500 years, Ye Lang lists 19 aestheticians, who have the greatest influence or deserve most attention in the view of the construction of aesthetics. Up to four of them are aestheticians in phenomenology and phenomenological aesthetics, namely Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Roman Ingarden and Mikel Dufrenne. Thus we can see that Ye Lang attaches great importance to phenomenological aesthetics. Also, judging from his quotations, Heidegger, Dufrenne, Husserl, Sartre and Ingarden are quoted repeatedly.

Accepting the mode of thought of phenomenological aesthetics, Ye Lang understands aesthetic activity as an activity of intentionality. Thus, aesthetic image becomes a result of intentionality, namely an intentional object. Ye Lang thinks this means that the activity of intentionality not only lets "image" be presented, but also promotes meaning. Thus, it is explained that aesthetic activity is the communication between "me" and the world. In fact, in his view,

“me” and the world can’t be separated at all in aesthetic activity. Obviously, once the world of aesthetic object is presented, “me” has already been included. Just the same, without “me,” this world can’t be presented. It is clear that Ye Lang uses the intentionality of phenomenology to interpret the characteristic of aesthetic image: Aesthetic image can only exist in aesthetic activity and the presentation of aesthetic image is a co-presentation of “me” and the world. According to Ye Lang’s analysis in this paragraph, his understanding of intentionality is closer to Dufrenne in spirit since there are different understandings of intentionality among phenomenological aestheticians.

Ye Lang defines sensuousness as the first character of the aesthetic image, which shows the influence of mode of thought of phenomenological aesthetics. He emphasizes that aesthetic image is a sensuous world which is complete, full of meaning and interest. His understanding of the sensuous is based on Dufrenne’s. Namely, sensuous is not a physical character of objects, but rather a mixture of subjective and objective taking shape after its appreciator has perceived the physical character of works of literature and art. In other words, the sensuous world presented in the eyes of the appreciator actually has a quality of emotion and is an object which has been soaked by the emotion of its appreciator. Just as the farmer’s pair of shoes painted by Van Gogh, it is neither the same with the pair of shoes that is thrown in the peasant’s house, nor the pair of shoes in the eyes of farmer, it is a new world found by Van Gogh. That is, the presentation of the sensuous can be separated neither from the sense object, nor the sense subject. Without either, can the sensuous exist. About this, Dufrenne’s says “the sensuous is an act common both to the sensing being and to what is sensed.”⁴ Obviously, Ye Lang agrees with Dufrenne on this point. However, differing from Dufrenne, Ye Lang comprehends the sensuous world as an emotion and scenery blending world in Chinese aesthetics. He emphasizes that emotion and scenery cannot be separated from each other, which originates from the fact that things on the earth cannot be separated from human survival and life. Thus it explains why an aesthetic image can always reveal some meaning of the world, since meaning is presented as the

⁴ Mikel Dufrenne, translated by Edward S. Casey, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p.48.

sensuous. At this point, Ye Lang turned once again to the view of Dufrenne: "It is in the angle of integration of sensuous and meaning that Dufrenne describes aesthetic object as 'splendid sensuous'." "Splendid sensuous' is a sensuous world which is complete and full of meaning, and this is aesthetic image, also 'Beauty' in a broad sense."⁵ When Dufrenne expounds on sensuous, he seeks for the fusion of the subject and object in the mode of thought. By accepting it, Ye Lang carries out the first step in defining aesthetic image.

Ye Lang attaches great importance to the image world which takes shape in aesthetic activity. His interpretation of the image world is founded on Husserl, Heidegger, and Dufrenne's interpretation of "life-world". In fact, Husserl's "life-world" raises a question on how to look upon the relationship between man and the world. In the tradition of western philosophy, man is opposite to the world and enjoys conquering the world. This subject and object dichotomy hides man from truly living in the world so that Husserl puts forward the concept of "life-world" to awaken people to reconsider the relationship between man and the world. Husserl's train of thought becomes the origin of Heidegger and Dufrenne's reconsideration. Heidegger proposes "poetically dwelling," while Dufrenne advocates going back to the nature of man and the world by means of aesthetic experience. The "life-world" emphasized by Ye Lang is an "original experience world," man and the world "coexisting". Obviously, it coincides with phenomenological aesthetics. Moreover, Ye Lang proposes further that "The thought on 'true' ('nature') in Chinese aesthetics has similarities and communication with the 'life-world' thought in phenomenological aesthetics."⁶ He thinks that the true is nature and the original appearance of existence. In the image world, the world is presented as it is, just as Heidegger says "Beauty is a way by which unhidden truth emerges."

Also, Ye Lang tries to combine the mode of thought of phenomenological aesthetics with Chinese theory that man is an integral part of nature to construct his own system of aesthetics. It is reflected in two aspects: On one hand, he constantly criticized the subject-object dichotomy. For example, he evaluates the big aesthetic discussion in 1950~1960s: "The whole discussion is carried out in the

⁵ Ye Lang, *The Principle of Aesthetics* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2002), p. 63.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

paradigm of subject-object dichotomy."⁷ Another example is that he evaluates the issue on the essence of beauty, which has been discussed for thousands of years in western history: "On the essence of beauty, the two kinds of opinions above share one thing on the premise of a subject-object dichotomy."⁸ It shows how necessary and urgent it is for aesthetics study in contemporary China to get out of the paradigm of subject-object dichotomy.

On the other hand, Ye Lang constantly affirms the mode of thought that man is an integral part of nature. He points out that "Viewed from the mode of thought, Chinese aesthetics has a character which regards man as an integral part of nature instead of the paradigm of subject-object dichotomy."⁹ By saying "regarding man as an integral part of nature," Ye Lang mainly refers to the meaning that man is connected with all the things on the earth just as they are in a body.¹⁰ On this premise, he summarized the mode of thought of Heidegger as "harmony between nature and human beings": "Heidegger criticized the traditional subject-object dichotomy (subject-object construction), and raised a mode of thought which regards man as an integral part of nature (human-world construction). Heidegger rejected the paradigm of a subject-object dichotomy that regards the relationship between man and the world as an external relationship between two ready-made things, actually the relationship between man and the world is not an external one, but a kind of harmony with all things on the earth, as man is soaked in all things on the earth. The world presents itself because of man's 'Dasein'." ¹¹In the aesthetic thought of Ye Lang, it has always been his goal to integrate the mode of thought of phenomenological aesthetics which stresses the blood relationship between man and the world with the traditional Chinese mode of thought that man is an integral part of nature. Because of this when he expounds on issues such as sense of beauty, image world, realm of life etc., Ye Lang's statements always permeate the spirit, which surpasses the subject-object dichotomy and returns to man being an integral part of nature.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁹ Ye Lang, *Bamboo in the Mind-Chinese Aesthetics on the Way of Modern Times* (Hefei: Anhui Education Press, 2002), p. 248.

¹⁰ Ye Lang, *The Principle of Aesthetics*, p. 6. footnote.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Zhu Liyuan's Practical Ontology: Aesthetics and Mode of Thought of Phenomenological Aesthetics

By reflecting on Li Zehou's practical aesthetics and transforming phenomenological ontology, Zhu Liyuan's practical ontology aesthetics took shape in the debate on practical aesthetics and post practical aesthetics. Zhu Liyuan thinks there are mainly two limitations in Li Zehou's practical aesthetics: First, it hasn't surpassed the subject-object dichotomy paradigm of epistemology. Second, its view on practice is limited.¹² This pushes him to reconsider practical aesthetics and find a way out for contemporary Chinese aesthetics.

In the process of comparing contemporary Chinese aesthetics' mode of thought and western aesthetics paradigm, Zhu Liyuan advocates learning from the trend of western aesthetics in order to transform the subject-object dichotomy paradigm of contemporary Chinese aesthetics. He reviewed two big discussions in contemporary Chinese aesthetics in the last century. At the same time, he studied the development process of western aesthetics. He noticed the criticism of Schopenhauer, Croce, Freud, Nietzsche et al on the traditional subject-object dichotomy of epistemology aesthetics, particularly the contributions made by Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Derrida and Habermas and others surpass the subject-object dichotomy. The reversal of China and the West made him feel deeply that "in order to get breakthrough in the construction of Chinese aesthetics in the new century, perhaps breaking and surpassing the traditional subject-object dichotomy paradigm is the key."¹³ It is on the basis of this view that Zhu Liyuan established his mode of thought which surpassed the traditional subject-object dichotomy paradigm consciously in his practical ontology aesthetics.

The aesthetic mode of thought of Zhu Liyuan has an inseparable and inherent relationship with that of phenomenological aesthetics. He pays more attention to Husserl, Heidegger and Dufrenne, especially Heidegger. Zhu Liyuan understands "practice" on the basis of Marxism and introduces the ontology of Heidegger. When Zhu Liyuan interprets man's being, he introduces Heidegger's "being-in-

¹² Zhu Liyuan, "The Reason Why I Turn to Practical Ontology Aesthetics," *Literature and Art Forum*, 2008, Vol. 11.

¹³ Zhu Liyuan, *Towards Practical Ontology Aesthetics* (Suzhou: Suzhou University Press, 2008), p. 40.

the-world," within which he introduces Heidegger's mode of thought regarding the relationship between man and the world: "According to the view of being-in-the-world, man cannot be separated from the world: On the one hand, man exists in the world. From the beginning, man is included in the world. Man is an integral part of the world. On the other hand, the world is meaningful only to man. Without man, it doesn't matter whether the world has meaning or not. And 'Dasein' is the contact of man and the world. Man is always in contact of the world. When contacting, man is generated realistically. The process of contacting actually is a process in which man relates to the world in various ways through conscious activities. According to Marxism, this is 'practice' indeed."¹⁴ It is easy to see that the "practice" of Zhu Liyuan is no longer the conquering or use of an object of practice by a subject of practices but a relationship between man and the world, a way by which man contacts with the world. Thus, it has become man's basic way of existence. This kind of reformation lets "practice" not only be limited to activities of physical production, but also contain different kinds of man's activities in life, such as morality, politics, economics and the arts etc. Thus, "practice" has become an intensive practice of life, which is the foundation of Zhu Liyuan's practical ontology aesthetics. However, his mode of thought has been very different from practical aesthetics.

When Zhu Liyuan expounds on the view that "beauty is generated," it is clear he identifies the influence of the mode of thought on phenomenological aesthetics. First, learning from Heidegger, he changes the traditional question "what is beauty?" to "how is beauty generated and presented?"

Second, Zhu Liyuan introduces the generative theory of Heidegger consciously to refute the view of traditional epistemology aesthetics which regards beauty as an already existing object. He thinks that later Heidegger's interpretation of existence, truth, and logos sketches out a brand new beginning for philosophy. "He thinks that 'beginning is ending', which points out a new realm of thought and the authentic state of existence for us. 'In-Sein' everything is vivid. All is integral, complementary and always in a vivid surge; there are neither rigid systems nor ready methods, while everything is always in a state of happening and generating in an everlasting movement. Heidegger

¹⁴ Zhu Liyuan, *Towards Practical Ontology Aesthetics*, pp. 279-280.

calls this movement the game of the four: heaven, earth, god and man. Also, he calls this new realm 'Ereignis.' Compared with his early thought, this new realm is more of dynamic generative theory, which inspires us to understand and interpret beauty."¹⁵ Inspired by Heidegger and influenced by Jiang Kongyang's creativity aesthetics, Zhu Liyuan inspected the reality of aesthetic activity and the development of human history, believing that aesthetic activity, aesthetic relationship and even "beauty" are processes which are constantly integrating.

Third, on expounding the principle that the relationship between the aesthetic subject and the aesthetic object is prior to its two terms, Zhu Liyuan borrows Dufrenne's intentionality construction of "aesthetic perception-aesthetic object". Dufrenne thinks that only when a work of art has really been perceived can it become an aesthetic object. In Zhu Liyuan's view, the change from a work of art to aesthetic object is the process in which "beauty" is generated. Before aesthetic perception begins, there is neither an aesthetic subject nor an aesthetic object. Both aesthetic subject and aesthetic object are formed simultaneously in the interaction of each other. Thus, Dufrenne's intentionality construction finally brought Zhu Liyuan to the establishment of principle that the relationship between aesthetic subject and aesthetic object is prior to its two terms, namely: "In time, the construction of aesthetic relationship and the generating of aesthetic subject and object occur synchronously and have no particular order; however, logically, the aesthetic relationship comes first while the aesthetic subject and object are second. The aesthetic relationship determines the aesthetic subject and object, without an aesthetic relationship there is neither aesthetic subject nor aesthetic object. This is the principle of 'relationship first'."¹⁶

Zhu Liyuan's understanding of the realm of life also shows the influence of Heidegger. Particularly, he emphasized the connection of realm of life with existence and practice: "Realm of life, as it is an integration of man and the world but the integration on the level of ontology, namely the integration achieved in the practice in which man and the world rely on each other and construct bilaterally, the integration achieved in the practice in which towards man is man the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 314-315.

world generated." This kind of integration embodies that man relies on the world and lives in the world, works hard endlessly in the life activities of the world, namely the practical relationship between man and the world. The realm of life generates the practical relationship between man and the world. This realm is rooted deeply in the practice of life."¹⁷ The practical activities of life are extremely rich. Since the levels of these activities are different, the levels of the realm of life differ naturally. From the vision of ontology, Zhu Liyuan views the realm of life as an integration of man and the world on the level of ontology. The boundaries and limits of man's existence are broadened by aesthetic activities. Since it enables man to have the closest relationship with the world, aesthetics is a higher realm of life. So Zhu Liyuan thinks that "It is only on the sense of practical ontology that the realm of life is communicated with the aesthetic and artistic realm."¹⁸

Over the last decade, Zhu Liyuan dedicated himself to exploring practical ontology aesthetics. Overall, his practical ontology aesthetics is an important attempt to explore the system of contemporary Chinese aesthetics, which is still based on a Marxist view of practice, inherits Jiang Kongyang's practical creativity aesthetics, introduces the dimension of ontology of Heidegger, and integrates all three of them. This is an important step that Zhu Liyuan has made to try to overcome the epistemological mode of thought of a subject-object dichotomy coming from Li Zehou's practical aesthetics system. Here, the mode of thought of phenomenological aesthetics which surpasses the dichotomy has given him important support.

The Ecological Ontological Aesthetics of Zeng Fanren and the mode of thought of Phenomenological Aesthetics

It is obvious that Zeng Fanren's ecological ontological aesthetics is related to phenomenological aesthetics in the mode of thought, mainly Heidegger's ontology aesthetics. First, with the thought of Heidegger's ontology, Zeng Fanren cleared away the obstacles in the mode of thought for ecological aesthetics to come on the stage. The phenomenology of Husserl is dedicated to seeking a way to surpass

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

the dichotomy of thinking and being, subject and object. Heidegger inherits the mode of thought of Husserl, but focuses on studying the being of beings. In his view, the traditional epistemology paradigm of "subject-object dichotomy" separates being from beings, resulting in the hiding truth. Heidegger's ontology brought a transformation from traditional epistemology to contemporary ontology, and also meant a thorough change in the mode of thought. Obviously, Zeng Fanren recognizes that ecological aesthetics should learn from Heidegger's thought. The need for a development of economy and society and the support from the field of literature both contribute to the birth of ecological aesthetics, still more the birth of ecological aesthetics needs the guidance of philosophy. Heidegger's ontology, opposes the subject-object dichotomy and anthropocentrism, and provides an important basis in philosophical theory for the establishment of ecological aesthetics.

Heidegger's brand-new interpretation on the relationship between man and the world provides a new vision for Zeng Fanren's ecological aesthetics to interpret the relationship between man and nature. For Heidegger the relation between man and the world is replaced by "dasein". The meeting of dasein and of other beings is attributed to dasein's hard work. Beings are brought forward in hard work, thus the world is generated. In the view of Zeng Fanren, this interpretation of Heidegger embodies an eco-holistic view of man and nature's harmonious symbiosis and coexistence. Zeng Fanren thinks that this is the nature of ecological aesthetics. It is revealed in man's kindness and appreciation towards nature and ecology, thus integrating man and the circumstances as a whole. He says, "We don't consider studying the object of ecological aesthetics as 'nature' simply, as a whole 'eco-system' which contains not only everything in nature but also man."¹⁹ This is the ecological holistic view much emphasized by Zeng Fanren, which is neither absolute anthropocentrism nor absolute egocentrism, but a modern view of nature that man co-exists and co-prospers with nature, integrating "ecological humanism" and "ecological holism".

Zeng Fanren also regards Heidegger's criticism of modern technology highly, since the criticism of modern technology is

¹⁹ Zeng Fanren, *Introduction of Ecological Aesthetics* (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2010), p. 292.

apparently criticism of anthropocentrism. Heidegger criticized mercilessly the “herausfordern” of western modern technology to man’s existence. He reproves that man controls and manipulates the world by modern technology, but hasn’t realized it is herausfordern to man’s own living space if he treats the world willfully. This kind of instrumental rationality undermines “the game of the four: heaven, earth, man and god” and man’s society loses harmony. Thereby, Zeng Fanren realizes that the study of ecological aesthetics should insist on the content of ecological phenomenology, to “change man’s purely instrumental and calculable ways of treating nature to a way of equal dialogue and intersubjectivity interaction.”²⁰ Apparently, for ecological aesthetics, the paradigm of subject-object dichotomy and anthropocentrism both must be abandoned.

Heidegger’s proposal of “poetically dwelling” is considered as the aesthetics ideal for ecological aesthetics by Zeng Fanren. “Poetically dwelling” is to resist man’s “technologically dwelling” which is under the control of instrumental rationality, and return to the integration of “heaven, earth, man and god”. In fact, it is calling for the harmony of man and the world; calling for man’s poetic dwelling in the world. Zhu Liyuan points out that, “Compared with the concepts of existence in the past, Heidegger’s understanding of existence is the most magical and ethereal. On one hand, there’s a ‘poeticizing’ tendency on the problem of existence. While on the other hand, it completely overcomes the Daseinism which exists more or less in the early time and reaches a poetical harmonious state of man, nature and the world.”²¹ Also in agreement with Zhu Liyuan’s understanding, Zeng Fanren greatly values Later Heidegger’s Ontology. He regards the quality of the poetic as an aesthetic state of man and the world, “The game of the four: heaven, earth, man and god” as the only way for men to obtain aesthetic dwelling. And, he pins the hope of ecological aesthetics’ and aesthetic ideal on men’s “poetically dwelling.”

In a word, Zeng Fanren’s ecological aesthetics benefits much from Heidegger’s ontology. The mode of thought of Heidegger’s ontology opens the mind of thought to studying ecological aesthetics. Some theories become an important theoretical basis of Zeng Fanren’s ecological aesthetics while some concepts and categories are directly

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

²¹ Zhu Liyuan, “Seeking for the Ontology Foundation of Ecological Aesthetics,” *Journal of Xiangtan University*, 2006, Vol. 1.

absorbed as core components of Zeng Fanren's ecological aesthetics. Compared with other contemporary Chinese aestheticians, the degree of participation of Heidegger's aesthetics is the highest in Zeng Fanren's ecological aesthetics.

Reflections

In the above, we have seen that phenomenological aesthetics has participated practically in the contemporary construction of Chinese aesthetics. For what reason are phenomenological aesthetics and its mode of thought favored in the construction of contemporary Chinese aesthetics? This can be analyzed in the following aspects:

First, there is some agreement between traditional Chinese aesthetics and phenomenological aesthetics, which has increasingly become a consensus of Chinese aesthetics community. The first scholar who recognized this agreement between traditional Chinese artistic spirit and phenomenological aesthetics is Xu Fuguan, who has realized the connection between Zhuangzi's "xin" of "xinzhai" and Husserl's consciousness in his monograph *Chinese Artistic Spirit* (1996). Similarly, Liu Ruoyu thinks that phenomenology has some fundamental similarities with daoism in his book *Chinese Literary Theory* (1975). Later, the agreement is recognized by many renowned scholars in China, such as Zhang Shiyong, Ye Lang, Zhang Fa, Ye Xiushan, Zeng Fanren, Yang Chunshi, Deng Xiaomang, Pan Zhichang, Gao Nan, Zhu Zhirong, Peng Feng, Peng Fuchun et al. Entering the new century, study in this field is deepened in a series of monographs, such as Zhang Xianglong's *From Phenomenology to Confucius, Chinese Ancient Thought and Phenomenology*, *Nine Lessons of Phenomenological Interpretation On Confucius, Heidegger's Thought and Chinese Tiandao*, Wang Qingjie's *Hermeneutics, Heidegger and Modern Interpretation on Confucianism and Daoism*, Na Wei's *Mutual Interpretation between Daoism and Heidegger*, and *Sounds of Nature, Where are They Come from-Zhuangzi's Saying without Mind and Heidegger's Unspeakable Theory* etc. All these achievements are the evidence that there is some agreement between traditional Chinese thought and phenomenology and phenomenological aesthetics.

Second, is the need to explore contemporary Chinese aesthetics system. Since the 1990s, the problem of how to construct and develop contemporary Chinese aesthetics has become a puzzling task for

aestheticians. Reflections on the two big discussions of Chinese aesthetics makes many scholars realize that traditional literary theory must be transformed in the new situation, which should break with the traditional subject-object dichotomy epistemology. Thus, practical aesthetics represented by Li Zehou is challenged repeatedly and “life aesthetics,” “transcendent aesthetics,” “existential aesthetics,” “ecological aesthetics” etc. seek to jump out of the subject-object dichotomy paradigm. With the help of phenomenological aesthetics to realize the modern transformation of classic Chinese aesthetics or the construction of a modern Chinese aesthetics system, is thought as a possible way.

Third, it is related to the change in the mode of thought in contemporary Chinese philosophy. In traditional Chinese philosophy, the mode of thought is that “man is an integral part of the world”. And the subject-object dichotomy paradigm intensifies gradually from Ming and Qing dynasties to modern China. Contemporary Chinese philosophy scholars have already recognized the necessity of changing Chinese philosophy’s mode of thought in studying contemporary western philosophy’s criticism of metaphysics. Ye Xiushan says in *The Philosophy of Beauty*, published in 1991, “The fundamental problem of Philosophy is the relationship between thinking and being, the relationship between subject and object. Here we call this problem the relationship between man and the world.”²² Obviously, this understanding merges with the mode of thought of phenomenology and also represents an important change in Chinese philosophy. And then in *Correlation between the Heaven and Human*, a monograph published in 1995, Zhang Shiyong proposed changing the mode of thought of philosophy from subject-object dichotomy to subject-object integration. Seeking to change the mode of thought in aesthetics is in accord with the mode of thought in contemporary Chinese philosophy.

Regarding our reflections, it is helpful for us to deepen our thought by examining the differences and similarities presented when contemporary Chinese aestheticians accept the mode of thought of phenomenological aesthetics. When the three aestheticians above

²² Ye Xiushan, *The Philosophy of Beauty* (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 1991), p. 37.

introduce the mode of thought of phenomenological aesthetics to their own theoretical system, they exhibit some common characteristics.

First, they very consciously take Chinese cultural context as their standpoint. Ye Lang emphasized this point especially identifying Zong Baihua's view that Chinese scholars should base themselves on their own cultural traditions. "Beauty lies in image" proposed by Ye Lang, is mainly on the premise of image theory in Chinese classical aesthetics. Western theories (phenomenological aesthetics included), categories and concepts are used by him as arguments for Chinese and the West proving each other. In his thought, a consciousness of exhibiting and stressing Chinese characteristics is obvious. Taking the Marxist conception of practice as its philosophical foundation and Jiang Kongyang's practical creativity aesthetics as its theoretical premise, Zhu Liyuan's practical ontology of aesthetics learned from Heidegger's ontology, interprets and perfects the concept of "practice" from the angle of ontology. As for Zhu Liyuan, ontology is not dragged into the system of practical aesthetics, but has already been contained in the practical philosophy of Marx, with possibilities to break through the subject-object dichotomy. Especially when Jiang Kongyang's theory of aesthetic relation has already showed vaguely a willingness to conquer subject-object dichotomy, Heidegger's ontology only lets the original being be presented with its true features. When talking about the construction of ecological aesthetics, Zeng Fanren stresses on strengthening nativeness and insists on the Sinicism of ecological aesthetics. This shows his attention on the standpoint of ecological aesthetics. His aim is to establish the status of Chinese ecological aesthetics in world aesthetics and construct an ecological aesthetics system with the Chinese manner and style under the global vision.

Second, they prefer Heidegger's ontological phenomenology. All three phenomenological aestheticians, namely Ye Lang, Zhu Liyuan and Zeng Fanren have paid great attention to Heidegger. This is also in accordance with the common preferences of contemporary Chinese philosophy and aesthetics. Ye Lang values the mode of thought of Heidegger and his interpretation of the life-world. In Heidegger's philosophy and aesthetics, he has found many similarities and communications with traditional Chinese aesthetics. Different from the fact that Ye Lang values Husserl, Dufrenne and Heidegger at the same time, Zhu Liyuan obviously attaches more importance to

Heidegger over Dufrenne. He appreciates the thought of Later Heidegger more, especially the thought of "being-in-the-world". In the construction of literary aesthetics, Zeng Fanren once proposed to learn from Dufrenne's aesthetic experience but in the construction of ecological aesthetics, he pays attention only to Heidegger. Like Zhu Liyuan, he also values more the thought of Later Heidegger, such as "being-in-the-world," "The game of the four: heaven, earth, god and man," "poetically dwelling" and criticism on technique etc. In fact, there are some resources contained in Dufrenne's *Natural Philosophy* which ecological aesthetics can learn from. However, it seems that Dufrenne's thought in this aspect has not drawn Zeng Fanren's attention.

Although they have the above points in common, the differences of internalizing ways of phenomenological aesthetics' mode of thought deserve more reflection, which actually relates to their understandings towards phenomenological aesthetics' mode of thought.

Specifically, when Ye Lang integrates phenomenological aesthetics' mode of thought with his aesthetic thought, his dominant idea is to explore ancient Chinese aesthetics' value with phenomenological aesthetics, make use of the common aesthetic resources of China and the West to bridge the gulf between Chinese contemporary aesthetics and ancient aesthetics, seek common ground while reserving differences and realize the contemporary construction of Chinese aesthetics. As for Ye Lang, on one hand, phenomenological aesthetics helps to break with the epistemology mode of thought of subject-object dichotomy in contemporary Chinese aesthetics. On the other hand, it also helps to realize the contemporary value of classic Chinese aesthetics. Therefore he tries to combine phenomenological aesthetics' mode of thought with the traditional Chinese view that "man is an integral part of nature". He regards Heidegger's view on the relationship between man and the world as similar to "man is an integral part of nature," and thus to connect China with the West.

Like Ye Lang, Zhu Liyuan also thinks it's an important task for contemporary Chinese aesthetics to overcome the subject-object dichotomy, and surpass the dichotomy of the mode of thought. His thought is to explore the contemporary value of practical aesthetics with phenomenological aesthetics, dig out the ontology dimension which has already been contained in Marxism, go on from Jiang

Kongyang's aesthetic thought, seek the development path of contemporary practical aesthetics and promote the contemporary instruction of Chinese aesthetics. When Zhu Liyuan interpreted the issue of the realm of life, he once talked about the Chinese longing for "man as an integral part of nature". However, he hasn't related it with phenomenological aesthetics to surpass the subject-object dichotomy.

On the standpoint of constructing the branch of ecological aesthetics, Zeng Fanren regards Heidegger's ontology as the philosophical foundation of ecological aesthetics, emphasizes the important significance of Heidegger's ontology which overcomes subject-object dichotomy and anthropocentrism towards ecological aesthetics. The reason why he takes some propositions of Heidegger as the basic category of ecological aesthetics also lies in its mode of thought which overcomes anthropocentrism.

What we should note is that each aesthetician comprehends the mode of thought of phenomenological aesthetics in his own theoretical context with its different emphasis: Ye Lang pursues the realm that "man is an integral part of nature," Zhu Liyuan values surpassing opposition between subject and object, and Zeng Fanren emphasizes overcoming subject-object dichotomy and anthropocentrism. These differences resulted in phenomenological aesthetics itself, and can be accommodated by it. The real problem it raises is: Does surpassing subject-object relationship mean to abandon it or not? How should we regard the relationship of subject and object? Looking at the three aestheticians discussed in this article, their thoughts differ.

According to Ye Lang's view in *the Principle of Aesthetics*, his attempt to surpass subject-object relationship goes to the realm that "man is an integral part of nature," so he advocate abandoning the subject-object relationship for research on beauty. As for Ye Lang, to abandon the subject-object relationship is not to pursue the integration of subject and object. He thinks the realm that "man is an integral part of nature" is different from the integration of subject and object: "The difference between the realm that 'man is an integral part of nature' and the integration of subject and object is that, it is not an epistemological relationship between two independent entities, but always a relationship in which the two are combined into one from

the view of ontology.”²³ The integration of subject and object is abandoned by Ye Lang because it distinguishes subject and object first and then seeks the integration of subject and object, thus it is an epistemological mode of thought. In addition to the study of beauty, when expounding on the issue of how man treats his life, namely beyond the study of beauty, Ye Lang advocates poetic life and treats the world with the mode of thought that “man is an integral part of nature”. Thus Ye Lang advocates abandoning subject-object relationship.

Zhu Liyuan’s practical ontology aesthetics proposes breaking with the mode of thought of subject-object dichotomy and surpasses subject-object dichotomy repeatedly. In fact, what Zhu Liyuan values is surpassing of confrontation. That is, advocating canceling the confrontation between subject and object but not denying subject-object relationship. For example, in *Aesthetics*, which he considers having implemented his practical ontology aesthetics, he regards aesthetic activity as an integral activity containing subject and object. Also, subject and object are frequently mentioned in the book. This proves that he hasn’t denied subject-object relationship thoroughly but opposes regarding them as complete oppositions.

Zeng Fanren’s ecological aesthetics advocates the symbiosis between man and nature, opposes the subject-object dichotomy and anthropocentric mode of thought, but still has remains of subject-object relationship. He says, “History has proved that, the subject-object dichotomy epistemology relationship between man and the world only exists in scientific experiments, but it is not a realistic existence. In reality, the relationship between man and the world is a kind of ‘dasein and the world’ ontology relationship, in which man and the world are not separated and confront each other, but are generated in the ecosystem that man can’t be separated from the world even for a moment.”²⁴ Even though the subject-object dichotomy epistemology relationship between man and the world only exists in scientific experiments, it is an undeniable existence. Moreover, he thinks China’s modernization process still needs to

²³ Ye Lang, *The Principle of Aesthetics*, p. 85.

²⁴ Zeng Fanren, “Reflection on German Classical Aesthetics and Construction of Contemporary Chinese Aesthetics—from the Practical Aesthetics of ‘Humanized Nature’ to Ecological Aesthetics of ‘Universal State’,” *Theoretical Studies in Literature and Art*, 2012, Vol. 1.

depend on technology. He doesn't agree with Heidegger's complete denial of technique.

In fact, in Chinese aesthetics community, scholars' voices on the subject-object relationship are not consistent. Although many contemporary Chinese aestheticians think that the study of aesthetics should adopt the mode of thought which surpasses subject-object dichotomy, some scholars question this. For example, Ma Longqian's subject-object construction aesthetics opposes the mode of thought which surpasses subject-object dichotomy; Tong Qingbing's aesthetic ideology is still in terms of epistemology. Zhang Shiyong proposes that "when continuing to call on Western subjective thought, we should combine subject-object dichotomy and subjectivity with the realm that 'man is an integral part of nature' at the same time".²⁵ Xu Bihui thinks that "the distinction of subject and object is an unalterable fact from the beginning of human history. As long as man has self-consciousness and man contacts the world in practical ways, there inevitably exists the distinction of subject and object."²⁶ The various views show that the mode of thought of phenomenological aesthetics truly inspires the Chinese aesthetics community's reflection, and contemporary Chinese aesthetics is exploring its own way of mode of thought.

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²⁵ Zhang Shiyong, *Man and Heaven-Confusion and Choice of Chinese and Western Philosophy* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1995), p. 99.

²⁶ Xu Bihui, The Distinction of Subject and Object and Construction of New Century Aesthetics, *Academic Monthly*, 2002, Vol. 9.

LISTENING TO SILENCE: JOHN CAGE AND THE ZEN BUDDHIST SPIRIT

WANG SHANG-WEN

Introduction

Western music developed rapidly during the careers of Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951) and Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) in the twentieth century. Besides the innovative composing techniques of these composers of “new music,” they also pursued a different understanding of music itself. John Cage (1912-1992) was one of the most important avant-garde composers in the United States of America. He made several experiments in his compositions to try to find new dimensions in music. Well educated in the western tradition, he was also greatly influenced by Eastern culture, especially by Zen Buddhism. His notorious work *4'33''* (1952) is a landmark of the new music in the twentieth century. This essay will try to analyze the Zen Buddhist Spirit in John Cage's well-known work.

This paper will be developed as follows: In the first part of this study the composer John Cage will be generally described. In the second part the work *4'33''* will be introduced. The third section explains the position of silence, which is the subject of *4'33''* in this musical composition. The fourth and fifth sections examine the fundamental concepts of Zen Buddhism. The sixth section discusses the special and “illogical” practice in Zen Buddhism. After these explanations, the discussion of the work *4'33''* will show that it is an example of the practice of Zen Buddhism, which aims at understanding *Truth* that is manifest in *Emptiness*.

John Cage and Contemporary Music

John Cage was one of the most famous composers in the United States of America. *Grove Music Online* praises him: “One of the leading figures of the postwar avant garde. The influence of his compositions, writings and personality has been felt by a wide range of composers

around the world. He had a greater impact on music in the 20th century than any other American composer."¹

He attended Arnold Schönberg's private classes and classes at USC and UCLA in 1935-38. Schönberg, although known as a "revolutionary" who "emancipated" the dissonant in music, still composed with many traditional western principles. These included the use of structure, intervals and forms. David Bernstein indicated that in his early compositions Cage was greatly influenced by Schönberg's "music idea".² Cage described himself:

In all of my pieces coming between 1935 and 1940, I had Schoenberg's lessons in mind, since he had taught me that a variation was in fact a repetition, I hardly saw the usefulness of variation, and I accumulated repetitions. All of my early works for percussion, and also my compositions for piano, contain systematically repeated groups of sounds or durations.³

Concepts such as "structure" and "system," however, which are more or less identical to "constraint" for an artist who always tries to create works "freely" are later left behind by Cage. He decided to launch another revolution, as had Schönberg, in twentieth century music.

John Cage's 4'33": Gag or Work?

John Cage's 4'33" (1952) is a crux of avant-garde music, which redefined the concept of music. This work had three movements without notes. There was, however, a printed score for this piece: all the instructions on the sheet were "tacet," and the duration of silence was indicated 33", 2'40" and 1'20" separately for the three

¹ James Pritchett, et al. "Cage, John." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2223954>.

² See David W. Bernstein, "John Cage, Arnold Schoenberg, and the Musical Idea," David W. Patterson (ed.), *John Cage. Music, Philosophy and Intention, 1933-1950* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 15-45.

³ John Cage and Daniel Charles, *For the Birds: John Cage in Conversation with Daniel Charles* (Sale, NH: M. Boyars, 1981), p. 75.

“movements”. This work was composed for any individual instrument or any combination of them. The premiere of this work was held by pianist David Tudor in Woodstock, New York on August 29, 1952, who separated the three movements by opening and closing the piano lid.

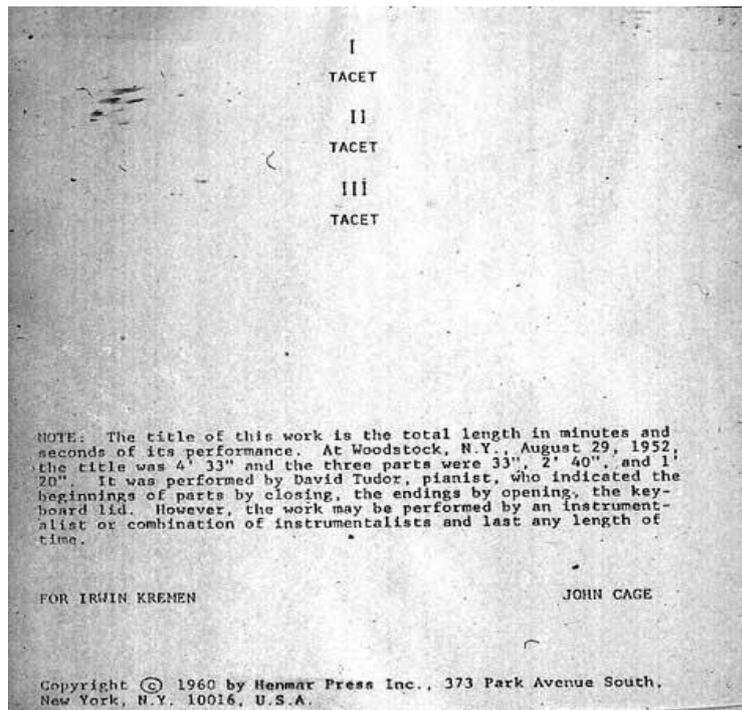


Figure 1, The Score of John Cage's 4'33''.

This work sharpened the situation of music listening and recreated its stage rules in that what is played by the performer is not identical with what is heard by the audience. Although the performer played *nothing*, the audience still heard *something* in the environment. John Cage talked about the premiere of 4'33'':

They missed the point. There's no such thing as silence. What they thought was silence, because they didn't know how to listen, was full of accidental sounds. You could hear the wind stirring outside during the first movement. During the second, raindrops began patterning the roof,

and during the third the people themselves made all kinds of interesting sounds as they talked or walked out.⁴

This work was an attempt, people can say, to search for a new limit of music and music listening. Swiss/German musicologist Hermann Danuser, a famous specialist of twentieth century music, indicated: "The historical meaning of the four and half minutes, in which Tudor sat silently before the grand piano, is hard to estimate. They built a starting point for the avant-garde environmental art in the sphere of music".⁵

Since the early twentieth century composers inserted various environmental sounds into their "music". In 1922 the Russian and Italian "Futurists," for example, choreographed factory sirens, steam whistles, foghorns, artillery, machine guns and aircraft into an epic of "proletarian music". Although 4'33" is not the earliest piece, it still "is the pivotal environmental work of the 20th century".⁶

"Silence" as a Constituent of Music

Silence is in fact an important constituent of music since this art emerged. As the proverb goes: "Silence speaks louder than words," silent music could also be clangorous. From the practical view point, on the one hand, the dramatic effect or climax of music could be well produced through the tacet or piano passage before *fortissimo* or *sforzato*, e.g. the *Surprising Symphony* of Joseph Haydn; from the theoretical view point, on the other hand, sound could not reveal itself if there were no silences: their independent existences depend on each other.

In order to exactly experience what silence is, Cage made an experience in an anechoic chamber at Harvard University in 1951. This room was also sound-proofed. In this supposedly "silent" room he

⁴ Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *Conversing with John Cage* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 70.

⁵ Hermann Danuser, *Die Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts. Neues Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 7 (Laaber: Laaber, 1984), p. 332. My translation from German.

⁶ David Toop. "Environmental music." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed November 14, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/43820>.

still heard something. "I heard two sounds, one high and one low. When I described them to the engineer in charge, he informed me that the high one was my nervous system in operation, the low one my blood in circulation."⁷ That's why he said, in the citation above, that "there's no such thing as silence."

Zen Buddhism: History and Characteristics

John Cage's search for silence was grounded not only in musical motives but also in philosophical ones, especially those of *Zen Buddhism*. "I was just then in the flush of my early contact with Oriental philosophy. It was out of that that my interest in silence naturally developed. I mean it's almost transparent."⁸ Zen Buddhism was introduced to the West mainly through Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki (鈴木大拙貞太郎, 1870-1966), a Japanese philosopher and scholar, after the Second World War and thus evoked a strong cultural influence. Many intellectuals and artists, including Cage, were greatly influenced by Suzuki at this time. These influences were also reflected in their works.⁹ Because of Suzuki's introduction of Zen into the West, many people might have the false impression that Zen Buddhism is the product of Japan.

Zen Buddhism is, in fact, the representative of Chinese Buddhism, which flourished during the Tang Dynasty (唐朝, 618-907). Buddhism originally sprang up in India. At the end of Western Han Dynasty (西漢, 206 BC-9 AD) Buddhism began to be introduced into China via the Silk Road. At the beginning it encountered strong opposition from traditional Chinese Confucians and Taoists. Through various conflicts and dialogues, Buddhism fused with traditional Chinese thought. During the Tang Dynasty, three indigenous Buddhist schools

⁷ Donald Stein. "A Few Notes about Silence and John Cage." *Weekly Journal*. 24 November 2004.

⁸ Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *Conversing with John Cage*, p. 70.

⁹ In 1942 Cage knew the mythologist Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) and they and their wives thereafter lived together in one apartment. It is believed that Cage's initial interest in Asian sources emerged in the exchange of ideas between them in this time. Cage was firstly engaged in South Asian concepts and in the 1950's turned into East Asian works. See David W. Patterson, "Cage and Asia: History and Sources," *The Cambridge Companion to John Cage* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 41-59.

emerged: *Tiantai School* (天台宗), *Huayan School* (華嚴宗) and *Chan*, i.e. *Zen School* (禪宗).

The word *Zen* is derived from the Japanese pronunciation of the Middle Chinese word Chan (禪), which in turn is derived from the Sanskrit word *dhyāna*, which can be approximately translated as “absorption” or “meditative state”. Chan Buddhism emphasizes achieving enlightenment and the personal expression of direct insight into Buddhist teachings. It deemphasized memorization and concentration on specific sutras and doctrine, and didn’t have a core sutra as its main narrative until the sixth patriarch Huineng (慧能)—his words and deeds were collected as *The Sutra of Sixth Patriarch* (六祖壇經) and form the canon for subsequent Chan Buddhists. Tiantai takes the *Lotus Sutra* (妙法蓮華經) as its central text along with *Huayan Flower Garland Sutra* (華嚴經).

The characteristic de-emphasis of literature and ceremony became an advantage for Chan Buddhism in becoming one of the most influential Buddhist schools in China during long periods of great conflict and strife. “The Chan School embodies the core teaching of Buddhism [...]. The essence of any of the other schools can be reduced to the spirit of Chan.”¹⁰

Gautama Buddha and the “Four Noble Truths”

In spite of the variety of the Buddhist schools this common concern is still the original teachings of Shakyamuni (釋迦牟尼, 563 BC - 483 BC). He was “the sage of the Shakya people,” on whose teachings Buddhism was founded. His original name is Siddhārtha Gautama (悉達多·喬達摩). He was the son of King Suddhodana (淨飯王), a leader of the Shakya people and lived in Kapilvastu (迦毘羅衛城). It is said that Prince Siddhārtha at the age 29 decided to devote himself to finding an answer to: “how people can get rid of the suffering of ageing, sickness, and death?” Strolling around the city, he saw at the eastern gate an old man, at southern gate a sick man and at western gate a funeral. As a result he felt deep suffering in life. At the northern gate he saw a monk who looked so calm and free from worry that Siddhārtha had a yearning for a similar peaceful life. This decisive

¹⁰ Chan Master Sheng Yen (聖嚴), *Orthodox Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Dharma Drum Publication, 2007), p. 128.

event was called the “stroll to the four gates” (四門遊觀). After a long period of thinking and reflecting he was enlightened. The term “Buddha” actually means “the enlightened one”.

The essence of Gautama Buddha’s thinking can be explained with the concept “Four Noble Truths” (四聖諦):

1) The truth or recognition of *dukkha* (suffering, anxiety, unsatisfactoriness, 苦諦): The phenomenon of suffering always accompanied life because of aging, sickness and death.

2) The truth of the origin of *dukkha* (集諦): Suffering and unsatisfactoriness come from trying to permanently hold onto things that are constantly changing, that in fact have no permanent existence. Since people can’t obtain what they want, they will feel depressed and suffer.

3) The truth of the cessation of *dukkha* (滅諦): If one wants ultimately to cease suffering in life, one has to change one’s mind and attitude toward the world: The world is ever-changing and has no eternal reality. The existences of things are transitory and come from the accidental combinations of many *causes* (因) and *effects* (果). If the cause-effect relations cease, then these things also vanish. Therefore one should give up the obsession with the false idea that the world has a separate eternal reality. The reality of the world is in fact *empty* (空), i.e. no sustained substance.

4) The truth of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha* (道諦): Gautama Buddha indicated eight methods or paths to the cessation of suffering, i.e. the “Noble Eightfold Path” (八正道): “Right view” (正見), “right intention” (正思維), “right speech” (正語), “right action” (正行), “right livelihood” (正業), “right effort” (正精進), “right mindfulness” (正念) and “right concentration” (正定). Gautama Buddha suggested that through these eight “right” paths people can get rid of the obsession with the “real” world and experience—not only “understand”—the “emptiness” of the world. If one can attain this state of mind, one can transcend the suffering of life.

The Special Practice of Chan Buddhism

The following Buddhist schools, in spite of their variety of interpretations, aimed at the basic teachings of Gautama Buddha, especially at the core concept “emptiness”. Emptiness is *not nothing*,

not the absolute void. On the contrary, it is full of various possibilities, where all things obtain their, although short and accidental, possible existences. *Emptiness is a vivid field, which lets all possibilities emerge.*

Chan Buddhism doesn't have a strict ceremony and fixed canon. It became one of the most wide-spread Buddhist schools in China and abroad because of its strong general message and its unique view on "methodology": There is no determined method, which can necessarily lead to enlightenment. Any method could be good, if it is a good way to reach Nirvana. A characteristic message of Chan Buddhism was therefore expressed as the "Jifong" or "prudent" dialogue (機鋒對話). Jifong "originally means the trigger of a bow [ji, 機] and the arrowhead [fong, 鋒]. The Chan School used the term as an analogue for the quick and deep arguments and sentences [...]. Chan masters often used Jifong language to test "the enlightened degree of the other practitioners".¹¹ Through the "quick and deep" even "illogical" dialogues, the enlightened masters broke the obsession and stubborn prejudices of pupils, to help them experience the vivid emptiness and to be enlightened. The famous dialogues were collected as "Gong'an" (公案, Japanese *Kōan*), which originally meant a government post, and subsequently became the proper name for the stories of Chan Buddhism. "Reflection on Gong'an" (參公案) later became the specific mode of practice for Chan Buddhism.

A famous Gong'an in *The Sutra of Sixth Patriarch* is as follows:

[...] I left there and went to Fa-hsin temple (法性寺) in Canton. At that time Bhikshu [monk] Yin-tsung (印宗), master of the dharma, was lecturing on the Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra (涅槃經) in the temple. It happened that one day, when a pennant was blown about by the wind, two bhikshus entered into a dispute as to what it was that was in motion, the wind or the pennant. As they could not settle their difference I submitted to them that it was neither, and that what actually moved

¹¹ Ming-Chuan Li (李明權). "Jifong (機鋒)". *Buddhist Dictionary Online* (佛學辭典在線版). Electronic Buddhadharma Society of BAUS, accessed November 28, 2013, http://www.baus-ebs.org/fodict_online/. My translation.

was their own mind. The whole assembly was startled by what I said [...].¹²

According to Gautama Buddha, all things have no permanent existence, even motion and change are only illusion. If one is still arguing “which moves,” that means he must also indulge in the “real” existence of the world. This false attitude originates from the instability of the mind, which moves with the illusionary phenomenon and can’t meditate on the reality of the world. If people can reflect this point, they will get rid of the obsession with the “real” world and realize the truth. That’s what Patriarch Huineng wanted to indicate.

4’33’’ as the Practice of Zen

With its “abnormal” musical logic 4’33’’ can be treated as one of the excellent Gong’an of Chan Buddhism. In the non-conduct of the performer, a vivid silence arises, which forces us—paradoxically—to reflect on the essence of music, sound and emptiness. Silence is not pure emptiness, but the field of possibilities, which lets the infinite sounds arise. Music, which is usually thought of as the “art of sounds” doesn’t have to be full of external sounds. In listening to silence, one can find even more internal “sounds” in the heart and spirit, which should be the quintessence of music.

Conclusion

John Cage would prefer, of course, to conduct and to be treated as a musician rather than a practitioner of Chan Buddhism. His main motive for composition was still musical. 4’33’’ could be seen as a Gong’an of Chan Buddhism, on the one hand, and the idea of Chan Buddhism could also help push the boundary of music and find its new possibility, on the other hand. As a composer of “new music” Cage successfully combined the spirit of western avant-garde and eastern Chan Buddhism.

¹² *The Diamond Sūtra and The Sūtra of Hui-neng*, tr. by A. F. Price and Mou-lam Wong (Boston: Shambhala, 1990), p. 76.

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**Created Truth and Remade Reality in
Painting: From Jin Hao (833-917)
to Ricoeur (1913-2005)**

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Preface

As Ricoeur has observed, the rise of photography and non-representative painting in the modern period helps us reflect on what a painting really is. Without the imitative function of appearance, painting still remains precious to us. So, the value of painting obviously lies elsewhere, other than in imitation. For Ricoeur, after dispelling the mist of shadowy imitation, in the end we confront the core of painting—a reality, containing ontological truth value rather than scientific truth, reconstructed by the artist. Interestingly, without the shocking invention of photography and abstract painting, Jin Hao, 1000 years earlier than Ricoeur, had proposed the idea of “truth in painting” in his famous article *Drawing Notes*. These two thinkers were unknown to each other, but their perspectives on painting are astonishingly similar and echo one another.

To narrow the scope of our research, this paper will focus mainly on a comparison between two texts: one is from Jin Hao’s *Drawing Notes*, a highly influential work on Chinese painting theory, which constitutes approximately 1900 Chinese characters; the other is an article from Ricoeur’s “Lectures on Imagination,” which crystalizes in general his perspective on painting. We will first illustrate Jin Hao’s idea of painting, and then move on to Ricoeur. Finally, a comparison will be conducted between the two texts, not only elucidating similar insights on painting by both thinkers, but also illustrating some subtle differences between the two. However, it must be noted that the differences of these two thinkers do not cause any irreconcilable difficulties in the theory of painting; instead, they tell us more about truth in painting from different aspects.

Created Truth in Painting

We are in debt to Jin Hao (c. 833- c. 917), the famous artist and theorist, for being the first to emphasize truth in painting 圖真 from Chinese aesthetics. Because of him, as early as 9th century China, the thesis “truth” in painting had become one of the most crucial and significant theses in Chinese painting aesthetics. Jin Hao elaborated his idea concerning truth in painting in a highly influential article entitled *Drawing Notes* 筆法記.¹

Drawing Notes is primarily an article which instructs us how to paint. Written in under 2000 Chinese characters, Jin Hao formulated the well-known thesis of “truth in painting 圖真.” Jin Hao suggested without any hesitation that “truth in painting” ought to be the ultimate goal for the real artist to achieve and be the defining characteristic of great painting.

By contrasting truth in painting with the idea of the similarity of an object’s appearance, Jin Hao brought to light the definition and significance of “truth” in painting.

[The author] said, “Painting, [is] the exterior color. The valuable similarity of the object [in painting] obtains its truth, and that is its secret.”

However, the old man said, “Not at all. Painting, [is] to paint. [You have to] ponder over the object’s images in order to catch its truth. [You] take its color in terms of its color and [you] take its reality in terms of its reality. If you do not know this technique, you may obtain only the similarity, but truth in painting remains unachievable.”

The author said, “What is similarity? What is truth?”

The old man said, “Similarity obtains only the similar appearance of an object while truth fulfills [in painting] with a flourish both its spirit 氣 (Qi) and quality 質 (Zhi).”²

¹ There has not been an English translation of 筆法記 accepted as a fixed translation. I have seen the translation of “Notes on Landscape Painting Techniques” or “Record of Brush Methods.” I use “Drawing Notes” since it points out the content of the article and is as simple and clear as its Chinese name.

² Jin Hao 荆浩, *Drawing Notes* 筆法記. Quoted from Yuan Yougen 袁有根, *Interpretation of Jin Hao—the Pioneer of Chinese Northern Landscape Painting* 《解讀北方山水畫派之祖荆浩》(Beijing: China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Publishing Corporation 中國文聯出版社, 2010). The Chinese word Qi 氣 has no equivalent English term for the translation. The famous thesis Qi Yun Sheng Dong

Through the old man's words, Jin Hao clearly pointed out his central idea that it is the truth of painting which the artist should aim for, and this truth is superior to the similar appearance of an object in painting.

By Jin Hao's definition, "truth" is what the painter achieves when he fulfills with a flourish both an object's spirit (Qi) and quality (Zhi) in painting. In the context of the article, Jin Hao implied that "spirit (Qi)" is something invisible whereas "quality" is visible, since he clearly made the distinction between the similarity of appearance of things in painting to an object, which is visible, and truth in painting, which contains not only the visible (quality), but the invisible (spirit). It is also why the truth is superior to mere similarity, namely the external likeness to the original object. According to Jin Hao, the defects of painting can also be attributed to two types, the visible and the invisible: "There are two kinds of defects in painting: one is the invisible and the other is visible. The defect of the visible is a defect such as painted flowers and trees that have appeared in the wrong season or when the human figure appears larger than the size of a house..., defects of this kind may still have a chance to be corrected. The invisible defect, however, is the defect that the spirit 氣 (Qi) and the rhythm 韻 (Yun) of things are completely eliminated..., the defect as such is irretrievable."³

What is spirit (Qi)? The answer to this question is related to the idea of "truth" in painting, since truth in painting can be achieved only when (Qi) and quality (Zhi) spirit are both obtained by the painter. The best way to answer this question is to find clues and evidence from Jin Hao's own words. In *Drawing Notes*, Jin Hao not only addressed the ideal of painting, but also elaborated concrete painting methods. In other words, he illustrated how to accomplish the truth

氣韻生動 in classic Chinese aesthetics is proposed by Xie He 謝赫 (-532), whose painting theory had highly influenced Jing Hao. The thesis Qi Yun Sheng Dong 氣韻生動 was translated as "the life-movement of the spirit through the rhythm of things" in *The Ideals of the East*. See Kakasu Okakura, *The Ideals of the East* (London: John Murray, 1903), p. 52. I will use Kakasu Okakura's translation of Qi as "spirit" until I find a more perfect substitute.

³ Yuan Yougen 袁有根, *Interpretation of Jin Hao—the Pioneer of Chinese Northern Landscape Painting* 《解讀北方山水畫派之祖荆浩》 (Beijing: China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Publishing Corporation 中國文聯出版社, 2010), pp. 325-326.

in painting. He contended that there are six essential elements in painting: spirit 氣 (Qi); rhythm 韻 (Yun); thought 思 (Si); scene 景 (Jing); stroke 筆 (Bi); and ink 墨 (Mo). The definition of these six elements is as follows:

Spirit 氣(Qi)—[In painting] the hand follows the heart in union; the image is obtained without hesitation. (心隨筆運,取象不惑)

Rhythm 韻(Yun)—unnatural traces are eliminated and shape is established; to paint with principles but not to fall into a convention. (隱迹立形,備儀不俗)

Thought 思(Si)—to discard the unnecessary and keep what is most important; to ponder and conceive the image of things. (刪撥大要,凝想形物)

Scene 景(Jing)—to make choices of need and speculate [the object's image] according to its real circumstances; to collect the wonderful from things and create the truth. (制度因時,搜妙創真)

Stroke 筆(Bi)—to follow yet not be limited by rules, and to move the brush flexibly and smoothly; to be unconstrained by the texture and shape of every stroke but to be agile and vivid as flight. (雖依法則,運轉變通,不質不形,如非如動)

Ink 墨(Mo)— to employ the ink lightly or thickly according to the higher and lower parts of things and to ascertain the real conditions of things; the distribution of ink is so natural that it seems not to be painted by the brush. (高低暈淡,品物淺深,文采自然,似非因筆)

We will leave aside the practical use of stroke 筆(Bi) and ink 墨 (Mo), for it is not our chief concern. As we shall see, thought 思(Si) and scene 景 (Jing) have provided us crucial information on truth in painting. In fact, the discourse here concerning spirit (Qi)—the hand follows the heart in union; the image is obtained without hesitation— indicates the state of a painter at his highest level in the act of painting. How can the artist paint with his hand and heart in union and obtain the painted image without hesitation? He must first go through a process of conceiving the image of things by “discarding the unnecessary and keeping what is most important,” so to speak, a process of thought. Furthermore, when he decides which elements are necessary or unnecessary, he must have “speculated the object's image according to its real circumstances,” and since he does not

create from nothing, he has to “collect the wonderful from things,” or in other words, to refine the cream of things. This is how the truth is created in painting.

With all these clues, we can now return to the idea of spirit (Qi) in painting. First, spirit (Qi) means the spirit (Qi) of the painted image. Second, the spirit (Qi) of the image rendered by the artist in painting, nevertheless, derives from the invisible spirit (Qi) of the object; the spirit (Qi) then also indicates the spirit (Qi) of the preexisted object observed by the artist before painting. Third, it is the painter who seizes the cream, the essence of the object according to who he is, so to speak, the spirit (Qi) of the painter is involved in creating the spirit (Qi) of image in painting.

According to Jin Hao, it is clear that truth in painting is never a correspondent truth (a truth often emphasized in the western tradition of epistemology), since the spirit (Qi) of the painter is entangled in creating truth in painting. And this is also why we call an artwork a man-made “creation,” rather than “knowledge.” So, when Jin Hao said that truth in painting is obtained, he in fact declared that the truth is created as a result of an inseparable “union” of the artist’s and the object’s spirit (Qi). The artist therefore in this union is able to capture the cream of the object and then express it in painting “in his own unique way.” So, “truth in painting” is “truth” created by the artist in a new form of image, containing both the spirit (Qi) of the artist and the spirit (Qi) of the object. In a union of his and the object’s spirit (Qi), the painter is able “in his own way” to discard the unnecessary and keep what is most important in his work, ponder and conceive the image of things, and is able to see into things and disclose their truth “without hesitation” in a way that no one has ever done. Truth thus is created in his work.

Jin Hao’s *Drawing Notes* is addressed to painters. Although he spoke of artworks in his writings, his main concern was how to create a great painting. The artist for him is key to a successful painting, since it is through the artist, through his spirit (Qi), that the spirit (Qi) of the object is seized and the truth of the image is revealed in painting. In short, the spirit (Qi) of the object is measured by the spirit (Qi) of the artist. It is correlative with the artist. This fact explains the reason why Chinese art criticism, especially in literati painting, placed so much emphasis on the painter’s state of being, including his moral integrity, education, and self-cultivation, because only the greatest artists who

have the greatest spirit (Qi) can have the utmost insight into things (namely, to reach the spirit [Qi] of things) and in turn create the greatest images in painting. The artist, and only the artist, is able to reveal to us the hidden of things, the hidden concealed in ordinary life, through the choices he makes in painting. This revelation he makes in painting, the revelation that shows a new dimension of things, thus, can be called “created truth.”

One more thing worth noting is that the invisible spirit (Qi) of things in painting has to be presented together with its visible quality (Zhi). “Truth in painting” for Jin Hao is always a truth which fulfills both the invisible spirit (Qi) and the visible quality of things. With a strong emphasis on invisible spirit (Qi), Chinese painting has great potential to enter the abstract painting field, although it has never reached this stage. Traditional Chinese painting remains figurative. Still, figurative images for traditional Chinese painters are the indispensable means to express truth in painting.

Remade reality in Painting

In Ricoeur’s Lectures on Imagination delivered at the University of Chicago in 1975,⁴ we found that chapter 17 is especially dedicated to the topic of painting: “Fiction 3: The Pictorial Aspect of Reference.” In

⁴ George H. Taylor, ‘Ricoeur’s Philosophy of Imagination,’ *Journal of French Philosophy*, 16, 1 and 2 (2006), p. 101. Taylor in footnote 3 of the article wrote: “Paul Ricoeur, ‘Lectures on Imagination (1975) [Lectures]’ (unpublished). As noted, I reviewed transcriptions of the original 1975 course lectures, which were delivered at the University of Chicago. The transcriptions were based on cassette retappings in 1979 of the original reel-to-reel recordings of the 19 course lectures. The original recordings were available at that time at a University of Chicago library. Patrick Crosby undertook the original recording of these lectures (as well as the recording of the Lectures on Ideology and Utopia), and we owe him a considerable debt both for his foresight in anticipating the value of taping these lectures and for his care in making the recordings. In 2003-05, the cassette tapes were initially transcribed by staff at the Document Technology Center at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, whom I thank for their arduous efforts, and I then listened to the tapes myself in order to edit the transcriptions to ensure their accuracy.” The author has to especially thank Professor George H. Taylor who introduced these lectures to me and offered great help for my current study. In the following footnotes I will cite these unpublished lectures as “Lectures on Imagination,” and cite the chapters and sections, according to the transcriptions Professor Taylor sent to me in 2012, as “chapter number: section number.”

these lectures, he proposed an analysis on the transition from reproductive imagination to productive imagination. The analysis on productive imagination is illustrated in the final five chapters of the lectures concerning "fiction," with one of these chapters focusing on the topic of painting. It seems that Ricoeur approached the topic of painting as a bridge between the poetic imagination and the epistemological imagination.⁵ And then he used "the roundabout way of models [of epistemology] to prepare the last stage of referential value also of poetic language."⁶ After this detour, he finally crystallized his thoughts on poetics.

Although his main concern in "Lectures on Imagination" is poetry, Ricoeur's discourses on painting, which coincide with his theory of productive imagination, still offer us precious insight into painting, an insight I found akin to Jin Hao.

In "Fiction 3: The Pictorial Aspect of Reference," Ricoeur claimed that what occurs in painting is the transfiguration of reality through an iconographic device. He adopted François Dagognet's idea of "iconic augmentation" to elaborate his theory of fiction in painting. Fiction, thanks to its negativity, "discloses new dimensions of reality."⁷

Ricoeur mentioned that, according to Dagognet, "...the images created by the skill of the artist are not less than real but more than real, because they increase reality." The idea of "iconic augmentation" thus expresses the "power of both condensing and expanding reality."⁸ Dagognet's argument is carried out by opposing iconic augmentation to the mere reduplicative function of the shadowy image. He criticized the platonic tendency of advocating the principle that in painting the copy is always less than the original, and accordingly "writing and pictures in general impoverish reality,

⁵ Ricoeur, "Lectures on Imagination," 16: 4-5. Ricoeur said, "With this second topic [The Pictorial Aspect of Reference], the correlation between model and metaphor will occur, and then we will have a transition from the poetic imagination to what I call the epistemological imagination. They have an intersection in the theory of model to the extent that metaphor is to poetic language what the model is to epistemology."

⁶ Ricoeur, "Lectures on Imagination," 19: 1.

⁷*Ibid.*, 17: 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 17: 8.

because they are themselves less than real, are mere shadows as compared to real things.”⁹

Dagognet’s perspective perfectly echoes Ricoeur’s idea of fiction, since fiction “seems to be non-referential in the sense that it has no object, that a new kind of reference may be opened thanks to the absence of a real referent, of an original. Whereas the reproductive image is marginal as regards reality, it is the function of productive imagination—of the fictional—to open and change reality.”¹⁰ Painting, while it breaks away from the function of copying the already existent object, creates its own original. As a fictional work, painting is completely distinguished from “the picture of [something that already existed].”¹¹ “...picture being the picture of in the sense of a copy while the fiction creates its own referent.”¹²

Furthermore, “iconic augmentation” helps illustrate how the productive imagination works to expand reality. First, painting as a work, not as “a picture of,” belongs to the category of “production.” Production of a work first of all means the externalization of the creative process. By giving form or organization to matter, painting delivers the creative process to an external barrier. This is the first sense of “augmentation” or the increase of reality.¹³

Secondly, “iconic augmentation” is linked not only to the choice of material medium (to render its external existence), but also to “the creation of an alphabet, a structural grid used for abbreviating and

⁹ *Ibid.*, 17: 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15: 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15:1, 17: 9.

¹² *Ibid.*, 18:4.

¹³ This first dimension of “augmentation” of reality in painting was also well illustrated by Etienne Gilson in his *Painting and Reality*. He said, “In the case of painting, art is not nature seen through a temperament; rather, it is the ability to create a new being that nobody would ever see, either in nature or otherwise, unless the art of the painter caused it to exist.” See Etienne Gilson, *Painting and Reality* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), p. 116. For Gilson, artistic creations increase the sum total of already existing reality. However, he also claimed that “Images add nothing to existing reality.” (*Painting and Reality*, p. 283.) It seems that his standpoint concerning the image is completely different from Ricoeur’s. But we have to keep in mind that the existing reality Gilson speaks of is always something outside the subject, while Ricoeur often posits the reality in the background of “being-in-the-world.” In other words, for Ricoeur, despite its objective sense, reality may also refer to a pre-objective world where the subject and the object do not separate from one another.

condensing the pertinent traits of reality, enabling a choice of pertinent traits.”¹⁴ This process of abbreviation involves the productive imagination, since it involves the invention of a new medium of mimesis,¹⁵ a new alphabet, by choosing a finite set from endless possible connections, to express the world. Ricoeur brought up impressionism in painting as an example, “Impressionism tried to beat photography where it cannot work by creating a new alphabet of colors capable of capturing the transient and the fleeting with the magic of hidden correspondences. Once more, reality was remade, with an emphasis on atmospheric values and light appearances.”¹⁶ With the productive imagination, the painting presents “a kind of plot here of colors and lines that is a condensed network in exactly the same way that the tragedy is more dense than life, has only the essential structure of life.”¹⁷

The third dimension of “iconic augmentation” has “even more important implication of the notion of creative imagination.”¹⁸ Ricoeur put the third and final implication in the form of a paradox: “the more imagination deviates from what is called reality in ordinary vision and in ordinary language, the closer it comes to the core of reality that is no longer the world of manipulable objects.”¹⁹ Following this logic, Ricoeur claimed that when painting is no longer figurative, that is, it disconnects itself from the copying of an existent object, non-objective qualities of reality are then depicted. We transfer finally into a subtle, indirect ontology from the kind of direct ontology of figurative painting, which always obstructs us from our more fundamental relationships with the world. “...it is when a descriptive reference is abolished that a more fundamental reference is displayed. It is not a reference to a something, to objects, or to things but to a pre-objective situation of our existence. Only through some imaginative variation may we reach this fundamental situation, and each painting

¹⁴ Ricoeur, “Lectures on Imagination,” 17: 10.

¹⁵ The term “mimesis” here is used in Aristotelian fashion. “For Aristotle mimesis was not at all a way of copying a thing. It was a creative reconstruction of reality, as when the tragedy expresses the truth about human action, because it’s a *muthos*.” See Ricoeur, “Lectures on Imagination,” 17: 2.

¹⁶ Ricoeur, “Lectures on Imagination,” 17: 14.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

is an imaginative variation concerning a mode of relatedness to the world.”²⁰ In this sense, a feeling or a mood displayed in a painting is no less objective and we are no less related to reality through emotions (although this feeling may have no name before being painted by the artist), since it reveals even more “fundamental tensions that relate us to the world as a whole.”²¹ In the same way, “The invention of landscape painting is at the same time a new way of looking at nature as a landscape. There is an augmentation of our world.”²² Or, precisely speaking, there is a new way of our relatedness to the natural world discovered in painting.

Towards the end of Chapter 17 in “Lectures on Imagination,” Ricoeur criticized the concept of reality under the influence of science, which believes that “the reality is only what can confirm or falsify empirical statements,” and that “the capacity of giving truth value to empirical statements is what we tend to call reality.” According to Ricoeur, under the shock of fiction, the scientific concept of reality becomes problematic. This does not mean that reality and truth defined by science is unreal, but it indeed implies that reality is not only the reality of science, and that there also exists the reality manifested in painting and poetry, which reveals for us our even more fundamental relationship with the world before its objectification. As Professor George Taylor puts it, “Ricoeur’s theory of productive imagination requires revision not only of our concept of reality but also of our concept of truth. No longer is truth defined in terms of ‘adequation,’ a conformation between judgment and existing reality, because the disclosure of new reality has more to do with a concept of truth as manifestation.”²³

A Comparison between Jin Hao and Ricoeur

I will conclude the similar views of Jin Hao and Ricoeur as the following 3 points:

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17: 15, 17:16.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 17: 15.

²² *Ibid.*, 17: 16.

²³ George H. Taylor, ‘Ricoeur’s Philosophy of Imagination,’ *Journal of French Philosophy*, 16, 1 and 2 (2006), p. 98.

1/Both Jin Hao and Ricoeur are against the idea that painting is merely a copy of an existing object.

For Jin Hao, it is truth in painting, not the external likeness of the object, for which a painter should aim as the ultimate goal. A painter may use the external quality of the object as a means to reveal truth, but a painting which has successfully depicted the similar appearance of the object is still far from a good painting. In Ricoeur, the same idea is again accentuated: "...in painting we have more than a copy, we have a certain creation of its own original."²⁴ And the view that conceives of the painting as a shadowy image of the existing object simply blocks us from the way to an "ontology displayed by the image itself."²⁵ Both Jin Hao and Ricoeur believe that the mere imitative view on painting makes us blind to the truth in painting.

2/ According to both Jin Hao and Ricoeur, productive imagination is involved in the artist's creation.

In Jin Hao, the definitions of "thought" and "scene" (two of his six crucial elements in painting) have clearly implied the process of "productive imagination," a term used by Ricoeur. The discourses such as "to discard the unnecessary and keep what is most important" and "to make choices of need and speculate [the object's image] according to its real circumstances" basically correspond to Ricoeur's explanation of the artist's "process of abbreviation," a process in which the painter's generative power of productive imagination works to create a new alphabet in painting through colors and lines. According to both Jin Hao and Ricoeur, productive imagination is surely involved and plays an extremely important role in the artist's creation.

3/ Jin Hao and Ricoeur both agree that truth is disclosed in painting.

For Jin Hao, truth in painting is created by the artist who is open to the object. And in the union of his spirit (Qi) and object's spirit (Qi), he produces the image of the object in painting. The image, therefore, through the visible colors and lines of the painted object, conveys to us a truth which concerns both the artist and the object, a truth which reveals the hidden of things captured only by the artist. For Ricoeur, reality is remade and reconstructed creatively in painting. An artwork

²⁴ Ricoeur, "Lectures on Imagination," 15: 4.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 16: 1.

offers us a new way to look at the world and a new alphabet through which new dimensions of the world are opened up to us. Furthermore, through some imaginative variation, we may even reach a more fundamental reference depicted in painting, a reference to a pre-objective situation of our existence where fundamental possibilities of our relations to the world are revealed. There is a truth value given to the reality built by the artist in painting. Reality in this sense is no longer the reality limited by scientific definition, and truth in turn also sets itself free from the meaning of mere “adequation.”

With Jin Hao and Ricoeur, despite the distinct eras in which they lived and differences of region and culture, the same insights into painting are proposed to us. But there are still some subtle differences shown in their discourses, which provide us an opportunity to think further on truth and reality in painting.

First, Jin Hao’s text placed more emphasis on the creative activity of the painter, unlike Ricoeur’s text on the artwork. Ricoeur’s approach indeed discloses for us an ontology of artworks and efficiently prevents us from the subjective trend which is highly developed in Kant’s thought. This is a great contribution made by Ricoeur in painting theory and this contribution provides a base which keeps us in the line between the subject and the object without indulging in either.

However, Jin Hao seems to place much emphasis on the subject (namely, the artist), since *Drawing Notes* is an article concerning how to paint. This may give us an impression that Jin Hao’s approach is in danger of subjectivism. In my opinion, nevertheless, Jin Hao’s stance is completely immune to Kantian subjectivism. First of all, truth in painting is not a truth only created by the artist, but a truth created through the union of the artist’s and object’s spirit (Qi). The Union of the subject and the object plays an extremely important role in Jin Hao’s theory of creation, which allows us on the one hand to “ponder over the object’s images in order to catch its truth,” so that the object and its truth is always involved in the painting; and on the other hand “to discard the unnecessary and keep what is most important,” so that the artist’s efforts and creative activities are also involved. Jin Hao had no intention whatsoever to develop any subjectivist view in his theory.

However, one thing of note here is that for Jin Hao there is no such idea called “pre-objective.” The idea of “pre-objective,” proposed by Ricoeur in his view on painting, derives from Heidegger. “Pre-objective” indicates a world where objects are not manipulable, where Dasein is yet separate from the world, and where the fundamental possibilities that we relate to the world as a whole are presented. We have to note that the union of the artist’s and object’s spirit (Qi) implied in Jin Hao’s text, however, refers to a union containing a nuanced difference from the pre-objective union of the subject and the world. For Jin Hao, the truth in painting is not something that the artist can easily reach; otherwise Jin Hao would not have written *Drawing Notes* to instruct the painter. A Chinese painter had to cultivate his own spirit (Qi) to a certain level, so that one day he might see into things, see into his existential relatedness to things, and create the best images in painting which convey the truth concerning both himself and the object. This union indicates the highest level and achievement of artistic activity, which differs from the pre-objective union as Dasein’s fundamental existential structure of “being-in-the-world,” the structure born to us or the situation we are thrown into.

For me, these two nuanced unions are not incompatible. In this paper, I would like to suggest that the first union of the subject and object, the pre-objective and primordial situation of our existence, provides the basis of the second union, a union which results from the artist’s efforts, his self-cultivation, and, most important of all, his free choices to be open to the object and to be united with it again while abandoning an ordinary attitude towards it. We may say that the second union cannot be reached if two parties (the subject and the object) in the first place exclude one another in nature. Luckily, we have a rather different starting point here: we are born as being-in-the-world. Thus, it is not surprising that the image created in painting by the artist, who is reunited with the object, may at the same time reveal the basis of this reunion (which makes the reunion possible), so to speak, the primordial situation of our existence and the pre-objective union between the subject and the world. The pre-objective world in which we “dwell” is so fundamental that we are hardly ever aware of it; however, with the efforts of the artist, with his willingness to embrace things and reunite again with them in the way he is, this primordial world is finally brought to light for us in painting.

Therefore, concerning art, there is still a necessity to speak of the artist, the subject, and the depth of his substance. This is, I think, what makes Chinese painting theory enlightening. It is unnecessary to become subjectivist just because we develop thinking on the subject, if we keep in mind that the subject is always a subject having existential structure as being-in-the-world, and that with this basis of being-in-the-world, and only with this basis, he is able to reunite himself with the world once again. This profound reunion occurs with all its depth when the artist is open to the object or, speaking phenomenologically, when the artist lets the object reveal itself to him. We shall not overlook the fundamental situation of our existence, but this should not become an obstacle which prevents us from an investigation into the artist. In fact, it is obvious that the artistic expression of the world in the work is never a shallow one and that the depth of an image first comes from the depth of the artist, his state of being, and his understanding of the world. Through his reunion with the world, the artist discloses in painting an image with depth, and this explains why the painting is to us "moving." The fundamental situation of our existence as the basis of this reunion is in turn brought to light in painting in a most touching manner and is revealed in its profoundest meaning because of the artist's art.

In conclusion, Ricoeur's approach to painting and his adoption of artworks as a starting point provides solid ground for a painting theory which avoids the danger of subjectivism. And his discourse on the pre-objective situation of our existence revealed in painting also provides a great basis for a profound reunion of the artist and the object, as implied in Jin Hao's theory. Jin Hao's discourse serves as a reminder that the primordial structure of our existential situation (though it is of great importance) does not offer an entire picture of the painting world. Jin Hao's theory on painting shows us that the investigation on the subject, namely, the artist and his activity, does not necessarily fall into subjectivism, and truth created by him in painting is by no means less real than truth in science.

Conclusion

This paper stresses the similarities between Jin Hao's and Ricoeur's ideas on painting and attempts to reconcile the nuanced differences between the two. The opinion of this paper merely reflects the texts of

Jin Hao and Ricoeur, which provide us with tremendously similar insights into painting. Although there indeed exist subtle differences in their respective writings, these differences in fact complement rather than contradict one another.

Perhaps such similar perspectives from Jin Hao and Ricoeur on painting are not surprising if we realize that their discourses are simply based on the same phenomena, a phenomena which resulted in the two thinkers, though living 1000 years apart, arriving at the same insights. In fact, arriving at a complete picture of truth in painting is far beyond the scope of this paper, which includes not only an ontological truth revealed in the artwork, how truth is to be created by the artist, and how the onlooker recognizes it in his aesthetic experience, but also the dialectical relationships between the work, the artist, and the onlooker. We are still on the threshold of exploring truth revealed in painting. But we have reason to believe, based on these two thinkers' similar insights into painting, that we are getting closer to the core of painting and to the essential value that painting creates for us, and that we are keeping on the right path faithful to the phenomena of painting.

(Fu Jen Academia Catholica, Fu Jen Catholic University, Taipei, Taiwan)

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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

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