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**Care of Self  
and Meaning of Life:  
Asian and Christian  
Reflections**

Edited by  
*William Sweet*  
*Cristal Huang*

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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**Introduction**  
**Philosophy, Religion, and Care of Self**

WILLIAM SWEET

**Introduction**

Humanity has long been concerned with questions such as ‘What is the meaning of life?’ and ‘How should we act towards one another – and towards ourselves?’ For answers, people have often turned to religion but also to philosophy.

Yet not only the answers, but these questions themselves are far from straightforward. What is meant by ‘meaning’? Does the question of the meaning of life not simply assume that there is meaning to be had – a dubious assumption, at best? When so many human beings accept a naturalistic, materialist view of reality, does it make sense to look for meaning? Even if there is meaning, how can people come to find that meaning? What methods are available to us? Further, what is the relation between acting rightly and our concern for others – and for ourselves? Does acting rightly require the truth of religions, such as Christianity, or of some kind of humanism? If there is no meaning to life, or if meaning is unclear, is there any way in which people can discern or discover what they ought to do?

The issues involved here, then, are considerable. Nevertheless, the papers in the present volume undertake to address a number of them. Some papers focus on questions of meaning, and the quest for meaning. Others focus on method, and are concerned with how one can come to acquire some insight on these matters. Finally, some focus on the approaches or techniques that, it has been claimed, help people to determine how they should act towards others and themselves.

To appreciate the approach taken to these issues, however, some context is necessary.

### From Meaning to Care of Self

At the beginning of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle writes that all human beings seek to know. This is not just a matter of knowing what is – i.e., a cognitive issue – but of knowing why, of the purpose of things, and also of one’s own purpose, if any – i.e., an existential issue. Throughout the history of philosophy and throughout the variety of cultures and cultural traditions, seeking to know has almost always carried an existential element. Thus, some twenty-three hundred years after Aristotle, in *Fides et ratio*, John Paul II writes:

In both East and West, we may trace a journey which has led humanity down the centuries to meet and engage truth more and more deeply. It is a journey which has unfolded – as it must – within the horizon of personal self-consciousness: the more human beings know reality and the world, the more they know themselves in their uniqueness, with the question of the meaning of things and of their very existence becoming ever more pressing. This is why all that is the object of our knowledge becomes a part of our life. The admonition *Know yourself* was carved on the temple portal at Delphi, as testimony to a basic truth to be adopted as a minimal norm by those who seek to set themselves apart from the rest of creation as “human beings”, that is as those who “know themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

This knowing oneself is not, as noted above, just a matter of cognition – knowing things about oneself. It also has an existential dimension; it involves knowing what our values and principles are, how we see our place in the

world, whether there is a purpose, whether there is anything that gives us direction or meaning, and so on.

Yet if we press the matter and ask, why it is that human beings seek to know about themselves, it is not clear what response could be given beyond it just being a fact about human beings. John Paul II continues: "It is the nature of the human being to seek the truth. ... Their search looks towards an ulterior truth which would explain the meaning of life."<sup>2</sup>

More, however, can be said. Human beings search for meaning and seek to know themselves because they do, or should, care about themselves. Recall the remark of Socrates in Plato's *Apology*: "For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons and your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul."<sup>3</sup> The search for the meaning of life is related, then, to the prior demand to care for oneself.

This theme of care of self is found in Asian traditions as well as the 'Western' traditions. In Asia, we find it, for example, in the *Da Xue – The Great Learning*, attributed to Confucius (Kongzi):

The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts.<sup>4</sup>

In the Western traditions we find this call to care of self not only in Plato, but in the Stoics<sup>5</sup>, in the early Christian Church fathers such as St Augustine<sup>6</sup>, in Thomas Aquinas,

and through a number of thinkers such as Petrarch<sup>7</sup>, Spinoza<sup>8</sup>, and Kierkegaard<sup>9</sup>, up to Martin Heidegger, Simone Weil, and – perhaps today most famously – Michel Foucault.

Aquinas, for example, wrote that “a man ought to love himself, out of charity, more than any other person”<sup>10</sup> – understanding this love as a care for one’s soul and as a necessary preliminary to the acquisition of virtue.<sup>11</sup> Heidegger focuses on the human being (*Dasein*) who is concerned about itself, arguing that *Dasein*’s being is care (*Sorge*). For Heidegger, then, to be is to care; ‘care’ is the basic way of being of human beings in the world, and human beings are related to the world through their conscious concerns in the world.<sup>12</sup>

It is in Foucault, however, where we find, today, the best known discussion of ‘care of self.’ In the third volume of his *Histoire de la sexualité*, entitled “Le souci de soi,”<sup>13</sup> Foucault argues that the care of the self was foundational in the ancients, and that it involved not only one’s own self, but that of others. Thus, according to one commentator, for Foucault,

Socrates and ancient ethicists understood that caring for oneself was to exhibit an attitude not only toward oneself but also toward others and the world, attend to one’s own thoughts and attitudes in self-reflection and meditation, and engage in ascetic practices aimed at realizing an ideal state of being.<sup>14</sup>

Foucault argues that, in the ancients, there was a normative, indeed a spiritual dimension to the care of self, but that it was not inward looking, but outward looking – it was a call to improve oneself and one’s reason in order to be a member of the *polis* and, thereby, achieve a measure of

self-fashioning or self-realization. According to Foucault, “the general Greek problem was not the *techne* of the self, it was the *techne* of life, the *techne tou biou*, how to live.”<sup>15</sup> Foucault claims, however, that this dimension was lost with Christianity as it became more ‘self-reflexive.’

While Foucault’s analysis of the effects of Christianity and modernity have been debated, there is little doubt that the broader point – that the injunction to know oneself – to know the meaning of one’s life – is connected with, and based on, care of self – is one that is found from antiquity. It also carries with it a normative injunction.

The opening chapters of this volume focus on the question of the meaning of life. In Chapter I, “Christian Philosophy and the Meaning of Life,” William Sweet discusses some responses and answers to the question ‘What is the meaning of life?’ He begins by briefly reviewing the assertions of psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud and analytic philosophers such as A.J. Ayer, who challenge the cognitive meaningfulness of the question. Sweet then looks at answers provided by existentialists (e.g., J.-P. Sartre and A. Camus) and by ‘naturalists’ such as William James, and argues that neither approach reflects an adequate account of human nature. Finally, he looks at three Christian philosophers – Thomas Aquinas, Søren Kierkegaard, and Jacques Maritain – and finds, in each, elements of a philosophical answer to the question. By drawing on these elements, Sweet concludes, Christian philosophy can provide a useful answer to the questions of whether and how human life is meaningful.

In Chapter II, “Love and Freedom as Essentials in the Process of Creative Evolution,” Wen-Hsiang Chen takes up this theme of the meaning of life. He investigates in particular the meaning and place of love and freedom in a world that is increasingly viewed through the lens of the

natural sciences. Chen notes that, while there are tendencies towards scientism in our cultures, these tendencies are as much grounded on faith as the views that scientism itself challenges. Chen also notes that the recognition of love and freedom in the world is evidence for a natural capacity for self-transcendence that implies, in particular, love for God.

An answer to the question of the meaning of life, then, is closely related to the answer to the questions of what human life is, what it is for, and how we should act. The example of authors from Socrates and Kongzi, to Heidegger and Foucault, as well as of that of the first two essays in this volume, have suggested that the quest for the meaning of life and for the meaning of own one's life, is the *product* of the injunction to care of oneself, but that this quest also *leads to* this care of self. This care of self, moreover, is not purely self directed. Rather, it is seen as a necessary part of one's relations to others.

Yet more needs to be said about *how* this quest for meaning and this practice of care are to be carried out.

### **Meaning and Method**

Questions of *how* one is to come to know oneself, *how* one discovers, uncovers, or gives meaning to one's life, and *how* this leads to a care of self, introduce the issue of method. What is the relation of these lines of inquiry to the methods offered by philosophy, by humanisms, and by religions, such as the Christian faith?

While humanisms, philosophies, and religions offer answers to these questions, what they tell us rests on what they see as the nature of human being and on what human beings can become. In the first instance, then, we need to understand the structures, institutions, and discourses that give us insight into what human being is. Three of the

authors in this volume undertake to provide this by carrying out a hermeneutical investigation.

In Chapter III, "The Hermeneutical Perspective and Christian Humanity," Cristal Huang focuses on how we can discern meaning – meaning in a cognitive sense and in an existential sense. She sees, that for many – particularly for the non-religious and the non-Christian – there is a gap between Christian faith and the care of humanity. She argues, however, that hermeneutics is a method to establish the dialogue between them. Hermeneutics can serve, she says, as a way of understanding the truths of Christianity and of Christ in relation to the meaning of life. Huang calls, then, for an engagement in a Christian hermeneutics in order to interpret and make sense of oneself and the world, and in order to see Christ in the world.

Jing-Jong Luh also turns to hermeneutics – in order to understand human being, but also to show the foundational role of philosophy in developmental psychology. In Chapter IV, "A Systemic-Hermeneutical Ground-Conception of Genetic and Developmental Psychology," Luh emphasises the importance of the human being as a being that understands – an understanding being. A systemic-hermeneutical approach is proposed as a way of understanding human psychology; this involves seeing people in context, and it is the context in which one lives that determines the meaning of one's existence. But there is also a possibility of transcendence, of a connexion with absolute spirit. Thus, a systemic-hermeneutic psychology may enable us to conceptualize a framework that shows us the different spheres in which human beings play a role, but also leads us to the issue of care of self. It is here that what has been called 'philosophical counselling' may be able to contribute.

Of course, all methods rest on or make assumptions. In Chapter V, "The Philosophical Method of Maurice Merleau-

Ponty: Styles and Negations,” Michel Dalissier considers the example of one method – that of Merleau-Ponty – in an attempt to discern Merleau-Ponty’s philosophical humanism. Beginning with Merleau-Ponty’s style of writing, Dalissier finds in his work a *methodus negativa*, rather than a specifically positive method. Dalissier reminds us, then, that, in adopting any method, hermeneutical or other, the practitioner must be cautious and be aware of what might be presupposed by it.

In short, Huang, Luh, and Dalissier propose that a hermeneutical method will help people to understand the discourses, structures, institutions, and conceptions of the human being that underlie the answers offered by humanisms, philosophies, and religions, and, thus, may point to how the search for meaning connects with the ethical care of oneself and of others.

That connexion, however, must still be spelled out.

### **From Care of Self to Caring for Self**

While it is essential to recognise the connexion between the search for meaning and the care of self, key issues remain: What is meant by ‘care’? What is care of self? How is ‘care of self’ carried out?

Care is an ambiguous term. It can refer to a feeling of worry and anxiety; one’s cares are one’s troubles and concerns. It can also refer to one’s attentiveness or meticulous consideration in correctly carrying out a task. Yet care can also refer to “the provision of what is necessary to the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone”<sup>16</sup> – as showing one’s attentiveness or solicitude for what matters; its opposite is apathy.<sup>17</sup> It is this latter sense of care with which ‘care of self’ is concerned.

Care of self, therefore, means care of the person as a whole. It is care of the person as an embodied being, and so

involves the physical. But it also involves a care for one's psyche, for the intellectual, ethical, and the spiritual.

Thus, it is no surprise that, for most authors, care of self fundamentally involves spiritual and ethical growth. It is a self-fashioning or a self-realization – and, as we have seen above, for many figures it is motivated by, but also motivates, at least in part, the desire to know oneself and to know the meaning of one's life. As a 'care of *self*,' it is an activity that individuals themselves take up. But it is not, as we have also seen, something that is just a matter of individual choice. The care of self is, arguably, a vocation and an ethical obligation.

This leads us to the theme of how 'care of the self' is carried out. Thus, a number of authors in this volume speak to the contributions of Christianity, of non-Christian religions and humanisms, but particularly of meditative and counseling techniques.

In Chapter VI, "Philosophical Counselling and *The Cloud of Unknowing*," Bernard Li introduces the reader to one technique for care of self – that of 'philosophical counselling.' Li begins with a brief summary of some of the classical 'ways' of approaching truth, particularly the spiritual ways. He notes, however, that what some modern 'ways' miss is the place of spirituality. Li calls the reader back, then, to a spirituality that has a central place in an anonymous work of the late fourteenth century, *The Cloud of Unknowing*. To achieve ethical and, more importantly, spiritual growth, Li recommends the counselling process (which he finds to be, in fact, a kind of spiritual exercise) present in *The Cloud*, and argues that this process applies to coming to understand values and spirituality, not simply to changing one's behaviour.

Another way of carrying out care of self can be found in the Daoist tradition. In Chapter VII, "The Reasoned

Structure of the *Guanzi* and Care of Self,” Chen-Yu Chou turns to a proto-Daoist text – the four chapters of the *Guanzi* on heart-mind cultivation. Although the four chapters deal with on “heart-mind,” “dao” is their main focus. According to this text, dao can be retained “when mind is tranquil and qi is regulated.” The aim of following the guidelines of the *Guanzi*, then, is the achievement of emptiness, tranquility, adaptation, and concentration. Chou argues that this practice of stillness and quiescence can apply effectively in modern society, and concludes that these ancient texts provide a philosophical approach to the care of self, compatible with the kind of counselling described by Bernard Li.

In Chapter VIII (Philosophical Therapy and Song-Era Confucianism: An Instance of Medical Application based on Settling-and-Stillness Practice from Zhou Dunyi’s *Explanation of the Taiji Diagram*), Chung-Hsiu Huang offers another method for the care of self. Seeking to discover a psychosomatic discourse of “composing oneself to cure depression,” Huang considers the similarities between the Confucian scholar Zhu Danxi (1281-1358) and his theory of “three kinds of depression caused by emotion,” and the neo-Confucian Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073), who focuses in the *Taichi Tushuo* [“Explanation of the Taiji [the Great Ultimate] Diagram”] on the theory of composing oneself through centredness, correctness, benevolence, and righteousness [zhong-zheng-ren-yi - 中正仁義]. Huang concludes that both approaches ultimately affirm a tripartite form of benevolence, righteousness, and centredness-plus-correctness, and open the way to “nurturing life” as both a medical and a mental praxis.

These different examples, then, offer models of caring for oneself through a range of spiritual and contemplative traditions and the associated techniques.

What is the situation today with regard to ‘caring for self’? In the final two chapters in this volume, the reader will find short reports on activity in mainland China and in Taiwan. In Chapter IX (“Thought Counseling in Mainland China”), Xisheng Wang provides a brief account of how philosophical or ‘thought counseling’ is understood in mainland China, of its distinctive character, and of some of the major scholarship and scholarly work being carried out there. But discussion of care of self and its relation to the meaning of life and to the spiritual would not be complete without a statement of how care in general is carried out in institutions devoted to care, i.e., health care facilities. In Chapter X (“Catholicism and Health Care in Taiwan”), the last chapter in this volume, Sr. Mary Ann Lou gives the reader a short description of care offered in the context of Catholic hospitals in Taiwan.

### **Conclusion**

The essays in this volume address questions with which humanity has long been interested – questions of the meaning of life, about how we are led to such a concern, and about how one might find or discover that meaning. The answers are, in large part, intertwined with the matter of ‘care for self’ – specifically, the injunction to do ‘what is necessary to the health, well-being, and protection’ of oneself as an embodied being whose needs are not only physical, but intellectual, ethical, and spiritual. One might say even that part of the call to care of self is the call to discover meaning.

The authors contribute to this continuing discussion not only by analyzing and investigating some of the presuppositions and central issues, but also by suggesting ways in which the care of self might take place. Some of these authors remind us that care of self is not simply a matter of

looking inward, but concerns the whole person – that self-realization is not just a product of introspection, meditative practice, and reflection, but also of how to live in the world. Some point out that there are techniques, practices, and forms of counselling that will be useful in engaging in this care. Some maintain that a resolution of the question of the meaning of life is not simply to be reached by giving an answer to a question, but by being reminded of one's vocation – to respond to others, to do good, to care, and to love – and of the fact that this search can end only in reaching an absolute.

There is, of course, more to these essays than can be summarized here. At this point, however, it is time to turn to these essays themselves, and to see how far the issue of 'care of self and the meaning of life' has been addressed.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, Pope, *Encyclical Letter, Fides et Ratio, of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II: To the Bishops of the Catholic Church On the Relationship between Faith and Reason* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1998), section 1.

<sup>2</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, section 33.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Apology*, tr. Benjamin Jowett, 30b.

<sup>4</sup> *The Great Learning* (Da Xue [大學]), English translation by James Legge at <http://ctext.org/liji/da-xue>

<sup>5</sup> See Gretchen Reydam-Schils, *The Roman Stoics: Self, Responsibility, and Affection* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 25.

See also Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From State Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), also at <http://www.giffordlectures.org/books/emotion-and-peace-mind/>

<sup>6</sup> In "Sorge in Heidegger and in Goethe's *Faust*," *Goethe Yearbook* 16 (2009): 207-218, Ellis Dye writes: "In the summer semester of 1921, ... six years before the publication of *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger lectured on "care" in the writings of St. Augustine, which he does not yet denominate as "Sorge" in German but as "Bekümmern." It becomes "Sorge" in his winter semester lectures of 1921-22 and is fundamental in *Sein und Zeit*. ... For Heidegger, Sorge is an ontological term, not an

ontic one, and pertains to “the deep structures that underlie and explain the ontic”.”

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Gur Zak, *Petrarch's Humanism and the Care of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Aristides Baltas, *Peeling Potatoes or Grinding Lenses: Spinoza and Young Wittgenstein Converse on Immanence and Its Logic* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> See Warren T. Reich, “History of the Notion of Care,” in *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, revised edition. Ed. Warren Thomas Reich. 5 vols. (New York: Simon & Schuster / Macmillan, 1995), pp. 319-331.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 26, a. 4, resp.

<sup>11</sup> In *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 25, a. 4, Aquinas continues: “hence we read in [Aristotle's *Nicomachean*] *Ethic.* ix, 4,8, that “the origin of friendly relations with others lies in our relations to ourselves.”

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of the issue of care in Heidegger, see, for example, Vensus A. George, *Authentic Human Destiny: The Paths of Shankara and Heidegger* (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998), ch 4. See also the entry on “care, concern, solicitude” in *A Heidegger Dictionary*, ed. Michael Inwood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).

<sup>13</sup> Paris: Gallimard, 1984.

<sup>14</sup> Bob Robinson, “Michel Foucault: Ethics,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/fouc-eth/>

<sup>15</sup> Michel Foucault, “On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress.” In *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 348.

<sup>16</sup> *Concise Oxford English Dictionary: Luxury Edition* / 12<sup>th</sup> edition (2011), p. 214.

<sup>17</sup> See Reich, “History of the Notion of Care.”



1.

## **Christian Philosophy and the Meaning of Life**

WILLIAM SWEET

There are times in one's life when people may ask themselves questions that bear on the meaning of human existence or the meaning of their own existence.

A person may not frame these questions explicitly as questions about the meaning of life: they may be questions about the nature of happiness or the good life; they may be questions about what the point or purpose is of leading a certain kind of life, or engaging in certain activities; they may be questions about death and what, if anything, happens thereafter. They may be (also) expressions of anxiety or of fear or of emptiness. But, in them all, there is an awareness of the contingent and temporally-limited nature of life or of our own lives, and a wish for some kind of recognition of this, and a response.

The question "What is the meaning of life?," expressed bluntly, may seem, however, a strange question, and even an embarrassing one. (Could *anyone* really know the answer? - we might ask.) So, even though a person may wonder or worry about 'meaning', the question itself is not only a large one, but may seem too big and perhaps too broad to admit of any answer.

Yet it is a question that, I would say, we need to take seriously, and to which Christian philosophy offers a response.

### **An Anecdote**

Let me begin with a brief anecdote. A little over 100 years ago, in 1901 in Paris, France, two university students –

a young man and his soon-to-be fiancée – were struck by the spiritual aridity of French intellectual life. The man, only nominally a protestant, had been raised in a strongly secular home; the young woman, a Russian Jewish immigrant, had long struggled with religious doubts and found only an indifferent atheism and skepticism in her teachers at the University of Paris. One day, while walking through the *Jardin des plantes*, in Paris, they vowed that, rather than live the absurdity of a life in which there was no way to determine what is good and what is evil, they would commit suicide should they not find some answer to the apparent meaninglessness of life.

Such a vow, particularly given the passionate character of youth, no doubt focused their minds. But the possibility of an answer soon presented itself, when they attended lectures at the 'College de France' given by a philosopher open to metaphysical intuition and the spirit – Henri Bergson (1859-1941). Thus, they started on a path from materialism, through the metaphysical vitalist philosophy of Henri Bergson, to, finally, entering the Catholic Church. It was there that they found an ultimate answer to their questions. The young woman was Raïssa Oumansov; her husband-to-be was Jacques Maritain. Both were to become major figures in Catholic intellectual life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Jacques is perhaps the most famous Catholic philosopher of the last 100 years.

What did the Maritains get from Bergson's philosophy? It was that human beings could indeed know what is ultimately real – that it is possible, somehow, to know the absolute.<sup>1</sup> But the Maritains recognised that more was needed. For the meaning of life is not just something that we are to know, but that we must experience and live. And, a few years after their marriage and conversion, they discovered the philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas. In this

way, a Christian philosophy provided a response to their burning question of the meaning of life.

But not all philosophies offer the kind of response that addressed the 'life or death' dilemma that the Maritains faced. What I want to do in the present essay is, first, ask what the question 'What is the meaning of life?' means, and whether this question can be discussed at all. Next, I want to outline three broad philosophical responses to the question of the meaning of life. Finally, I will look more closely at different approaches to one of them – the response of Christian philosophy – and see what it may have to say to us today.

### **Meaningfulness and Meaning**

As noted above, the question, 'What is the meaning of life?', can be expressed in different ways.

Some may ask why anything at all exists – by which they do not just mean what its cause is, but what its purpose is. Or some may ask what the purpose of humanity is on this planet – or just what one's own purpose might be. This questioning is sometimes found when people wonder what might make them truly happy, or what kind of profession or career they ought to follow, or how they ought to lead their lives. (For example, Should I care about others? Should I develop my character? Should I develop my talents? Do I work in order to live, or do I just live to work?) Or, on the occasion of a death in one's family, some will ask about that person's life, what its effects were on friends and family, but also what, if anything, happens after death. And this questioning often does not seem to admit of an easy answer – or perhaps any answer at all. So this question is often mixed with fear or a feeling of emptiness.

Yet, however it is expressed, it seems to be a question that many, if not all, people have to confront.

Nevertheless, some would regard this question with suspicion – or say that it is not a genuine question at all.

One such reaction to this question can be discerned in the writings of the English cosmologist and theoretical physicist, Stephen Hawking. In his *A Brief History of Time*, 1988, Hawking suggests that this question needn't await a philosophical or religious response. Indeed, he is rather sceptical that philosophy ever could provide an answer. Instead, he says, science may be able to tell us the meaning of life. He writes:

Up to now, most scientists have been too occupied with the development of new theories that describe what the universe is to ask the question why ... However, if we discover a complete [and unified] theory [combining quantum physics with general relativity] ... we shall all ... be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason...<sup>2</sup>

Then, once we can produce such a theory, Hawking suggests, we have all the answer that we need – or, as he poetically puts it, “for then we would know the mind of God.”<sup>3</sup>

A second, skeptical reaction to this question is to be found in the views of the Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Freud suggested that such asking after the meaning of life is not asking a real question, but is instead a sign of a medical or health problem – indeed, it is a mental health problem. Freud writes:

The moment a man questions the meaning and value of life, he is sick, since objectively neither

has any existence; by asking this question one is merely admitting to a store of unsatisfied libido to which something else must have happened, a kind of fermentation leading to sadness and depression.<sup>4</sup>

On Freud's view, such questions are not genuine questions – questions to which one can provide a cognitive answer. Instead, they are the expression of a 'feeling of helplessness'<sup>5</sup> to which only a clinical – not a cognitive – response is appropriate.

Still others – for example, some of the 'ordinary language' or analytic philosophers of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century – would broadly agree with Freud. They would say that the question is not a real question, but a "pseudo-question." In other words, although the sentence "What is the meaning of (my) life?" is grammatically well formed, it contains conceptual confusions and cannot, in fact, admit of any answer. For such a question implies that there is something separate from and outside of 'life' that could provide a justification for the existence of life, or of one's life – and there simply isn't anything 'outside' of life that could do so. So, the question cannot be a real question at all.

### **Some General Responses**

Yet, for many, this question of the meaning of life is a quintessentially human question – and it is the kind of question that can appropriately be asked, even if it cannot be answered. As the psychologist Viktor Frankl once wrote – in a way in response to Freud: "Challenging the meaning of life can therefore never be taken as a manifestation of morbidity or abnormality; it is rather the truest expression of the state of being human, the mark of the most human nature in man."<sup>6</sup> Philosophers who have taken this issue

seriously have responded to this question, though in radically different ways. Let me briefly note three.

One well-known response to this question is found in the writings of 'existentialist' philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Camus, for example, writes that "the meaning of life is the most urgent of questions." But, he continues, "I do not know that meaning and ... it is impossible for me just now to know it." Camus says that "the world in itself is not reasonable" and, when we see "the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart", we encounter 'the absurd.' Camus' response, then, is that there is no 'meaning of life' – by which he means that there is nothing outside of oneself that can provide an answer to the question. So, strictly speaking, there is no answer. Instead we have to have "belief in the absurd", which means that one must have an "indifference to the future and a desire to use up everything that is given." According to Camus, this is "not the best of living but the most of living."<sup>7</sup> Once we accept the absurdity in existence, we can "imagine" that life is happy.

Some regard this kind of response as a form of nihilism – the view that there is simply no objective meaning, purpose, or value to life. For many existentialists, there is and there can be no single answer to the question of 'What is the meaning of life?', and looking for or depending on some external answer is not only unjustifiable, but a crutch. Instead, we need to recognise our freedom – our radical freedom of action.

Camus's claim, though, presupposes that one's knowledge begins and ends with "this world"; he writes "This heart within me I can feel, and I judge that it exists. This world I can touch, and I likewise judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge, and the rest is construction." But this begs the question; is it true that that is all that one

can know? Is it true that to go beyond this primitive empiricism is merely “construction” and nothing of which one can be certain. Perhaps it is better to say that, on Camus’ view, *if* this is all there is, then we are led to that ‘absurdity’ which is the quest for meaning in an indifferent, material universe. But the truth of the consequent of this conditional statement is, indeed, dependent upon the truth of the antecedent.

A second response to this question that has been offered affirms that the question does make sense and that this meaning can be found – but only ‘within ourselves,’ and so this meaning varies from person to person. This is ‘subjectivism’ – the claim that human nature has no ‘objective’ meaning or purpose, and that it is entirely up to the individual to construct the meaning of his or her life. ‘Meaning’ (in the sense of the question, ‘What is the meaning of life?’) means simply whatever a person holds dear, or takes to give her or his life significance or value, or is the object of one’s interests and desires. It is, we could say, “that set of objects, habits, and convictions, whatever it might prove to be, which [one] would rather die for than abandon, or at least would feel himself excommunicated from humanity if he did abandon.”<sup>8</sup>

This, I think, tells us something important about answers to the question of the meaning of life – that they refer to an ‘inner dimension.’ But this, too, falls short. There is, here, no meaning of life as such, but a contingent – and perhaps arbitrary – recognition of values and of the fact that these values have some hold over oneself.

A third response to this question that has been offered is that there *is* a meaning to life, but that this meaning is not purely subjective or based on one’s personal interests and desires. This is the option offered by many Christian philosophers. But how Christian philosophers – and, more

broadly, Christian philosophy – have answered the question has differed.

### **On Christian Philosophy**

At this point one might interject and challenge the claim that there is a Christian Philosophy. This is a fair point; this question is a much debated matter.<sup>9</sup>

Without entering into that debate, however, I will make three proposals. First, while there is no single system or philosophical approach that is ‘Christian philosophy,’ it may still be possible to use the term. Thus, some mean by ‘Christian philosophy’ what John Paul II called “a sapiential philosophy” – i.e., it seeks wisdom, and not just the solution of certain (technical or abstract) problems. And, according to John Paul II, this wisdom is not just any wisdom. It is wisdom about “the ultimate and overarching meaning of life,”<sup>10</sup> that does not, and cannot exclude the metaphysical and the spiritual. The question of the meaning of life is, therefore, part of any genuinely Christian philosophy. I will use the term ‘Christian philosophy’ in this sense.

Second, that meaning or wisdom sought by Christian philosophy is to be found in understanding human life and that the human person is a social being, rooted in history and culture, with a past, a present, and – importantly – a future. Such a philosophy also supposes that human beings have natural tendencies and capacities, similar or common goals, and a purpose or function or set of activities to which they are called – i.e., a vocation.

Third, such a philosophy need not be uniquely Christian. While Christian philosophers are aware of views found in scripture and Christian theology, and borrow on and draw from other philosophers who are Christians, the philosophical investigation that Christian philosophy proposes is one that affects all human beings and is present,

therefore, in all religions and cultures. In *Nostra Aetate*, a “Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions” of the Second Vatican Council, promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1965, we read:

Men expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir the hearts of men: What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what is sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?<sup>11</sup>

With this terminological issue addressed, if we look at Christian Philosophy, we see a range of responses to the question of the meaning of life. I want to mention three.

#### *Aquinas*

One response within Christian philosophy to the question of the meaning of life is found in the writings of St Thomas Aquinas. According to Thomas, the meaning of life is to be found in “the Ultimate End of Human life,” which he regards as happiness.<sup>12</sup>

For Thomas – and here he is following Aristotle – to know what a thing is means also knowing its end or purpose. Thus, to know what a human being is, we need to know what the purpose or ‘end’ of human life is.

Now human beings are, for Aquinas, unities of body and soul, and their end is what he, again following Aristotle,

calls happiness; for Aristotle, happiness consists in an activity of the soul in accord with excellence or virtue achieved by repeatedly and rationally following a mean.

Aquinas' account of human nature is more extensive than Aristotle's, taking into account the various activities of the soul, and Aquinas is led to the view that happiness for human beings ultimately resides in a vision of the divine essence.<sup>13</sup> This end is the same for all human beings. Following Aristotle, Aquinas recognises that this end is something that human beings must work for, and he acknowledges that virtue is the reward of an individual's virtuous activities. Nevertheless, as this end is not just a natural but a supernatural good, there is also a role for grace.

But some have argued that Aquinas's account fails to capture the subjective dimension of the meaning of life – that there is too little account taken of the individual person – of subjectivity – and that the meaning of one's own life cannot be seen to be merely identical with what the meaning is for everyone's life. Aquinas' account of the meaning of life is, then, too formalistic. What it misses, as Charles Taylor reminds us (in a different context), is the importance of one's sense of authentic being – of the importance of being true to one's unique identity. Building on a view that he finds in Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), Taylor notes that, beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, we find the hitherto unappreciated notion that “each one of us has an original way of being human”<sup>14</sup>, and so each one is called to live one's own life in one's own way. Taylor writes that, on this view, one risks one's “own inner nature” – indeed, one's identity – if one merely imitates another's life. By merely imitating or merely following external rules, “I miss the point of my life; I miss what being human is for *me*.”<sup>15</sup>

This emphasis on the subjective is, however, to be found in another Christian philosopher, of a very different character and tradition: Søren Kierkegaard.

### *Søren Kierkegaard*

A second response from within Christian philosophy to the question 'What is the meaning of life?' can be found in the writings of Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). Kierkegaard was suspicious of institutions (such as church structures and hierarchies) and of 'externalities' (such as religious rituals) that ignored the importance of the inner transformation of the person. His answer to the question of the meaning of life was that it was to be found in *being* a Christian – specifically, through an act of faith in God and in the incarnation.<sup>16</sup>

One of the ironies of Kierkegaard's philosophy, perhaps, is that he is critical of philosophy's traditional relation to Christianity – that philosophy makes Christianity into a doctrine and a matter of knowing and objective truth – whereas Christianity (Kierkegaard says) is something intensely subjective, that contains tensions and contradictions. In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard writes: "Christianity is not a doctrine, but an existential communication expressing an existential contradiction."<sup>17</sup>

For Kierkegaard, to be a Christian is neither simply conforming to a series of practices, nor to some speculative doctrine. It is, rather, "a lived experience of sin, suffering, guilt, and the absurd." To be a Christian is to change one's own existence, to move towards authentic personal existence – away from the aesthetic sphere (in which there is no self realization) by becoming conscious of an imbalance and a feeling of despair, through the ethical stage (in which one begins to realize the universal in oneself, to assume responsibility for oneself, and thereby realize himself and constitute himself), to a level where one goes beyond the

ethical-universal (because the universal is not always binding), to the first level of religion – where there is a private, personal, and distinct relationship to God.

But reaching even this first level of religion is not simply up to us – for there is an abyss between man and God: “God and man are two qualities separated by an infinite qualitative difference”<sup>18</sup> because of man’s sinfulness – and any attempt to reconcile the finite and the infinite offends reason. What is required is “an inner transformation, an actualization of inwardness.”<sup>19</sup> We must, then, have a consciousness of our sinfulness – but this is only possible through our acceptance of the paradox that an infinite eternal God became an individual human being in history. We accept God and the truth of the incarnation only by an act of faith – a faith that is an act of will, a leap, and a gift of God. And even thereafter, the ‘tension’ between one’s faith and what one knows continues.<sup>20</sup>

One’s being a Christian – continuing in the Christian life – is not, however, the consequence of a single act. There is continued action. Kierkegaard, then, speaks of what Gregory Kerr calls “the existential nature of love.” Kerr writes:

Kierkegaard... highlights the existential nature of the Christian’s obedience to Christ’s command to “love your neighbor.” ... For Kierkegaard, we are simply to follow the command of Christ. There are no truths or conditions that must be in place. There is nothing good or fulfilling to be sought. We are simply to do it! To love otherwise is “poetic” love and that is based upon personal preferences and inclinations .... What matters for Kierkegaard is one’s relationship and obedience to God.<sup>21</sup>

In the preceding account, Kierkegaard is clearly emphasising the subjective element. But, for Kierkegaard, this subjectivity is not merely an element of, but is the nature of faith, and the account that he provides is fideistic. Believers crave to know the meaning of life, and this requires action on their part. But this meaning is, in the end, not something that we can know, given human nature. Nor is it based on following rules. It is, rather, is a matter of faith – perhaps even a blind faith – in the person of the Christ. It is a faith in someone, not just a faith that someone exists. It is a faith that manifests itself in practical love.

### *Maritain*

A third response within the Christian tradition to the question ‘What is the meaning of life?’ is to be found in the writings of Jacques Maritain. For Maritain, the answer to the question of the meaning of life is neither something purely ‘external,’ objective, and universal, nor purely subjective. And, unlike Kierkegaard, Maritain was confident that philosophy can provide some direction, if not an answer.

Interestingly, at the time of his conversion, Maritain was concerned that philosophy could not be consistent with Christian doctrine, and he was ready to abandon philosophy for the sake of his faith.<sup>22</sup> Once he read St Thomas, however, he recognised that there need not be such an opposition. He came also to see that Thomas provided a model of how to philosophize and not just a set of views that had to be blindly adopted.

Like Aquinas, Maritain saw the meaning of life as (essentially) related to what human beings are – their nature. Like all animals, human beings possess a physical nature. But they are also cultural beings, historical beings, beings for whom history makes sense. It is through society and culture that human beings not only exist but flourish,

that they not only thrive as a species, but differentiate themselves from one another and acquire their distinctive identities. And, of course, they have characteristics that go beyond the material. They possess free will.<sup>23</sup>

So the answer to the question of the meaning of life must be something that has an objective dimension, something that is in accord with our nature.

The answer to the question of the meaning of life is, then, in part, 'external' – i.e., it lies outside us. It is that which Maritain calls 'the absolute' – "the truth which is God himself" and "which is revealed to us by God."<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, Maritain recognises that many philosophers focus on a conceptual knowledge of God, whereas it is more important to have experienced or to have "lived" this knowledge.<sup>25</sup> It is this point, Maritain writes, that is signaled to us by Kierkegaard. He writes: "We should be grateful to Kierkegaard and his successors for having, in their fight against Hegel, taught anew, to those who profess to be thinkers the great lesson of anguish."<sup>26</sup> Thus, 'the meaning of life' must also be something that has a subjective character – something that, as Charles Taylor has noted, reflects something of our inner condition and nature.

What, then, can this meaning be?

In *Education at the Crossroads*, Maritain writes that we are to seek 'self-perfection.' But, he continues:

It should be added that the very term "self-perfection" ... needs to be properly understood. Man's perfection consists of the perfection of love, and so is less the perfection of his "self" than the perfection of his love, where the very self is in some measure lost sight of. And to advance in this self-perfection is not to copy an ideal.<sup>27</sup>

In other words, Maritain recognises that this meaning is the achievement of an interior liberty and spiritual life, which involves “the perfection of one’s love” and not just the perfection of one’s self. Thus, Maritain says, “the meaning of human life is to tend to the perfection of love, which can be achieved only by the means outlined for all time in the Sermon on the Mount.”<sup>28</sup>

The notion of love is, then, central to the answer to the question of the meaning of life.<sup>29</sup> By love, Maritain does not mean, of course, a sentiment or feeling. Love is a virtue – not just an inclination or desire, but also a disposition to act. The love of which Maritain speaks is a practical virtue – it is practical love. This is the love referred to in the Scriptures as ‘doing good.’<sup>30</sup>

And this good is a good to be done in *this* world – which is in keeping with our nature as social beings.

But what motivates this love, this doing good? For Maritain, the answer is partly that it comes from something outside of us, something that ‘calls’ each person individually. Though Maritain does not use this precise word in this context, what he has in mind here is that we have this as a ‘vocation.’

Yet, what motivates this love cannot be entirely external. It also depends on a person *choosing* this end; this is, again, a point that he carries over from Aristotle.

For Maritain, then, the meaning of life is “perfecting [one]self by knowledge and by love.”<sup>31</sup> It is ‘to live in the truth,’ ‘to live in faith,’ to act, and even to act with God.

The way that we live out our action with God is ‘to love’ – to care.

### *Summary*

What do these Christian philosophers tell us that is helpful in answering the question of the meaning of life?

From Aquinas we are reminded that there is an end or purpose to life – ‘the vision of the Divine Essence.’<sup>32</sup>

Directing oneself towards this goal is, in part, acting upon an interior principle – “the natural desire to seek the cause.” But this search is also characteristic of all human beings as human beings. Little mention is made of whether this end is an individual’s end *as* an individual.

For Kierkegaard, the meaning of life cannot be something ‘generic’, and it involves not just the satisfaction of a desire, but a *transformation* of the individual person who searches for meaning.

This is, however, a rather individualistic and fideistic approach to the search for meaning. While Kierkegaard does remind us of the call to love, little is said about how our act of faith is a natural act and the act of a human person as a *social* being – a being who is in relationships to others.

Finally, Maritain adopts Aquinas’s view that human beings are naturally oriented to their telos or end, and that achieving this end is not simply a matter of following rules.

Maritain emphasises, however, that achieving this end also involves an inner transformation. One seeks this end, not just because it is the end or purpose of all human beings, but because it is fundamentally the *individual’s* goal.

The key here is Maritain’s account of ‘the meaning of life’ in terms of love. Love – which has both an internal and an external character – is a virtue. It involves action, for love is to ‘do good.’ But we are also called – we have a vocation – to it.

### Conclusion

While some philosophers have avoided the question of the meaning of life, or regarded it as a conceptual confusion or a sign of mental distress, or have regarded questions of ‘purpose’ or an ‘end’ of life as unnecessary complications in

understanding human persons, Christian philosophers acknowledge the importance of this question. Indeed, it is a part of a 'sapiential' philosophy, a philosophy that genuinely seeks wisdom.

The response of Christian philosophers to the question of the meaning of life, as we have seen, has varied. Nevertheless, we can draw three central points from these accounts.

First, Christian philosophy looks at human life as more than biological and material, and in terms of its history, its inclinations, and its ends (i.e., what we are 'made for').

The meaning of life, then, is focused outside the individual as he or she exists at the present moment. The meaning of life is not to be found (just) in one's end, *but how one is motivated, and how one responds to or seeks that end.*

Second, Christian philosophy allows for the notion of "vocation" – what a person is 'called to do' – which addresses not only the matter of 'how' one is to act, but 'why' (i.e., it provides an explanation and justification) One's vocation is based on and reflects one's natural talents and tendencies.

But it also requires our active participation. So it requires an engagement in virtuous activities, in developing one's character, but also in a transformation and realization of who we are as individuals.

We can, of course, be called to participate in different ways, even through suffering.

Third, Christian philosophy has an answer to such questions as: What are we called by? And what are we oriented towards?

As intelligent beings, we are oriented towards what is true, but as social and affective beings we are called to respond to others, to love, and to care.

This is affirmed in Christian scripture. The letters of St Paul are filled with reminders that we are called – that we are called to care for one another. This is also a reflection of the Gospel call to love. Recall the Beatitudes: “blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” In answer to the question ‘What is purity in heart?’, the saintly monk Isaac of Nineveh answers that it “is a heart full of compassion for the whole of created nature”.<sup>33</sup>

This emphasis on love is recognized by Christians, non-Christians, and secularists alike. The British literary theorist and critic Terry Eagleton writes of love as a reciprocity – a reciprocity which allows flourishing.<sup>34</sup>

Living out the vocation to love involves living in society. For the Christian, this means cooperating with God’s plan, and even recognizing that we are God’s co-workers – co-creators.

The meaning of life, then, not only has to be sought and found, it has to be experienced and lived for us to be fully human. Some, unfortunately, seem to fail to find it, or locate it in something contingent and ephemeral. For Christian philosophy, however, the meaning of life is *caritas*: love – doing good – care.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Describing these events this, Raïssa writes: « Bergson nous assurait [...] que nous sommes capables de connaître vraiment le réel, que par l’intuition nous atteignons l’absolu. Et nous traduisions que nous pouvions vraiment, absolument connaître ce qui est. Peu nous importait alors que ce fût par l’intuition qui transcende les concepts, ou par l’intelligence qui les forme; l’important, l’essentiel, c’était le résultat possible : atteindre l’absolu » R. Maritain, *Les grandes amitiés*, in *Oeuvres complètes de Jacques et Raïssa Maritain*, Vol. XIV (Fribourg, Switzerland: Editions universitaires, 1993), p. 699.

See H. Bars, “Sur le rôle de Bergson dans l’itinéraire philosophique de Jacques Maritain”, in B. Hubert and Y. Floucat (eds.), *Jacques Maritain*

*et ses contemporaines* (Paris, 1991). See also F. Worms, *Bergson ou les deux sens de la vie* (Paris, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (New York: Bantam, 1988), p. 193. Cited in John Cottingham, *On the Meaning of Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>In a later book, published in 2010, Hawking is clear that he was speaking only metaphorically. He writes: "Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going." Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York: Bantam Books, 2010), p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Letter to Marie Bonaparte [13 August 1937]", in Ernst L. Freud (ed.), *Letters of Sigmund Freud*, tr. Tania and James Stern (New York: Basic Books, 1960), p. 436.

<sup>5</sup> John Cottingham, *On the Meaning of Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> See Viktor E. Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul: from psychotherapy to logotherapy*, tr. Richard and Clara Winston. 2d expanded ed., with revisions and an added chapter written in English by the author. (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1965).

<sup>7</sup> Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus, and other essays*, tr. Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

<sup>8</sup> See Bernard Bosanquet, "Religion (Philosophy of)." Reprinted in *Bernard Bosanquet: Essays in Philosophy and Social Policy*, ed. William Sweet, 3 vols. (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2003), Vol. 1: 29-39.

<sup>9</sup> See, especially, "La notion de philosophie chrétienne", *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie*, v. 31 [Session of 21 March 1931]. See also, in particular Emile Bréhier, "Y-a-t'il une philosophie chrétienne?" *Revue de Métaphysique et de la Morale*, vol. 38 no. 2 (1931): 133-162. See also Jacques Maritain, "De la notion de philosophie chrétienne", *Revue néo-scholastique de philosophie*, vol. 36 (1932): 153-186; and *Essai sur la philosophie chrétienne* [An Essay on Christian Philosophy, tr Edward Flannery (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955)].

<sup>10</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Fides et ratio: On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason* (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, 1998), section 81.

<sup>11</sup> *Nostra Aetate*, section 1, In *The Teachings of the Second Vatican Council: Complete Texts of the Constitutions, Decrees, and Declarations*, ed. Gregory Baum (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1966)

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, qq. 1-5.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q 3 a 8, ad 2.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism*, ed. Any Gutmann, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 30.

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *The Prayers of Kierkegaard*, ed., with a new interpretation of his life and thought, by Perry D. LeFevre (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

<sup>17</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, tr. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 339.

<sup>18</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening* [Kierkegaard's Writings, Vol. XIX] ed. and trans., with introduction and notes, by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 126.

<sup>19</sup> See LeFevre, in Kierkegaard, *The Prayers of Kierkegaard*, p. 161.

<sup>20</sup> The three preceding paragraphs draw from the account by Perry LeFevre in Kierkegaard, *The Prayers of Kierkegaard*, pp. 161-171.

<sup>21</sup> Gregory J. Kerr, "The sine qua non of love: a pluralism within," in John G. Trapani (ed.), *Truth Matters: essays in honor of Jacques Maritain* (Washington, DC: American Maritain Association/The Catholic University of America Press, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> Raissa Maritain writes that, before they were baptized « Jacques restait malgré tout si persuadé des erreurs des 'philosophes' qu'il pensait qu'en se faisant catholique il devrait renoncer à la vie de l'intelligence » (*Les grandes amitiés*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. XIV, p. 778). Consequently, « Nous pensions encore que devenir chrétiens c'était abandonner la philosophie pour toujours. Eh bien, nous étions prêts - mais ce n'était pas facile - à abandonner la philosophie pour la vérité. Jacques accepta ce sacrifice. La vérité que nous avions tant désirée nous avait pris dans un piège. 'S'il a plu à Dieu de cacher sa vérité dans un tas de fumier, disait Jacques, c'est là que nous irons la chercher.' Je cite ce mot cruel pour donner une idée de notre état d'esprit » (*ibid.*, p. 779). For a discussion of these comments, see P. Maurice Elder Hyppolite, sdb, "Le Réalisme de la connaissance comme condition pour l'humanisme intégral de Jacques Maritain," Thèse du Doctorat en Philosophie, Universitas Pontificia Salesiana, 2007.

<sup>23</sup> The human being is “un animal de culture, dont l’espèce ne peut subsister qu’avec le développement de la société et de la civilisation; c’est un animal historique : d’où la multiplicité des types culturels ou éthico-historiques qui diversifient l’humanité... Afin d’atteindre cette liberté dans laquelle il se détermine lui-même, il a besoin d’une discipline et d’une tradition qui, tout à la fois, pèseront lourdement sur lui et le fortifieront.” Stanislas R. Baleke, *Une pédagogie pour le développement social: de la transmission à la communication des saviors* (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> Maritain writes that the human person “a le privilège d’être placé en face de la vérité absolue, de la vérité qui est Dieu lui-même, et Dieu lui-même se révélant.” J. Maritain, *Approches sans entraves* (Paris: Fayard, 1973), p. 59.

<sup>25</sup> Maritain writes: “Ces choses-là, la philosophie les connaît par voie de conceptualisation. Mais il y a un énorme avantage à avoir vécu, expérimenté en acte exercé ces grands thèmes concernant la vérité avant de les conceptualiser philosophiquement. C’est dans la foi en Dieu qui est la vérité subsistante, dans la foi à la vérité incarnée, que nous les vivons à un degré souverainement éminent.” J. Maritain, *Approches sans entraves*, p. 60.

<sup>26</sup> J. Maritain, *Court traité de l’existence et de l’existant* (Paris: Paul Hartmann, 1947), p. 205. Maritain writes: “rendons grâce à Kierkegaard et à ses successeurs d’avoir, contre Hegel, réappris à ceux qui font profession de penser la grande leçon de la vérité; et en particulier d’avoir rappelé cette grande leçon aux disciples de saint Thomas.”

<sup>27</sup> Jacques Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), p. 36.

<sup>28</sup> Maritain writes: “Le sens de la vie humaine est de tendre à la perfection de la charité, ce qui ne peut s’accomplir que par les voies pour toujours tracées dans le Sermon sur la Montagne. Dans l’ordre social une culture ne sera humaniste et chrétienne que si elle tend à donner à la multitude, avec le juste sens — le sens évangélique — de la hiérarchie des valeurs, les moyens matériels et moraux permettant l’accession de la à la liberté intérieure et à la vie de l’esprit. Tout cela revient à affirmer la primauté de la grâce et des valeurs spirituelles.” Jacques Maritain, “Pour un réalisme intégral” [from a 1932 letter to the publication “Feuille central” de la Société Suisse de Zofingue], in *Cahiers Jacques Maritain*, 1 (1980): 57-61, at p. 58.

<sup>29</sup> Deal Hudson and Matthew Mancini write that, for Maritain “love was the meaning of life; this he was not afraid to say explicitly.” They do

not, however, say precisely what this means. See Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini, "Introduction: Maritain and the Ambivalence of the 'Modern' World," in Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini (eds.), *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987), p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> Matthew 5:44 "But I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you" Douay-Rheims (1899), American Edition.

<sup>31</sup> *Education at the Crossroads*, p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q 3, a 8, resp.

<sup>33</sup> Isaac of Nineveh, *The Ascetic Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian* (Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1984), 81 (p. 306)

<sup>34</sup> Eagleton writes: "love at its most typical involves the fullest possible reciprocity." Terry Eagleton, *The Meaning of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 23.

2.

## **Love and Freedom as Essentials in the Process of Creative Evolution**

WEN-HSIANG CHEN

### **Scientific Inquiry Presupposes Basic Faith**

Most people nowadays agree that science is a successful or at least an effective way to observe and understand the universe. Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945) claimed, for example, that science is the last step in humanity's mental development, and that it may be regarded as the highest and most characteristic attainment of human culture.<sup>1</sup> With its various discoveries and technological development, science is an approach which characterizes our life gradually and deeply, and in a way that has also thoroughly changed our way of thinking. It is obvious, then, that science should not be regarded merely as a technical achievement to enjoy, but also as having profound spiritual meaning requiring deep exploration. The goal of this paper is to discuss whether traditional values, such as love and freedom, can survive within the scientific world-view. If they cannot, then what ultimate meaning can we find within the scientific point of view? If they can, then how can we confidently find a new meaning for such notions as love and freedom in this material world? In order to achieve this goal, perhaps a good place to start is to clarify what it means to speak of science as a method of inquiry.

The first phenomenon that should be explored is how scientists do their work so successfully. Many illustrations can be found in modern philosophy but, since the aim of this paper is restricted to the relationship between science and its ultimate value, let us focus on related arguments from some important theologians' and philosophers'

perspectives including Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984), Ian Barbour (1923-2013), and John Haught.

The first point I will note here is the classic observation from Bernard Lonergan, who summarized the classical scientific process of how scientists reach a hypothesis from observation. According to him, scientists commonly begin from some problems, scrutinize the relevant sensible data, select their measureable features, plot the results of measurement on a graph, draw a smooth curve that approximately passes through all points determined by the measurements, find the mathematical formula that corresponds to the curve, test the formula by working out all its implications and by conducting experiments, and, finally, if the formula passes the tests, then the scientist can announce it as a hypothesis.<sup>2</sup> With this rigorous approach, it is generally agreed that science can be thought of as an objective method to explore the universe, and its method can also be verified. What is not so widely understood, however, is that, on the one hand, the central aims of science really are, rather, concerned with a search for understanding, a desire to make the course of nature not just predictable but intelligible<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, the differences between primary and secondary properties, proposed by René Descartes, Galileo Galilei, and even John Locke, have been replaced by observation from common sense (elementary sense) and scientific measurement (complex sense) that has been uncovered by modern science.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, since the performance of a scientific inquiry is based on a hypothesis, it allows for revision in the process of justification on the one hand, and it also explains why science continues to progress, on the other hand. In this respect we can see that Aristotle's physics have been overthrown by the discoveries of Galileo and Isaac Newton.

Nevertheless, now we also know that Newton's perspective on absolute space and absolute time was, in turn, replaced by Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity. Hence it is reasonable to say that scientific development is still going on throughout the whole inquiry process of the human desire to know. Accordingly, there are two aspects which require further observation. On the hand, if we can discover the mistakes of Aristotle or even Newton, in the future we might also find some fault or at least complications in the theory of Einstein. On the other hand, can we find the underlying intelligibility in those different discoveries?

About the first aspect, it seems that a common feature of science reflects the principle of falsification, as Karl Popper (1902-1994) claims.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps it would be more correct to say that, although every scientific discovery is limited by its horizon and space-time conditions, the observable object to be explained must have uniformity as the nature of a familiar phenomenon.<sup>6</sup> To the second aspect, this means that we all begin at the point with the same anticipation to discover the nature of things. From this viewpoint, we can say that all kinds of discoveries in different times have their own intelligibility and truth value.

Perhaps scientists will respond immediately that scientific laws, such as laws of physics or chemistry, have long existed in the universe, and they are unmodifiable even though they may now still be incomplete. However, if this view can be bought into being, then you can explain the cause of a thing's nature, and its nature is comprehensible.

Accordingly, there must be a belief in scientific inquiry that the universe is intelligible; this is similar to the faith that the world was created by God, which is a belief held by religious people. Thus, Michael Polanyi (1891-1976), the scientist and philosopher of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, wrote: "Scientific inquiry is accordingly a dynamic exercise of the

imagination and is rooted in commitments and beliefs about the nature of things. It is a fiduciary act".<sup>7</sup>

In other words, like theologians, scientists also need some kind of faith during the pursuit of truth to discover the intelligibility of things, as we can see from Albert Einstein. In his book *Ideas and Opinions*, Einstein wrote:

Science can only be created by those who are thoroughly imbued with the aspiration toward truth and understanding. This source of feeling, however, springs from the sphere of religion. To this there also belongs the faith in the possibility that the regulations valid for the world of existence are rational, that is, comprehensible to reason. I cannot conceive of a genuine scientist without that profound faith.<sup>8</sup>

However, empirical scientists are generally focused on specific operative processes but are never aware of the structure of the world and our mind as well. But doing science without the awareness of such matters is one thing; the world as intelligible in itself is another. In fact, scientific inquiry requires some potential faith – namely that the world can be understood by human intelligence. That faith seems much greater than (or at least equal to) religious faith.

Furthermore, scientists as explorers may respect the unknown because the world is always full of surprises and there is so much incredible beauty. It may be assumed that the more sincere a scientist, the more in awe of nature he will be. Georgetown University theology professor, John Haught, holds this view. In his recent book, *Science and Faith: A New Introduction*, he made a clear interpretation from this point. Haught used the term 'convergence' as a mode to interpret the relationship between science and faith,

just like Ian Barbour used the term ‘integration’ to reconcile their intense relationship.<sup>9</sup>

Haught emphasized that, whether the scientist believes in God or not, scientific inquiry requires that the scientist has a robust faith that nature is lawful, predictable, and intelligible. Even a scientist who is a skeptic, as the case of Einstein illustrates, has to trust that nature, though often surprising, is never capricious.<sup>10</sup> In other words, Haught notes

Doing science requires a confident expectation that the scientific search can lead to deeper understanding down the road. This confidence is essential to both launching and sticking with the scientific adventure. In its belief that nature’s coherence is ultimately grounded in an infinite divine wisdom, meaning and truth, theology provides an entirely reasonable foundation for the trust needed by every good scientist.<sup>11</sup>

### **Scientism as a Blind Faith**

Nevertheless, there are arguments claiming that, even here, the approach of scientists is based on scientific evidence, at least at first sight. This will be called ‘scientism’ or ‘scientific naturalism’ in this paper. While some intellectuals agree with this position, other scientists or philosophers hold quite different perspectives. Yet some will say that their conclusions are going beyond that which science can in fact achieve. As a result, scientism asserts that science itself is the first principle and the only way to reach the truth, and that no reliable beliefs exist outside of scientific evidence. This way of thinking suggests that philosophy, metaphysics, religion, theology, and faith are

illusions. Anyone who accepts such beliefs should not be regarded as an intellectual in the contemporary era.

I would argue, however, that scientism is not a kind of sincere science, but instead a series of unwarranted assumptions about science.<sup>12</sup> In fact, many serious philosophers throughout history, such as René Descartes and Immanuel Kant, have not only deeply appreciated scientific achievements, but also regarded scientific methodology as a sound approach that should be followed. Modern scientism, then, is a kind of tool or disguise leading to parochial conclusions – conclusions that go beyond what science can reach. Therefore, we believe that it is a crucial issue to distinguish the real sciences from scientism in the contemporary age.

Few intellectuals take such an extreme attitude; however, this perspective seems to be more attractive to modern academics, such as Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and others. Such scientism in Dawkins is reflected in the following remark:

The only watchmaker in nature is the blind forces of physics, albeit deployed in a very special way. A true watchmaker has foresight: he designs his cogs and springs, and plans their interconnections, with a future purpose in the mind's eye. Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparent purposeful form of all life has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind's eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, no foresight, no sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the blind watchmaker.<sup>13</sup>

The watchmaker metaphor is commonly associated with the British cleric and philosopher William Paley (1743-1805), who claimed that if we even found a complex watch in a forest we would immediately assume that there must be some reason for it, and that someone great had made it – and that the same assumption holds for the complicated and exquisite universe. It is a ‘design argument’ for God’s existence. According to the above quotation, we notice that, although Dawkins might admit that there is a watchmaker in nature, because this watchmaker has to be following the rules of natural selection, therefore, this maker must be blind. So, even if the universe has a creator, at most this creator must be a blind one.

These scientific naturalists treat evolutionary theory as the chief weapon in science’s war against faith and theology. However, there are various objections raised against them. For example, Francis Collins, a well-known American genome scientist, has argued that Dawkins and Dennett are articulate academics who expend considerable energy to explain and extend Darwinism, proclaiming that an acceptance of evolution in biology requires an acceptance of atheism in theology.<sup>14</sup> However, the question is, surely, whether accepting evolution is the equivalent to accepting atheism?

I do not believe that it is. In the first place, science and theology operate on totally different levels. Even if science can demonstrate the accuracy of evolution without faith, it cannot deny that evolution has a starting point; what started evolution? Faith is something above science, but this does not mean that either is necessarily incorrect thinking. It is generally agreed that science relies on empirical data through observation, experimentation, and, finally, making a hypothesis. However, as far as faith is concerned, visible

or invisible experience of God is not a question of matter. Therefore, God could not be a properly scientific object.

Secondly, if scientism holds that theism has no evidence for it, atheism is in the same situation. Is there any strong evidence to prove atheism? As Collins wrote, if God is outside of nature, then science can neither prove nor disprove His existence. Accordingly, the only explanation for scientism is that it is a matter of belief. Collins adds: "Atheism itself must be considered a form of blind faith, in that it adopts a belief system that cannot be defended on the basis of pure reason."<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, throughout the history of scientific development, we have seen many invariant laws or principles in chemistry and physics. But, with evolutionary theory, scientists have a completely new understanding of the universe. Not only are there many strange and incredibly beautiful species which we can recognize through evolution, but there are also numerous accidents of nature full of unexpected surprise. That means, on the one hand, that some comprehensible and predicable evolution could be observed, and, on the other hand, that some prolonged development is going on. This can be seen in the following quotation from Darwin, who wrote in the last page of *The Origin of Species*:

There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, while this planet has gone circling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved.<sup>16</sup>

What the quotation makes clear at once is that principles in chemistry or physics cannot explain why so many accidents happened in the universe. We agree, following Darwin's step similar to Dawkins, but our conclusions are so different; accidents do not mean an imperfect universe but instead might refer to a perfect universe which is still going on. The universe is going on as intelligible and ordered though the method of evolution. I would argue that this is a more reasonable and comprehensive understanding than scientism or scientific naturalism, which claims that the universe has no purpose or is just a blind universe.

#### **From Desire to Love and Freedom**

It has been noted above, on the one hand, why authentic science could be moving closer to faith and, on the other hand, why scientism might not be coherently convincing. Accordingly, it is fair to say that science is a term that represents the human struggle for understanding and discovery, rather than a technological invention. Ironically, if the view of scientism comes into being, then we will have an incomprehensible world and our universe will be a static universe. However, if the horizon of science can range from "already real out there now" to "unity identity whole" as Lonergan argued,<sup>17</sup> some new reality might emerge, and a new horizon might be able to be anticipated which is mediated by meaning. Obviously, the world of meaning is constituted by many important characteristics, including symbols, language, grammar, rituals, history, culture, spirituality, goodness, religion, etc. This is a real world that cannot be denied even by the most radical skeptics, because the scientific naturalists or followers of scientism cannot be prevented from playing a meaningful role in this meaningful world. Ironically, if the followers of scientism

insist on their position coherently, then they will be moving toward the counter-position and should not be trusted.

Now it is time to turn to the view of faith. But when we deal with this issue, we are certainly not leaving behind the themes of scientific inquiry and addressing a wholly separate set of thoughts. The goal here is to cast aside just the arbitrary nature of modern scientism, but not analysis from the perspective of spirituality and faith according to God's creation.

### *The Meaning of Desire*

The first issue to be discussed is why can the human world be defined through meaning? A reasonable and simple explanation, I believe, is that we desire it. We desire something meaningful by our nature; otherwise, we will always be looking for it. Let us borrow a notion from Lonergan, who claimed that there are four stages of exigencies in our mind and are part of the desire to know: they are systematic exigence, critical exigence, methodical exigence and, finally, transcendent exigence.<sup>18</sup> As Lonergan wrote: "man can reach basic fulfilment, peace, joy, only by moving beyond the realms of common sense, theory, and interiority and into the realm in which God is known and loved."<sup>19</sup>

That is the meaning we are looking for in which we go beyond intellectual to moral conversion and finally to the realm of religion. However, a further question is how can this human desire can be satisfied? Logically speaking, this means that there is something waiting to be desired. 'A human who is born blind does not desire vision'; this proverb can be used by an empiricist as a refutation of idealism. However, it can also mean that there is something to be seen if one is not born blind. Evolution tells us of the 'survival of the fittest', but how – if our desire can never be

satisfied – can this desire survive over such a long evolutionary process? As we see in C.S. Lewis’ oft-quoted argument:

Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.<sup>20</sup>

Here Lewis suggests that there is a transcendental God, and He is exactly the origin of one’s desire. This way of thinking goes beyond scientific inference to the realm of faith, and such a faith relies not only on observational evidence but also on spiritual desire. Similarly but deeply, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) indicated that our natural desire includes *ens per essentiam* – that we have a natural desire to know God through his essence. As Lonergan wrote:

When we learn of God’s existence, spontaneously we ask what God is, but to ask what something is releases a process that does not come to rest until knowledge of essence is attained; therefore we have a nature to know God by his essence.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, if our very inquiry implies the question of God, that means God must be always on our mind even though we might never be aware of this. We can see this point of an impressed confession in Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), when he writes: “these questions are the simplest in the

world. From the stupid child to the wisest old man, they are in the soul of every human being. Without an answer to them, it is impossible, as I experienced, for life to go on."<sup>22</sup> In the same way, Lonergan asserts that God always exists within our horizon, as long as we have the ability to ask questions. From this point of view, then we must at least admit:

The question of God, then, lies within man's horizon. Man's transcendental subjectivity is mutilated or abolished, unless he is stretching forth towards the intelligible, the unconditioned, the good of value. The reach not of his attainment, but of his intending is unrestricted. There lies within his horizon a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness. It cannot be ignored.<sup>23</sup>

### **Love and Freedom as Essentials of Faith**

Moreover, because our question cannot just be restricted to the cognitional level, we have a moral as well as an ultimate concern. This means that we are not only concerned about apparent good or concrete benefits, but also about the question of 'worthiness'. We have seen throughout history that so many great persons, like disciples, saints, and martyrs, have sacrificed their lives in order to gain the truth, proclaiming faith and testifying the authentic love from God. It is a self-transcendental process which happens in the authentic mind and it is possible for it to happen to every person.

According to Lonergan, the term 'love' has an essential meaning in the process of self-transcendence. To 'fall in love with God' is the highest status of self-transcendence – that is, to fall in love with someone absolutely without

reservations and no boundaries. Lonergan says it well in *Method in Theology*:

To be in love without qualifications or conditions or reservations or limits is to be in love with someone transcendent. When someone transcendent is my beloved, he is in my heart, real to me from within me. When that love is the fulfilment of my unrestricted thrust to self-transcendence through intelligence and truth and responsibility, the one that fulfils that trust must be supreme in intelligence, truth, goodness.<sup>24</sup>

It is fair to say, conversely, that it is because of this intrinsic goodness that moral and intellectual conversion could be truly attained. If we could gain an insight into this point, we would be aware that love is an interactive transcendence. As we see in Scripture, not only can we “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with your soul and with all your strength” (Mark, 12:30), but we can realize that “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans. 5:5).

Having this point firmly established, we can then argue that our unrestricted inquiry is the capacity of self-transcendence, and the fulfillment of this capacity is falling in love with God. But the crucial question is, Why do we have the capacity to love and to be loved? Scientism or radical evolutionism could not explain this but, on the other hand, authentic faith does. Where faith helps us is that God’s love is poured into our hearts, and this gift of his love is free. As Lonergan states: it is not conditioned by human knowledge; rather it is the cause that leads man to seek knowledge of God.<sup>25</sup> From this viewpoint, we can say that our knowledge and vision were initially called and changed

by God's love. Then, we can create a new horizon in love with God. Thus, like St. Augustine (354-430), Lonergan is convinced that "The fulfilment brings a radical peace, the peace that the world cannot give."<sup>26</sup> Now we realize that this confession is not as simple and as it may have seemed.

A final and crucial question that this paper must address is the relationship between love and human freedom. If we accept human freedom as an indispensable characteristic, do we have to accept the evil or hatred that exists within the human horizon and that is opposite to the essence of love? This continuing but thorny question has plagued many intellectuals throughout history. In response to this question, our perspective is that, if we insist on classical science or its mistaken successor, scientific naturalism, that is continually looking for invariant laws or principles, then we will always meet a contradiction during this inquiry. However, there is a simple solution to this problem – that is, we accept contemporary evolutionary theory in a way that also embraces God's creation. Then we might be able to have a complete new horizon. As John Haught writes:

If God is infinite love, as our traditions maintain, we should acknowledge that love does not coerce. Love allows the beloved to be and become itself. This means that God grants to creation, life and human history room for spontaneity or indeterminacy and – in human persons – freedom to exist on their own and to be at least relatively self-determining.<sup>27</sup>

If this perspective is reasonable, it means that God's creation embraces human mistakes, failures, guilt, and even betrayal at the same time because, fundamentally speaking, the meaning of creation means to create something different

from the creator. If we accept that the universe is created by God, we have to accept a universe different from God. Accordingly, this universe, presently imperfect, should not be attributed to God's creative intention; rather, because of this imperfection, there are opportunities to become perfect in the future. Conversely, if God's creation does not include human freedom, can we say that this process of creation is the greatest creation?

We believe, following this context, that science and faith can combine together as a whole. Nowadays, we take scientific development for granted, but we are nevertheless unsatisfied or find this problematic. Why don't we then think again about the other possibility, which is the possibility of God's creation? If we think this way, perhaps we might have a new horizon that goes beyond problems and endless suffering. We should realize, as Lonergan argued, that without faith, without the eye of love, the world is too evil for God to be good, or for a good God to exist. But faith recognizes that God grants human beings their freedom, that he wills them to be persons and not just automata, that he calls them to the higher authenticity that overcomes evil with good.<sup>28</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Several points have been made in this paper. First, that scientific development is based on the human desire to know, and that the universe is intelligible. Based on this affirmation, scientists – like theologians – also need some kind of faith during their pursuit of truth, to discover intelligibility in the world and find a deeper understanding. Second, that scientism is not a genuine approach to science but instead a series of unwarranted assumptions about science that should be considered a form of blind faith. Third, that there are natural desires in us for the answers to

cognitional questions, ethical relations, and religious faith. I also argued that God always exists within our horizon, whether or not we are aware of this. Finally, it has been argued that our capacity of self-transcendence and the fulfillment of this capacity is falling in love with God, and this kind of love must embrace human freedom. These two are essentials in the process of creative evolution.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944) p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lonergan, "Isomorphism of Thomist and Scientific Thought," in F.E. Crowe and R. M. Doran (eds.), *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Vol. 4 – Collection* (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 133-141, at p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Toulmin, *Foresight and Understanding* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1957; London: Longman & Todd, reprinted, 1958), p. 252.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 737.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Polanyi and Harry Prosch, *Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions* (New York: Modern Library, 1994), p. 46.

<sup>9</sup> See Ian Barbour, *When Science meets Religion* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> John Haught, *Science and Faith: A New Introduction* (New York: Paulist Press, 2012), p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> Haught, *Science and Faith*, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> Haught, *Science and Faith*, p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1986), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Francis Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006), p. 161.

<sup>15</sup> Collins, *The Language of God* p. 165.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*. Reprinted from the sixth London edition (New York: A. L. Burt, Publisher, 1894), p. 505.

<sup>17</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 245-270.

<sup>18</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), pp. 83-84.

<sup>19</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 84.

<sup>20</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 106.

<sup>21</sup> Bernard Lonergan, "Insight: Preface to a Discussion," in F.E. Crowe and R. M. Doran (eds.), *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, Vol. 4 – *Collection* (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 147.

<sup>22</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1961), p. 134.

<sup>23</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 103.

<sup>24</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 109.

<sup>25</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 283.

<sup>26</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 105.

<sup>27</sup> Haught, *Science and Faith*, p. 46.

<sup>28</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 117.



3.

## **The Hermeneutical Perspective and Christian Humanity**

CRISTAL HUANG

### **Preface**

The modern study of hermeneutics may be said to begin in 1819, with the writings of Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher. He established hermeneutics as a general approach in order to bring to the world insight into the art of understanding. The present paper adopts Schleiermacher's approach – that is, the art of understanding in its both 'grammatical' and 'technical' interpretations – as the main method of studying the humanity of Jesus, the Christ. We also wish to discuss here how, by following this approach, human beings may be led to see 'sacrifice' as an understandable event. We will also ask: Can we use hermeneutics as a method to establish a dialogue between the Christian faith and the care of humanity, in order to approach the meaning of Christianity, humanity, and the meaning of life?

Hermeneutics provides us with an approach and a future model for an interdisciplinary method for the study of Christianity. Thus, this paper follows the basic forms of the art of explanation-understanding-interpretation. We plan to link the study of Christianity to the hermeneutical circle. Such an interpretive circle, open to the possibility of Christianity, adopts a circular route through human beings' views, to grasp the key features of "Christianity."

### **Beginning with Schleiermacher**

Because hermeneutics comes from Schleiermacher (1768-1834), we begin with his ideas, starting with his early

observations.<sup>1</sup> Yet the roots of hermeneutics are to be found in the work of (Karl Wilhelm) Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829). Schleiermacher met Schlegel in Berlin (1796-1802), along with other scholars influenced by Romanticism. Schlegel was the first person who applied the philosophy of philology in the humanities; see his *Philosophy of Philology* (1797). Schleiermacher, then, applied transcendental idealism to this philosophy of philology. He inherited from Kant and Fichte a neo-transcendental approach, and linked the hermeneutical tradition to Christian theology through classical scholarship on rhetoric and traditional philological studies.

Schleiermacher created the classical system of Romantic Hermeneutics. In 1819 he published the *Compendium of 1819*, in which he explained his ideas about hermeneutics. These ideas were also explained in the texts that he taught (from 1810 to 1834) in his courses on Christian theology at the University of Berlin. In 1828, Schleiermacher added material published later as *Marginal Notes*. His student Gottfried Lücke published Schleiermacher's *Hermeneutics and Criticism* in 1838. The text provides Schleiermacher's notes together with his students' notes. In 1958, H.-G. Gadamer's student Heinz Kimmerle published another edition of Schleiermacher's manuscripts, from which J. Duke and J. Forstmann compiled their edition of Schleiermacher's manuscripts, combining the notes of 1819 and 1829, together with an introduction. This 'new' publication deals with grammatical interpretation in the first part, and technical interpretation in the second, adding notes to paragraphs of thematic interest.

Schleiermacher's hermeneutics focuses clearly on his idea of grammatical and technical interpretation. Here questions arise: Can we follow Schleiermacher to approach human understanding in general? Can we have a "general

hermeneutic" for the study of Christianity? How do we apply both the grammatical and technical interpretations, generally? Inspired by these questions – in the face of the task of constructing a hermeneutics of Christian humanity – in the following pages we wish to focus on the interdisciplinary human and 'scientific' sciences.

Scholars of hermeneutics in different cultural regions are privileged to apply their understanding of 'objects' and 'marks' from the point of view of grammatical and technical interpretations. They are privileged to return to the self as a person who interprets, in order to use this understanding in his or her own region. This is a detour of the study of Christian humanity, which is a process and an *ars/techne* along with the question of cultural multiplicity and plurality in contemporary humanities. Schleiermacher's hermeneutics will allow us to focus on the detour of this dual level of interpretive action.

This paper wishes to deal with this method in local evangelization and in philosophical counseling in relation to the sustaining issue of the search for mission and values. We begin with Schleiermacher, and go through other scholars' ideas in the same terms. This method will point to the story of Jesus' sacrifice, for interpreting examples in human beings' inward and outward lived-experience. We suggest that we read related stories back to our original understanding of the love of Jesus Christ. Here and now, in the contemporary Asian cultural context, we predict that this model will work to prove hermeneutic-grammatical and hermeneutic-technical practices as understanding the local style of evangelization there. The model may help us to understand that Jesus has also same human nature, confirming the value of sacrificing the self to help others. This reflects a kind of humanity of Christianity, that enables us to engage Schleiermacher's grammatical-technical herme-

neutics, to have a total illustration of evangelization in local cultural contexts.

As for the question of language, Thomas Reynold holds that Schleiermacher has a special value in researching religion. He agrees with this dialectical pluralism, suggesting – in his comments on the manuscripts of Schleiermacher – that “Christianity has created language. From its very beginning it has been a potentiating linguistic spirit, and it still is.”<sup>2</sup>

Schleiermacher confirmed the function of speech. He thinks that speaking focuses on both the totality of language and the thought of the speaker, and grammatical and technical interpretations are both dialectical and rhetorical. Only within the range of language can we understand human activities. With language and culture together, we are able to make our minds work effectively. This enabling of understanding is made possible from within human beings, and from within the existential conditions being enabled; “understanding a speech always involves two moments: to understand what is said in the context of the language with its possibilities, and to understand it as a fact in the thinking of the speaker.”<sup>3</sup>

In *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, Schleiermacher argues that, through articulation, we present thoughts. Then articulation becomes an object of hermeneutics, a propos the practice of presentation.<sup>4</sup> In the practice of presentation, beginning with the stage of learning and mimesis, we are no longer figures who simply imitate, but also present our activities. At later times, we make use of the relation between element and language, which indicates that language has long been there, in a deep position within the elements. But then it goes deeper and deeper, and is not able to be found out and studied. (As language is purified and formalized, it become more

individualized, and so can be approached.<sup>5</sup>) Professor Hong Handing has said that this is also relevant to French linguists' ideas on *la langue* and *la parole*.<sup>6</sup>

We can have a better hermeneutical understanding through regional and local studies of the meaning of Christianity. Combining the grammatical and technical interpretations, and applying them to the understanding of regional contexts, we can then apply the understanding of regional contexts to the interpretation of Christianity and to human understanding in general. But we may also transform local language and other semiological applications under the approach of this specific cultural epoch of our operation and linguistic presentation, when interpretation turns to be the presentation of the art of horizontalizing hermeneutics.

**The Circle of the Hermeneutical Method: Understanding and Identity between the Beginning and End of the Meaning of Life**

When Jesus, the Christ, is seen as human being, human beings are provided with a kind of understanding of the mystery of God which may, in turn, help them to approach the existence and the presence of God. When we are presented with an object, we tend to grasp the feeling of self-experience, and transform our self-experience into an awareness of the present and of the object transcendently, thus opening hermeneutics to and for our understanding of the Christ. Such a process is open to the possibility of thinking of and inquiring into the mystery of Christ itself, as a kind of understanding that human beings may have immediately.

Now, we need to ask whether we can go through the possibility of understanding human suffering and joyfulness – as a kind of logos or Tao, be it understandable or

not – through multiple hermeneutical practices, for an understanding of Christ, but also whether the beginning and the end of life are already Christian matters. This is the question of the meaning of life. Actually it is there already, the beginning and the ending. If hermeneutics is a human practice, then in every second and, indeed, every 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of a second, we cannot live without ‘understanding.’ This Christian-hermeneutical method of understanding God, that is a method of ‘searching’ into all the humanistic and Christian studies, is found in all human activities. We find Christianity in humanity.

For human beings, the most difficult part is not death, but to see all the past happinesses and memories that can be forgotten. Christ, then, shares that very human existence, that includes the human insistence on meaning, when he faces death; all human beings deal with ‘eternity’ imprinted into them. Because Christ chooses death, he chooses to sacrifice, but he also chooses the prearrangement of the process, in order to show that he, as fully human, understands his Father's will and plan.

In understanding, we go through the construction of grammatical and technical interpretations in the style of God, marking those experiences in which we live with God as real feelings of living. Here, we can see Heidegger's model of *Da-sein* as offering the best interpretation. Then, using Gadamer's notion of the human scientific dimension as dealing with *Bildung*, *sensus communis*, judgment, and taste, we are able to build on our understanding of our lived experience, and thus understand the fusion of horizons. For Paul Ricoeur, the emplotment of events furthers our understanding of the death of body and of human existence as a mystery of Christianity.<sup>7</sup> All these hermeneutical constructions are set up by going through human practices – as understanding and as interpretation. If we understand

what sacrifice is, then we can understand that the expression of God and the expression of humanity are different. Philosophy may translate this evangelization into the worldness of the world, before belief is made possible, translating and understanding human beings in an evangelical method that is new. As God always does, God chooses to have human beings understand through His own existence, with the proof of flesh with beginning and end. This intentional expression shows to the world the core of the Christian faith. All human beings, in their daily activities, may grasp the expression of the divine intention. The Christian religion provides people with the Light, offering faith to all. Thus, via a hermeneutical approach, we come to the meaning of miracle. Hence we have the simple possibility of understanding and the simple possibility of humanity's pure existence with the possibility of the union between God and all Christians via the change of a body.

### **To Observe the Future from a Human Perspective**

So far we have been trying to demonstrate that all 'learning' of theories is for improving 'understanding.' We 'understand' and 'express' – we have lived experiences – in order to 'understand' better about Christ. We understand Him in and through the entirety of the life-world in which we achieve an understanding of our own being given – which leads to the new possibility of creation. The eternal Him is understood by human beings, but He is not human. He had a human body, but now he is simply Him. This is the process: Hermeneutics follows from understanding the parts of the Him-process, one stage after another, from the past up to the future; the future is part of the Him-process. Hermeneutics probes the capacity of the person, in its understanding in its entirety, so that we arrive, at our very construction of Christianity. God goes through life and

death and, thus, through will and doubt. We human beings pass through all of these, too. Through all of the events and narratives about God, through the emplotment of the limited lives of human beings, we come to understand our human limits. Can we then conclude that Christianity is that which lies between the life and death of Christ? This paper argues that the hermeneutical circle and human development are understood, in grammatical and technical terms, to combine in order to manifest a real and true philosophy – to give the meaning of logos<sup>8</sup> – and as a way of ‘saying’ Tao, of telling, and as an expression of logos.

As such, this paper proposes that we adopt a hermeneutical perspective to discuss Jesus, the Christ – the events in His life, but also of Christianity – in order to understand Him. Our understanding of humanity is based on our understanding of Him and, as he goes through the process of being the Father, we will also understand Him in the process. Hermeneutics will help us to understand Jesus as God, but also to understand ourselves. As we see ourselves through our Christian humanity, as we see ourselves through being human, we see our lives with Tao or logos. The logos enables us to see that God wishes human beings to understand Him.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have argued that to be a human being requires human understanding, and that this understanding occurs in all human practices in a hermeneutical ‘openness.’ Through this openness, we are able to manifest everything to philosophizing. All human practices reflect our understanding of God. But, first of all, we need to understand our own understanding. Through and in the process of life formation and death, we are able to come to understand that we are with Him; with His help and through His design, we

try to understand all this in the process of living our lived-experience.

The hermeneutical perspective helps human beings to understand that human existence has the meaning of existence within themselves, but also how Christ transforms – or, better, sacrifices – Himself for us. Christian humanity means that we always need and are already in the process of ‘understanding.’ Within this, we – as human beings – are able to continue to ‘understand.’

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, *The Hermeneutics Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Reynolds, “Reconsidering Schleiermacher and the Problem of Religious Diversity: Toward a Dialectical Pluralism” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 73, no. 1 (2005): 151-181, p. 168. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4139881> (accessed May 28, 2014). See also Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 49-50.

<sup>3</sup> *The Hermeneutics Reader*, op. cit. pp. 74-75.

<sup>4</sup> Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Hong Handing [洪漢鼎], ed., *詮釋學經典文選 [Understanding and Interpretation: Anthology of Classical Hermeneutics]* (Beijing: Oriental Press, 2001 / Taiwan Laurel Books, 2002), p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> These two words can be found in Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 31-51.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1926), tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), pp. 55-58.



4.

## **A Systemic-Hermeneutical Ground- Conception of Genetic and Developmental Psychology\***

JING-JONG LUH

Since the construction of scientific psychology by Freudian psychoanalysis on the one hand and behaviorism on the other, one can assert that there are no further significant and crucial developments in the philosophy of psychology. The fundamental problem lies not only within the field of psychology, but also in the competition or conflict between science and philosophy since the beginning of the modern era. The triumph and domination of modern science in the cultural world of mankind has meant either that philosophy, as mere *ancilla scientiae*, works like logicism, epistemology and the philosophy of science, or that it is degraded by the empirical sciences into mere speculation, such as metaphysics, and has no right to exist. But psychology, either as a discipline of the human sciences or as a theory about humanity as a whole, will find its foundation or meta-theory in philosophy. Although in the contemporary intellectual ethos, traditional philosophy seems to have lost its function as meta-physics or meta-science, an emerging hermeneutics, as a new way of thinking between science and philosophy, might revive that role of philosophy. Hermeneutic philosophy, for example in Heidegger's *Dasein*-analysis (especially in his concept of the circle of understanding) and, thus, Gadamer's hermeneutic circle and its transformation to *arc herméneutique* by Ricoeur, reveals understanding as a process, which, on the one hand, starts from the unconscious, preconscious and subconscious prestructure, moves through the consciousness of otherness,

and then reflects back to selfhood and shapes the self-consciousness. On the other hand, underpinning on such an understanding, its meaning-unfolding, value-attaining and goal-realizing action, can affect applicatively both the private, psychological and existential life of individuals, as well as the social, cultural and religious life of the whole community. This otherness- and self-understanding of the concrete subjectivity or the person in context is, in fact, a potential mediation among psychoanalysis, subjectivity-theory (such as transcendental phenomenology), and behaviorism. This paper shall, first, outline the fundamental concept of systemic hermeneutics; then, draft some basic ideas of a systemic-hermeneutic philosophy of psychology, particularly to emphasize the idea of the human as a person in world-contexts, and; finally, adumbrate a life-span development-psychology of the person in context as the process of the understanding of language.

### **The Fundamental Concept of Systemic Hermeneutics**

What does systemic hermeneutics mean? In contrast with the idea of system or systematic thinking – which attempts, from an original, ultimate or absolute principle as *arche* (ἀρχή) or foundation of all, to deduce rational or even logical all these otherness – Systemics or systemic thinking substantiates the Idea of the system itself as an inter-relation and -action of the wholeness itself and of its particulars. Thus, this way of thinking is concerned with the constitutional correlational, interactive, and even dialectical and hermeneutical relationships between whole and individuals, between individual and individual, between context and elements, and between the system or its element and its environment. Systemic hermeneutics arises from the meta-theoretical reflection and holistic representation of contemporary hermeneutical ways of thinking.<sup>1</sup> There are, of

course, various ways and means for such reflection and representation. And among the differential polar of hermeneutic theories, Heidegger, Gadamer, Habermas, Ricoeur and Derrida – if deconstructive thinking appears also as one of the hermeneutical conflicts – are only the most representative. But if hermeneutics signifies not only a contemporary philosophical phenomenon but also one of the oldest intellectual movements, then the origin or genesis of its term can certainly unveil something authentic or essential. In fact, the etymological origin of hermeneutics – *hermeneuein* – signals unique thinking activity. The first syllable of the Greek word, “her” originates from the word root “eiro” (εἶρω), which means rowing or speaking. The third one “neu” comes from the root word “noeo” (νοέω), which implies perceiving or thinking. The syllable between the first and third syllables, the second syllable “me” stems from “menyo” (μενύω), unclosing the concealment or exposing the secret. Consequently, putting the three elements together, *hermeneuein* means: speaking discloses thinking.<sup>2</sup> Here are implied, then, not only the three systemic-hermeneutic ground presuppositions – the linguisticity or textuality (εἶρω), the historicity or the contextuality (μενύω), and the sense or subject-matter (νοέω) –, but also the basic potential of a hermeneutic philosophy of psychology and counseling. (The inward spirit of humanity is expressed only by external language of mankind.) Therefore, the implication of this word can be indicated as following: speaking displays feeling or thinking as sense or meaning. This could be analyzed in the following fundamental hermeneutical processes: first, the speaker or writer expresses his mental ideas through linguistic media; second, the listener and the reader attempt to decrypt or interpret the mental sense from the expressed linguistic substrate; third, this interpretation can happen

only in one's own linguistic medium, i.e., that of the listeners or readers, and this is a process of translation of the previous language in the final stage. Expression, interpretation, and translation are not only the implied senses of *hermeneuein* but also its pragmatic applied meanings.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, *hermeneuein* includes not only the activity of the revealing of thought through language, but also its concealment, because there is no perfect identity or analogical correspondence between linguistic expression and expressing thoughts – and what interpretation and translation could provide is even less. Thence *hermeneuein* induces three potential approaches for the development of hermeneutics as a theory of understanding and interpretation. For example, from 'expression,' is the text-centric approach to unfold; from 'interpretation,' we have the author-centric approach; and from 'translation,' is the reader-centric approach – insofar as the overall sense of *hermeneuein* can be summed up in language-understanding. The linguistic interpretation of the language of the expressed meaning or idea is, then, a translation. The expressing, interpreting, and translating of *hermeneuein* are not only the joint activity of understanding and speaking, but also mutual fusion of understanding through language and understanding of language. That is why, from the beginning, *hermeneuein* implies a dynamic and processual relationship of thinking and speaking – to coin the Stoic or Augustinian term, a relationship between *logos endiathetos* (λογός ἐνδιάθετος, *dianoia* – διάνοια) and *logos prophorikos* (λογός προφορικός, *hermeneia* – ερμηνεία).<sup>4</sup> Thinking and speaking are always activities about something. As a result, the hermeneutic event is usually an interrelating interaction between thought, speech, and their object or being, thing, or meaning. The linguistic expressions of thought, informing or communicating from the communicator, and the

correspondence of information with being or thing, show up as the first problem level of communicative truth; whether the content received and understood by the information-receiver or communicant corresponds to the information from the informant or communicator; this indicates the second problem level of communicative truth. On the other hand, since the real semantics or even pragmatics of *hermeneuein* unite the activities of expressing, interpreting, and translating, this implies the basic relationship of the three basic hermeneutical elements – which are the process of understanding as an understanding of language or text, the understanding agent as a person in context, and understanding media, i.e., language and text as a medium or as the synthesis of matter and spirit – , develops an interactive relationship of author, text and reader, and presents the prototype model of reading. The original *hermeneuein* – that speaking reveals thinking – means, firstly, that the linguistic utterance of the mental inside a first person as the speaker or even the author, brings about his idea about a thing expressed through the medium of language, and this becomes a text. On the other hand, the first person as a speaker, normally for the sake of communication, speaks to another person, who is the listener or the reader, about the speaker's thought through language due to the ongoing communication, and this listener or reader will understand or interpret the linguistic entity expressed or text, in terms of the idea of speaker and author. Since *hermeneuein* includes an interactive relationship of expressing, interpreting, and translating, the utterance of the speaker, then, has not only his thought expressed, but also interpreted, which is focusing on the 'To-Understanding' of the listener, in his language. The language may, for example, filter or select linguistically through the language game for the communication of the

thought, and it also involves itself with the emergence and maintenance of the living-world's element to promote the potential of the sense and the meaning/growth of thought. In addition, since a human person exists as a uniting organism of thinking and speaking, of will and emotions, of mind and body in relationship-context, this means that the interpretation of listener or reader indicates a holistic translation – that is, he interprets those expressed thoughts (which is the matter of the language of the speaker or the author) through his own language.

Therefore, the three hermeneutic-ontological ground presuppositions are already implied in the three roots of *hermeneuein*. First, as compared with traditional philosophy (which is based on rational activity and focuses on intellectual process), the εἶρω of hermeneutic philosophy refers to the linguistic nature or the linguisticity of human understanding, because the linguistic event stands for the main or core process of *hermeneuein*. Without linguistic events in expressing, interpreting, and translating, there is no hermeneutical process. The hermeneutical phenomenon or experience always takes place in the language from which the text was formed, thus textuality is also anticipated. Second, in contrast to the idea of Western philosophy or φιλέω as rational love of abstract universality, the hermeneutic μενύω indexes the historicity of language-understanding. Because the revealing of speaking and articulating manifests the fleshing-out process of language, which takes place only in the historical background and cultural context of the language itself, this revealing then presupposes the concealed or the concealment as the context of unconcealing, and therefore the contextuality. Third, as compared to the philosophical σοφία, which emphasizes both theoretically and practically the noetic and intellectual dimension, the hermeneutic νοέω, which discloses the 'to-

understand' through language, refers to the matter-of-factness (Sachlichkeit). For what the language discloses is not only the philosophical, rational discourse, but also the sense- and meaning-system, which includes the sensual feelings or emotions, the mental thoughts and notions and the volitional will and intentions holistically – and this involves relationality. Therefore, in comparison to rationality-foundationalism – the paradigm of monism or reductionism in traditional Western philosophy – hermeneutic philosophizing includes thinking, speaking, and being as integrated in the understanding-system, in which the person in context, the language as a medium of material and spirit, and the language- or text-understanding, interact in the entire understanding-event, and it presupposes contextuality, linguisticity, and matter-of-factness ontologically. In this sense, the hermeneutic philosophy understands the understanding man as a person in a context that has always understood and further understands the otherness, self-awareness and their relationship, mankind, worldliness, and their correlated origin or their ground by language, which is the medium of matter and spirit. The hermeneutic person in a context is a holistic humanity, who is and will be a systemic unity not only of body and spirit, of mind and feeling, of intellect or reason, and motivation or will, but also of understanding, speaking, and being.

As for the hermeneutic philosophizing and understanding which, as truth-events, relation-interaction, and systemic, includes the comprehension of language and text, the person in context and the language or the text as a synthesis of matter and spirit, and thus is more original than the correspondence theory of truth from a monistic standpoint – than the epistemological dualist's subject-object framework in which subjectivity is based on rationality, and being as its object is oriented to identity. And even in the

horizon of practical philosophy, contemporary philosophical hermeneutics can offer, for example, a proto-model of communication, such as Habermas' theory, which not only practices hermeneutic criticism on the pre-structure of understanding, but also searches for a consensus of common action in the intersubjective relationship. In the proto-model of dialog such as that of Gadamer, the practical philosophizing of hermeneutic application is to be expected, and the general law of nature or moral norm is concretized in individual-personal and interpersonal situations and contexts, so that truth will become wisdom for the in-the-world-living-being. In the proto model of reading, such as that of Ricoeur, even personal, social and cultural actions can be understood as a text, and hermeneutics can refer to any meaningful activity and behavior including the psychological and the religious. As a result, systemic-hermeneutic philosophizing is a potential way of thinking applicable to all spheres of life and to the cultural dimension of humanity.

Preliminary Conclusion: In relation to traditional philosophy, which Reason searches for wisdom, hermeneutics tries first and foremost to understand meaning and matter through language. Moreover, the understanding is happening in the being- and living-movement of the holistic person, of which that process simultaneously involves physical and spiritual dimensions, including any faculty of the holistic human being, such as desire, feeling, imagination, judgment, understanding, reason, will, spirituality, etc., and thus their interest and value such as happiness, emotional life, aesthetic sense, purpose in life, wisdom, freedom, holiness, etc. Because all of these are or could be hermeneutically understood in language, the language as medium of matter and spirit, and the person in context, and language- and text-understanding also mean the holistic

contextuality of personality, the multidimensionality of linguisticity, and the systemic truth-event of the understanding-process. Thus, hermeneutics is systemic.

The anthropology and psychology of hermeneutics is, then, systemic: the human being exists in context; this manifests itself again in its being-events in the material representation of its own spirit or inner-self primarily by language and by its understanding of the otherness or its language through interpretation or translation. The sense-understanding and value-realizing of the selfhood and otherness, and their existence in the context of life, is the subject matter, *telos*, or even truth-event of understanding. In other words, the fundamental life-event of human existence is a hermeneutic event. This means expressing his own mental and spiritual sense to otherness through his own language, the understanding of otherness, and the meaning of their sense and value for oneself and others through their language, and the realization of life-meaning, value and, thus, goal, but in a common language with the otherness in life-coexistence. The main question of a human being for his life-existence is, then, in the sense of his spirit-representing, in the value of this sense-understanding and in the meaning- or value-unfolding in life-context, which traditionally philosophy used to be called the problem of human life. Here, the first task will be to, in a spatial and temporal dimension as principal axis, conceptualize the foundation of existence-sense, life-value and the ultimate goal of human being as a person in the spatially-temporal, natural and cultural context for the basic categories of systemic-hermeneutic philosophical counseling.

**Basic Approaches: The Theoretical Concept of a Systemic-Hermeneutic Philosophy of Psychology: The Dimension of the Human Person in the Multi-World-Context**

Accordingly, in short, the so-called systemic-hermeneutic philosophy is a holistic worldview with a systemic way of thinking: the three ground-presuppositions of hermeneutics (historicity and contextuality, linguistic or textuality, and matter-of-factness or meaningfulness), the three ground-elements (he who understands or interprets as a person in context, the substrate of understanding – i.e., language or text as a medium of matter and spirit, and the understanding process as language- or text-understanding), and the three proto-models (dialogue with communication and discourse, reading both in personal and public style, and translation including oral and writing) are all in the interrelation and interaction of wholeness and the individual, of individual and individual, and of system and context. Well, the unveiling of the fore-structure of human existence can not only be realized through Freud's psychoanalysis or Jung's analytical psychology on the individual or collective unconscious, but can also be implemented by the theory of the person in context and the proto-model of reading in systemic hermeneutics. The application of language-understanding is to be highlighted in the theory of language as a medium of matter and spirit, and the proto-model of translation. Overall, the integration model of classical readings can be offered at most as a systemic-hermeneutic way for philosophical counseling in the modern and post-modern problem-complex of mankind. Here are the three ground-elements of systemic hermeneutics to be recognized as the core, pervading the three ground-presuppositions and proto-models, to project the basic concept of philosophy of psychology as a basic theory

for a systemic-hermeneutic oriented philosophical counseling. As indicated above, since the original ground-presupposition of contemporary hermeneutical philosophy can be traced to Heidegger's hermeneutic of historicity of human existence and pre-structure of understanding, and since the starting point of psychological philosophy is the human spirit or the soul, systemic hermeneutics can start from the person in context to unveil his contextual pre-structure and, further, to illuminate from this where the human understanding is conceived as the language-understanding, to discover their basic models, to show the basic types of language as a medium of matter and spirit, and finally to reveal the human language-understanding as a potential of systemic-hermeneutic oriented philosophical counseling. Springing from Heidegger's analysis of human existence as in-the-world-being, hermeneutic philosophy begins with a general tendency against modern western philosophy, which bases its naïve ground-presupposition on post-Enlightenment rational humanity, and presupposes radically the finiteness of human existence as the origin of hermeneutic philosophizing, in order to rethink humanity and even Being. This not only recognizes the underlying ontological finitude of human existence – in this case, Heidegger has paradoxically invented the term fundamental-ontology – but also enables philosophy to deal with the complex problem of modernity (for example, the collective disease of modern civilization, such as psychological and mental disorders) as what Jung had revealed and diagnosed as the consequence of the rationality-centrism of the modern age. This ontological ground-presupposition of hermeneutic philosophizing is to be universalized as a human person in context: the characteristics of the human person lie not only in its holistic nature of the trinity of body, soul, and spirit, but also in his way of being in the world,

just as in-the-world-being. And Heidegger's insight is that the worldliness is not only spatial but also temporal, which is why his famous book is entitled *Being and Time* – which seeks to emanate from the ontological art of human being the temporality of his existence, in order to discern the relationship between time and being, and then to explore Being from time. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer further unfolds this temporality of the worldliness of human existence especially regarding historicity, and specifies it in the concept of effective history. From the genesis and development of the being-mode of human existence, one can describe its condition of existence or its dimension as “context”. This genesis- and development-history of the person in context is the main thinking-way of a systemic-hermeneutic philosophy of psychology. Heidegger elicited further the pre-structure of understanding – more accurately, “fore-having”, “fore-sight” and “fore-conception” – which forms the basic theory of hermeneutic philosophy, i.e., the hermeneutic circle.<sup>5</sup> Gadamer then develops from the horizon of culture, the theory of pre-judgments, the tradition as a delivery process, the Classical, and language itself as a pre-structure.<sup>6</sup> Finally, Habermas takes his starting point from the social sciences and transforms the problem of the historicity into sociality.<sup>7</sup> Worldliness, historicity, or sociality, etc., participate in the contextuality that must be presupposed in philosophizing about language- and text-understanding. History stems from cultural life or the event of the inter-relation and -action of thinking, being, language, and action in the dialectics of unconcealment and concealment. Thus all those theories are actually descended from Heidegger’s worldliness and can be projected in the spatial dimension into following multi-world contexts as a systemic framework. It is precisely because the human being exists or lives in such contexts in which each has also relevant

meaning, value, and purpose of life respectively, that it can also reactivate the philosophical traditions which have reflected such contexts of the human person and can offer corresponding approaches as paradigm for philosophical counseling.

Thus, one can consider the contextuality of the human world under two macro-dimensions:

**From the Context of Hermeneutic Philosophy there can be a Typology for the World and the Humanity existing there, as follows:**

*Life-World (WI) and the Human Person in Interpersonal Relationships*

The life-world, a term that Husserl coined and on which Habermas' theory is based, and indeed as the context or worldliness or complex of the handiness of existence, is the hermeneutical process as not only a primordial ontic movement of human being but also a holistic process of language understanding.<sup>8</sup> In this world-context, human understanding is happening in the life-language, in the paradigm of communication and dialogue as the basic model, because the fundamental activity of the existence of the human person in the life-world-context relates to the interpersonal relationships among people, as both Husserl and Habermas emphasized. This is intersubjectivity.<sup>9</sup> But due to the holistic nature of the body, soul, and mind of the human person, the interpersonal relationship cannot be limited in intersubjectivity. This has the result that the being-activities of the person in the life-world context, include the existential vital needs of the body, the interpersonal relationship of the soul, and the metaphysical or transcendental infinity-reference of the spirit, so that Husserl's problems between the transcendental ego and the

body and between bodies, and Husserl's and Habermas' problem with the spiritual and religious dimension, can be gone over. The meaning, value, and purpose of the life-existence of the person in the life-world context are closely connected with interpersonality. Hermeneutically, if the intersubjective communication and interpersonal dialogue of mankind in the everyday life-world does not function in order and causes poor interpersonal relationships, this will lead to a vicious circle, which will then raise the problem of the meaning, value, and goal of life. Confucian Ethics in Chinese tradition and philosophy, especially its family-centric social ethics, stemming from the blood-relationship or consanguineous sociality of humanity, offers a paradigm for philosophical counseling in this context.

*Science World (WII) and Alienation and Reification of People*

Human language comprehension is alienated from the knowledge-construction of modern science and its expansion into applied technology, industrialization, and production, in business, management, and marketing, and in principle with the mono-causal manipulation of the language paradigm and scientific methodology, nature, and the world – and, in general, degraded to the presence-and-Ge-Stellt.<sup>10</sup> Through its methodology, nature, things, and the world are abstracted from the life-world and objectified. Then, by using measuring technology and mathematical calculations, they are reduced to a mechanistic view of the world, the universal validity of causality-metaphysics, and integrative explanation-model of the mathematical and experimental structure, and, thus, are led to a utilitarian teleological instrumental rationality, cybernetics, and industrialization. After this, they are exploited into industrial products which are further materialized by the capitalist into the consumer economy as commodity-

fetishism. This explanation – prediction/ controlling/ manufacturing/ marketing, as a distorted way of understanding – is just the model formed by the Holy Alliance of scientism, Machiavellianism, and capitalism, in which language can be quantified, operated, and instrumentalized, and then become the opium for the satisfaction of scientific explanation, industrialization and commercialization, which are in control of and dominate nature, world, and life world. The problem of modernity is serious because, from the context-dimension that forms scientific knowledge, political power, and capitalism, a distorted science world is coming to dominate and oppress the life world of humanity in the modern state, industry, and society.<sup>11</sup> Since, on the one hand, the language of modern natural science is based on mathematical logic, and has mechanistic materialism as its metaphysics and basic principle for its ideology – i.e., with the logical law of identity and contradiction, and with the natural law of natural uniformity and causality – it will bring about a ‘monotonicity’ with a unidirectional thinking-way, i.e., the so-called One-Dimensional Man.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, such a language presupposes observable facts and descriptive sensory experience as the only criterion of truth, so that the people in the social context of modern science, industry and capital will be alienated by power or capital as a dominated object, and even materialized as tools or materials of power and capital (often euphemistically described as “human resources”), or, as in Jung’s insight, the modern unbalanced person balanced between rationality and irrationality. Therefore, there is for this occupation of the life-world by the science-world and this excessive imbalance, an emergency of a contrasting world, in which other possibilities corresponding to this modern situation shall be given. Jung had developed the analytical psychology or that psychological hermeneutics, while Habermas

proposed value-differentiation and diverse forms of rationality – namely the issue of truth, justice and taste – , and even Gadamer had evinced from the spirit, values, etc., the balance of the natural world. In general, these contrasts with a situation in balance point to the spiritual and cultural world context.

*Spirit-Culture-World (WIII) and the Human Person in  
Cultivation [Bildung]*

Human language-understanding activities of the primordial life-world have taken place, and it always transpires, in the genesis and development of culture, some kind of spirit-culture-world as the element-context or tradition-substance for the heritage of the life-world. This language understanding of a cultural deep structure (*Gebilde*) has text (whether oral, written, or art, rituals, etc.) as its main-type – under which the cross-temporal and cross-cultural classic texts represent the paradigm. This leads to the traditional text-reading model, especially the classics-study pattern and intercultural text translation pattern. From the emergence of human culture, there has always been a dimension of spirit-culture; as archaeological discoveries have shown, traces of religious or artistic artefacts always remain. Today's imbalances of a materialistic civilization caused by a scientific world-view could achieve a balance through the development of spirit-culture. Therefore, even the late Husserl had noticed this crisis of western civilization and turned his attention to the idea of spirit.<sup>13</sup> Today, scientific knowledge, political society, and the macro-economy in modernity are issues involving public space. (Although the concept of 'public affairs' is derived from the cultures of the classical Greek city-states, it spread all over the world through the modernization of non-Western culture, and with problem-complex of modernity.) Therefore,

the promoting and deepening of spirit-culture-world in modern society and civilization will be combined with public consciousness and public affairs, especially those involving the public discourse of knowledge, allocation of resources, and political rights, particularly in relation to education and cultural policy issues, as well as in relation to the cultural responsibility of industrial and commercial enterprises. Compared with Herbert Marcuse's advocating for passive resistance against consumer culture or a positive liberation of original desire,<sup>14</sup> the hermeneutical point of view holds that the sublimation of the human person through spirit-culture is another way out. If so, the human person in the context of spirit-culture-world is, then, he who participates in cultural or intercultural cultivation: the idea of cultivation shall both be the subject of the spirit-culture-world and also that which is realizable in the public domain – which means that, whether it be so-called compulsory education, social education, or cultural education in modern civilization, all are in the implement-field of cultivation. The meaning, value, and purpose of spiritual life in that cultivation of the person in the spirit-culture-world can sublimate the individual and interpersonal spirits within their cultural context, and even facilitate intercultural exchanges and intermediation. In philosophizing about *Bildung* in German idealism and hermeneutic philosophy, it can provide a relevant paradigm for philosophical counseling in this context.

**From the perspective of the Human Being as a Person existing, living and acting in context, because the process of understanding is always in the element of language as a medium between matter and spirit, and so the contextuality of the human person in language-understanding is to be distinguished, as follows:**

*Nature-World Context (C1) and the Human Person in the Natural Environment*

The natural environment in which mankind exists and lives is the natural-world context of the process of understanding. This is also an object of alienation from nature through scientific knowledge, technological methodologies, industrialization, and cybernetics, which are tempted by the material and misuse it. Therefore, in addition to the very survival of the human species through the use of the natural environment (i.e., so-called Confucian Welfare 厚生), the human person should be aware of her existence in the context of the natural world, and avoid the objectification and domination of it. Otherwise, this may not only lead to environmental pollution and catastrophes threatening the survival of mankind, but will also result in physical and mental disorders in human beings, because of the imbalance between them and nature. According to Chinese Taoist philosophy, human beings are, from their origin, living-being(s) in a natural context, for the reason that, synergism or mutual generation and symbiosis or coexistence between human beings and all beings in the natural world, as well as the respectful love and careful obedience to the universal Way or Dao, and the harmony of heaven, earth and human being, are the meaning, value, and purpose of the human person in the natural world context. For example, the concept of a life regimen or maintaining health (養生) in Asian medicine can refer back to such an

idea. In this respect, the global environmental problem is also a hermeneutical task: people should seek to counteract global warming so that the different ways of life of other cultures of the world can be understood cross-culturally, in which the natural environment and human culture exist symbiotically.<sup>15</sup>

*The Cultural World Context (C2) and the Human Person in Classical or Humanistic Culture*

Although this context comes out of the life-world (i.e., human life in the context of the natural world), what makes the life of human beings different from other creatures is its culture – that the human spirit can comprehend, reflect, and speculate about nature, humanity itself and its origin, and also transcend, while integrating both nature and humanity in the higher spirit, and so labour, model, and transform them into culture.<sup>16</sup> This can be, on the one hand, classified according to the genesis and development of the individual and collective spirits into two sub-dimensions. The inner spirit of the human individual as the (sub-) dimension of the subjective spirit can be divided into two contexts, the subjective consciousness and the unconscious, and again these are in two sub-contexts, the individual and collective unconscious or so-called cultural archetype.<sup>17</sup> To draw on Hegel's philosophical terminology, this is the dimension of subjective spirit. The human collective spirit processes the natural world, human beings themselves, and their transcendent and integrating dimensions, and develops the entire cultural context, which can be divided into the diachronic historical context, the interpersonal social context, language as media-context of the natural world, the spiritual culture-world, and even religion – a dimension that transcends and integrates these worlds while presenting this synthesis in cultural activities, experiences, phenomena, and

outputs. In Hegel's philosophical terms, this is the dimension of objective spirit. Hegel had philosophized about this from the late Jena period onward, where religion is in the dimension of the absolute spirit; this will be treated separately in the following point.<sup>18</sup> Admittedly, since Freud, the main domain of psychoanalysis is to deal with the subjective sub(un)conscious sub-dimension; of course, there is also, in Jung's analytical psychology, the collective unconscious sub-dimension. Contemporary cognitive psychology then comes back to the problem of consciousness, especially to research on the cognitive processing of mental activities. However, since systemic hermeneutics gives more attention to the holisticity of the human person in its physical, mental, and spiritual unity, and its ontological meaning as living existence in the cultural context, by associating with the spirit-culture-world (WIII) dimension, the human subjective spirit should sublimate itself through the humanistic or classical cultivation of the objective spirit, whether it be through ethical-moral, aesthetic-artistic, philosophical or religious-spiritual cultivation.

For example, the Way of the three cardinal guides and eight main steps in the traditional Confucian *Great Learning* [大學] about the Way, or Neo-Confucianism's advocating for the way of virtues in mind and positive action (or inside the saint; outside the king [內聖外王]), seizes the moral as the higher ground, and claims that human beings can develop from the self-cultivation of moral subjectivity to the social-political cultivation of the ethical system. The emerging and development of German Aesthetics had shown the evolving process of aesthetic consciousness in the cultivation of philosophy, art, and so on. Gadamer's advocacy for cultivation through classics-reading can be verified by experiences from classic philosophical and theological hermeneutic practices and education. The humanistic cultivation of

philosophical classics especially can serve as an original paradigm for philosophical counseling. If the philosophical classics can be catalogued, then either an analytical or comprehensive (or synthetic), innovative-inspiring or heritage-integrated, critical-reflection type or system constructed type, etc., can be developed into different types of philosophical counseling.

*The World Context of Absolute Spirit (C3) and the Human Person in Ultimate or Religious Concern:*

The human spirit will subconsciously or intentionally correlate and integrate the natural world-context and the cultural world-context into a dimension of the pure spiritual world or the world-context of absolute spirit. This dimension can ideally reveal the nature of spiritual activity which, on the one hand, extrapolates from the inside out of itself and opens outwards to the other, and then returns from this, back to itself. On the other hand, this activity should neither be observed from the perspective of the subjective spirit and be considered only as a reflection of self-consciousness, nor be put in the context of objective spirit and be treated as self-alienation and a re-integration of the normal social-historical-linguistic-and cultural life-community. The spirit opens to the outside, alienates to otherness, and returns to itself: This is the dialectical trait of the spirit process, which transcends itself to otherness and integrates this to higher unity (i.e., creatively forms the differentiation of selfness and the accommodativeness from the synthesizing of otherness).

This often exists in world-views and in religion as having the most breadth and deepest dimension of the culture world – that it can transcend differences of individual cultural life-community while consolidating these in itself. That is, on the one hand, it comprehends the

contradictory of discrepancy; on the other hand, it mediates the oppositions into harmony and enriches itself towards perfectibility. This is why different cultural life-communities can share the same religious belief-system or worldview, while having a differentiation in form and content with each other. Using Hegel's concepts, this can be described as a dimension of absolute spirit – though, of course, according to Hegel's original intention, this involves art, religion, and philosophy. Universal or intercultural systems of religion concern issues about life and death, suffering and the hereafter etc., – the so-called ultimate concerns of human beings. These kinds of ultimate questions of life-existence and their answers indicates the potential for and the realization of richer and more harmonious meaning, value and, purpose that will comprise and mediate differences or even conflicts, so that there will be cross-cultural creeds and canons, intercultural history and media, and contextualized faith-communities and practices in those world-religion. This religious dimension of doctrine and text will shape the person accepting it as absolute, whether individual or collective, with a divine authority that has a transcendent and an integrating binding force and effect. The problem of understanding sacred dogma and scripture involves persuasiveness (*Überzeugungskraft*), affiliation (*Zugehörigkeit*), and ethical practices or application in one's life, which means that the interpretation of the text of these holy canons can be described as the ultimate model of text-comprehension: authoritative understanding, classical interpretation and contextual application is a holistic system. Religions with cross-cultural holy canons and doctrines such as Christianity, Confucianism, and Buddhism can represent the paradigm for philosophical counseling in this dimension. In addition, philosophizing involving such dimensions can

also be paradigmatic, such as Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics revealed in *Being and Time*.

The previously-mentioned spirit-culture-world (WIII) is a combination or intersection of the cultural world-context (C2) and the spiritual world-context (C3), which is also the main context of text-, especially classic text-understanding, and the intended meaning of such understanding will differ due to varied models and contexts. The spirit-culture-world is now the main area of hermeneutical philosophizing. For example, Gadamer's special attention to the artistic and philosophical world-field, Habermas' philosophizing about the public social world-domain, and Ricoeur's and Derrida's emphasis on the literary text and religious world-sphere. All of these involve hermeneutical truth.

If so, because human persons always exist in such multi-world-contexts, and because their finiteness is also tied to the contextuality of their life-existence, the meaning of existence in these world-contexts of human beings involves the value of living in these existence-contexts and the purpose of practicing such a value. Since, in the primordial world where human persons live (i.e., the life world), intersubjective and interpersonal relations are characteristic of their ontic being, this is also precisely the core idea of systemic-hermeneutic psychology. This follows from the temporal dimension of human beings as persons in the context of the genesis and history of development of the process of language-understanding, to explore related main subject areas in philosophical counseling.

### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Concerning the basic concept of systemic hermeneutics, see the following essays by the author: "A Prolegomenon of Dialectical-systematical Hermeneutics: A Primary Research of the Ground-presupposition of the Intercultural-Philosophical Methodology," in *Sino-Christian Studies: An International Journal of Bible, Theology & Philosophy* (Han yu jiao xue Jidu shu ping lun, A & HCI), Vol. 4 (2007): 139-168; "The Spiritual Genesis and Development from Hermeneuein to Text Understanding: Theoretical Ground-Nexus of Dialectical-systematical and -systemic Hermeneutics," in: *National Central University Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 34 (2008): 97-140; "A Primary Research to the Ontological Dimension of Systemic Hermeneutics: A Turn of Basic Problems of Traditional Western Philosophy," in *Sino-Christian Studies: An International Journal of Bible, Theology & Philosophy*, Vol. 8 (2009): 189-222; "Vom hermeneuein zur Interkulturalität: Etymologie und Originalontologische Dynamik der systemischen Hermeneutik," in *Von der Hermeneutik zur interkulturellen Philosophie. Festschrift für Heinz Kimmmerle zum 80. Geburtstag*, hrsg. von Hamid Reza Yousefi und Henk Ooserling (Nordhausen: Bauz, 2010/12), 39-60.

<sup>2</sup> Jing-Jong Luh, 哲學詮釋學 — 歷史、義理與對話之「生化」辯證 — 》 [*Philosophical Hermeneutics — "Geschehen"- Dialectics of History · Spirit and Dialog*] (Taipei: Wulan 2004), pp. 12-14.

<sup>3</sup> G. Ebeling, *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart III*, s.v. „Hermeneutik“ (Tübingen, 1959).

<sup>4</sup> J. Grondin, *Einführung in die philosophische Hermeneutik* (Darmstadt, 1991), 50–59. In another essay, I have shown the etymology of this term and the basic structure of hermeneutics. Here, I have provided only an overview and summary of the fundamental relationship between the term *hermeneuein* and the three ontological ground presuppositions of hermeneutics. Cf. Jing-Jong Luh, "The Spiritual Genesis and Development from *Hermeneuein* to Text Understanding: Theoretical Ground-Nexus of Dialectical-systematical and -systemic Hermeneutics", esp. pp. 103-114.

<sup>5</sup> Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 8th. ed, 1957), pp. 148-153, 314-316.

<sup>6</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 4th ed., 1975), pp. 270-312.

<sup>7</sup> Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, pp. 148-153, 314-316.

<sup>8</sup> J. Habermas regards the life-world as the context of communicative action. Therefore, this involves the social *a priori*, which is immanent in the intersubjectivity of linguistic understanding, cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie der kommunikativen Handelns, Bd. II: Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1987), pp. 198-202.

<sup>9</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität: Texte aus dem Nachlass Zweiter Teil: 1921-1928*, ed. Iso Kern (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973).

<sup>10</sup> Gadamer, "Vom Wort zum Begriff: Vom Wort zum Begriff: Die Aufgabe der Hermeneutik als Philosophie," in *Gadamer Lesebuch*, ed. Jean Grondin (Tübingen: Mohr, 1997), pp. 103-109.

<sup>11</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1972); Günter Figal, *Der Sinn des Verstehens: Beiträge zur hermeneutischen Philosophie* (Ditzingen: Reclam Verlag, 1996), pp. 83-100.

<sup>12</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964). Marcuse's originality was to show that positivism in modern science and public discourse collapses into the thinking-constriction caused by so-called value free quantification and empiricism. This results in the hierarchical society of technocracy in which human beings are manipulated and instrumentalized by consumer culture.

<sup>13</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Das Ende der Utopie: Vorträge und Diskussionen in Berlin 1967* (Frankfurt: Verl. Neue Kritik, 1980); *Versuch über die Befreiung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969).

<sup>15</sup> Vgl. Gadamer, *Vom Wort zum Begriff*, 107-109.

<sup>16</sup> 關於此方面論述之經典包括黑格爾的《精神現象學》，G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes. Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 9, hrsg. von W. Bonsiepen u. R. Heede (Hamburg: Meiner, 1980). 亦參此書之前黑格爾有關自然哲學與精神哲學之構想：*Naturphilosophie und Philosophie des Geistes—Vorlesungsmanuskript zur Realphilosophie 1805/06. Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 8, hrsg. von Rolf-Peter Horstmann (Hamburg: Meiner, 1976).

<sup>17</sup> Carl G. Jung, *Archetypen und das kollektive Unbewusste. Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 9,1 (Olten: Walter, 1973).

<sup>18</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830)*, hrsg. von Wolfgang Bonsiepen (Hamburg: Meiner, 1992).

## The Philosophical Method of Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Styles and Negations

MICHEL DALISSIER

### Introduction

Since a method is necessary to approach a method, reflection on methodology is confronted from the start with the logical complexities observed by Spinoza.<sup>1</sup> This leads Edmund Husserl and Eugen Fink to call for a “phenomenology of phenomenology.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Husserlian phenomenology’s methodological strait is that it refuses all psychological and methodological prejudices. Nevertheless, it rests on certain “essential presuppositions,” such as its own validity.<sup>3</sup>

A phenomenology of perception like Merleau-Ponty’s cannot disown this heritage. To some extent, its essential presupposition is “The Primacy of Perception”, presented in a famous lecture.<sup>4</sup> Is not then perception the key to understanding his methodology? More precisely, how and where can we *perceive* his method at work? Does this not imply a specific reading of his texts? The right *way* to begin must be to examine his philosophical style.

### At the Beginning: A Question of Style

Let us take as a paradigm the beginning of “The Cogito,” the first chapter of the last part of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, dealing with the problem of subjectivity:

I am thinking of the Cartesian *Cogito*, wanting to finish this work, feeling the coolness of the paper under my hand, and perceiving the trees of the boulevard through the window. *My life is constantly thrown headlong into*

*transcendent things, and passes wholly outside me. The Cogito is either this thought which took shape three centuries ago in the mind of Descartes, or the meaning of the books he has left for us, or else an eternal truth which emerges from them, but in any case is a cultural being of which it is true to say that my thought strains towards it rather than it embraces it, as my body, in a familiar surrounding, finds its orientation and makes its way among objects without my needing to have them expressly in mind. This book, once begun, is not a certain set of ideas; it constitutes for me an open situation, for which I could not possibly provide any complex formula, and in which I struggle blindly on until, miraculously, thoughts and words become organized by themselves. A fortiori the sensible forms of being which lie around me, the paper under my hand, the trees before my eyes, do not yield their secret to me, rather it is that my consciousness takes flight from itself and, in them, is unaware of itself.”<sup>5</sup>*

What is striking here is a merging inherence of the philosophizing self in a whirl that will be described as the “turbulence” (*tourbillon*) of Being itself.<sup>6</sup> The “strain towards” being manifests, analogically, “motility” as the “original intentionality” of body (“as my body...”).<sup>7</sup> At a sympathizing level, the reader of Merleau-Ponty also feels this maelstrom which provides [avoid gendering the reader!] a first taste of this “Wild Being” (*l'Être sauvage*) developed in the lectures on nature and *The Visible and the Invisible*.<sup>8</sup> The philosophical method thus incarnates within

this gesture what will be called “taking part in” (*participer or en être*)<sup>9</sup>, in a striking contrast with Plato’s *methexis*. What does this mean concretely concerning writing style?

*From a linguistic aspect*, Merleau-Ponty’s prose does not use many commas or connecting words, and often includes foreign words, not translated, to create a kind of interweave of languages. What is more, E. de Saint Aubert underlines a chiasmic style in his way of writing.<sup>10</sup>

*From a referential aspect*, Merleau-Ponty quotes freely, due to lack of attention to the original<sup>11</sup>, secondary quotations<sup>12</sup>, or the inaccessibility of sources.<sup>13</sup> This urges, philologically, the need for a critical apparatus; testifies, sociologically, to knowledge shared by contemporaries; and means, philosophically, participation in a collective thinking movement.

*From a genetic aspect*, titles shift from the genitive (*The Structure of Behaviour, Phenomenology of Perception, The Primacy of Perception, The Prose of the World, The Adventures of Dialectics*), to a couple of notions, with a copula meaning “with”<sup>14</sup> (*Sense and Non-sense, Humanism and Terror, Signs – originally to be called Sense and Non-sense II, Eye and Mind, The Visible and the Invisible – the title preferred to Genealogy of Truth (vrai), and The Origin of Truth*)<sup>15</sup>, a graphic incarnation of chiasm and the growing institution of reversibility within his writings.

*From a literary aspect*, we have a metaphorical trend: not a “transport” between pre-established distant meanings, but the proximity of a “metamorphosis” of signification.<sup>16</sup> This is why Merleau-Ponty uses metaphors as an ontological opening on Being, while at the same time criticizing it as a purely linguistic tool.<sup>17</sup>

Now, what does this organic style reveal more deeply, at other levels? Can we perceive in his style something deeper?

*From a psychological aspect*, Merleau-Ponty very seldom appears within the frame of his own discourse, with some exceptions, such as in the quotation above and also in the beginning of the fourth chapter of *Eye and Mind*.<sup>18</sup>

*From a dialectical aspect*, conversely, the panorama of falsity (*panorama du faux*) inaugurating his chapters often reaches such a virtuosity as to make us believe he is standing up for the person he will criticize, merging with the opposite argument.

*From a perceptual aspect*, M. Richir praises his "prose of exceptional fluidity, with a kind of transparency of expression, only able, perhaps, to espouse the silences of primordial being or the extremely subtle reversibility that belongs to the flesh." But his "inimitable style", or "sense of the concrete," comments Richir, "we do not have it, or at the very least, we had lost it with him, in a quasi-irremediable manner." Yet there is still, in this participating capacity, an inimitable "youth (*jouvence*) of the eye and the senses that we can only evoke, to the extent that we feel it while reading."<sup>19</sup>

*From a semantic aspect*, such a perceptive complicity with the world implies that we should read him over and over again – co-read with him, "over his shoulder" as he says about Sartre.<sup>20</sup> Signification makes itself anew, according to the polysemy of "sense" ("meaning" in *chiasm with "direction"*).<sup>21</sup> Making use of it is not playing with words or creating "language games", but suggesting the ambiguity of reality.

*From an incarnated aspect*, all this is subjected to "adversity." For example, there is a partly recognized "failure" (R. Barbaras) related to the problematic of consciousness and otherness, of a work now actively belonging to our *past*, the *Phenomenology*<sup>22</sup>; a meaningful "interruption," related to the status of language, of *The*

*Prose*, making it *present* forever; and the incompleteness of *The Visible*, to all of which Baudelaire's words apply: "A complete work" is "not necessarily finished and a finished work not necessarily complete."<sup>23</sup> Merleau-Ponty is eternally surviving in the very evanescence of his works.

But is all this just a question of style? How can we avoid the "danger" of "confusion of style and thought" that Merleau-Ponty himself will denounce, as we will see in the next quotation? Is he not obeying a kind of logic? If he did not write any *Discourse on Method*, what is the method of his discourse?

### Passing through Negative Methodology

When it comes to methodology, it is judicious to follow a rule expressed at the end of the core essay of *Sense and Non-Sense*: "To define this conception of metaphysics, we had to determine it through a certain number of negations."<sup>24</sup> So the first relevant question to ask here is: "What is *not* the philosophical method of Merleau-Ponty?" It is as if "nothingness" itself was an "active" device to approach the very being of his method, an argument which can be grounded in his conception of an "active nothingness" (*néant actif*) that we cannot develop here.

1. *Not an inductive method.* The *Phenomenology* criticizes the kind of "inductive analysis" that strives to "deduce the normal from the pathological", because the first would be lacking a quality belonging to the second, such as the capacity to "locate" a stimulus.<sup>25</sup> However, "The genuine inductive method is not a 'differential method'; it consists in correctly reading phenomena, in grasping their meaning, that is, in treating them as modalities and variations of the subject's total being." This is not idealism, always criticized in contradistinction to realism, but a phenomenological and ontological apprehension of induction. 1) A pure induction

proceeds *from* distinction to unification: X and Y are unified because X is what Y lacks. 2) On the contrary, genuine induction initiates *in* a primitive union of meaning and being, towards modification and variation, identifying *disparities* with a view to organizing “the given world in accordance with the projects of the present moment, to build in the geographical setting a behavioural one.”<sup>26</sup> This will distinguish subjects, healthy and ill persons, but also maturity and “childhood”, civilized and “‘primitive’ states”, and, as the lectures on nature will add, humans and animals, in an effort to “structure” the surrounding world (*Umwelt*). (There is a suggestive historical contrast with Heidegger, for whom only man is *weltbildend*.<sup>27</sup>) To induce means to read, signify, and produce phenomena, according to the way we *structure* and *make them be*. It can be shown that we cross the borders of phenomenology and ontology here, but due to lack of space and time, I will not develop this argument here. For the moment, suffice it to say that the method appears contextual and not established.

2. *Not a definitive method*. As E. Bimbenet remarks, there is a kind of programmatic methodology in Merleau-Ponty.<sup>28</sup> This means that there is never a definitive “Method”, such as in Descartes, nor one that can embrace every essential matter in a synthetic or systematic way, as in Hegel. It should be an in-actual (*inactuelle, unzeitgemäss*) meta-method, reflecting on method, its range, and historicity. One of the “Working Notes” proposes then to “Study the pre-methodic Descartes, the *spontaneae fruges*, that natural thought ‘that always precedes the acquired thought’ – and the post-methodic Descartes, that of after the VI<sup>th</sup> Meditation, who lives in the world after having methodically explored it.”<sup>29</sup> However, as we asked in our introduction, is this an infinite regress? Is a method that

never stops, still a method? Is endlessly reflecting on method, good methodology?

3. *Not an analytical method.* This free method contrasts at least with academic ones, as one of the “Working Notes” emphasizes, self-reflecting on the very utility of these notes, and opposing phenomenology to the analytic method, in another sense than the inductive:

There is a danger that a philosophy of speech would justify the indefinite proliferation of writings – and even of pre-writings (working notes – Husserl’s *Forschungs-manuskript*. With him [the] notion of the *Arbeitsprobleme* – *Arbeit*: that impossible enterprise of grasping the transcendental consciousness of the act) – the habit of speaking without knowing what one is saying, the confusion of style and thought etc.

Yet: 1) it has always been that way in fact – the works that escape this profusion are ‘academic’ works

2) there is a remedy, which is not to return to the American analytic-academic method – which would be to retreat from the problem – but to proceed over and beyond by facing the things again.”<sup>30</sup>

As he does elsewhere, Merleau-Ponty here criticizes the analytical tradition for its method, because of his phenomenological heritage: “philosophy of speech” means something incommensurable with a philosophy of (ordinary) language. Nevertheless, he refers to Whitehead in the lectures on nature, and some studies insist on affinities with this contemporary tradition.<sup>31</sup> Further, there is a remarkable persistence of the phenomenological motive in

the later Merleau-Ponty, for methodological issues that need to be questioned in relation to ontology and existentialism. His “facing the things again” (*se remettre en face des choses*) must be contrasted with Husserl’s and Heidegger’s “auf”, “zu” and “aus den Sachen selbst.”<sup>32</sup>

4. *Not a Cartesian method.* Despite his huge debt to Descartes, Merleau-Ponty explicitly refuses a fixed “order of reasons” and prefers an “order of matters” or “things.” Trespassing on the logical problem of finding reasons not to use reasons, he advances at least two motives in *The Visible and the Invisible*. 1) To save the very possibility of “taking up” (*reprendre*). As a Working Note explains, to undertake a “reflection” on “ontology” implies “start [ing] anew from behind that point” (*reprendre son élan en deçà*) where Leibniz took it, and hence a “circularity of the research ... This circularity is no objection – we are following the order of matters, there is no order of the reasons.” A *matter* can be methodically retaken, reframed, and reworked, as “taking up” is indeed better expressed according to the following gradation subjected to adversity and the flesh of all matters: “take up again, deepen, and rectify.”<sup>33</sup> Following the matters is to be taken within, participate in the material worked on, as the Working Notes are at work, and correspond to an *Arbeitsproblem*. 2) To preserve the authenticity of perception: reasons hinder *perception*, rather than existence, as in Bergson; in a certain sense, the *principle of sufficient reason* might be an intellectual refuge: “If we search after the reasons, it is because we no longer succeed in seeing.” Searching reasons implies a reason to search reasons: this reason is indigence and opacity of perception; yet, this is an intellectualistic prejudice, from the point of view of phenomenology. On the contrary, seeing is seeing, and does not imply reasons to see; the problem is, rather, as the *Phenomenology* argued: “Nothing is more difficult than to

know precisely *what we see*.”<sup>34</sup> But this knowledge is sensible: “To see is to think without thinking,” as the lectures on nature will conclude.<sup>35</sup>

### The Crossings of Cartesianism

However, what is refused is not *reason*, but rather the correlative *order* in the “order of reasons.” The Working Note “Descartes”, quoted above, continues: “[Study] the ‘vertical’ Descartes soul and body, and not that of the *intuitus mentis* – And the way he chooses his models (‘light,’ etc.) and the way that, in the end, he goes beyond them, *the Descartes of before and after the order of reasons*.”<sup>36</sup> This escape from a purely rational order is linked with the fact [supposition?] that this order will jam the true “metaphysical mechanism” that Merleau-Ponty intends to rethink with the author of the *Monadology*, because of proximities (R. Barbaras) but despite distances (E. de Saint Aubert), as in the lectures on nature.<sup>37</sup> This refusal ultimately originates in the fact that such an order would lead Descartes to “give us *decisive reasons* not to do metaphysics any more”, as explained in *Eye and Mind*, whereas Merleau-Ponty comes out “in favor of metaphysics” in a Working Note, and especially tries in his last book to think, with the “modern history of painting,” a “metaphysics of depth,”<sup>38</sup> following an order of flexible and interpenetrating matters: depth, light, colour, form, line, movement, contour, physiognomy.<sup>39</sup> In brief, giving up “decisive reasons”, but not reason itself, might provide us, so to speak, a more “rational” rationality, a living rationality incarnated in things – something that *matters* more than its purely intellectual dimension.

This dis-order might yield to non-Cartesianism, as an unpublished manuscript suggests: “Formulating things in this way is going beyond what Descartes says, *already no*

*longer Cartesian*: because for him, one must stick alternately to each of the truths, and he does not consent to own that the order of reasons is a *nexus*. *That is what makes of Descartes at the same time the deepest and the least satisfying of the philosophers.*"<sup>40</sup> The greatness of Descartes is thus to make us perceive, in his thought, finitude and infinity, temporality and eternity, the nothingness and being of Cartesianism, and above all the destiny of metaphysics: the deepest of his *meditations* might guide us towards a "metaphysics of depth," and eventually to the very depth of metaphysics.

Still, this ambiguous Cartesianism is not *irrationalism*, but a new figure of rationality. For Merleau-Ponty, rationalism must at the same time grow old and become younger, "prematurely."<sup>41</sup> It must integrate "contingency", contra the "great rationalistic philosophies": when they

joined battle with revealed religion, what they put in competition with divine creation was some metaphysical mechanism which evades the idea of a fortuitous world just as much as it had. Today, humanism does not oppose religion with an explanation of the world. It begins by becoming aware of contingency. ... It is the methodical refusal of explanations, because they destroy the mixture we are made of and make us incomprehensible to ourselves.<sup>42</sup>

Scientific, conceptual or religious "explanation" is "afraid of contingency", while *explicitation*, the "single activity of making explicit and signifying which is ourselves", according to Merleau-Ponty, is never plainly "explicit", and stands in contrast also with Heidegger's ontological and hermeneutical *Auslegung*. It is a making of vision in the very flesh of contingency, rather than a

phenomenological *Seinlassen* or a religious *revelation*. Now, the true metaphysical mechanism will entail a deeper approach to the phenomenology and philosophy of religion in Merleau-Ponty, which cannot be examined here. This kind of intuition, in making implicit rather than barely expressing something, incarnates the “paradox of expression”, in a different sense from this hazy “mechanism” (“some”) that we will define precisely later.<sup>43</sup> Genuine rationalism thus hinges on a novel metaphysical mechanism, more *naturally* including contingency. It must also import contingency within the philosophy of history: “Methodical rationalism is not to be confused with a dogmatic rationalism which eliminates historical contingency in advance by supposing a ‘World Spirit’ (Hegel) behind the course of events.”<sup>44</sup>

### Conclusion

All history takes us back to metaphysics. Rationalism must not only include contingency but transcend “reasons”, “demonstrations.” Thus, the fourth chapter of *Eye and Mind* begins:

The entire modern history of painting, with its effort to detach itself from illusionism and to acquire its own dimensions has a *metaphysical significance*. This is not something to be *demonstrated*. Not for *reasons* drawn from the limits of objectivity in history and from the inevitable plurality of interpretations, which would prevent the linking of a philosophy and of an event; *the metaphysics we have in mind* is not a body of detached ideas for which *inductive justifications* could be sought in the experiential realm. There is, in the flesh of contingency, a structure of the event and a

virtue particular to the scenario. These do not prevent a plurality of interpretations but are in fact the *deepest reasons* for this plurality.<sup>45</sup>

The “deepest reasons” are not to be drawn from another field: whether *psychological* or *empirical* “inductive justifications”, *analytical* approaches, *mathematical* demonstrations, *historicist* relativisms, or *hermeneutical* arguments. Rationality is internally deeply concerned with contingency, flesh, and structure, and linked with a “metaphysical significance”, still obscure.

Can we really consider seriously such a metaphysical frame? Is it not limited to *Eye and Mind*? How can we relate it to methodological issues in existentialism, phenomenology, and ontology? Questions such as these must be considered at another time.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *On the Improvement of the Understanding*, tr. from the Latin by R.H.M. Elwes (Bibliolife, 2008), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Sebastian Luft, ‘*Phänomenologie der Phänomenologie*’. *Systematik und Methodologie der Phänomenologie in der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Husserl und Fink* (Kluwer: Dordrecht, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie* (1913), herausgegeben von Walter Beigel (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), pp. 36, 139, 174, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, translated by F. Kersten (The Hague : Nijhoff, 1983), pp. 36, 167, 205. Cf. pp. 121-124, 180, 299, tr., pp. 148-151, 212, 344, and “Nachwort”, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, drittes Buch: die Phänomenologie und die Fundamente der Wissenschaften* (1913), herausgegeben von Marly Beigel (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), p. 139. Cf. pp. 148-162.

<sup>4</sup> “Le primat de la perception et ses conséquences philosophiques” (23 novembre 1946), *Le primat de la perception et ses conséquences*

*philosophiques précédé de Projet de travail sur la nature de la perception* 1933, *La Nature de la perception*, 1934, édition établie par Jean Prunair (Lagrasse, Verdier, "Philosophie", 1996), "The Primacy of Perception and Its Philosophical Consequences", tr. James M. Edie, in *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics*, ed., with an Intro. James M. Edie (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

<sup>5</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris : Gallimard, 1945), p. 423, *Phenomenology of Perception*, tr. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1962), p. 369 (Hereafter *P.P.* 423, tr. 369). Emphasis added. As for the other works, I quote and sometimes modify the translations.

<sup>6</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Œil et l'Esprit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 14, "Eye and Mind," translated by Carleton Dallery, in *The Primacy of Perception*, *loc. cit.*, 161, hereafter, *O.E.*, 14, tr. 161.

<sup>7</sup> *P.P.*, 160, tr. 137.

<sup>8</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Le visible et l'invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), *The Visible and the Invisible*, tr. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), hereafter *V.I.* M. Merleau-Ponty, *Nature. Course Notes from the College de France*, compiled / with notes by Dominique Séglaard, tr. Robert Vallier (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003), hereafter *N.*

<sup>9</sup> *V.I.*, 169, 181, tr., 127, 137. Cf. *Les aventures de la dialectique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), pp. 268-269, *Adventures of the Dialectic*, tr. Joseph Bien (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 199 ("Je suis du", "I am a part of"), "Eloge de la philosophie" (leçon inaugurale au Collège de France, 15 janvier 1953), *Eloge de la philosophie et autres essais* (Paris : Gallimard, 1960), pp. 23, 38-40, 68-73, *In Praise of Philosophy and other Essays*, tr. John Wild, James Edie, John O'Neill (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1963), pp. 16, 30-33, 59-64, *V.I.*, 164, 173, 178, tr., 123, 131, 135, and Pierre Rodrigo, "Vers l'endotemps et l'endoespace : les difficultés du motif de la profondeur charnelle chez Merleau-Ponty", *Alter, revue de phénoménologie*, n°16/2008, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, *Le scénario cartésien. Recherches sur la formation et la cohérence de l'intention philosophique de Merleau-Ponty* (Paris: Vrin, 2005), p. 136.

<sup>11</sup> For example, *P.P.*, 489, tr. 427, *La prose du monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), p. 40, *The Prose of the World*, tr. John O'Neill (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 27, hereafter *P.M.*, 40, tr., 27.

<sup>12</sup> For example, *O.E.*, 72, tr., 183, quoting Bergson, quoting Ravaisson.

<sup>13</sup> E.g.: “The philosopher, as the unpublished works declare, is a perpetual beginner”, *P.P.*, ix, tr., xiv. See *V.I.*, 294 (March 1960), tr., 241. The “Unpublished works” correspond to more than ten thousand pages of manuscripts.

<sup>14</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Causeries* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), p. 23, *The World of Perception*, tr. Oliver Davis (London and New York : Routledge, 2004), p. 43.

<sup>15</sup> On these titles, cf. Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, *Vers une ontologie indirecte. Sources et enjeux critiques de l'appel à l'ontologie chez Merleau-Ponty* (Paris: Vrin, 2006), pp. 168, 178, 194-195.

<sup>16</sup> E. de Saint Aubert, *Vers une ontologie indirecte, loc. cit.*, 59, R. Barbaras, *De l'être du phénomène. Sur l'ontologie de Merleau-Ponty* (Grenoble: Millon, 2001), pp. 224 sq., *The Being of the Phenomenon. Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, tr. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 194 sq. See also Françoise Dastur, *Chair et langage. Essais sur Merleau-Ponty* (La Versanne : Encre marine, 2001), pp. 147-148.

<sup>17</sup> *N.*, 271, 281, tr., 209, 219, *The Adventures of Dialectics, loc. cit.*, 53, tr., 37, *V.I.*, 139, 166-167, 183, 203, 275 (November 26, 1960), tr., 102, 125-126, 139, 155, 221-222.

<sup>18</sup> *O.E.*, 63, tr., 179.

<sup>19</sup> Marc Richir, “Le sens de la phénoménologie dans ‘Le visible et l'invisible’”, *Esprit* (Paris: Bellenand, 1982), vol. 6, p. 125.

<sup>20</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Signes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 41, *Signs*, tr. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 30, hereafter S.

<sup>21</sup> *P.P.*, 358, tr., 310.

<sup>22</sup> *V.I.*, 230-232, 237, 253 (fév., juil. 59), tr., 176-178, 183, 200. R. Barbaras, *De l'être du phénomène, loc. cit.*, 12, 51 sq., 69 sq., tr., xxx, 33 sq., 49 sq.

<sup>23</sup> *P.M.*, 77-78, tr., 55.

<sup>24</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, “Le Métaphysique dans l'Homme”, *Sens et non-sens* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), p. 119, “The Metaphysical in Man”, *Sense and Non-Sense*, tr. with an intro. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 98.

<sup>25</sup> *P.P.*, 124-125, tr., 107. The patient is Schneider, analysed by K. Goldstein in “Über die Abhängigkeit der Bewegungen von optischen Vorgängen. Bewegungsstörungen bei Seelenbildern”, *Monatschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie*, Festschrift (Liepman, 1923).

<sup>26</sup> *P.P.*, 125, 130, tr., 108, 112.

<sup>27</sup> *N.*, 221-248 tr., 168-190. See M. Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* (1929-30, GA, 29/30) (Frankfurt: A. M., Klostermann, 2004), p. 414 and R. Barbaras, *Introduction à une phénoménologie de la vie* (Paris: Vrin, 2008), pp. 58-66.

<sup>28</sup> Etienne Bimbenet, *Après Merleau-Ponty. Etudes sur la fécondité d'une pensée* (Paris: Vrin, 2011), pp. 9, 14.

<sup>29</sup> *V.I.*, 326 (mars 1961), tr., 272.

<sup>30</sup> *V.I.*, 293 (mars 1960), tr., 239. These reflections are influenced by the article of Eugen Fink, quoted in *V.I.*, 296-297 (avril 1960), tr., 243-244, "Die Spätphilosophie Husserls in der Freiburger Zeit", *Edmund Husserl* (1859-1959) *Phaenomenologica*, 4 (La Haye, Nijhoff, 1959) – and not 1960, as Merleau-Ponty writes.

<sup>31</sup> See *P.P.*, ix, 31, 294, 367, tr., xv, 23, 254, 318, *P.M.*, 24, tr., 16, *S.*, 197-198, tr., 157, *V.I.*, 131-132, 167, tr., 97, 126. On Whitehead, *N.*, 152 sq., tr., 113 sq.. See E. de Saint Aubert, *Vers une ontologie indirecte*, loc. cit., 177-185, Samuel B. Mallin, *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1979), and E. Bimbenet, "La querelle des contenus conceptuels de la perception. Merleau-Ponty et MacDowell", *Après Merleau-Ponty*, loc. cit., p. 189 sq.

<sup>32</sup> E. Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen, zweiter Band : Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis* (Nijhoff: La Hague, 1984), *Hua*, XIX/1, p. 6, *Ideen I*, loc. cit., 35, tr., 35, *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft* (Frankfurt A. M.: Klostermann, 1965), p. 71, Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2006), p. 27, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, loc. cit., 86, 124. Cf. *Signes*, 31, 55, 98, 112, tr., 22, 44, 78, 90. Cf. M. Dalissier, "La notion de comportement selon Heidegger", *Revue philosophique de Louvain* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut supérieur de philosophie, 2008), n° 2, p. 280 (Errata : read « CFM, 93&131/86&124 » and not « PFP, 93&131/86&124 »).

<sup>33</sup> *V.I.*, 221-222 (17 jan., 59), tr., 168. On the "order of things", cf. *V.I.*, 181, tr., 137. Cf. M. Dalissier, 「デカルトにおける取り返しの概念」 ["The Concept of 'Reprise' according to Descartes"], *Annual Report of Cultural Studies*, Special Issue for the retirement of Prof. Nagasawa Kunihiko and Ota Takahiro (Kyoto: The Doshisha Daigaku Bungakkai, Graduate School of Letters, March 2013), no. 62, pp. 97-112 and 「メルロ=ポンティにおける歴史の知覚」 ["The Perception of History according to Merleau-Ponty"], *Doshisha Annual of Philosophy*, Special Issue in Memory of Prof. Yamagata Yorihiro (Kyoto: Societas Philosophiae Doshisha, March 2011), pp. 53-88.

<sup>34</sup> *V.I.*, 75, 220 (jan. 1959), tr., 150, 66, *P.P.*, 71, tr., 58. See Camille Riquier, *Archéologie de Bergson, Temps et métaphysique* (Paris: P.U.F., 2009), pp. 106-108.

<sup>35</sup> *N.*, 351, tr., 283.

<sup>36</sup> *V.I.*, 326 (mars 1961), tr., 272 (emphasis added).

<sup>37</sup> *N.*, note b, 300, tr., 309. Cf. also “Notes de lecture Proust – Mémoire”, in “Le problème de la passivité : le sommeil, l’inconscient, la mémoire”, *L’institution : dans l’histoire personnelle et publique ; Le problème de la passivité : le sommeil, l’inconscient, la mémoire : notes de cours au Collège de France (1954-1955)*, textes établis par Dominique Darmallacq, Claude Lefort et Stéphanie Ménasé, préface de Claude Lefort (Paris : Belin, 2003), p. 276, *Institution and Passivity : Course Notes from the Collège de France (1954-1955)*, tr. Leonard Lawlor and Heath Massey (Evanston. IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), p. 214. On this debate about the figure of Leibniz for Merleau-Ponty, see R. Barbaras, *De l’être du phénomène*, loc. cit., pp. 104, 263-269, tr., 82, 229-234, and E. de Saint Aubert, *Le scénario cartésien*, loc. it., 185 sq.

<sup>38</sup> *O.E.*, 56-57, 61, tr., 177-178 (emphasis added), *V.I.*, 305 (mai 1960), tr., 251.

<sup>39</sup> *O.E.*, 59-88, tr., 177-188.

<sup>40</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *La nature ou le monde du silence*, MF 9587, f. 75 (quoted in E. de Saint Aubert, *Vers une ontologie indirecte*, loc. cit., 125, we translate, emphasis added).

<sup>41</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, “L’homme et l’adversité”, *Signes*, loc. cit., pp. 305-306, tr., “Man and Adversity”, *Signs*, loc. cit., 240-241.

<sup>42</sup> M. Dalissier, “Etrangeté et prématuration selon Merleau-Ponty” [“Strangeness and Prematuration according to Merleau-Ponty”], International Congress, “The World: Common Interest for Philosophy Between Europe and Asia” (Huang Kuan-min), National University of Politics, Taipei, 2013/03/25.

<sup>43</sup> *S.*, 290, 304-307, tr., 228, 239-242, *P.M.*, 160, tr., 113. On *explicitation*, often translated by “explanation”, “clarification”, “making explicit”, cf. *P.P.*, 451, tr., 394, *S.*, 114, tr., 91, *N.3*, 266-267, tr., 205-206, and Ferdinand Alquie, “Une philosophie de l’ambiguïté. L’existentialisme de Merleau-Ponty”, *Fontaine* (Paris, 1947), n°59, t. XI, 52, 60, 63. On the notion of *Auslegung*, cf. Dominique Janicaud, *La phénoménologie éclatée* (Paris: éditions de l’éclat, 1998), p. 77.

<sup>44</sup> “Un inédit de Maurice Merleau-Ponty” (1951-1952), *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* (Paris : Colin, 1962), n°4, p. 408, collected in *Parcours deux 1951-1961*, édition établie par Jean Prunair (Lagrasse:

Verdier, 2001), pp. 46-47, "An Unpublished Text by Maurice Merleau-Ponty : A Prospectus of His Work", tr. Arleen B. Dallery, *The Primacy of Perception, loc. cit.*, 10.

<sup>45</sup> O.E., 61-62, tr., 178-179 (emphasis added).



6.

## Philosophical Counselling and *The Cloud of Unknowing*

BERNARD LI

### Introduction

Among the great numbers of modern tomes on practical philosophy or philosophical counselling, nearly all contain methods or procedures that touch on what in Chinese is called *lingxing* (translated, roughly, as “spirituality”). In Lou Marinoff’s “PEACE” model, we see “contemplation” and “equilibrium,”<sup>1</sup> in Peter Raabe’s “FITT” model, we see “transcendence,”<sup>2</sup> in *The Method to Surpass Method*, we see “beyond,”<sup>3</sup> and in my CISA model<sup>4</sup> we see “spiritual moving” and “ascendance”<sup>5</sup> – all of these concepts use spirituality as the final stage of counselling. But this form of counselling is largely different from psychological counselling in that most psychological counselling looks at behaviour and emotion, while the philosophical sort looks at values and spirituality.

*Lingxing* is very similar to the English word “spirituality.”<sup>6</sup> It speaks of the inner appeals of an individual, and also that the targets of spirituality are not just of the natural world; it incorporates targets that transcend that natural world. Therefore, *lingxing* may be defined in the following ways: 1) referring to spirit or vital essence, 2) the intellectual faculties of a human being, including the ability to perceive and comprehend objects, 3) referring to the power of understanding in religion, 4) the soul, 5) the intelligence of an animal gained through domestication or training.<sup>7</sup> With the exception of the fifth definition above, all are part of the content of philosophical

counselling. This paper will, therefore, discuss definitions 2, 3, and 4 in terms of the Western content on the issue.

The discussion of spirituality in the West did not begin with Christianity. In fact, there is a discussion of it in pre-Socratic philosophy. Spirituality, if we take it as the core of our investigation, then psychology (ψυχολογία), the spiritual (πνευματικός), *hodos* (ὁδός), *logos* (λογος), and *nous* (νοῦς) are all terms that the pre-Socratics mention that refer in some way to the mind, the soul, or the spiritual. These philosophers all use such terms to describe the ultimate purpose of philosophical pursuits. Thales of Miletus (Θαλῆς ὁ Μιλήσιος, ca. 624 - ca. 546 BC) believed that “all things were full of gods,”<sup>8</sup> Anaximander (ca. 610 – ca. 546 BC) said that the origin of the universe was from the *apeiron*,<sup>9</sup> while Heraclitus of Ephesus spoke of the *logos*, which had a particularly deep influence on later Christianity.

The word most often used in the Western tradition is *logos*; second to that, *hodos*.

*Logos* (λόγος) approximates to “word” in English, though it contains within it many levels of deeper meaning. At one level, it refers to language, speaking, discussion, narrative, and rules. At another level, it refers to rationality, thought, calculation, correspondence, causality, analogizing, and is often used in philosophy. Greek uses another term for ordinary speech or discussion – *lexis* (λέξις), which derives from the same root as *logos* – λέγω (*legō*), meaning discussion, calculation, or speech. In English, “logic” and any term ending in “-logy” (such as geology) derive from the Greek term *logos*. In Latin, it translates as *ratio*, which later became *raison* in French, which in turn was used in English as reason and rationality. Even more, it led to the development of spirituality for religion.<sup>10</sup>

Logos in Greek itself derives from the verb for speaking, which may ultimately derive from words meaning 'to put out' or 'set down,' the latter of which meant 'to lay or lie down or place,' which means to find an appropriate place to lodge one's own body. The second meaning of logos is to collect or bring together, and that the objects so collected have something in common.<sup>11</sup> The third meaning is the oneness of the objects so brought together. It is these three meanings that have led to the word's use in philosophy:

(1) Logos refers to the act of speaking or the speaker itself. Xenophanes uses it to mean speech and to point at the inner beliefs of the person; this is the use that led to philosophical thought. Xenophanes says, "I will now use other methods to speak of logos and reveal a new path."<sup>12</sup> This was the logos that gave philosophy a new medium and a new direction. It became the tool of the speaker to express his or her own thoughts; it was not only the method, but also the purpose.

(2) Logos became also the reaction of the listener to the speaker. It was the way by which the listener understood the words of the speaker, was able to accept them and put them into practice. This contains some form of trust as well. Parmenides used the logos to exactly this purpose. He says: "As to the discussion and belief of the meaning of this talk (logos), it is the result of many levels of discussion, which are themselves the result of our own ideas."<sup>13</sup> By this, Parmenides meant a type of belief or trust or confidence.

(3) From logos was then derived an objective sense of truth. This is the value and meaning of the words that go beyond or between the speaker and the listener. This is how Heraclitus uses the logos, specifically for the purpose of philosophy, and he defines it thus:

1. It is speech or a word that, once spoken, is able to produce in other people a concept by which other things may be known. (Fragment 108)

2. It is reason; this reason is the cause of the form of all things in the universe. (Fragment 1.31)

3. The rational meaning of the logos was extended to mean wisdom, which meant that only those with wisdom are able to apply reason.

Hodos, on the other hand, is the Ancient Greek word for road or path. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus disguises himself as a beggar and asks his swineherd Eumaeus to give him a branch so that he can use it as a crutch as he walks on the "hodos" to the city (*Odyssey* π 259); thus, the hodos is identified as a road, a path, or a passage (*Iliad* ζ 15). Its second meaning is the path from one point to another (*Iliad* ψ 330), which also connects to the meaning of "purpose" or "destination." Although the path itself may not be the destination, it is the clear path to the destination from which it derives this meaning – as in Homer's *Iliad*: "Let us proceed! If we walk down this path we are bound to find our objective." (*Iliad* ι 625). This use also gives hodos its meaning of "method." From the discussion above, we can see how hodos has the following meanings in the philosophy:

(1) The concept of road first was used by Polyphemus (πολδφημοσ)<sup>14</sup> to describe information coming from outside of the world into this world, and thus the term was connected with illumination and rationality.

(2) The path concept also means to surpass, meaning to surpass the abilities of human beings.

(3) Within the concept of path, there are right paths and wrong paths. Parmenides uses hodos in this way and thus establishes a concept of oneness.

(4) From meaning (3) is further derived the metaphysical concept of a downward road and an upward road, which refers to the meaning and the value of life.

The spiritual theory within the Christian religion originates from the person and the gospel of Jesus<sup>15</sup> Christ,<sup>16</sup> though it actually begins after the time of Christ.

In general, the Gospels tell of the life of Jesus and the teachings of God. But, in the New Testament, Jesus' birth into the world and the saving of that world is a type of gospel,<sup>17</sup> a call for man to walk on the path of oneness with God. Jesus is God made flesh in the mortal realm for the purpose of realizing a perfect union with God the Father. In the same way, later Christians used a variety of spiritual exercises and teachings to strive ever closer to becoming one with God.

One of the most important progenitors of spiritual exercises and teachings is Origen (182-251)<sup>18</sup> of the Alexandrian School,<sup>19</sup> and his three-fold method derived from philosophy: ethics (moral training), physics (observation of God), and enoptics (contemplation).<sup>20</sup> Later, by way of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite,<sup>21</sup> this three-fold method became the triple mystical path: the purgative way, the illuminative way, and the unitive way. The Alexandrian School influenced the Cappadocian father Gregory of Nyssa,<sup>22</sup> who transformed the tri-partite method into light, cloud, and dark.

Origen uses the Song of Solomon to interpret the development of the spiritual, which Dionysius follows, while Gregory, in addition to using the Song of Solomon, also uses the story of Moses seeing God manifest in the burning bush and his climb up Mount Sinai; from the clouds God speaks to him, and then after Moses makes it to the peak of Sinai he enters the dark cave where he meets with

God. This tri-partite method became fundamental in later spiritual exercises and even became the creed of many monastic orders, such as the compliance, silence, and modesty of the Order of Saint Benedict,<sup>23</sup> as well as the vow of poverty, chastity and compliance for other orders.

The following table compares the three tri-partite paths:

	1st	2nd	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Origen	Ethics	Physics	Enoptics
Dionysius	purgative way	illuminative way	unitive way
Gregory	light	cloud	Dark

In the Middle Ages, spiritual investigation was in full force, with theories, teachings, and methods. It was also a period rich in the content of spirituality. What was most worthy of attention was the difference between stability and mendicancy, and also the difference between contemplation and works. Still the majority of practitioners and scholars believed that the second pairing was most appropriate. To St. Thomas Aquinas, the simultaneous use of contemplation and service was the most perfect way of life for a Christian, as seen in his *comtemplata aliis tradere*,<sup>24</sup> or “delivering the fruits of contemplation to others.” In the words of Aquinas and others like him, we can see that the spiritual way of life was by no means opposed to the real world. As in the words of Pope Francis, “We priests tend to clericalize the laity. We do not realize it, but it is as if we infect them with our own disease. And the laity – not all, but many – ask us on their knees to clericalize them, because it is more comfortable to be an altar server than the protagonist of a lay path. We cannot fall into that trap – it is a sinful complicity.”<sup>25</sup> Clerics

and lay people each have different methods, but their purpose and goal is the same. Thus, it cannot be said that one is more effective than another.

Spiritual enquiry saw a large development in the mysticism of the fourteenth century, and many texts were written in the language of the local people. Taking each type of mysticism by its location, we may divide them into Rhineland Mysticism, Flemish Mysticism, and Unknowing Mysticism. A key representative of the Rhineland school is Meister Eckhart (ca 1260-1328), of the Flemish school is Jan van Ruusbroce (1293-1381), and of the Unknowing school is the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* (late fourteenth century).<sup>26</sup>

### **Structure of *The Cloud of Unknowing***

*The Cloud of Unknowing* is a work of mysticism written in English. Although the author is anonymous, the content of the work points to a cleric or a noble of high rank with a depth of cultural knowledge. The book itself is not intended for initiates, but rather for one who has already had some spiritual preparation, an advanced level of the mystical ladder.<sup>27</sup>

*The Cloud of Unknowing* is a work of Christian mysticism, specifically adoration and "mysticism of being." During this period, there were two primary expressions of mysticism: one being bridal mysticism, represented in Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153); the other was the metaphysically based "mysticism of being," which concentrated on the realization that God is within oneself, that God is one's ground of being. Using the definition of St. Augustine, *intimior intimo meo*, "God is nearer to me than I am to myself," the mysticism of being was subdivided into the "knowledge" type, and the "adoration" type: Eckhart is representative of the knowledge type, while John

Ruysbroeck and *The Cloud* are representative of the adoration type.<sup>28</sup>

Composed of 75 chapters, *The Cloud* tells us that an individual has two inner faculties, namely understanding (or rationality) and love. Understanding is incapable of unraveling the mystery of God. Just as Augustine himself said, and just as Aristotle and Aquinas both believed: the soul of a human being is greater than the rational faculty. The reason is simple: a soul at once possesses life, perception, and rationality, while at the same time humans are made in the image of God. Thus, love is the only path to contact and embrace God. *The Cloud* advocates a spiritual exercise that surpasses concepts and iconography, and uses two clouds, the “cloud of unknowing” and the “cloud of forgetting,”<sup>29</sup> to make a distinction between man and God (cloud of unknowing) and man and other created things (cloud of forgetting).

Unknowing does not mean that we “do not know” and are therefore unable to understand. Instead, as the author says, “For it is a darkness of unknowing that lies between you and your God,”<sup>30</sup> “When I speak of darkness, I mean the absence of knowledge,”<sup>31</sup> “If you are unable to understand something or if you have forgotten it, are you not in the dark as regards this thing?”<sup>32</sup> “Well in the same way, I have not said “cloud” but *cloud of unknowing*,”<sup>33</sup> “The thoughts of men are not capable of perceiving God, and for this reason, I am willing to give up that which I understand and use love to love Him whom I cannot know by reason. We are incapable of knowing Him, but we are able to love Him,” and “One must constantly fire the dart of loving desire into the cloud of unknowing.”<sup>34</sup>

### **The Method of *The Cloud of Unknowing***

*The Cloud of Unknowing* divides the spiritual-growth exercise into four levels: the common, the special, the singular, and the perfect;<sup>35</sup> within this division there is another division into two levels: one begins in this life and may be completed within this life, while the other begins in this life but is never completed. The first three levels of the first division – the common, the special, the singular – belong to that which can be completed, while the fourth – the perfect – belongs to the incomplete-able. From this perspective, the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* makes “the eternal” as the final purpose of spiritual exercise, and rejects all that which can be completed in one’s life as not genuine spiritual exercise. His hypothesis, however, if looked at from the perspective of spiritual exercise, leaves some room for discussion:

There are two methods of spiritual exercise: (1) self satisfaction, and (2) ultimate concern.

(1) Self satisfaction is represented in the work of Maslow (Abraham Harold Maslow, 1908-1970) and his six-tiered hierarchy of needs (originally a five-tiered model, Maslow proposed a sixth tier, Self-transcendence, late in life; the psychological community generally uses only the first five). This sequential model of needs is the way by which one’s self can be satiated, but it is not the case that every individual may be satisfied by the same needs, since even individuals of the same line of work may have widely differing needs.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs does show that each individual does indeed have needs, just as the Chinese philosopher Gaozi said, “To enjoy food and delight in colours is human nature.”<sup>36</sup> The hierarchy theory not only explains the makeup of a human personality, but also explains motivation. In fact, it defines the force of inner

growth as just that – motivation. Motivation is not simple; it is a rather complex weaving of needs in many different layers and of many different properties; not only that, but each need has higher and lower subdivisions as well as a particular sequence. Each level of needs and the corresponding level to which that level of needs has been satisfied decides the development of the individual personality. The theory divides individual needs into six tiers, categorised from low to high, and provides a stimulation for each level. One basic premise of the theory is “human beings are an animal that strives to fulfil its own needs.” These six needs are:

1. Physiological needs: The lowest of the tiers on the hierarchy, this is also the first priority of each individual’s needs. It includes food, water, air, sex, shelter, health.

2. Safety needs: Also part of the lower tiers on the hierarchy, this level includes bodily safety, stability, and the avoidance of pain, threat, and illness.

3. Love and belonging needs: This level is considered to be in the upper half of the hierarchy, and includes friendship, love, and familial relationships.

4. Esteem needs: Also considered to be in the upper half of the hierarchy, this level includes success, reputation, status, and opportunity for improvement. Esteem needs also include the self’s own feelings of value and success, as well as the respect and approval of others.

5. Self-actualization: This is the highest of the five-tiered model, and it includes the winning of truth, the good, and beauty, the pinnacle of accomplishment in life. Only when the previous four needs have been satisfied can this level be realized; thus this level is a derivative of the four previous tiers. It includes self-realization and the utilization of one’s full potential.

6. Self-transcendence: This level was added by Maslow during his later years. When an individual's self-actualization need has been completely satisfied, there is a temporary "peak of experience." This is often experienced when one is involved in a task or has just finished a task. Often, this is experience by artists such as painters or musicians.

As is apparent from the needs listed above, self-satisfaction sets its goals and purposes in this life, unlike the *The Cloud of Unknowing*. To an individual, even one who puts their whole heart into the path to God, Maslow's needs are unavoidable. We can temporarily ignore them, but we are never able to get rid of them completely.

(2) The second type of spiritual exercise is one of "ultimate concern," exemplified in the work of Paul Tillich (1886-1965). Tillich uses this ultimate concern to deal with the human concern of death. By ultimate concern, Tillich means the most basic and essential concern.<sup>37</sup> He says:

We can question whether or not these ultimate things may be taken as objects of investigation, and thus determine the ultimate nature of any rhetoric. If it may be taken as an object of investigation, then it is not ultimate in that sense. Something of an ultimate nature must be beyond the division of objective and subjective, and must be limitlessly beyond the existence of any objective thing.<sup>38</sup>

Ultimate concern is the most basic concern and gives the meaning of concern to other things. Utterly and unconditionally, it is willing to sacrifice any concern that is limited in comparison to itself.<sup>39</sup> There are no limitations in the ultimate concern, nor attachment to any condition of character, desire, or environment. This limitless concern is

holistic, and thus no person, not even the world, is able to leave it, and nowhere is one able to flee from it (Psalm 139). In this limitless, holistic concern, there is no allowance for relaxation or rest.<sup>40</sup>

Tillich believes that faith is the ultimate concern of the spiritual world.<sup>41</sup> The object of faith and the life of the believer produce endless connections,<sup>42</sup> causing one of true faith to become a person who expresses ultimate concern. When such a person experiences that “unconditionality,” ultimate concern is then able to be manifest.<sup>43</sup> Faith in the ultimate concern is an action of the entire person, and is also the most central action of the individual’s mind; in the action of faith, all of the individual returns to oneness. This is not to say that the sum of all the actions a person takes is faith; rather, faith goes beyond every single action of the individual as well as the sum of all that individual’s actions. Faith has a decisive power with respect to everything that a person does – it directs each and every action, and is involved in all life energy.<sup>44</sup> Tillich speaks of religion, which he names as an ultimate concern. In this he refers not only to faith, but to all of the various things connected to one’s life; he also goes on to name the matters of the spiritual life which are ultimate, limitless, and unconditional.<sup>45</sup> Religion, therefore, is the “deep” part of all cultural and spiritual life of humanity. What it expresses is the ultimate concern of human life. It bestows upon humanity the striving for limitless existence and points toward the things that uphold a person’s life and give that life meaning.<sup>46</sup> From this it is apparent that religious faith and rationality are one. Faith is not blind worship of God. Rather, faith is the thought that every person gives to what it means to exist, to the sin of estrangement – it is the result of the problem of saving oneself.<sup>47</sup>

To return to the discussion of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, entering into religion or faith is not sufficient to entering into a stage of completion, a stage that “though [it] begins here, shall go on without ending into the joy of eternity.”<sup>48</sup>

That is why I believe that the counselling process in *The Cloud* is one that begins in this world and extends into eternity. In other words, this life, this world, is the process, and the objective is eternity. Spiritual exercise takes eternity as its objective, the completion of which requires that the methods of this life are effective to that end. The author of *The Cloud* does not believe that this life is bad, but that one should not get caught up in its beauty.

For that reason we can place spiritual exercise in this life, not in eternity. *The Cloud* proposes training contemplation, the purpose of which being to recognize oneself clearly, to recognize which things are conducive to a complete life, and to pursue that goal in an active and positive way.

*The Cloud* tells us that the first step in spiritual exercise is of the rational; this is followed by the conditioning of the mind; last is the life of contemplation.

As regards the rational life: *The Cloud* assumes that human actions are brought about through reason, will, imagination, and sensation.<sup>49</sup> However, the faculty of reason is based in differentiation between good and bad, between better and best; in some circumstances, bad things lead to good conclusions, or in other circumstances the bad may be rendered good, the worse may be rendered merely bad, or the worst may be rendered only slightly bad. Today reason is blinded by the compounding of original sin unless one has accepted the light of divine grace. Mistakes will continue to be made, and the human mind still retains its reason and the objects of knowledge.<sup>50</sup>

Over the course of spiritual exercise or of philosophical counselling, the most important and primary investigation

to make is into the sources of pain. Reason's very purpose and method is to create a system of differentiation. No matter if one has religious faith or not, pain is always part of existence. The finding of pain's sources leads one over many different routes, though the faculties at the very base of the differentiation system remain the same, namely perception. Scholasticism and other philosophical schools look at perception differently. Scholasticism divides perception into inner perception and outer perception. Outer perception includes the five senses of sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing; each of which is attached to the completeness (or not) of the organs of the perceiving subject (e.g., sight is attached to the function and structure of the eye). The function of reason is only in differentiating the completeness of the structure or the effectiveness of the function. It does not often assess the goodness or badness of a thing, but does tend to see clearer the sources of pain. With inner perception, the analysis of the reasoning faculty is relatively important. Not only can reason find the source of a certain pain, but it can also assess the motives created by the inner perception.

As regards the conditioning of the mind: *The Cloud* believes that reason, will, imagination, and sensation are all parts of the method and function of such conditioning.<sup>51</sup> In fact, this is a state derived from the rational life. *The Cloud* sees the first two – reason and will – as primary faculties, and the second two – imagination and sensation – as secondary faculties. The reason for such a division is this: "It is not that men's minds can make such a distinction, only that information deriving from it can be divided into two large categories."<sup>52</sup> "The mind is a general term for that which contains these four faculties. It incorporates information from various faculties and categorizes them, stores them. That is where the mind differs from other faculties. The mind it is not properly said to work but to

understand."<sup>53</sup> So the mind understands, but how so? *The Cloud* believes that a situation of "upwardness" explains how the mind understands. *The Cloud* uses "up"<sup>54</sup> rather than "ascend," since this upward movement is "raising one's heart to God,"<sup>55</sup> "seeking the inner heart inside of the holy spirit."<sup>56</sup> It is a cleansing of one's mind and provides a function of disallowing the mind from being contaminated and harming the process of conditioning. "How does an individual know which spiritual work is below him, or outside of him, or at the same level of his self and within him, or below God and above himself." <sup>57</sup>

As regards the life of contemplation: *The Cloud* believes that, after both the rational life and the conditioning of the mind have been adequately prepared, the life of contemplation may begin. It advises that we set aside our curiosity, scholarly inquiry, and knowledge of the natural world.<sup>58</sup> Only then may we "actively enter the life of the missionary and the life of contemplation; the active life is rather low, but the life of contemplation is rather high."<sup>59</sup> *The Cloud* puts active participation in this life on a lower level than that of contemplation, the reason for which is that it is a diversion from full participation in spiritual exercise. Only when we abandon the curiosity, inquiry, and knowledge that he mentions above can we concentrate our efforts on spiritual exercises.<sup>60</sup> It holds that the purpose of this type of thought is to put the initiate of these exercises into a deeply excited state of spiritual work. But it cannot be denied that once the initiate becomes "proud and in a state of excited curiosity and selfishness, the mind then becomes defiled and evil. This is because, once that occurs, you are no longer a modest and receptive student, a scholar of God and a spiritual teacher, but rather a wicked and arrogant student, a vain liar."<sup>61</sup>

So how does one begin spiritual exercise?

The person who wishes to enter into spiritual exercise must first foster the following three habits: reading, thinking, and prayer. Reading should be related to your spiritual work; and after reading, you should direct your thinking at the content, value, and meaning of what you have just read. Finally, you should learn how to relate your spiritual work to the object of contemplation. "When we reach the state when our bodily faculties are no longer able to obtain knowledge, we then discover that which is spiritual; similarly, when this spiritual faculty becomes powerless, it is then, by divine grace given us in this life, that we are best able to gain knowledge from God."<sup>62</sup>

Additionally, one must have a humble heart, a consciousness that repudiates self-centredness, and one must learn how to give of oneself without scruple.<sup>63</sup> It is only through humility and abandoning self-centredness that one can hear the voice of the object of your spiritual exercise. Even if it is your own voice, it is still a voice that comes ordinarily from your inner self; it is only by giving freely of oneself without scruple that one can reach a state of oneness. "Go the way of nature: it is that the body of flesh belongs to the spirit and not the spirit that belongs to the body of flesh."<sup>64</sup>

Finally, "Only within the experience of the 'emptiness' and 'nowhere' of one's inner self can the feelings of an individual take a wonderful turn."<sup>65</sup> "He who has the patience to wait within the darkness will of certainty find comfort, and will find again confidence in one's future path."<sup>66</sup> "Yes, man will rethink 'emptiness' into this or that matter, but in the end it is the 'cloud of unknowing' that is between man and God."<sup>67</sup>

In conclusion, on the road of spiritual exercise, the crux for non-believers is how to use one's own spirituality as a guide, a leader, and a completer; for the believer, it is a

matter of how one uses the object of one's faith as a guide, a leader, and a completer. Such a purpose uses the inner purpose of philosophy, that is, the seeking wisdom that can be used practically. It is only by this way that one can see the value and significance of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and it is only by that, that one's life can reach the highest of heights.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Lou Marinoff, *Plato, Not Prozac!: Applying Eternal Wisdom to Everyday Problems* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), pp. 37-40.

<sup>2</sup> Peter B Raabe, *Philosophical Counseling: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2001), pp. 158-166.

<sup>3</sup> Raabe, *Philosophical Counseling*, pp. 16-196.

<sup>4</sup> Consciousness, Insight, Spiritual moving, and Ascendance. See my "Application and Practice of the C.I.S.A. Theory," in *Journal of Humanities Therapy*, Vol. 6, No.1 (2015): 1-19.

<sup>5</sup> Li Jian-qi: "Theory and Application of CISA Rules," *Philosophy and Culture*, Vol. 392 (2007) pp. 3-16, Taipei.

<sup>6</sup> The English version of this paper will continue to use the term "spirituality" and its derivatives in place of the Chinese term 靈性.

<sup>7</sup> See *China on Paper: Chinese and European Works from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marcia Reed and Paola Demattè (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007), particularly p. 77.

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 411a7. For other ancient sources see the discussion in G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 93-7.

<sup>9</sup> *The Theogony of Hesiod*, tr. H. G. Evelyn White (New York, 1914) (Loeb Classical Library), pp. 736-740.

<sup>10</sup> See the article on 'logos' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, at <http://www.britannica.com/topic/logos>

<sup>11</sup> *Herodotus*, tr. Henry Cary (London: George Bell, 1879), Bk. VIII 68.

<sup>12</sup> Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, eds., *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 7th ed. (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1954), 21 B 7.

<sup>13</sup> Diels and Kranz, 28 B 7.

<sup>14</sup> See the entry on Polyphemos (or Polyphemus) in Luke Roman and Monica Roman, eds., *Encyclopedia of Greek and Roman Mythology* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010), po. 415-417.

<sup>15</sup> "The word *Jesus* is the Latin form of the Greek *Iesous*, which in turn is the transliteration of the Hebrew *Jeshua*, or *Joshua*, or again *Jehoshua*, meaning "Jehovah is salvation."" See A. Maas, "Origin of the Name of Jesus Christ." In *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910). Retrieved August 12, 2015 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374x.htm>

<sup>16</sup> "The word Christ, *Christos*, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Messias*, means "anointed." According to the Old Law, priests (Exodus 29:29; Leviticus 4:3), kings (1 Samuel 10:1; 24:7), and prophets (Isaiah 61:1) were supposed to be anointed for their respective offices; now, the Christ, or the *Messias*, combined this threefold dignity in His Person." See A. Maas, "Origin of the Name of Jesus Christ." *op. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> "The word *gospel* derives from the Old English *gōd-spell*." Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved 2012-12-25.

<sup>18</sup> "Origen of Alexandria, one of the greatest Christian theologians, is famous for composing the seminal work of Christian Neoplatonism, his treatise *On First Principles*. Origen lived through a turbulent period of the Christian Church, when persecution was wide-spread and little or no doctrinal consensus existed among the various regional churches." See Edward Moore, "Origen of Alexandria (185-254 C.E.)," in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/origen-of-alexandria/>

<sup>19</sup> Alexandria was founded in 332 BC by Alexander the Great. It included peoples and cultures from as far afield as Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and existed as a multi-cultural mix of Judaizers and Eastern religions. Gnosticism became popular here during the second century, leading to Alexandria becoming a major base for its study. In approximately 180 AD Pantaenus founded the Catechetes as the leader of the School of the Faithful. He later became the leader of the Alexandrian school at the Catechetical School of Alexandria. His followers Clement and Origen became the inheritors of the Alexandrian School, and would Christianize Greek philosophy while also infusing what they believed to be the better parts of philosophy into Christianity, creating an amalgamation of the two in one system. Pantaenus' mix of theology and philosophy led in part to the creation of Neo-Platonism. See Lin Peng-xin's *Doctrinal History*, First Part, p. 54; *Missionary Fathers II*.

<sup>20</sup> Huang Ke-li, Lu De, ed., *Christian Spiritual Exercises* (Guangqi Cultural Enterprise: July, 2012), Book 1, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> On Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, see Kevin Corrigan and L. Michael Harrington, "Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/pseudo-dionysius-areopagite/>>.

<sup>22</sup> On Gregory of Nyssa, see H. Leclercq, "St. Gregory of Nyssa," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910). Retrieved December 7, 2015 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07016a.htm>

<sup>23</sup> The order was established by St. Benedict (480-547) and has been called the beginning of monasticism in the West. See Huang Ke-li, Lu De, ed., *Christian Spiritual Exercises*, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Huang Ke-li, Lu De, ed., *Christian Spiritual Exercises*, p. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Official English translation of the words of Pope Francis in an interview he gave as archbishop of Buenos Aires.

<sup>26</sup> Huang Ke-li, Lu De, ed., *Christian Spiritual Exercises*, pp. 16-19.

<sup>27</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, tr. Zheng Sheng-chong (Guangqi Cultural Enterprises, 3<sup>rd</sup> printing, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 2012), Title page.

<sup>28</sup> Huang Ke-li, Lu De, ed., *Christian Spiritual Exercises*, pp. 16-18.

<sup>29</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing and the Book of Privy Counseling*, tr. William Johnston (New York: Doubleday, 2005), p. 45.

<sup>30</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 45.

<sup>31</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 44.

<sup>32</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 44.

<sup>33</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 45.

<sup>34</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 29.

<sup>35</sup> Huang Ke-li, Lu De, ed., *Christian Spiritual Exercises*, p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> Mencius, Gaozi I.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith*, tr. Luo He-nian (Tainan: Church Bulletin, 1999).

<sup>38</sup> John Macquarrie, *Twentieth-Century Religious Thought*, tr. He Bo-sha (Hong Kong: Wenyi, 1997), V459.

<sup>39</sup> Wang Chong-yao, *Religion and Culture: Christianity and Modern Ethics*, p. 9

<sup>40</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: (Book I)*, tr. Gong Shu-sen and You Long-wen (Tainan: Southeast Asia School of Theology, 1993), 117 p.

<sup>41</sup> Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith*, tr. Luo He-nian.

<sup>42</sup> Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith*, tr. Luo He-nian.

<sup>43</sup> Li Dao-sheng, *World's Theological and Philosophical Thinkers* (Daguang Publishing).

<sup>44</sup> Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith*, tr. Luo He-nian.

<sup>45</sup> Wang Chong-yao, *Religion and Culture: Christianity and Modern Ethics* p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith*, tr. Luo He-nian.

<sup>47</sup> Paul Tillich, He Guang-hu Ed., *Select Texts of Paul Tillich* (Part I) (Shanghai: Shanghai San-lian Bookstore, 1999.) See also the thesis by Zheng Hui-wen, "Paul Tillich's Ultimate Concern," thesis Southeast Asia School of Theology (Tainan), 2007.

<sup>48</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 33.

<sup>49</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 59.

<sup>50</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 61.

<sup>51</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 161.

<sup>52</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 159.

<sup>53</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 159.

<sup>54</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 102.

<sup>55</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 144.

<sup>56</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 145.

<sup>57</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 157.

<sup>58</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 33.

<sup>59</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 34.

<sup>60</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 34.

<sup>61</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 34.

<sup>62</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 174.

<sup>63</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, pp. 48, 109, 117.

<sup>64</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 154.

<sup>65</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 172.

<sup>66</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 173.

<sup>67</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 173.

## The Reasoned Structure of the *Guanzi* and Care of Self

CHEN-YU CHOU

### Introduction

In 1944, Mo-Ruo Guo proposed the idea that the four chapters of the *Guanzi* (管子)<sup>1</sup> should be regarded as an anthology to study and, as a result, the academic circles started to pay attention to the uniqueness of the four chapters in *Guanzi*. Later, in 1973, the long-lost four chapters of *Laozi – Jingfa, Shiliujing, Cheng* and *Daoyuan*, that had been copied on silk – were excavated from Mawangdui Han tombs in Changsha (generally known as *Huang-Lao Silk Texts*); they were studied and regarded by some as the *Huangdi Sijing* (*Four Classics of the Yellow Emperor*), that had been put down in writing by Daoists in the *Hanshu Yiwenzhi*. As a result, the study of the Huang-Lao Theory in the Pre-Qin Dynasty has increased.

The four chapters of *Guanzi* (“*Neiye*” 內業 = *Internal Work* [or *Inward training*]; “*Baixin*” 白心 = *Clear Mind* [or *Purifying the mind*], “*Xinshu shang*” 心術上 = *Mental Techniques* [or *Mind techniques* or ‘*Art of the mind*’] *First Part*; and “*Xinshu xia*” 心術下 = *Mental Techniques* [or *Mind techniques* or ‘*Art of the mind*’] *Second Part*) are representative works of the Jixia Academy and Huang-Lao Daoism during the Warring States Period. It has become a trend to study them, and different schools have their own illustrations and expositions.

Gu-Ying Chen referred to the *Shi Ji*, the *Biography of Sima Xiangru*, and said that “work is the origin,” and thought “internal work” refers to “the origin of mind.” He argued that *Internal Work* holds a theory of the origin of mind,

which enriched the philosophy of mind of Daoism in the Pre-Qin Dynasty. In addition, with “mind” being the axis, the school of mind of Jixia Daoism was illustrated by the theory of mind-nature, the theory of mind-qi, the theory of mind-shape, and the method of concentration of mind, to qi. Mind covers six processes including “receiving, losing, searching, existing, discovering, and contradicting.”<sup>2</sup>

Ru-Bin Yang expounded the theory of jingqi and integral mind, discussed implied issues of body concepts and metaphysics, and argued that dao can exist only in “the center of mind,” as he thought the obvious state of “the center of mind” is the state of “integral mind” with plentiful jingqi and with the appearance of nature of mind.<sup>3</sup>

The explanation of different schools varied as their perspectives and illustrations were different. The issue that the present paper focuses on is that, although the four chapters talk about “mind,” their content can be seen from their names, and “dao” is still their main thought. In addition, “jingqi” often serves as “dao” to show on human bodies. Through “jingqi,” “dao” can prevail in human bodies and show above them. However, it requires skill and practice which means that, through the cultivation of mind and qi, mind is fixed as integral, and the flow of “dao” is possible. Therefore, it can be known that “mind,” “qi,” and “dao” have an interrelationship. As *Internal Work* states, “when mind is tranquil and qi is regulated, dao can be retained”; this clearly indicates the relationship of the three. With the integration of mind and qi, and with tranquil mind and regulated qi, “dao” can make Nature and people become one in people’s minds, which is the utmost state that the Daoist school pursues. When one enters the homeland of “dao,” his life has been healed. Therefore, the wisdom of Oriental philosophy expounded in the four chapters of the *Guanzi* can serve as a philosophical foundation of philoso-

phical counseling. The thesis will discuss the meanings of “mind,” “qi,” and “dao” in that order, as well as the inner connection of the three.

### **The Theory of “Mind”: The Tranquil Mind and Regulated Qi**

“Mind” and “qi” are two considerably important categories in Chinese philosophical thought, and they influence all of Chinese philosophy. However, “mind” and “qi” are not two independent concepts. Instead, they influence and interact with each other: mind influences qi, and qi influences mind. Mencius once stated, “will influences qi, and qi influences will,” and the four chapters assert “tranquil mind and regulated qi.” Both emphasize their interdependent and inseparable relationship.

Xi Bai has interpreted this sentence, and asserted that, regarding the relation of qi and mind in *Guanzi*, qi succumbs to mind – emphasizing that mind controls qi. Mind has to be tranquil first before qi can be regulated. Thus, “tranquil mind and regulated qi” means that “qi can be regulated only when mind is tranquil; mind must be tranquil first before qi can be regulated,” in that order.<sup>4</sup>

Mind and qi do not, however, come in that order; they interact with each other and influence each other – they are simultaneous. Mind and qi depend on each other, and they are interdependent and inseparable. Moreover, they influence each other: various qi appear with the change of “mind, so “mind” is still the axle.”

“Mind” can be regarded as at the core of the thought of the Jixia Academy and of Huang-Lao Daoism. It is an important key for one to experience and acquire dao as described in the four chapters. “Mind” is to the body as a monarch is to his throne, so it possesses a dominant and commanding power and status. The *Mental Techniques, First*

*Part* defines clearly the function and status of “mind” which is dominant in the mind-qi relationship, and the main focus of the four chapters is to expound the cultivation of “mind.” Xuan-Ying Cheng of the Tang Dynasty once illustrated this by saying that “techniques stand for abilities. The abilities of mind are called mental techniques.” Based on this interpretation, “mental techniques” are generally interpreted as the capabilities of mind. However, the so-called “mental techniques” emphasize techniques used to govern the mind, which facilitates the integration of a main body and object through “internal work.” This implies that one experiences *dao*, and acquires it with his internal skills for the cultivation of mind.

Although the four chapters involve an issue of epistemology, they do not pursue issues such as the exploration and thinking of objects. Instead, they focus on how internal cultivation is conducted to “acquire *dao*.” The four chapters argue that people can acquire “*dao*” only through the cultivation of skills of “emptiness (xu, 虛)<sup>5</sup>,” “tranquility (靜),” “adaptation (因),” and “concentration (一).” I turn now to a discussion of these four aspects.

### **On “Emptiness (xu, 虛 = void, space, vacuity)”**

In the *Mental Techniques, First Part*, we read:

It is true that the Heaven is said to be void (xu, 虛), and the Earth is said to be tranquil. Clean your house, open the door, get rid of your desires and do not express your opinions randomly as if gods are in front of you. Complicated things and objects seem messy, but they are in order when they are tranquil. Although you are a man of power, you cannot always achieve; although you are a man of wisdom, you cannot plan each thing

completely. Objects have their forms, and the forms have their names. When one's name is equivalent to one's achievements, he can be called a saint. Therefore, be sure to understand what theories do not require illustrations and what things can be done without hands before you can understand the rule of "dao." Although objects have various forms, "dao" never goes against the regular patterns of all living creatures. Therefore, it can serve as the foundation of the world.<sup>6</sup>

Heaven is said to be void or emptiness (xu, 虛 = empty space), while the Earth is said to be tranquil. Emptiness is boundless, and tranquility leads to no rash action. There is an unchanged way in the world of changes, which is so-called "tranquility." This implies that the dao of the Heaven and the dao of the Earth are shown with emptiness and tranquility. Being in between the Heaven and the Earth, people have to keep emptiness and tranquility in mind in experiencing dao and in acquiring it. If we want to be compatible with dao, we should keep emptiness and tranquility in mind often: that the emptiness and tranquility of the dao agree with those of our mind. In other words, a person's mind has to return to the state of emptiness and tranquility to agree with the dao of the Heaven and the Earth. Emptiness is the beginning of creation. What is "emptiness"? the *Mental Techniques* asks; "emptiness has no reservation." How can our mind have no reservation? To experience dao with our integral mind means that our mind is open to dao, so there is no reservation. "Emptiness" refers to reality, and "nil" actually implies entirety. When one has no reservations, he is in a state of emptiness. There is no gap between emptiness and dao, so it is compatible with dao.

“There is no distance between emptiness and people. Yi-Shen Shi stated, “Empty space is the qi of Heaven. People reside in emptiness, so there is no distance between people and emptiness.” In the *Mental Techniques, First Part* we read:

Dao exists between the Heaven and the Earth, and there is no boundary to it when it stretches out, and no limit to it when it shrinks. Therefore, a saying goes: “although dao is not far from us, it is difficult for us to enter.” There is no distance between emptiness and people, but only saints can acquire emptiness. Therefore, a saying goes, “although dao exists with people, it is difficult for us to be compatible.” What we should focus on is concentration. When you eradicate your desire, you feel unobstructed. When you feel unobstructed, you can be tranquil. Once you step into emptiness, you can concentrate. When you concentrate, you can stand out. When you stand out among all living creatures, you learn to observe things carefully. When you learn to observe things carefully, you reach the state of deity. Gods are the noblest, and if your house is not clean, they will not reside with you. A saying goes, “if the house of mind is not clean, the god of dao will not stay.”...The state of emptiness and tranquility has no reservation. Therefore, without wisdom, how can we pursue dao? Without reservation, how can we plan? No pursuit and no planning, we do not have to think. Without thinking, we can return to the state of emptiness and tranquility.

From the passage cited above, we can see that what people should focus and concentrate on is “jing.” What is “jing?” According to the four chapters, “jing” is what we were born with and what is hidden in our bodies. “Jing” is the jing of qi. In other words, “jing” is the essence of qi, and it is mystical. As long as people eradicate their desires and have peace of mind, they can return to tranquility and peacefulness. When our mind is in the state of complete tranquility and peacefulness, we enter the bottom of our mind as “the mind in our hearts” as stated in the *Internal Work*. This can be regarded as a complete state of profound serenity when the jingqi hidden deeply in our bodies rises up to make our orifices flow freely, and we are independent individuals in the universe. Therefore, our jingqi flows together with prevalent jingqi in the universe in order to have an understanding of the world and to see clearly emptiness to enter a mystical state. Therefore, “when we are independent, we can see everything clearly; when we can see everything clearly, we can reach a mystical state,” and gods are the noblest. However, “gods do not stay where it is unclean,” and our “mind” is the key. Therefore, a person should thoroughly get rid of tangled desires and impurities in his mind in order to restore the mind to peacefulness and tranquility, and to let jingqi prevail and wisdom appear. This is what is called “emptiness (xu, 虛).”

Regarding the remark mentioned in the text, that “saints acquire empty (xu) dao”; how can saints obtain empty dao? A quotation from the *Shu Yan* might explain this. As the *Shu Yan* states:

When saints use their intelligence, it is erudite and round in a muddle, it is as if the right way is too obscure to obtain, it is as a tangled skein that is difficult to be untangled, yet it can be combed as it is orderly.

“Muddle” means “mess,” and “obscure” means “unclear” or indistinct. *Guangya* writes, “obscurity means indistinctness,” and the meaning of “muddle” is interlinked to that of “obscurity.” The passage chiefly describes the dedication of saints: it is erudite and round in a muddle; it is as if the right way is too obscure to obtain; it is as tangled as a disorderly skein, which is winding and circumlocutory yet orderly. Although the paragraph depicts the dedication of saints, it is quite similar to the description of Heaven and Earth in the *Clear Mind*, which reads:

Heaven seems to be held together by something, while the Earth seems to be carried by something. If there is nothing to hold Heaven together, it will collapse; if there is nothing to bear the weight of the Earth, it will sink.... When we attempt to search for its whereabouts, we have no idea about the right timing. It is vast in the world, and it is clear yet turbid in the sky. In addition, in a muddle, we cannot find the right way.

The description of “it is erudite and round in a muddle, and it is as if the right way is too obscure to obtain” is quite similar to “it is clear yet turbid in the sky, and we cannot find the right way in a muddle.” The former describes the state of saints, while the latter discusses how Heaven does not collapse and how the Earth does not sink, which implies the metaphysical existence of “dao.” “Emptiness (xu, 虛)” is the dao of the Heaven. Comparing the two, we can see that saints acquire empty dao because of their emptiness which does not collect or reserve anything, and they can hold Heaven, the Earth and creation. Therefore, the words, thoughts, and actions of saints become one with the Heaven and are compatible with dao.

### On “Tranquility (靜)”

“Tranquility” is a state. However, when the mind enters a mystical state of mental tranquility, it has to face a fundamental question which is an intrinsic feature of humankind and which is the question of lively vigor stated by Confucius. That desires that are derived from the mind of lively vigor is a fundamental issue that has to be solved in life. Confucius wrote about “lust,” “fight,” and “greediness,” while the four chapters talk about anxiety, sorrow, joy, anger, desire, and advantage. When one is anxious, he loses orderliness; when one is angry, he has no idea. “When there is desire in mind, one will not see any object in front of him and will not hear any sound,” and “when desire is filled with one's mind, he does not see any color or hear any sound.” As one's mind is flooded with desires, there is no place for dao to stay. From the angle of “jingqi,” it means that pure and mystical “jingqi” has disappeared, and thus, “one has to clean up his house and open his door.” The house here refers to mind. “Mind” in the four chapters means house. “House” and “door” are metaphors. Eradicating impurities in the mind is like cleaning up a house. This kind of metaphor is similar to the splendor of the Sun and the brightness of the Moon; their brilliance is simply covered by dark clouds. When they disperse, their shining looks are restored.

However, when one wants to get rid of impurities and restore the serenity and brightness of his mind, it is important to eradicate “desires.” In other words, to control mind, it is a priority to face the “desires” in our mind. “Desires,” as stated in the four chapters, are anxiety, sorrow, joy, anger, desire, and advantage. “Desires” make people confused and irritable. We read in *Internal Work*:

All forms of mind are plentiful and sufficient,  
and they grow and develop naturally. If one

loses it, it is because of the interference of anxiety, joy, happiness, anger, desire and advantage.

People's lives depends on the happiness of their mind. When one is anxious, he loses orderliness; when one is angry, he has no idea. When one is anxious, sorrowful, happy or angry, dao has no place to stay. The thought of desires should be ceased, and evil thought should be corrected. When one is not allured or swayed by desires, happiness will eventually come.... One can acquire dao when he has peace of mind, but he will lose it when he is restless.... If we can carry out the principle of controlling our desires, creation will not be harmful.

The desires of anxiety, sorrow, joy, anger, desire and advantage make one's mind rash, restless, irritable and angry, and cause the original jingqi to lose its spirituality and mystical character. Therefore, we should let our mind return to the state of serenity and peacefulness. Do not be confused, and the mind will return to tranquility. What are methods for administering to the mind? *Zhuangzi* says, "when one's mind is righteous, it is tranquil; when one's mind is tranquil, it is clear (*Zhuangzi · Gengsangchu*)."  
*Disijing* writes, "when one is righteous and tranquil, he can be regarded as a saint." *The Mental Techniques, First Part* states: "complicated things might look messy, but they are orderly when they are tranquil." *Internal Work* states: "when one is not righteous, morality will not be around; when one's mind is not tranquil, his thoughts will not be reasonable," and "one loses spirit because he is irritable. If one's mind can be tranquil, "dao" will be stable." It can be

known from the aforementioned sentences that “tranquility” is important in governing mind. In other words, one can cultivate his mind with “tranquility.” However, how can one's mind be “tranquil?” If one's mind wants to be “tranquil,” one has to control his desires and lessen them. The concept of “lessening desires” comes from *Laozi*, which says:

Do not pursue rare treasure..... Turn away from objects that arouse desires so that people's hearts will not be deluded (3<sup>rd</sup> chapter).

Only when one has few desires can his desires be satisfied (19<sup>th</sup> chapter).

If people do not seek fame or wealth, the world will be settled (37<sup>th</sup> chapter).

*Laozi* advocates lessening desires and having no desire, and it states that impurities in our mind can be deposited with “tranquility,” which can help to restore our “mind” to the state of mental tranquility, to observe objects clearly and to agree with dao. This concept influenced the author of the four chapters, which emphasize controlling desires.

Yuan-Ming Ding argued that the author thought the greatest obstacle for “the acquisition of dao” was that our “mind” was covered and allured by desires and subjective prejudice.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, if one wants to elaborate the function of “mind” in experiencing dao, he has to eradicate his desires, likes, and dislikes. Therefore, “lessening desires” and “controlling desires” can be said to be important skills to cultivate one's mind. “Lessening desires” means that one has few desires, and to reduce one's desires is to “control one's desires.” This means that one is not attracted by advantage and not frightened by harm. Gentlemen steer

objects, but they are not steered by objects. When one's mind is upright, his qi is upright as well.

“Tranquility” in the four chapters of *Guanzi* has the former meaning, and it means that mind becomes irritable and distraught as it is harassed by anxiety, sorrow, joy, anger, desire, advantage, and subjective prejudice. Through “lessening desires,” these emotions will be deposited, and the restlessness of the mind will be removed to help it return to the state of peacefulness and serenity. The process is to abandon all artificial disturbances, and help restore the mind to serenity, plainness, simplicity, starkness and being indifferent to fame or gain. This is to say that one returns to sincerity and does not pursue rare objects and power. The process from having a liking for desires, to lessening desires, to being indifferent to fame or gain and plainness and simplicity cannot be attained overnight. Instead, it takes an accumulation of experience and is a practical principle of returning to one’s foundations, and restoring to dao.

However, people cannot help but respond to objects in their ordinary lives. When one responds to objects, he has feelings and then feels moved. Therefore, “feeling” is “moving;” how can “moving” become “tranquil”? “Tranquility” here has a more profound meaning. Static “tranquility” is transformation in the depth of mind to enter the emptiness (xu, 虛) and profound serenity in the center of one's mind. Jingqi that hides deeply inside rises up and flows together with the jingqi outside and in the universe, when body and mind become one, and mind and qi become one. Integral mind shows the flow of qi, and it shines with the Sun and the Moon and combines with dao. It can be said that movement is in stillness, and stillness is in movement. There is no artificial operation, but it operates naturally to enter the state of nature as stated in the four chapters. It is most important for dao to adjust to the nature of objects.

### On “Adaptation (因)”

In the *Mental Techniques, First Part*, we read:

Following things or objects does not come from one's subjective thought, and one's movement is not chosen randomly. Mistakes are made because one relies merely on his own opinions; errors appear because one changes without any rule. Therefore, gentlemen who follow dao seem naïve and ignorant when alone and seem to be cooperative when they handle objects. This is the dao of mental tranquility that they scrupulously abide by.

The so-called adaptation means that one eradicates his subjective assumptions and learns from objective objects. Observe the regular patterns of objects before following them, and this is not a subjective assumption. Take action in accordance with the rules of objects, and it is not random selection.

“Mistakes are made because one relies merely on his own opinions; errors appear because one changes without any rule.”... If one changes blindly, deception will occur, and when deception occurs, there will be chaos. Therefore, it is the most important for dao to adjust to the nature of objects.

What does adaptation (因) mean?

Li-Gui Chen thought that “adaptation” means that one does not have any subjective thought or prejudice and faithfully reflects the original appearance of objects. “Adaptation” has two features: the first one is to empty oneself and get rid of one's thought, to thoroughly eradicate anything with one's ideology, no likes and dislikes, no

prejudice, no selection, no attempt to stick to anything, or to change oneself into an object. The second feature is completely passive, which adjusts to the coming and going of objects. Like a mirror, one does not have any assumptions when an object comes, and does not retain anything when it leaves. "When an object comes, one reacts to it; when it leaves, one does not think about it anymore." This means that one has reached the state of emptiness (xu, 虛). From an objective standpoint, one waits for the change of an object and reacts to it passively.<sup>8</sup>

Fu-Chen Hu thought "adaptation" covers four meanings:<sup>9</sup> "one eradicates his subjective assumptions and learns from objective objects," "adaptation means abiding by the power of an object," "adaptation to nature," and "adaptation to people's will," which mainly emphasize the eradication of one's subjective persistence.

From the perspective of the mind-qi relationship, "adaptation" has two meanings: the first one is to handle objects as if they are cooperative, and the other one is the adaptation of the main body. Although the former adjusts to objects, the mind of the main body is not swayed by external objects. There are no subjective assumptions, likes and dislikes, or prejudice. One adjusts himself to objects, not out of subjective prejudice. One's mind adapts to Nature and to the coming and going of objects. When an object leaves, he does not retain it, and his mind returns to the state of mental tranquility. The mind of the latter adapts to Nature. "Gentlemen seem naïve and ignorant when being alone, which is the highest state of mental tranquility." This implies the mind of the main body is still and then it enters the bottom of one's heart to transform the qi of the body into jingqi without any artificial feeling. It abides by the rule of Nature: it flows together with jingqi in the universe and shines with the Sun and the Moon. This is "concentration,"

that results from adaptation to the natural world inside the main body.

### On "Concentration (—)"

Over 30 passages in the four chapters of the *Guanzi* discuss "concentration (—)." In the *Mental Techniques, Second Part*, we read:

When one is concentrated and sincere and has righteous vision and hearing, he can understand profound wisdom that is still far away. Can he be concentrated? Can he be sincere? Can he predict misfortune and fortune without divination? Can he halt when he is supposed to? Can he stop when he is supposed to? Can he find answers to his questions without asking others? Therefore, he thinks about his questions. When he cannot find answers to his questions, ghosts and gods will assist him. However, this is not the power of ghosts and gods, but it is *jingqi* that has reached its climax.

In the *Clear Mind* we read:

When one is concentrated, he comprehends "dao."

The *Internal Work* states:

When one responds to creation with concentration, he can urge the development of creation, which is called "spirit." When one persists in responding to creation to promote the change of all living things, it is called "wisdom." Only single-minded gentlemen can urge the development of creation without

altering their righteousness, and promote the change of creation without changing their thought. When one is concentrated without losing himself, he can steer creation. Gentlemen harness creation, but they are not harnessed by creation. This is because they can follow the rule of being single-minded. When reasonable thought is hidden in mind, reasonable discourses come from them and reasonable measures favor the public; the world is settled.

It continues:

Collecting righteous power with superhuman strength can store the regular patterns of creation in mind. Can people collect it? Can they be single-minded? Can they predict misfortune and fortune without divination? Can they stop when they want to? Can they finish it when they want to? Can they not request others' assistance but depend on themselves? Think about it. Think about it. Think about it again. If your thought is not clear, ghosts and gods will assist you. However, this is not the power of ghosts and gods, but it is jingqi that has reached its climax.

“Concentration” plays an important role in the development of the mind-qi relationship. The profound meaning of the sentence of “collecting righteous power with superhuman strength can store the regular patterns of creation in mind” still focuses on “mind.” “Collecting righteousness power” will be discussed in the following section. “Mind” focuses on “concentration”; integral mind is

in the middle and its form is outside. Integral mind is concentration. What does “concentration” mean? Qi which is in our bodies is not separable from mind, and the mind has to be single-minded. No matter how much the external world changes, the internal body never changes.

“Concentration (—)” has three interrelated meanings in the four chapters.

1. One of its meanings is the climax of jingqi. “One thinks about his questions. When he cannot find answers to his questions, ghosts and gods will assist him. However, this is not the power of ghosts and gods, but it is jingqi that has reached its climax.” One thinks about his questions. When he cannot find answers to his questions, ghosts and gods will assist him. However, this is not the power of ghosts and gods, but it is his own power. How can he have the ability to do so? It is because jingqi has reached its climax. Climax means peak. When one is single-minded, sincere, and concentrated, and when his mind reaches the state of tranquility, his mind will become clear, and jingqi will rise up. When one understands the rules of dao, the regular patterns of creation will be stored in one's mind, and one will be able to comprehend misfortune and fortune.

2. The second meaning is concentration. No matter how the external world changes and how turbulent objects are, one's mind is not influenced and swayed by other objects. Because of “concentration,” one's turbulent and messy willpower will be purified. “Concentration” makes chaotic things orderly. In other words, “jingqi” is the foundation of creation, and no matter how the external form of an object changes, its nature never changes. As long as

we command the foundation of the development of creation, we can steer all living things.

3. The third meaning is purity. What does purity mean? When one concentrates on one thing or one object to its apex, he reaches the state of perfection which is called "spirit" and "wisdom," and this is a spiritual state. However, on the "nature" of qi, the internal structure of qi is altered as one is concentrated and single-minded. This is called "the change of nature," when qi changes from indelicacy into delicacy, and when it is exquisite and pure, it turns into "jingqi" to restore its holiness and mystical character. The third meaning of "concentration" is the same as the first one which states the climax of jingqi. Therefore, it states: "this is not the power of ghosts and gods, but it is jingqi that has reached its climax."

"Concentration" means integral mind. Being integral means one has no reservations. No reservation means "emptiness (xu, 虛)." "Tranquility" is the foundation of "emptiness," and "concentration" is the focus of "tranquility." Although I have expounded the key argumentation of the school of mind from four aspects – "emptiness," "tranquility," "adaptation," and "concentration" – the four are interrelated and cannot be independent. They are four aspects of one whole. Through the internal cultivation of "emptiness," "tranquility," "adaptation," and "concentration," the mind of a main body returns to its original state of tranquility, and qi becomes smooth and harmonious. With the change of mind, qi naturally changes, and one's spirit is thus purified.

### **On "Qi" in Tranquil Mind and Regulated Qi**

"Mind" and "qi" are closely related: they are inter-

dependent and inseparable, and they influence each other. With the change of “mind,” “qi” becomes different. Dao can only be acquired when one's mind is tranquil and his qi is regulated. However, what does “qi” refer to? What are differences between “qi” and “jingqi?” These questions will be discussed below.

### *Qi and Jingqi*

The *Internal Work* presents “qi” as follows:

When jingqi of creation is collected, it has vitality. It becomes food crops on the ground and becomes stars in the sky. Jingqi that lingers between Heaven and the Earth is called ghosts and gods. Those who embrace jingqi in their bosoms are called saints. Jingqi is as if it were in Heaven when it is bright, and in a chasm when it is dim. When it is distant, it is as if it is drifting in the ocean; when it is near, it is as if it stays with us. Therefore, jingqi cannot be retained by force, but it can be stabilized with virtues. You cannot summon it with sound, but you can welcome it with your will. When you retain it respectfully without losing it, this is called the cultivation of virtues. When virtues are cultivated, wisdom will appear, and the regular patterns of creation can be thoroughly commanded.

With “dao,” qi has life. When it has life, it can think. When it can think, it gains knowledge. When it has knowledge, it stops in the state of perfection. Any form of great ordinary mind will damage its vitality when it gains excessive knowledge.

When “jing” is in our bodies, we are full of vitality. It shows luster in our appearance. It becomes a vast and peaceful spring in our bodies, and it is the origin of righteousness. When the origin does not dry up, our bodies are healthy and strong. When the spring does not run dry, our orifices will be smooth. When one governs the world, his achievements and virtues will influence the entire world.

Jing is the essence of qi.

The *Mental Techniques, Second Part* discusses “qi” as follows:

Therefore, when one's qi is stable, his behavior can be righteous. Qi can enrich one's body.

When one is concentrated and sincere and has righteous vision and hearing, he can understand profound wisdom that is still far away. Can he be single-minded? Can he be sincere? Can he predict misfortune and fortune without divination? Can he halt when he is supposed to? Can he stop when he is supposed to? Can he find answers to his questions without asking others? Therefore, he thinks about his questions. When he cannot find answers to his questions, ghosts and gods will assist him. However, this is not the power of ghosts and gods, but it is jingqi that has reached its climax.

The first passage in the *Internal Work* states: “when jingqi of creation is collected, it has vitality.” “Jing” here refers to “jingqi,” which is more primitive and purer than qi. “Jing is the essence of qi.” Jingqi contains the creative pure

power to combine with various objects and turn into different forms. Some turn into stars, some into food crops, some into ghosts and gods, and others become saints. Therefore, from the perspective of “jingqi,” the form and spirit of a human body are the homogeneous existence of different aspects. The body and spirit have an inseparable effect due to this kind of fundamental connection.

The jingqi is everywhere, and it is the origin of the existence of all individuals. When it is around, it is as if it is in Heaven, in a chasm, on the ocean or around us. The description is similar to the discussion of “dao.” However, is the “jingqi” “dao?” “Dao” is expounded in the four chapters, and there are various explanations of “dao”: “dao is not far from us, but it is difficult for us to enter,” “dao is empty and intangible,” “great dao can be adjusted, but cannot be explained,” “dao is between Heaven and the Earth, and there is no boundary to it when it stretches out, and no limit to it when it shrinks,” “only saints acquire empty dao,” “emptiness is what we call dao” and “dao is as vast as the sky, as broad as the ground, as heavy as rocks and as light as feathers.” The above-mentioned sentences show that “jingqi” is not completely equivalent to “dao.” The 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of *Laozi* reads:

Dao is both tangible and intangible. It is like an invisible image between existence and inexistence, but it can create all living things. In the profound and dim state, it has the most fundamental jing to create all living things. The jing is genuine and believable. From past to present, dao always exists and constantly creates all living things.

“Jing” in the sentence “it has the most fundamental jing” refers to “jingqi” as it appears in *Internal Work*. “Dao” are

both tangible and intangible, profound and dim. It is empty yet real, and it is real yet empty. It is difficult for us to predict, but its existence is genuine. In a twilight state, it has the image of the universe and covers creation. It depends on the flow of “jingqi” for “dao” to possess the image of the universe and contain all living things. “Jingqi” makes all existence and changes possible. It can become food crops on the ground and turn into stars in the sky. It can even transform into ghosts, gods, and saints. Therefore, “dao” is displayed in another form in *Guanzi*. In other words, “jingqi” becomes another existence of “dao.” “Jingqi” is the origin of all life. But what are differences between “jingqi” and “qi?” The text mentions “jing is the essence of qi” and “qi can enrich one's body.” Obviously, they are different.

Cun-Shan Li interpreted the sentence “jing is the essence of qi,” and thought the sentence grants the character “jing” a material regulation, but does not explain it. He thought “jing” that connects with the concept of “jingqi” has four meanings. The first one is that “jing” is the opposite of largeness and thickness, and it means delicacy. The second one connects with the meaning of delicacy, so “jing” means purity and simplicity. The third one connects with the meaning of delicacy and purity, so “jing” has the mystical meaning of being changeable. The fourth one is that “jing” means spirit. To integrate the four meanings, it can be said that “jingqi” is delicate – different from general delicacy, it is “so fine that there is no limit” and it is “so pure that it has no shape –, pure, and mystical qi that can transform into our spirit after entering our bodies.<sup>10</sup> Based on this, “jing” is the essence of qi, and “jingqi” is most essential and purest of all. *Mental Techniques, First Part* states that: “qi is called jingqi when it can transform.” This shows that “jingqi” is still a kind of “qi,” but “jingqi” is more delicate, purer, and more mystical than “qi.” This can be comprehended with

“intrinsic qi,” and once the qi hides in one's bosom, he becomes a saint who does not suffer from natural and artificial disasters.

People are born with qi which is jingqi. “Jingqi” is the origin of all life, so the purity and mystical character of “jingqi” exist inherently in each life. Saints are those who get rid of bad habits in order to show their true hearts and jingqi which is hidden in their bosoms, so they can harness creation and govern the world. Then one can stand indomitably to inspect the sky, the Sun, and the Moon, which shows the mystical uses of “jingqi.” Therefore, “qi” in tranquil mind and regulated qi are different from “jingqi” in nature. “Jingqi” is purer and more delicate than “qi,” and it is mystical. “Regulated” in “tranquil mind and regulated qi” means “smooth.” Thus, we can also say “tranquil mind and smooth qi.” Gu-Ying Chen interpreted this phrase as “one's will is tranquil and stable, and his qi runs smoothly.”<sup>11</sup> It can be known that “qi” in “tranquil mind and regulated qi” is different from physical qi, and that it is influenced by mind, so it can tolerate “jingqi,” smooth qi in the state of tranquil mind, and regulated qi. It can also be regarded as “spirit.”

### *Collecting Righteous Power*

“Collecting righteous power” is another concept mentioned in the *Internal Work*. What does “collecting righteous power” mean? The *Internal Work* states:

Collecting righteous power with superhuman strength can store the regular patterns of creation in mind. Can people collect it? Can they be single-minded? Can they predict misfortune and fortune without divination? Can they stop when they want to? Can they finish it when they want to? Can they not request others' assistance but depend on

themselves? Think about it. Think about it. Think about it again. If your thought is not clear, ghosts and gods will assist you. However, this is not the power of ghosts and gods, but it is jingqi that has reached its climax.

“Collecting righteous power” literally means assimilating and gathering jingqi. The first sentence “collecting righteous power with superhuman strength” means that gathering jingqi is like having the assistance of superhuman strength, and the regular patterns of creation can be stored in mind. However, can “qi” be gathered and agglomerated? If it can be gathered and agglomerated, can we say that “people can collect it? Can they be single-minded?” Therefore, to solve the question, we should start from the mind-qi relationship. Mind and qi are interdependent and interrelated, so the key of “collecting righteous power” lies in “mind.” “Mind” determines the agglomeration of “qi,” which means that when people get rid of vexatious and distracting thoughts and remove all fixation on knowledge and argumentation, they can enjoy a state of mental tranquility, return to the pure nature of mind, show their true mind, and then they can gather and agglomerate jingqi which will be restored to its purity and mystical character. When it goes to the bottom of one's heart, meaning that it is in the center of one's heart, one can be assimilated into Heaven and Earth and flow with dao. At that time, the universe joins him. This is what *Guanzi* argues – that when jingqi is hidden in one's bosom, he is regarded as a saint. This means that “spirit is in our bodies, but it seems impossible to think about it as it comes and goes.... When righteous spirit is preserved in our bodies, we will have a unified standard to treat objects.” In addition, the concept of “concentrating spirit” can be found in *Laozi*, which states:

Can you concentrate spirit to be perfectly calm and as carefree as a baby? Can you remove spiritual stains to make your spirit have no desire? Can you treat your people nicely and govern your country without showing off your abilities? Can your thoughts and words be humble and respectful? Can you examine the tiniest things without exerting your wisdom? (10<sup>th</sup> chapter)

The meaning of “concentrating spirit” is interpreted by Heshanggong: “concentrating jingqi to make mind not turbid.” Bang-Xiong Wang illustrated the sentence well: “Can you concentrate spirit to be perfectly calm and as carefree as a baby?” and he contrasted it with the passage in the 59<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Laozi* which goes: “It is the most important to be frugal when one governs his people and conducts dao with Heaven. Thriftiness is for the preparation of future disasters. Early preparation is the same as the accumulation of merits and virtues.” He thought concentrating spirit meant thriftiness. Thriftiness means that life is modest, not arrogant, and that life is agglomerated. This helps eradicate the growth of mind and the interference of desires. Therefore, when one has no knowledge and desire, his life will naturally become concentrated and tender. Concentrating spirit means early preparation, and it is perfectly calm. Early preparation brings harmony between Heaven and the Earth, while being perfectly calm receives harmony between yin and yang. Being perfectly calm means acquiring harmony and valuing merits and virtues as a baby.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, “concentrated spirit is perfectly calm” means agglomeration and helps life return to its tenderness and tranquility.

Based on this, “collecting righteous power” has the same meaning as “concentrating spirit,” and the reasons for them are identical. They both mean that the concentration of jingqi eradicates vexations and distracting thoughts, and mind becomes concentrated and tranquil, returning to the clearness of one's mind. There is no thought and no desire, and one's inspiration rises up to illuminate the world. “Collecting righteous power” is the same as “concentrating spirit.” “Agglomeration” is “concentration.” The *Internal Work* states:

When one responds to creation with concentration, he can urge the development of creation, which is called “spirit.” When one persists in responding to creation to promote the change of creation, it is called “wisdom.”

Only a single-minded gentleman can urge the development of creation without altering his righteousness, and promote the change of creation without changing his thought. When one is concentrated without losing himself, he can steer creation. Gentlemen harness creation, but they are not harnessed by creation. This is because they can follow the rule of being single-minded.

The *Mental Techniques, Second Part* reads:

Concentrated qi makes one flexible with the instruction of ghosts and gods. This is called sincerity. When one is single-minded, he can change objects. This is called wisdom.

The *Internal Work* states, “when one responds to creation with concentration, he can urge the development of creation, which is called “spirit.” “Responding to creation with

concentration” means “concentrated qi.” In the *Mental Techniques, Second Part* we read: “concentrated qi makes one flexible with the instruction of ghosts and gods”; this is the explanation for “when one responds to creation with concentration, he can urge the development of creation, which is called ‘spirit.’” “Transformation” and “change” mentioned in the aforementioned two sentences mainly focus on the transformation of “concentrated qi” toward all forms, and this is the same as what *Internal Work* says: “when jingqi of all objects is combined, it has vitality. It grows into food crops on the ground and becomes stars in the sky.” “Concentrated qi” is infinite, intangible and continuous qi, and various forms are the agglomeration of a fixed amount of qi. The agglomeration brings change in nature and, as it was difficult for ancient people to describe this change with appropriate language, it is called “spirit.” Sima Tan stated in *The Discussion of the Essentials of the Six Schools*, “the Daoist school makes people concentrated”; this is based on the *Mental Techniques, Second Part*. Based on this, the so-called “concentrating on objects,” “concentrating on things,” “concentrating one’s attention,” and “commanding the principle of concentration” can be comprehended as concentration. This means that as long as one can concentrate on things and objects and can be absorbed in one thing and one object, he will enjoy the result of “practice makes perfect” and reach a wonderful state of perfection, which is called “spirit” and “wisdom.” Therefore, “collecting righteous power with superhuman strength” still focuses on “mind.” “Concentration” is the key of “mind,” and mind is sound inside our bodies. Integral mind is concentrated mind, and we can only enter the state of dao when we are concentrated.

### On “Dao” That Governs Mind and Qi

The greatest contribution of the *Guanzi* is to implement “dao,” the origin of creation and of people’s minds, and to show it with the form of “jingqi.” “Dao” is no longer empty and elusive, but it quietly stays with us and influences us. From being the origin of creation in the universe to being a regular pattern of operation of Heaven and Earth through “tranquil mind and regulated qi,” mind and qi are combined to be carried out in human bodies. From the integration of mind and qi and from tranquil mind and regulated qi, “dao” stays in our mind to reach the combination of Heaven and humanity, which is the highest state that Daoism pursues. However, people do not hear its sound and do not know its shape, and this is why we say “dao is both empty (xu, 虛) and intangible.” What is “dao?” In the *Mental Techniques, First Part* we read:

Although dao is not far from us, it is difficult for us to enter. Although it stays with us, it is hard for us to identify with. When one eradicates his desires, dao will enter his mind. When one removes unclean lust, dao will be retained. Everyone wants to acquire wisdom, but no one knows how to obtain it. Wisdom, wisdom! It should be cast away so that people will not fight for it. Those who search for wisdom cannot find its residence, and even gentlemen cannot find it. This is why we say dao is “empty and intangible.”

Dao exists between the Heaven and the Earth, and there is no boundary to it when it stretches out and no limit to it when it shrinks. Therefore, we say, “although dao is not far from us, it is difficult for us to enter.”

We do not see the shape of dao when it moves and do not see the virtues of it when it spreads. Creation is favored by dao, but no one understands its mystery.

The *Mental Techniques, Second Part* states:

Dao of saints is sometimes as if it is in front of us, and sometimes as if it is not there. If we use it, it will never be exhausted. It urges the changes of the times, but it does not change at all. It allows the development of objects, but it is always immovable. It can be used each day, but it does not make any mistake.

In the *Clear Mind* we read:

When dao is used by one person, there is no surplus, and when it is used by all the people in the world, it is not insufficient. This can be called dao.

Dao is as vast as the sky, as broad as the ground, as heavy as rocks and as light as feathers.

It continues:

We examine the origin of objects to search for their bases.

The *Internal Work* reads:

Dao is a shape that enriches people's minds, but we cannot retain it. Once it leaves, it will not return. Even if it comes back, it does not stay where it belongs. No one can hear its sound, but suddenly, it appears in people's minds. We cannot see its shape as it is dim, but

it quietly stays with us and influences us. We cannot see its shape, hear its sound, but it can perfectly order creation, and this is so-called "dao." Great dao does not have a fixed place to stay, and when it meets someone kind, it stays there. When the mind is tranquil and qi is regulated, dao can be retained.

The so-called "dao" has no root, no trunk, no leaf and no flower. However, creation is born and grows because of it, so we call it "dao."

The phrase "We examine the origin of objects to search for their bases" in the *Clear Mind* refers to original dao. "Dao" is the utmost origin of creation. However, it is both empty (xu, 虛) and intangible, and no one can hear or see it. It is boundless for it is "empty (void)," and it produces no conflict as it is "intangible." It can prevail within creation without changing itself. Dao is empty and intangible. We do not see the shape of dao when it moves and do not see the virtues of it when it spreads about. However, creation is born and grows because of dao. We do not have an answer to the issue, so we say, "creation is favored by dao, but no one understands its mystery."

"Dao is as vast as the sky and as broad as the ground." Between the Heaven and the Earth, dao can stretch out without any boundary and shrink without any limit. It is everywhere in Heaven and Earth, and it is the origin of all creation. Dao is as vast as the sky, as broad as the ground, as heavy as rocks and as light as feathers. "Dao is complete and precise, broad and comfortable, persistent and sturdy." Dao covers all nature, so when it appears in human bodies, it can reach the state of "dao is quick-eared and sharp-eyed, and it makes us relaxed and healthy. It can stand

indomitably between the Heaven and the Earth and inspect the sky, the Sun, and the Moon." Dao changes with the environment, but its nature never changes. People know little of dao. It seems near yet far, and it seems accessible yet inaccessible.

"Dao" is in our bodies, but people generally do not comprehend this. It cannot be retained. Once it leaves, it does not return, and even if it comes back, it does not stay where it belongs. Dao is empty (xu, 虛) and tranquil. We cannot hear its sound, but it quietly stays with us and influences us. Dao is tranquil and empty, so we cannot hear its sound or see its shape. However, creation grows because of it. Dao has no fixed place to stay, but if one treats it kindly and if one's mind is tranquil and qi is regulated, dao will be retained. When one feels peaceful and healthy and when his mind is single-minded, his life will be long.

To sum up, "dao" expounded in the four chapters of *Guanzi* can be categorized into the following four concepts:

#### *The Emptiness (xu, 虛) of Dao*

In the *Mental Techniques, First Part*, we read: "dao is both empty and intangible... Great dao can be adjusted, but cannot be explained," the "dao of Heaven is empty and intangible," "we do not see the shape of dao when it moves and do not see the virtues of it when it spreads around. However, all creation is favored by it" and "dao of Heaven is empty (void), while dao of the Earth is tranquil." The *Internal Work* states: "dao cannot be expressed by mouth, cannot be seen by eyes and cannot be heard by ears. It helps to cultivate our mind and correct our behavior... The so-called "dao" has no root, no trunk, no leaf and no flower. However, creation is born and grows because of it, so we call it "dao." Dao is empty and intangible, and it is something that we cannot hear or see.

*Dao is Everywhere*

In the *Mental Techniques, First Part*, we read: “great dao can be adjusted, but cannot be explained,” and “we do not see the shape of dao when it moves and do not see the virtues of it when it spreads around. Creation is favored by dao, but no one understands its mystery.”

“Dao” is not concrete, and it cannot be perceived and comprehended by our sense organs or through perception. However, it genuinely exists among all living things and objects. No matter whether it is big or small, it is everywhere between Heaven and the Earth.

*Dao Stretches without Boundary and  
Shrinks without Limit*

The *Mental Techniques, First Part* states: “dao exists between Heaven and the Earth, and there is no boundary to it when it stretches out and no limit to it when it shrinks. Therefore, we say, 'although dao is not far from us, it is difficult for us to enter.'” The *Internal Work* states: “dao is complete and precise, broad and comfortable, persistent and sturdy.”

All phenomena can change, all objects can be different and all operations can be diverse, but “dao” is such that “it can urge the change of the times, but it does not change at all. It can allow the development of objects, but it is always immovable. It can be used each day, but it does not make any mistakes.”

*Dao is the Origin of All Creation*

In the *Internal Work*, we read: “people will die when they lose it and will live when they acquire it. People will fail when they lose it and will succeed when they acquire it.”

“Dao” in the four chapters basically inherits the “dao” from *Laozi*. “Dao” of *Laozi* is empty (xu, 虛) and super-perceptual and, being mixed with Heaven and the Earth, it is taller than Heaven and the Earth. *Laozi* describes the state of “dao” as being profound and dim. The *Internal Work* reads: “in a twilight state, we cannot see its shape, but it stays with us and influences us.” Although “dao” in the four chapters inherits “dao” from *Laozi*, “dao” in the four chapters has been carried out on human bodies with “jingqi,” and it can only be retained when the mind is tranquil and qi is regulated.

### Conclusion

After inheriting the dao from *Laozi*, the four chapters show its features of being prevalent in the world and cultivating all living things with the idea of “jingqi.” However, the prevalent existence of jingqi makes us realize the fundamental internal connection between us and creation. Therefore, the existence of jingqi ensures the possibility for us to return to dao. However, when this transcendent possibility is shown in human bodies, it becomes the practice of governing qi with the mind and cultivating qi with the mind.

The perspective of the four chapters holds that the purity of one's mind can invite jingqi and that one will become a saint when his mind is clear. On the contrary, when our mind is tempted by desires, jingqi will move away from us, and “dao” will be away as well. In a turbulent and diverse society, when people depart from the homeland of dao and when people are not connected with Nature, they have only their isolated bodies left. Therefore, how we can follow the guidelines for mental tranquility and for external respect described in the *Guanzi*, have peace of mind, and

avoid depression by integrating mind with qi, are issues that humanity has to think about and face.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> "The book *Guanzi* ("Master Guan") is a collection of various philosophical treatises on statecraft collected in the state of Qi (齊) during the Spring and Autumn period (771 BCE – 403 BCE)." See <http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Diverse/guanzi.html>

<sup>2</sup> See Gu-Ying Chen, *Interpretation of Four Chapters of Guanzi: Representative Works of Jixia Daoism* (Taipei: San Min Book Co., Ltd., 2003), pp. 43-49.

<sup>3</sup> See Ru-Bin Yang, "On Jingqi and Integral Mind in Four Chapters of Guanzi: Clear Mind, Mental Techniques First Part and Second Part and Internal Work – On Connection of Body Concept and Metaphysics," *Sinology Studies* Vol. 9, no. 1 (1991).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> According to Harold Roth, xu (虛) means the "apophatic inner cultivation practice of emptying the mind of all its normal contents until one experiences "an awareness that precedes words." [Editor.]

<sup>6</sup> The translations of the Guanzi texts referred to in this essay are the author's.

<sup>7</sup> See Yuan-Ming Ding, *Overview of Huang-Lao Daoism* (Shangdong: Publishing House of Shangdong University, 1997), p. 147.

<sup>8</sup> See Li-Gui Chen, *Huang-Lao Thought during the Warring States Period* (Taipei: Linking Publishing Company, 1991), p. 137.

<sup>9</sup> See Fu-Chen Hu and Xi-Chen Lu, *Introduction of Daoism: Daoist School, Daoism and Dan Dao* (Revised Edition) (Beijing: Social Science Academic Press Circulation Department, 2004), pp. 141-142.

<sup>10</sup> See Cun-Shan Li, *On Qi and Theory of Ren* (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Ancient Books Publishing House, 2009), pp. 120-121.

<sup>11</sup> See Gu-Ying Chen, *Interpretation of Four Chapters of Guanzi: Representative Works of Jixia Daoism*, p. 95.

<sup>12</sup> See Bang-Xiong Wang, *Philosophy of Laozi* (Taipei: Dongda Book Company, 1983), p. 141.

**Philosophical Therapy and Song-Era  
Confucianism: An Instance of Medical  
Application Based on Settling-and-Stillness  
Practice from Zhou Dunyi's  
*Explanation of the Taiji Diagram***

CHUNG-HSIU HUANG

**Preface**

It is commonly known that the Chinese Neo-Confucian philosopher Zhou Dunyi (周敦頤, 1017–1073 CE) made the following proposition about praxis in his book *Taichi Tushuo* (太極圖說, *Explanation of the Taiji Diagram*): “Settling is done by means of centeredness, correctness, benevolence and righteousness, with an emphasis on stillness.” Yet the *Explanation* was written in condensed, suggestive prose, so later scholars had no way to obtain additional content from Zhou’s account. Even so, the implications of this proposition were valued by the philosopher brothers from the Northern Song Dynasty, Cheng Hao (程顥, 1032–1085) and Chéng Yí (程頤, 1033–1107) (who were briefly students of Zhou Dunyi), and by other philosophers, such as Zhāng Zāi (張載) a Chinese Neo-Confucian moral philosopher and cosmologist, and Zhu Xi (朱熹), a Southern Song Dynasty Confucian scholar, and so it became the focus of discussion and interpretation. Even after the Song and Yuan dynasties, Ming-era scholars addressed the scope and relations of ideas in the *Explanation* such as “respect and stillness” or “settling and stillness,” absorbing and elaborating on its concepts. This ongoing trend of traditional hermeneutics and commitment to cultivation constituted an impetus which implicitly drove contemporary scholars of Confucian praxis,

like Móu Zōngsān (牟宗三, 1909–1995) and Táng Jūnyì (唐君毅, 1909–1978), to establish their own positions and arguments. Scholars such as Lin Yuehui, Huang Junjie and Yang Rubin followed after them, conducting extended theoretical analyses and surveys, either from the perspective of East Asian Confucianism or from that of intellectual history.

Aside from assembling evidence based on research by these scholars, I will introduce views on medical philosophy from the Yuan-era Confucian doctor Zhu Danxi (1281–1358).<sup>1</sup> Working from his understanding of medicine and of the Confucian doctrine of cultivation, I will address aspects of settling-and-stillness practice from *Explanation of the Taiji Diagram* and formulate a basis for their curative effect upon the three dispositional depressions (careworn depression, angry depression and thought-depression). The doctrine of cogitative structures for the three types of dispositional depression is founded upon an analysis of Zhu Danxi's three levels of depression (i.e., bioenergy depression, mental depression and depression of spirit). (This has been presented in my *Between Desire and Depression—The Reception of Song Era Moral Philosophy as Seen in Development of Theory on Depression by Confucian Doctor Zhu Danxi*.<sup>2</sup>) The three types of dispositional depression are treated as cogitative structures incurred only as part of “mental depression.” Ideally, then, I should give a general account of cogitative structures pertaining to all three levels of depression. However, were I to attempt to sort out and exhaust the concepts of mental depression plus the other two levels (bioenergy depression and depression of spirit), the range of this study would necessarily span the two broad fields of medicine and Confucianism, touching on a wide range of concerns indeed. In consideration of structure and manageable length, this paper will touch upon Zhu Danxi's

ideas of settling and stillness, but its scope will be limited to the segment of “settling.” In this way I can lay out a basic framework and avenue for my study. (A further discussion on “stillness” will be addressed in a separate paper.)

Even so, in choosing to expound on the practice of “settling” directed at the three types of dispositional depression (careworn depression, angry depression, and thought-depression), one immediately faces a problem of correspondence between pre-existent formulations. That is, how can the three types of dispositional depression be made to correspond with Zhou Dunyi’s practice of “centeredness, correctness, benevolence and righteousness”? That is to say, early in the interpretive tradition of Zhu Xi’s Confucianism, the rubric of “centered, correct, benevolent, and righteous” was commonly understood as analogous to the four moral roots [as discussed by Mencius], so this was treated as a set of four independent items: “centeredness, correctness, benevolence, and righteousness.” Given such a view, in cases when the three items of “careworn depression, angry depression, and thought-depression” were to be mapped onto these four items, there would clearly be a dissonance in numerical form. That being so, the first question to be dealt with in this paper arises: how can one step outside of Zhu Xi’s interpretive system to find a form for “centered, correct, benevolent, righteous” that would stand in a three-to-three correspondence with the three types of dispositional depression? (Zhu Danxi’s thinking already contains a strong tendency to integrate the ideas of Zhou Dunyi with those of Zhu Xi.)

In an earlier paper<sup>3</sup>, I proposed an answer to this question. There, I described a “three-to-three” form of correspondence, allowing for a therapeutic interpretation of cultivation doctrine. I pointed out that we need to draw on a foundation in key Chinese texts before we can match the

sets of terms in a plausible way. Between two sets of three categories there are nine possible ways to match the terms. Thus, a solution here needs to draw upon what we can discern from the background and tradition. For instance, we know the traditional sayings: “A benevolent [*ren*] person is not careworn,” and “The thinking [in the *Book of Songs*] is without crookedness [i.e., non-correctness].” I also drew on an intuitive understanding of key Confucian principles to match the terms in three pairs as a provisional basis for discussion.

[Below, the arrow signifies curative effect.]

#### **Benevolence → Care**

(Here “care” is negative and refers to a self-limiting, careworn state. This is not the moral self-awareness Mencius spoke of when he discussed the “consciousness of care and concern.”<sup>4</sup>)

#### **Righteousness → Anger**

#### **Centeredness and Correctness → Thought**

(Here “thought” refers to pensiveness or pining; it is a negative mood or state generated by non-correct or excessive thinking.)

What is more, because Zhou Dunyi did not provide detailed explanations of settling-and-stillness cultivation, this paper will draw upon a remark by Liu Jishan regarding the connection between Cheng Hao’s *Treatise on Settling Self-Nature* and Zhou Dunyi’s doctrine of emphasizing stillness:

Liu Jishan said, “This gentleman left nothing undone when he elaborated on emphasizing stillness and setting up a sphere of striving... For a long time the doctrine of emphasizing

stillness was a secret resource. Even when Zhang Zai found it he could not be free of doubt. If this gentleman Master Cheng had not elaborated on it as he did, it would have come close to vanishing in obscurity.”<sup>5</sup>

Aside from this, Zhang Heng put forth the following line of argument:

Liu Jishan directly referred to Zhou Dunyi’s doctrine on emphasizing stillness when he interpreted the *Treatise on Settling Self-Nature*. In fact there were precedents for this. Wang Yangming had already put forth such an opinion.<sup>6</sup>

With respect to the bodily domain of cultivation and praxis, this paper will go fairly far afield to draw on discussions by Cheng Hao, Zhang Zai, and Cheng Yi. Here the intention is to come close to a rounded conceptual picture of Zhou Dunyi’s settling-and-stillness practice, demonstrating the possibility of pluralistic interpretation. My paper will explore this topic in sequence according to the following framework: “expanding benevolence to settle and stabilize careworn depression”; “carrying out righteousness to settle and stabilize angry depression”; and “being centered and correct to settle and stabilize thought-depression.”

### **The Possibility of “Expanding Benevolence to Settle and Stabilize Careworn Depression”**

In order to ease the unfamiliarity that scholars may feel towards medical explanations of Confucianism, I will begin with an instance of *ren* [“benevolence”] being defined as feeling or awareness, which happens to be the approach

taken by Cheng Hao. This will serve as a lead-in to my argument.

In medical parlance degenerative paralysis of hands and feet is referred to as “not *ren*,” which is a compelling metaphorical expression. A person who has *ren* takes heaven, earth, and all things as one body, so nothing is not oneself. If one can recognize things as one’s self, the self can be extended anywhere. If you do not have something in your [notion of] self, then even a part of yourself may have nothing to do with you. If your hands are numb and unfeeling (not *ren*), that means bioenergy is not getting through, so they do not belong to you.<sup>7</sup>

Cheng Hao points to the medical use of the word “not *ren*,” referring to paralysis of the hands and feet, and he finds this to be a fitting metaphor to explain the traditional concept of *ren* in Confucian thought. This view of Cheng Hao definitely influenced the attitude behind interpreting *ren* by Xie Shangcai, Hu Guangzhong, and other scholars. Even though Zhu Xi changed the focus and methodology when he interpreted this, it is undeniable that he took this view seriously. In *Discourses of Zhu Xi*, we read the following:

Getting to the bottom of the meaning, what we call *ren* [benevolence] is the life-giving mind of Heaven and earth. Received by human beings, it is the heart-mind. So we can say that Heaven, earth, humans and animals are alike in having this heart-mind, and there is no time when the virtue of this heart-mind does not move through them. Although they are

different with respect to being Heaven, earth, humans or animals, there is this thread connecting them. By experiential realization one gains this [as one's] heart-mind, and if one finds ways to nurture it, then the principle of this mind can reach anywhere, so naturally there will be nothing one does not love. The moment that the slightest desire covers it up, it will be cut apart. One may set out to love [on purpose], but then there may be places [one's] love does not reach.<sup>8</sup>

This passage from Zhu Xi indeed makes Cheng Hao's conception clearer than before. Zhu Xi felt that as soon as this human heart – which is one with the myriad things – is covered up by selfish desires, it will retract; thereupon it will view the myriad things as being external to the self and one will “not have them within oneself.” Then there will be places where the love one puts forth does not reach, which will cause energy not to flow smoothly. If this goes on for long, by daily accumulation it will become an ailment of degeneration and paralysis. Thus if one wants to avoid the illness of degeneration and paralysis, one's praxis of human virtue becomes important as a moral way of fostering health. In Cheng Hao's other discourses we can find explanations and clarifications pertaining to this chain of reasoning.

Being *ren* is up to oneself, so what careworn feelings could there be? When something is not within oneself and one starts chasing it outwardly, this is called care. Hence it is said that “one who delights in [things given by] Heaven and knows fate will not be careworn.”<sup>9</sup>

Confirming the above passage deductively, we find that the man who has a heart filled with *ren* does not chase outer materialistic things; he has the realization that the myriad things are the self, and there are no things it does not reach. Therefore under such conditions of non-opposition between subject and object, one can be said to be on a mental plane of "all things being one," in which "one who is *ren* has no enemy." Of course, such a person is also not likely to harbor selfish desires and thus get stuck in an isolated state of careworn emotionality. On the contrary, if we extend Cheng Hao's discoveries one step further to the medical account of depression, by laying out a set of logical propositions we can arrive at the following conclusion. [Here, the arrow is a symbol of implication.]

**Proposition I :**

If *ren* is within us, what care would we have?  
 → One who is *ren* is not careworn.  
 One who is *ren* is not careworn  $\equiv$  One who  
 feels care is not *ren*.

**Proposition II :**

Not being *ren* leads to degeneration and  
 paralysis.

**Conclusion :** State of Care → Degeneration and  
 paralysis

*Note:* The "care" referred to here is a careworn  
 state, not the consciousness and concern properly  
 belonging to human subjectivity.

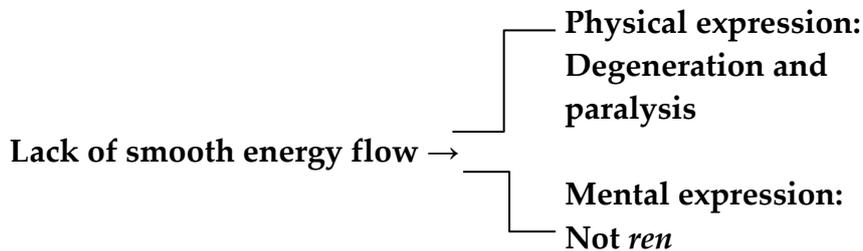
This etiology of a careworn state leading to degeneration and paralysis is clarified further by a passage from

Zhu Danxi's *Ju fang fahui* (*Annotated Prescriptions from a Medicine Chest*):

Upon examining various accounts of degeneration, one finds that dry heat of the lungs affects the five organs, and this can develop outwardly as degeneration. Heat in heart-energy can give rise to degeneracy of meridians, which causes the limbs to be slack and unable to hold up the body. Heat of liver-energy gives rise to degeneration of the vessels, which can cause a slackness of the sexual organs. Heat in one's spleen-energy causes degeneration of muscle, which causes paralysis and not being *ren* [lack of feeling].<sup>10</sup>

With regard to various degenerative symptoms, Zhu Danxi believes that they are all due to the effects of fire-heat on the lungs, which causes the five organs to develop various forms of degeneration. As for spleen-energy (vital energy), if it is affected by heat, it gives rise to the degeneration of muscle, which manifests symptoms of "paralysis and not being *ren*." Thus, "degenerative paralysis and not being *ren*" (which was mentioned in the quote from Cheng Hao) is caused – as we know from Zhu Danxi's interpretation – by the effect of lung fire on spleen energy. Furthermore, if we refer to the above-mentioned description of fire by Zhu, we find that the production of lung fire has two formative causes, namely "fires of the five volitions" and "auxiliary fire" [*xiang-huo*]. Here, what Cheng Hao was referring to obviously relates to one of the five fires, in this case generated by an excess of care. To clarify the explanation, let us lay out the principle of development as follows:

**Depression → Lung fire → Energy Stagnation →**



Of course, the chain of reasoning could be applied the other way:

**Benevolence → Smooth energy flow → No energy stagnation → Lung fire stays balanced → No depression**

In view of this, using Zhu Danxi's centeredness, correctness, benevolence, and righteousness in treating the five kinds of dispositional fire (elation, anger, pensive thought, care, and fear) does indeed show the possibility that centeredness, correctness, benevolence, and righteousness can be applied therapeutically to careworn depression, angry depression, and thought-depression. Given such an elaboration of meanings implicit in Cheng Hao's text, we see that a model can be conceived for "expanding benevolence to settle and stabilize careworn depression," and this model helps to confirm our initial hypothesis. As to whether this success can help us adduce the possibility of "carrying out righteousness to settle and stabilize angry depression" in a manner consistent with Cheng Hao's thinking, that is a question to be addressed in the next section.

### **The Possibility of "Carrying out Righteousness to Settle and Stabilize Angry Depression"**

In the Confucian tradition, there is a thread which helps

us understand and interpret the concept that “one who is benevolent is not careworn.” However the statement “one who is righteous is not angry” does not exist in Confucian texts. Thus, our search for relevant passages in the literature presents a higher degree of difficulty. Even so, by a further survey of the literature, we see that Cheng Hao was fairly concerned with propositions relevant to this matter, and he even wrote special texts to explain his views. For instance, in the *Treatise on Settling Self-Nature*, he put forth the following ideas:

Of human feelings that are readily externalized and difficult to control, none are more so than anger. Yet if one is able to set one’s anger aside somewhat while feeling angry, so as to contemplate the rightness or wrongness of its principle, then one will find that external incitements will not be sufficient to cause antagonism.<sup>11</sup>

What is more, in other places Cheng Hao has an even clearer explanation about governing anger:

Governing anger is difficult, and governing fear is also difficult. By overcoming oneself one can govern anger. By comprehending principle one can govern fear.<sup>12</sup>

As many people know, “to overcome oneself and return to ritual is benevolence” was a statement made by Confucius in response to Yan Yuan’s question about benevolence. Cheng Hao’s view put forth here – that “overcoming the self can govern anger” – has far-reaching implications, and it prompts us to take a fresh look at the issue. First, let us look at explanations of “overcoming the self.” The Japanese scholar Kojima Tsuyoshi<sup>13</sup> analyzed

explanations of the concept in commentaries on the Analects by He Yan and Xing Bing. He also traced treatments of this concept back to Ma Rong and Kong Anguo. He presented an overall treatment which included Zhu Xi's explanations in *Collected Annotations on the Analects* and in *Someone Asked about the Analects*. Of course, Taiwanese scholars have also reached conclusions on this topic, but I will not go into more detail here.

Getting back to the topic of this paper, I feel compelled to raise a question. We would like to find a plausible link between Cheng Hao's idea of "overcoming self to govern anger," on the one hand, and "acting with righteousness to settle and stabilize angry depression" according to Zhu Danxi's medical practice, on the other. If that is our aim, then aside from "benevolence as a way to treat care," which we have discussed above, which of the two remaining practices – "centeredness and correctness" or "righteousness" – can be demonstrated to have a connection with "overcoming the self"? To address such a question, this paper will begin by looking at Cheng Hao's discourse on "overcoming the self"; then we will go back to looking at this issue in the light of medical practice.

When the self is overcome, then selfishness is gotten rid of. Although one may not have studied formal patterns of ritual, one will realize the intent of ritual.<sup>14</sup>

In this quote, Cheng Hao expounds on the proposition that by "overcoming oneself one returns to ritual." Because of this passage's use of the phrase "getting rid of selfishness," and because of Zhu Xi's interpretation of it, later scholars have taken this phrase to be Cheng Hao's explanation of "overcoming oneself." An example can be found in Wu Qichao's paper "On Tang Junyi's Interpreta-

tion of ‘To Overcome Oneself and Return to Ritual Is Benevolence.’” In the following passage Wu gives his understanding of the above passage by Cheng Hao:

What is called “overcoming oneself and returning to ritual” is no more than overcoming one’s own selfishness so as to gain the “intent of ritual.” This does not mean that an external prescription for behavior is used to control and discipline oneself.<sup>15</sup>

Considering Cheng Hao’s stated meaning, though it is plausible to explain “overcoming self” as “getting rid of selfishness,”<sup>16</sup> yet the explanation becomes problematic when we apply it to the above-quoted passage on “setting aside anger when one is angry and seeing if the principle is sensible or not.” This is because the “setting aside of anger” is an effort at restraint that tries to calm the fiery mood of anger. (According to the normal procedure of mental action, one would need to restrain the anger first and then set it aside.) Thus, one’s mental state at such a time should at least call for moderation and restraint of one’s mood. Therefore, an explanation of “overcoming the self” solely in terms of “getting rid of selfish desire” surely fails to get at the whole meaning!

Accordingly, I would like to quote supporting material from Zhang Zai, who engaged in close scholarly exchanges with Cheng Hao. In his book *Den of Principle*, “Origin of Learning, Part 1,” Zhang Zai put forth an important opinion on Mencius’ idea of “accumulating righteousness” to nurture energy:

As for righteousness, it is overcoming the self.<sup>17</sup>

Although Zhang Zai sometimes agreed and sometimes disagreed with Cheng Hao in their scholarly exchanges, Zhu Danxi interpreted and absorbed his predecessors’ thinking

from the standpoint of body-oriented issues. Thus, Zhu could examine these thinkers' theories and selectively accept what he found to be of merit. (For instance, although Zhu Danxi belonged in Zhu Xi's camp, some of his arguments tended to favor the thinking of Zhang Zai or Zhou Dunyi.) Thus, in choosing an inner praxis to link with "overcoming the self," it would have made sense for Zhu Danxi to favor the angle of "righteousness" espoused by Zhang Zai, instead of Cheng Hao's "getting rid of selfishness." Given such a possibility, the word "righteousness" would point out a key direction to be explored for a possible linkage to "overcoming self" and beyond that to "governing anger." His point calls for further in-depth analysis.

As for uses of the term *yi* ("righteousness"), we know that the *Book of Rites*, "Doctrine of the Mean," interprets it as "fitting."<sup>18</sup> Aside from this, the *Book of Rites*, "Workings of Ritual," explains it thus: "Righteousness is the division of arts and the moderation of benevolence." *Xunzi*, "Territories and States,"<sup>19</sup> offers this definition: "Righteousness is a means to limit and prohibit evil, treacherous deeds." This chapter also states that "righteousness means internal restraint with respect to a person and external restraint with respect to the myriad things." Coming down to Zhu Xi, we find that he combined the two senses: "righteousness is control of the heart-mind and a fitting arrangement of matters." That is to say, the purport of "righteousness" when expressed inwardly is moderation and restraint; when expressed externally it is behavior suited to the principle of affairs. In particular, when applied to desires of the human heart, one can see the tension between its latent and manifest aspects. This lends itself to characterization as a battle between principle and desire. Even in books of military strategy we can find corroboration of this linkage.

Tai Gong said, "If righteousness wins over desire, the result will be well-being. If desire wins over righteousness, the result will be downfall."<sup>20</sup>

Thus, if we look at righteousness from the angle of mental activity, then the scope of its praxis does indeed fit with Cheng Hao's idea of "overcoming self" with its possibility of controlling one's mood in order to govern anger.

As for real-life praxis, there is a question of whether its implications correspond to Confucian ideas. In this respect I will first bring up the ten kinds of "righteousness of persons" which are mentioned in the *Book of Rites*, for the purpose of further analysis.

What are the forms of righteousness of persons? They include a father's kindness, a son's dutifulness, an elder brother's goodness, a younger brother's respect, a husband's righteousness, a wife's obedience, an elder person's generosity, a younger person's deference, a ruler's benevolence and a subject's loyalty. These ten are the forms of righteousness of persons.<sup>21</sup>

Among these, if we look specifically at the relation between husband and wife, a husband's righteousness – corresponding with a wife's obedience – is the husband's fitting standard of behavior. That is, besides having feelings for his wife, the husband must treat her with righteousness. In such a close reciprocal relation, if the wife fulfils the virtue of obedience but the husband betrays her and behaves dishonorably, such treatment will lead to a rift in their relationship and do harm to the other person. This fits

with Zhu Danxi's record of a case in which the husband was without feelings and righteousness [towards his wife], which caused the wife to be "indignant and angry" in her heart.

In such a case [the patient] was not treated well by her husband and her in-laws. She had angry depression and emotional stagnation. The effects accumulated night and day; her spleen-energy was diminished and blocked; her liver-energy was flaring up, and as a result she developed hidden lumps.<sup>22</sup>

Sure enough, a separate case also has Zhu Danxi's record of treating a wife who was not getting along with her husband.

I treated a woman whose illness caused her to lie unconscious. Upon reviving she would wail loudly, convulse several times, and then fall back into a stupor. I diagnosed her liver pulse and found it to be string-like and slippery. I told myself this was due to an angry mental state. She probably got the condition from anger and then overindulged in wine. I asked her about this. She said that she was not treated well by her husband, so she would fill a pot and drink alone to console herself.<sup>23</sup>

According to the points made above, and according to the concept of metal (righteousness/care) overcoming wood (benevolence/anger) (as was widely believed throughout Chinese intellectual history), it was reasonable to conceive that "righteousness" could prevent "anger." Thus, the remaining item to be addressed is the cross-disciplinary

question of how “centeredness and correctness” can be a cure for “thought-depression.”

### **The Possibility of “Settling and Stabilizing Thought-Depression by Centeredness and Correctness”**

According to records in Zhu Danxi’s *Medical Notes of Danxi* (丹溪醫按), when a sufferer already shows symptoms of “thought-depression,” one can draw on the curbing or generative relations among the five elements. By using “anger-energy,” which is wood, one can smash the “thought-depression,” which is earth, thus gaining an initial curative effect.

After a young woman of 20+ years of age gave herself in marriage, her husband went to Guangzhou and Hainan to engage in business. Two years later he still had not come back. The young woman would not eat, and she was bed-ridden and listless. She had no other particular ailments, and various medicines were ineffective. Her father asked me to treat her, so I went to have a look. Most of the time she lay facing the wall, and she appeared gaunt. I thought to myself that this illness was due to stasis of bioenergy from excessive pining. This was not something medicine alone could cure: something joyful would have to happen in order to bring relief. Her parents had no way to bring her joy, and they had no way to make her angry. I went there and said things to stir up her anger. After an angry outburst she began crying. After sobbing for over two hours, I told her parents to comfort her, and I gave her a dose of medicine. At this point she asked for food. I told them that the

illness was better for the time being, but it would not be eliminated unless there were a joyful event. If the pining were to set in again, it would result in illness later.<sup>24</sup>

Of course, these were expedient measures taken after the symptoms had already developed, as a way of “treating one energy by means of another.” However in the *Internal Classic of Medicine* we read: “High-level skill gives treatment before one is ill; middle-level skill gives treatment after illness develops.” Therefore, the true gist of medical education lies in how to eradicate a major illness before it breaks out. It also poses a question for ordinary people as to what psychic stance they should adopt to guard against excess manifestation of the three dispositions – care, anger, pensiveness – so as to prevent the onset of “careworn depression,” “angry depression” and “thought-depression.”<sup>25</sup>

Having readily established the two major propositions of “righteousness to treat anger” and “benevolence to treat care,” I would now like to approach the final proposition of “centeredness and correctness to treat pining.” Earlier in this paper, I established “centered and correct” as an integral phrase which is combined with “benevolence” and “righteousness” to constitute a system of cultivation. Nevertheless, we must still face the important question of how “centeredness and correctness” can be linked up with the theme of “thought-depression.” Consider this statement in the key Confucian text *Hong-fan* (洪範) [*Grand Model*]: “Thought is perspicacity, and perspicacity can make one a sage.” If we look at this statement alone, would it not seem that “thought” is being viewed as an important form of cultivation for achieving sagehood? As for Zhou Dunyi, in *Tong-shu* (*The Book of Connections*) he devotes a section to discussing thought as perspicacity:

The “Grand Model” says, “Thinking is perspicacity, and perspicacity makes one a sage.” Non-thinking is fundamental; the connections of thought pertain to function. Latent threads of possibility operate out there in reality, and sincerity operates here within. Although he remains in non-thinking, there is nothing he does not connect with – this is the sage.

It also says, “To know the latent threads of things – is this not a divine gift!”<sup>26</sup>

We can see that “thought” holds extreme importance in the Confucian progression toward sagehood. Thus, in the Confucian tradition as we now know it, “thought” is quite different, in terms of conceptual application, from the meaning of “thought” in “thought-depression.” For example, in the quote below, Zhang Jiebin makes the following observation on the issue of “thought-depression.”

Thought-depression is suffered by spinsters, widows, students fretting at lamp-lit windows, and people who have pent-up suspicion and resentment. If one thinks too long [in this way], there will be a stasis of energy. The stasis will go to the heart and hurt the spleen.<sup>27</sup>

Among these, “fretting at a lamp-lit window” describes the ordeal of a student who must stay up late to prepare for civil service exams. Compare this to “thought” as a means of connecting with subtle things or vivifying oneself. Although both are obviously activities of subjectivity, yet in terms of outcomes the latter becomes a way of knowing nature’s workings and becoming a sage. As for the gap between two kinds of thought and their mode of inter-conversion, it is

hard to say how such things are to be discovered. Clarification of this issue awaits further study.

Actually the concept of “thought” was not always given a good explanation in Confucian texts. For instance, in *Analects*, “Wei-zheng,” we can read the following statement:

The Master said, “The three hundred poems [of the *Book of Songs*] can be covered by a single phrase – ‘the thinking is not crooked.’”

The semantic content of “not crooked” implies that human cogitative activity may show correctness, but it may also tend toward crookedness. Thus, there is no guarantee that it is necessarily good. A distinction of good or bad will arise depending on whether or not the subjective core keeps a grip on moral principle. Thus, in the *Book of Rites*, “Record of Music,” one can find a line of interpretation that is similar to “the thinking is not crooked.”

To know human ties – this is the feeling of music. To feel elation and delight – this is the perceptual state of music. To be centered, correct and not crooked – this is the substance of ritual. To be solemn and reverent – this is the restraint of ritual.

This phrase “centered, correct and not crooked” is not directly applied to the *Book of Songs*, yet proceeding from “the thinking is not crooked” to a usage like “centered, correct and not crooked” further demonstrates the subtle connection between “thinking” on one hand and “centered and correct” on the other.

In *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books · Analects*, “Wei-zheng,” Zhu Xi makes the following comment:

When the words of a poem are recited by a good person, they will cause him to resolve

upon good deeds; when recited for a sinful person they have an admonitory effect on his reckless intentions. To sum up the function, we can say it causes a person to find correctness in his feelings and self-nature... In Cheng Hao's discussion of "the thinking is not crooked," he was talking about sincerity.<sup>28</sup>

Thus according to Confucianism, the activity of feeling and self-nature called "thought" must be in accord with the attribute of "correctness" before it can achieve its positive value and be truly sincere. This inner demand for correct thinking at least shows the possibility – in logically conceived terms – of cogitative activity being guided by the "correctness" of "centeredness and correctness."

Now let us revisit the above passage about causes of thought-depression. It includes the phrase "pent-up suspicion and resentment," so it probably relates to a suspicious, obsessive person. In regards to subjective cogitative activity, such a person has a suspicious mind and thus his original relation of "sincerity and trust," by which the subjective and objective could be unified, is stripped away. Seen in terms of the subject's energy-blood balance, trust is "correct thinking" (salutary), and suspicion is "crooked thinking" (harmful to health). So this rigid "buildup of suspicion," extended over weeks and months, will lead to resentment and give rise to a stagnant condition. This refers to the subject's inner hygiene of heart-energy.

Yet whether it is a matter of "correct principle" as an objective conceptual truth or "correct action" as activity of the subject's heart-energy, let us consider Cheng Yi's statement that "the centered is correct; the correct is not necessarily centered." From this we know that, even if a person finds a way to be correct, this is no guarantee that he

can maintain “centeredness.” Supposing that he cannot achieve centeredness, then even if he maintains “correctness,” he may develop a skewed, excessive condition due to personal emotional factors. Such a “decentered” condition is a good explanation of why spinsters, widows, and exam-preparing students may suffer from thought-depression. That is to say, although their actions may be correct according to propriety and human concerns, yet the motivation of their behavior may be too extreme or may go beyond certain limits. In such cases, their excessive pining for a mate or dwelling on worries may give rise to pensive stagnation, leading to symptoms of a physical collapse.

Of course, these examples were examined from the angle of individual hygiene and the prevention of stagnation. In terms of traditional intellectual culture, ruling the state is like ruling one’s body; if one is good at ruling one’s body, one will be good at ruling the state. The body-state relation is open to correspondence and mutual interpretation. Thus, the above approach of centeredness and correctness to prevent thought-related disorders should show points of correspondence with the sage’s Way of ruling a state. Take, for instance, the *Hong-fan* (洪範) [*Grand Model*], where it mentions the Way of the sage-king:

Being without favoritism or factionalism, the kingly Way is open and expansive. Not showing factionalism or favoritism, the kingly Way is even and level. Without twists and turns, the kingly Way is correct and straight.<sup>29</sup>

Emphasis here is put on the sage-king or great duke’s Way of ruling the state which is not partial or selfish, so it causes the people to be free from suspicion and resentment. This is also the “centeredness and correctness” that Zhou Dunyi meant when he emphasized that the sage “lets things

settle by means of centeredness, correctness, benevolence, and righteousness." At the same time, this viewpoint or overall attitude about "great centeredness and optimum correctness" is elaborated further in the "Zhong-zheng" ("Centeredness and Correctness") chapter of Zhang Zai's *Zheng meng* and Cheng Yi's commentary on the *Yijing*. In this scheme of centeredness-and-correctness practice, effects radiate outward from the subjective core, because the object of the mind's projection rests on the well-being of the common people, and the mind of all-under-Heaven is taken to be one's own mind; such a sagely scheme of "caring with all-under-Heaven; feeling joy with all-under-Heaven" expands one's personal desires and interests outwardly. In this way, one can make body and mind replete; one can naturally transcend individual bodily limitations and end up rejoicing in Heaven and knowing fate. Thus, in interpreting the conceptual relation of "centeredness and correctness" to "thought," Cheng Yi made this statement:

If one can be centered and correct while being sincere, one is a sage... If one prolongs this and does not lose it, if one abides in it contentedly, then one's expressions and actions will fit perfectly with ritual, so that a crooked, twisted mentality will have no way to arise.<sup>30</sup>

The passage affirms that a "crooked, twisted mentality will have no way to arise": this shows that sage's self-realization and furtherance of others is already implied in being "centered and correct while being sincere," along with the sage's connectedness to subtle phenomena and his understanding of nature's workings. Thus, in terms of fostering personal health, naturally the sage will neither have pent-up suspicion and resentments, nor will he

carelessly agitate his mind over matters of personal status or emotional disappointments, which would cause him to suffer from thought-depression. On the level of moral practice engaged in by the subjective self, his centered-and-correct virtue would help him to be tranquil and free from doubt, so he could possess an air of equanimity. Zhu Danxi once made this statement:

Those who speak of ruling the state often draw on the body as a metaphor, and their words show a great degree of understanding. Healthy bioenergy is the citizenry, and disordered energy is banditry. If banditry arises, something should be done to eliminate it. Good generals and councilors need to appraise the strength of fighting men and that availability of supplies to determine when the time is right, and only then should they mobilize. If mobilization is done recklessly, citizens will suffer first from banditry and later from use of fighting men. When citizens suffer, the state will be weakened.<sup>31</sup>

According to Zhu Danxi, ruling the state is like treating an illness. If one wants to get rid of a disorder – or of bandits – one should not carelessly administer harsh medicine or mobilize soldiers. In such cases one needs to consider the question of timeliness and bodily reserves. That is to say, even though mobilizing soldiers is “correct action,” still it is crucial that the action be “in balance with the time” and in fitting proportion. The above quote says that citizens “will suffer first from banditry and later from use of fighting men.” The emphasis here is on careless, disproportionate action which results in suffering by citizens and a weakened nation. By extension, the condition of “thought-depression”

arises when a person's mind, in facing external circumstances, remains in a state of tension and suspicion, being impatient to gain a certain outcome. The result will be excess pensiveness and internal damage to healthy energy. Thus, the praxis of remaining "centered and correct" to avoid careless action is not only shown in ruling the state and using soldiers. It can also be utilized as a Way of curing one's body and preventing stagnation. Here medicine and Confucianism shed light on each other, providing a good basis for reasonable expansion of the proposition that "centeredness and correctness are used to settle and stabilize thought-depression."

Aside from the examination of logical texts that touch upon this argument, in empirical medicine Zhu Danxi's treatment records also show the substantial effect of living habits (diet and sex life) and personality traits in causing the three dispositional depressions. These considerations must, however, await discussion at a later time.

### Conclusion

Having read Zhou Dunyi's *Explanation of the Taiji Diagram* in light of his *Book of Connections*, and having made further reference to arguments and analyses by Hagibara Hiroi and Okata Takehiko, I have shown the possibility of an alternate interpretation of "centeredness, correctness, benevolence, and righteousness" – that is, I have departed from Zhu Xi's insistence on a four-fold correspondence between the rubric of "benevolence, righteousness, centeredness, and righteousness" on one hand, and the moral roots of "benevolence, righteousness, ritual, and wisdom," on the other. We must recognize that Zhou Dunyi, in order to connect his idea of a settling, stabilizing practice with the sage's self-realizing, pragmatic Way of rule, would quite plausibly have taken the *Yijing's* original usage into account,

and viewed “centered-and-correct” as an integral concept in which the two constituent terms have complementary meanings. In view of this, I have concluded that, in unfolding his argument, Zhou Dunyi expanded on the meanings of his concepts according to the tripartite form of “benevolence, righteousness, and centeredness-plus-correctness.”

What is more, inasmuch as “On Auxiliary Fire” is closely linked to ideas on settling-stilling practice from *Explanation of the Taiji Diagram*, the framework of three dispositional depressions developed by Zhu Danxi in “On Auxiliary Fire” will necessarily resonate, at a fundamental level of thought, with the settling-stilling practice in *Explanation of the Taiji Diagram*. Based on such an understanding, this essay has drawn upon material from Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, and Zhu Danxi himself to establish a correspondence between the threefold rubric of “benevolence, righteousness, and centeredness-plus-correctness” (pointed out in Section 2), with the idea of three dispositional depressions, namely “careworn depression, angry depression, and thought-depression.” I then pointed out the possibility of linking these to three derived conceptions of practice as follows: “expanding benevolence to settle and stabilize careworn depression”; “carrying out righteousness to settle and stabilize angry depression”; and “being centered and correct to settle and stabilize thought-depression.” This, then, is an optimal medical justification for Cheng Hao’s statement: “The sage will surely not suffer from mental ailments.”

Of course, the ideas of “expanding righteousness,” “carrying out righteousness,” and “being centered and correct” have long held established positions in the intellectual history of Confucianism. Regrettably, due to constraints of space, I am not able to work out the expanded

implications of these concepts. (For instance, with respect to “expanding benevolence to cure careworn depression,” would it be possible to extend this as a real-world practice to the Buddhist idea of “compassion as a cure for ill-temperedness”? This would offer a possibility of “benevolence to treat anger,” meaning that the practices and their interpretations could be mutually supporting. I hope to explore this further in a future paper.) At any rate, based on the findings of the present study, the stabilizing and settling practices of “benevolence, righteousness, centeredness, and correctness” based on Zhou Dunyi’s *Explanation of the Taiji Diagram*, can be viewed in light of Zhu Danxi’s three dispositional depressions, opening the way to an interpretive system of “nurturing life” in a medical sense and even of mental praxis. This indeed offers a theoretical basis for developing native humanistic cures for the benefit of contemporary preventive medicine. It is to be hoped that the true gist of traditional Confucian praxes – “expanding benevolence,” “carrying out righteousness,” and “being centered and correct” – will be viewed with growing acceptance and understanding by members of society.<sup>32</sup>

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> As to the scope of Confucian medicine, see Chen Yuanming: “Personages Versed in Medicine” and “Confucian Medicine” of the Northern and Southern Song—With an Examination of Developments in the Jin and Yuan (Taipei: National Taiwan University Publishing Committee, 1977). [陳元朋:《兩宋的「尚醫人士」與「儒醫」—兼論其在金元的流變》]

<sup>2</sup> See Chung-hsiu Huang: “A New Look at the *Taiji Diagram* According to Zhu Danxi’s Heaven-Human Thinking” (Beijing: Collected

Papers of China-Japan-Korea International Symposium on Traditional Medicine, 2011), pp. 52-64. [參見黃崇修：〈朱丹溪天人思想下的《太極圖》新風貌〉◎北京：中日韓傳統醫學文獻交流國際研討會論文集，2011]。Also see my dissertation: *Between Desire and Depression—The Reception of Song Era Moral Philosophy as Seen in Development of Theory on Depression by Confucian Doctor Zhu Danxi* (Tokyo: Tokyo University, Department of East Asian Thought and Culture, PhD Dissertation, 2011). [《欲と鬱の間—儒医朱丹溪鬱説の展開における宋代道学の受容》◎東京：東京大學東亞思想文化博士論文，2011]

<sup>3</sup> Published in *Jiedi*, Issue 27 (Nanhua University, Philosophy and Life Education Dept., July 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Mencius, “Li-lou 2”: “Thus the superior man has a lifetime of care, but not a morning of worry.” [《孟子◎離婁》]

<sup>5</sup> Huang Zongxi, *Records of Cheng Hao’s Moral Philosophy*, Pt.1, Fas.13 in *Song-Yuan Scholarly Cases* (Taipei: Chengchung Publishing House, 1963). [《明道學案》上，卷十三，《宋元學案》◎台北：正中書局，1963年◎]

<sup>6</sup> Zhang Heng, *Siwen-zhi-ji Collected Papers—Modern Interpretation of Confucian and Daoist Thought* (Taipei: Yunchen Cultural Enterprises Co., 1997) [張亨：《思文之際論集—儒道思想的現代詮釋》◎台北：允晨文化實業股份有限公司，1997年◎]

<sup>7</sup> *Posthumous Works of the Cheng Brothers of Henan* [Henan Chengshi yishu], Vol.2A, “Discourses of the Two Masters” Pt.1.

<sup>8</sup> *Discourses of Zhu Xi*, Fas. 95.

<sup>9</sup> Cheng Hao, *Posthumous Writings of the Cheng Brothers of Henan*, 12. [程明道，《河南程氏遺書十一》]

<sup>10</sup> Zhu Danxi, *Annotated Prescriptions from a Medicine Chest*, p. 34. [朱丹溪：《局方發揮》]

<sup>11</sup> Cheng Hao, *Treatise on Settling Self-Nature*, in *Collected Works of the Two Chengs* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1981) [程明道：《定性書》，收錄於《二程集》◎北京：中華書局◎]

<sup>12</sup> Cheng Hao, *Posthumous Writings of the Cheng Brothers of Henan*, Fas.1, “Words of the Two Masters 1,” in *Collected Works of the Two Chengs* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1981). [程明道：《河南程氏遺書十一》，二先生語一，收錄於《二程集》◎北京：中華書局，1981年◎]

<sup>13</sup> Kojima Tsuyoshi, *Discourse on Ritual in Contemporary China* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1996) [小島毅：《中国近世における礼の言説》◎東京：東大出版社]

<sup>14</sup> *Posthumous Writings of the Cheng Brothers of Henan*, Fas.2A, “Discussions of the Two Masters,” Part 1.

<sup>15</sup> Wu Qichao, "On Tang Junyi's Interpretation of 'Overcoming the Self and Returning to Ritual,'" in Liu Guoying, Zhang Canhui, ed., *Cultivating the Long Road: Hong Kong Chinese University Philosophy Department 60-Year-Anniversary Collection - Faculty Volume* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Chinese University Press, 2009), p. 386. [吳啟超：〈論唐君毅先生對「克己復禮為仁」的詮釋〉，劉國英、張燦輝 合編：《修遠之路：香港中文大學哲學系六十週年系慶論文集·同寅卷》◎香港：中文大學出版社]

<sup>16</sup> Supposing that the idea of "subsuming ritual under benevolence" is extended to the idea of "subsuming wisdom under righteousness," then it helps to explain Zhou Dunyi's argument that the five cardinal bonds are implied by centeredness-plus-correctness, benevolence, and righteousness.

<sup>17</sup> See Zhang Zai, *Den of Principle: The Great Origin of Learning*, in *Collected Works of Zhang Zai* (Taipei: Hanjing Cultural Enterprises Co., 2004), p. 279. [張載：《理窟·學大原上》，收錄於《張載集》◎台北：漢京文化事業有限公司]

<sup>18</sup> Dai Sheng, (ed.), Wang Meng'ou, tr., *Book of Rites·Doctrine of the Mean* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1981). [戴聖編纂，王夢鷗註譯：《禮記·中庸》，◎台北：臺灣商務印書館]

<sup>19</sup> Xunzi, *Xunzi—An Annotated Contemporary Translation*, in Xiong Gongzhe, (ed.), (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 2012). [荀子著，熊公哲註譯：《荀子今註今譯》，◎台北：臺灣商務印書館]

<sup>20</sup> Taigong-wang, *Liu Tao·Wen Tao·Ming Zhuan*, in Wu Xifei, (ed.), (Taipei: Sanmin Books, 2006), p. 21. [太公望《六韜·文韜·明傳》，鄔錫非注譯◎台北，三民書局]

<sup>21</sup> Dai Sheng, (ed.), Wang Meng'ou, tr., *Book of Rites: Workings of Ritual* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1981). [戴聖編纂《禮記·禮運》第九，王夢鷗註譯：《禮記今註今譯·禮運》◎台北：臺灣商務印書館]

<sup>22</sup> Zhu Danxi, *Supplemental Inquiries, "On Hardness of Female Breasts."*

<sup>23</sup> Jiang Guan, *Classified Cases of Famous Doctors·Medical Cases of Danxi* (Beijing: China Chinese Medicine Press, 1996) [江瓘：《名醫類案·丹溪醫案》（北京：中國中醫出版社）]

<sup>24</sup> Zhu Danxi, *Medical Cases of Danxi, "Spleen and Stomach" 22*, collected in *Recovered Works of Danxi*, Liu Shijue, (ed.), (Shanghai Medical University Press, 2005), p.44. [《丹溪醫按》脾胃二十二，收錄於《丹溪逸書》（劉時覺編，上海中醫藥大學出版社，2005年）] Besides this, one can also refer to *Ming-yi yi-an, "Danxi yi-an"* (Beijing: China Chinese

Medicine Press, 1996.) [《名医類案·丹溪醫案》◎中國中醫出版社] In this book there is a related record:

After a woman gave herself in marriage, her husband went off to conduct business and did not return. Because of this she did not eat; she lay bedridden in a vapid state, but had no other ailments. She mostly lay facing the wall. I diagnosed her and found that her liver pulse was like a distended string at her wrist. I said to myself: this is stasis of bioenergy due to pining. It cannot be cured by medicine alone. If there is a joyful event it can be relieved. Perhaps making her angry may prove effective. The spleen is in charge of thought. If thought is excessive, then there is stasis of spleen-energy and one does not eat. Anger belongs to liver-wood, and wood can overcome earth. If she has anger, its energy will be in the ascendant and break through the spleen-energy. I provoked her to have an outburst of anger, and she cried for six hours. I made sure she was comforted, then gave her a dose of medicine. Then she asked for a bowl of porridge and ate it. I told people [at the house]: although the pensive energy has been relieved, she needs to have a happy event so the stasis will not set in again. We used a ruse, saying that a letter had come from her husband, and he was expected any day. Three months later he really did return, and she recovered.

<sup>25</sup> These are prime concerns of the present study. Given this, the present writer trusts that readers will show further sympathy and understanding toward the therapeutic method involving the next set of concepts—using the principles of “centeredness and correctness” to cure depression due to excess thought.

<sup>26</sup> Zhou Dunyi, *Tong-shu (The Book of Connections)* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press), Chapter 36, “Thought.”

<sup>27</sup> *Mingji · “Zazheng-mo · yu-zheng”* [*Ming Collection · Dealing with Miscellaneous Disorders · Depressive Disorders*], Fas.19.

<sup>28</sup> Zhu Xi, *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books·Analects*, “Wei-zheng” (Taipei: E-hu Publishing House, 1984), pp. 53-54. [朱子:《四書章句集註·論語·為政》◎台北:鵝湖出版社◎]

<sup>29</sup> See Wu Yu, tr., *Book of Documents: A New Translation, “Grand Model”* (Taipei: Sanmin Books, 2001), p. 108. [參見吳瑛注譯:《新譯尚書讀本·洪範》◎台北:三民書局◎]

<sup>30</sup> Cheng Yi, *Yan Yuan's Fond Pursuits—An Educational Doctrine*, included in *Collected Works of the Two Chengs: Essays of the Two Chengs*, Fas.8 (Beijing: Zhonghua Books, 1981), pp. 577-578. [程伊川《顏子所好何學論》,收入《二程集·二程文集》卷八(北京:中華書局)]

<sup>31</sup> Zhu Danxi, *Supplemental Inquiries (Ge-zhi yu lun)*, "On Not Treating Disorders by Harsh Means in Cases Where Stomach Energy Has Suffered Injury."

<sup>32</sup> Translated by Denis Mair.

## Thought Counseling in Mainland China

XISHENG WANG

“Thought Counseling” in mainland China developed because of the influence of practical activities in philosophy initiated by international scholars starting in the 1980s. After years of introducing, learning, and exchanging, “Thought Counseling” in China has been deeply developed, with research characteristics and a practical dimension of its own.

### Related Nouns and General Meaning

“Thought Counseling” is a newly-coined word, created by absorbing the essence of the relevant terms. In academic circles in the mainland, there are a number of related terms and ideas in counseling – for example, “the practice of philosophy”, “philosophical counseling”, “meaning therapy”, “humanistic therapy”, and “humanistic care”. In academic circles in the mainland, nouns related to “thought counseling” are “philosophical practice”, “philosophy practicing”, “philosophical counseling”, “thought analysis”, and so on. “Thought counseling” is associated with these terms, because “thought counseling” absorbs the values advocated by philosophical practice: the “philosophy of the everyday life of ordinary people,” and the essence of the Socratic method. But “thought counseling” also has its own unique characteristics. For example, “philosophical practice” differs from “practical philosophy” because the former term emphasizes philosophy relevant to the daily lives of ordinary people, and not the abstruse philosophical theories of a few scholars engaged in abstract studies. In the former sense, philosophy focuses on the philosophy of life and is full of vitality, addressing the lives of those who are increasingly faced with philosophical dilemmas. The reason

why some scholars in the mainland are concerned with “philosophical practice” as initiated by international academics is largely because they take it as a new philosophical movement. Of course, it also can provide an inspiration to address the continent’s philosophy of living space. The term “philosophy practicing” has been coined to correct the Chinese translation of “philosophical practice”. The literal translation of philosophical practice is “哲學實踐”. The term “practice” is likely to cause some confusion because political science and ethics have also been called “practical philosophy” or practical reason – but, in the present case, “practice” is not focused on how to “do”, although it is still based on rational thinking in actual problem situations. Philosophical practice was not intended to “re-talk philosophy” or “to write philosophy” or to form a new system of philosophy, but to “do” philosophy. Therefore, Professor Jianjun Zhang from Nanjing University, believes philosophical practice should be translated as “philosophy practicing.” “Philosophical counseling” is a term frequently used by mainland scholars but it is mainly concerned with earlier psychological counseling. “Philosophical consultant,” “philosophical guidance,” “philosophical encounter,” “philosophical inquiry,” “philosophical coaching,” “philosophical consultation,” and other terms that have been used in international circles, have not been echoed by mainland academics. The term “thought analysis” is a creation of Tianqun Pan, a professor at Nanjing University, in 2008. Pan believes that “analysis is therapeutic.” His so-called “analysis” mainly refers to the analysis of analytic philosophy, but also to the analysis of logic; the “Treatment” of what he called “doubts” is the attempt to solve puzzles in cognition. He advocated “value-neutrality,” and refused to apply “thought analysis” to “humane care”, thereby keeping the term “thought

analysis" unique. Based on this academic background and considering the purpose and mission of "ideological education", Anhui Normal University Professor Xisheng Wang proposed a new noun: "Thought Counseling." Wang believes that "thought" is a hybrid variety of factors – knowledge, emotion, will, and credibility – and Ideological Education is used to solve the ideological confusion of ordinary people and to eliminate the mental anguish caused by ideological problems; it is not confined to a particular subject or imprisoned in a specific domain. Such a study should seek a multidisciplinary integration, and learn the methods and resources of different disciplines in order to form a joint force to solve ideological problems. So, solving thought problems requires both rational logical explanation and irrational factors, 'guiding' like faith. It is impossible to maintain the value of the tool in a neutral, rational manner. For this reason, the basic meaning of the term "thought counseling" is to solve epistemic puzzles by taking a consultative approach, and to eliminate cases of primary mental anguish through humanistic care activities such as counseling.

### **Progress to Date and Main Results**

#### *Chronology*

The following paragraphs provide a chronology of the progress of the basic activities of "thought counseling" as carried out by mainland academics.

In 2002, Xianshang Guo translated the book *Plato Not Prozac!* (by Lou Marinoff).

In 2005, Yingchun Wang translated the book *The Big Questions* (by Lou Marinoff).

In 2008, Qian Ouyang and other writers published papers to summarize and introduce foreign studies referring

to philosophical practice. Professor Pan Tianqun proposed the concept of “thought analysis”.

In 2009, Wei Li translated the children’s philosophical wisdom series, including “Good and bad, what is it?”, “What am I?”, “Happiness, what is it?,” “Knowledge, what is it?” and nine other books by the French philosopher Oscar Brenifier. There was a PhD thesis with the similar theme of “Thought Counseling”; Nanjing University Professor Pan Tianqun and others went to Korea to participate in international conferences on philosophical practice, and recruited professional masters and doctoral students in “thought analysis” in the area of logic, at Nanjing University.

In 2011, there was a masters thesis by a graduate student with the title of “philosophical counseling”.

In September 2012, Tianqun Pan organized the “Nanjing Circle” and, in November, launched the “philosophical practice workshop”. Up to November 2013, they have held four consecutive workshops.

In 2013, the “Journal of Nanjing University,” the “Journal of Anhui Normal University,” the “Journal of Anhui University” and other scholarly journals published at the same time a group text about thought counseling, under the name of “Applied philosophy”, “thought analysis” and “philosophy practice research”. In the first half of 2013, Tianqun Pan invited scholars from France and the Netherlands to give an open lecture on the “philosophy of practice”. Pan supported doctoral student Xiaojun Ding to go to France in order to participate in activities in the philosophy of practice, such as skills training. At Anhui Normal University, Professor Xisheng Wang proposed the concept of thought counseling.

*Scholarship on Thought Counseling*

Here is a list of authors and research teams in the mainland, together with a brief statement of their specific activities:

In 2008, at the College of Philosophy, Renmin University of China, Professor Qian Ouyang wrote on “A New Development in Contemporary Western Philosophy: On philosophical thought counseling” and on “Philosophy Café: Sports, Philosophy Consulting and Thought Management”. And, at Renmin University of China, Yongsheng Zhou wrote on “Philosophical Counseling in North America: A State of the Art Glimpse”.

In 2009, at the School of Public Administration, Central South University, Professor Zhouzhuo Feng wrote on: “Methods of Confucian Philosophy and Consulting Life”. Zhongshan University doctoral student Meihong Liu wrote on “Qin Confucianism on blame diagnosis and treatment”. Finally, at Yunnan Normal University, Professor Ning Zhou and others wrote on “Philosophical Counseling: An alternative Choice of Counseling and Psychotherapy”.

In 2010, at the School of Public Administration, Central South University, Professor Zhouzhuo Feng wrote on “On the Complementarity of Philosophical Counseling and Psychological Counseling”.

In 2011, Yuan Huang, based at Central South University, wrote a masters thesis in Marxist philosophy on “The Advisory Function of Philosophy”. At Renmin University of China, Dr Weidong Wang wrote on “Philosophical Counseling in educational institutions”. Tianqun Pan of Nanjing University and his doctoral student Xian Zhao wrote on “On the Logical Structure of Hope”. Nanjing University doctoral student Yan Gong wrote on “Philosophical counseling: an emerging practice in the field of philosophy.” And,

in 2012, Anhui University teacher Chunmei Wei wrote on “Plato <Phaedo> and the Philosophy of Consultation.”

In 2013, Tianqun Pan wrote on “The Path of Philosophy Practice in Analytic Philosophy”; “How to Treat Analysis: A Methodology of Thought Analysis,” and “Thought Analysis from a Logical Perspective.” (2013). Nanjing University Professor Weizhong Yang wrote on “The Significance of Buddhism in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy,” and “Buddhist Doctrine and Thought Treatment.” Nanjing University doctoral student Yan Gong defended his PhD thesis on “The Theory of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy: Based on the Perspective of Scientific Methodology.” Also at the Department of Philosophy of Nanjing University, Dr Xiaojun Ding wrote on “Belief Network Analysis Approach, Based on the Ideas of Quine” and “Logical Antidote: Stoicism’s Therapeutic Dimension”. Finally, at Anhui Normal University, Professor Xisheng Wang wrote on “Thought Analysis: Basic Issues.”

### *Characteristics of Thought Counseling*

“Thought counseling” as studied and practiced by mainland academics has several distinctive characteristics: First, it is mainly narrative – introducing the practice of foreign philosophy, but also the consulting practice of philosophy. Second, there is the exploration and application of this, based on the results of the work of foreign scholars. Third, mainland academics ‘mine’ the foreign history of philosophy, the history of ideas, and the idea of traditional culture, which they use as resources for consultation. Fourth, they seek to define and explain “Thought counseling,” outlining its characteristics and underlying thinking, but also try to construct a systematic theory and practice of counseling.

In defining and interpreting their unique approach, Tianqun Pan from Nanjing University and Xisheng Wang from Anhui Normal University are key figures. Starting with a logical analysis, Tianqun Pan regards thought analysis as a treatment activity that uses a logical thinking approach in order to address ideological confusion caused by human factors. He believes that spiritual pain is associated with cognitive conflict, and he notes that such a conflict could be in many forms. Thus, a person's "confusion" can be overcome by the elimination of cognitive conflict. A purely neutral logical analysis is one of the ways to eliminate the confusion. The view that logical analysis is the appropriate treatment is called the 'thought analysis' approach. The reason that analysis can be a useful way of treating "confusion" is that logic is part of every human's mind, and thought analysis using verbal communication can reach the minds of others, and help confused people to think more clearly.<sup>1</sup> The theoretical and experimental exploration activities of Tianqun Pan, then, draw on "Thought Analysis" with this knowledge and these assumptions in mind.

From the point of view of ideological education, Xisheng Wang regards "Thought Counseling" as following an active process. That is, with the "thought crux" as the object of his research, he adopts a method of "dispelling doubt, relieving suffering" – i.e., using logical analysis to help clients clean up the crux of their thinking using philosophy, psychology, literature, history and other disciplines, as well as knowledge of similar situations and individual experience, in order to guide confused people to think more clearly, to develop right cognition, to learn modifications in how to achieve solutions, and to seek a positive meaning to life, in order to eliminate the mental anguish caused by one's "crux ideas."<sup>2</sup> Based on this

knowledge and summing up practical experience, Xisheng Wang summarized “Thought Counseling” in a seven-step method:

1. Listening (“Thought Counseling” is an active statement of the clients.)
2. Stopping automatic thinking (Cool the primary emotions of the clients and stop their poor automatic reasoning.)
3. Problematizing (Find the main ideas inherent in the concept or belief that cause the thought crux of the clients.)
4. Logical clarification (Reveal contradictory beliefs or inconsistencies in the cognitive styles and concepts of the clients.)
5. Resolving the cognitive crux (Clean up their cognitive conflicts using formal logic, correct their insularity, their cognitive style, and the style of the dialectical thinking of the clients.)
6. Guiding for meaning (Guide the clients using those with a similar experience or with similar thoughts as resources.)
7. Enlightening (Resolve the client’s ideological confusion and mental anguish.)

### **Cooperation and Exchanges**

At mainland universities, Tianqun Pan has given thematic lectures on “Logical Analysis and Thinking” at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology (2009), Zhejiang University (2012), and Anhui Normal University (2012), etc., which had a great impact and widespread interest in academic circles. In August 2013, two doctoral students, Yan Gong and Xiaojun Ding, who were students of Tianqun Pan, went to France to participate in the “Eighth International Summer Seminar Philosophical Practice.” In December 2013, Xisheng Wang and Li Guo from Anhui

Normal University, attended the seminar on “Catholic Faith and the Dialogue for Human Care: Christianity, Humanity and the Meaning of Life,” organized jointly by Fu Jen Catholic University, the International Jacques Maritain Institute, the World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies, and other research centers. They also had academic exchanges with the Chair of the Taiwan Society of Philosophical Counseling, Professor Jianqiu Li, Secretary-General Huimei Li, Assistant Professor Yingfen Su, and Assistant Professor Jianshuo Qiu.

In March 2013, Tianqun Pan also invited Dr. Oscar Brenifier from the French “Institut de pratiques philosophiques [Institute of Practicing Philosophy]” to Nanjing University to carry out philosophy practice activities. Professor Pan also invited scholars from Anhui Normal University, Nanjing Normal University, Anhui University, Yangzhou University, and Zhejiang University to participate in these activities.

In May 2013, Tianqun Pan invited Peter Harteloh, of the Dutch Erasmus Institute for Philosophical Practice, to Anhui Normal University and Nanjing University in order to carry out philosophical practice activities and to give academic lectures.

In addition to these academic exchanges, through Professor Pan’s contacts and consultations, some of the writings of Peter Raabe, Elliot D. Cohen and others have been translated into Chinese and published in mainland academic journals:

From Canada: Peter Raabe: “Philosophical Answers and Happiness” (Translator: Yan Gong, 2013).

From the United States: Elliot D. Cohen: “Logical Treatment and Metaphysical Hypothesis” (Translator: Zhongjun Hu, 2013), and “New Rational Therapy in the 21st Century:

Philosophy and Applied Psychology” (Translator: Xiaojun Ding, 2013).

From France: Oscar Brenifier: “Philosophy Practice: from Theory to Practice / Interview with Oscar Brenifier” (Translator: Yan Gong, 2013).

From Holland: Peter Harteloh: “Philosophical Practice: Western Philosophy, a New Paradigm” (Translator: Zhengyuan Yang, 2103)

### **Future Orientation**

The study and practice of thought counseling needs further theoretical work. Mainland academics need to explain further the relationship of thought counseling with traditional culture, the relationship between thought counseling and psychological counseling, and the relationship with philosophy and logic. Once these relations have been better clarified and explained, these academics should construct a theoretical system drawing on their own traditional culture and values to provide support for the ideas of counseling practice. In terms of practice, a “Thought Counseling Studio” and a “Thought Analysis Laboratory” have been built at Nanjing University’s Department of Philosophy and at the School of Political Science at Anhui Normal University. With that, mainland academics should be able to continue to explore the specific operation of thought counseling and study the technology and procedures, but also train consultants who will be able to provide services to the community.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> See Tianqun Pan : “How to treat analysis: analysis, methodology, and thinking”, in *Journal of Anhui Normal University* (Humanities and Social Sciences) No. 5 (2013): 540-543; “Ideological logic and analysis: a

technological perspective”, in *Journal of Nanjing University* (Philosophy • Humanities • Social Sciences) No. 1 (2013): 141-147.

<sup>2</sup> Xisheng Wang, “Ideological analysis: Basic Issues,” in *Journal of Anhui Normal University* (Humanities and Social Sciences) No. 5 (2013): 529-534.



## Catholicism and Health Care in Taiwan

SISTER MARY ANN LOU

### Introduction

The Catholic faith was introduced to Taiwan by missionaries 150 years ago. It had another period of rapid growth when large numbers of missionaries in China who were expelled by the new Communist government came to Taiwan. But even now we see the need for a continuous effort to evangelize, to spread the love of God and to attract people to Christ. Catholics number less than 1.2 % of the total population of 23 million. Following the example of Jesus Christ, *education* and *health care* remain the two main avenues of evangelization. Catholic health care has earned a good reputation in Taiwan.

The tally of Catholic health care institutions in Taiwan includes:

- 11 hospitals (6 regional; 5 community)
- 7 nursing homes (all hospital run)
- 10 long-term care facilities, including one for dementia patients.
- 32 homes for the physically or mentally handicapped
  - 6 old folks homes
  - 3 universities (1 with a medical school)
  - 3 colleges of Nursing
  - 8 health-related foundations

The Catholic hospitals are distributed throughout Taiwan, and serve the Christian call to care for the weak and needy, by carrying relatively low-profit services such as hospice care, psychiatric care, nursing home care, and extensive community healthcare (see Table I)

**Table I**

<b>Catholic Hospitals in Taiwan</b>									
Hospital	Yr. began	Type	Total Beds	Out-patients /day	Employ-ees	Hos-pice	Psych-iatry	Nur-sing Home	Comm unity Health
Cardinal Tien	1969	Region-al	1443	3079	~1500	V	V	V	V
Jung-Ho Branch	1983	Com-munity	340	1917	~660		V	V	V
Catholic Fuan	1963	Com-munity	74	347	~100				V
Mercy	1996	Com-munity	417	712	~400	V	V	V	V
St. Mary-Lotung	1952	Region-al	601	1907	~1000	V	V	V	V
St. Mary-Taitung	1961	Com-munity	34	68	~150	V			V
St. Paul	1965	Region-al	427	1466	~900		V (Day Care)		V
St. Joseph-Huwei	1955	Region-al	482	1196	~700	V	V (Out-patient)	V	V
St. Martin	1966	Region-al	697	2224	~1300	V	V	V	V
St. Joseph-Kao-hsiung	1943	Com-munity	254	1025	~530	V	V (Out-patient)	V	V
St. Camillus	1957	Com-munity	20	97	~70			V	V
			Total 4789						

How to keep and promote the Catholic identity of a hospital is often the topic of discussion among concerned persons. In my opinion, the key is the spirit of the administrators and a good pastoral care team. So far, our Hospital Directors have all been serious Catholics, and we make conscientious efforts to put Catholics of the same

dedication in important leadership positions. Our pastoral care team has been conscientiously built up by me and my successors over the years. Members all have at least basic CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) training to have proficiency in visiting patients. Our 8-member team made a total of 46,647 patient visits in 2012. They provide emotional and spiritual care for our patients and their families, and for our staff co-workers, based on our four principles of holistic care, plus the sacraments. They lead weekly prayer sessions in each nursing unit, and plan and conduct meaningful celebrations for many religious and civil feasts. They help people to find meaning in life and death, value in suffering, and spread the good news of God's love for everyone. Our 43 specially trained pastoral care volunteers also provided 5960 visits to patients admitted to various units of the hospital. The pastoral care workers themselves, as well as the medical staff, need frequent reminding, encouragement, and affirmation from the administrative directors towards this goal, aside from the management and business angle.

In view of the shortage of priests, we are fortunate to be the sole hospital with a full time chaplain, and he is busy with daily mass in the hospital chapel, bringing Holy Communion to patients, and hearing occasional confessions. Funeral and memorial services are more frequent than baptisms, naturally. But with conscientious efforts at evangelizing our co-workers, we have had 28 employee baptisms in the past five years and 36 in the previous five-year period (similar to St. Martin Hospital in Chia-Yi). Most of the other hospitals have only two to three per year.

The result of our pastoral efforts is difficult to quantify, except as a noticeable over-all Christian spirit of loving and caring service in the hospital. Some seeds of faith may have been sown by us and some sown by others have been harvested by us. Patients who received baptism at the

hospital are usually near the point of death. Our hospital recorded 16 in the past five years, while other hospitals have less than 10. I can share a few touching stories with you here.

#### Story #1

A gentleman had terminal stage lung cancer. When he was transferred from the oncology ward to the hospital ward, he surprised his wife by asking if he could have the crucifix on the wall of his former room brought to his new room. We recognized his secret friendship with the crucified Jesus, and agreed to his wish. He was quickly instructed by our pastoral care member and received baptism with great joy, a few days before he died. A year later, his wife, our staff nurse, was also baptized and became a fervent Catholic; actually she had received catechetical instructions many years ago from our pastoral care staff but, due to concerns over her mother-in-law's folk religion beliefs, she postponed her desire to become a Catholic.

#### Story #2

An 82 year old lady was sent to us from a high-class nursing home. She had multiple chronic diseases and an inoperable breast cancer. She was resentful that her children had sent her to a nursing home. A family conference was arranged to discuss her condition and to seek to reconcile the emotional difficulties. A team of medical experts worked together to treat her disease. After she told us "I've always wished to be Catholic", she was quickly and joyfully instructed and baptized in the hospital chapel. She was taken back to her own home and died a year later. Her children arranged a traditional style non-Catholic funeral for her. Her daughter sent apologies to me. I assured her it should have made no difference to her mother's soul in

heaven. The funeral is for the consolation of the bereaved living.

### Story #3

A woman came with precipitous labor and delivered a very premature baby after only two hours of labor. The baby had a poorly developed brain, as shown by CT scan, and had to be resuscitated several times a day. After the parents were informed of the hopeless prognosis, the mother was resigned, but the father could not accept it. He kept saying, "This is my son, my son, please save him". Our chaplain finally was able to offer him some consolation by offering to baptize the baby so that he could live forever with God in heaven. With this hope, the man accepted the unavoidable death of his baby. A few weeks later, the man came back to the priest and asked to become a Catholic, so that he could be with his son in heaven someday.

### Conclusion

How can we carry on the mission of medical evangelization in the modern world?

1. In Taiwan, where 99% of the population is covered by National Health Insurance, where medical care is readily available and inexpensive, competition for survival is keen among private hospitals, government hospitals, and religious hospitals. We must provide medical care that is up-to-date, competent and compassionate, and convenient. Holistic care is part of our mission statement – i.e., to provide care for the whole person (physical, emotional, spiritual and psycho-social), the whole family, during the whole journey of life or illness, and with the whole team of our professional experts. These four principles of holistic care have been propagated widely in Taiwan among health care workers.

2. Religious hospitals are “not-for-profit”, i.e., the purpose is not to make money for investors. Yet they must be self-supporting in overall management, while, at the same time, taking care of the weak and needy whom Jesus loves, and providing certain profitless services with our own resources.

3. In spite of the challenges, we encourage each other through our daily work to show how to “Love God, Love people, and Respect life.” (This is our core-value statement.)

4. As a group, we strive to attract people to look to the source of the Love that motivates us, accept Jesus, and be his followers. *May God Who inspires us with good desires, also grant us strength to accomplish them.*

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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.

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

## **Projects**

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*. A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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