

Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change
Series III. Asia, Volume. 4
Series VI. Foundations of Moral Education, Volume 6

Morality, Metaphysics and Chinese Culture

Edited By
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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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620 Michigan Avenue, NE
Washington, D.C. 20064

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Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication

Morality, metaphysics and Chinese culture / edited by Tran Van Doan and Vincent Shen.

p.cm. — (Metaphysics, culture, and morality ; vol. 1) (Cultural heritage and contemporary change ; George F. McLean, Gen. ed. ; Series III. Asia, vol. 4 ; Series VI, Foundations of moral education ; vol. 6)

p.cm. — (Studies in metaphysics, George F. McLean, Gen. ed. ; vol. XII-1)

“Published with the support of The Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange.”

Includes bibliographies and index.

1. Ethics, Chinese--History.

I. Shen, Vincent. II. Tran van Doan. III. Series. IV. Series: Cultural heritage and contemporary change. Series III, Asia ; vol. 4. V. Series: Cultural heritage and contemporary change. VI. Foundations of moral education ; v. 6. VI. Series: Studies in Metaphysics ; v. 12-1.

BJ117.M66 1992
170.951—dc20

92-28170
CIP

ISBN 1-56518-026-7 & 1-56518-027-5 (pbk.)

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Preface

Vincent Shen

Our world is now under the menace of nihilism, devoid of any ideal values to which one could devote his or her life. This is especially experienced in the post-modern cultural movement, understood not as a new phenomenon announcing the end of the modern world, but as a tendency to deny the value of modernity. This movement of negation is now showing itself through the deconstruction and even the destruction of all conventional values. As a result, mankind is now walking through the dark valley of nihilism. In facing this situation, many serious thinkers propose as a way out the reawakening of the human moral consciousness and of the sense of moral responsibility. To attain this goal moral education is much emphasized in different ways.

But morality should not be understood as the cultivation of human qualities only. As Martin Heidegger has pointed out justly, the philosophy of subjectivity and its man-centered modern culture--especially "human, too human" self-assertion--constitute the essence of a closed type of humanism. This is the very tendency which leads man finally to his doom in nihilism. As a way out of this dark valley morality must lead men out of this closed type of humanism, rather than becoming entangled with it. In other words, moral experience, as the process of self-realization and the fulfillment of human relationships should not be limited to human subjectivity.

Cultural traditions are one of the ways in which humankind can escape the limit of its own subjectivity. The tradition is taken not as a kind of given constituted in the past, as both rationalism and fundamentalism would think, but as a living process of meaning formation. I agree with Gadamer's concept of living traditions: all are supported by their own cultural tradition as their horizon of meaning. Through understanding one's cultural tradition, one is enabled to return to the most precious part of one's own self. Cultural tradition is not merely a way out of our limited self, it is also our resource for coming to the best of our self. That is why, in this volume, we include some papers which look back to the best of the Chinese cultural traditions: Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.

Though every one lives in his or her own cultural tradition, it should be understood also that each tradition is one among other traditions. Comparison with other traditions is therefore another way to escape the limits of our own subjectivity. Comparison is also a way of communication and of learning languages other than our own. On the other hand, comparison with other traditions is also a way of achieving self-consciousness and the contrast which appears through the process of comparison might bring us to the consciousness of the specificities of our own tradition. For this reason we present in the present volume some papers comparing the Chinese philosophical traditions with those of Western philosophy.

In order to climb out of the dark valley of nihilism, it is not enough to appeal to one's own cultural tradition and to situate it among others. Morality and moral traditions are but modes of the manifestation of Being in human history. This means that our moral life and moral traditions must have metaphysical foundations and should be understood as ways of realizing our being as rooted in the Being of all beings. Heidegger's notion of *Ab-grund* does not mean that human beings do not have metaphysical foundations but only that we should not choose any particular manifestation of Being as our foundation. This means that we are free, but that this freedom is nevertheless grounded. Searching into the metaphysical foundation of our being is essential therefore to its realization and to that of our common being with others. For this reason an important part of this volume is devoted to metaphysical reflection.

This volume is an outcome of the International Conference on Morality, Metaphysics and Culture organized by The International Society for Metaphysics and the department of philosophy of the National Chengchi University and of Fujen Catholic University in Taipei. The Conference was supported financially by both the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China and the United Daily News Cultural Foundation; the publication of this volume is supported financially by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange. To all these organizations, to the authors of the papers presented in this volume, and especially to Prof. George F. McLean of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy the editors wish to express their deepest gratitude.

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Introduction

Tran Van Doan

With the rise of nihilism which Nietzsche proclaimed in his *Gay Science* and with the death of God at the hands of the positivists, metaphysics and morality are again condemned to death. The tragedy is not only celebrated by Sartre with his philosophy of the absurd, but also tacitly accepted by the theologians of "the death of God". Nowadays, it could seem that there is nothing but atheism and nihilism, and that talk about values is rather taboo. However, is it true that God is dead? Is it true that metaphysics survives as no more than a relic in the museum of the history of thought?

Immanuel Kant restored metaphysics from its immanent death at the hands of Locke and Hume and transformed it into a kind of epistemology. He also built a kind of transcendental morality which, he claimed, could be guaranteed against mistakes. Such metaphysics and morality no longer needed the authority of God as their backbone, for they claimed their autonomy through self-evidence and their truth as mathematical fact. Indeed, Kant saved metaphysics and morality, but only to make them impossible for human beings: Hegel may be correct in dismissing the practicality of Kant's ethics. As a matter of fact, in its ontological roots metaphysics is neither epistemology nor a specific branch of anthropology, and the same could be said of morality as well, for it cannot generate practical values.

This volume on the relationship between metaphysics and morality shows that neither Nietzsche nor Kant, neither the positivists nor the empiricists are right in handing in a verdict against metaphysics and traditional values. The authors here reject such a claim by demonstrating the validity of moral values in humankind's most basic activities. They also demonstrate the inner, inseparable relationship between metaphysics and morality which appears in culture. More than merely reconfirming moral values and the indispensability of metaphysics, they advocate a kind of creative morality based upon the human capacity of self-transcendence. Thus, they suggest a new understanding of metaphysics in terms of ontological transcendence--a kind of metaphysics reconciling immanence and transcendence, phenomenology and ontology.

The volume consists of two main parts: the first studies morality in the Chinese tradition, while the second deals with the metaphysical foundations of moral philosophy. The division is not in logical order: it follows an existential order which the editors find more appropriate for dealing with human activities. According to this, moral activities are seen as specific intersubjective communication and self-regulation with a feed-back controlled character which aims at rendering the communication harmonious. In this context, most Chinese authors stress the characteristics of harmonious communication between the subjects, that is, between human beings and God, and between human beings and nature. They regard these characteristics as the most important factors determining the essence of morality and consider the increase of human relationship in terms of richness and growth of moral consciousness in the moral agents. In this sense the authors are in search of what they call a "creative morality."

The first part of the volume begins with a work of Stanislaus Lokuang who attempts to provide a metaphysical foundation for the theory of morals expounded in *The Doctrine of the Mean*. The dynamic self-transcendence neglected by modern moralists is stressed by Lokuang as the most essential factor determining human moral consciousness. This point is further discussed by Vincent Shen in his essay on Lao Tzu's critique of Confucian ethics. The main contribution of Lao Tzu consists in his demand for a total relationship of Tao-Nature-Man and in his insight regarding

human freedom. These two factors, often neglected by Confucianists, are emphasized by Shen in his reconstruction of Chinese morality.

In the third Chapter, Gabriel Ly Chen studies the historical process of atheism in China and shows that the original or authentic characteristics of Chinese morality are rather transcendental, not immanent. This transcendentalism explains the true structure of human relationships and, hence, of human beings as moral agents. The human capacity for self-transcendence again is discussed by Tong Lik-kuen of Fairfield University. His paper attempts to reinterpret Confucian morals not as an autonomous, closed system of human regulations as some Neo-Confucians would understand it, but as a creative human force. To throw more light on Confucian morality, he relies on Nietzsche's insistence on self-overcoming or self-transcending as the most basic and natural force of human beings. In the next chapter, Fu Pei-jung returns to the point emphasized by Vincent Shen, namely, the total relationship of man and God, man and nature. In his comparative study of Spinoza and Lao Tzu, he painstakingly shows the necessity of creating morality in the context of this total relationship embraced by both Lao Tzu and Spinoza.

In the next two chapters the factor of love is brilliantly discussed by Manuel Dy of the Ateneo de Manila and Gotthold Hasenhüttle of the University of Saarbrücken. For them, the fundamental values which constitute morality are universal and with regard to love there are great similarities between Christian and Confucian ethics, between Max Scheler and Wang Yang-Ming.

These contributors have taken some metaphysical principles such as self-transcendence, harmony or total relationship to be the foundation of morality. In Part II of this work this moral foundation is discussed more in depth and detail. The principle of a creative morality is grounded on a spiritual basis; as Eliot Deutsch of the University of Hawaii notes: a person "is an articulation of the spiritual ground of one's being and the creative transformation of the constraints, limitations and conditions of one's individual being." Through a similar idea, Thomas Fay relates metaphysics to morality in terms of human responsibility. He supplements the works of Dy and Hasenhüttle, by presenting the dialectic of freedom with responsibility, the relationship between love and duty. In this way the principle of responsibility is seen to play as important a role as the principle of self-transcendence. It is not surprising that André Mercier separates morality from metaphysics and shows the necessity of metaphysical foundations for any possible morality. However, such a metaphysical foundation is not yet discussed by him.

T. Imamichi of Tokyo University and George F. McLean take up this issue and further develop the metaphysical foundation. To McLean, who follows many of Gadamer's ideas, this metaphysical foundation could be found in our cultural heritage which he understands as "the cumulative sense of human dignity and appropriate social relations which lie at the heart of the culture(s) we inherit". Thus, to understand our metaphysical foundation is tantamount to a thorough understanding of our cultural heritage, and *vice versa*. These, in turn, serve as the "meta-foundation" for human and social morals. As the history of human cultures is marked by dramatic crises, transformations and changes, culture must not be understood as a kind of museum relic. Rather, it enriches itself by these very crises, changes and transformations, and as such the search and development of metaphysical foundations continues incessantly. Imamichi illustrated this in reflections upon moral crises as well as upon meta-technical problems.

All these discussions point in the same direction and reveal common aims: (a) a true, authentic and human morality cannot be limited to the terms of static natural laws; (b) the metaphysical principles of creativity, self-transcendence and freedom, which the legalists and utilitarians reject, are the conditions *sine que non* for creative morality; (c) by the same token these very metaphysical

principles which are the conditions of morality are also the principles of cultures; and (d) cultures are the modes of emergence into time of the power of being.

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Part I
Morality in the Chinese Tradition

1.

Ching-Hsing (Fulfillment of Nature) in the *Doctrine of the Mean*

Stanislaus Lokuang

The central tenet of the *Doctrine of the Mean* can be summarized in a word: Nature, which is understood in terms both of physical and human nature. Thus it is necessary to have a clear view of nature. Nature comes originally and directly from the Mandate of Heaven which consists of two essential characteristics: naturalness and innateness. This work will not seek simply to explain their meaning, but will look for their genesis, especially from a philosophical perspective.

The Origin of the Natural and the Innate

The very first question is how this naturalness and innateness come to be? A simple explanation of these phenomena will not provide a satisfactory answer. We must instead trace their genesis back to the Mandate of Heaven (Heaven-Mandate) which is shared commonly in the Chinese tradition. Mencius for example used both terms in the same context:

It is due to our nature that our mouths desire sweet tastes, that our eyes desire beautiful colors, that our ears desire pleasant sounds, that our noses desire fragrant odors and that our four limbs desire ease and comfort. But there is also fate. The superior man does not say they are man's nature. The virtue of humanity in the relationship between father and son, the virtue of righteousness in the relationship between ruler and ministers, the virtue of propriety between guest and host, the virtue of wisdom in the worthy, and the sage in regard to the Way of Heaven--these are endowed in people in various degrees according to fate. But there is also man's nature. The superior man does not refrain from practicing them and say they are the matters of fate.⁽¹⁾

In the *Book of History* and the *Annalects* the terms of Heaven-Mandate and Fate clearly express the fate determined Heaven or *T'ien*. But to be more precise, these two terms are not identical. Though Mencius himself uses these two terms in the same sense, still he acknowledges their difference in their very original meaning. He has in his mind two different conceptions: the small substance (hsiao-ti) which is concerned with physical elements and the great substance (ta-ti) which deals with the human heart and mind. The small substance is completely determined or created, and it belongs to the category of fate, while the great substance belongs to what we call human nature and can win over blind fate.

Accordingly, human morals have been constructed on human nature, i.e., the human heart and mind. Mencius regards morals in different forms such as benevolence (Jen), righteousness (Yi), fittingness (Li) and wisdom (Chi):

What belongs by his nature to the superior man are benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom. . . . These are rooted in his heart; their growth and manifestation are mild harmony appearing in the countenance or rich fullness in the back, and the character imparted to the four limbs. Those limbs understand to arrange themselves without being told.⁽²⁾

In the *Doctrine of the Mean*, human nature is known not by its essence, but by its praxis (or acts manifest in nature). But this distinction does not contradict the view that they all belong to

human nature. A careful study of the history of metaphysics leads to the same conclusion. For example, Western metaphysics seems to put more emphasis on the question of Being (in its essence) while the Chinese counterpart tends toward a metaphysics of natural change. Such distinction is artificial, because praxis and theory, existence and essence, change and being cannot be discarded. Only by means of act (change) does Being come into its presence (sheng). That is to say, in its most original form, the act of coming into presence (sheng), i.e. existence, requires a movement beforehand. In another expression, the nature of our existence is a dynamic presence. Analogously, one could also say that the nature of Being could be seen from its immobility or its essence. In the *Doctrine of the Mean* man's nature is precisely understood in this dynamic perspective.

Movement, change, dynamos . . . all express *living* human life. Any discussion about human nature is identified with a discussion about our life. Hence, it can also be said that we can understand our life only if we first grasp our human nature. It is no wonder then that for Confucius and Mencius, all moral codes which are purposely constructed to regulate our life must be built on the basis of human nature. The following passage in the *Doctrine of the Mean* clearly indicates that: "The Ordinance of Heaven is what we call the law of nature. To fulfill the law of nature is what we call the way. To cultivate the way is what we call education" (chap. 1).

Accordingly, living in accordance with human nature is called Cheng or sincerity. In the *Book of the Great Learning* this is exalted as the most pristine virtue. In this way, all morals are constructed upon human nature as goodness itself, i.e., the basic virtue. Thus, we can state that human nature is not only goodness itself, on which all morals are based, but is *most evident* which needs no clarification or verification. A neo-confucianist, Wang Yang-ming calls it moral conscience (liang-chih). Moral conscience is innate, *a priori* in the sense of what Mencius describes as 'unlearned knowledge' or knowledge acquired not from learning, or innate idea; the foundation of morals, moral conscience must be the common consciousness of all men: an unconscious moral conscience would be rather a non-sense. However, that does not mean that all men are equally good. Man often lapses into ignorance for one or another reason, which is precisely why man needs self-enlightenment in order to restore moral conscience. This self-restoring enlightenment is expressed in the *Great Learning* as 'Let the virtue be self manifesting' or 'refurbishing pristine virtue', and in the *Doctrine of the Mean* as sincerity (chap. 20): "Sincerity is the Way of Heaven. The attainment of sincerity is the way of men."⁽³⁾

On the other hand, there is also what we call physical or biological nature implicit in matter and which man needs to transform or to harmonize into goodness. By means of his own effort man can attain or acquire the goodness for his life. With a full knowledge of human nature man no longer clings to self-interest but voluntarily follows the natural way and as such becomes *Chun-tzu* or the noble man. In the *Doctrine of the Mean*, there is a passage:

Sincerity in its original enlightened state is called nature; when manifested, it is called education. Where there is sincerity, there is manifestation; where there is manifestation, there is sincerity (Chap. 21).

Seen in this way, in its 'very nature' sincerity is transparent and spontaneous. Blinded by the strong desire to amass interests, man is in need of self-correction in order simply to return to his nature. Such is the purpose of education.

Regarding the question of nature, we find in the *Doctrine of the Mean* three main ideas: 1. human nature as Heaven-Mandate, 2. human nature as goodness, and 3. human nature as the moral

codes of human life. In a word, one can obtain the Tao only by means of educating one's human nature.

Sincerity

To attain the Tao, sincerity is the first requisite. The second half of the *Doctrine of the Mean* is devoted to this question of sincerity, *Cheng*. This is implicit in all human activities guiding our praxis into conformity to human nature. Human nature may be regarded as the model or the standard with which man must act in accord. We regard it as the standard because of its universality and necessity. Another function of sincerity is its role in making nature moving and transforming:

Where there is sincerity, there is form. Where there is form, there is evidence. Where there is evidence, there is manifestation. Where there is manifestation, there is activity. Where there is activity, there is change. Where there is change, there is transformation. In the world, only he who possesses sincerity can transform (chap. 23).

In commenting on this passage, Chu-Hsi notes on the concepts of change and transformation as follows: change is always oriented toward *Chi* (the material force), and transformation toward the divinity. Thus he explains the difference of the attitude of a sage from that of ordinary people: "Only the mover can move all things and only the transformer can transform" (Chu-Hsi). However, if we take a careful look into the *Doctrine of the Mean*, it is clear that we cannot rely on the influence of the ordinary man to explain change and transformation. We can do that only by means of first grasping human nature (chap. 22) and, more important, the "silent dynamic nature" (Ching Hsing). Consequently, our activities should be regulated by the morals based on human nature. By doing so, one can reach the stage of the sage. Needless to say, goodness is born in and from our sincerity and from our acts conforming to nature. Conversely, one can say also that our nature is in developing through moral acts. In the *Doctrine of the Mean*, goodness is identified with moral goodness:

When the passions, such as joy, anger, grief and pleasure, have not awoken, that is our true self or being. When these passions awoken and each and all attain due measure and degree, that is the moral order (chap. 3, 4).

One important thing hidden in this passage that we need to mention is the key-term 'harmony'. Harmony expresses how human beings whenever and wherever--in any state of joy, anger, sorrow and happiness--always try to act in accordance with the laws of nature. In a word, goodness means exactly the final stage of acting and developing as well as of following nature.

One point however, needs to be clarified here. In the *Doctrine of the Mean*, *hsing*, i.e. nature, can be understood not from its static appearance, but from its dynamic hidden aspect. That is to say, by means of a constant developing sincerity human nature manifests itself. In *I-King*, we find such an idea: 'Only through *yin* and *yang* does Tao manifest itself; only through practical acts does goodness reveal itself and only in sincerity does human nature emerge' (*I-King*, chap. 5). In another expression, the autonomous transformation of *yin* and *yang* produces the nature of material and physical nature, and even these continue to further this self-transformation. Mencius thus regards human nature as goodness; as such, man has no other choice but out of sincerity to conserve and

develop his nature. But to develop one's nature, one cannot look elsewhere for other ways; one must develop one's own nature in the natural way. Mencius explains:

There are few in the world who can resist the temptation of helping their rice plants grow. Some leave them unattended, because they think that to help the plants is all to no avail; there are people who do not even bother to weed. Others help the plants grow by pulling at them; not only do they fail to help but they do harm.⁽⁴⁾

We can state it this way: like a seed which grows, human nature also consists in growing. Mencius means by seed what he has in his mind: benevolence, righteousness, fittingness and wisdom. These four cardinal virtues form the kernel of morality, namely goodness. One can say that these four virtues are regarded by Mencius not only as moral goodness but, more than that, the spiritual life itself, because spiritual life is meant for humankind. It is the great substance (*ta-ti*). However, in order to make them visible one should cultivate one's life. The moral act, i.e., the act of benevolence, righteousness, fittingness and wisdom, is rooted deeply in our spiritual life, or more precisely, in our human nature.

To avoid misunderstanding, we need to note here the difference between Western and Chinese metaphysics on this question. The Western metaphysicians discuss Being in terms of the principles of identity and of contradiction, while their Chinese counterparts understand being in its act of coming-into-presence in terms of moral virtues, i.e. the four cardinal virtues.

Let us return to Mencius's arguments. Our nature grows in the same way as a seed which, after being buried under the earth, grows up and again is planted in the rice-pad. The seed will become what it is supposed to be. According to this natural phenomenon, one may assert that the nature of a seed is to be such, i.e. following the principle implicit in the seed enables the seed itself to grow. The harvest self-expresses the total reason of this principle of "*sheng*" (genesis, creation . . .). Similarly, the principle implicit in nature can be explained in what I propose to call "ching-hsing", or the "silent, dynamic nature."

In the *Doctrine of the Mean* human nature must be understood as this "silent dynamic nature". At the very first beginning of human life, one notices the presence of a certain principle implicit in man (that we call *li*). Such a principle is known in the acts of benevolence, righteousness, fittingness and wisdom. Accepting *li* as the root requires that we develop our human nature by means of moral practice to the requirements of *li*. *Li* is most visible in the life of Chun-tzu, the holy man or sage, who possesses these cardinal virtues:

In the world, only he who possesses pervasive sincerity is able to fulfil his nature completely. He who is able to fulfill his own nature completely will be able to fulfill completely the nature of all men. He who is able to fulfill completely the nature of all men will be able to fulfill completely the nature of all things. He who is able to fulfill completely the nature of all things will be able to assist the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth. Able to assist the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth, he may form a trinity with them (Chap. XXII).

The silent dynamic nature in the *Doctrine of the Mean* is manifested in four degrees: dynamic individuality, dynamic human nature, dynamic material force and dynamic transformation. These four degrees or steps are sometimes placed in time-sequence and sometimes occur at the same time. Generally speaking, in order to attain the fullness of human nature, it is necessary to proceed in order step by step, from the first to the second, from the second to the third and so on to the final

step. A clarification about the time-sequence must be made here: at the very moment of reaching the first step, one reaches all four steps at one glance. Chu Hsi tends to a second interpretation, namely, claiming that one becomes a sage when he possesses sincerity (Chu Hsi).

In fact, the comment of Chu-Hsi is derived from his understanding of traditional morality based on Tao, and of the relationship between sincerity and human nature. Consequently, he claims that one can grasp completely one's own nature as well as the nature of universe, and that man should rely only on his nature as guide to acting. Chu-Hsi accepts the silent dynamic nature in the *Doctrine of the Mean* as a metaphysical essence in which one develops human nature to its most perfect form.

Following this interpretation, Wang Pan-shan continues to insist that the more the nature grows the more fate diminishes, because human nature is constructed on the unity of *yin* and *yang*. *Yin-yang* moves, transforms and constructs everything; it explains how human nature manifests itself. In this context, man and thing originally share the same nature: all depend on the Heaven-Mandate which is unchanging. Thus we can understand why the *Doctrine of the Mean* explains *hsing* (nature) and *li* (principle) in different terms. This idea strengthens our interpretation that the principle of HeavenMandate is unchangeable while our human nature is developing. Chu-Hsi has distinguished the principle (*li*) from material force (*chi*). He argues that if nature is principle then this principle is unchangeable. But by taking nature as *chi* (material force), nature is seen to consist in developing. In the same sense, he baptized as individual nature the characteristics of each individual man. By taking *chi* as the most fundamental principle of nature, he claims that one attains the full knowledge of goodness and evil, i.e., one develops himself. Thus, this principle also is called the eternal principle of Heaven and Earth. However, Chu-Hsi notes that the nature of *chi* and of the Heaven and the Earth are different in terms of manifestation. The nature of Heaven and Earth is abstract while that of *chi* is concrete.

In the *Doctrine of the Mean* we find both the concrete and abstract natures. To be more precise, note the main features of nature: the first is individual, the second is concrete nature, while the third concerns the nature of matter. Needless to say, the *Doctrine of the Mean* tends toward the second, concrete nature. In a word, we believe that Chinese metaphysics starts not from pure being but being in its concrete life and development. We would go a step further to say that it is through the movement of life (life in act) and by means of the concreteness of life that we can understand human nature. The evidence in our life: human growth from infancy to adulthood, from adulthood to the final stage of life, suggests continuous development. But how explain the diminution of human physical strength in old age? In fact we are talking of development in terms of spiritual development. The human spirit always develops, even at the later stage of our life, and to such a degree that one can obtain then the state of silent dynamic nature and become the sage.

Human Nature and the Nature of Thing

The last question regarding the silent dynamic nature in the *Doctrine of the Mean* is the nature of thing which, as Chu-Hsi insists, can be seen in our human nature. As a matter of fact, some explanations of human nature and the nature of thing have been made in terms of individual nature. But the reality is that whatever we name, either individual nature or human nature, either the nature of thing or simple nature, all belong to the same unique nature. A danger may occur in such an understanding of nature, namely, one may identify human nature with animal nature, whereas the simple fact that man is not a beast demonstrates that human nature is not animal nature. In order to avoid this embarrassing problem, Chu-Hsi takes the view of Changtsai and Chang-chin

on *li*. This explains all things in Heaven and Earth, but not on *chi* (material force) and on concrete *praxis* which are different in different species.⁽⁵⁾

Actually, Chu-Hsi holds that there are different stages of *chi*, from the innumerable to the seriousness, and from the seriousness (as the psychological prerequisite for true knowledge) to *chi*. On the other hand, he claims that the principle or *li* lies in actualizing, its degree of actualization depending on the seriousness of *chi*. More clearly, a man who possesses *chi* has the seriousness with which he knows how to let the self-manifesting take place. Chu-Hsi later reaffirms this position by reiterating that man can be understood from his total possession of the principle of all things (*li*), while material things or animals can be grasped partly because they lack this *li*. In a word, the *li* found in the united and harmonious universe can be the principle of life, namely the principle of *sheng* or biological, genetic principle.

In *I-King*, similar ideas are found. Tao is the genetic activity which is implicit in the universe and expresses life. It contains in itself the movement of yin and yang. By taking *sheng* (genesis) as principle, or, more precisely, by taking life as principle, it is evident that the principle of life is identified with the principle of Heaven-Earth, that the most concrete principle must be the principle of *chi*, and finally, that the principle of life is in harmony with *chi* itself. From a reverse order, one may formulate it so: if *chi* stands in opposition to life, then the principle (*li*) will not become present, and logically, no life can be expected. Hence, only by means of the seriousness of *chi* does life emerge. According to Chu-Hsi then the more the seriousness of *chi* develops, the more life ascends toward its most developed form, i.e., human life. One may say also, with man *chi* is in its highest seriousness and therefore life manifests itself in the most perfect form, namely, spiritual life whose essential characteristics are benevolence, righteousness, fittingness and wisdom. In Chu-Hsi's own words, that is the united principle in its manifestation.

However, in our daily life, the four cardinal virtues of benevolence, righteousness, fittingness and wisdom are often clouded by improper events. The duty of self control and correction is thus the first condition for arriving at the silent dynamic nature, and then attaining the full developing personality. A man's personality is known in spiritual life, which consists of human life, as well as in cosmic life. Thus, Mencius affirms: "All things are there in us" (Ching-hsing, 1). The silent, dynamic nature, now regarded as the great ultimate force, involves both human nature and the nature of things. In *I-King*, this *hsing* or nature is considered as the principle of life coming from Heaven and Earth: "The Virtues of Heaven and Earth are implicit in *sheng* (genesis), i.e., our original life can be found in the love of the heavenly spirit" (T'ien Hsin). Similarly, Chu-Hsi insists on the spiritual force as the basis of Heaven and Earth. Once man possesses spiritual force, he is fully developed.⁽⁶⁾ One can also express this as once man arrives at the stage of quietness of heart (and mind), he can express (from his life) the benevolence existing in Heaven and Earth. Mencius speaks thus of benevolence: "he is benevolent towards the people, but is merely sparing with things".⁽⁷⁾ As such, one has all the virtues existing in the harmony of Heaven and Earth; as a logical matter one absolves himself from all conflicts in the universe. In the *Yi-chuan*, the same idea is expressed as follows: "A great man possesses the virtues implicit in Heaven and on Earth".⁽⁸⁾

To conclude, we cite from the *Doctrine of the Mean* a passage which expresses the above idea: "Oh, how great the Way of the sage is! Vast and full, it gives birth and life to all created things" (chap. 27.1).

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2.

Lao Tzu's Metaphysics and His Critique of Confucian Ethics

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Lao Tzu's Critique of Confucian Ethics: The Social Context of His Times

Lao Tzu has given to Chinese Culture the most profoundly speculative system of metaphysics in the history of Chinese philosophy. However, his metaphysics was quite intimately related to his critique of the Confucian Ethics. In fact, Lao Tzu's metaphysics emerged first as a vehement critique of the 'Too Human', that is, too anthropocentric ethical orientation in Confucianism. Lao Tzu's metaphysics is proposed as an ultimate solution to the impasse created by this too human ethics. It is characterized by an emphasis upon the ontological foundation of human nature and its re-insertion of human action into the cosmic spontaneity shared by all things as begotten by the Ultimate Tao.

According to my interpretation, Lao Tzu was first of all a cultural critic of his time: his concept of Tao was proposed as an ulterior solution to the socio-political and spiritual crises of that society. By his penetrating criticism, fused with a profound praxis of life, he established a paradigm of social critique and critique of ideology for Chinese culture in general. His writings on the Tao and its virtues, entitled the *Tao Te Ching*, has revealed to us the image of a society in a process of radical change. On the one hand was the disintegration of the cultural order in the ancient China constituted by Chou Li: the social institutions and politico-religious rites of Chou Dynasty. On the other hand, new cultural elements were emerging, but without being able to stabilize themselves as a new social order. Viewed from this perspective, even though we possess very few historical accounts about the life of Lao Tzu, after a rigorous textual analysis of the *Tao Teh Ching*, we could still judge that its author had composed it in the epoch of Warring States (480-221 BC). Thus, we are justified in denying the only narrative tradition concerning Lao Tzu since Ssu-ma Ch'ien, according to which Lao Tzu was a keeper of the archives at the Chou Court and an elder contemporary of Confucius (551-479 BC). On the contrary, the *Tao Teh Ching* was composed much later than Confucius. It was in criticizing the society of Warring States and the ethics of Confucianism that Taoism emerged as a vigorous way of thinking, and hence as a deep, fundamental trait of Chinese thinking and even of the Chinese attitude towards life and society in general.

Under Lao Tzu's penetrating criticism, the society of his time was revealed to be in a state of disorder in which, according to Lao Tzu's own words, "The people suffer because their rulers eat up too much in taxes. That is why they starve. The people become difficult to govern because those in authority have too many projects of actions. That is why they are difficult to govern. The people take death lightly because their rulers have too many desires. That is why they take death lightly" (ch. 75). It seems that for Lao Tzu social problems were produced by the political domination of the rulers themselves, rather than by the disproportion between desired values and their modes of realization. *Chou li*, the most important cultural institution in ancient China, was in Lao Tzu's eyes but a form of domination hindering and distorting man's communication with nature, with other men and, most importantly, with Tao. Lao Tzu's writing show that the disorder of the society of his time resulted from the distortion of free and natural communication through all forms of domination.

Lao Tzu has also criticized the inter-state conflicts of his time, which were so vehement as to resort to military solutions and unceasing wars. He said, "When Tao does not prevail in the world, war horses have to breed on the border" (ch. 46). "Whenever armies are stationed, briars and thorns become rampant. Great wars are inevitably followed by famines" (ch. 30). "The weapons of war are instruments of evil and they are detested by people . . . war should be regarded as a mournful occasion. When a multitude of people are slaughtered, it should be an occasion of the expression of bitter grief. Even when a victory is scored, the occasion should be observed with funeral ceremonies" (ch. 31). Today, the echo of these critical words of Lao Tzu still touches the hearts of many people for whom the wounds of war still throb in bitter memory, or even make the heart bleed for the death of their beloved.

These Laotsean critical descriptions of social disorder and wars show that they belong to the period of Warring States. But in this social disintegration on a grand scale new elements tended to emerge to seduce many a man's intellectual activities and desires. When the "clan-law" () and "well-field" () institutions were gradually obliterated, there arose a commercial society where even land became an object of commerce. In order to avoid the calamities of wars, people left their land and devoted themselves to liberal commercial activities. Therefore the lust for goods and the desire for material success became very elevated. Lao Tzu had discerned clearly the new signs of his time and had vehemently criticized them. He said, "There may be gold and jade to fill a hall, but there is none who keep them. To be bearing when one has honor and wealth is to bring calamity upon oneself" (ch. 9). "Do not exalt the worthy. . . so that people shall not compete. Do not display objects of desire, so that people's heart shall not be disturbed" (ch. 3). "Therefore he who has lavish desires will spend extravagantly. He who hoards most will lose heavily." It was also a society in which social mobility was highly promoted to the point that people of low origin could become high ranking officials. People strived for fame and position. Intellectuals rendered service to political power and became instruments of political domination. People sacrificed their spiritual freedom for the prize of their lustful desire and instrumental rationality. All these were for Lao Tzu but consequences of having forgotten Tao. What Heidegger calls "Seinsvergessenheit", forgetfulness of Being,⁽⁹⁾ is for Lao Tzu rather "Tao vergessenheit", forgetfulness of Tao. Under these social, political and even spiritual crises, people need a way out. For Lao Tzu, an authentic way out consists in returning to Tao and following Tao's own way.

Lao Tzu was not only a critic of society, he was also a critic of ideology, especially that of Confucian ethics. Confucianism, as another main current of Chinese philosophy, contains in itself many philosophical and ethical truths: therefore it is not to be treated as mere ideology. But it could be ideologized when used by political community to maintain social order and to serve political control, through transforming its system of ideas into a kind of false consciousness. Thus was the aspect of Confucian ethics criticized by Lao Tzu. Confucius himself had endeavored to maintain the ancient social order instituted by *Chou li*.

In pre-Confucian China, *Chou li* embraced both the religious, ethical, political ideality and reality of Chinese life. It represented a cultural tradition, and even a comprehensive ideal of human life in general, as did the concept of Paideia for the ancient Greek people. But in the time of Confucius, *Chou li* began to lose this latter deeper meaning while still keeping its superficial meaning as a code of behaviour, institution and ceremonies. Confucius tried to revitalize *Chou li* by translating its ideal meaning into the concept of *Jen*, which represents the inner sensitive connection between man's inner self and nature, other men and Heaven. *Jen* manifests man's subjectivity and responsibility in and through moral awareness. By doing this Confucius had given a transcendental foundation to our interaction with nature, with other men and even with Heaven.

Then, from the concept of *Jen*, Confucius deduced that of *Yi*, which represented for him moral norms, moral obligations, our consciousness of them and even the virtue of acting always according to them. From the concept of *Yi*, Confucius deduced that of *Li* which represented codes of behaviour, religious and political ceremonies and social institutions. Through this procedure of transcendental deduction, Confucius tried to reconstitute and thereby to revitalize the ethical and social order once concretized in the *Chou li*.

As critic of ideology, Lao Tzu proclaimed that *li*, as code of behaviour and social institutions, was not transcendently grounded in human nature. Rather they were merely formalistic constraints devoid of any positive meaning and were considered by him as a means of social domination from which man needed to be emancipated in order to regain his free existence. Lao Tzu said

It is only when Tao is lost that virtue arises. When virtue is lost, only then does *Jen* arise. When *Jen* is lost, only then does *Yi* arise. When *Yi* is lost, only then does *Li* arise. *Li* is superficial expression of loyalty and faithfulness, and the beginning of disorder. Those who are the first to know it have the appearance of Tao but are the beginning of ignorance (ch. 38).

Lao Tzu criticized all means of domination as expressions of losing the profound co-belongingness of all men to Tao and of immobilizing the spontaneous virtue of each individual. The Confucian *Jen*, *Yi*, and *Li* are for him but specific determinations of ontological origin, Tao and its virtues. Often they lead to superficial and external developments which forget totally their origin and thereby separate from Tao.

In Lao Tzu's eyes, Confucian ethics as a solution to the problems of his times contains the following difficulties:

1. Confucian ethics emphasizes deliberate actions taken with anthropocentric self-consciousness, which by so doing inclines to forget the spontaneity of man and its root in Tao. On the contrary, Lao Tzu proposes instead a mindless spontaneous creativity springing from Tao itself as the real solution. Any way out separated from Tao loses its source of creativity and tends to be artificial.

2. Without the creative support from Tao and the spontaneous character of *Teh* (德), the transcendental system of Confucian ethics--which grounded *Li* in *Yi* and *Yi* in *Jen* in a transcendental way--tends towards progressive degradation. *Jen* degenerates into *Yi* and *Yi* into *Li*. *Li*, separated thereby from all its ontological and transcendental foundations, even when supported by instrumental rationality, could still be determined by lustful desire and therefore cause social conflict.

3. The social anomie and the commercial civilization created by lustful desire and calculating intellect cannot be improved by Confucian revitalization of *Chou li*, because the hearts of people, according to Lao Tzu, incline towards freedom and emancipation from all constraints.

For the above reasons, Confucian ethics, in Lao Tzu's eyes, was not an adequate solution to the problems of his times. Its tendency towards ideologization had to be criticized by an ultimate reference to each being's spontaneity, the *Teh*, and the source of all creativity, the Tao.

Lao Tzu's cultural critique led him to think of a way out for the society in crisis. His critique of Confucian ethics led him to deny Confucianism as an adequate solution (way out) for that society, and to replace its conceptual framework of *Jen-Yi-Li* by an emancipating philosophy of

Tao and *Teh*. His main argument consists in pointing out that the human heart by nature tends towards freedom. Hence, any adequate solution must be capable of leading people to return to the creative spontaneity of each person and each being--the *Teh*, and to their ontological origin--the Tao. *Teh* is the transcendental foundation of our freedom and Tao is its utmost ontological foundation.

Lao Tzu's Metaphysics and His Concept of Tao

The concept of Tao is central to the philosophy of Taoism. This Taoist concept was original in the intellectual history of China in the sense that it replaced the traditional, especially Confucian, concept of *T'ien* as the ultimate principle of reality. *T'ien* was the core concept representing the Ultimate Being, either as a personal God, or as the highest principle, in the *She King*, the *Shang Shu* and other classics of primordial Confucianism. As such, it gave the conceptual system of *Jen-Yi-Li* an ultimate foundation. But in a troublesome age like Lao Tzu's, it was either difficult for people to believe in an impartial personal God or a highest moral principle, or too easy to vacillate between them in a naive way to render justice to people's unending suffering. Therefore *T'ien* comes to be interpreted by Lao Tzu as nature, as the locus in which all things are produced (as in the case of *T'ien* and Earth, and as the law of nature (as in the case of the way of *T'ien*. All three are now treated by Lao Tzu as derivative manifestations of Tao, which alone is the ultimate Reality. Man, together with all other things in *T'ien* and Earth, are but manifestations of Tao and have to return back to Tao. Here we touch the most important problem of the relation between Tao and man, which replaced the traditional anthropocentric, humanistic relation between *T'ien* and man. This means a fundamental change in metaphysics and philosophy of man. But how should we understand this metaphysics and its correlated vision of man?

In Western philosophy, the term 'meta ta physica' was given by Andronicus of Rhodes to an anonymous work of Aristotle placed after the Physics. For Aristotle, the objects of this science vary. In Book 4, he proposed that, "There is a science which investigates being as being and the attributes which belong to this in virtue of its own nature."⁽¹⁰⁾

Metaphysics here means ontology, defined as the science of being as being. But, in the same book, when he tried to define the multiple meanings of the term 'being', he pointed out that substance is central to them. Therefore "to study being is to study substance".⁽¹¹⁾ Metaphysics hereby became ousiology. Then, in studying various substances, he proposed the need of affirming God as the Eternal Substance, the First Cause of all beings, which is Pure Thinking Itself (Noesis Noeseos). Metaphysics thereby became theology, or first philosophy--these were names given by Aristotle himself to this honorable science. Moreover, since God is the First Cause of all movement in the physical world, in studying God metaphysics studies also the ultimate cause, and became thereby a science of causes, an aitiology.

On the one hand, Aristotle failed to recognize the ontological difference between Being Itself and other beings. Even if he had proposed to study being as being, this did not prevent him from staying on the ontic level. On the other hand, as he was quite realistic minded and focused much attention on the physical world, his ontology was much influenced by his physical vision. These reasons led him into the degrading process of development from ontology to ousiology, and from ousiology to theology (an aitiology). In the criticism of Martin Heidegger, the metaphysics of Aristotle represents a stereotype of onto-theo-logy.⁽¹²⁾

When we turn to the metaphysics of Lao Tzu, the meaning and scope change quite notably. It is in fact not a 'meta ta physica', not an after- thought on physics. On the contrary, for him the

physical world comes after Tao. By Tao the physical world is begotten. Any explanation of the physical phenomena is to be derived from a more profound meditation on Tao, which is Being Itself. Lao Tzu has distinguished clearly between Being Itself and other beings. He never forgets the important ontological difference existing between them. Lao Tzu's ontology is concerned with Tao rather than with the Aristotelian being as being.

Moreover, Lao Tzu's ontology is complemented by a meontology, because being and non-being are seen by him as the two essential moments of the manifestation of Tao. Non-Being is not mere nothingness, but rather a higher way of being, transcendent to our grasping either by senses or by intellect, and to the moment of being. The manifestation of Being Itself is for Lao Tzu a dialectical process between being and non-being. In this way he avoided hypostatizing Tao as substance. For Lao Tzu, the dynamism and act of existence is more essential than substance, which is but a mode of being; Lao Tzu's metaphysics is never an ousiology. Nor is it a theology, because for him Tao "seems to have existed before the Lord" (ch. 4). God is but the Lord of the realm of being, whereas Tao transcends being and therefore transcends God. God and the realm of being, in Lao Tzu's metaphysics, are derived from the manifestation of Tao. It becomes clear now that Lao Tzu's metaphysics does not belong to what Heidegger calls the onto-theological constitution.

But Lao Tzu cannot accept Heidegger's proposition that the meaning of Being is to be grasped in terms of Dasein's--that is to say, in terms of man's--understanding of it. For Heidegger, an existential analysis of Dasein's existence reveals to us the meaning of Being. Man is the there (Da) of Being and manifests Being by the same token.⁽¹³⁾ Lao Tzu, on the contrary, thinks that we cannot understand man without reference to Tao and its manifestation through all beings. Lao Tzu avoids anthropocentric humanism by referring to Tao and by inserting man among all beings which share the same creative spontaneity of Tao.

In the following sections, we will discuss first Tao and its manifestation; secondly, we will discuss Tao and all things; and finally we will discuss Tao and man. The first is ontology, the second cosmology, whereas the third is anthropology.

Tao and Its Manifestation--Lao Tzu's Ontology

Etymologically speaking, the Chinese character "Tao" is composed of two elements: one signifying a head and another signifying the act of running or walking along. Together they signify a path or a way for a person with a thinking head to run upon or go along. When used as verb, it means "to direct", "to guide", and sometimes "to say", "to tell" or "to be told of". The significance of guiding and directing could be extended to mean principle, reason, or even method. The significance of saying and telling could be extended to mean discourse, speech and even theory. But these later meanings, which were so important for the Greek concept of Logos, and for Western philosophy in general, are less important for Lao Tzu and Chinese philosophy in general. This makes many differences in their respective epistemologies and metaphysics.

In pushing the meaning of "Tao" further to its most speculative level, it becomes, not only the ways followed by some things and some persons, but the Way Itself, the Ultimate Reality or Being itself. Here the concept of "Being" does not mean negatively, as in the case of Hegel's Logic, mere "beingness", the most impoverished ontological determination without any positive content. It represents rather the act of existence, like the *Ipsum Esse* according to St. Thomas, or the self-manifesting Being, according to M. Heidegger. It is not even a concept, because treating it as concept equals saying that it is merely a conceptual being or *ens rationis*; this reduces it to an ontic status where it loses its ontological import. That is why Lao Tzu would say: "The Tao that can be

told of is not the Eternal Tao; the name that it can be named is not the Eternal name" (ch. 1). In affirming this way, Lao Tzu discards from the beginning any possibility of reducing the Way to a mere object of science or discourse. Therefore in Lao Tzu's metaphysics there always exist some elements which transcend towards the trans-metaphysical, some elements in his ontology which lead beyond to the meontological.

Has Lao Tzu ever attributed characteristics to this unfathomable, unnameable Tao? Yes. In chapter 25 he said:

There is something undifferentiated and yet remains as totality, which exists before heaven and earth. Inaudible and invisible, it is independent and immutable. Its function is pervasive and ceaseless. It can be considered the mother of heaven and earth. I do not know its name and call it the Way or Tao. If forced to describe it, I will say that it is Great. Now being great means functioning everywhere. Functioning everywhere means far-reaching. Being far-reaching means returning to its origin.

Undifferentiated totality, inaudible, invisible, independent, immutable, pervasive, ceaseless, great, acting everywhere, far-reaching, and cyclical or spiral are then the characteristics given by Lao Tzu to describe Tao.

Now we must keep in mind that these characterizations are but names given reluctantly, as Lao Tzu says: "if forced to" give. Still Lao Tzu proclaims that he does not know its name. So the best name is the "Il y a", the "there is", which points silently but eloquently to the Way, the Tao. This reminds us of something similar in what M. Heidegger says in "The Way to Language":

This unknown-familiar something, all this pointing of Saying to what is quick and stirring within it, is to all present and absent beings as that first break of dawn with which the changing cycle of day and night first begin to be possible; it is the earliest and most ancient at once. We can do no more than name it, because it will not be discussed, for it is the region of all places, of all time-space-horizons. . . . What is a way? A way always allows us to reach something. Saying, if we listen to it, is what allows us to reach the speaking of language. ⁽¹⁴⁾

That Appropriation, seen as it is shown by Saying, cannot be represented either as an occurrence or a happening--it can only be experienced as the abiding gift yielded by Saying. . . . The Appropriating event is not the outcome of something else, but the giving yield whose giving reach alone is what gives us such things as a 'there is' (Il y a), a "Il y a" of which even Being Itself stands in need to come into its own as presence. ⁽¹⁵⁾

What Heidegger says above is very near what Lao Tzu means. Their only difference consists in the fact that Lao Tzu does not interpret the Way (Tao) as Saying, "The Tao that can be told of is not the Eternal Tao" --even if he also tends to call Tao the 'Il y a', and to recognize the possibility of appropriating It.

Now since Tao is the act of existence, the original self-manifesting Ultimate Reality, it must have the tendency to manifest Itself through concrete phenomena. According to Lao Tzu, Tao manifests itself through two ontological moments: the *you* and the *wu*. You as being, signifies the moment of concrete manifestation, realization, the fulfilledness, and the substantiality. *Wu*, as non-being, does not represent sheer nothingness; it signifies rather the moment of dissimulation, possibility, potentiality, transcendence, and functionality. Lao Tzu said:

You is the name given to the origin of Heaven and Earth. *Wu* is the name given to the mother of all things. Therefore let there always be *wu* (non-being) so we may see their subtlety. And let there always be being, so we may see their outcome. The two (moments) belong to the same (Tao), but once produced they have different names. They both may be called the deepest metaphysical moments. The rhythmic dialectical interchange between them leads finally to the gate of all subtleties (Ch. 1).

Here the *T'ien-Dih* (Heaven and Earth) means the locus in which All things exist and become, and therefore represents the totality of all things, whereas *Wan-Wuh* (Myriad of things) represents every thing taken separately. Since the totality enjoys priority over each individuality, the potential over the actual, and the transcendent over the real, we can say that the moment of *wu* is for Lao Tzu more original than the moment of *you*. That is why Lao Tzu said: "the myriad of things in the world come from being, and being comes from non-being" (Ch. 40). Therefore the movement of manifestation of Tao must be like this: first, Tao manifests itself as the potential, the transcendent, the dissimulated, the functional; then from this moment it begins to manifest itself as the actual, the real, the concrete, the substantial; then it transpasses this moment towards the higher moment of transcendence, potency and possibility, in order to attain a higher level of being, actuality, and reality. From all these we could affirm the following points concerning Tao:

1. Tao is in a rhythmic movement of self-manifestation.
2. Tao manifests itself through the rhythmic interchanging movements of being (*you*) and non-being (*wu*).
3. Tao is the origin and the unity of these two opposing moments, (*you*) and non-being (*wu*).
4. Tao first self-manifests as non-being and then as being. It moves by these two opposing but interacting moments.

On the ontological level, being and non-being are two opposing but interacting moments. On the ontic level, that is, on the level of being, all things are also constituted by opposing elements. This leads us to further considerations of the relation between Tao and all things.

Tao and Things in Nature--Lao Tzu's Cosmology

Through the dialectical interaction of being and non-being Tao begets all things by a process of differentiation. "All ontic beings are begotten by the self-differentiation of the Simple Origin" (Ch. 28). "Tao begets one; one begets two; two begets three; three begets the myriad things. The myriad things carry on their backs the *yin* and embraces in their arms the *yang* and through the blending of the material forces *chi*, they achieve harmony" (Ch. 42).

This text articulates a process of differentiation from one to two and from two to three. It can be seen also as a process of complexification, going from the simple to the complex. Therefore the word "begets" does not represent any act of creation (*creatio ex nihilo*), as does the metaphysics of creation in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It represents only this process of differentiation and complexification. This theory is common to practically all Chinese philosophical schools. Chinese philosophy has not conceived any doctrine of creation; rather, it has a doctrine similar to what Plotinus called emanation, interpreted here as a process of differentiation and complexification. It is also similar to what Spinoza proposed as the way the *natura naturans* self-manifests into *natura naturata*.

All things, as begotten by Tao as their origin, have to return to Tao as their final end. Corresponding to the process of differentiation, there is the process of conversion. "All things come into being, and I see thereby their return. All things flourish, but each one returns to its origin. This returning to its origin means tranquillity. It is called returning to its destiny. To return to destiny is called the Eternal Tao" (Ch. 16).

Being the ravine of the world, he will never depart from the eternal virtue, but returns to the state of infancy. . . . Being the model for the world, he will never deviate from the eternal virtue, but returns to the state of the Ultimate of non-being. . . . Being the valley of the world, he will be proficient in eternal virtue, and return to the simple Origin (Ch. 28).

...
Returning to that which is non-being, which is shape without shape, form without form. This is the Vague and Elusive. Meet it and you will not see its head. Follow it and you will not see its back. Hold on to the Tao of old in order to master the thing of the present. From this one may know the primeval beginning of all beings. This is called the principle of Tao (Ch. 14).

This last text tells us that Tao begets all things through the temporal process. If we could trace back in this process, we could discover Tao in its primeval beginning.

Tao is the origin of the whole temporal process. Everything happens in time, whereas Tao is the mother origin of time. Therefore the process of conversion has to be conducted in retracing back through the temporal movement till one arrives at its primeval origin. In other words, all things happen through presenting themselves to our field of experience as phenomena. But they present themselves to us after having run through a certain distance in time. We have to retrace the road they have run through to be able to attain their original starting point.

Differentiation and Conversion is therefore the ultimate relation between Tao and all things, between the Origin of time and the phenomenon in time. Lao Tzu's saying: "Return to the simple origin must be the act of all things, since they are but begotten by the self-differentiation of the simple origin" (Ch. 28). This is the best summary of this relation between Tao and all beings. These two processes are in unceasing interaction. Lao Tzu calls them metaphorically the relation between mother and son. "He who has found the mother (Tao) thereby understands her sons (all things); and having understood the sons, still keeps to its mother" (Ch. 52).

Differentiation and conversion are the ultimate relations between Tao and all things. They are also the ultimate relations between Tao and man. "To find the mother in order to understand the son, and having understood the son, still keeps to its mother" is therefore also the best description of the relation between Tao and man. But before discussing this more in detail, we must see, on the cosmological level, the principle movement of all things. Here we meet the question of natural law: Tao manifested as natural law is the principle of the movement of all things. On this level, we interpret Tao as principle.

The law of nature seen by Lao Tzu is not based on the principle of causality which is linear in character, as in the case of Western science and philosophy, but rather on the dialectics of differentiation and conversion which is essentially a cyclical or spiral movement. The fundamental principle of nature is best summarized in Lao Tzu's saying that "Reversion is the action of Tao" (Ch. 40). Here reversion has two connected meanings: one signifying opposition, reversal; the other signifying returning, conversion. The first movement of opposition is derived from the movement of differentiation, determined originally by the dialectics between being and non-being. This leads things to differ one from another and thereby to be in relative opposition. In this sense

the more extended the Way, the more differentiated and opposed are things one from another. The second movement of return is the consequence of the fact that Tao is the final end of all things, which must thereby return back to it. In this sense the further the Way leads, the nearer it is in returning back to itself. This differs therefore from the principle of causality, which pre-supposes the before/after linear temporal scheme in structuring the precedent phenomenon and the consequent phenomenon with a determinist necessity. In contrast, Lao Tzu's principle of nature is based on the dialectical movement of *Concordium Oppositorum*, which considers opposing elements and their mutual interaction as fundamental to all natural and social phenomena. In Lao Tzu's text, we could read many chapters describing the structural and the dynamic oppositions--we prefer to call them "contrasts". For example:

When the people of the world all claiming to know what is beautiful for the Beauty of it, will lapse into ugliness; all claiming to know what is good for the Goodness of it, they will lapse into evil (the opposite of the good). Being and nonbeing generate each other; the simple and the difficult complement each other, the long and the short compensate each other; the high and the low incline towards each other; the tones and the melodies constitute harmony one with the other; and the earlier and the later follow one another (Ch. 2).

...

Calamity is that upon which happiness depends; happiness is that in which calamity is latent (Ch. 50).

...

The heavy is the of the light. The tranquil is the ruler of the hasty" (Ch. 26).

Opposing but complementing, differentiating but unifying, distancing but co-belonging, these structural and dynamic contrasts are constitutive of Lao Tzu's fundamental principle of nature. It has two aspects: the one structural and the other dynamic. The structural contrast means that every natural and social phenomenon is constituted of contrasting (that is to say, opposing but complementing, differentiating but unifying) elements. The dynamic contrasts mean that all natural and social movements are moved by the dialectical interaction between contrasting (distancing but co-belonging) moments.⁽¹⁶⁾ The structure and dynamism of nature and society are therefore based on this fundamental principle. By it all things return to Tao and achieve harmony. "Mysterious virtue is profound and far-reaching. And with it all things return to their original natural state. Then complete harmony will be reached" (Ch. 65).

Based upon the above, the relation between Tao and all things could be summarized as follows:

1. Tao is the ontological origin of all things. "The Way is empty, yet use will not drain it. Deep, it is like the ancestor of myriad things" (Ch. 4).

2. Tao self-manifests into all things by a process of differentiation. "The simple origin self-differentiates into ontic beings" (Ch. 28).

3. Tao is the ultimate end of all things which have to return back to it. "All things come into being, and I see thereby their return. All things flourish, but each one returns to its root" (Ch. 16).

4. Tao is the Ultimate unity, the One of all things constituted and moved by structural and dynamic oppositions. "Of old those that obtained the One: Heaven obtained the One and became clear. Earth obtained the One and became tranquil. The spiritual beings obtained the One and became divine. The valley obtained the One and became full. The myriad things obtained the One

and lived and grew. Kings obtained the One and became rulers of the empire. What made them so is the One" (Ch. 39).

Man Re-Inserted into the Ontological and Cosmological Context: Lao Tzu's Anthropology

Lao Tzu never used the word *hsing*, though he talked very often of the word *teh*. This means that for him any idea of human nature is to be integrated into a global conception of all beings' spontaneous nature. The word "teh" represents the spontaneous virtue of every being begotten by Tao in its self-differentiating process. Tao remains in the innermost constitution of every being after being is differentiated into myriad things. It remains there as their spontaneous virtue: what Tao imparts to all beings is their virtue. This affirmation replaces the Confucian formula: "What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature." (*The Doctrine of the Mean*) The forms of these two formulas are quite similar, but their emphases are quite different. The Confucian formula is anthropocentric and humanistic, although it recognizes T'ien as the ontological foundation of man. But in the Taoist formula, there is nothing anthropocentric or humanistic. It takes the spontaneous virtue of all beings as the necessary mediation between Tao and man. On this level, man has to recognize his co-belongingness with all things. "Tao produces them. Virtue fosters them. Matter gives them physical form. The circumstances and tendencies achieve them" (Ch. 51). Man and all things share the same metaphysical structure and the same destiny. Man should not dominate or exploit other beings as instruments or as objects in servitude. Instead, he should treat them as mediator to the Mother Tao.

The Taoist virtue is therefore very different from the Confucian virtues such as *jen*, *yi*, *li*, *chih*, etc. . . . For Lao Tzu, true virtue is to achieve this spontaneity imparted by Tao to all beings. This achieved authentic virtue is called by Lao Tzu Profound Virtue (Ch. 10, 51, 65), Eternal Virtue (Ch. 28), Superior Virtue (Ch. 38, 41), and Great Virtue. "The all-embracing equality of the great virtue follows alone from the Tao" (Ch. 21). "He will never depart from eternal virtue, but returns to the state of infancy. . . . He will be proficient in eternal virtue, and return to the state of simplicity" (Ch. 28).

Tao is esteemed and virtue is honored without anyone's order. They always come spontaneously. Therefore Tao produces them and virtue fosters them. They rear them and develop them. They give them security and give them peace. They nurture them and protect them. Tao produces them, but does not take possession of them. It acts, but does not rely on its ability. It leads them, but does not master them. This is called profound virtue (Ch. 51).

Always to know the models is called mysterious virtue. Mysterious virtue is profound and far-reaching. And with it all things return to their original natural state. Then complete harmony will be achieved (Ch. 65).

The highest virtue for Lao Tzu is to achieve total union with Tao and to share its spontaneity. This virtue is characterized by Lao Tzu as all-embracing, innocent, simple, original, generous and self-forgetful.

It is in view of the fact that lustful desire and calculative intellect operate under the condition of Tao-forgetfulness and hinder man from returning to this spontaneous virtue that Lao Tzu criticizes their function and that of mind in general. "[The sage] keeps their [the people's] mind vacuous, fills their bellies, weakens their ambitions, and strengthens their bones, he always causes his people to be without [intellectual] knowledge, or (lustful) desire" (Ch. 3).

All other things which hinder man from this spontaneity, such as social values (favor or disgrace), the abuse of senses and extravagant bodily movements, are all criticized and devaluated by Lao Tzu.

For Lao Tzu, the highest virtue is incarnate and concretely manifested in the person of a sage. Though a man among men, the sage has transcended all human weakness and selfishness in becoming one with Tao and thus realizing the highest virtue in spontaneous freedom and undefiled infinitude. He knows how to gain a world of love and reverence by employing himself generously for the world. "The sage takes no fancy to accumulation. Having lived for the benefit of others, he is more rich in worth. Having given all he has to other men, he is more plentiful in being" (Ch. 81). "The sage has no begotten mind of his own; he immerses his own mind in the mind of all people, and forms a harmonious one with them" (Ch. 49). "Therefore, the sage is always skillful and wholehearted in the salvation of men so that there is no deserted man; he is always skillful and wholehearted in the rescue of things so that there is no abandoned thing" (Ch. 27). The sage is therefore not only an ethical and moral achievement as in the case of the Confucian sage. He is the incarnation of Tao and its spontaneous virtue, and thereby becomes the saver of the world of appearance in the realm of being, restoring them to the primordial unity with Tao.

Contrary to the Confucian image of the sage as a great man, Lao Tzu proposes the image of an infant as best representing the Taoist sage because an infant realizes without any effort the characteristics of the highest virtue: all-embracing spontaneity, innocence, simplicity, originality, generosity, and self-forgetfulness. "He who possesses virtue in abundance may be compared to an infant. Poisonous insects will not sting him. Fierce beasts will not seize him. Birds of prey will not strike him. His bones are weak, his sinews tender; but his grasp is firm. He does not yet know the union of male and female, but his organ is aroused. This means that his essence is at its height. He may cry all day without becoming hoarse. This means that his harmony is perfect. To know harmony means to be in accord with the Eternal (Tao). To be in accord with the Eternal means to be enlightened" (Ch. 55). The relation between Tao-Nature-Man is central to Lao Tzu's philosophy. "Utterances must have a central theme. The world of events must revolve round a pivot" (Ch. 70). Now this triple relationship is the central theme of all Lao Tzu's utterances. It concerns our origin and our innermost nature and therefore is nearest and dearest to us. It must be also the easiest to know. But people are ignorant of it as a consequence of their forgetfulness of Tao and Virtue, and especially as the consequence of the fact that they are deprived of any methodology. "My utterances are quite easy to understand and quite easy to be put into practice. Yet people in the world are entirely ignorant of the know-how" (*ibid.*).

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3. From Immanentism to Atheism

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Religious Belief in Ancient China

From the very beginning of Chinese culture, a certain belief in God appears at the same time as the birth of letters. According to the study of oracle-bones of Lwo Chen-yu (1169),⁽¹⁷⁾ worship and prayers to God were widespread even then. The same phenomenon is recorded in the history (classics) of the dynasties of Hsya, Shang and Chou. The term *T'ien* (Heaven), expressing God, is repeated more than 330 times while that of *Ti* (the Sovereign) indicating Power is scattered throughout, appearing more than 80 times. In the work of *Chou-yi*, we find also more than ten passages relating to *T'ien* and the Heaven-Mandate.⁽¹⁸⁾ These documents confirm the existence of a personal God (in the Chinese mind), or the Demiurge of all things and all races. He is absolute Goodness, the Protector of mankind, the Designer of natural and moral laws. He is also the umpire defending common goodness and righteousness, who judges man for the latter's moral acts (rewarding good people and punishing the evil). All that explains why our ancestors have worshiped God with the deepest reverence, and have trusted him sincerely. When an individual or the whole nation encounter difficulty or disaster, they rush to God, pay tribute, ask forgiveness and pray to him. They even sometimes complain to God, expressing their hurt feelings and discontent.

How is it, O great Heaven,
That he will not hearken to all just words?
He is like a man going [astray]
[who knows] not where all will proceed to.
All ye officers,
Let each of you all reverently attend to his duties.
How do ye not stand in awe of one another?
Ye do not stand in awe of Heaven.⁽¹⁹⁾

This passage has in fact not expressed any doubt or negation of God, but the feeling of impotence and the ignorance of man in the face of the absolute, transcendent, mysterious, omnipotent God.

Compassionate heaven, arrayed in terrors,
How is it you exercise no forethought, no care?
Let alone the criminals:--
They have suffered for their offenses;
But those who have no crime
Are indiscriminately involved in ruin.⁽²⁰⁾

Denying this historical fact, many scholars, especially the Marxists (in mainland China), still cling to the view that even the concept of God was only a social product of feudal society. They contend that from the late Chou on the concept of God is only born from the fetishism and later

the cult of ancestors in accordance with social development and new emerging needs. Accordingly, many forms of religion, from fetishism to pantheism, from polytheism to monotheism . . . are different reactions of primitive societies and class-societies. Wang You-San for example bluntly states:

The origin of religion can be traced back to the cult of culture, the worship of totem and then to the belief of a soul which later spreads to polytheism and finally to the worship of a God. This belief finally takes form in an institutionalized religion. In general, religion consists of primitive, relatively individual religion, social religion and social-conscious religion which are born from the reductions of society, and which are the natural products of the earlier stage of social development.⁽²¹⁾

Several scholars, among them Kwo Mo-jo, claim that the cult of ancestors was developed in the Shang Dynasty as a form of ideology whose purpose is to consolidate imperial power. This means that the concept of God comes rather from the cult of the chief of a clan. Fu Pei-jung contests this view by pointing out:

Relying on the documents studied on the oracle-bones, we can absolutely reject these claims because: 1) there is no trace of what we call the God of Shang-clan. We possess no empirical fact showing the blood-relationship between Di (the sovereign) and the royals. 2) The description of the cult of ancestors and of natural god is completely different, because Di is considered as the omnipotent God in high. 3) It shows in the oracle-bones that Di is empowered to command, reward and punish Shang dynasty. That clearly indicates that the God in high is not only the Lord of the Shang. 4) Human feeling and their relationship to God inscribed on the oracle-bones are also recorded in the *Book of History*. In this book, the attitude of the people of Xia, Shang and Chou is not much different from that of those of the earlier Chou.⁽²²⁾

By showing that the concept of God is not born either from the worship of nature or from the cult of ancestors, that the Clan-god was not an ideological product defending the power of the Shang, that the belief in God was already accepted and deeply in the heart of all people before and after the Shang, we are forced to arrive at a thesis that, in ancient times and in the mind of the primitive people, there was already a belief in God. Scholars who are still skeptical should note that even if the available documents cannot perfectly demonstrate the divine origin of all, then at least there is not a single historical document which can reject the validity of our thesis. The belief in God among Chinese is as old as the idea of nature-worship and ancestors-cult.

In presenting such a thesis, we do not claim to solve the puzzle on the origin of monotheism. Nor do we want to demonstrate the existence of God in Chinese culture. Our point is much more simple, namely, that the idea of God is as old as our culture, and that such an idea is consciously held by all people, from the moment of the birth of intellect. Thus, we object to the over-simplification of the Marxists that monotheism is nothing but an evolutionary idea or a product of fetishism and polytheism, that religion is a naive ideology fabricated by a class society. To make our point more clear, we will use philosophical argument to clarify the question whenever historical documents are not in a position to give an adequate or clearcut answer. Besides, another important real fact, namely human hope, must be emphasized. Whenever we are looking at the cosmos, whenever we reflect upon ourselves, whenever we perform our moral duty, whenever we

are aware of our limits, lacks and shortcomings, a certain desire toward the transcendent, the absolute, the perfect arises. This feeling is universal among all men, whether primitive or civilized.

The Spirit of Humanism

Generally speaking, the birth of philosophy in the Chun-chiu period (Spring-Autumn) is widely acknowledged as the beginning of the Chinese philosophy. The highest peak of philosophical development is the discovery of Tao (by the Confucianists and Taoists alike). To the Maoist, Tao is the foundation of all things while to the Confucianists, Lao appears next to Tai-chi, i.e., the most necessary and universal or the most essential of the universe. In other words, Tai-chi is the basis of all things. Without Tai-chi or Tao, things would never develop themselves, or never come into being. All would remain void.

We read from Xi Ci Zhuan:

The successive movement of yin and yang constitutes the Way (Tao). What issues from the Way is good, and that which realizes it is the individual nature. The man of humanity (Jen) sees it and calls it humanity. The man of wisdom sees it and calls it wisdom. And the common people act according to it daily without knowing it. In this way the way of the superior man is fully realized.⁽²³⁾

The above passage clearly explains yin and yang as two factors of the cosmos which constitute the Tao which is the origin of goodness, human nature and human beings themselves. It shows Tao is the foundation of life. Another passage in the same book which sheds more light on this view⁽²⁴⁾ indicates that implicit in Tao are the three `tsai', i.e., *T'ien* on high, Man in the middle and the Earth below. Conforming to the three `tsai' (three realities) are the three different but related principles (or Tao): the Tao of the Heaven, the Tao of man and the Tao of Nature. By explaining Tao in such a way, Tao is meant as the *means* of communication. Actually, Tao communicates the will of Heaven, man and Earth. Such an idea fits exactly with what is written in the book of the *Doctrine of the Mean*: "He who is able to fulfill his own nature completely will be able to fulfill completely the nature of all things"⁽²⁵⁾; and "In order to know man he may not dispense with a knowledge of Heaven".⁽²⁶⁾ In the *Book of Mencius*: "He is affectionate to his parents, but is merely benevolent towards the people. He is benevolent towards the people, but is merely sparing with things."⁽²⁷⁾ "He who has given full realization to his heart knows his nature and then knows Heaven. To retain his heart and nourish his nature is to serve Heaven."

Here we can see clearly the triple communicative function of Tao: namely ontological, gnoseological and moral. In Confucianism and Taoism, Tao is much more open and free. It describes the infiniteness of *T'ien* and the limit of the Earth, the inner relationship as well as the co-habitation of man and nature. Hence, in this tradition, Tao appears as somewhat like God, and *T'ien* can be understood only in the context of metaphysics. One can say, Tao is embraced by the people because the Heavenly Tao is inborn or innate in the human heart and mind. It is not only for the sake of human destiny, or human relation to nature, or for the sake of moral satisfaction. Tao is thus the objective of human life. A conscious man is therefore a more autonomous man; man is always conscious of Tao for this reason.

Similarly, belief in God is a matter of fact. Belief is a human way of dealing with nature, with the mysterious, transcendent force. Such characteristics of the believer could be considered as the spirit of humanism in the Chun-chiu period, which makes this period the most flourishing and cherished in the history of China. They show two ways of human praxis: the first deals with the

harmony between God, man and the Earth. In such a harmony, man never loses his own freedom. That way was adopted by Confucianism, Taoism and Mohism. The second way expresses how man tries to live alone without God and nature, i.e., the immanentist way. This is a preparatory step to naturalism and atheism, of which the chief representatives are Lieh-tzu, Kwan-tsu, Yang-chu, Han Fei-tzu etc.

Historical facts tell us that, in the time of Confucius, Lao-tzu and even earlier, the reverence of humanism and the worship of the heavenly Tao were matters of fact. A bizarre thing happened later when the old regime, in order to consolidate its power, twisted the reality by fabricating a new relationship between the Heaven-mandate and the reigning dynasty and feudal system. Such an abuse secularized (or demythologized) *T'ien*, and consequently, replaced God by a man who claims to be the son of God (T'ien-dzu). Such a practice forces man to believe that the power of the son of God and power itself have nothing to do with God Himself, but are related to the institutionalization or rationalization of power in the latter period of the Chou dynasty. That is the main reason of human doubt regarding the presence of T'ien.⁽²⁸⁾ Another view recorded in *Two-chuan* regards the symbol of the king which is explained simply as the symbol of superiority and no longer as the messenger or the representative of God.⁽²⁹⁾ But superiority is understood in the sense of moral conducts and the texts of *Two-chuan* unmistakably lay great emphasis on morality in Chinese culture. Some examples will show how the humanist spirit developed, and how they put less emphasis on the Way of Heaven.

Tzu-cheng and Yen-tzu could be called the representatives of humanism in their time. Tzu-cheng who died about 520 BC was fifty years older than Confucius. According to *Two-chuan*, in the 17th year of the Chou-kung regime, a comet suddenly appears. An officer of the Tzu saw it as the sign of catastrophe (fires) which fell upon the four small states of Sung, Wei, Chen and Cheng. A bureaucrat named Pi-dzao suggested to Tzu-cheng a ceremony worshipping God in order to avoid this catastrophe. At first, Tzu-cheng took this lightly as a matter of superstition. However, why did a big fire engulf these states? This time, Cheng-jen again suggested to offer to God the national treasure as a sign of repentance, but Tzu-cheng replied: "The far distant heaven is much different from the present human way. We are unable to know the way of Heaven. Pi-dzao claims to know it, but how can he? That is nonsense."⁽³⁰⁾

Actually, Tzu-cheng denied the connection between super-natural power and man. He thus held the view that belief in a super-force behind nature, and belief in God as the judge who will punish people by means of a catastrophe are not identical. The first belief in super-force corresponds completely to religious belief, while the latter violates common rational understanding. Tzu-cheng affirms the existence of God, but he also notes the mystery of the Way of Heaven that creates difficulty for us in relating the Way of Heaven to the way of man. In this context, it is hard to label Tzucheng an atheist.

Yan-tzu was born ca. 500 BC. The Yan-tzu recorded some of his ideas during the period of the Warring-States. He emphasizes the law of nature by claiming that human development and disease are connected with natural law so that there is no way other than to follow nature.⁽³¹⁾ The story of such an idea is as follows: One day, Tzu Chi-kung thinks of his own death. He worries, cries and hopes that he never dies. Yon tzu ridicules him saying: "nature shows us that death and birth are matters belonging to Heaven; why do you worry about them. Why are we afraid? Is it ridiculous to worry, to be afraid of them?"⁽³²⁾ Hence, Yon tzu protests Tzu Chi-kung's prayer for longevity.⁽³³⁾ The emphasis on the way of man, and on the fact itself, as well as on the act of following nature in the Chun-chiu period sometimes caused another problem as well. People have often taken superstitious prescriptions and employed magic to force God to support them, simply

neglecting to act morally and to love people. This shows that too much emphasis on the way of man and too little on the Way of Heaven or death does not manifest authentic humanism. Conscious of this fact, Confucius once told his disciples: "If we are not yet able to serve man, how can we serve spiritual beings?" (*The Analects*, Xian Jin) or "If we do not yet know about life, how can we know about death?" (*The Analects*, Yong ye).⁽³⁴⁾

This way of talking about man reflects the spirit of that time. In the works of Confucius, the transcendent way of Heaven and the immanent way of man confirm the existence of the God of tradition. Belief in God and ghosts, in immortality and fate are in fact a common feature of Chinese humanism and help man to reach harmony. In comparison to Tzu-cheng and Yan-tzu, others have little to say against God.

Kwan-Tzu, Lieh-Tzu, Yang-Chu and Atheism

Kwan-chung (died 645 BC), was more than 100 years older than Confucius and a well known politician in the earlier period of Chun-chiu. *Kwan-tzu* is not his own writing but a collective work of many intellectuals in the Warring-States. Kwan-tzu concerns himself with the question of the origin of the universe, God, man and ghosts. He adopts a naturalistic stand to explain the universe and claims that we can indeed grasp the cosmos in terms of the active life of matter. He also contends in a passage of `Schwei Li' that there is an inter-relationship between water, earth and air (*chi*) which can be explained from different aspects of the activating matter and that, therefore, matter can be regarded as the foundation of life. He affirms that *chi* is not other than Tao.⁽³⁵⁾ He even suggests that what we call the human image, spirit and ghosts, are born in *chi* and sometimes distinguishes *chi* in two different categories: pure *chi* (ching chi) and impure *chi* (tzu-chi). More than that, he concludes that human spirit and life originally come from the material *chi*. Without *chi*, nothing can survive or exist independently. Thus we can call Kwan-chung's view naturalism and he actually constructs a view of the way of heaven which he regards as the way of nature. Thus, for him, the way of heaven and of the earth function in accordance with natural laws.

In other passages, Kwan-tzu has mentioned sincerity, help and the greatness of the way of heaven. He even mentioned goodness and evil, but thinks of these terms in a somewhat more moral manner. They have nothing to do with the conception of God or a personal God, for it is man himself who acts and relies on the natural way. From another aspect, Kwan-tzu also affirms that, in order to become a good ruler, one should understand how to come to terms with the Tao of ghost (or the divine way).⁽³⁶⁾

The fact that Kwan-tzu lays a great deal of emphasis upon the human factor and less on the superstitious aspects does not contradict his neutral attitude toward religion. In fact, he does not dare to neglect the traditional belief in God and the custom of worshipping from the Chou on because he believes that these beliefs and customs contribute to enlightening the ordinary people and protecting the nation. Of course, we detect a certain form of atheism in his works which exercises an undeniable influence on later generation of atheists, but Kwan's atheism is not radical or systematically developed.

Lieh-tzu, like other literate persons in the Warring-states held the view that all things come from *chi*. He says:

Formerly the sages reduce heaven and earth to a system by means of yin and yang. But if all that has shape was born from the shapeless, from what were heaven and earth born? I answer: there was a primal simplicity, there is a primal beginning, commencement, primal material.

Here one clearly discovers Lieh-tzu's primal material or material force or *chi*. Lieh-tzu's *chi*-ism explains how heaven, earth and all things derive or develop . . . from *chi*. The circular activities of *chi*, from simplicity to complexity, and again from complexity back to simplicity are happening indefinitely. In this way, Lieh-tzu confirms that *chi* is the root of the cosmos, and the reason for natural events. That is to say, he clings to the view that the natural and mysterious activities of *chi* manifest and complete themselves in the silence of the cosmos. He notes: "The natural develops in quietness" and even suggests: "The way of nature's knowing is the way of unknowing, complete in incompleteness" (Tien Rwei). It is evident that Lieh-tzu's naturalism is nothing but immanentism which excludes the possibility of a transcendent. By naturalism he means: "without self-generation and self-transformation nothing comes to its present state."

The relationship between living nature and organic creatures is a relatively causal one. By taking the view of organism, Lieh-tzu unconsciously explains man in terms of his *chi*-ism. Yin Ling-feng once remarked that the last stage in Lieh-tzu's naturalism is the appearance of human beings, whose essence could be described as "harmonized act with *chi*": like heaven, man comes directly from the ultimate *Chi*.⁽³⁷⁾

We share the view of Yan ling-feng that by starting from naturalism and *chi*-ism, Lieh-tzu denies the difference between the spirit and the body, and consequently the existence of a transcendent outside of matter and *chi*. The difference between the spirit and the body is only a matter of degree of the different grades of *chi*. Analogously, he explains the ghosts in terms of a natural state of man after death, and not a fully independent spirit, which lives eternally external to the body. It is no wonder that Lieh-tzu never discusses the question of immortality. In a word, his naturalism is much closer to the western materialism.

Another scholar who follows the same line as Lieh-tzu is Yang-chu. He develops a certain egoism and individualism similar to the theory of Max Stirner as a radical individual utilitarianism. This view was criticized by Mencius:

The principle of the philosopher Yang was "Each one for himself." Though he might have benefitted the whole kingdom by plucking out a single hair, he would not have done it.⁽³⁸⁾

Yang-chu's individual utilitarianism can be understood only in the context of his view of human life. He boasted: "Then what is a man to live for? Where is he to find happiness? Only in fine clothes and good food, music and beautiful women." But he then adds: "It is in life that the myriad things of the world are different. In death they are all the same".⁽³⁹⁾ For Yang chu death is liberation from suffering. If after death, all are the same, then clearly there is no immortality at all. We live only a short period and if joy, happiness and satisfaction are the ultimate purposes of human life then we must simply ignore life after death.

From another point of view, Yang-chu also holds that the Chinese tradition of *chi* is the main line and it consists of *yin* and *yang* which can explain the movement of life. Lieh-tzu admires Yang-chu, perhaps because of the latter's naturalism and *chi*-ism. Thus he explains life and death as the circular movement of *chi*. Life and lifeless, mortal and immortal, all are natural and relative. All are self-developing and self-satisfying. Thus, the most important thing is to follow the natural way, enjoys our fleeting life and be satisfied with it. He advises: "Make haste to enjoy your life while you have it; why should we care what happens when we are dead?"⁽⁴⁰⁾

Consequently, it is easy for him to conclude that to seek the after-life is simply immoral or anti-natural. The final result of such an absurd enterprise is nothing at all. Feng You-lan rightly

points out that for Yang-chu there is nothing but the satisfaction of all desires, especially those of the flesh.⁽⁴¹⁾ Another consequence is that one must ignore death because it threatens happiness. "There is an old saying that each of us should pity the living and abandon the dead. This saying puts it exactly." To take the view of Yang-chu more transparently, we would summarize his idea as follows: On the one hand, to Yang, whatever does not fit the natural way (such as the effort of trying to overcome death) is simply irrational. For life or death do not depend on man or from man, thus one is in no position to change his or her status. What one can do is to avoid suffering, to ignore the result, and to enjoy oneself. Or the other hand, Yang prefers the so-called philosophy of non-doing; however, his aim is not to promote human life (as with Lao and Chuang), but to escape from suffering in order to enjoy one's days. Therefore, he disregards man's frivolity and naivete in running after fame, holiness, etc., for that generates unhappiness. Finally, for Yang, to be a naturalist, egoist and individualist one ought not to follow traditional morals, to respect laws, etc., because these norms have no existential value at all.

Han Fei-Tzu and Atheism

In the legalist school, Han Fei-tzu (died ca. 233 BC, just 14 years of Han Chin Shi Emperor) is regarded as the most brilliant representative of legalism because of his erudition of 'lao' and 'hsuy'. Han rarely discusses metaphysical matters. In one passage (chi-lao), he talks about the meaning of Tao and *Li* (principle): "Tao is that by which all things become what they are. It is that with which all principles are commensurable." Actually, Han Fei-tzu follows the line of Taoism by insisting on Tao as the principle making matter and transforming it into other matter. It is thus the most universal, because without it, there is no matter at all. Similarly, *li* cannot be removed from Tao. *Li* makes all things look differently. He argues: "Heaven obtains it and therefore becomes high. The earth obtains it (*li*) and wherefore can hold everything."⁽⁴²⁾ He continues:

In all cases the principle (*li*) is that which distinguishes the square from the round, the short from the long, the coarse from the refined, and the hard from the brittle. Consequently, it is only after principles become definite that Tao can be realized. According to principles, there are existence and destruction, life and death, flourish and decline.⁽⁴³⁾

Apparently, Han Fei's Tao bears great resemblance to the Tao of Confucianism and Taoism. It seems to be close to the inclusive and omniscient way of heaven, way of man and natural way. But, such an interpretation is insufficient, because Han Fei sometimes takes a stand in opposition to Confucianism and Taoism. Hu-shi suggests that we need to explore Han-Fei's epistemology, his 'experience-sharing' and 'common use' to explain this puzzle. Hu-Shi argues:

Experience-sharing shows how Han Fei-tzu attends to experimentation. Han believes that he can experiment with all things by taking the conception of common use.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Han Fei-tzu himself gives following explanation:

Both Confucius and Mo-tzu transmitted the doctrines of Yao and Schun. Although they differed in what they accepted or rejected, they each claimed to represent the true teachings of Yao and Schun. Now Yao and Schun cannot come to life again. Who is going to determine the truth of Confucianism and Mohism? It has been more than seven hundred years from Yin and Chou times,

and more than two thousand years from the times of Yao and Schun. If we are unable to determine the truth of Confucianism and Mohism and yet wish to determine the doctrines of Yao and Schun of three thousand years ago, I believe it is impossible to be sure of anything. To be sure of anything without corroborating evidences is stupidity, and to base one's argument or anything about which one cannot be sure is perjury. Therefore those who openly base their arguments on the authority of the ancient kings and who are dogmatically certain of Yao and Schun are men of either stupidity or perjury.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Han Fei-tzu unmistakably relies on correct, objective and verifiable knowledge. Such objective knowledge must be supported by our experience which in turn, comes directly from our praxis or common use. Thus, it is logical that he disregards subjectivism. His claim that human sensibility and behaviour cannot be understood without a first understanding of experience leads him to take a stand in opposition to the subjectivists (Han-Fei, Wen bian). Consequently, he calls rational what is objective and universal. In order to develop knowledge and to achieve the success in one's career one needs to act in accordance with *li* (principle). He then goes on to advise us that in order to exist, all things in the universe must follow natural laws to which belong the two most fundamental: Tao and *Li*. However, sometimes he holds a certain relativism by putting much emphasis on consultative values and common use. Hsieh Yun-fei for example notes: "even fittingness, righteousness and laws must vary in accordance with changing time."⁽⁴⁶⁾ It is no secret that Han-Fei relies much on Taoism and later develops a certain theory of evolution of history.⁽⁴⁷⁾ As a matter fact, Han Fei-tzu seems to hold such a view when he criticizes Confucians and Mohists for their utopia of a society built on morality.⁽⁴⁸⁾

These criticisms convinced Han Fei-tzu that only a legal system (*fa*) may help the cause. His concern thus is to establish a flexible legal system in accordance with natural change: "in order to govern the people, one needs *fa* (laws), but *fa* must be variable depending on changing times and people."⁽⁴⁹⁾ Consequently, he has no belief in God or ghosts because they have nothing to do with human laws. These beliefs are seen rather as a psychological reaction in the time of need and sorrow, despair and fear. He therefore objects to man's immortality.⁽⁵⁰⁾ He simply raises an objection: how do we know how to help others to obtain immortality when we all are dying? The most evident experience teaches us that there is not a single one who can escape from death. Therefore, any belief in immortality is unjustified. It is a useless hope or utopia.

In sum, from Han-Fei's epistemology, knowledge comes only from our living experience; what we call truth is relative. Thus, Tao is not a metaphysical tao, but rather the *chi's* experience (i.e. sub-physical) which is the foundation of all things. In this regard, Han Fei distances himself from Taoism. His Tao bears no metaphysical characteristics of Lao and Chuang, namely, the constant and the great Tao. On the other hand, his Tao also plays against the transcendent, heavenly Tao of Confucianism and of God. Actually, because of his stand against divine existence, even if we cannot label him atheist, he appears at least as an agnostic.

Conclusion

In discussing the tendency of immanentism in the Pre-Chin period, we must pay attention also to Hsun-tzu's naturalism. The superstition of the Yin-Yang school in the Warring-States period also deserves our attention. These schools have in a certain sense dismissed (or destroyed), partly, the religious characteristics of the Chinese tradition.⁽⁵¹⁾

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4.

Self-Transcendence and Morality: Human Creativity in Nietzschean and Confucian Thought

Lik Kuen Tong

Self-transcendence, according to Nietzsche, is the common essence of all moral codes. "Man," he says, "is something that should be transcended."⁽⁵²⁾ Self-transcendence is, for him, not only the essence of morality, but most emphatically the essence of man himself--his authentic, civilized humanity. The superman, Nietzsche's model of the self-perfected man, is the most authentic, civilized man. He is precisely one who has overcome or transcended himself. Self-overcoming is the basis of self-transcendence and self-perfection: that, in brief, is the essence of the Nietzschean conception of man.

Confucius once said: "To transcend oneself and return to *li*--that is what is meant by *jen*."⁽⁵³⁾ What Confucius means by *li* and *jen* here may be put succinctly: *li* is what constitutes the civilized order by which our authentic humanity or *jen* is defined. To be more specific, *li* is the ritual propriety essential to civilized life; it is the civilizing factor or element--the "civilized form," if you will--that distinguishes human from non-human existence. This civilizing function of *li* lies precisely in its disciplinary power--in the human power of self-command. Like the Nietzschean superman, the Confucian *chun-tzu* or superior man is also an authentic, civilized human being: he, too, is one who has overcome or transcended himself.

Thus there exists at least a notable formal similarity or parallel between Nietzschean and Confucian philosophy in their conception of authentic humanity: namely, the recognition that the being of man is at heart *moral* in character;⁽⁵⁴⁾ that the process of being human, the civilizing process, is fundamentally a process of "moral creativity", the creative transformation of human character by virtue of self-overcoming or self-command.

Thus conceived, moral creativity is in truth *human* creativity; man, for Nietzsche, is at once the "creator" and "creature" of his authentic existence. Or, to put it in a well-known existential phraseology, "man is nothing but that which he makes of himself":⁽⁵⁵⁾ man is the product of his own "selfmaking." But what makes moral creativity "moral" and defines the "moral" dimension of being human is none other than the power and reality of self-overcoming. There can be no question then that in both Nietzschean and Confucian thought man's capacity of self-command is of the essence of his humanity; self-transcendence is indeed the constitutive principle of man.

What does it mean to be overcome; what really constitutes the human reality of self-transcendence; how can man at the same time be the "one who overcomes" and the "one who is overcome"; and are these two capacities of man constituted differently, or are they constituted of the same underlying reality? In overcoming himself, man must first experience an *opposition* arising within himself, but what is the nature and meaning of this *internal opposition*: is it an opposition between two mutually exclusive forces, or is it rather the opposition of polarities which belong in deep harmony to the same organic whole? The answers to these questions will not only throw light on the phenomenon of self-transcendence, but will tell us that, in spite of a fundamental similarity between Nietzschean and Confucian philosophy on the reaction between self-command and humanity, the differences between them are also decisive.

That man is not a stone but, as Ortega observes, must fight for being what he is, and that he is quite capable of acting in opposition to himself or in spite of himself, is, of course, universally recognized. But the answer to the question pertaining to the nature of the fight, the internal struggle

or opposition so characteristic of the moral dimension of selfhood, is by no means obvious. That man is different from the rest of nature--or again, as Ortega puts it, that "man's being and nature's being do not fully coincide"⁽⁵⁶⁾ --is almost everywhere taken for granted. The distinction between "natural" and an "extranatural" dimensions of man (in Ortega's terms) is undoubtedly one of the most widespread conceptions in civilized thinking. The natural self is the animal or not-yet-civilized self: that part in us which we readily recognize as part of nature. But what of the extranatural part? Wherein, exactly, lies the "human differential" that distinguishes man from beast; what is the source of man's extranatural self, of his extranatural humanity?

To the latter questions, Nietzsche, like Ortega, Sartre, and the other twentieth century existentialists who have come so profoundly under his influence, has an answer that in its essence is quite unambiguous. What distinguishes man from the beast lies in *his* creative activity: the creator of his "extranatural humanity," or "humanity" in the proper sense of the word, is not God, but man *himself*. The extranatural self is at once the creator and creature of his own creation: the human differential belongs to man as creative subject--to his creative subjectivity.

That Nietzsche's thought is at heart permeated by an aesthetic or artistic conception of life is almost unanimously recognized by his commentators, including the late Walter Kaufmann and the recently much discussed Alexander Nehamas. Indeed, the latter's brilliant commentary, subtitled "Life as Literature", is based entirely on this interpretation, as are in substance Kaufmann's earlier well-known classics.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Nehamas's subtitle reminds us of a very Nietzschean statement in one of Ortega's famous essays: "whether he be original or a plagiarist, man is the novelist of himself."⁽⁵⁸⁾ But Nietzsche's own words are more emphatic: "*One thing is needful*...`to give style' to one's character--a great and rare art!"⁽⁵⁹⁾ Nietzsche's conception of human life and authentic selfhood is fundamentally modeled upon the process of artistic creation. Man is at once the artist, the basic raw material, and the finished product of his own self-transcending creativity. Just as the creative artist must transcend the resistance of his raw material in transforming it into a beautiful work of art, so the creator in man must transcend the resistance of his natural self in giving form and shape to his extra-natural humanity (the self as creature). Moral creativity then for Nietzsche is essentially aesthetic in character: it is a matter of imaginative ordering whereby the original *chaos* of raw material or data is organized in virtue of the artist's appropriative-creative power of projection and interpretation.

In the context of human life, the "chaos" just spoken of refers, of course, to the natural self. The chaos inherent in the human self is the chaos of unrestrained instincts, drives, desires, and passions--in short, the chaos of (what the Greeks called) Eros. For Nietzsche, man is at bottom nothing more than a field of warring instincts. Each instinct seeks its own gratification and seeks to be on top of every other instinct: this dynamic essence of Eros or the instinctual field is what Nietzsche termed the "will to power." Let us note immediately that the will to power is not itself a particular instinctual drive, but is the common feature of all instinctual drives. The life of Eros seeks power: it is indeed (in essence) the will to power.

The will to power is the will to command, the will to prevail over a situation or environment. It is, if we may express it in familiar Buddhistic terms, essentially a form of *grasping*. The will to power is the "will to grasp," that is, the tendency for a given organism, life-form or, in general, a strand of activity or power to persist and perpetuate itself. It is most interesting to observe that, like the Buddhists, Nietzsche denies the substantial notion of "selves" and "things", dismissing them both as conceptually constructed fictions. The fundamental difference between Buddhism and Nietzsche lies, of course, in their opposing attitudes towards the underlying reality of grasping, that is, of the life of Eros. For the Buddhists, the life of Eros is *samsara* or the realm of suffering,

liberation from which defines the very meaning of *nirvana*. But for Nietzsche the life of Eros is the only life there is: grasping or the will to power is of the essence of all life.

For Nietzsche the solution to the problems of civilized mankind and the enigmas of life is not to be found in a cessation of suffering, as the Buddhists would have it, through extinguishing the fire and passions of grasping, but--anticipating Freud--through the sublimation and creative transformation of the natural self, the chaotic complex of instinctual passions. Sublimation then is the mechanism of self-overcoming and thus the thrust of moral, human creativity. The superman is one who transcends himself, who succeeds in sublimating his gross or basic instincts along with the most fruitful or creative channels.⁽⁶⁰⁾ There is no doubt in Nietzsche's mind that the sublimational process of self-overcoming is what lies at the heart of civilized humanity. The noble and the ignoble--or the good and the bad-- are, from the "civilizational" standpoint, not mutually exclusive. The noble is in fact derived from the ignoble, the good from the bad. If every human society may be looked upon as at heart nothing more than a civilizational strategy of "instinctual management," then the "repressive" strategy of most traditional societies would be for Nietzsche as for Freud, highly undesirable. Much of Nietzsche's critique of Christian morality cannot be properly understood except from the standpoint of the sublimational strategy. But the condition for the effectiveness of the sublimational strategy is the strength or power of self-command. Indeed, according to Nietzsche, the power of selfcommand--the basis of all creative strength--is the highest manifestation of the will to power. There is reason to believe that although the power of self-overcoming is in principle only a special form of the will to power, the latter concept was, in the order of discovery, derivative of the former. We believe that it was Nietzsche's own experience and insights into the nature of self-command and moral creativity that finally led to the formulation of his power doctrine, and that is perhaps the way it should be.

That Nietzsche always depends on literary or artistic models for understanding life and world, as Nehamas observes,⁽⁶¹⁾ is not really surprising in light of his profound attachment to the Greek cultural tradition. For the artistic model of thinking is, among civilized peoples in the ancient world, most prevalent with the Greeks. Plato's application of this in the cosmogony and cosmology of the *Timaeus* is the most notable example. Like Plato's Demiurge or supreme artisan in the *Timaeus*, the creator in man in Nietzsche's aesthetic conception of life and self-creativity is also responsible for the passage from chaos to cosmos--from the lack of order to the acquisition of order.

But what is the origin of order? Is it immanent in the chaos, or does it come rather from a different source? When we apply these questions to Nietzsche's philosophy, one is immediately reminded of the famous dichotomy in his early writing between the Dionysian and Apollinian principles-- that is, between impulse and reason, nature and culture--betraying an unmistakably dualistic conception of life and reality. Yet in his later works the two symbols have, according to Kaufmann, become "merged into one, with the Apollonian principle being absorbed into the all-encompassing symbolism of Dionysus."⁽⁶²⁾ What Dionysus now stands for is creativity itself. As the ultimate creative principle, Dionysus symbolizes at once the ground of life and spirit, of impulse and reason, of nature and culture. It is, in short, the will to power.

The distinction between life and spirit in Nietzsche corresponds to Ortega's distinction between the natural and the extranatural parts in man's being. "The spirit (Geist)," says Nietzsche, "is the life that itself cuts into life."⁽⁶³⁾ This statement implies clearly that not only does the natural self constitute the foundation for the extranatural self, but the latter is actually derived from the former and is even an aspect of it. Thus Nietzsche's position is not only radically different from the traditional dualistic conception of man as typically exemplified by the famous "chariot"

metaphor in Plato's *Phaedrus* in which impulses (nature) and reason are essentially unrelated, but also quite removed from the indifference or even hostility towards the natural that has figured so prominently in contemporary existentialism. If the relation between reason and impulse can be represented as a relation between an animal tamer and his beast, then for Nietzsche the tamer is originally *bestly* in nature. To put it more emphatically, the tamer is in fact the beast itself, for it is the beast that is both beast and tamer. The beast tames itself: out of itself it has evolved its own tamer.

The truth is, we believe, that Nietzsche's mature philosophy is governed not so much by the artistic model which tends to give a dualistic interpretation to the self-ordering process inherent in the organization of selfhood, as by the organic model which conceives self-ordering as a function of organic, field determination. Indeed, Nietzsche does conceive the raw, uncivilized self (life), which constitutes the natural foundation for the extranatural self (spirit), as originally nothing but a field of warring drives, a chaos of instinctual passions. But the order of civilized manhood, which is not given but something to be achieved, is not derived from any transcendent source, external to its natural foundation. The passage from chaos to cosmos, a transition from a relatively unresolved state of conflicts to a relatively determinate state of order and harmony, is essentially a matter of organic evolution. It is the same dynamic field of instinctual drives, a multiplicity of contending desires, thoughts and interests forming the contents of the personal self, that play the diverse roles of artisan and material, tamer and beast, subject and object. The conditions effecting the passage from disorder to order are all inherent in the instinctual field itself, which serves as a playground for the will to power. Hence, it is really the same will to power that is at once the beast and the tamer, the overcome and the one who overcomes. The will to power transcends itself--in the interest of greater power.

Although Nietzsche's philosophy of man is ultimately based on an organic conception of selfhood, at least as a metaphoric guide the aesthetic model remains a decisive element in his thought. The importance of the aesthetic outlook in Nietzsche is attested by the strong role in his philosophy of the conscious ego with its capacity for imaginative ordering, which is the hallmark of the creative artist. On the other hand, Nietzsche seems to be just as strongly committed to the organic, field conception of order which inevitably reemphasizes the agency and efficacy of the conscious ego. This ambiguity and tension between the aesthetic and the organic approach is really never quite resolved in his thought.

Interestingly, a similar tension and ambiguity is also discernible in the theory of the self in classical (pre-Chin) Confucian philosophy. Between the "idealistic" and the "realistic" wings of Confucianism, represented respectively by the positions of Mencius and Hsun-tzu, the former clearly leans towards organic outlooks whereas the latter shows unmistakably aesthetic orientations. Hsun-tzu frequently employs artisan metaphors in his writings. His theory of moral order both for the individual self and for society is attributed ultimately to the work of conscious intelligence but often is couched both explicitly and implicitly in metaphoric expressions.⁽⁶⁴⁾

Like Nietzsche, Hsun-tzu also identifies the initial state of instinctual passions as a state of chaos and anarchy. That is what he meant by saying that man's original nature is evil. It is also his reason for holding that man must subject himself to the restraint and disciplines of *li* if he wants to lead a civilized life. The fact that for Hsun-tzu human beings are ultimately perfectible, that every one can become a sage, shows that for him instinctual desires are not in themselves evil. Under the proper guidance of conscious intelligence and through the taming power of *li*, the beast in man or his animal self can indeed be harnessed and transformed into a perfected civilized being.

Indeed, a dimly conceived "sublimationism" in the Nietzschean sense is even detectable in Hsun-tzu's writings. For Hsun-tzu, too, the good is derived from the bad, the noble from the ignoble. Evil is a matter of chaos, a function of excesses and unresolved conflicts; goodness lies in the achievement of the right proportion, in the restoration of order and harmony, which, of course, is the hallmark of an aestheticism. What is fundamental to the aesthetic model of selfhood is, as suggested earlier, the tendency to attribute the source of order to the creative agency of the conscious ego. The beautiful form of a marble statue is to be attributed to the artistic power of the sculptor, not to the original block of marble. Similarly in Hsun-tzu's theory of human perfection the source of authentic, civilized humanity is rooted in conscious intelligence, not in chaotic desires or passions.

The relation between the instinctual self and conscious intelligence in Hsun-tzu is indeed very much like the relation between the charioteer (reason) and the pair of horses (desires and passions) in Plato's chariot metaphor of the soul. Hsun-tzu's artisan self is almost as much intellectually inclined as Plato's divine craftsman. Neither Plato nor Hsun-tzu recognized as did Nietzsche the possibility that conscious intelligence may itself carry the life-blood of Eros, which is an expression of the will to power. Furthermore, we may note that although both Plato and Hsun-tzu employ the aesthetic model in their philosophical thinking, the human creator in their models has as much the spirit of a guardian as that of an artisan. Like Plato in his later Dialogues, Hsun-tzu's philosophy betrays a severe lack of appreciation of the importance of the creative imagination. In virtue of its impulsion towards the novel and the unknown, inevitably, imagination poses a threat to the security and stability of the order essential to the maintenance and continuation of civilized society. This condition was almost non-existent in pre-Chin China during Hsun-tzu's times. Such conservatism in philosophical outlook is a natural tendency for a thinker imbued with the guardian spirit.

The spirit of the guardian--more precisely, the "moral guardian,"--which figures so prominently in Confucian thought through the equation of *chun tzu* (authentic human being) with *shih* or "Knight of the Way," is precisely what is lacking in Nietzsche's philosophy. Zarathustra's teaching on the superman fundamentally extols the supreme value of the creative individual whose striving towards individual self-perfection seems to bear no essential relation (at least as Nietzsche sees it) to the conditions of the civilized society of which he is a member.⁽⁶⁵⁾ This is in sharp contrast to the spirit of Confucianism which is incurably *social* in character. The Confucian *chun-tzu* aims, to be sure, also at his own individual self-perfection; but his individual perfection is inextricably connected with his expected role as *shih* or Knight of the Way--that is, as the moral guardian of civilized humanity. Indeed, in Confucianism the ideal of individual perfection or *nei sheng* (literally sagemess within) and the ideal of societal perfection or *wai wang* (literally kingliness without) are essentially inseparable. From the Confucian standpoint, there can be no morality apart from the standpoint of the "moral guardian" in us. Even if the Nietzschean superman may be said to have a "moral" dimension in his aesthetic self-creativity, in the context of Confucian ethics he cannot be said to be a "moral" being in the proper meaning of the term until he assumes--explicitly or implicitly--his role of moral guardianship.

The contrast between the Nietzschean superman and the Confucian knight may be further elaborated. The Nietzschean superman as the supreme specimen of the self-transcending creative individual is forever haunted by the playful lure of mystery arising from man's confrontation with the chaotic and the unknown, which is the basic impulse of human participation in the life of Eros. In contrast, the Confucian Knight is forever burdened with the solemn sense of responsibility issuing from a vital sympathetic feeling of kinship towards all life, but, of course, most strongly

towards one's immediate relatives and kin. This defines our humanity in the life of *jen*. The life of Eros is prompted by possessive-aggressive tendencies towards grasping, by the desire to take hold of one's self in the persistence and independence of individuated selfhood. In contrast, the life of *jen* is ruled by the cohesive-empathetic tendencies towards bonding, by the longing to unite with others in the mutual belonging and harmony which characterizes the oneness of the greater whole. The fundamental contrast then is between the life of *eros* and the life of *jen*, between mystery and responsibility, between grasping and bonding, between creative individuality and moral guardianship. In short, the contrast between what we may term, respectively, the "Way of Wonder" and the "Way of Care,"--or "thaumaticism" (from Greek *thaumazein*, wonder) and "curaticism" (from Latin *cura*, care)--as respectively, two radically distinct modes of life and thought. Since *eros* and *jen* are both constitutive of the intrinsic nature of man, it would be difficult for any thinker to philosophize along an exclusively curatic or thaumatic line. No doubt, this accounts for the ambiguity in the thoughts of Plato, Hsun-tzu, and Nietzsche.

Perhaps the purest expression of the Way of Care or the curatic outlook is to be found in the "idealistic" Confucianism of Mencius. Although artisan metaphors are not absent in Mencius, they are not pertinent to his conception of self and authentic humanity. Mencius certainly does recognize that man must somehow act in opposition to himself in order to achieve authentic selfhood. Nevertheless, the harsh reality, or to borrow Nietzsche's own favorite term the "cruelty", of self-transcending, which both Nietzsche and Hsun-tzu would spare no effort to convey to their readers, is clearly not paramount in Mencius's mind. For him the process of human creativity is much less like that of a sculptor working laboriously on his block of marble, and much more like the ripening of a seed or kernel under the nurturing care of a cultivator. If in the aesthetic or artisan model, the credit of authentic achievement is attributed primarily to the "active" side of the self--to man as the artisan of his life--the same cannot be said of the organic or cultivator model. In the aesthetic model, the conscious ego in its capacity as self-creative artist is the source of order constitutive of the unity of the self. In the organic model the source of authentic humanity is not located in the conscious ego assuming the role of "self cultivator", but in the "passive" side of selfhood or what Mencius and the *Chung Yung (Doctrine of the Mean)* refer to simply as *hsing* or "nature". This nature is the original human endowment which contains the seed of one's true humanity. What the seed shall become is basically beyond the cultivator's control, but is determined primarily by the inner law of its self-becoming.

Mencius indeed likened the realization of humanity (*jen*) to the ripening of grains. One is readily reminded of how the man of Sung warns against the disastrous consequences of intervening too eagerly in the natural process of maturation.⁽⁶⁶⁾ For Mencius the way to become (authentically) human is simply to recover the "lost mind" in which are contained the germs of man's original goodness. Whereas Nietzsche sees in the will to power the unifying principle underlying the life of *eros*, Mencius locates the beginnings or origins of humanity in what he termed the "unbearing mind," the principle of human integrity for the life of *jen*. The unbearing mind is one that cannot bear the suffering of others. Its frustration is the frustration of our primal feeling of care--our instinct for bonding and mutual belonging. This is diametrically opposed to the will to power which, as the primal instinct of grasping, underlies the experience of wonder.

Unlike the artisan of the self, the cultivator in the process of self-becoming is not, properly speaking, a "creator." The creative principle belongs not to the imaginative ordering of the conscious ego, but to what in man is given by heaven, that is, to the power of *jen* which is the immanently deposited seed of humanity. While in the aesthetic model the inertly given raw self is to be imposed upon by the willful acts of the artisan-self, the heavenly given seed is for the

cultivator-self the object of his care and nurture. Indeed, his nurturing care towards the seed is already an actualization of his potential humanity, the beginning of the ripening of *jen*. This conception of human creativity as consisting basically in a *procreative* process of ripening is what sets Mencius apart from both Nietzsche and Hsun-tzu.

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5. **Spinoza and Lao Tzu** *Fu Pei-Jung*

In the field of comparative philosophy, Spinoza is a prominent representative of the West. The reason is not only that he practiced what he preached,⁽⁶⁷⁾ but also that he preached a doctrine which could be practiced. It is mainly on the latter point that he is compared with Buddha.⁽⁶⁸⁾ His doctrine is compared with that of Mahayana Buddhism⁽⁶⁹⁾ as well as with that of Wang Yang-ming⁽⁷⁰⁾ (1472-1529), an eminent idealist in Chinese Neo-Confucianism). No matter how fruitful these studies might be, they all center on a "part" of Spinoza's philosophy. For example, Spinoza's philosophy is compared with Mahayana Buddhism with regard to the practice of meditation, and with Wang Yang-ming's doctrine with regard to relations between knowledge and action. The conclusions of these comparisons are quite peculiar: the former contends that Spinoza has some ideas concerning "sudden" and "gradual" enlightenments,⁽⁷¹⁾ while the latter affirms that both Spinoza and Wang Yang-ming are "pragmatists".⁽⁷²⁾ The trouble lies in their failing to treat Spinoza's philosophy as a whole. A study of Spinoza cannot go far without touching his theory of Substance or God. To characterize Spinoza as a "God-intoxicated man" requires a complex explanation,⁽⁷³⁾ but to affirm God or Substance as his ultimate presupposition is nonetheless self-evident. By contrast, Substance for Buddhism is "empty" and for Wang Yang-ming it is "idealistic." The divergence on the doctrine of Substance inevitably leads to the undesirable comparisons referred to above.

However, if we take Lao Tzu (the author of *Tao Te Ching* which appeared around the fifth or sixth century B.C.) as the representative of the East to compare with Spinoza, the above difficulties will be reduced to a minimal level. In saying this, I am quite aware that Spinoza's masterpiece, *Ethics*, is one of the most systematically formulated works in the philosophical world, while Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* goes to the other extreme in being one of the most fragmentary and enigmatic works of philosophy. I am also aware of their remarkably different backgrounds in thought, culture, and society. My confidence in making this comparison consists primarily in that both Spinoza and Lao Tzu have contributed something to "perennial philosophy."⁽⁷⁴⁾ Like Spinoza, Lao Tzu can also be characterized as a naturalist (for him naturalness is the supreme virtue), a pantheist (or more adequately speaking, a panTaoist in that he believes that Tao generates all beings), a determinist (in that all beings are determined to return to their roots), or even a Tao-intoxicated man (in that Tao is his ultimate concern). Again, as in the case of Spinoza, all these titles are mere epithets which contribute little to understanding Lao Tzu's philosophy as a whole.

Basically, this study will follow the general sketch of Spinoza's *Ethics* save for some parts for which we find no correspondent discussion in Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*. Such parts are Spinoza's theory of attributes which is loaded with many preconceptions of the western tradition, and its consequent theory of the mind/body relation for which, once it occurs, there can be no satisfactory solution. On the other hand, Lao Tzu explicitly describes what Spinoza vaguely refers to as the "model of human nature" which involves direct impact on the theory of human freedom via human knowledge. Thus, the following discussion will focus successively upon four points: 1) the transcendent aspect of Substance and Tao; 2) the immanent aspect of Substance and Tao; 3) the power of knowledge; and 4) the freedom of human beings.

The Transcendent Aspect of Substance and Tao

Substance, for Spinoza, means that which is in itself and is conceived through itself (E1, Def3).⁽⁷⁵⁾ Thus, it must be self-caused (*causa sui*), for otherwise it would be an effect of something else and hence involve the latter in order to exist and to be conceived (E1, A4), which fact would then contradict the definition of Substance. As self-caused, Substance necessarily exists (E1, Def1 & P7). It is also necessarily infinite (E1, P8), otherwise it would be limited by another substance of the same nature, which fact would also be absurd (E1, P5). Being infinite, Substance must be an indivisible One (E1, P12) which is called God (E1, Def6 & P11, P14). Being infinite and selfcomplete, God can exclude nothing, for nothing exists outside God (E1, P15). Accordingly, God must be all-encompassing; in him everything has its being and without him nothing can either be or be conceived.

The above argumentation leads to an apparent monism which obscures the transcendent aspect of Substance or God. To avoid this conclusion, Spinoza first affirms that there is something which is in another and is conceived through another (E1, A1). This is "mode" or the modifications of Substance (E1, Def5). Mode is finite because its essence does not involve existence (E1, A7). Taking man as an example, the finiteness lies in the fact that the being of Substance does not pertain to the essence of man (E2, P10). The discrepancy between a mode's essence and its existence seems to warrant the pure transcendence of Substance. This explication frees Spinoza from the accusation of monism and some kind of emanationism. However, a principle bridging the finite and the infinite is still needed; otherwise he would somehow fall back to a certain creationism which he disputes from the very beginning. Spinoza, then, revives a pair of terms "Natura naturans, Natura naturata" to solve this problem once and for all. We will return to this point later.

If the above understanding of Spinoza is acceptable, then Lao Tzu's doctrine of Tao shows a striking similarity.

According to Lao Tzu, the term "Tao" appears in the following way:

There was something undifferentiated and yet complete, which existed before heaven and earth. Soundless and formless, it depends on nothing and does not change. It operates everywhere and is never exhausted. It may be considered the mother of the universe. I do not know its name; I call it Tao (25).⁽⁷⁶⁾

We learn from this paragraph that 1) Tao existed before all beings (for heaven and earth indicate the beginning of all things); 2) Tao is the "One" which is undifferentiated and yet complete; 3) Tao is "self caused" (it depends on nothing) and eternal (it does not change); 4) Tao is infinite and all-encompassing (it operates everywhere and is never exhausted); 5) Tao is considered the "mother" of the universe.

To avoid the unnecessary repetition of original texts and my interpretation, I will put the latter in the parentheses directly following the sentence quoted. Lao Tzu says,

Tao is empty *like* a bowl. It may be used but its capacity is never exhausted (for it is infinite). It is bottomless, *perhaps* the ancestor of all things, (for it is self-caused). . . . Deep and still, it *appears* to exist forever (for its essence involves existence). It *seemsto* have existed before the Lord of Heaven; I do not know whose son it is (for it is motherless or self-caused)" (4).

In the above quote I have italicized four terms, i.e., "like," "perhaps," "appears," and "seems," because they and their equivalents form an important function in understanding Lao Tzu's Tao. Tao, considered in itself, is an undifferentiated unity which can never be predicated. The same situation applies to Spinoza's Substance which cannot be conceived except through itself. Since man is not in a position to conceive Tao or Substance, Lao Tzu uses these indeterminate terms to symbolize the Tao in itself. Moreover, Lao Tzu writes, "Look at it but you cannot see it! Its name is Formless. Listen to it but you cannot hear it! Its name is Soundless. Grasp it but you cannot get it! Its name is Incorporeal. These three cannot be further inquired into, and hence merge into one" (14). This undifferentiated One sometimes reverts to "nothingness," but it is never pure nothing. Despite the fact that Tao is elusive, vague, deep, and obscure, we can still find in it form, things, essence, and evidences (21). These indefinite descriptions quite clearly manifest the transcendence of Tao. This way of expressing the absolute is functionally better than the "negative way" which leaves no room for human language.

However, the relation between the transcendent Tao and the all encompassing Tao needs to be clarified. The problems of creation and emanation also arise in Lao Tzu's mind though in a different context from that of Spinoza. First, concerning the relation between Tao and all beings, Lao Tzu talks about Tao as "the ancestor of all things" (4), "the root of Heaven and Earth" (6), "the mother of the universe" (25, 52). The metaphors of "mother," "ancestor," and "root" all express an intimate relation of "giving birth to." It seems that Lao Tzu deliberately gets rid of the "creation" theory. But what about the other extreme? Does not the term "giving birth to" strongly imply the "emanation" theory? Surprisingly enough, Lao Tzu also says something on this point in three steps:

First, Tao is regarded as "the principle of life" which does not give birth substantially. Lao Tzu says, "All things depend on it (Tao) for life" (34) and "The myriad things obtained the One (Tao) and lived and grew" (39). Secondly, Lao Tzu uses two metaphysical notions to symbolize the Tao in giving birth to all things. He says, "All things in the world are produced from being. And being is produced from nonbeing" (40). Thirdly, seeing that the above steps are not satisfactory at all, Lao Tzu faces the problem and declares, "Tao produced the One. The One produced the two. The two produced the three. And the three produced the ten thousand things" (42).

There is no consensus among scholars concerning the meaning of "the One, the two, and the three." They might indicate the natural causation rather than the personal creation or purposeful origination.⁽⁷⁷⁾ But this also shows that Lao Tzu tries to prevent Tao from directly producing things. Once the process of production is mediated by something or some principle (to an extent, Spinoza's "attributes" also mediate between Substance and modes),⁽⁷⁸⁾ the pressure of Tao's losing its transcendence is alleviated. Viewing Tao as the only existent, nothing can be produced except through it. Again, in affirming that Tao produces all things, Lao Tzu immediately adds, "Virtue fosters them. Matter gives them physical form. The circumstances and tendencies complete them" (51). Here, the "virtue" is of crucial importance. It is what everything gets from Tao or, in other words, it is Tao's embodiment in everything. Thus, the virtue of a thing is nothing but its nature or essence. This exegesis avoids the danger of emanationism and opens a way to the discussion of Tao's immanence.

To sum up, we will first return to Spinoza's theory of "nature naturing and nature natured" (nature naturans and natura-naturata). Taking nature as such, nature naturing and nature natured form one nature. However, since the maturing is not the natured, there necessarily exist two natures. Viewed from their relations, the maturing and the natured are an inseparable pair which

once being separated will lose all their relevance and become meaningless. For Lao Tzu, the relation between Tao and all things is symbolized as that of "mother and child." Without the mother, the child cannot exist; without the child, the mother cannot be termed. For Lao Tzu, mother and child also form an inseparable pair without neglecting their difference and their ultimate unity. Thus, in retaining the transcendence of Substance and Tao, Spinoza and Lao Tzu come to similar conclusions through similar strategies. What, then, about their treatment of the immanence of Substance and Tao? We will now turn to this question.

The Immanent Aspect of Substance and Tao

The immanence of Substance or God is self-evident for Spinoza, because "whatever is, is in God, and nothing can either be or be conceived without God" (Ed, P15). As immanent cause (E1, P18) God encompasses all things. But viewing it from the aspect of all things, what does this "immanent cause" mean? "Individual things," says Spinoza, "are nothing but modifications or modes of God's attributes, expressing those attributes in a certain and determinate manner" (E1, P25, Cor). On the other hand, Spinoza speaks of the mode not as a predicate of Substance but as a "sample" of Substance.⁽⁷⁹⁾ An effect necessarily expresses something of its cause, but is it a sample of its cause? The term "sample" implies two things: first, it is a reflection or imitation of the original; second, it can be conceived through itself (though it cannot exist through itself) at least to a large extent. The latter involves a discussion of the possibility of adequate and inadequate knowledge. But to conceive an effect as a "reflection" of its cause implies, at least at first sight, a static relation between them.

Nevertheless, this static relation cannot be justified since Substance is the "efficient cause" of both the existence and the essence of things (E1, P25). From the viewpoint of the things produced by Substance, their essence does not involve existence (E1, P24). Again, "the being of Substance" does not pertain to their essence (E2, P10). It follows that all beings are contingent which contradicts Spinoza's doctrine (Ed, P23). To avoid this dilemma, we have to deal with the relation between Substance and modes. For an understanding of this relation the key idea is the identification of God's power with his essence (E1, P34). If God's essence is his power, and his essence involves existence, then God must be infinitely and eternally active. He is both the first cause (E1, P16, Cor2) and the free cause (E1, P17, Cor2) in the absolute sense. This kind of cause, in turn, necessarily involves the effect. Therefore nothing is contingent; all things are necessary in following God's creative power in action.

The created world is nothing but the essential exercise of his power.⁽⁸⁰⁾ All things manifest the comprehensive self-activity of God's power or essence. That, again, "is immanent in each form, or is the dynamic exerting itself in their various (yet continuously progressive) ways."⁽⁸¹⁾ This theory culminates in the following sentence: "The more we understand objects, the more we understand God" (E5, P24). To conclude, we can say: 1) that the Substance is for Spinoza a dialectical whole,⁽⁸²⁾ 2) that the relation between Substance (nature maturing) and modes (nature natured) is dynamic; and consequently 3) that both the immanence and the transcendence of Substance are preserved.

For Lao Tzu, the immanence of Tao is also self-evident. After giving birth to all things, Tao does not retreat to its ultimate mystery. It remains the storehouse or inner-essence of all things (62). "The Great Tao is universal like a flood. How can it be turned to the right or to the left?" (34) Analogically, Tao in the world may be compared to rivers and streams running into the sea (32). All things by nature are Tao-inclined. They all esteem Tao and honor virtue (Te). "Tao is esteemed

and virtue is honored without anyone's order! They always come naturally (or spontaneously)" (51). Here, "virtue" is the key concept to the understanding of Tao's Immanence. Virtue, as mentioned above, is what every individual being obtains or receives from Tao. In Chinese characters, the verb, "obtains," has the same pronunciation as the word for "virtue" and consequently is often used to denote virtue in its verb aspect. This is also similar to Spinoza's identification of virtue with power (E4, Def8), and power with essence (E1, P34, 36; E4, P53, Dem).

Thus, virtue is the nexus between Tao and all things, and at the same time it also constitutes the very essence of all things. Since Tao is an integral whole, the nameless One, all things need to obtain or receive something from it. What they have received from Tao exists in and with them and hence becomes the source of their being as they are. This participation is also dynamic. Lao Tzu says, "All things come into being, and I see thereby their return. All things flourish, but each one returns to its root" (16). The dynamic movement of "returning" manifests the secret of Tao's inexhaustibility. The action of Tao lies exactly in "returning" (40). Thus, Lao Tzu describes Tao's action as "great, functioning everywhere, far-reaching, and returning to the original point" (25).

This return is not a one-way movement, but is rather dyadic.

Progressively, the fundamental Non-being in the Tao gives rise to the Being of all forms in the world, whereas regressively, the immanent Being in the whole world depends upon the Non-being of the transcendental Tao for the performance of adequate function.⁽⁸³⁾

Once the Immanence of Tao is confirmed, the effect is magnificent: "One may know the world without going out of doors. One may see the way of Heaven without looking through the windows" (47). This is because Tao is everywhere and everything in its own being manifests the whole, i.e., Tao. This doctrine is developed by Chuang-tzu when he says, "To know one thing thoroughly is to know all."⁽⁸⁴⁾

Putting Spinoza and Lao Tzu side by side, we find that Spinoza justifies the immanence of Substance through its "infinite creativity" which belongs primarily to the nature maturing; while Lao Tzu emphasizes the "eternal return" of Tao which sufficiently expresses the dynamic process within and of the Tao. Both Spinoza and Lao Tzu in their theories leave no room for a purposeful world. Thus, we need to continue our discussion on human beings.

The Power of Knowledge

Before going into the discussion of human beings, we should consider the status of man in Spinoza's universe. While disputing the concepts of a personal God and a purposeful world, Spinoza also abandons the anthropocentric world-view. Man is not the center of the world, for "nature is not bounded by the laws of human reason. which aims only at man's true benefit and preservation." More than this, in the eternal order of nature, "man is but a speck."⁽⁸⁵⁾ His status in such a depersonalized world is expressed as follows: "We are in God's power live clay in the hands of the potter, who from the same lump, makes vessels, some for honorable, some for dishonorable use."⁽⁸⁶⁾ In this regard, Lao Tzu is not silent, but states, "Heaven and Earth are not humane, they regard all things as straw dogs."⁽⁸⁷⁾ The sage is not humane, he regards all people as straw dogs" (5).

The above statements, though not in man's favor, afford a chance to reconsider and reconstruct the theory of man. Logically these assumptions result in: 1) encouraging the autonomy of man (since man can depend on nothing but his own nature), and 2) emphasizing the intellect of man

(since intellect is the only advantage he can have). The development of Spinoza's and Lao Tzu's philosophy will validate this logical implication.

On the other hand, this non-anthropocentric world-view is a prerequisite for the disinterested scientific mentality. It is primarily through the perception of this world-view that Spinoza is described as a scientific optimist⁽⁸⁸⁾ and Lao Tzu is estimated as a pioneer of natural science in ancient China.⁽⁸⁹⁾

While focusing on human beings, we find that the problem of knowledge becomes conspicuous. Without clarifying the interrelations between "to know", "to act", and "to be", man will get confused in the search for happiness. Spinoza deals with this problem thoroughly in his *Ethics*. To begin with, three statements can be taken to explain the origin of the knowledge problem.

- 1) The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things (E2, P7).
- 7) The human mind is the idea itself or the knowledge of the human body (E2, P13).
- 3) The human mind does not involve an adequate knowledge of the parts composing the human body (E2, P24).

We learn three things from the above quotations: 1) The order and connection of the human mind is the same as that of the human body; 2) therefore the correspondence or coincidence of mind and body is theoretically possible and this constitutes man's adequate knowledge; 3) however, mind does not have the knowledge of each part composing the human body, the knowledge of which only exists in God. The discrepancy between mind and body makes falsity possible (E2, P35). In other words, falsity comes from opinion or imagination which Spinoza calls the first kind of knowledge (E2, P40, N2). Reason and intuition, as the second and the third kinds of knowledge, not only are necessarily true (E2, P41) but also teach us to distinguish the true from the false (E2, P42).

The power of knowledge does not come from outside. Rather, it has something to do with human nature. First, by identifying intellect with will (E2, P49, Cor) we can affirm that to know is to desire, which by definition pertains to the essence of man (E3, Dem1). Secondly, this desire, whereby a man strives to persist in his being, is also called "conatus" (E3, P6). The "conatus" of man causes all actions which tend to his self-maintenance; it covers the whole range of human self-affirmation.⁽⁹⁰⁾ Thus, we can agree with Spinoza in saying: "When the mind contemplates itself and its own power of acting, it rejoices, and it rejoices in proportion to the distinctness with which it imagines itself and its power of action" (E3, P53). It is clear that to know is to act (in the sense that passion is transformed into action) (E5, P3), and is to be since reason demands nothing which is opposed to nature (E4, P18 N).

Therefore, the guidance of reason goes in line with the conatus of man which, being the strife of human self-preservation, necessarily tends to the good and avoids the evil. Since man is not born free, the only way for him to be free (that is to say, for him to have only adequate ideas and hence no conception of evil and good) (E4, P68), is to live according to the dictates of reason alone (E4, P67). In other words, to strive for more rationality for its own sake "is to realize oneself, and would not mean anything outside the realm of our fundamental endeavor."⁽⁹¹⁾

We will reserve the discussion of freedom for the next section: for the moment, it suffices to say that "there is no modification of the body of which we cannot form some clear and distinct conception" (E5, P4). This affirms the power of knowledge and makes human freedom an

attainable goal. In this regard, Spinoza is successful. Hence, the only way leading to human freedom can be sketched as follows: 1) Man's essence is his conatus which dynamically tends to self-preservation; 2) Self-preservation means the transformation of passion into action, and this transformation cannot work without man's knowing its adequate cause; 3) "To know" in this sense means to live according to the guidance of reason which corresponds to nature and results in human freedom.

The Chinese character "Chih," which means "to know" or "knowledge," appears frequently in Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*.⁽⁹²⁾ Since no relevant discussion concerning the relation between mind and body can be found in this work, we will pass by such questions as the extent to which the discrepancy between mind and body affects the nature of knowledge.⁽⁹³⁾ Rather, we will go directly into the contexts of this character and classify its different meanings. Three kinds of knowledge can be discerned in Lao Tzu's work. To avoid confusion, I will put them in the following way.

1) To know is to discriminate. Knowledge in this sense naturally results in distinguishing the good from evil, the beautiful from the ugly, and the true from the false. All these are relative judgments. Lao Tzu says wittingly, "When the people of the world all know beauty as beauty, there arises the recognition of evil" (2). For Lao Tzu, knowledge as discrimination will disturb the people's hearts and lead to undue desire, which is the origin of disaster (3). This kind of knowledge is thus discarded by Lao Tzu (19). He warns, "Those who are the first to know have the flowers of Tao but are the beginning of ignorance," (38) and more rigorously, "He who rules the state through knowledge is a robber of the state" (65). This seemingly anti-intellectual attitude is not without positive implication. The relative value-system issued from an anthropocentric world-view must breakdown in order to be transcended. The happiness of man cannot really be found except through the correct understanding of man's status in and his relation with the whole of Nature.

2) To know is to do away with evil. Here, "evil" is used to mean that which diminishes, hinders, threatens, or destroys the happiness of the self-preservation of man. This understanding of evil, though it sounds like Spinoza's usage, is actually in Lao Tzu's mind. This will be shown along with the following discussion. 1) For Lao Tzu, "to know" always involves "to act" (28, 70). This is emphasized by him to the extent that he claims, "He who knows does not speak. He who speaks does not know" (56). 2) Knowledge as action has as its primary goal the self-preservation of man. Lao Tzu deeply concerns himself with the following things: to be without reproach (8), to be without trouble (13), to be companions of life (76), to be preserved whole (22), to last long (9), to exist forever (7), to be beyond wearing out and renewal (15), etc. In the process of attaining this self-preservation, that is to say, in the process of knowing, man naturally does away with evil. 3) This kind of knowledge exerts a great effect in human life. The point is that knowledge in this sense is none other than knowledge "about" the self. Lao Tzu says, "To know you have enough is to be immune from disgrace. To know when to stop is to be free from danger" (44). The phrase "to be free from danger" appears in many other contexts (e.g., 16, 25, 32, 46, 52) but the most significant point is that it is used also to describe Tao. In the latter case, this phrase means "to be never exhausted" (25). If by "to be never exhausted" is meant the eternity of Tao as we have indicated in the first section of this paper, then, when applied to man, does it also imply man's immortality? The answer seems positive.⁽⁹⁴⁾ But we get no definite information concerning the nature of this immortality to which the third kind of knowledge is directed.

3) To know is to be enlightened. Knowledge in this sense is first of all knowledge "of" the self or self-knowledge. Lao Tzu says, "He who knows himself is enlightened" (33). To make this sentence clear, we find another saying: "To know the eternal is called enlightenment" (16, 55).

Could we thus conclude that to know oneself is to know the eternal? To answer this question, we have first to understand what Lao Tzu means by the "the eternal" (16), and "to know harmony is called the eternal" (55). It then seems that "to return to destiny" is equivalent to "to know harmony". Here, harmony and destiny manifest two aspects of Tao. Thus, it can be affirmed that to know is to return. "Returning" is exactly the magnificent movement of Tao (40), and is consequently the real way of all beings. But, what does this return mean for human beings? It means to return to the state of infancy. Since the infant possesses eternal virtue (28) or virtue in abundance (55), a man while returning to it naturally restores his enlightenment (52). For a man, the state of infancy is both original and eternal; it represents both harmony and destiny. Therefore, to know oneself is to know the eternal, and knowledge in this sense involves enlightenment. This knowledge as enlightenment has much to do with man's immortality. We read Lao Tzu's words:

He who knows the eternal is all-embracing.
Being all-embracing, he is impartial.
Being impartial, he is universal.
Being universal, he is one with Nature.
Being one with Nature, he is in accord with Tao.
Being in accord with Tao, he is everlasting
And is free from danger throughout his lifetime (16).

The Freedom of Human Beings

For Spinoza, all events are determined (E1, P29). But this determination is not opposed to, or incompatible with, freedom. "For this is the sort of determination by which God freely produces his creatures and the sort of determination by which man frees himself from the tyranny of desire and the turmoil and bewilderment of conflicting passions." ⁽⁹⁵⁾ As a matter of fact, the chief concern of Spinoza's *Ethics* is to enlighten the way leading to freedom in a world of necessity. For this purpose, knowledge of the third kind, i.e., intuition, plays a crucial role. As for how this knowledge functions and what the freedom thereby attained means, we can discern the following points.

1) The third kind of knowledge proceeds from an adequate idea of certain attributes of God to an adequate knowledge of the essence of things (E2, P40, N2). The first import this knowledge conveys is that since necessity pertains to the attributes of God, it must then pertain to the essence of things. Therefore, the more the mind understands all things as necessary, the greater power it has over the emotions (E5, P6). To have power over an emotion means to form a clear and distinct idea of it (E5, P3). This, again, is to strive for man's self-preservation. We can then infer that to understand the necessity of things is to preserve one's being. To know is to act. Through intellect man conceives the necessity of things and is consequently free from passions (E5, P10).

2) The validity of the above inference (which takes necessity as a medium) should be traced back to the idea of God as its ultimate ground. It is to the idea of God that the mind should "cause all the modifications of the body or the images of things to be related" (E5, P14). Once a man succeeds in doing this, he forms nothing but clear and distinct ideas. He then rejoices (E3, P53) and his joy is attended with the idea of God. Therefore, "he loves God, and (by the same reasoning) loves Him better and better as he understands himself and his emotions" (E5, P15). There is no discrepancy here between knowledge and love which is defined as "joy with the accompanying

idea of an external cause" (E3, Dem6). In other words, this is the intellectual love of God (E5, P32, Cor).

3) The intellectual love is eternal (E5 P34, Cor), and the third kind of knowledge is always attained "under the form of eternity" (E5, P29), or "through the essence of God" (E5, P30, Dem). This knowledge as love is thus the sovereign remedy for the ailments of the mind.⁽⁹⁶⁾ It brings the highest possible peace to mind (E5, P27). The repose of mind is man's salvation, or blessedness, or freedom (E5, P36, N).

Moreover, man's immortality lies in this state of mind,⁽⁹⁷⁾ which is at the same time a union with God.⁽⁹⁸⁾

4) The union with God is not without practical meaning. Since God or Substance is the absolute whole which encompasses all things, union with God then explicitly indicates union with others. With this conviction, Spinoza maintains "universal fellowship" and, still more inclusively, "that the minds and bodies of all should form, as it were, one mind and one body" (E4, P18, N). This conviction manifests the ideal model of human nature and makes "ethics" a comprehensive law of Nature.

For Lao Tzu, knowledge as enlightenment results in human freedom. Instead of describing abstractly the content and effect of this freedom, Lao Tzu presents a living model of human nature, namely, the sage. The work of Lao Tzu is in fact a meditation record of the enlightened sage. Throughout the whole work there never appears the term "you," nor is any person's name mentioned. It is Lao Tzu's own monologue: the term "I" appears 37 times and is obviously referred to "the sage" which appears 31 times. Putting these two terms, "I" and "the sage," together to represent one subject, we find that its frequency is second to that of "Tao" (76 times). Adequately speaking, the sage is the embodiment of Tao. Thus, the best way to understand Lao Tzu's theory of human freedom is to contemplate the sayings and activities of the sage.

The sage is an enlightened man because he knows himself (7); besides this, he likes to show how he knows (4, 21, 43, 51, 57). He thinks his doctrine very easy to understand and very easy to practice, but "none in the world can understand or practice it" (70). Therefore, he embraces the One (Tao) and becomes the model of the world (22).

The sage treasures the Tao and follows the way of Heaven. "The way of Heaven is to benefit others and not to injure. The way of the sage is to act but not to compete" (81). "It is precisely because he does not compete that the world cannot compete with him" (22, 66). "He never strives for the great, and thereby the great is achieved" (34, 63). He thus becomes the leading official (28).

What does the sage do as a leading official? Not much. The answer is beautifully expressed in the following paragraph:

The sage has no fixed (personal) ideas. He regards the people's ideas as his own. I treat those who are good with goodness, and I also treat those who are not good with goodness. Thus goodness is attained. I am honest to those who are honest, and I am also honest to those who are not honest. Thus honesty is attained. The sage, in the government of his empire, has no subjective viewpoint. His mind forms a harmonious whole with that of his people. They all lend their eyes and ears, and he treats them all as infants (49).

What he does is merely to help people return to their own nature.
Therefore the sage says,

I take no action and the people of themselves are transformed. I love tranquility and the people of themselves become correct. I engage in no activity and the people of themselves become prosperous. I have no desires and the people of themselves become simple (57).

The result is magnificent: "No action is undertaken, and yet nothing is left undone" (48). What the sage does for his people is exactly what Tao performs in the universe (37).

However, before the people can say that "they simply follow Nature"(17), the sage still has to face the actual world. Three points can be summed up from his preaching.

1) Tao is the good man's treasure and the bad man's refuge. Even if a man is bad, Tao never rejects him. "Those who seek shall have it and those who sin shall be freed" (62).⁽⁹⁹⁾

2) As the follower of Tao, the sage is always good in saving men and consequently no man is rejected; he is always good in saving things and consequently nothing is rejected (27).

3) The good man and the bad man should be concerned with each other. The former is the teacher of the latter, while the latter is the charge of the former (27). Finally, "The way of Heaven has no favorites. It is always with the good man" (79).

Thus, it is obvious that the highest effort or virtue of the sage is to enlighten the people and make them all sages. Once the people all return to their original state, complete harmony will be reached (65). This is also called "profound identification" (56), which can be expressed as follows: "When human beings do not lose their purity and are all at ease with themselves, follow their nature and preserve the principle underlying it, they will be merged with profound Tao."⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

With the same conviction, Chuang-tzu, the great successor of Lao Tzu, states, "Heaven and earth are produced at the same time with my being born; all things are in oneness with me."⁽¹⁰¹⁾ "Leveling up, I will freely fly with the Creator of all things; leveling down, I will accompany with those who are beyond life and death and without beginning and end."⁽¹⁰²⁾

Spinoza and Lao Tzu, though living in different times and places and belonging to different cultural traditions, attain similar insights so strikingly close as to have been evolved from the same school. If there really existed such a school it should be termed the "perennial philosophy." No other concluding comment on the comparison of their thought seems necessary.

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6.

The Movement of Love in Wang Yang-Ming and Max Scheler

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Love is a point of common emphasis for the Neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yang-ming and the phenomenologist Max Scheler. Although ages apart and drawing from different cultural traditions (Wang from Confucius, and Scheler from St. Augustine and Blaise Pascal), both see love as a dynamic movement. What does this movement consist of for each philosopher and what synthesis can one make from both? These are the concerns of this paper.

Love in the Philosophy of Wang Yang-Ming

In Wang Yang-ming's philosophy, love is found in the concept of *jen*. *Jen* is a difficult concept to translate. It has been translated as "benevolence", "kindness", "charity", "compassion", "sympathy", "perfect virtue", "goodness", "true man", "manhood at its best", "human heartedness", "humanity", "man-to-manness", and "love".⁽¹⁰³⁾ Actually, the Chinese character for *jen*, is a composite of two Chinese characters, meaning "man," and, meaning "two". Literally, then, it means two men or something interpersonal. Whereas *jen* had been a particular virtue, the kindness of a ruler to his people, in the Confucian tradition it has come to designate the primary virtue, the virtue of all virtues, embracing all forms of goodness in man. Confucius once spoke of a thread that runs through all his teachings, namely, conscientiousness (*chung*) and altruism (*shu*). These two are synthesized in a single concept, *jen*.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

It was Confucius who identified *jen* with love. When Confucius was asked about *jen*, he replied, "It is to love men."⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ After Confucius, Mencius put *jen* and *i* (righteousness) together to attach equal importance to both nature and function. It is not that *jen* is internal and righteousness external; both form one root of the moral life.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ *Jen* is the universal virtue that embraces all relations, but righteousness is the particular virtue that makes distinctions in personal relationships. Mencius said, "The man of *jen* loves others".⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ "A man of *jen* extends his love from those he loves to those he does not love",⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ and "the man of *jen* loves all".⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Throughout the ages, the concept *jen* evolved and developed to mean love, consciousness, impartiality, and unity with the universe.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ But in general, *jen* is essentially *social* and *active*, dealing with what and how man must act in order to be truly man. In the Confucian tradition, only the man who loves is truly man, and thus, *jen* is "humanity" or the "Man of humanity."⁽¹¹¹⁾ In the words of the existentialist Karl Jaspers, *jen* is "humanity and morality in one."⁽¹¹²⁾

Wang Yang-ming follows the Confucian tradition of identifying *jen* with love. "To love is the same as to be humane (*jen*)."⁽¹¹³⁾ In a letter to Huang Mien-chih, he writes, "nature is emotion before it is stirred, emotion is nature after it is stirred. *Jen* is love before it is stirred, love is *jen* after it is stirred . . . to speak of love is also to speak of *jen*!"⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Wang also quotes a passage from the *Doctrine of the Mean* which says, "Humanity (*jen*) and wisdom (*chih*) are the character of human nature, and they are the way in which the internal and external are united", identifying love as part of the essence of man. As regards the text of the *Great Learning* which says, "the way to manifest a clear character consists in loving the people," he opposes Chu Hsi who changed the phrase "loving the people" (*ch'in-min*) to "renovating the people" (*hsin-min*).⁽¹¹⁵⁾

For Wang, the steps in the *Great Learning*, the extension of knowledge and the investigation of things, as well as the sincerity of the will and the rectification of the mind-heart (*hsin*), bring

out the unity of knowledge and action. But the various steps from the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge to the bringing of peace to the world as found in the *Great Learning* are nothing but manifesting the clear character.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ The clear character is for him the character of the innate *hsin*.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The original *hsin*, however, is also the Way (*Tao*).⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The Way is also called by Wang "Heaven" (*T'ien*).⁽¹¹⁹⁾ The way or Heaven must be searched for in one's own heart or *hsin*, and only then will the Way be found anywhere and anytime.⁽¹²⁰⁾ The Way is also nature and destiny, complete in itself.⁽¹²¹⁾ As nature, it is something conferred upon man by heaven, and when man acts in accord with nature, he is following the Way. Innate knowledge is identical with the Way.⁽¹²²⁾ When man cultivates and learns the Way, his innate knowledge, he is educating himself. The cultivation of the Way, however, is done through *jen*.⁽¹²³⁾

Thus, for Wang, manifesting the clear character which is manifesting the clear character of the innate *hsin* (by extending one's knowledge and investigating things, making the will sincere and rectifying the mind and heart) consists in loving the people, in *jen*.⁽¹²⁴⁾

Like a true Confucianist, Wang conceives of *jen* as a natural universal principle that grows from within. Like Mencius, Wang does not consider Mo Tze's doctrine of universal love as one of *jen*. Mo Tze propagated the doctrine of loving everyone equally. For Wang, this is contrary to the Principle of Nature. *Jen* is the principle of unceasing production and reproduction, of growth and regeneration in the universe.⁽¹²⁵⁾ But there is order or gradation in production and reproduction. Because there is order, there is a starting point. When there is a starting point, there is growth, and the growth is unceasing.⁽¹²⁶⁾ For instance, a tree begins by putting forth shoots, then roots, then trunk, branches and leaves. If there is no sprout, there would be no trunk, branches or leaves. The tree can sprout because it has a root beneath.

Likewise, the love between the father and son and between elder and younger brothers is the starting point of the human *hsin's* spirit of life. From here it is extended to the humanness of all people and love for all things.⁽¹²⁷⁾ Filial piety and brotherly respect are the root of the practice of *jen*.⁽¹²⁸⁾

Mo-tzu's doctrine obviously has no starting point. It makes no distinction in human relationships and regards one's own father, son, brother as being the same as a stranger.⁽¹²⁹⁾ There is no order in human relationships.

Going back to the analogy of the tree, "if the tree is to grow, the many branches must be trimmed when it is young. Likewise, if *jen* is to become eminent, the love of external things must be eliminated when the student first begins to learn."⁽¹³⁰⁾ *Jen* demands that one does not run after exalted positions,⁽¹³¹⁾ that one's mind be broad and impartial and identified with the Principle of Nature, wiping out selfish desires,⁽¹³²⁾ and that one share the good with others.⁽¹³³⁾

A man of *jen* must involve himself with others. To discard human relations is to build up a mind-heart of selfishness.⁽¹³⁴⁾ *Jen* is the natural principle that is refined and clear without any selfish attachment. For Wang, the man who detaches himself from others is unworthy, a man without *jen*. *Jen* stresses the responsibility of man towards his fellow man. To be a man of humanity is to be self-effacing, to be a non-ego. The man of *jen* is naturally humble. And "humility is the foundation of all virtues, while pride is the chief of all vices".⁽¹³⁵⁾

To be selfless is to be one with all things.⁽¹³⁶⁾ The man of *jen* regards Heaven and Earth and all things as one body.⁽¹³⁷⁾

Jen for Wang is not only a personal virtue to be realized by man, but a metaphysical principle as well. It is a principle of regeneration;⁽¹³⁸⁾ the whole universe works because of the presence of the man of *jen*. When the Way is cultivated through *jen*, the original substance of *hsin* is restored and equilibrium and harmony exist. When equilibrium and harmony exist in the heart of man,

proper order prevails in the universe and all things attain their full growth and development--there comes about a full development of nature and fulfillment of destiny. ⁽¹³⁹⁾

Jen is manifesting one's clear character, and

To manifest the clear character is to bring out the substance of the state of forming one body with Heaven, Earth and the myriad things, whereas loving the people is to put into universal operation the function of the state of forming one body. Hence, manifesting the clear character consists in loving the people, and loving the people is the way to manifest the clear character. ⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

So, the man of humanity or *jen* forms one body with all things. But since there are principles in this union, there exists necessarily some relative importance in man's love for being. The man of humanity loves both animals and man, but he tolerates butchering animals in order to feed man. Given the choice between parents and strangers and with only meager food in hand to survive, he prefers to save his parents first rather than a stranger. ⁽¹⁴¹⁾

Similarly, in the *Great Learning*, Wang finds a natural order in the exercise of *jen*. Righteousness is this order, and following this order is propriety. Understanding this order is wisdom, and following it from beginning to end is faithfulness. ⁽¹⁴²⁾

In any case, the man of *jen* regards all things as one body, ⁽¹⁴³⁾ as his body. It is as if "the whole universe is inside my room!" ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

But how is this possible? How can the human *hsin* (of the man of *jen*) and things form one body when the bodies of men are different from each other and differ also from those of animals and plants?

According to Wang, this can be answered from the point of view of the "subtle incipient force of their mutual influence and response." ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ Because "man is the mind and heart of Heaven and Earth" ⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ and man becomes mind by the clear intelligence of his innate knowledge, the whole universe is filled with this clear intelligence. Men are separated only by their physical forms and bodies, but

my clear intelligence is the master of heaven and earth and spiritual beings. If heaven is deprived of my clear intelligence, who is going to look into its height? If earth is deprived of my clear intelligence, who is going to look into its depth? If spiritual beings are deprived of my clear intelligence, who is going to distinguish their good and evil fortune or the calamities and blessings they will bring? Separated from my clear intelligence, there will be no heaven, earth, spiritual beings, or myriad things, and separated from these, there will not be my clear intelligence. Thus, they are all permeated with one material force. How can they be separated? ⁽¹⁴⁷⁾

It is clear from the passage above that Wang considers man the mind of the world. Without man there would be no world to speak of and vice versa; men exists because there is a world of which to be mindful. True, the world may have physically existed since great antiquity, but "why should it be that if my clear intelligence is gone they will cease to exist?" ⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ Wang answers this question in a rhetorical manner, Consider the dead man. His spirit has drifted away and dispersed. Where are his heaven and earth and myriad things?" ⁽¹⁴⁹⁾

The man of *jen*, then, treats all things as if they were his own body. Concretely, this means that the suffering and bitterness of the great masses are the diseases and pain of his own body. He shares with all men a universal sense of right and wrong, shares their likes and dislikes, regards other people as his own person. Like the ancient sage-emperors, he himself feels the good that

others do and senses that he himself has fallen into evil when he sees others do evil. He regards other people's hunger and misery as his own; and when one person's condition is not so well adjusted, he feels as if he himself had pushed the other into a ditch. He does not do these things purposely to win the praise of others but because he has devoted his effort to extending his innate knowledge of the good.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ For the man of *jen*, there is no distinction between self and other, or between self and things. Like the body of a person which does not distinguish the functions of the eyes, ears, limbs, the man of *jen* regards all things as part of himself.⁽¹⁵¹⁾

This movement of forming one body with all things is for Wang spontaneous and not deliberate, for after all, *jen* is inherent in one's nature, in one's *hsin*.⁽¹⁵²⁾ Consequently, the man who does not realize *jen* in his life not only alienates himself from others and nature, but also alienates himself from his own true humanity. He is the man who exercises cunning and selfishness; manipulative, he sticks to his personal desires.⁽¹⁵³⁾ By having selfish desires, he obscures the original substance of his *hsin* which originally contains everything. Losing the original substance of his *hsin*, he loses everything.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾

Love as Movement in Max Scheler's Philosophy

The heart is for Scheler the most important sphere in man's life for "where his `heart' is attached, there, for him is the `core' of the so-called essence of things".⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ In fact,

Whoever has the *ordo amoris* of a man has the man himself. He has for the man as a moral subject what the crystallization formula is for the crystal. He sees before him the constantly simple and basic lines of his heart running beneath all his empirical many-sidedness and complexity. And heart deserves to be called the core of man as a spiritual being much more than knowing and willing do. He has a spiritual model of the primary source which secretly nourishes everything emanating from this man. Even more, he possesses the primary determinant of what always appears to surround and enclose the man: in space, his moral environment; in time, his fate, that is the quintessence of possibilities belonging to him and him alone. Nothing in nature which is independent of man can confront him and have an effect on him even as a stimulus, of whatever kind or degree, without the cooperation of his *ordo amoris*.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾

For Scheler, "*our heart is primarily destined to love*".⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ More than anything else, love is the primordial act of the heart and is more original than knowing and willing:

What we call `knowing' . . . always presupposes this primal act of abandoning the self and its conditions, its own `contents of consciousness,' of *transcending* them, in order to come into experiential contact with the world, as far as possible. And what we call `real' or actual presupposes the same subject with the realization of something, while this act of willing presupposes an anticipatory loving that gives its direction and content. Thus, *love* is always what awakens both knowledge and volition; indeed, it is the mother of spirit and reason itself.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

Both knowing and willing presuppose a prior act of the heart, the act of love understood as the "tendency to go outside of oneself in order to participate in another being."⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ Love is the foundation of any "knowledge of being or any willing of content" and for all morality and ethics, judgmental acts, norms, rules of actions, units of goods, mores and customs.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

What is Love for Scheler?

First of all, love (and hate) cannot be reduced to feeling-states in the presence of objects of representation and thought.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ A feeling-state is passing, and moreover, it is a reactive response. Love is not a mere reaction to an already felt value.⁽¹⁶²⁾ This is the mistake of Kant: he makes love an inclination, as if love were mere sensible feelings and as such cannot be commanded.⁽¹⁶³⁾ True, there is a spontaneity in love, but this spontaneity is not a mere reaction.

Love is also different from preferring or placing after because the latter presupposes a *plurality* of felt values in intention. In love (and hate), only a *single* value can be given.⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

For Scheler, love is a "movement in whose execution ever *new* and *higher* values flash out, i.e., values that were wholly unknown to the one concerned. Thus, this act does not *follow* value feeling and preferring, but is ahead of them as a pioneer and a guide."⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ In loving, the lover goes out of himself in order to participate in another being of value in the direction of new and higher value or values. In the case of another, "the person of another can only be disclosed to me by joining in the performance of his acts, either cognitively, by 'understanding' and vicarious 'reliving' or morally, by 'following in his foot-steps'"--in short, by sympathy.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ In this participation the two beings concerned, who are bearers of values, do not become real parts of one another.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ The spontaneity of love is an immediate intuition into the value of another: we love (or hate) something not "about" or "in" something. This spontaneity is a dynamic movement to seek the perfection of the value proper to the being loved, towards new and higher values. These new and higher values are not produced or made; rather, they are disclosed in the very movement of love itself.

In love and hate our spirit does much more than 'respond' to already felt and preferred values. Love and hate are acts in which the value-realm accessible to the feeling of a being is either *extended* or narrowed. . . . In speaking of this 'extension' or 'narrowing' of the value-realm given to a being, I do not mean to say that the nature of the act of love is such that it is directed in a 'responding' fashion to a value *after* that value is felt or preferred; I mean, rather, that strictly speaking, this act plays a *disclosing* role in our value comprehension, and that it is only this act which does so.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾

Why is love a movement for Scheler? Properly speaking, there is no "object" loved, "object" in the sense of a finished static being no longer capable of growth. What is loved properly is the person as a whole or as a bearer of value, unfinished, incomplete, open to potentialities and possibilities. The person is not an object to be observed or looked at. The person is a being to be participated, and in participating in his being, the lover discovers higher values which are "part of his wholeness and constitute his fulfillment".⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ This higher value is the ideal value-essence compatible with the nature of the person. There is indeed the empirical given of the bodily presence of the beloved, but the empirically given is only the density of the whole. The wholeness of the person includes what he can ideally *become*. To love the person as he is to participate in his becoming. There is thus a movement from the empirical to the ideal. Love is, "the tendency or . . . the act that seeks to lead everything in the direction of the perfection of value proper to it--and succeeds, when no obstacles are present. Thus we define the essence of love as an edifying and uplifting action in and over the world".⁽¹⁷⁰⁾

As a spontaneous movement in the direction of higher values, however, love does not aim intentionally at changing or improving the person. The lover does not demand that the beloved become this or that he does this. The person's improvement is not the prerequisite or condition for

loving him.⁽¹⁷¹⁾ Love is "letting the other be", permitting, assisting, promoting him to become his full self.

There is thus a creativity in the movement of love. This creativity is not a production of a thing or values, not a making or changing of something into another. Values in the first place are not created but exist objectively and ideally. The creativity of love consists in the disclosure of new and higher values that would fulfill the person. Love is creative in the sense of enabling the other to *be* or *become* as he is.⁽¹⁷²⁾

For Scheler, this spontaneous creative movement of love is infinite. "Love loves and in loving always looks beyond what it has in hand and possesses. . . . This driving impulse which arouses it may tire out; love itself does not tire."⁽¹⁷³⁾ The infiniteness of love demands for its satisfaction an infinite good. Thus, the idea of God thus already underlies the movement of love. Love is:

always a dynamic becoming, a growing, a welling up of things in the direction of their archetype, which resides in God. Thus, every phase in this inner growth of the value of things, a growth which love produces, is always an intermediate station on the way of the world toward God, however distant it may still be from its goal. Every love is love for God, still incomplete, often slumbering or self-infatuated, often stopping, as it were, on its way.⁽¹⁷⁴⁾

There is a certain unity in this infinite spontaneous creative movement of love. This unity consists in the gradation in rank of what is worthy of love. Since love does not produce values, and values form an *a priori* hierarchy, the movement of love is a recognition of this gradation, and to the extent that man's act of love is in harmony with this ordered rank of values, his love is characterized as true. Love unites man with all that is worthy of love.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ And all that is worthy of love is one realm.

From the primal atom and the grain of sand to God, this realm is one realm. This 'unity' does not mean that the realm is closed. . . . when any sort of love is fulfilled by an object adequate to it, the satisfaction this gives can never be definitive. . . . It is in the essence of the act of love as it fulfills itself in what is worthy of love that it can progress from value to value, from one height to an even greater height. "Our heart is too spacious," said Pascal.⁽¹⁷⁶⁾

In the context of what is said above Scheler talks of correct and false love, of *disordre du coeur*. A *disordre du coeur* occurs when the movement of love falls in the wrong direction, when, for instance, what is sought for is not a value but a feeling-state which can only accompany acts of preferring but is not supposed to be intended. The typical egoist is a case in point: instead of experiencing the value of things or persons, he concentrates on his experiencing; as a result, he does not fully experience the thing of value.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ A *disordre du coeur* also happens when man "believes he has attained in a *finite* good an absolutely final fulfillment and satisfaction of his love-drive, . . . a stagnation of his spiritual-ethical development".⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ An example of this is infatuation where "a man is carried away and enraptured by some finite good without regard to his guiding center of personhood".⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

Finally, incorrect love occurs when man goes against the objective rank-order of values.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ The scale of what is worthy of love for every man is

of such a kind that every object, when its contingency is stripped away and its essence is considered, occupies a completely determined and *unique position* on this scale, a position to which a completely precise and nuanced movement of the spirit corresponds. If we 'fit' this position, then our love is *correct* and in order; if two positions change phases, if under the

influence of passions and drives the hierarchy of levels is overturned, then our love us *incorrect* and disordered. [\(181\)](#)

Hate is the result of this inverse movement: instead of moving to higher values, it seeks lower values or it considers the lower ones as higher. For Scheler, though, hate is founded on love, because "hate is always and everywhere a *rebellion of our heart and spirit against a violation of ordo amoris*."

The act of *hate*, the antithesis of love, or the emotional negation of value and existence, is the result of some incorrect or confused love. However rich and various may be the motive of hatred or the state of valuelessness which exacts hatred--every act of hate is founded on an act of love, without which it would lack sense. We can also say that, since love and hate have in common that they do not fall within the zone of indifference but take a strong interest in the object as the bearer of some value, this is primarily a case of taking a positive interest in, of loving [\(182\)](#)

If the hierarchy of values is ultimately founded on God, the highest value, and of every genuine love is a movement towards God, it follows that hate is a movement away from God. In so far as in the love of God, all that is worthy of love is one, it follows too that hate is an alienation, a breaking away from this unity with all that is worthy of love.

The task of man then is to follow the correct and true *ordo amoris*, the objective order of what is worthy of love in all things. By recognizing and realizing this in his life, he fulfills his destiny. Destiny signifies the unique place in which the individual can recognize and actualize the objective order of values in his life. Its particular value content has this individual in view; it is, so to say, his "calling". By answering this call, he fulfills his destiny and in doing this he fulfills his personality. [\(183\)](#)

The Movement of Love, A Synthesis

Summing up, for both Wang Yang-ming and Max Scheler, love constitutes man's humanity: in the Confucian tradition, *jen shih jen* ("to love is to be man"). For Scheler, man's heart is destined to love, and love is more original than knowing and willing. For both philosophers, to love is to fulfill one's destiny as man.

If love constitutes man's humanity, and humanity is the dynamic process of personal cultivation, then love is primarily a movement, a natural universal principle of growth.

While there is something metaphysical in this movement for both philosophers, both emphasize the primacy of the interpersonal relationship. Love is an involvement in the other, a going out of oneself. This participation in the other begins for Wang in the feeling of commiseration, whereas for Scheler love can start with sympathy and may also lead to sympathy.

Jen for Wang is moving towards the forming of one body with all things. *Jen* is also the Way (*Tao*) and *Tao* is also *T'ien*, Heaven. For Scheler, love ultimately is a movement towards the highest good, towards God who unites all in His love.

Both philosophers are aware of an objective order of importance in reality. For both, hatred and selfishness are a deviation of this order, a narrowing and centering of one's potentialities towards one's own ego.

For Wang Yang-ming, however, this objective order of importance is the natural order of relationships. One begins his movement of love with the family, in filial piety and brotherly

respect, extending this to the state and finally to the rest of the world. The movement seems to be from the more to the less familiar. The transcendence in Wang's jen is a *horizontal* transcendence.

For Scheler, on the other hand, the movement of love is a movement towards higher values. Values form a hierarchy from the sensory to the vital, to the spiritual and finally to the holy. Love is a creative movement because in loving new and higher values are disclosed. In Scheler's notion of love the transcendence is *vertical* or axiological.

If we are to view love as a total movement, then we have to posit both kinds of transcendence; love is both horizontal and vertical movement. In the natural course of life, man indeed starts his experience of love from the family to the community to humanity. Yet, transversing this development is also a gradual awareness of a hierarchy of values, a disclosure of a rankorder of what is deserving of love. This is the richness and inexhaustibility of the experience of love.

Ateneo de Manila
Manila

Fundamental Christian Values and Confucian Thought An Ontological Foundation

Gotthold Hasenhüttl

The Impulse of Jesus

Christianity understands itself as a design for living, as an imparting of meaning to human life. It imparts meaning, however, not only in the area of theoretical reflection on the act of faith, but in the area of practice which falls under the heading of basic human values or *human rights*. The Catholic Church, at the Second Vatican Council, in the *Constitution on Divine Revelation*,⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ understands the revelation of God as the source for the proclamation of moral teaching ("*morum disciplina*"). All the more remarkable is the fact that, to the present day, ethical argumentation takes recourse to a supposed "natural laws", and strives to deduce from "nature" those basic human values which have been and still are understood as the manifestation of the divine will.

The *natural-law* concept rendered it almost impossible to appreciate human situations in their social and psychological structure. By referring morality to an allegedly unchangeable, divinely constituted "nature", it excluded everything that was conceived of as violating nature and, in consequence, as violating divine law. Thus *Christian social teaching*, for example under Leo XIII, had no room for freedom of thought, of the press, of teaching, of religion. That meant, at the same time, that personal development--individually and socially exercised democratic freedom--was seen only to the extent that the individual was a particular instance of nature in general and of its laws. The results of this attitude, particularly in the area of sexuality, were devastating.

In the position taken by John XXIII's encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, written in 1963, for the first time the Catholic Church departed from a purely natural law type of argumentation (even though this still dominates). Here the term "human rights" occurs for the first time in an ecclesiastical document. With the help of this concept the Second Vatican Council attempted in 1965, in the *Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes* and in the *Declaration on Religious Freedom: Dignitatis Humanae*, to underscore the personal, unalienable rights of the individual person in a social context, and to defend these rights against a totalitarian socialism as well as against a liberal capitalism: the former would look upon the state, the latter upon goods and technology as the central value.

It should be noted that the possibility of a paradigm change first made its appearance at the Second Vatican Council, after human rights had become institutionalized in many nations of the world, and many of these basic human values had found their way into modern constitutions. It should be remembered that the human-rights ethos aims simply at justice, which is the presupposition for the ethos of love of neighbor. This latter, however, forms uncontestedly the ethical basis for Christian morality; and as Vatican II formulates it, it is to be found in revelation. But since the Bible as source of revelation of divine reality offers specific ethical counsels--drawn in part from surrounding societies only sporadically and as related to specific situations--reliance tended to be placed rather in the so-called "natural-law." As a result, the genuinely Christian contribution to an ethical design for life was called into question.

Does such a contribution exist? Are there basic values in Christianity that can be made comprehensible for, and communicated to, non-Christians?

The fundamental ethical discussion is to be found in the *New Testament*, which is the source of Christian morality. This discussion embraces all of what is right and just; it includes norm and law in the existing order. To "law" belonged, in the historical context, not only the Mosaic Law, but also the natural-law ingredients (e.g., in the ten commandments), and cultic, sociopolitical standards and legal axioms.

At the outset, according to the presentation of the Bible, there stands a struggle for orthopraxy, which of course takes place in reciprocal relationship to the struggle for orthodoxy: ethics and metaphysics exhibit a clear interdependence. It is above all the evangelists who attempt to unfold this theme for posing the question about the behavior of Jesus which involves posing the question of God.

The point of departure for moral behavior is formed by experience. Earlier, Aristotle recognized in experience a lasting prerequisite for feeding every and all ethical reflection. The experience of men and women in contact with Jesus can be designated "authority in freedom", or "the power to be free". This power leads inevitably to conflict with the prevailing state of affairs. The concept which forms the foundation of ethical values is the unique, liberating authority of Jesus; it is expressed in Scripture by the Greek word . This authority or power implies the possibility of acting unhampered by any instance, whether it be norm, law or cult. It is the authority of freedom. At the time of Jesus the orientation for a person's life was given by the words, "On three things stands the world: on the Torah (legal instruction), on worship, and on deeds of kindness (alms-giving)" (*Pirke Aboth* 1, 2). It is just these three pillars which become questionable then through experience of Jesus with the power to be free. With an unlimited experience of power, of authority, these basic values begin to sway, although--or precisely because--they were looked upon as divine, for what in the Old Testament was assigned to the lordly and kindly authority of God, now is granted to Jesus.

In this ethical assertion, therefore, the image of God is being changed. In the behavior of Jesus, men and women experienced the liberating nearness of God, a proximity which makes free. He teaches as one "who has authority" (Mt 7:29:), and not like the Pharisees and Bible scholars. Even the devil spirits must succumb to this authority, which is displayed on the sick as well as on sinners. Indeed, all those ties in and with which men and women have entangled themselves cease to dominate them, individual and social bonds are loosed, and the human person is constituted in freedom. When the existing "authorities" demand to know where this new authority, this power, comes from, when they ask how it proposes to identify itself, the evangelists deliberately decline to give an answer. The authority requires no further substantiation, because it is in itself substantial. Inasmuch as it is exercised, and signifies liberty and freedom for men and women, it is in itself evident, since it formulates what is human and makes it reality, and since through its interpersonal exercise it mediates the nearness and proximity of God. Certainly, the demand included by this event is a fundamental transformation of mind and character, "metanoia". This means that what is human is no longer to be understood and to be lived from the point of view of general norm and legality, but by being exercised and put into practice after the liberating manner of Jesus.

In the context of Jesus, this authority takes on specific form against the background of: 1) the law, 2) organized worship, 3) politics, and 4) society.

The Law

On the one hand, Jesus is described as someone on whom Jewish rites are performed, someone who is subordinate to his parents, who visits the temple, indeed as someone who intensifies the

demand of obedience to the law (divorce and swearing are forbidden), so that it appears as if he would teach the observance of all commandments and norms. On the other hand, however, in light of the commandment to keep holy the Sabbath, precisely the opposite can be inferred. It was the loftiest commandment and, like the *Torah*, created before the world. Jesus infringed against it, apparently in an arbitrary manner. It was precisely on the Sabbath that the disciples plucked ears of grain (Mt 12:1ff; Mk 2:23ff.; Lk 6:1ff), although strictly speaking, no one would have died of starvation had they not done so. It was on the Sabbath that the women who for eighteen years had been bent over were cured (Lk 13:11ff), and on the Sabbath that the man who had been ill for thirty-eight years was healed (John 5:5ff), though to satisfy the norm, both could certainly have waited until the next day. The violation of the law seems almost willful. And it is useless to look for a principle. Just as when the law is intensified, when the law is violated, no new norm is being established with the help of which a person could find orientation. The one takes place as well as the other from circumstance to circumstance, concretely, for the benefit of someone who is directly affected. In this manner freedom over against the law finds its expression, and simultaneously, it is shown that persons are not to be manipulated.

All commandments and norms have meaning only if and when they exist for people: never the other way around. No human being may ever be forced into a Procrustean bed. The key to the proclamation, to ethical practice, is never the law, but Jesus' authority in freedom, the power to be free. This authorization from Jesus signifies the liberation of the person, not simply from law, however, but *over against* the law, which retains its conditional, relative and historical validity and binding force. But it is no longer through the law that human life receives meaning, but through the authority and the power in which a person concretely experiences God's nearness, when he himself or she herself goes through this conversion. The liberation over against all laws grants the whole person new possibilities for life.

Organized Worship

In analogy to the law stands also the experience of Jesus' authority over against organized worship, the temple cult. On the one hand, Jesus accepts it and cooperates in carrying it out; on the other, he relativizes its absolute meaning with his words on the destruction of the temple, for there is something greater than the temple (Mt 12:6). A human being may not be simply subsumed under the concept of worship. Temple and law, sanctuary and the commandment of God: both remain; they are not replaced by something new (and thus "reformed"), but they are relativized in the light of the authority of Jesus. His authority grants freedom, indeed not from sanctuary and law, but over against them. Organized worship is not a way of salvation, such that in it human existence could find fullness of meaning; rather, human existence is emancipated into freedom over against the "act of religion", when it cooperates in carrying through this transformation that grants meaning to human life.

Politics

Similar observations can be made in the area of politics. Jesus' behavior is neither apolitical (*cf.* the Essenes) nor national-revolutionary (*cf.* the Zealots). On the one hand, political power is not simply refused, not even in its then prevalent form, occupation by a foreign power. Thus Jesus can pay the tax coin and recommend rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's (Mk 12:17). And even to Pontius Pilate Jesus is willing to concede power from above (not from

God!; John 19:11). On the other hand, the supreme power of the state is relativized, inasmuch as it is put at a critical distance. The authoritative title "rabbi" is strictly refused (Mt 23:8). With downright irony, Jesus negates the custom of political rulers who lord it over peoples, "pacify" them and let themselves in return be called "benefactors" (Lk 22:25). It is a radical criticism of political power, of the totalitarian claim of the state on the human person.

Without doubt, Jesus is speaking in the name of the oppressed. But Jesus as well as his disciples also undergo the temptation to power; it raises its head not only in the desert, but again in Gethsemane. Jesus refuses power, and demands this attitude from his disciples. The domination of one person over another person is damaging to persons and to peoples. The strived-after change in the *conditio humana* is therefore political in nature. But not even the renunciation of aggression turns out to be a new principle with Jesus, in accordance with which the political order could align itself. By no token should salvation and politics be identified with each other. Jesus does indeed identify himself with the oppressed, without himself oppressing--whence his preference for children and for women, who at that time were held in subjection. This implies liberation, therefore, from the clutches of the state as a way to salvation, and thus freedom for the specific individual vis-a-vis the political power.

Society

Jesus' reaches its peak in the liberation from interpersonal barriers in society. In the abolition of social oppression his authority becomes specific once again, and thereby practical. The just and the sinner, separated in the social order, both have equal contact with Jesus. Injustice remains injustice, indeed, but the association with tax collectors and prostitutes no longer makes a person unholy, rather the power of forgiveness, liberating salvation is communicated to them. The Samaritan becomes 'neighbor' for the isolationist-inclined Jew. The touchstone for Jesus' power of freedom is one's enemy; the religious outsider and the personal enemy, both are included. Social barriers do not secure salvation, they rather destroy the freedom of the person and thus the person him- or herself. Of course, active engagement and the intensive, specific decision for one's fellow human being are demanded absolutely. The freedom *over against* the established norms of society, but not *from* social relationships, means salvation and liberation for the individual and for society, when conversion is put seriously into practice.

The Christian ethic, its fundamental value, has its root therefore not in the natural law, not in religious or in sociopolitical lawgiving, but in the liberating experience which Jesus communicates. He does this by taking men and women out of the existing order, out of the established, petrified system of norms and letting them experience the authority of freedom, the power to be free. Nature and law are not simply identical with "God's will", they are not its expression; but they can become its expression when they contribute to the *humanum* of the person, that is, to the humanness of men and women. Laying this foundation for morality can be called a paradigm-change. What is general is understood to be derived or secondary; the particular is now primary, for it is in concrete life, in specific experiences, that what really matters becomes clear. It is in the act of decision that the fundamental ethical value reveals itself. Thus for the Christian, the particular person is the "norm", and not the "generally valid". Jesus Christ is a "living norm" who communicates liberating experience. Where one person is able to make such an experience comprehensible to others, namely by living that experience, there this fundamental Christian value is realized.

With this understanding, a free development of the person is possible, as is also the advancement of human rights. These latter are, like historical experience, not subject to being chosen retrospectively *ad libitum*; they are dependent on the time. Thus, the rights of men and women are to be seen in the medium of time and history. Of course, they are none-the-less binding. This binding force can--as the example of Jesus shows--never take on the structure of an obedience responsible before the face of the norm or the law. Such a structure would pronounce the norm to be innocent, and would see the particular person alone as possible guilty factor. It is not the conformer who is free of all guilt, quite the contrary. Thus, seen from the liberating authority of Jesus, every man and woman is drawn into the responsibility for shaping the law and the norm. All are obliged to shape what is human in the specific temporal, historical situation; their responsibility is to what is human. Precisely this is what is expressed in Jesus' exercise of freedom *over against* all law, but not *from* any and all establishing of norms.

"What is human" is to be understood as whatever is of specific service to love and thus furthers the tendency to increased humanness. In this liberating ethical "finding of norms" one person communicates him- or herself to another in a decision which is critical and free to a maximal degree, a decision with shared responsibility. The examination of whatever is prevailing at the time, in the form of norms, laws, rules and customs, is both critical and self-critical. Everything already at hand, as well as the concrete decision, is part of the dialectical process and only as such can become understandable. What we have here is relational polarity, or the polarity of relation. Both terms of the relation are in the process of becoming. Jesus' critical decision in freedom before the law changes this latter not only in its position as a value, but also in its specific content. At the same time, Jesus himself comes to be, through his decisions, what he himself makes out of his life. He himself is constantly becoming, constantly changing.

The model of Jesus mirrors a certain understanding of humanity, in which the liberating impulse is indeed dominant, but without ever cutting itself off from relational polarity. This affects not only the specific person as an individual, but is always also a communicative, and thus social, procedure. In this manner, the men and women who were with Jesus understood his practice, experienced it as liberating, and communicated it further. The binding force of this practice was made accessible to reason, communicatively. If, however, norms or laws are made into fundamental values and thus exaggerated, their binding force is necessarily driven home with authoritarianism, in the pattern of obedience and command.

In the practice of freedom, in the model of relational polarity, such a development is fundamentally excluded, since response can be made to this "living norm" only through dialogue and argument. The intersubjective possibility of universalizing, the transsubjectivity of the basic value, is the "criterion" for the humanness of this morality. If in the historical, temporal conditionality of some society such a consensus is reached, then it is entirely legitimate to postulate a certain irreversibility. In this manner, the Samaritan's treatment of the man who was beaten and robbed can, for contemporary society, stand as a non-standardized free act which realizes the basic human value of love of neighbor. This has, in some modern societies, found its way into the area of objectified norms, so that under certain circumstances the failure to assist someone in acute and immediate need is a legally punishable offense. The root of Christian morality is the experience of the behavior of Jesus. From what has been said above it is clear that putting the matter this way does not imply a blind faith in an untouchable authority, but that this experience constitutes a model for living the dialectic of authority and norms in freedom.

The Elaboration by Paul

It can be shown that in the early community of believers which formed after Christ, this power to be free, this authority of freedom, was the way of life. This can be seen most clearly in the theology of Paul. Fundamentally, Paul presupposes that conversion which Jesus enjoined. Indeed, this conversion is nothing other than putting the authority of freedom into practice. The fruit of this spirit is, for Paul, ethical behavior (Gal 5:22). His morality is grounded on "being in Christ". Albert Schweitzer called this new form of existence "mystical". Whatever one may think of the last term, it is this manner of being which according to Paul is decisive for human behavior. It is what makes criticism of the system of norms possible.

There is a danger for this "being in Christ", however, when it is understood "supraethically", and so becomes a kind of being in eternity, in pure spirit, and indeed thus turns into an end in itself and no longer forms the fundamental thought of ethical behavior. To a great extent, the Corinthians--as we know from Paul's letters--succumbed to this danger. They became "infants in Christ" (I Cor 3:1-3), inasmuch as each one egoistically lived according to his or her own talents, without bearing communicative responsibility for them. The phrase "being in Christ", which occurs more than a hundred times in the Pauline letters, is intended, however, to express that room, or space, in which a Christian is free. This room is therefore that of Christ, indeed it is Jesus Christ himself, who is the end of the law (Rom 10:4). Freedom is thereby a characteristic quality of the Christian and of his or her morality. "Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1). "For you were called to freedom, brethren" (Gal 5:13). "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (II Cor 3:17).

Paul insists on this freedom and defends it. Thus for those who are in Christ, who himself is freedom, there is no difference between holy and unholy (cf. Rom 14:1ff) between man and woman, and so on. His freedom stands vis-a-vis the whole legal structure. Thus being in Christ is also the end of living in the "having" mode. In the phrase, "having as if one did not have", the dialectical distance of the "as if" note finds expression. Over against all having, all possession, vis-a-vis all achievement and power, the Christian lives his or her life in freedom. This room in which a Christian is free, and which represents the fundamental ethical value, is an anthropological insight and an experience which is made with the "living Norm" who is Christ. Because this new being implies the giving of meaning to human existence, it thereby implies an "ontological" content, which can then be interpreted as the room, the space in which salvation takes place, or as the "first installment" on all further salvation of the Christian, precisely as making it possible for the human person to be human. When a person lives in Christ, he or she is "saved", and Christ lives in that person, so that he or she becomes an "alter Christus" (as later--among others--Francis of Assisi came to understand the matter).

In the objective language also used by Paul, this is then called salvation through Jesus Christ. But the "mystical" expression "in Christ" counterbalances this objectivity, and recognizes in Christ the room, the space, in which the person who consents to this new manner of being, and accepts the ethical meaning therewith imparted, is free. What is denoted morally, by the concept of freedom, is grasped theologically as faith. Here again it is important that faith, which is a trusting, relational putting into practice, not be seen so much as having Christ as its object, but that it be seen as taking place *in* Christ (Gal 3:26; 5: 6; also Col 14:25; Eph 1:15; and the still later reminiscence in the pastoral epistles: 1 Tim 1:14; 3:13; 2 Tim 1:13; 3:15). The believers are in Christ (Col 1:2; Eph 1:1). And when there is talk of faith in Christ, the same content is intended (Gal 2:16,20; 3: 22; Phil 3:9; Rom 3:22, 26; Eph 3:12).

A. Deissmann points out in his book on Paul, that in the Hellenistic Koine the preposition *eis* can also be used in this manner.⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ Just as in the synoptic tradition "believing" is always used absolutely, without an accusative object, the same usage holds as well--with reservations--for Paul. "Believing in Christ" could be understood in two ways: with "in" as a locative preposition, denoting "where" the belief takes place; or with "in" practically as part of the verb, pointing to the specific object of belief. These two possibilities involve a different understanding of the mode of being. Only by transposing meanings in the latter case--"in" as introducing the object--can the Christ-event become the qualification of my fellow-human being (e.g., "What you did to one of the least of these, that you did to me"). Faith and freedom as the putting of human existence into practice occur "in Christ", because he forms the standard of human life. Thus those who live and exist in Christ are "one body in Christ" (Rom 12:5). A new understanding of human and ecclesiastical community presents itself through this new reality.

It is the freedom, which by turning to the other in faith and trust attains realization, and denotes the authority to be free over against legal obedience. But even here the law is not simply annihilated; it can even turn into the expression of divine will. Then it is holy, "spiritual" (Rom 7:12, 14). It is not, however, God's will automatically; rather it remains present primarily as a pole for reflective dialogue. In this way the dialectic between freedom and a system of norms is preserved: freedom over against the law (as polarity), but not freedom from the law in the sense of an arbitrary libertinism. But it always remains the case that the source of meaning for human existence never comes from law, but only from freedom. Or again, as seen from the viewpoint of faith: "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under the charge of a custodians" (Gal 3:23ff). There must not, however, be any non-dialectical confusion between the freedom of faith, or moral freedom, and a system of norms. When Peter attempts a mixture of these ideas, Paul resists him face to face. The of Jesus would be betrayed, for Paul says, "all things are lawful for me" (: 1 Cor 6:12).

This concept, which transcends what is at hand, the essence and thus the "natural limits", is used later by Origen to characterize Christian freedom. He uses the concept of for freedom.⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ The free authority of Jesus is autonomous, and we are autonomous in that authority. Thus Origen can say that we, in Christ, are in our freedom the ground () of what is good.⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ A more autonomous morality would seem hardly thinkable.

At the same time, the fundamental understanding lying behind these words reveals how senseless a discussion about so-called "autonomous or "heteronomous" morality can be. In freedom, the particular believing individual stands beyond the μ , the law. In making decisions, he or she becomes, relatively, a "legislator". Every norm, however, calls again for dialectical responsibility in the face of that freedom which takes place "in Christ".

For Paul, there enters at this point--even before he discusses the structure of freedom for all, in other words, our common freedom--a further, decisive, fundamental thought. Even though the freedom of faith and morality is indispensable, in order not to betray the "mystical" being in Christ, there is nonetheless another basic ethical principle which proceeds from this "being in Christ" as a common being of all believers. The calling to freedom is indeed irrevocable, but it is only then true autonomy when it assumes the structure of love for one another. "For the whole law is fulfilled in one saying: `You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Gal 5:13f; cf. Rom 13:8ff). Decisive here is that the so-called "double commandments" of love of God and neighbor is here "reduced" to love of neighbor. Only in being in Christ is the dimension of divine reality accessible; and the *Letter to the Ephesians* (2:12) can go so far as to say, without Christ we are in this world without God (. . . μ). Love of neighbor is freedom in Christ, and is itself "without grounds",

because it has--or better, it *is*--the ground and therefore divine reality in itself. It is what grounds all ethical behavior and renders legal norms relative.

We can, however, encounter the weak, Immature Christian, who acts as a minor, not yet of age. It is the Christian, who in the concrete, practical circumstances of life cannot hold out under the dialectic of Christian freedom. His or her conscience is troubled; he or she thinks it necessary to submit to certain regulations. Paul speaks specifically of meat that has been offered to idols, a question which poses a problem even today, e.g. in Black Africa. In his letters to the Corinthians and to the Romans Paul is convinced that every Christian may eat any meat sold at the market place, even that which has been offered to idols. Eating such meat does not bring about union with the gods. Some of Paul's contemporary Christians, however, believe just that. It is a matter of not plunging the weak brother or sister into ruin, a matter of tolerating his or her opinion, not theoretically, but practically, out of love and solidarity. Paul would rather never eat meat again than to cause his fellow Christian to fall (1 Cor 8:13; Rom 14:20ff). After all, "'knowledge' puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor 8:1). Love must therefore prove its value practically, in particular as consideration for the weak. Gnosis, or knowledge, however correct it might be, does not lead closer to God, not closer than others are in their being in Christ. Paul smashes this opinion for the benefit of the weak, in favor of love of neighbor. M. Dibelius writes of this: "The egoism of mysticism must make way for the altruism of the gospel".⁽¹⁸⁸⁾

Thus freedom binds itself in love. But love and freedom are, in a certain sense, contradictory. Freedom is thought of as self-determination; love, however, is only in relation to the other. Nonetheless, it is only a free person who is able to love at all; and this person is free only when he or she realizes him- or herself in the relation with the other. Love is the field for the integration of personal freedom(s). Love transcends freedom(s) towards unity. This may be formulated as follows: Paul knows only one point at which a Christian is unfree, namely where love is unfree for the benefit of one's neighbor. He or she becomes a "slave" (of love) because of being in Christ, because of the freedom that finds its limit at the other.

Being in Christ is thereby determined by God. For God is not faith and hope, but alone is Love. Therefore love is the highest, or in other words, God is the highest, because he is Love. Love in Christ is the love of God (Rom 8:35). Love is the manifestation of being in Christ, and also of faith, for faith works through love (Gal 5:6). Here again we have the "principle" of communicative responsibility. Even if we humans are responsible for the forming of norms, this dialectic fades into the background when my fellow human being is at stake. One could say, he or she bears a "living system of norms" in him- or herself, and it is with this "living system" that the Christian must enter into dialogue from the very first. Only by means of this dialogue can "abstract rules and laws" that are of use for living together then be filtered out. One's fellow human being in his or her particular limitation may not be skipped over.

Herein, Pauline behavior can be seen occurring basically in the form of a dialogue. It is not authoritarian command and the obedience resulting therefrom which determine ethical conduct, but "paraenesis". "Paraenesis as heartfelt, brotherly, encouraging and helpful exhortation is the new style, such as corresponds to an ethical instruction filled with the Spirit of Christ."⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ And it is together that burdens are to be borne (Gal 6:2), in family-like solidarity. (This is not to say that Paul himself always fulfilled this ideal and never became authoritarian in a false manner; but his occasional behavior is no counter argument against his underlying intention, his ethics.) The main thing is not the art of persuasion; it is rather a matter of convincing one's neighbor within a community of communication. This community of dialogue, necessitated and guided by love, can be grasped only by the ethics of freedom. This latter cannot even then be reduced to nomism, when

they dispense with revolutionary impatience and tolerate the fellow human being, even precisely in his or her faulty behavior.

This Pauline morality makes possible Paul's understanding of community, which becomes visible in his concept of the community of faith, the Church. He says that Christians are one body in Christ (Rom 12:5), indeed, that they are the body of Christ (1 Cor (2:27)). This is true not for each individual as such, but for determining the relationship of Christians one with another. The thought of "body" is supposed to indicate a relational reality, according to which one person should interact with another. The coordination of the individuals with each other should thereby be clarified. "Body" is the room, the space for interpersonal relationship. This relation of one person to another, this dealing with another person, is, however, not arbitrary. Not every dealing with another is sanctioned thereby; the expression "in Christ" is necessary as the localization of morality.

People conduct themselves with each other properly when they conduct themselves "in Christ", that is, when they grant each other freedom, the authority and power to be free. They do this when they refrain from dominating each other. Just as it is unethical to base life on a system of norms instead of on the liberation given by Jesus Christ, so the social relationship is unethical when it is oriented on dominance and thereby on the structure of command and obedience. What individually might be called "regulation", on the level of society or in a social context is domination.

Paul's position lies here along the lines of the proclamation of Jesus, which propagates the principle of mutual service as the principle of social relation and love. Paul thinks that the authority of freedom, the power to be free, falls to everyone, that no one may exalt him- or herself above another, but rather that each one stands up for the other in genuine family-like solidarity.

Domination is no road to salvation; instead, it brings evil upon society. Paul himself, in spite of his authority, never claims domination over his community, and he does not succumb to the temptation of exercising dominant force "in the name of Christ or indeed of God". "Domineering over your faith is not my purpose. I prefer to work with you toward your happiness" (2 Cor 1:24). Even in case of conflict, it is not the "last word", the decisive command, which is decisive, but simply communicative conduct (*Cf.* 2 Cor 10:6). All those terms connected with *arche*, which mean dominion and office, are--in this understanding of community and of church--excluded. "Holy" is alone the freedom from domination (so to speak, the "an-archy"), never the "hierarchy." Domination is never holy, but highly unholy. Just as Paul broaches the subject of freedom from the law in order to prevent the Christians from turning Christianity into a system of laws, so does he broach the subject of freedom from domination in order to reintroduce order in the community. It is not authoritative dominion which should govern community life, but the freedom of the body of Christ. Power and dominion do not build up, but destroy the community; they abandon the liberation that comes through Christ. This common root for the ethical behavior of all believers is indispensable.

Nonetheless, he knows that neither human society nor the Church is an amorphous mass, but that this freedom falls to different human beings with different gifts or talents (*charismata*). These differences may not, however, be imposed from without, as through a caste into which one is born, or through sex, or through skin color, etc.; but they come from the specific talents or gifts of each individual. This is what structures society. Out of this freedom in Christ, a multiplicity of gifts of grace, *charismata*, are released; and they become the principle for order and for living in the ecclesiastical society. Every believer should realize his or her charisma, granted in Christ for the benefit of others, in such a way that it contributes to the order of the common life. Charisma,

therefore, is what establishes the structure for order in the Church. The standard for the right use or misuse, the criterion of right morality is not the concept of obedience, which divides people into masters and servants, but, being rooted "in Christ", that is, in the authority of freedom, the power to be free. This makes love--that is, the usefulness for, or effect upon, the others--to be the measure of freedom. In this way the structural elements of ecclesiastical life are led back and grounded dialectically in "being in Christ".

If indeed Paul himself thinks only in terms of this inner ecclesiastical polarity, in fact institutional auxiliary structures, permanent or semi-permanent functions, etc., also are thinkable. Like the system of law, these latter, however, are to be seen in critical distance to living a Christian life, and are accordingly subject to ethical judgment. Institutions for the protection of freedom, as they find expression, say, in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, confirm the auxiliary structure of the institution over against freedom. Once again the concept holds: freedom "over against", but not "from" the institution. This is true even in reverse: the Christian is affected also by existent structures of dominion on the part of the state, just as at the time of Jesus. And just as the law can be called "holy", under certain circumstances, so can Paul speak of "authorities established by God", to which everyone should be subject (Rom 13: 1-7).

Factual injustice is not being considered here, *e.g.*, that the emperor has himself honored as God, or that Paul himself is unjustly imprisoned and beaten. What Paul means is that if the state were eliminated, dialectical polarity would be destroyed. Without considering the perverting structure of the supreme power of the state more closely, that supreme power is something *over against* which the Christian is free and which he or she should even resist, when injustice occurs. But the Christian is not free from the structure of the state; rather, the Christian lives in a dialectical relationship to it. As applied to the Church, Paul recognizes the structure of domination as a human perversion; even the state as such need not necessarily be so structured. In the Church, however, there must be no power structure. Otherwise it is no longer "in Christ" but "in the cosmos", and as such is to be understood from the "world" and as fallen to the world.

On these assumptions, the community of believers has a decisive significance, namely as the place where God is put into words. With the state and in the system of norms, this is not the case. When, "in Christ", everyone aligns his or her conduct ethically according to its usefulness to the community, and thus establishes order in social life, then God becomes luminous. Church is a connecting relationship of people to each other, of which God can be asserted. It is not the individual who, puffed up in his or her pneumatic inflation, has a personal relationship with God. Rather it is possible in community, in the right behavior to each other, that God is put into words. And for a community of which God can be asserted, God is a predicate; it is a Community which, in Christ, is determined by God: the Church *of God!*

This is particularly true with Paul in I Cor 11-14: in Corinth, everyone is thinking only of him- or herself; self-satisfied, one provides a mirror of the other in his or her particular gifts. Community is thereby destroyed. Paul interposes angrily, and points out that in this way no worship can take place at all; that what they are performing "in the name of God" is a "service of the devil"; that no Church of God but rather a convention of the rejected is what is happening. If, on the other hand, the faithful understand one another, if they speak so that what is hidden comes to light, that what is good comes to the fore, if the bread is shared with one another and not eaten egoistically, then God will be present in this assembly and, Paul says, even an unbeliever will declare: really, God is here among you (I Cor 14:25).

"Being in Christ", the body of Christ (not the body of God!), the Church--each concept is the determination of a relationship of human person to human person. This relationship is ethically

qualified and being thus directed to each other believers hope that God will be present. This presence reveals itself in the freedom from domination and in the liberation over against all systemization of legal norms for the benefit of one's neighbor. This "morality" Paul calls love, which, ontologically expressed, designates God, who biblically is "defined" as Love. Thus Christian self-understanding leads to the idea of God. In a certain (ethical) way, God is experienced in being together with one's fellow human being.

The Underlying Understanding of God

Morality has an "ontological foundation" in the idea of God. After all, love is not just a basic value, but at the same time a declaration of Being. It is an ontological reality that determines every being, not just moral being, although this latter is reflected and recognizable in the former.

Modern theologians, among others R. Bultmann, put it this way:

God is Love, to the extent that I know that I am sustained by the blessing which is offered to me in the always present possibility of loving in human togetherness, from person to person, and when I know that I am compelled to realize this possibility.⁽¹⁹⁰⁾

This expression reveals the close connection between the ontological state of affairs and ethical demand. With this biblically characterized approach, there is no sense in speaking of God as a Being, not to mention as a self-existing Potentate and Ruler. God is not a Being (as such he would be superfluous, or a projection), but Love, that is, Relation, Self-dedication, and in Christian theology: Community of Persons. God is the expression for the most profound meaning of human community and solidarity. God denotes the location of the meaning of human existence: it is not each person's own ego which is the point of departure, the center for shaping one's life. Relation, which is qualified as the occurrence of love in freedom alone is essential for life; only in relation will the meaning of our being be disclosed.

Therewith, again, new light is shed upon the ethical demand for conversion. Anyone who derives ethics from the experience of an objectively conceived being, and looks upon this as the basis for taking up relation, lives topsy-turvy, puts everything upside-down. Conversion, and that means giving life meaning as relationship and solidarity, is what first makes an object-related experience possible in an ethically correct sense--and also ontologically. In other words, it is (ethically) crucial, whether the determination of a human person is made by nature (norm) and existant institutions, or whether the specific character of the human being is seen in his or her personal fulfillment in freedom.

In genuine Christian thought, a man or woman is to be understood through his or her being a person; and not through a given human essence. Therefore the "depth of reality" cannot be conceived as a being, for example, as an "almighty Being", but "only" as relation (ontologically) or as love (ethically). The being of a person is real only in fulfillment, and indeed not inasmuch as it is in-and-for-itself, separated from others, but in its being with another. Person, the power to be free as self-fulfillment, constitutes itself only through the other. Psychologically speaking, a man or woman attains the form of his or her own person, discovers the "I", only by way of a "thou". If no "thou" ever reached a person, he or she could never form an "I" and thus come to him- or herself. The "essence" of personal being does not primarily consist, therefore, in a non-communicable uniqueness, but in the transcendence of self, in communicative mediation and relation. In this sense it is "the overcoming of self" and the reversal of "natural" conditions.

True enough, "person", which realizes itself only in the manner of being-with-another, is always mediated by spirit-endowed nature. Person is person, however, only inasmuch as he or she finds fulfillment, forms a relationship and lives in relation. This means that personal being can be realized only in a social context. It is a relational event; the community (for example, mother--child) constitutes person. Human personal being stands in the polar dialectic of being-in-itself and relational being. Precisely, this is indicated by the message of Jesus as well as by Paul; it is resolved by the dialectical concept of freedom. It must constantly be emphasized thereby, that ontological primacy belongs to the person, to the power to be free as fulfillment, to liberation and love.

The experience of this ontological and ethical primacy expresses itself in the concept of God. Being involved in the polar dialectic is not the ultimate disclosure of the meaning of human existence, but the univocally positive, and this deserves the designation "God". For this reason, by means of the teaching on the Trinity, Christian theology has interpreted God's personal being as "pure relation". God's essence is pure "person". God can be understood only as relation; God is absolute relation. Traditional Christian theology speaks of "*relatio subsistens*", total self disclosure or self-transcendence. Thus God can be designated in the New Testament as total dedication, as gift, or again as Love. In the area of human experience, God is thus the determination of human relationships. He is the transsubjective determination of existence.

By way of comparison, we may consider music. Music is a reality but it cannot be reduced to individual tones. It is the harmony between the individuals parts which is the essence of music; music is the integrating field as the determination of mutual relations.

By "God" is to be understood such a relational reality; it is not at all arbitrary, but integrates towards love and establishes community so that individuals yield a "harmonic" whole. For this reason, the Christian understanding of God's personal being is not that of individual subjectivity and substance; God is community of person, personal communication, solidarity. Here our power of speech fails, because for us every community involves a numerical multiplicity, whereas no number can be predicated of God. God as community of person in the singular should clarify the "*coincidentia oppositorum*". The relational multiplicity is seen as unity, and precisely in human society; that is the dimension that grounds unity. Thus God's reality can be understood as a being which is being-here, as an essence which is presence (German: *Da-Sein, An-Wesenheit*). A person experiences himself or herself as affirmed, as accepted. A God who is community of person is a God who evinces solidarity with human beings, sustains human society, and is the meaning of intrahuman solidarity.

Intermediate Summary

The Christian insight into the ethical constitution of human beings is evident originally therefore, in the experience of Jesus' authority of freedom. The power to be free is given to a person as a gift when that person is ready for reorientation, that is, ready to put conversion into practice. The experience of this liberating impulse is the original event that initiates the Christian understanding of the human person. Morality, in a Christian sense, is no longer to be understood otherwise. Human rights evolve from this fundamental ethical concept. The Christian churches have often failed to see this freedom movement; they have therefore developed their concept of ethics from nature and thus betrayed the experience and the proclamation of Jesus.

Pauline ethics uses the concept of "being in Christ" for this experience. It is intended to signify the free room, or space, in which Christian responsibility is put into practice. This is called a mystical formula (since Adolf Deissmann), and it is at the same time the place or location for

conversion or for the new ethical and ontological mode of being. "This means that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor 5:17 *et alibi*). The formula is called "mystical" because it signifies a unity between Christ and the believer. As liberating impulse, Christ is a center of powers. "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13). Indeed, the subject putting life into practice is no longer the individual, the "I", but Christ himself. "The life I live now is not my own; Christ is living *in me* (Gal 2:20).

The concept does not, however, turn into a mysticism of identity: it remains rooted in the community, and only in community do these statements make sense. Neither does this mysticism at any point denote a sensuously pleasurable abiding "in Christ"; it expresses the ethical impulses constituted through this mode of being. It is decisive that Paul does not simply refer "being in Christ" to God, or thereby intend a deification. The "mysticism of Christ" remains therefore in the field of social integration, so that it can designate the dialectic of freedom and love. The Body of Christ, or "the one body in Christ", is intended to express the context for action by all believers, much in the sense that Mt 25 declares behavior to the least of one's fellow human beings to be behavior towards the reality of Christ. The expression "Body of God" is for the Pauline writings inconceivable, just as Jesus' authority of freedom cannot be identified with God.

Nonetheless, this ethical-ontological approach does indeed bring about a change in the concept of God. Whereas God is often seen in the context of nature and its corresponding system of laws, and functions accordingly as the highest being and as the ground of Being, in a Christian sense God is seen from the viewpoint of the field for the integration of genuine community, so that he is the meaningfulness of the ethical choice of love and not of hate, indifference, apathy, etc. Moral behavior is thereby exposed to criticism, and can be classified as right or wrong according to definite criteria. The concept of God has an ethical function, because it is the determination of a relation and, as such, meaningfully qualifies as love those interpersonal relations in freedom which conduct themselves dialectically towards what is existent, towards Being. Ethics is not without ontology; each conditions the other, so that Christian morality can properly be called an "event of Being".

Confucian Thought in Dialogue with the Fundamental Christian Value

Albert Schweitzer is of the opinion that this ethical concept, especially as developed by Paul, has a parallel in Chinese thought--not in its Taoist but in its Confucian form:

The fact that Paul's ethical thought is in many particulars reminiscent of Chinese thinkers like K'ung-fu-tzu ([Confucius] 6th century BC), Meng-tzu ([Mencius] 4th Century BC), and especially Mo-tzu ([Mo Ti] 5th century BC) can be explained in the same way as the resemblances with late Stoicism. The same thing occurs in Chinese thought as in Stoicism. Lao-tzu (6th century BC), Chuang-tzu (4th century BC) and others achieve vital living ethics no more than do the older Stoics, because they fail to comprehend ethically the ultimate Will that holds sway in nature. Parallel to them, K'ung-fu-tzu, Mo-tzu, Meng-tzu and others achieve living ethics in the same manner as does late Stoicism, and afterwards the Rationalism of the 18th century: they assume a purposeful and ethically effective world Will, to which man must dedicate himself, and then come accordingly to demands of love that are somewhat analogous to those of Paul.⁽¹⁹¹⁾

P. Welt writes: "Because of this similarity Between Chinese and Christian moral concepts, Christian faith is attractive for many Chinese, and provides a welcome support for traditional

morality."⁽¹⁹²⁾ In this light A. Schweitzer calls attention above all to the coherence between ontology and ethics, or between the concept of God and human morality. In his opinion, this particular connection is correctly grasped in Confucianism.

This consideration will serve as the point of departure here for presenting some ideas on Confucianism. Not being a specialist in this field, I would offer my remarks simply as suggestions for further thought. All authors I know, in explaining the basic concept of Confucian teaching on morality identify the concept which runs as a thread through all of Confucianism as that of *jen*. In my opinion, this fundamental concept can best be rendered into German by *Mitmenschlichkeit* or humanheartedness, a deep awareness, with consistent consequences, of one's fellow human beings. The Chinese character for *jen* (ren) consists of that for "man" and "two". *Jen* signifies, therefore, a reciprocal relationship between human beings. It means love and everlasting loyalty. This is the proper form for interpersonal relations. It is the highest commandment, the path to harmony, to balancing opposites; it is the path to the unity of reality, the path of life. *Jen* is kindness as human relationship. This "being good", which is not simply something "already there", is not an isolated quality, but acting correctly precisely in human togetherness: the morality of the individual is rooted in the social context. The principle of action is reciprocity, mutual understanding (*Lun yü* 15, 23).

The first rule of content resulting from this is the so-called golden rule: "What you yourself do not wish [that someone do to you], do not do that to another" (*cf.* Mt 7:12). Service to one's fellow human being is therefore the measure (*Lun yü* 6, 20); as in the structure of the Pauline church!). The first duty is that to one's fellow human being. Thus it is above all necessary to serve one's fellow human being (*Lun yü* 11, 11), not spirits or other beings. *Jen* always remains rooted in society, and transcends the individual (but never does away with the latter).

From the first rule is also to be derived, secondly, that service to one's fellow human being cannot mean domination (*Lun yü* 11, 25), whether it be in the Great Temples, or over the people, even if the domination were to bring about prosperity and satisfaction. It is always service by, and to, those who are free: "To bathe with others in the river, and return home singing." Thus there is, basically, only one sadness: "Not to understand the others" (*Lun yü* 1, 16). *Jen* approaches in this way the concept of "communication without domination."

The preceding becomes more clearly apparent inasmuch as, thirdly, this interpersonal service does not mean punishment. On the contrary, one should strive after what is good, and then other things will follow after this (*Lun yü* 2, 3). Even the so-called "useless" person is not to be spurned. This is "divine will" (*Lun yü* 6, 4). The bad person is not to be detested (*Lun yü* 8, 10). One who is wise, the noble person, lets none be lost (*Lun yü* 15, 7). One who is noble does only good. By means of this humanness, the death penalty becomes superfluous (*Lun yü* 13, 11).

This doing of what is good can go so far that the just person, fourthly, sacrifices him- or herself. Mo Ti (Mo-tzu) explains this humanness so: "To kill a person in order to save the world, that doesn't mean acting for the benefit of the world; but to sacrifice oneself in order to save the world, that means acting for the benefit of the world."⁽¹⁹³⁾ The essence of what is good, the love of humanity is thereby made manifest (*cf.* *Lun yü* 12, 22).

It follows from this, fifthly, that the person who carries out *jen* can name no limit for his or her humanness. Confucius himself apparently recognizes a gradation, in that evil is to be met with justice and the good with what is good (*Lun yü* 14, 36); Mencius (Meng-tzu, 371289) and Mo Ti (Mo-tzu, 5th century BC), however, see *jen* as universal, without gradation and equal for all. Each and every one is to be loved.⁽¹⁹⁴⁾

Such noble persons make up the "new people" of Confucians, as A.B. Chang Ch'un-shen writes.⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ And Mencius calls this benevolent (*jen*) person "lord of Heaven". Inasmuch as in the "new people" he helps the other person, he himself is splendid. "He is capable of judging others according to what he himself knows and is familiar with." And Chang comments further: "This is the condition of the 'new man' of Christ, of whom Paul speaks, who loves his neighbor as himself."

But how did this noble person acquire *jen*? It is given to him or her at the start, and is, to that extent, a gift. Human nature is good. Natural benevolence, *jen*, is like the water which collects in a valley inasmuch as water flows downhill. *Jen* as a possibility is given to every person as a gift. But no person is *only* good; the good must be attained chosen (*Lun yü* 4,1). Whoever acts against humanness, *jen*, is evil. But how should people do what is good, when day after day flagrant wrongs are being perpetrated? It is as with the woodsman's axe, which does damage to the woods.⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ By interfering in what is harmonious, the corresponding elements are disturbed; the human being is ruined. Thus we can well say that cruelty (the opposite of *jen*) interrupts human relationships. The disturbed relations are to be restored; the feeling for humanness is to be awakened. After all: whoever is good (*jen*) is never unhappy (*Lun yü* 9, 28). In this manner the "true nature of the person is to be recognized. Even the "non-*jen*" I is determined not only individually, but socially and even decisively so.

It is apparently the case in many religions, that a return to the origins as a "golden age", *Tat'ung*, and as a grand harmony in the past is of considerable significance (*cf.*, ancestor cult). This awareness plays a function for the just order of society in the present for it reflects the true measure of what is human. Measure is not taken from the divine, important as the "will of Heaven" seems to be, but from the human. In *I Ching*, the Classic of Changes, can be read: "If the measure of man is absolute righteousness, then it is difficult to be a true wise man; but if man is the measure of man, then just men have a model which they can follow".⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ This is the way that *jen* is handed down in tradition; history transmits to humans the quality of being human.

One must, therefore, take the path of learning (*Lun yü* 7, 8). This path or way (*tao* ?) changes human beings in the direction of the good. Therefore no one, of any social standing whatsoever, may be excluded from this human self-cultivation. "In education there is no discrimination" (*Lun yü* 15, 38).

Jen comes to fulfillment in specific circumstances, situations and forms. This ceremonial structuring of relations is called *li*, the concrete cultivation of humanness. *Li* means the specific social behavior which expresses itself in ritual forms and which itself has religious meaning. In *li* the human measure of "being-in-relation" is realized: In society right and just social relations are the basic principle.

Five such interpersonal relations, which are the *ratio* of all further human structuring, are named by Confucius. All are reciprocal relations: 1. father--son; 2. husband--wife; 3. (older) brother--(younger) brother; 4. ruler-minister (subject); 5. friend--friend. The just society is constituted by means of these five relations. Most important is the reverence of children for their parents (*hsiao*), filial piety. It is also the way to self-education, and is connected with ancestor cult. As long as the parents are alive, the children should serve them; and when the parents are dead, they should be honored (with sacrificial rites). The reason for the importance of this relation is to be seen in the fact that life is transmitted through the parents. It is not primarily a legal regulation, but expresses rather the linear descent of the power of life. Thus the meaning of every change, of every improvement (even in the political order, which is very important), is that of a better possibility for life: *Li* arises from *jen*. These relations, which doubtlessly were elaborated historically under specific social conditions, are not, however, to be understood uncritically. Thus

the son may, within limits, contradict his parents (*Lun yü* 4, 18). The structuring with *li* finds a true counterpart, say, in Paul's adoption of contemporary Stoic rules conditioned by their time of origin and in his counsels for the "family".

All this assumes a transcendental quality. This is not only inasmuch as the individual is determined relationally by humanness; inasmuch as the concept of *jen* is led back to a "sacred time" ("*in illo tempore*"), to the ancestral line; further not only as the right path of a human being joins the path of non-human things; but much more, it is inasmuch as the right path of a human being forms a unity with the path of "Heaven". Mencius was of the opinion that a human being can carry Heaven in his heart, and that whoever relates to the truly human knows Heaven (Mencius 7a, 1).⁽¹⁹⁸⁾

As a *consequence* of right relations, the religious dimension of reality *reveals itself*. The "Will of Heaven" is present: the noble person is receptive for Heaven (*T'ien*), but does not have *T'ien* at his or her disposal.⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ Rather, such a person reveres the divine reality (*Lun yü* 16, 8). This experience of the presence of "Heaven", this "Enlightenment", makes one fearless in the face of one's enemies (*Lun yü* 9, 5). The path of the human being and the path of Heaven are in unity, even if the "polarity" remains, and one is never identified with the other. "I search here below, but I never penetrate to what is above. It is God who knows me" (*Lun yü* 14, 37). Such a manner of expression suggests mystical forms. This divine reality does not speak "visa-vis" human beings, "only" the world does that, but it "appeals to a persons in the sense of genuine experience (cf. *Lun yü* 17, 19). Indeed, the "will of Heaven" reveals itself in silence. In this way Heaven can become "the measure of all things", for the whole world then stands in cosmic order and harmony.

Once again, however, it becomes evident that in proper conduct, in the *Jen* that finds expression in *li*, or in other words, in ethical, moral practice, Heaven and Earth reach their polar Harmony (as it is called in *Li chi* [Collection of Rituals]).⁽²⁰⁰⁾ At the moment we deviate from right, ethical practice (*jen*), we sin against *T'ien*. The field of integration is destroyed; any prayer becomes meaningless (*Lun yü* 3, 13). In this light, to speak simply of "an indefinite religious attitude of Confucius" is to assume, in my opinion, an untenable position.⁽²⁰¹⁾ Indeed, the power of the good, the impulse of humanness is a divine event; it is the presence of Heaven (cf. *Lun yü* 7, 7). Thus it becomes clear that a person is serving Heaven only when he or she is serving fellow human beings (cf. *Lun yü* 11, 11). The divine presence is visible in service to human beings. Indeed, anyone who shortens a visit to the sick in order to go to prayer incurs the reproach of the Master (Confucius; *Lun yü* 7, 34). *Jen* is divine worship, and only when this is recognized, when Heaven and Earth in this way are one, does sacrifice make sense (*Lun yü* 3, 12; cf. "If you are offering your gift at the altar . . ." [Mt 5:23], "It is mercy I desire, and not sacrifice" [Mt 9:13]).

One cannot wish for a direct access to *T'ien*; one should rather keep oneself at a distance from the "gods". The only access to living reality is humanness. A warning can therefore be spoken against anthropomorphisms and superstition,⁽²⁰²⁾ and questions about Heaven, the gods, Death, etc., should be avoided (*Lun yü* 11, 11). Such questions are attempts to evade the *jen*, to flee unity and objectify knowledge. Priesthood, organization, a prescribed (dogmatic) faith have no meaning in this context. *Jen*, which finds expression in loyalty and truth, is "the supreme law" (*Lun yü* 9, 24). When will it take place? "When the Great Truth (= Tao ?) triumphs, the Earth will belong to all men together" (*li chi*) [Collection of Rituals].⁽²⁰³⁾

This integration, *Thai chi*, the "Supreme Ultimate", this stream of unity", finds a Christian expression in Paul's understanding that God will be all in all (1 Cor 15:28; cf. Acts 17:27-28; Phil 2:13). A radical theology of humanheartedness, of deep awareness of one's fellow human beings with the appropriate consequences--such a theology can be recognized in Confucianism. From the

vantage point of *jen*, *T'ien* can be perceived, determined, experienced, and from there the "gods of nature" and the ancestors. Thence the way is pointed to the origin of the good, love and humanness. God's being emerges therefore in moral practice. It is experienced in human-heartedness (*jen*).

If this brief sketch can meet with Confucian acceptance, then I see therein such a profusion of parallels to Christianity as is hardly to be found in any other religion and morality. This would be a witness to fundamental human structures which are illuminated in original experiences (Jesus--Confucius), and would represent a broad basis for dialogue towards reaching a possible agreement. In this there unfolds communicative responsibility. The Second Vatican Council teaches that there has been no time in which the reality of God has not made itself manifest through revelation.⁽²⁰⁴⁾ If this is true, then together with the concept of being human and that of humanity, the concept of revelation is simultaneously posited, and no people or nation can be excluded therefrom. It has been asserted, therefore, not without justification, that Confucianism stands in a dialectical relationship to Christianity similar to that of the Old Testament to the New Testament. A dialogue, however, can take place only if and when the Confucian writings (the Nine Classics) are taken at least as seriously as the Old Testament.

On the suggestive understanding that every religion is a light with a characteristic tinge or hue, and that Christianity always shines forth with a Jewish-Greek tint, one might go further and say that it is necessary for every communicative action that the colors be various, and that by renewed "shading" the light is not destroyed at all, but that it thus manifests itself in a specific historical situation.⁽²⁰⁵⁾ Once, no "change of creed" from Judaism to Christianity was intended, but rather a liberation of men and women. Similarly, the dialogue of Christianity with Confucianism must not be another name for proselytizing, but for the Christian it must mean instead coming to a genuine reflection on, and awareness of, real Confucian values. Only an honestly critical attitude is able to make the needed *metanoia* possible.

If it is the case that a person is sound and whole only if he or she is living "in *jen*", and that this ethical reality opens the only true access to the ontological reality of God, then a striking similarity to Paul's "being in Christ" becomes visible. Jesus Christ is understood, in a Christian sense, as a human being for others; it can consequently be asserted that Christ is *jen* in person". One decisive question remains, however, namely to what extent Confucian thought sees *jen* as a "living norm", or as a clear cut matter of nature. Is *jen* a liberating impulse, or authority or power of a human being to be free, which liberates him or her over against an historically conditioned *li*; or is *jen* only the power of law putting a human being under obligation? To put it another way: is the ethical impulse seen as a dialectical pole to the legal mode of existence (*li*?), or is this dialectic abandoned, or does it perhaps remain unseen? There would seem to be no question about the fact that God (*T'ien*; eighteen times in *Lun yü* [Ti]) is rooted in ethical Will, and that God cannot be meaningfully mentioned apart from the demand for being "in *jen*".

But here, too, a question arises, as to what extent God has a purely sanctional function for nature and norm, or whether he is to be understood in a dialectical polarity. In my opinion, popular religious practice casts practically no light on the matter (no more than it does in Christianity). To put the question in another way: does Confucianism have a critical, liberating power, or does it function only to stabilize a system? One reads: "The unity of Heaven and Man is a Chinese ideal with the aim of unifying human virtue with that of Heaven. For the acceptance of the moral subject, however, an objective basis and a general norm are to be found only with some effort", then this statement--which the author means as a complaint--seems to imply a liberating impulse.⁽²⁰⁶⁾

A critical dialogue between the two confessions might perhaps bring about a mutual broadening, in that on the Christian side *jen* is considered and reflected upon seriously and

earnestly, and on the Confucian side *liberation* is recognized as a fundamental quality of *jen*. Should *jen* express polar unity, then it is not to be distinguished from the Western concept of a person when this is seen as an I-thou-relationship and is understood as a relation-event. In this manner, ontology and ethics form a dialectical unity. A genuine understanding of person is possible in Christian thought only when it means unity of life, which implies (polar-dialectic) relationality.

At this point, I believe, a fruitful dialogue could take place between Confucianism and Christianity. It must, however, be a matter of genuine dialogue, not an attempted "conversion" of one of the partners. Both partners must be in the process of transformation, and this is the program, the message of Jesus.

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Part II
Metaphysical Foundations for Moral Philosophy

8.
Principles of a Creative Morality
Eliot Deutsch

Human Dignity

"Personhood," I believe, is an achievement concept. A human being is a person to the degree to which he or she becomes an integrated, creative, freely-acting social and moral being. I have an identity as a person, then, only insofar as I realize the spontaneity of my spiritual being and, in and through the riven conditions, features, characteristics of my individual being, attain to what I ought to be, as that "ought" is itself dynamically determined within the creative process of my historical becoming. In short, a person, I would want to argue, is an articulation of a unique subjectivity whose rightness is secured through an affirmation of the spiritual ground of one's being and the creative transformation of the constraints, limitations and conditions of one's individual being.

A person is thus grounded in freedom. Or, to put it another way, human beings are free to the degree to which they achieve personhood. I am free to the degree to which I have appropriated my experience and act, in and through that integrated ownership, with creative skill and power. I am free when my own power of being is expressed rightly in action. Freedom, as I understand it, is thus more of a *quality* than a *condition*; it is integral to a person and his/her action and not something (e.g., a "free-will") which makes a certain kind of (morally responsible) action possible.

The question, then, which often arises at this point is: If human beings are more or less persons, having realized their spontaneity and having achieved freedom in varying degrees, should not some human beings count for more than others and enjoy special privileges and be accorded exceptional rights? Ought not societies to be structured, as indeed they often have been both East and West, North and South, hierarchically in ways that take these differences between human beings into account? The answer, I believe, is that when one achieves personhood and freedom, one has precisely the nonegoistic, loving sensitivity and concern that carries along with it the recognition of a nondiscriminatory spiritual worth obtaining throughout life. A person affirms quite spontaneously and naturally the intrinsic worth, the *dignity*, of every human being--and it is this recognition, this affirmation, which makes possible a political/moral understanding that is commensurate with the spiritual potentialities of man.

Traditionally, at least in Western experience, the notion of the intrinsic worth of every human being has been grounded, for the most part, in some form or other of Theism. It is because we are equal in the eyes of God as His creatures, made in His image, that we are granted equal spiritual value. On this basis, some theologians would even go so far as to extend the concept of dignity to the inorganic as well as to the living. Paul Tillich, for example, writes:

Self-transcendence in the sense of greatness implies selftranscendence in the sense of dignity. It might seem that this term belongs exclusively to the personal-communal realm because it presupposes complete centeredness and freedom. But one element of dignity is inviolability, which is a valid element of all reality, giving dignity to the inorganic as well as the personal. ⁽²⁰⁷⁾

For some considerable time now (at least since the Enlightenment and the French Revolution), however, most philosophers, and indeed many theologians, have not appealed to Theism with its

self-transcendence to ground their ethical and political beliefs in dignity and equality; rather they have struggled to find other strictly rational, pragmatic or utilitarian justifications. One need not, I think, strain moral sensitivity in this way; for, as I will try to show, it is sufficient for upholding the intrinsic worth of everyone that it is the natural expression of a person to so perceive others in those terms. The fact that a person recognizes spontaneously the inherent dignity of others provides the best warrant for asserting that dignity and for exploring the ways in which it can best be expressed in our political and socialmoral experience. Inherent or intrinsic dignity rests on the solid foundation that it is spirit which sees spirit.⁽²⁰⁸⁾

In his *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, and elsewhere, Kant--a paradigm of one who seeks a strictly rational justification for morality--sets a sharp opposition between duty and inclination; he goes so far as to disallow moral value to those actions or states which incline spontaneously toward the good. "[M]any persons," Kant writes, are "so sympathetically constituted that without any motive of vanity or selfishness they find an inner satisfaction in spreading joy, and rejoice in the contentment of others which they have made possible. But I say that . . . that kind of action has no true moral worth."⁽²⁰⁹⁾ For an action to have "true moral worth," according to Kant, it must be done not from inclination, but entirely from duty. It must be carried out as an act of *rational* obedience to the moral law (expressed as a categorical imperative); it must be an act of will totally independent of what and who one is as a person. "Thus everything empirical," Kant says, "is not only unworthy to be an ingredient in the principle of morality but is even highly prejudicial to the purity of moral practices themselves."⁽²¹⁰⁾

It is thus entirely conceivable that we could have a perfectly wretched human being, filled with all manner of hate and resentment, who nevertheless would be supremely moral if he acted rationally according to the principle of duty. There is indeed something ludicrous in divorcing morality from the qualities of a person--what he/she "inclines" towards--and in seeking a purely rational ground for morality; especially one that can support the principles necessary for a just and fulfilling social and political order.

One form of Kant's categorical imperative, however, declares that 'one must always treat others as ends never as means,' which is to say that one must act towards others with the recognition of their intrinsic worth. This recognition, however, cannot itself, as Kant unwittingly showed, be grounded in a purely rational will; rather it is presupposed in the very possibility of such a will. With Kant, this presupposition of a primal human dignity no doubt derived from his own rich theistic background. The inherent dignity of every human being may, however, be affirmed, and on a stronger, unshakable footing, as it is the natural, spontaneous way in which a genuine person--one whose inclinations are, as it were, in order--regards others.

The intrinsic dignity of a person shows the person as inviolate. Intrinsic dignity is thus one of the value conditions constituting the individual, and as such can be cultivated, albeit never as a mere act of will.

Dignity becomes then a manner of one's standing in the world. It is a fundamental state or quality of a human being as well as a source of his/her judgment and action. To rob a person of dignity is to reduce the person precisely to a mere thing (a "means"). We rightly call inhumane any treatment of another which is designed to deprive him of his dignity.

The awareness of one's own primal dignity, we have said, brings with it a natural extension of that awareness to others. There is, in short, a native tendency--let us call it an "inner logic"--to recognize and acknowledge the worth of others the moment that one recognizes and claims it for oneself. It would be inherently contradictory for a person who has realized to the full his own

dignity to act immorally, to willfully deprive another of his/her personhood and freedom or, given the opportunity, to fail to enhance the personhood of the other.

Intrinsic dignity, we affirm, belongs to individuals as a primal condition of their being; and yet, at the same time, it is a social phenomenon, for it demands recognition and acknowledgment in order for it to become a living force and for it to be sustained by the love it affords to others. With its insistence upon qualitative differentiation among human beings (between "the herd" and those endowed with a privileged "beautiful soul") romantic individualism (with which the view here being articulated is often confounded) was entirely ego-based. It recognized the social only as it was a field upon which one's own dignity could be acted out and not as that which informs one's dignity at the core.

One who successfully cultivates his/her dignity does not think of himself as *superior* but as *worthy*--and it is precisely that which is affirmed as well in others.

Evil

Evil exists. Evil-doers exist. The evil that human beings are capable of inflicting upon one another and upon the world seems without boundary: the holocaust, genocide, torture--and the little acts that are calculated to hurt, to humiliate, to violate and degrade.

Evil is the betrayal of dignity. It is thus a spiritual sickness, a disease of the soul. Lacking the self-esteem that flows from the awareness of their own inherent dignity, the doers of evil, while bringing about immense harm and suffering, in fact destroy themselves. Evil-doers know nothing of the joy of being.

Evil is ignorance, but not as a mere lack of knowing something or other, as if evil could be dispelled if only one had a certain piece of knowledge. Rather, it is ignorance as a failure to achieve a spiritual state of knowing being; one which renders one incapable of intentionally harming or degrading others. Evil does not disappear in knowledge, as though it never existed in the first place: it is seen as it is and is inwardly transformed and transfigured. Nicholas Berdyaev notes that

The genesis of evil shows that we must both recognize its positive significance . . . and condemn it, waging an unwearying struggle against it. The positive meaning of evil lies solely in the enrichment of life brought about by the heroic struggle against it and victory over it.⁽²¹¹⁾

One must indeed struggle with the tendencies toward evil whenever they appear within oneself and in others; but a "victory" over evil is possible only when evil is radically denied. As the Augustinian side of Christian theology recognized, evil is the absence of what is truly significant (the good); it can have no positive meaning of its own.

Now this is certainly more than a logical or semantic quibble over the definition (meaning) of terms; and it extends as well beyond any concern to develop a theodicy. For to give positive meaning to evil, if only of an instrumental sort, is to allow some value to the degradation of the spiritual quality of life. Evil is utter nonsense. It needs to be understood; it needs to be explained; it needs to be addressed socially, politically; it does not need to be, and it cannot be, justified.

This brings us to the concept of *Power*.

Power

Men, women, children need, and therefore oftentimes desperately seek, to be able to effectuate change, to control others and themselves, to influence events, to acquire some degree of mastery over their lives; in short, to have power. Power takes many forms--from a crude display of physical force exercised against another, to a spontaneous expression of authoritative competency. There are raw physical actions; there are subtle manipulations of others; there are legitimated modes of compelling authority; and there are triumphant self-over-comings and acts of beauty and grace.

We need then to distinguish broadly at least between coercive power and creative power. Coercive power demands the obedience of the other (be it person, event, situation) to one's own will. It is ego-based. It assumes struggle, engagement, victory or defeat. Creative power, on the other hand (*te*, as I understand the Chinese), seeks the realization of a harmony that is constituted in and through diverse and oftentimes conflicting elements. Creative power is an expression of freedom in action. It is exercised in celebration and joy.

Creative power is not an imposition of order upon chaos; a therapeutic overcoming of the forces of darkness; or a simple overflow of exuberant feeling which is "expressive" of its bearer's personality (as has sometimes been thought). Rather it is just that mastery, that skillful acting (*wu wei*), which is grounded in an essential understanding of things and being (*Tao*), and is realized concretely in consummate forms of acting freely. Creative power, unlike coercive power, aims to promote human fulfillment. It translates into the social/moral/political arena as the authority which issues from competency: the *authoritative* in sharp contrast to the *authoritarian*. Creative power strives, in short, to enhance the dignity of persons.

Wu wei, as I understand it, thus holds that action--in this context political/moral action--needs to be performed always in a spirit of care and devotion. In Confucian terms, a person in authority should possess that authority in virtue of his competency, the authority consisting then not so much in imposing one's will upon others but in orchestrating their talents and achievements. Creative power is carried out at once thoughtfully and spontaneously with the intent of enhancing the welfare of all. [\(212\)](#)

Creative Power in Work and Social Relations

Paul Ricoeur argues that

Work calls into play the power relations of man over man within the context of the relations of force between man and nature. Indeed, through work, human resistance takes on the character of a rationally organized battle against nature that makes nature appear as a reservoir of forces to be conquered. . . . Now, the force of man's work also figures among the forces to be mastered. The rational organization of the battle against nature also implies an organization of human efforts in projects, plans and programs. In this way man ranks among the number of resistances to be overcome by man. His work is a productive force to be organized: by means of his work he enters into relations of subordination. [\(213\)](#)

And thus

Authority is not bad in itself. Control is a necessary 'differentiation' between man and is implied in the essence of the political sphere. [\(214\)](#)

Insufficient attention, it seems, has been paid in ethical thought to the politics of work, which is somewhat surprising insofar as the vast majority of power relationships (and aspirations and frustrations) for most persons, especially in a liberal democratic society, occur in the workplace, rather than in the governmental arena. Day to day power situations arise more as we are workers than as we are citizens (of a state).

Given unlimited leisure, which is mistakenly taken as the opposite of work, most persons would go mad--or they would impose upon themselves all manner of new tasks. It is not so much the flight from boredom as such, however, that drives man to work, as the need to accept challenges, to have an appropriate field to engender and play out one's energies and talents (let alone "to make a living"). Within the social/economic structures that have developed, this means institutionalized, organized productivity of one sort or another where labor is offered, money is given, power is acquired.

A distinction needs to be made, I believe, between *working at* something or other and *working to*; with the former we have action carried out primarily for the sake of the end to be achieved, with the latter tasks are undertaken for their inherent value as well as for a purpose to be fulfilled. *Working to* exhibits, and contributes to, a person's autonomy and dignity. It is not part of a battle to be waged with nature, a battle requiring "resistances to be overcome" both with nature and with fellow workers. *Working to* is joyous work: it is playful skill in action.

Most work that is carried out or tasks undertaken are not, by their very nature and character, able to be done by a single person working alone; most work requires some degree of group participation and always implies a social context--and hence becomes "political". It is here that the ideals of a creative morality that I have been trying to sketch can be seen to be clearly superior to any other ethical/political style, insofar as they allow for, indeed call for, autonomy and respect for individual dignity. The ideas allow for work to be a *working to*, a kind of creative play.

Authoritarian models of work relations obtain whenever one is compelled to assume subordinate/superior roles as part of a system that places power in a very few and legitimates their being able to tell others what to do unquestioningly. In authoritarian work relations power often seems to get exercised as much for its own sake as for the goal to be attained, for the system when carried to its near extreme usually proves to be highly inefficient and counterproductive in the end. With the authoritarian model, the worker is a mere instrument or thing, a piece of a larger whole and is thus regarded as utterly *replaceable*. He/she is discouraged, indeed often prevented, from acquiring distinctive skills of a sort that would command a large measure of autonomy (and hence the traditional difficulty authoritarian structures have when dealing with both craftsmen and peasants). Where initiative and pride of work are denied, not only are human beings degraded, but--the pragmatic will appreciate--the productive purpose or goal is certain to be unrealized.

Turning to so-called "democratic" models of work relations, we find that they usually contain a large dose of the authoritarian, certainly within corporate/state capitalist economies--especially historically, in their early stages of growth. However, they strive over time, at least within the framework of liberal political democracy, to safeguard individual rights (with laws and regulations governing safety, minimum wages, child labor and the like) and to allow for the promotion of the worker's welfare through collective actions (e.g., union bargaining). The democratic model encourages the full rationalization of the productive process, whether in factory or in office, through specialization of skills and wage differentials. It remains, however, dedicated to work in the spirit of *working at*. Work being essentially instrumental to the end product of profit for the company or for the individual, will always be alienating to some highly significant degree.

Democratic work-models are to be found, of course, not only in capitalist economies but in socialist ones as well. But oftentimes they have the ironic peculiarity that the worker, while not being easily replaced, often is regarded and regards himself ever more keenly as superfluous or inessential. Where "everybody must work," jobs having to be provided for all, most work becomes meaningless. Numerous people are provided to do what could be done more effectively and meaningfully by only a few.

Nevertheless, insofar as the democratic model of work relations does call upon worker initiatives--where by 'worker' we mean all who are involved in the productive system of goods and services, the clerk as well as the surgeon. With their participation in various and diverse decisions involving their work, we have an important advance from the authoritarian model. This advance points in the direction of the creative moral ideal, where in actuality some essential aspects of the democratic are retained.

The creative moral ideal honors skill and excellence, for it recognizes that mastery of an activity provides one of the strongest basis for freedom and autonomy. Mastery, in no matter in what area, requires a firm willingness to learn, which in turn means disciplining one's immediate inclinations and desire for individual self-expression and subordinating oneself to the demands of the task and of the teacher. In the master/apprentice relationship, which is freely constituted, the apprentice does what he is told to do, not because of a hierarchical, wage-structured authority, as if the master were a "boss", but because the apprentice recognizes the master's superior competency, from which he hopes to learn and eventually to emulate. The whole purpose of being an apprentice is to become a master.

The creative moral ideal, then, is one which seeks to harmonize various competencies--in a spirit in which what appears to be necessary is seen as an opportunity for genuine play. Work becomes a devout service, an offering of one's skill as a kind of ritual participation or contribution. Creative workers are able to serve one another without becoming servile. They organize a task to be carried out in ways wherein each person recognizes for him/her self--and is so recognized by the others--how best to contribute the appropriate skill. The "leaders" are granted the obligation to lead, to orchestrate the action, through the recognition of their superior ability to do so. "Power" is thus turned to imaginative ways of sharing responsibility and to mutual satisfaction in what is achieved.

Any discussion of the politics and morality of work relations must today address the question as to "whether, in an ideal society, certain roles should be assigned to females and others to males."⁽²¹⁵⁾ Now the question as framed assumes "roles" and their "assignment," nevertheless its intent is clear and the question needs to be addressed within the framework of a creative morality. How should sex/gender differences be taken into account in the politics of work relations? Do men and women have special, distinctive capacities for different kinds of skills or competencies?

In Joseph R. Lucas' essay "Because You Are a Woman," one reads:

There are no conclusive arguments about feminine abilities and attitudes. But the discoveries of the scientists, so far as they go, lend some support to traditional views. It could well be the case that intellectual and psychological characteristics are, like physical ones, influenced by genetic factors. If this is so, the way in which a particular pair of genes in an individual genotype will be manifested in the phenotype will depend on the other genes in the genotype, and may depend greatly on whether there are two X chromosomes or one X and one Y. It could be that the masculine mind is typically more vigorous and combative, and the feminine mind typically more intuitive and responsive, with correspondingly different ranges of interests and inclinations.⁽²¹⁶⁾

But is it not the case that we take the *customary* to be what is typical and then go on to assume, as Mill showed, that it is what is most *natural*? "So true is it," Mill writes, "that unnatural generally means only unc customary, and that everything which is usual appears natural. The subjection of women to men being a universal custom, any departure from it quite naturally appears unnatural."⁽²¹⁷⁾

In the last analysis it may simply be impossible to disentangle the genetic from the social in accounting for whatever differences (other than the obvious biological ones) might obtain between men and women. In any case, the central question has to do with what importance is to be ascribed to whatever those differences might be. Obviously some differences between human beings (male or female) might be relevant in some work contexts (physical strength in some forms of construction labor) but not in others (say in computer programming); some differences (e.g., one's eye color) might hardly ever be relevant; some might always or nearly always be relevant (with our present technology we wouldn't have blind persons as airplane pilots). The significance of differences in human beings in work relations is always contextual--and subject to change.

If a person's own identity has some bearing on the work roles that are most appropriate to the person, as indeed it would seem to have, then sex-differences have to make some kind of difference in work-roles: but precisely what kind of difference still remains as the question.

Quite clearly much of what traditionally has passed for what is appropriate in sex-roles is more a matter of socialization and history than of personal identity based on somatic considerations. There doesn't seem to be anything in psychosomatic personal identity, for instance, that would require that women do the cooking.

Assuming that it is possible to know what is "typical" in sex differentiation with any degree of precision (which is, of course, doubtful) we still have the problem about how the "exceptional" are to be treated. The answer seems obvious: every person should have the opportunity (the liberty) to act freely, to have an artful destiny within the conditions of his/her being. This means that there ought not to be any compulsory sex-role differentiation (the determination of "occupation" by sex) either by legal or social pressure coercion. Although it may in fact turn out that, for whatever psychological, genetic, or social-historical reasons or causes, in various contexts most men or most women might choose one or another kind of role (as being most in accord with what they understand their own nature to be).

In sum: I have tried to sketch, in broad terms, some select principles of what I call a "creative morality"--a morality for persons, which defines a person as a developed, integrated, social human being who has, from the realization of a spiritual ground of being, successfully articulated the given conditions of his or her individuality to create a non-ego-centered, loving being. A person is thus an achievement, not a given. Part and parcel of this achievement is the recognition of one's own worth as a person and the extension, in a wholly natural way, of that recognition to others. A person affirms human dignity and strives to enhance it in self and others.

Evil, which is the most fundamental antithesis to the realization of dignity, must be recognized for what it is, but never given a positive value. No instrumental value ascribed to evil can overcome its inherent tendency to deny the very basis for, and the achievement of, personhood. It must simply, as far as possible, be overcome.

Two kinds of power need to be recognized in social/moral/political relations. These are coercive power and creative power. Coercive power is ego centered and demands obedience to one's will. Creative power is non-ego-centered and strives to bring forth new meaning and value in all situations. Creative power is the free expression of realized persons and is exhibited throughout the range of a person's activities and relations with others,

The area where power gets displayed most readily in human experience seems to be in work relations, an area often neglected in ethical and political theory. We distinguish two very different styles of working, which we call *working-at* and *working-to*. *Working-at* is carried out strictly for the realization of ends extrinsic to the work itself and is associated most clearly in authoritarian structures of political work relations, but also, in modified and softened ways, in so-called democratic models as well. *Working-to*, on the other hand, calls for a free association in work relations, laying stress on the attainment of excellence through the ordering of achieved competencies. *Working-to* is thus joyous work and becomes the ideal for all work relations.

A special problem arises today with the concerns voiced by feminist thinkers who reject differentiation of roles by sex or gender. We conclude that differences between persons by way of sex and gender are significant only in certain contexts, but are never of the sort which would rule out any person's having the opportunity to act freely, to attain a rich autonomy within the conditions of their individual being.

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9.

Metaphysics of the Person, Determinism and Responsibility

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O, now for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind!
Farewell content!
Othello, Act, III, Scene 3

In his great tragedy, *Othello*, Shakespeare achieves a very penetrating phenomenological analysis of responsibility. When Othello utters the above words a turning point has been reached in the drama. Othello voluntarily and deliberately decides that he is going to entertain doubts about the fidelity of his beloved wife, Desdemona. He also realizes full well, and adverts to the fact, that in so doing he is bidding farewell to all of the happiness and glory he has known and deliberately decides to do it anyway, *coûte que coûte*. What is interesting about this in terms of the related problems of determinism, freedom and responsibility is the conscious and deliberate way in which he takes responsibility for his acts. He sees the consequences of what he is doing clearly, indeed he goes on in the long paragraph which follows to enumerate in detail all of the things that he is forfeiting in so doing, and he decides to do it anyway. In short, he assumes the full responsibility for his acts.

The reason why this is so interesting is because it contrasts so markedly with the pervasive moral attitude of our society in which the dominant tendency is a more or less total denial of responsibility for anything. That such a denial of responsibility should come about is not at all surprising since many philosophers, social scientists, and especially psychologists, regard man as a purely material being, and nothing else. If he is purely material, then he is as determined in his actions as the stone to fall or water to boil at 100⁰ C. And further, if he is totally determined because he is a purely material being, then he is not free and certainly not responsible for his actions. But how did we arrive at the moral and metaphysical vision of man which robs him of his spiritual dimension, of the nobility of moral responsibility, and reduces him to a purely material stimulus-response mechanism?

Science and Determinism

As early as the seventeenth century, Descartes in his *Meditations* was laying the groundwork for determinism. In Descartes' world all things, at least material things, were explainable in causal terms. The material universe was like a giant machine, and as such could be explained by mechanical laws. His world view of the material universe was thus both mechanistic and deterministic--although he did allow that there is, in the case of man at least, another realm, that of thought. Thus he maintained that there are two realms, the physical and the psychological, and that they are not only distinct but indeed opposed to one another. In his dualistic schema the laws which govern the material world are deterministic and mechanistic, although he still maintained freedom for the spiritual realm. In his view, only man among all the animals has a mental life. Other animals are mere mechanisms. With the advent of Darwin and Darwinism in the nineteenth century this view of the radical difference between man with a mental and spiritual life which differentiated him from the other animals suffered a severe setback. Man came to be seen as much

more closely related to the other animals; eventually all essential differences would be obliterated, and he would be seen as a purely material being *comme les autres*.

Added to this in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was the monumental work of Sigmund Freud who developed a psychological theory according to which all mental occurrences, even those of seemingly the most trivial sort, are as strictly determined as are any physical phenomena.⁽²¹⁸⁾ Freud postulated unconscious mechanisms that give rise to dreams and neurotic symptoms, and he offered causal explanations of such trivia as slips of the tongue and pen. Nothing escaped a causal explanation. In this way he ushered in a new era in psychology in which psychological phenomena were explained by laws every bit as deterministic as Newtonian mechanics. So-called "free" choices could be explained on the basis of strictly deterministic and mechanistic law. Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth it seemed that the universe and all its elements, man and his psychic life included, could be explained on a strictly deterministic basis of mechanistic laws.

From this brief survey a causal chain appears operative from Descartes' dualistic metaphysics of man in the seventeenth century to the twentieth century determinism of Freud, for Freud offered not only explanations of psychological phenomena but an even more radical metaphysics of man than Descartes had attempted. In Freud's metaphysics of man, man is reduced to a purely material being; like other material beings he is explainable in terms of strictly deterministic causal laws. Following this view many philosophers argue that since man's so called "free will" and "free choices" can be explained on the basis of causal law then free will is a mere myth, and so also is moral responsibility.⁽²¹⁹⁾ Professors John Hospers and Paul Edwards argue, for example, that since actions proceed from character and since character is formed even before we have any choices about things, therefore, we are not free to do actions or not.⁽²²⁰⁾ They proceed from a character which is as fixed as poured concrete is to its mold, And hence we cannot be held responsible any more than a machine can be that stamps labels on cans. thus he writes in "Free Will and Psychoanalysis:

. . . everyone has been molded by influences which in large measure at least determine his present behavior; he is literally the product of these influences, stemming from periods prior to his "years of discretion," giving him a host of character traits that he cannot change. . . . What if even the degree of will power available to him in shaping his habits . . . is a factor over which he has no control? What are we to say of this kind of "freedom?" Is it not rather like the freedom of the machine to stamp labels on cans when it has been devised for just that purpose?⁽²²¹⁾

What effect will this deterministic vision of man have on responsibility? As Hospers sees it man is merely a "victim" who has no control over his actions. He is the helpless plaything of deeply buried, dark interior forces beyond his control. Again he writes in, "What Means This Freedom?"

The poor victim is not conscious of the inner forces that exact from him this ghastly toll; he battles, he schemes, he revels in pseudo-aggression, he is miserable, but he does not know what works within him to produce these catastrophic acts of crime. His aggressive actions are the wriggling of a worm on a fisherman's hook. And if this is so, it seems difficult to say any longer, "He is responsible."⁽²²²⁾

Thus all responsibility is removed from man for his actions. They are merely the products of deeply buried drives and desires which were formed before man had any control of them, and they now lie beyond his control. Rand Hospers notes that "we must admit that we are ultimately the kind of sons we are because of conditions occurring outside of us, over which we had no

control."⁽²²³⁾ Hospers clearly wishes to connect this deterministic explanation of our behavior to an outright denial that there is any such thing as "right" and "wrong" in human behavior, and any such thing as "responsibility." Thus he concludes his article "What Means This Freedom?" by stating:

"Right" and "wrong" which apply only to actions, have no meaning here either. I suspect that the same is true of responsibility", for now that we have recalled often forgotten facts about our being the product of outside forces, we must ask in all seriousness what would be added by saying that we are not *responsible* for our own characters and temperaments. What would it mean even? . . . Instead of saying that it is false that we are responsible for our own characters, I should prefer to say that the utterance is meaningless.⁽²²⁴⁾

In the final analysis this type of deterministic vision of man must inevitably lead to a fatalism of a most pessimistic sort. Instead of our life being subject to our own freely determined direction and rational control, the course of our Life is whimsical, "the "luck of the draw," as gamblers would put it. This final point is accepted unblinkingly by Hospers.

. . . whether or not we have personality disturbances, whether or not we have the ability to overcome deficiencies of early environment, is like the answer to the question whether or not we shall be struck down by a dread disease: "it's all a matter of luck."⁽²²⁵⁾

Could any view of life be more depressing than this kind of fatalistic pessimism?

But perhaps it might be thought what Hospers represents an idiosyncratic exception in contemporary thought. Such, unfortunately, is not at all the case. Thus among the "hard determinists" Paul Edwards,⁽²²⁶⁾ who shares Hospers's views, counts Jonathan Edwards, Anthony Collins, Holbach, Priestly, Robert Owen, Schopenhauer, Freud, and of course B.F. Skinner and the whole school of neo-behaviorists who take their lead from his inspiration.

Thus far we have seen that the tendency, starting in the seventeenth century with Descartes, followed closely by Newton, was to regard the material universe as a kind of giant machine, governed by, and explainable by, mechanistic laws. The universe was no cosmic lottery ruled by chance. Rather, things were seen as *caused*, and the causes determined the effects. Even Einstein in the twentieth century expresses this point of view in his famous remark "God does not play dice with the universe." Everything in the universe is explainable by causal laws.

This was part of the elan of seventeenth century rationalism which believed that everything in the universe could be explained by causal laws. As we have seen, Descartes had retained a spiritual realm of thought, the *cogito*, which was separate and diametrically opposed to matter, or *res*. But in this scheme of things man became a *res cogitans*, a thinking thing. It was a short step from this point for Darwin to reduce man simply to a purely material being, totally explainable in terms of causal laws which could adequately account for his origins in terms of an evolutionary process. In the end, this completely eroded man's unique distinction of thinking, *res cogitans*, which Descartes had retained, and simply reduced man to the *res*, now bereft of any uniquely distinguishing *cogito*.

Descartes had set the stage with rationalism's drive to explain everything, material at least, in terms of strictly mechanistic laws. True, he had attempted to vindicate the validity of a spiritual realm of thought, but his vindication left it on such a weak foundation that the nineteenth century onslaught of Darwinism quickly demolished it. Now *everything* in the universe could be explained on the basis of mechanistic causal laws, man included. It remained only for Freud to reduce even

man's mental and psychological life to this same kind of mechanistic, deterministic explanation. Thus the grand design of seventeenth century rationalism was finally completed in the twentieth century.

Or so it seemed at least, until these seemingly unshakable Victorian certitudes began to crumble at the beginning of the twentieth century. The first cracks in the foundation began to appear in physics, and in particular in the area of microphysics where it began to become apparent that the inner workings of the atoms did not obey the old simplistic rules of Newtonian mechanics. By 1900 Max Planck's work in quantum theory presaged the collapse of the rigidly predictable mechanistic laws of classical Newtonian mechanics. This was followed by Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy which maintained that it is impossible to predict, even in principle, how electrons will behave, that is, to determine both their position and velocity.⁽²²⁷⁾ The arguments of the physicists about the truth or falsity of Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle need not detain us here since they are not within the scope of this paper. The only reason for mentioning them is to show that the old unshakable certainties of rationalism and the Victorian era, which also permeates much of Freud's thought, have in large measure collapsed. It seems that things are not as simple as naive Newtonian physics and Freudianism had supposed. It seems that everything in the universe cannot be so easily accounted for by simple mechanical, deterministic laws. There seems to be an elusive *noumena* which will not yield to such mechanistic explanations. As Shakespeare observed in *Hamlet*, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your Philosophy."

Causality and Determinism

But if it can be shown, as I hope to do, that the choice is not an either/or, that is, that we must choose either a universe in which all things, man included, are ruled by causes which totally determine, *or* a universe in which there is at least some areas of freedom but in which there cannot then be any causality. What I should like to suggest is that this is a false dilemma--either causality and determinism, *or* freedom but no causality.

In order to show that causality does not entail a totally deterministic world view, and that causality can be reconciled with freedom, the first thing that must be done is to distinguish the several senses that the term "determinism" can have. For Brand Blanshard determinism means "that all events are caused."⁽²²⁸⁾ But to say that all events are caused is not the same thing as saying that because all events are caused they are therefore determined. To say that all events are caused and that therefore determinism holds universally is to say more than we definitely know at any one time, since we could never, even in principle, know every cause that would be operative in producing an event. This does not mean that we must embrace an indeterminism which says that *nothing* is determined, for clearly *some* things are. What it means is that this understanding of determinism is not adequate.

To say that an event is not determined is not the same thing at all as saying that it is not caused. An event can be *both* caused *and* not determined. This means that a free act can be free and caused. In other words to claim that a free act *cannot, eo ipso*, be caused is to mistake *absence* of causation for *mode* of causation. What distinguishes free acts from unfree acts is not *absence* of causation, but rather *mode* of causation.⁽²²⁹⁾

A further confusion concerns proximate causation and remote causation. That there are remote causes of a human action does not preclude the possibility that this same action is free, even though there may be *remote* psychological causes.⁽²³⁰⁾ Suppose for example that I bring my car to a garage

mechanic to have the transmission replaced. If he accepts the work he is responsible for performing it adequately. Obviously there are any number of causes that have brought the mechanic to this point in his life. He was born to a mother who was widowed when he was three, of Polish ethnic origin, who transmitted to him her depressive tendencies, and so on and on. If the mechanic accepts the job none of these remote causes that have been operative to bring him to this point in time in his life are relevant to his responsibility to do the work adequately.

If he accepts the job for a stipulated amount of money the fact that he is Polish, Catholic, with a tenth grade education and depressive tendencies are not at all irrelevant. He is responsible for doing the work properly, and if he does not, he will plead in vain that his Polish ethnicity, his incomplete education, and his depressive tendencies are the explanation of his careless work and that his background removes his responsibility. These remote causes in his life obviously just won't do. If there were a *proximate* cause, however, which prevented him from going the job, the case would be otherwise. Suppose, for example, that while he was bent over examining the engine burglars came up behind him, knocked him unconscious and took the transmission and his tools away.⁽²³¹⁾ This we would regard as excusing him from blame.

This example is interesting on two counts, the notion of proximate as opposed to remote causality, and also in regard to the relation of freedom and constraint. Concerning the first point, proximate causality, there is a tendency, especially in psychology since Freudian determinism, to mistakenly suppose that because something has a prior cause itself, that this somehow makes it less of a cause itself. Therefore in Freudian psychology it is frequently thought that, because there are all sorts of remote forces operative in my present life, this *ipso facto* means my present acts are not therefore free. The reasoning here seems to be that because a cause itself has a cause it is somehow therefore less of a cause itself. But the fallacious character of this line of reasoning is obvious. It is like saying that because I had a father who caused me that I am therefore somehow less of a cause of my children. But that is clearly silly. In terms of the problematic of responsibility this means that whatever moral responsibility I have for my decisions I have as their proximate cause and that responsibility is not diminished by showing that there have been remote causes operative in my life that have brought me to my present point.

We said above that our example of the mechanic was interesting for two reasons, the first involving the notion of proximate cause which we have now examined, and the second constraint, to which we will now turn our attention. What does it mean when I say that I have done something of my own free will? It means that I could have acted otherwise, and it is only when it is believed that I could have acted otherwise that I am held responsible. Now it seems that we have two common-sense beliefs which are at odds with each other. Common-sense tells us that we act freely and hence are morally responsible, and it also tells us that we are governed by causal laws.⁽²³²⁾ It is this seeming conflict which gives rise to the problem of freedom of the will. This problem of freedom of the will arises when it is assumed that freedom must be contrasted with causality, so that a man cannot be said to be acting freely if his action is causally determined. But this assumed opposition between freedom and causality is mistaken. It is not with causality that freedom should be contrasted, but rather with *constraint*.⁽²³³⁾ This means that to say that a free action is caused is not a contradiction in terms, for free should not be contrasted with *caused*, but rather with *constrained*. Thus in our example with the mechanic above we easily see that there are various causes operative in his life, his ethnicity, education, religion, etc., but these do not totally determine him to do what he does with the transmission, and therefore what he does is free and he is morally responsible for his acts. But it is perfectly clear that the loss of the transmission and his tools to

the burglars was the result of constraint--he was knocked unconscious--and clearly he had no freedom, and thus no moral responsibility.

A further objection can be made against a deterministic explanation of all human conduct and one which leads to a denial of all moral responsibility, namely, that in the end it denigrates human dignity.⁽²³⁴⁾ In the example of Othello with which we started, one can see moral nobility and dignity, regardless of how obviously misguided his action. There is something that inspires our admiration for his character in taking total responsibility for his acts. There are no cowardly excuses, no whining self-pity, only the awe inspiring nobility of taking full responsibility as a moral agent.

The metaphysical vision of man that sees him only in one-dimensional terms as a purely material being can see man only as purely determined and governed by causal laws which impose the same kind of strict necessity on his behavior that rules in physical nature. Well meaning twentieth century social scientists, and especially psychologists, have done this to relieve him of the weight of responsibility for his acts, and thus it was hoped, to free him from Freudian guilt. But this attempt has been bought at a very dear price, specifically to deny him the dignity that can be his only as a free and responsible moral agent.

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Freedom, a Metaphysical Approach from Culture and Morality

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Freedom and Metaphysics

Freedom is not a right, nor is it something human beings just have or possess, for, to begin with, men are not free. By nature they are indeed under two kinds of constraints: on the one hand, the limitations imposed by their environment, i.e. they are parts of the world, on the other hand, the threat of retortions by fellow beings, i.e. they are parts of mankind (which can be included within the former). Therefore, it does not make sense to utter declarations like: man is "born free", or freedom is "due to man," etc. And it is also wrong to claim that he should be given freedom, though it is mostly refused to him. For indeed: who owes him freedom? who refuses to give it?

Also, freedom is not the possibility to choose. That possibility is at most free will. But free will is a special faculty, the faculty to decide, whenever no specific reason can be put forward for making the decision, and this is not Freedom *as such*.

Especially, freedom is not the power to do just "whatever one wishes to do." It is not either--contrary to a view put forward by a number of existentialists of the middle of this century--the capacity to create possibilities of choice that were not there beforehand. Indeed, e.g. Sartre, who held that view, concluded that God is impossible, for if He did exist, man could not create 'freely' or all by himself his own values, but ought to accept and ratify them as they are created by God. But people like Sartre make the mistake of confusing freedom and creativity. Creativity certainly confers upon man a mastery over reality and, consequently, helps in the promotion of specific values. But what is reality?

My answer is that reality is that which resists our attempt at grasping or apprehending it. Quite generally, resistance is the attribute of reality. For instance, what we call the physical world is and remains real as long as we do not succeed in apprehending it. But when we succeed in elaborating a physical theory about at least a part or an aspect of that world, e.g., the theory of gravitation or of electromagnetism, etc., some sort of apprehension has succeeded and that part or that aspect does not resist any more. Thus it is no more a reality, for we have replaced it by its formal model which we can use and apply successfully. At the same time the adequacy of the model has revealed a value, namely the truth of the theory which has been put forward. This successful apprehension of parts of reality is also a mastery over time, for even though the material world continues to change in time, the theory itself is independent of the temporal, it is simply true. Similarly, if the creation of a work of art succeeds in showing the beauty of an idea the artist has had about some aspect of reality, the latter has ceased to resist him or her, and another value has been promoted, which is no longer time-dependent.

This, however, is not freedom itself, but a specific, though important, part of human action. Of course, it should be performed preferably when man is free, for if an artist, scientist or any professional works in a state of unfreedom, such as submission to the ideology of a political regime, the result of his endeavor will never be an authentic mastery over the resistance opposed by reality, and what he puts forward will not be actually valuable.

It is surely correct to begin with that man has a strong, primitive feeling for freedom, even a longing. Like Augustine writing on time in his *Confessions*, we can state the fundamental 'paradox

about freedom' by saying: As long as no one asks me what it is, I know, but as soon as I am requested to explicate it, I do not know what it is!

However, this primitive feeling is not mere nostalgia, since it is not something man had but then lost. That would be similar to the Platonic Ideas of which the soul could have a reminiscence from the time she was contemplating God's perfection. But if the soul had been contemplating such perfection, she would precisely not have been free, but tied by an ideal link.

The first consciousness concerning freedom is rather that *we are not free to begin with*; that is the reason for the Augustinian-like paradox about freedom. As we are imprisoned in all sorts of limitations, the first thing to do is not to revolt against it, but to understand, and to acknowledge that we are not free. Yet, it is not enough to acknowledge this fact; it must be accepted. Therefore freedom is not a matter of what we will, but of what we ought.

In other words, to accept the fact of one's own non-freedom is the condition *sine qua non* for the possibility to be free. This makes of freedom the source of morality, for if there were no such thing as freedom as just defined, man would remain within the bond of his limitations and would not have to distinguish between authentic values and inauthentic values, especially good and evil.

The condition for the possibility of my freedom is therefore that I acknowledge and accept not to be free to begin with. Here, I am suddenly speaking in the first person. I do this in order to establish the second fact, that only persons can be free. One will immediately ask: What is a person? The concept of a person was not clear to thinkers in antiquity. The very word comes from the Latin *persona*, where, however, it meant something else; it meant a mask, i.e. a cover of cloth or wax for protection or concealment of one's face, especially used by Greek and Roman actors 'to look like' the characters of the play they played, which were mostly gods, demigods and heroes.

The modern signification of the word *person* is of Christian origin: the very first Person thought of was God himself, evidently capable of recognizing everything He does, and then the human individuals, capable of distinguishing their own acts from acts performed by others--a capacity which animals do not seem to possess. Whence a person can speak in the first person and also carry on a dialogue by speaking and addressing oneself in the second person, especially to God Himself in either invocation or prayer. It seems evident, that morality makes no sense without persons in that sense, whereas there is no such thing among stones, or stars, or even animals: the person is the pillar upon which morality can rest, for then there is me, and thee.

Once this condition of acknowledgment and acceptance is fulfilled, I can go on freely approaching reality and creating works of art, scientific theories, moral relationships with others. In short such works include any human action by whose virtue such and such value appears manifest, apprehensible by the mind and more precisely endowed with the double nature of possessing quality and quantity that makes it something valuable. For a value is defined by the encounter of quality and quantity, which makes it possible that it be offered, given and even sold to someone else. Indeed, we buy beautiful pictures, scientific or literary books, and all sorts of goods which we consider valuable for life. In this sense it is even alienable, i.e., transferable into an unknown property and eventually lost into a kind of vacuum. This induces some existentialists to see in it a negative aspect of human existence. Since for them human life, assumed 'free' in its own right, cannot but alienate itself of its values and consequently run into a diminution and finally into an apparent absence of being, they interpret it, wrongly, as falling into nothingness.

In fact, the creative exertion related to the possibility of my being free has overcome the resistance opposed by reality. It is not that this reality has been reduced to something passive like a piece of cheese to be eaten. For it is not the resistance opposed by reality which has been accepted

(actually, that had to be overcome); rather, it was the very circumstance of my imitating finitude that had to be accepted.

An infant baby does not know at birth that it is not free to begin with, yet from the time of its birth it is endowed with a feeling that something can be achieved to finally make it free. This achievement is always conditioned by the realization of all the constraints of its existence. In the womb of its mother, on the contrary, these constraints were not existent, for everything was automatically done for its ease and welfare. At the moment of birth, this situation collapses: birth amounts to being thrown into the multiplicity of constraints which create non-freedom. Man is not born free, not even if this phrase is meant to say that he was free before birth. Therefore, human existence appears from its very beginning *in the world*, not simply as the traditional 'struggle for life' spoken of in bio-physics, but also and with comparable intensity as a 'struggle for freedom' to be spoken of in *meta-physics*. The former of these struggles procures material goods, the latter one spiritual goods called values.

We have been taught that there are four so-called cardinal values: the true, the beautiful, the good, the divine. Some people no longer accept that teaching, asserting for instance that there is no such thing as the 'divine' or even the 'good'. It has indeed become the fashion to reject the divine on the ground that it can never be touched, or apprehended by any of our physical senses as we can see the beauty of pictures or hear that of music. There is even a tendency to replace all values by artificial products of the human imagination, as if everything valuable were of anthropomorphic nature, making man the measure--quantitative and qualitative--of all things. This is a fatal confusion of the analytic and the synthetic, leading to arbitrariness and resting upon the assumption that if one can produce something, anything, then it should be acknowledged and even offered for sale and for consumption. This tendency has become a main trend of contemporary civilization, not only in the West, but throughout the world.

Yet civilization is not culture; rather, it is the progressive loss and ignorance of the values, beginning with the divine and the moral. Our civilization, spreading throughout the world and accompanied by such loss and ignorance, is still more or less built on the search for truth and beauty. Yet even this is not quite so evident any more, for the promotion of authentic beauty is being replaced increasingly by mere 'happening' and/or 'pop' which is simply the release of the morally low, of baseness in its easy consumption. The search for truth is being progressively replaced by a wrong conception of technology where small and even big gadgets like computers are just meant to be sold for the sake of acquiring wealth and power. The main tendency of present civilization is to usurp power, not to promote value. This clearly runs against freedom, for it puts every one in dependency, those who have no power in dependency upon those who have, and those who have it in dependency upon their wealth which they must continually consolidate, which means setting ever more barriers to prevent its conquest by others.

Such views should not be interpreted as reactionary, for I am perfectly aware of the efficiency of computers and other inventions. But their spread do not make people freer than they were before. On the contrary, they make them more ant-like than ever, since people become more and more dependent on them for doing anything. So my argument is nothing but the description of a kind of phenomenon that not only strikes us today, but may be the fate of culture as such. That is, culture unavoidably degenerates into civilization, civilization being the flattening of values, especially the cardinal values, down to their disappearance. At the same time, to my mind, one of the most outstanding and positive features of mankind is, that it seems capable of overcoming the process just described and recovering again and again the status of culture out of its very ashes. This, I believe, has to do with freedom, for civilization and its growing flatness is the quintessence of

constraints; it presses upon and squeezes mankind into something like an ant-hill, which is the strongest possible constraint.

For, when acting freely I am actually repeling the limits of the constraints imposed upon my freedom, i.e., enlarging their field beyond the limits thus far acknowledged. Then I am once again within circumstances of a non-freedom, for I encounter new constraints at further limits. But this is non-freedom at a higher stage, and this is precisely the dialectics of a situation in which I am never free in order to be able, by creating its possibility when accepting the situation, to give free play to my creativity.

However, before accepting not to be free let us now look for the reason why I am not free. In order to become free, I must at least make clear the fact responsible for it, namely, that I am part of a world where things are finite and unavoidably multiple. Yet I am capable of conceiving the opposite to that finitude and multiplicity, namely, Transcendence and Unity. However, neither transcendence, nor unity, can be the product of finitude and multiplicity, whereas it is thinkable that the latter are at the origin of the former. Indeed, the totality of the multiple is never One. Even at its limit, the finite cannot become infinite; it can at most suggest the transfinite, alone accessible to logical and mathematical reasoning. Therefore, asking the question of the origin of my freedom in spite of my being non-free amounts to asserting the incommensurable, and this is a way to say, that *God is*, without my ever being able to assign to Him anything truly adequate, since whatever 'theory' I elaborate about my relationship with Him, will never but push back the limits of my finitude or reach "beyond that which is on this side of it".

In my German book, *Metaphysics, the Science "sui generis" of the Incommensurable*, I have called the attention of the Reader to the fundamental circumstance that what is metaphysical is such because of the incommensurability which reigns between the finitude of human standards and the radical infinity which is God's own. This is in contradistinction to the relationship existing between man and the world surrounding him including other human beings, even though the world may be so huge, for it remains measurable by human standards. Therefore, freedom surpasses all that is in the latter sense measurable, and must be one concept, perhaps among a few others, which compel one to enter the field of *metaphysics*. On the ground of its primacy, freedom amounts to a main entry into Metaphysics like a triumphal Arch leading into a big city. At the same time, the very form of the dialectics which leads to that conclusion shows that metaphysical discourse cannot rest on logic alone. For freedom unavoidably receives its very significance by being at the same time identified with and differentiated from non-freedom as its own contrary or opposite. This kind of reasoning has no place within logic proper, but must function within a discourse beyond logical discourse; that is precisely what is called *dialectics*.

Culture and Morality

Early in this paper I noted with emphasis, that "freedom is not a right". This is in apparent contradiction with a two centuries old tradition going back mainly to the French revolution, but also with earlier Declarations published in England, France and the United States. Indeed, more or less all the successive "Declarations" which intend to establish fundamental 'rights of man' avoid the problem of freedom. It is interesting to note that, in those early days, one did not realize that a necessary connection must exist between rights and duties, which led to a process of isolation accompanied by a one-sided, artificial emphasis on rights, as if they could exist 'in their own right'. This implied that men need have nothing other than rights in order to be the beings they ought to be.

This is most typical of our arrogance which as a civilization is degenerate form of a culture, due mainly to mass-phenomena. The word arrogance comes from the Latin verb *arrogare*, meaning to claim. This claim amounts to changing the ought ('what sort of beings men "ought" to be') into what they want to, claim to, in short will be. It is, consequently, a blow or injury to morality.

To change this, note that although in former civilizations oppressed classes of the population complained about, and eventually had recourse to, insurrection against oppression, historians like to trace the first claim to Rights to the so-called Petition of Right (in the singular) presented 1628 by Parliament to King Charles I of England. This first document however does not declare freedom a right. Then, the famous Bill of Rights (in the plural) elaborated in February, 1689, by the English Parliament after the Revolution of 1688 had started against King James II speaks of the 'fundamental rights of the Kingdom'.

Nearly a century later in North America, the so-called Assembly of Virginia wrote down a *Declaration of Rights* dated May 30, 1765, which was renewed as a petition to the English Crown in 1774 by the First Continental Congress held in Philadelphia. Finally, still on the North American Continent, we know of the *Declaration of Independence* dated 4th of July, 1776, by the United States. It took another ten years to write down the *Constitution of the United States of America* which was accepted in 1787 and, with the exception of some amendments, is still valid today. Surely, it was the intention of all such texts to promote some kind or idea of freedom, but they all did it against the oppression felt to have been as exerted by a formerly established autocratic authority which had acted in a way unbearable to major parts of their subjects.

But why should Freedom, if it is a fundamental determination of man, necessarily be declared against an oppression exercised by some sort of established authority? In doing that, one reduces freedom to a non-fundamental, hence secondary matter of thought. My contention is that Freedom is of primary, even primal, nature.

Whether the same remarks can be applied to the first text in French of a *Declaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* (*Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens*) under the French Revolution is a question which I am tempted to answer with both yes and no. For there, something new is attempted, viz. to expound these rights as existing 'in their own right' independently of a preestablished, possibly oppressive Authority, even though to begin with, the citizen is quoted beside the human being as such or man. This reduced the universality of purpose to the restricted status of a politically organized State in which oppression might arise. (However, "might" is different from "does".) Surely, the philosophical tendency, peculiar to the French, to generalize and look for universals gives this first Declaration and further declarations issued from then on a depth and universal meaning which are missing in the English and American texts. Those were not only older, but conceived within an intellectual climate which still today, as it was then, is much more matter-of-fact than the French tradition. Therefore, the French tradition throws on freedom--*la liberté*--a different light than does the Anglo-Saxon.

Of course, the ancient Greeks already had the notion of ; they even had festivities in honor of Zeus-the-Liberator called (notice the difference in the position of accents). Also they had the consciousness of a status of freedom of citizens which, however, is to be contrasted to the then existing status of non-freedom of slaves. In Greece, free citizens could not be sold, whereas slaves could be, etc. Therefore after all did not assume the universal character of a prime freedom which I have in mind; it was for the Greek a right reserved to a class of citizens among the living population. If much later for the English and more explicitly for the authors of the American

Declarations, this right was no more to be reserved to such a class but extended to all, it was still conceived as a right (and slaves still existed there in 1787).

Verbally, it remained a right for the French Declaration. The first *Declaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* was (written by the Archbishop of Bordeaux Jerome Champion de Cice), dated August, 26, 1789 and used as Preface to the *Constitution* of 1791, the first Constitution of France and prior to the death of King Louis XVI by decapitation). Surely, it was written with awareness of the American texts, but it was inspired also to a high degree by former declarations of principle issued by the French 'General States' dating back to 1347, the French 'Parliament of Paris' which was a High Court of Justice established in the 13th century, and by the corresponding provincial parliaments in the following centuries, and of course influenced by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. This first *Declaration of the Rights of Man* asserts freedom as the first of such rights, but restricts its applicability by the condition that the freedom of others be respected, which amounts to accepting duties.

This 1789 Declaration inspired all bills of rights issued later on in the West.¹ However, it was still circumstantial and had the middle class in mind more than the totality of the people. Therefore, even though 1789 marks the date of the French Revolution, the more fundamental Declaration of such rights in France dates from 1793 (the so-called 'Year I'), for it asserts first and foremost the equality of all without restriction. It bears the same title, including the mention of the Citizen. In its Preamble, it speaks however restrictively of the French People, though universally of *Natural human rights*, . . . which are said to be *sacred and inalienable rights* assumed to constitute *the basis of its* (the people's) *freedom and happiness*, and it establishes these rights "in the presence of the Supreme Being." Then follows Article One, in which these rights are mentioned, four in number, in the following order: Equality, freedom, security, property.

Finally, in a new Declaration issued 1795 (the Year III of the Republic) the Declaration of Rights is completed by a Declaration of Duties, which I consider very important, but which very soon fell into oblivion in later discussions up to our days.

Of course, we know that towards the middle of our century, a new Declaration was issued to serve as a basis for the work of the United Nations. There, the list of rights is considerably augmented and the universality is meant to be total, although the way it is asserted does not seem quite so satisfactory to me, for it refers it to an independence of race, creed and other human traits, and one never can know whether their list is exhaustive.

How is it then that I dare to contest the nature of a right when speaking of freedom? Apart from the suggestions already made, it seems to my mind that the more rights are asserted as fundamental rights, the greater becomes the uniqueness of the role to be assumed by Freedom and the greater its independence towards, and primacy over, such rights. To be more specific: First of all, a right is by nature the claim to a specific exercise; yet freedom is not a specific exercise, i.e. one formulated distinctly beside similar exercises. Second, the opposite of a right is not a non-right, but a duty, whereas the opposite of freedom is non-freedom, but not another will-be specific determination of action.

According to the famous Vocabulary of Philosophy published by the French Philosophical Society under the editorship of André Lalande, a right has either of two possible meanings: (1) it is that which conforms to a precise rule and consequently can be claimed legitimately either because the laws prescribe it or because it follows from an agreement, or that which is allowed by the same laws or by the currently accepted morals. (2) If right is used in the singular, it is law, as opposed to fact, and includes all rights in the first sense. If among rights conforming to precise rules some are held as natural, i.e., as consequences of the very nature of man, then they can be

called liberties, i.e., specific powers of action which should be at the disposal of men. However, these liberties are again in the plural. Neither (1) nor (2) actually include Freedom as such, in the singular and with the primacy of its significance.

I do not agree that freedom in the singular is the reunion of a multiplicity of liberties. Especially, I cannot accept the definition of freedom included in the 1793 Declaration according to which freedom is man's own power to do whatever does not hurt other men's rights. This is not so much because this definition forgets about hurting other beings than just human beings, but because the opposite of freedom, non-freedom, is not an absence of will, but precisely the beginnings of another will, namely, the will to accept non-freedom in order to get rid of it. Even though I am not very happy about Kant's views, I must recall that he at least did not introduce freedom among possible rights, but proceeded in the opposite way, defining rights from the concept of categorical freedom.

I am not contesting that freedom does not offer any resemblance whatsoever with a right. Yet at the same time it has also a kind of likeness with a duty, which renders the former resemblance misleading. It has its origin in the fact that the acceptance of a duty assumes the simultaneous claim to a right, and conversely the claim to a right requires a corresponding duty. However, the claim to a right is different from the assertion of freedom; for one can neither claim, nor accept freedom: one is free by accepting non-freedom. That is, freedom is still an ontic determination, whereas rights and duties are ethic determinations. Hence the dialectics of rights and duties is fundamentally different from the dialectics of freedom versus non-freedom.

But could it be said that the totality of rights constitutes freedom and, by way of consequence, that the totality of duties constitutes non-freedom, so that by assuming all these duties one would create the condition of possibility of all assignable rights, identified as freedom? I must answer in the negative. For neither are the rights at hand *a priori* before the existence of duties, nor are the duties at hand *a priori* before the existence of the rights in the same way as non-freedom is anterior to freedom and the accession to freedom puts one in a state of renewed non-freedom.

I would even refrain from saying that I have rights because I have duties, or have duties because I have rights. In an earlier paper, I explained that rights are exemplifications of a prototype of right, namely, the original right to have an offspring, and at the same time duties are the exemplifications of a prototype of duty, viz. the duty to make room for the same offspring. What would then be correct to say is, that one has rights and duties, or duties and rights if you prefer, simultaneously, without priority or precedence, and that is why the dialectics of rights and duties has a structure different from that of freedom which issues from the sequence:

$$(\text{non-freedom})_1 \rightarrow (\text{freedom})_1 \rightarrow (\text{non-freedom})_2 \rightarrow (\text{freedom})_2 \dots$$

Especially, the exercise of a right that has become effective through the practice of a duty would not entail the practice of a new duty, yet a weaker one as compared with the preceding one and which would validate a new, re-enforced right.

Rights are sometimes usurped. That is, a usurper, like a dictator wrongfully seizing power, claims to possess rights which the others do not have or possess at most by his munificence. Freedom cannot be usurped, for to usurp an assumed freedom does not in the least make (more) free, on the contrary, it tightens the bonds of non-freedom.

The dialectics of freedom appears like a spiral developing on a cone, along which freedom and non-freedom bite each other's tail since they incessantly imply each other mutually in a progress whose two-stroke engine consists in acknowledgment and acceptance. There is no such

thing in the dialectics of rights and duties which keep moving along two parallel but inseparable lines or rails allowing a linear motion, yet at the risk of moving with only one wheel on a single rail. If it is, on the one hand, condemnable to move on the rail of rights only, it is, on the other hand, vain to move on the rail of duties only, for it amounts to an undue alienation leading to false asceticism.

After all, there is only one spiral of the dialectics of freedom, whereas there is a multitude of parallel rails along which rights and respective duties can be exercised. Thus, freedom is like the actualization, in the mirror of human existence, of Oneness and Infinity in spite of their incommensurability in comparison with human dimensions, means and capacities. In contrast, rights and duties follow characteristically from the domain of finitude and multiplicity and are therefore commensurable with human standards. This is what finally makes jurisprudence possible, while jurisprudence does not qualify for judging about freedom. Especially, since finitude and multiplicity cannot succeed in founding the Infinite Oneness, while Infinite-Oneness generates finitude in multiplicity, rights and duties certainly can detach themselves, like double trails issued at points along the spiral-like dialectics of freedom, while they can never engender that spiral.

Therefore, in conclusion, the difference between ‘rights and duties’ on the one hand, and ‘freedom’ on the other hand, is of the same nature and of the same order as the difference between ‘physics’ (or the other ‘ordinary’ sciences), and ‘metaphysics’, or between ‘ordinary arts’ like music, dance, painting, sculpture . . . , and ‘poetry’. This is true not so much on the objective plane of the sciences, or on the subjective plane of the arts, as on the plane--which in my epistemological research I have called conjective because of the interrelationship existing within the community of beings. There morality as concerned with the relationships among fellow human beings, is different from a ‘meta-morality’. In the latter, man is not in correlation with other human beings as in morality proper, but with himself as if he ‘saw himself’ in a big mirror producing the ‘other’ as his own image. But since where is no other such big mirror than God Himself, the plane on which the problem of Freedom has to be tackled is of meta-physical nature. I could not say of meta-moral nature, because *meta* (Greek) and *moral* (Latin), if combined, yield a monstrous etymology. So if we agree to use ethics for morality in establishing our comparison, and keep poetry to designate the art which transcends the other ordinary arts, we can summarize this conclusion by establishing the following double proportion:

$$\underline{\textit{science}} = \underline{\textit{art}} = \underline{\textit{morality}}$$

metaphysics poetry metaethics using Latin words in the domain of finitude and multiplicity, and Greek ones in the domain of the Infinite Oneness.

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Note

¹Purposely, I do not translate the French word *liberté* (the unique one available in French) by ‘liberty’ in English, for in English liberty designates primarily the state of being free from captivity, imprisonment, slavery, or despotic control (of. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*).

Acknowledgements

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the sponsors of the conference in which this work was thought through and brought to realization. These include The International Society for Metaphysics, for which this volume constitutes the continuation of an extensive sequence of investigations which represent the cutting edge of contemporary sensibilities in metaphysics.

In the realization of the present volume the assistance of The Chang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, The United Daily News Cultural Foundation and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China has been most generous. The National Chengchi University, Taipei, provided exceptionally fine working space. Its faculty and students extended excellent assistance in enabling a broadly international group of scholars to come together, have the working materials in hand and accomplish serious work within a brief span of time. This work was contributed to as well by faculty and students from the National Taiwan University and Fu-Jen Catholic University, to all of whom a special debt of gratitude is owed.

Above all, of course, the volume is the work of scholars who have devoted their life to understanding more deeply the Chinese tradition and unfolding its significance for life in our times. The volume suggests the long years of dedicated study and research by this team of scholars and their colleagues in carrying out the pioneer work required for the progress of peoples.

Acknowledgement is made to the University of Hawaii Press for permission to use materials included in chapter VIII. In the preparation and correction of the manuscript the work of Mrs. B. Kennedy and Carol Dupré has been essential, as has been the continuing work of the James A. McLeans in the ongoing work of the project on Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Life.