

GUO YI, SASA JOSIFOVIC AND  
ASUMAN LÄTZER-LASAR (EDS.)

# METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE AND ETHICS IN CHINESE AND EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY

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MORPHOMATA

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In the history of Chinese and European philosophy, metaphysics has played an outstanding role: it is a theoretical framework which provides the basis for a philosophical understanding of the world and the self. A theory of the self is well integrated in a metaphysical understanding of the totality of nature as a dynamic process of continuous changes. According to this view, the purpose of existence can be conceived of as the development and realization of the full potential given to the individual by its nature. In regard to human nature specifically, this idea of self-realization includes the development of all cognitive faculties as well as of the moral character.

Metaphysics has, however, suffered a loss of importance in current debates, especially in ethics. As a result, we observe the emergence of such philosophical views as moral skepticism and even nihilism. The consequence of this tendency has been the renunciation of a claim to understanding and to providing a solid ground for ethics.

Yet an intercultural dialogue can provide us with some hope as the consolidation of debates on crucial topics of our traditions might indeed serve as the basis for a more powerful philosophy in the future.

GUO, JOSIFOVIC, LÄTZER-LASAR (EDS.) -  
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**MORPHOMATA**

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AND ASUMAN LÄTZER-LASAR

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OF KNOWLEDGE AND ETHICS  
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## PREFACE

The Center for Advanced Studies MORPHOMATA investigates how cultural knowledge becomes manifest in concrete forms. The focus lies on the analysis of the genesis, dynamics and mediality of cultural figurations called *morphome*.<sup>1</sup> Their investigation becomes particularly valuable by a concentration in comparative cultural studies. Therefore, MORPHOMATA invites internationally acclaimed scholars to channel expertises and to intensify their studies on cultural figurations in Cologne.

During a fellowship in the academic year 2010/11 at the Center for Advanced Studies MORPHOMATA I, Guo Yi, was proceeding my philosophical research based on the texts of the Guodian bamboo slips, which have been excavated 1993 and are dated back to the time period between the first half of the 4th century until the beginning of the 3rd century BC.

The learning and philosophy of the pre-Qin period constitute the source of Chinese culture. However, for a variety of reasons not many writings from this period have survived, and the authenticity of some extant writings are doubted. Fortunately, 804 bamboo strips with more than 13,000 characters were excavated at No. 1 Guodian Chu tomb in the Hubei province of China.<sup>2</sup> They consist of philosophical texts, both confucian and daoist texts. These newly recovered archaeological documents required a reinterpretation of the formative period in Chinese philosophy. During an earlier fellowship at the Harvard-Yenching Institute between 1999–2001 I, Guo Yi, had the possibility to investigate the bamboo slips in detail. Afterwards I paid particular attention to the philosophical

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**1** Günter Blamberger / Dietrich Boschung, *Morphomata. Kulturelle Figurationen: Genese, Dynamik und Medialität. Morphomata 1* (München 2011). See also Jürgen Hammerstaedt, *Die antike Verwendung des Begriffs *mórphoma**, in this volume, 91–109.

**2** For the archaeological circumstances on the finding of the bamboo slips see Asuman Lätzer-Lasar in this volume.

interpretations of the texts, but with a view less to the history, and more to the contemporary Chinese philosophy.

These newly made philosophical thoughts resulted in a paper that formed the basis of the conference *Metaphysical Foundations of Knowledge and Ethics in Chinese and Western Philosophy*.<sup>3</sup> The conference was organised by me, Asuman Lätzer-Lasar (Center for Advanced Studies MORPHOMATA) in cooperation with Sasa Josifovic (Institute of Philosophy) and took place at the University of Cologne from the 24th until the 25th of June 2011. Our main aim of the conference was to approach the notion of common values – such as knowledge and ethics – from a cross-cultural perspective. For this reason we chose a quite unusual concept of dialogue: We invited scholars from different areas of Western and Chinese philosophy. Every invited scholar had to respond from their own perspective on the key text. This concept promoted an intensive exchange and furthermore fostered an enriching dialogue between experts of Chinese and Western philosophical schools.

We therefore extend special thanks to the directors of the Center for Advanced Studies MORPHOMATA Dietrich Boschung and Günter Blamberger for benefitting the concept of the conference and publishing the results. Furthermore we would like to thank Sasa Josifovic from the Philosophical Institute of the University of Cologne for participating in drafting the concept and organising the conference. At last, we would like to thank Thierry Greub and Semra Mägele for their meticulous corrections.

Guo Yi and Asuman Lätzer-Lasar

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**3** For the key text see Guo Yi, *Metaphysics, Nature and Mind. The Main Idea of Daoic Philosophy*, in this volume.

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## INTRODUCTION

A title such as “Metaphysical Foundations of Knowledge and Ethics” does not suggest an engagement with current debates in epistemology and ethics. Metaphysics does not play any substantial role in these debates and there are scarcely any prominent philosophers at present attempting to ground normativity, claims to knowledge or ethical judgements in metaphysics. However, philosophy transcends fashions and trends. It is a quest that is deeply rooted in and draws its inspiration from the whole history and dynamics of human culture and civilization.

In contrast to most current theories of rationality, normativity, justification and action, the authors represented in this book engage with classical philosophical topics and theories typically excluded by analytic philosophers. The keynote text by Guo Yi, for example, emphasizes the central place of the theory of human nature for Chinese philosophy throughout its history up to the present. Any effort to comprehend and engage with Chinese philosophy must accept this theme as central. Moreover, Guo Yi claims that such substantial philosophical themes should be retained. It is necessary to develop a deep understanding of the different theories of human nature that have been developed within different traditions and different societies as the condition for inter-cultural understanding. Furthermore, a focus on this topic is required if philosophy is to maintain its relevance to humanity and if philosophy is to be advanced. Guo Yi himself advocates a theory of human nature that provides a “spiritual home” for humanity based on the notion that every living being is born with specific potentials, and that the “meaning of life” consists in the full realization of these potentials. While focus on the question of human nature provides the groundwork for intercultural philosophical exchange, defining human nature in turn is grounded in metaphysics. Most authors of this book have a deep knowledge of the history of philosophy and metaphysics of Chinese civilization

or European civilization or both, and like Guo Yi, are engaged with these more substantial topics.

Through this engagement, this book is a contribution to the debate between so called Eastern and Western philosophy. While it is a debate between authors, some of whom stand in the tradition of Chinese philosophy, some of whom have a strong background in European philosophy, in contrast to similar projects, we chose an authentically Chinese position as a starting point for this debate. We invited Guo Yi to provide one of his texts, in this case an introduction to his own concept and theory of “Daoic Philosophy”, and invited selected scholars with a strong record in the classical tradition of European philosophy: ancient, medieval, and modern, to a conference to respond to Guo Yi’s theses. The book is based on the papers presented at this conference and the discussions they provoked. Many of the participants, while having a strong expertise in the traditions of Western culture were encountering a radically different tradition of thought for the first time. The inclusion of such participants was deliberate. The aim was to initiate a debate on topics that are substantial to both traditions, and in doing so, to initiate an international and intercultural philosophical dialogue that could include those who are not experts in both Western and Chinese philosophy. We hope that such a dialogue will generate and develop a specific form of global philosophy that goes beyond comparativism, a global philosophy that is rooted in the whole history of philosophy, not just European philosophy, but at the same time is productive, opening new vistas for philosophy, civilization and for the future of humanity.

A project that claims to be open to such an intercultural encounter must first of all be open to the topics and methods that are important in unfamiliar traditions. An international and intercultural conference that claimed to take the Chinese tradition seriously while insisting on the “current standards of philosophy” according to which subjects and methods that are crucial to the Chinese scholars are disqualified, would fail to advance intercultural philosophy. Yet in the past, such prejudice was common. European philosophers used to acknowledge that China and India have substantial cultural histories of their own, but from a standpoint that can be classified as Euro-chauvinistic, they did not acknowledge that these traditions are qualified to be recognized as philosophy.

The global world has changed, however, and this challenges the way philosophy has traditionally been understood. Chinese and Indian scholars especially have refused to acknowledge the claim often raised by European philosophers, typically those in the Heideggerian tradition, that philosophy is originally rooted in the Greek language and culture and that it therefore represents an exclusively European cultural phenomenon, transmitted to other cultures by European philosophers. These Heideggerians have claimed, with little justification, that German language provides a privileged vocabulary to uphold and continue this originally Greek tradition. Of course this is nonsense. India and China do have strong and substantial traditions of philosophy. A possible reason for the incapacity to understand the philosophical quality of classical Chinese authors might be that their works have been transmitted to us by sinologists and not by philosophers. Consequently, the philosophical qualities of these texts were not understood and represented adequately. Sinologists were able to read, translate and analyse the cultural significance and relevance of classical Chinese texts, but they were rarely sufficiently qualified to raise profound philosophical questions and apply philosophical methods to the analysis of the philosophical content of these texts. As a result, the Western world acknowledged the quality of Chinese cultural history but refused to recognize its philosophical significance. At this conference, Guo Yi and Chung-ying Cheng introduced some of the philosophical aspects of Chinese traditions of thought.

We acknowledge there is a major problem in any attempt to engage in a dialogue between Chinese and European philosophers in the lack of knowledge of the philosophical literature of the other tradition. In the Western world most influential philosophers have at best a marginal knowledge of Chinese philosophy. It is widely believed that a school of Confucianism has competed with Daoism and Buddhism, and Westerners might know of classical authors such as Meng Zi, Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming; but that is about all. And it is because Western philosophers do not know more that, even when sympathetic to Chinese culture, they are unable to appreciate the subtleties of these Chinese traditions. Guo Yi's text provides some indication of how much more there is to discover and, what seems even more striking, shows that there is a specific development of the principles of Chinese philosophy with roots in the culture of the ancient Zhou Dynasty. With the development of Confucian philosophy Chinese philosophy evolved from the unity of the Rituals (*li*) and Commiseration (*ren*) to Meng Zi's synthesis of the Four Beginnings (*ren, yi, li, zhi*); but this was only one of a range of developments in an-

cient Chinese philosophy. Subsequently there was a long and complex historical development of ideas up to the work of the philosophers of the Qing dynasty. Guo Yi informs us of the specific history and relevance of the concept “Dao”. In the West it is assumed that this represents a specific aspect of so-called “Daoism”. Guo Yi demonstrates that this concept is also central to Confucius’ philosophy, although in this context it has a specific meaning. In Chung-ying Cheng’s contribution to this book we find a specific theory based on classical Chinese philosophy that offers solutions to some highly controversial areas of recent philosophical debate in the West such as the Goodman’s new riddle of induction, the Gettier problem, and anomalous monism.

A major challenge for any effort to develop an East West dialogue on philosophy is the problem of translating the original texts. As with most philosophers, the authors represented in this book have assumed that the ability to read a text in its original language is not only very helpful but even a necessity for fully understanding its true philosophical substance. But only few of the non-Chinese authors can speak or read Chinese. In fact, very few if any influential philosophers in the Western World speak Chinese, while most experts in classical Chinese philosophy do not speak English, German or French. The difficulty of understanding philosophical works written in Chinese is far greater for Western philosophers than understanding any European language, whether modern or ancient. There are many different versions of Chinese: Mandarin, Min, Yue and Wu, yet they are all written in the same script. Chinese is ideographic, not phonetic, and not only does it not correspond to any of these versions of the language; there is a great difference in the grammar and vocabulary between written texts and spoken language. While there has not been the major break in the evolution of Chinese language as occurred in Europe with the collapse of Roman civilization and then the overthrow of medieval society, Chinese has evolved throughout its history from archaic inscriptions on oracle bones, the literary language of the Zhou Dynasty sages, the language of Tang and Song poets and the vernacular language of classical novelists and modern literature. And there has been a break of kinds, and this occurred fairly recently. At the beginning of the Twentieth Century a successful effort was made to narrow the gap between written language and the “plain speech” (*bai hua*) of everyday life, breaking the monopoly of and subsequently marginalising “cultural language” (*wen yan*). The written form of plain language which originated in and had evolved from the twelfth century onwards in novels and folk opera, but looked down upon by the literati, was privileged and

eclipsed the cultural language of the classic philosophical texts. Cultural language is now the preserve of specialists. It is a challenge to even native Chinese speakers to comprehend these texts.

We have not been deterred by this challenge, however. The difficulty of dealing with the immense problem of translating and interpreting Chinese texts has revealed the limitations of even the most profound of previous work on the problem of translation; and it has generated a creative response. Understanding ancient Chinese texts involves more than bringing to consciousness tacitly held prejudices, as suggested by Gadamer's hermeneutics. To comprehend the efforts of people over millennia to make sense of the world and our place within it, work out how to live and to communicate in a very different context and with very different social conditions, institutions and histories to our own demands a great deal of imaginative and creative work. A genuinely productive engagement between such radically different traditions requires the development of new ways of thinking through which both these Chinese texts and Western philosophy and culture can be interpreted in relation to each other. This engagement with Chinese texts by Western philosophers thereby involves engaging in and developing a global dialogue that is generating a new global philosophy. Just as the contributors to this dialogue are presently rooted in their own educational backgrounds, such a global philosophy will be rooted in a variety of traditions and thereby create a new tradition encompassing all these traditions. We do not want to translate. We prefer to create. And since we are engaged in a philosophical debate, we intend to create philosophy.

Arran Gare and Sasa Josifovic



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GUO YI (SEOUL/BEIJING)

## **METAPHYSICS, NATURE AND MIND**

### **The Main Idea of Daoic Philosophy**

#### INTRODUCTION

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both Chinese and Western philosophies have suffered under the impact of modernization and capitalism. The reason is that the character of traditional philosophies and that of modernity are incompatible with each other. What is the character of traditional philosophies and modernity? In a nutshell, if we can say modernity is rational, traditional philosophies appear more value-oriented.

Chinese philosophy is primarily concerned with society and people. Since its beginning, it has focused on the value and meaning of life. Although Chinese philosophy pays attention to knowledge, the aspect of knowledge it discusses is the knowledge of virtue. Virtue and the knowledge of virtue were addressed as “honoring virtue” (*zun de xing* 尊德性) whereas “following the path of study and inquiry” (*dao wen xue* 道问学) was dealt with separately by ancient Chinese philosophers. Generally speaking, what they called knowledge, learning, “following the path of study and inquiry” and so on belonged to the study of the knowledge of virtue. As the knowledge of natural science, it consisted merely of insignificant “minor skills”. Therefore, Chinese philosophy is the philosophy of virtue. Influenced by this philosophy of virtue, ancient Chinese people did not pay enough attention to natural science, so it was not brought into the national education system. From this perspective, it is inevitable that capitalism and modernization has not derived from Chinese culture itself.

In Western culture, the original meaning of philosophy is “love of wisdom”. This confirms that since the very beginning, Western philosophy was interested in knowledge. Despite this, the key issues in

traditional Western philosophy before Kant and traditional Chinese philosophy are very similar. But since modern times, Western philosophers have been chiefly concerned with the world of knowledge and have taken knowledge as their highest goal. The maxim of Bacon that “knowledge is power” has become a symbolic slogan. The knowledge in question is natural knowledge; the rationality they revered is instrumental rationality. Meanwhile value left quietly, so that it is not accidental that capitalism and modernization derived from western culture.

We should point out that modernization has brought to our time not only dramatic changes and previously unknown material pleasures, but also the pollution of the environment, the clash of civilizations and the decline of value. At the same time, Modern Philosophy, infiltrated by modernity, has lost its way.

The crisis of humanity and philosophy compels us to rethink, rechoose and set sail once more. Let us come back to humanity itself. We should remember that, as Kant said: “man and generally any rational being exists as an end in himself, not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will, but in all his actions, whether they concern himself or other rational beings, must be always regarded at the same time as an end.”<sup>1</sup> All activities of man are for man himself. As a highly intellectual activity, Philosophy is not an exception. Therefore, in any reasonable philosophical system, a theory of value should occupy the dominant and central position, and a theory of knowledge a subordinate position. The former is the end, and the latter is the means to realize the former.

The crisis of humanity and Philosophy is the crisis of value. This means there is a need to fortify value in an era of knowledge explosion and to rebuild a spiritual home for human beings.

Thus, we need a clear understanding of the defects and tasks of Chinese and Western philosophies. The major flaw of Chinese philosophy is the absence of a theory of knowledge, while the major flaw of Western philosophy is the breakdown of its theory of value. Therefore the challenge for Chinese philosophy is to construct a theory of knowledge to support its theory of value. The challenge for Western philosophy is to reconstruct its theory of value to govern its theory of knowledge. In the foreseeable future, world philosophy needs a new philosophical system

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<sup>1</sup> Kant, Immanuel, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Great Books of the Modern World, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 42, 1952, 271.

that places its theory of value in the lead role and its theory of knowledge in a supporting role.

This paper tries to move in this direction, taking Chinese philosophy as a starting point. First, we should adopt a correct attitude toward metaphysics. Metaphysics is the lifeblood of philosophy. Since Aristotle, metaphysics has been called the first philosophy. It is obvious that metaphysics has occupied an important position in western philosophy. But in modern times, western philosophy had changed its direction. Following the prevalence of the trends of thought such as analytical philosophy, Postmodernism, and so on, western philosophy began to turn away from metaphysics to concrete science, from substance to phenomenon, from the *a priori* to experience.

This anti-metaphysics movement is so strong that it has become something like the mainstream of philosophy today. Does it really represent the orientation of future philosophy? According to Stephen Hawking, "The people whose business it is to ask *why*, the philosophers, have not been able to keep up with the advance of scientific theories. In the eighteenth century, philosophers considered the whole of human knowledge, including science, to be their field and discussed questions such as: did the universe have a beginning? However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, science became too technical and mathematical for the philosophers, or anyone else except a few specialists. Philosophers reduced the scope of their inquiries so much that Wittgenstein, the most famous philosopher of this century, said, 'The sole remaining task for Philosophy is the analysis of language.' What a comedown from the great tradition of philosophy from Aristotle to Kant!"<sup>2</sup>

This anti-metaphysics movement means a comedown from the tradition of philosophy because it changed the nature of philosophy. As a matter of fact, this was not accidental. The separation between substance and phenomenon is a basic characteristic and also a key limitation of traditional western metaphysics. It has resulted in the decline of traditional western metaphysics. It requires us not to throw metaphysics away, but to reform and even to rebuild it. From the point of view of history, it is likely that the anti-metaphysics movement will be merely a transition period in the whole history of the development of philosophy. Philosophy eventually will come back to the track of metaphysics.

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2 Hawking, Stephen, *A Brief History of Time*, Bantam Dell Publishing Group, New York, 1988, 164.

Metaphysics also is the foundation and core of Chinese philosophy. I argue that the traditional Chinese metaphysics concerns itself with three levels, namely ontology, human nature and the human mind. Since modern times, under the influence of western philosophy, Chinese metaphysics was discarded.

This is the time to reconsider traditional Chinese metaphysics. In my view, this metaphysical system has none of the aforementioned drawbacks of Western philosophy, moreover it could rectify these drawbacks.

Developing the theories of life, ethics, society and politics by constructing or revising metaphysics is a fundamental method in Chinese philosophy, including Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism.

An important characteristic of Chinese metaphysics is the combination of cosmology and ontology. Cosmology is the theory of the origin and evolution of the universe. Ontology is the study of the source, nature and structure of the world. On the philosophical level, the categories of universe and world correspond with each other, so that the objects of cosmology and ontology are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, to understand the source of the world, the nature of the myriad things and the order of society by exploring the origin of the universe is the most fundamental and solid way to construct Metaphysics. This is the great wisdom of Chinese philosophy and it is worth imitating.

## 1. THE SPHERE OF DAO – WHERE WE COME FROM

### 1.1 THE BIG BANG THEORY AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL COSMOLOGY IN ANCIENT CHINA

In the past, people knew little about the immense universe, and philosophers established their cosmologies based on limited astronomical knowledge and their insight into the nature and the universe. Up to now, cosmogony has made marked progress and become a notable form of learning and it is indispensable a solid foundation for constructing a contemporary metaphysics. If Laozi, Confucius, Zhu Xi, Aristotle, and Kant lived today, they could not ignore the achievement of modern cosmogony.

By now, the Big Bang Theory is well-known and has been broadly accepted. According to this theory, the universe originated from a single point. 14 billion years ago, this single point exploded and expanded rapidly and produced the universe. What will be the final stage of the universe? Scientists believe that the universe does not expand in an

unlimited way. When the expansion stops, as the gravity of its galaxies causes the universe to collapse and condense, all galaxies will assemble closer and closer, until finally the universe becomes a single, high-density point. Then, this point will explode again and produce a new universe.

Cosmology in ancient China could be divided into two branches, namely astronomical cosmology and philosophical cosmology. The former explored the physical universe and is beyond our discussion; the latter was more concerned with the ontological world aside from the exploration of the physical universe. While the ancient philosophers undoubtedly could not imagine the development of modern cosmogony described above, it is nonetheless striking that the cosmological models they established are very similar.

The philosophical cosmology in ancient China could be divided into three cosmological models. The first one holds that the universe was formed from an original spot, and the myriad things were produced by the original spot. The recently excavated Guodian bamboo text *Laozi*, which could have been written by Lao Dan 老聃 in late Spring and Autumn period, represents this model: “there was a state which formed chaotically. It existed before the sky and the earth. It is quiet, independent, and never changes its nature. It may be considered the mother of the myriad things. No one knows its name. I call it Dao. If forced to give it a name, I will call it the Great. The Great begins to depart, and then it becomes further and further away, and then returns to the original point.”

Apparently, the Dao that existed before the sky and the earth, and was the mother of the myriad things, was the original point of the universe. It was not a concrete thing but a chaotic state. Since it produced the myriad things, it was certainly great, and therefore it deserved to be called the Great. The paragraph “The Great begins to depart, and then it becomes further and further away, and then returns to the original point” describes the evolutive process of the universe. Thus, we can see an analogy between the following concepts: we can compare “the Great begins to depart” with the process of the Big Bang, “then it becomes further and further away” with the expansion of the universe, “then returns to the original point” with the collapse and contraction of the universe.

The second cosmological model not only holds that the universe came from an original point, but also explores the matrix that produced the original point, consequently leading us into a transcendent and absolute world. For instance, the most accepted version of *Laozi* which could be written by Taishi Dan 太史儋 based on Lao Dan’s text in Warring

States period said, “Dao produced the One, the One produced the Two, the Two produced the Three, The Three produced the myriad things. The myriad things carry the yin and embrace the yang, and through the quiet and peaceful Qi, they achieve harmony.”<sup>3</sup> From the process from Dao to The One, The Two, the Three and the myriad things, we can say The One is the producer of the universe, or the original point of the universe. It merits attention that as the producer of the universe, The One was produced by Dao. Therefore Taishi Dan finds the ultimate basis for the original point is Dao. That means the Dao of Taishi Dan differs from the Dao of Lao Dan. The latter is the original point of the universe, while the former is the transcendent and absolute world of the producer of the original point.

When we talk about cosmology in ancient China, we can always remember a paragraph in Xici 系辞, in a section of the *Yi Zhuan* 易传 (or *The Commentaries on the Book of Changes*): “in the sphere of Yi 易<sup>4</sup> there is Taiji 太极 (or the Great Ultimate). It generates the Two Forms (*yin* and *yang*). The Two Forms generate the Four Forms (major and minor yin and yang). The Four Forms generate the Eight Trigrams. The Eight Trigrams determine good and evil fortunes and good and evil fortunes produce the great enterprise.”<sup>5</sup> The Eight Trigrams correspond to eight cosmological elements, including the sky, the earth, thunder, wind, water, fire, mountain and marsh. According to the results of my research, the section Xici represents the learning of late Confucius.

Here Yi is the transcendent and absolute world and it corresponds to Dao of Taishi Dan. The character “ji 极” in “Taiji 太极” has the meaning of the topmost point. Therefore “Taiji” corresponds to “the One” in Taishi Dan’s saying “Dao produced the One” and should be the original point of the universe. But from the sentence “in the sphere of Yi there is Taiji (or the Great Ultimate)”, we do not know if Yi produced Taiji or not. This sentence may have two meanings. On the one hand, Yi contains Taiji; on the other hand, Taiji and Yi exist simultaneously and they are not related in the sense of “production” or “was produced”. This is the third cosmological model.

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3 Laozi, ch. 42, Chan, Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, 1969, 160.

4 “Yi 易” generally has been translated as “change”. But I do not think this is a proper translation.

5 *The Commentaries on the Book of Changes*, Chan, Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, 1969, 262 (with change of first sentence).

Like the Big Bang Theory, the above philosophical cosmologies in ancient China hold that the universe comes from an original point and undergoes a process of development or expansion.

Are these similarities coincidence or the result of a forced interpretation? I believe they are neither. They are the result of the similarity between the process of generation and development of the universe and of the myriad things. Georges Lemaître, who advocated the Big Bang Theory first compared the process of the universe expanding from the “primeval atom” to the process of a big oak tree growing from a small acorn. As a matter of fact, everything goes through a similar process. The philosophers in ancient China just constructed their cosmological models based on their observations of the generation and growth process of the myriad things. Therefore they could deduce cosmological models similar to the Big Bang model from studying the phenomenon of myriad things.

What about the inner connection between the single point as the “original atom” and the myriad things? Modern biology proved that parents’ genes could be inherited by their children, and most members of an ethnic group carry the same genes. Based on this, we can conclude that as the mother of the universe, the single point must contain all basic information, and all things carry the original information of the single point. This is the way of thinking of philosophers in ancient time. They believed that in the process of producing, the producer gave its own nature to the myriad things. For instance, the received version of *Laozi* said, “When the uncarved wood is broken up, it is turned into concrete things.”<sup>6</sup> That means when the One is broken up, it is transformed into the myriad things. Furthermore, *Laozi* compares the relation between Dao or the One and the myriad things to the one between a mother and her children, “There was the beginning of the myriad things. Which may be considered as the mother of the myriad things. He who has found the mother, can thereby understand her children.”<sup>7</sup>

In summary, philosophical cosmology was very vital in ancient China. The metaphysics on which it is based combines cosmology and ontology into one and so may be used as a model for revising modern philosophy.

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<sup>6</sup> *Laozi*, ch. 28, *ibid.*, 154.

<sup>7</sup> *Laozi*, ch. 52, translated by the author.

## 1.2 THE COMPOSITION OF DAO

Following traditional Chinese metaphysics, I would like to reconstruct metaphysics into three parts or spheres, namely *daoti* 道体 (or the sphere of Dao), *xingtǐ* 性体 (or the sphere of nature) and *xīngtǐ* 心体 (or the sphere of mind).

What kind of concepts could be used to name the origin of the universe and the root of the world? The ancient people believe that the myriad things were produced by “Tian” (or sky), so that Tian became the earliest concept to name the origin of the universe. As aforementioned, at the end of Spring-Autumn period, Laozi and Confucius put forward the more philosophical concepts “Dao” and “Yi” to name it separately. But from the Warring States period to the Tang dynasty, Confucians continued using “Tian” as the original and ontological concept. Since the Wei and Jin dynasties, influenced by the prosperous Neo-Daoism, the concept “Dao” was accepted by more and more scholars; even the Neo-Confucians in the Song and Ming dynasties talked about the concept “Daoti” (or “the sphere of Dao”). Here I prefer to use “Dao” to name the origin of the universe and the root of the world. Thus the new philosophy and metaphysics I will discuss could be called “Daoic philosophy” and “Daoic metaphysics”.

“Daoic philosophy” and “Daoic metaphysics” are different to “Daoist philosophy” and “Daoist metaphysics”, because they integrate and go beyond the ideas of Dao in both Daoism and Confucianism. They differ from the terms “philosophy of Dao” and “metaphysics of Dao”, since they are not constructed for Dao, but are constructed based on Dao.

The sphere of Dao is a transcendent and absolute world. It is the origin of the universe, the root of the world and the mother of the myriad things. It is an absolute “great whole” 大全, boundless, ceaseless, all-embracing, without beginning or end.

Although ancient philosophers have put forward various concepts to refer to the origin of the universe and the root of the world, they have not distinguished between their components. It seems to me the sphere of Dao is formed by three fundamental elements, namely *zhi* 值, *li* 理 and *qi* 气. *Zhi* 值 is the locus of value and meaning. *Qi* 气 is the locus of energy and matter. *Li* 理 is the locus of form, reason, law and principle. Among them, *li* has no own body. It exists in *zhi* and *qi*, so that there are two kinds of *li*. One exists in *zhi* and could be named as *zhili* 值理 (or the law of value). Another exists in *qi* and could be named as *qili* 气理 (or the law of matter).

*Zhi*, *qi* and *li* have different properties. *Zhi* is absolutely true, good and beautiful, or purely true, good and beautiful. *Qi* itself cannot be designated as true, good and beautiful, or false, evil and ugly, but it contains the tendency or possibility of both. *Li* itself also cannot be designated as true, good and beautiful, or false, evil and ugly, but may have both the *li* (law, form and reason) of truth, good and beauty and the *li* of falsehood, evil and ugliness. It is both the root of the highest virtues and the source of all evils.

The different properties of *zhi*, *qi*, and *li* determine their different positions in the sphere of Dao. It is evident that *zhi* is the highest element, *qi* is the lowest, and *li* is between them.

Dao has ten characteristics, namely *heng* 恒 (or eternal), *pu* 朴 (or plain), *jing* 静 (or quiet), *xu* 虚 (or vacuous), *du* 独 (or independent), *cheng* 诚 (or factuality), *he* 和 (or harmonious), *sheng* 生 (or productive), *ren* 仁 (or benevolent), *yi* 易 (or change). The general property of them is *heng* (or eternal). They together are called *shi de* 十德 (or “the ten characteristics”).

### 1.3 FROM *WUJI* (OR THE NON-ULTIMATE) TO TAIJI (OR THE GREAT ULTIMATE)

In the sphere of Dao, *zhi* 值, *li* 理 and *qi* 气 are eternal. They are the thing-in-itself. So they could be called respectively *hengzhi* 恒值 (or the eternal value), *hengli* 恒理 (or the eternal reason), and *hengqi* 恒气 (or the eternal matter-energy). This state of Dao is *wuji* 无极 (or the Non-ultimate).

“Dao is the mother of the myriad things” is a sweeping phrase, but only a metaphor. The immediate origin of the universe is Taiji (or the Great Ultimate) which scientists called the single point. So we can say that, while Dao is a the mother, Taiji (or the Great Ultimate) is her ovum and the universe is her child that came from the ovum.

In the sphere of Dao, is the Great Ultimate (the single point) unique, or does it have companions? We can't give a definite answer to this question. If there are innumerable Great Ultimate (single points) in the sphere of Dao, so every one of them could produce a universe, Dao would be like a super universe or super mother.

When the eternal value, the eternal reason, the eternal matter-energy come together, they form Taiji 太极 (or the Great Ultimate). This is the single point and the direct producer of the universe.

The eternal value, the eternal reason and the eternal matter-energy in Taiji could be called *taizhi* 太值 (or the primeval value), *taili* 太理 (or

the primeval reason) and *taiqi* 太氣 (or the primeval matter-energy) respectively. *Taizhi* and *taili* are in *taiqi*, and not separate from *taiqi*.

Inasmuch as *Taiqi* is one kind of matter-energy, it is a limited being, and this determines that *taizhi* and *taili*, which contains *taiqi*, are also limited. Therefore when we say the eternal value, the eternal reason and eternal matter-energy come together and form Taiji, it does not mean Taiji (or the Great Ultimate, the single point) carries the complete information of Dao. In other words, Taiji as the producer of Dao is limited. This limitation appears in all of the components of Taiji including *taizhi*, *taili* and *taiqi*.

#### 1.4 TAIJI (OR THE GREAT ULTIMATE) PRODUCES THE MYRIAD THINGS

As for the process by which Taiji (or the Great Ultimate) produces the universe and the myriad things, I accept Zhou Dunyi's<sup>8</sup> idea in his work *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate*: "The Great Ultimate through movement generates *yang*. When its activity reaches its limit, it becomes tranquil. Through tranquility the Great Ultimate generates *yin*. When tranquility reaches its limit, activity begins again. So movement and tranquility alternate and become the root of each other, giving rise to the distinction between *yin* and *yang*, and the two modes are thus established. By the transformation of *yang* and its union with *yin*, the Five Agents of Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth arise. When these five material forces (*qi*) are distributed in harmonious order, the four seasons run their course. The Five Agents constitute one system of *yin* and *yang*, and *yin* and *yang* constitute one Great Ultimate. The Great Ultimate is fundamentally the Non-ultimate. The Five Agents arise, each with its specific nature. When the reality of the Non-ultimate and the essence of *yin*, *yang*, and the Five Agents come into mysterious union, integration ensues. Qian (Heaven) constitutes the male element, and Kun (Earth) constitutes the female element. The interaction of these two material forces engenders and transforms the myriad things. The myriad things produce and reproduce, resulting in an unending transformation."<sup>9</sup>

Of course this is not a scientific statement, but a philosophical expression. In it, Taiji (or the Great Ultimate), corresponds to the single point; the Five Agents of water, fire, wood, metal, and earth correspond to the elementary particles and various cosmological materials after the

<sup>8</sup> Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073), a philosopher in North Song Dynasty.

<sup>9</sup> Zhou Dunyi, *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Ultimate*, Chan, Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, 1969, 463.

Big Bang; and the process of the Great Ultimate producing the myriad things corresponds to the whole history of the evolution of the universe.

The only absolutely eternal one is Dao. Taiji (or the Great Ultimate) has a beginning and an end. The universe that Taiji produced is also limited, and will experience a process from generation to growth to death.

When Taiji (or the Great Ultimate) evolved and became the universe, it existed in the universe and the myriad things. So Taiji (or the Great Ultimate) could be divided into two levels. One is the producer, which could be called the original Great Ultimate, and another is the Taiji which was in the myriad things, and could be called the secondary Great Ultimate. From the view point of modern science, the so-called original Great Ultimate is the single point, and secondary Great Ultimate is the primeval information with which the myriad things were endowed from that single point.

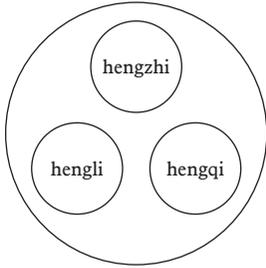
Because the Great Ultimate is the product of Dao, when the single point evolved into the universe, (or the original Great Ultimate) evolved into the secondary Great Ultimate, Dao itself ran through the myriad things.

The secondary Great Ultimate is *xing* 性 (or the nature) of the myriad things. Since the Great Ultimate was formed by *zhi*, *li* and *qi*, *xing* (or nature) as the secondary Great Ultimate could be also divided into three kinds, namely the nature of *zhi* 值之性 (or the value-nature), the nature of *li* 理之性 (or the reason-nature), and the nature of *qi* 气之性 (or the physical nature).

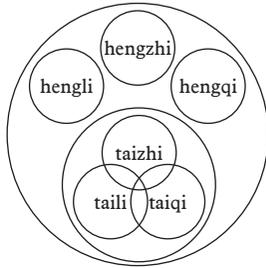
As embodiment of Dao, on the one hand, Taiji is the source of the universe, so that it is transcendent and *a priori*. On the other hand, it runs through the myriad things, so that it is internal and experiential. As the relation between Taiji and Dao, we can say Dao is transcendent and also internal, *a priori* and also experiential.

Fig. 1 The diagram of Dao generating myriad things

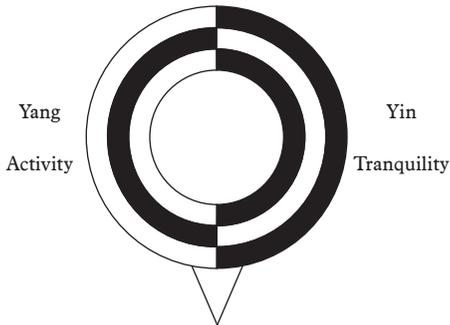
Dao (Non-ultimate)



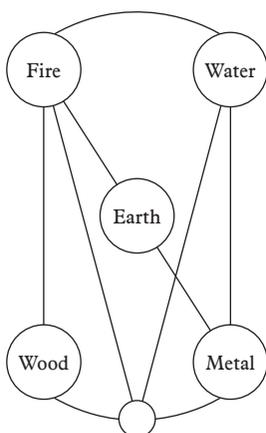
Dao generates the One (from Non-ultimate to the Great Ultimate)



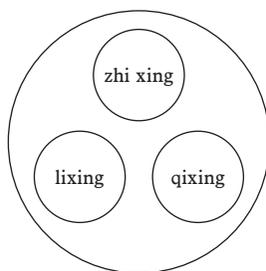
The One generates the Two (the Great Ultimate generates the two forms)



Five Agents arise



The myriad things were generated



2. THE SPHERE OF *XING* (OR NATURE) – WHO WE ARE

2.1 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE NATURE OF MAN AND THE NATURE OF THINGS

When we say everything has a Great Ultimate, does it mean the nature of the myriad things is the same? Let us examine physical nature first.

Physical nature, which the myriad things inherited from Taiqi, is energy and matter, since Taiqi is energy and matter in Taiji. As energy and matter, it is partial and limited. As the myriad things inherit their own *qi* from Taiqi in thousands of ways, the physical nature in the myriad things is different in thousands of ways.

As early as the late Warring States period (475–221 B. C.), discussing the differences between the myriad things, Xunzi explained, “Water and

fire have *qi* but not life, plants have life but not awareness, animals have awareness but not the consciousness of *yi* (or justice). Man has all of *qi*, life, awareness and the consciousness of justice.”<sup>10</sup> Here Xunzi divided the myriad things into four groups. We can name them respectively as that with *qi*, that with life, that with awareness and that with the consciousness of justice.

Generally speaking, the so-called *xing* (or nature) is the totality of the properties a thing possesses. The property or properties that represent the essence of one kind of thing may be called its essential nature. The other property or properties may be called its non-essential nature. The essential nature of something with life (a plant) is manifest in its life. The essential nature of something with awareness (an animal) is manifest in its animal mind. The essential nature of something with a consciousness of justice (a man) is manifest in the human mind. One must even say that different types of properties define the nature of different kinds of things. Non-living is the nature of a thing that has *qi*, living is the nature of a thing that has life. An animal mind is the nature of a thing that has awareness, a human mind is the nature of a thing that has the consciousness of justice. Therefore animal mind is animal nature, human mind is human nature, mind is nature.

Since mind is nature, can there be any difference between them? It seems to me that they are definitions of the same thing from different sides. Nature is the definition from the perspective of innate endowment and objectivity, while mind is the definition from the perspective of subjectivity. The fundamental difference between the mind as nature and other things rests with fact that the former has awareness.

Does everything among myriad things have value-nature? Is the value-nature of the myriad things same? There were three opinions about this question. First, Laozi, and later Confucius and Zisi all held that everything among the myriad things has a nature, but they did not specify whether the value-nature of the myriad things was the same or not. Second, from Mencius' point of view, the term “nature” is value-nature, he called it “the Four Beginnings”: “A man without the feeling of commiseration is not a man; a man without the feeling of shame and dislike is not a man; a man without the feeling of difference and compliance is not a man; and a man without the feeling of right and wrong is not a man. The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity;

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<sup>10</sup> Xunzi, ch. 9, translated by the author.

the feeling of shame and dislike is the beginning of righteousness; the feeling of difference and compliance is the beginning of propriety; and the feeling of right and wrong is the beginning of wisdom. Men have these Four Beginnings just as they have their four limbs.”<sup>11</sup> That means only human beings have nature in the world. Third, Zhu Xi believed that every one of the myriad things has value-nature, humans have a complete value-nature, but things only have a partial value-nature. He said, “With respect to *qi* (or material force), human beings and things do not seem to differ in consciousness and movement, but in respect to *li* (or principle), the endowment of humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are necessarily imperfect in things.”<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Zhu Xi argued that different things have different endowments: “When human beings and things were born or produced, *li* (or principle) which was endowed by Tian (or Heaven) in them is not different, but what they have received from Heaven is different. This is just like if you take water from a river. If you use a spoon to take water from the river, you will only get a spoonful of water, if you use a bowl you will only get a bowlful, if you use a pail or a vat you will get a pailful or a vatful. According to the different capacity human beings and things receive different amounts of principle, like the different containers hold the different amount of water.”<sup>13</sup>

From my point of view, *qi* is the decisive element for the nature of the myriad things. The difference between physical nature determines differences of value-nature and reason-nature. Among the four elements Xunzi used to distinguish the myriad things, *qi*, life and awareness are not value, only the consciousness of justice refers to value. That means in Xunzi’s view, only human beings could find value. This is very close to Mencius’ idea above that only men have nature — for Mencius, only the Four Beginnings are nature. In conclusion, despite the fact all myriad things have physical nature, only men have value-nature.

It should be acknowledged that all things with life (a plant), things with awareness (an animal) the things with consciousness of justice (a man) evolved from things with *qi* (non-living materials such as water and fire). That is to say, life, animal mind and human mind are the result of the evolution of things with *qi* over a long history. On this point, we have to say things with *qi* already possess the seed of value-nature, lives

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11 Mencius, 2A:6, Chan, Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, 1969, 65.

12 Zhu Xi, *Mengzi Jizhu*, ch. 1, *commenting on Mencius*, 6A:3, *ibid.*, 622.

13 Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi Yulei*, translated by the author, ch. 4.

of things with life have the sprout of value-nature, and the awareness of things with awareness have the seedlings of value-nature. But, at any rate, all the seeds, sprouts and seedlings of value-nature are not real value-nature, just as rice comes out of the rice stalk, but the stalk is not rice.

As *li* has been divided into the two kinds of *zhili* (or the law of value) and *qili* (or the law of matter), so too the nature of *li* (or the reason-nature) should be correspondingly divided into two kinds, namely *zhili xing* 值理性 (or the reason-nature of value) and *qili xing* 气理性 (or the reason-nature of matter). Thus the difference between physical nature and value-nature among the myriad things determines the difference between their reason-natures. Things with *qi*, things with life, things with awareness and things with consciousness of justice have their own reason-nature of matter, but only man as the thing with an awareness of justice has the reason-nature of value.

That is to say, with respect to the reason-nature, the reason-nature of matter is its only reason-nature for things with *qi*. For things with life, the non-essential nature is the reason-nature of matter, while the essential nature is the reason-nature of life. For the things with awareness, the elements of non-essential nature are the reason-nature of matter and the reason-nature of life, while the essential nature is the reason-nature of awareness. For things with consciousness of justice, the non-essential nature are the reason-nature of matter, the reason-nature of life, and the reason-nature of awareness, while the essential nature is the reason-nature of consciousness.

The difference between human beings and animals does not only manifest itself as completeness or partialness and high or lowness as already mentioned, but also in facilitation or obstruction. Facilitation and obstruction refer to the ability of self-realization. Animal mind lacks self-realization, so we say animal nature tends to obstruct. The Human mind has strong self-realization, so we say human nature tends to facilitate.

Here the so-called completeness and partialness, high and lowness, facilitation and obstruction are relative. Compared with that of animals, we say human nature is complete, high and unimpeded. If there was an extraterrestrial and it was more intelligent than human beings, we would say human nature is partial, low and obstructed, and animal nature is more partial, low and obstructed. In other words, extraterrestrials may have a nature higher than value-nature, one that human beings may lack.

To sum up, in general terms, all things have their own Taiji (or Great Ultimate), but because the physical nature they received from the Original Great Ultimate is different, their value-nature and reason-nature are

also materially different. This determines the differences between the Great Ultimate of the myriad things. On our planet, the Great Ultimate of human beings is the most complete and highest, the Great Ultimate of animals is second, the Great Ultimate of plants is third. The Great Ultimate of water and fire is the most partial and low. Compared with the Original Great Ultimate, all the Secondary Great Ultimate, including that of human beings, is more partial and lower, as the *qi* the myriad things received is partial and lower. Qi is the decisive and original element in the nature of the myriad things, and both value-nature and reason-nature are based on physical nature.

Since the Original Great Ultimate received limited information from Dao, and the myriad things received limited information from the Original Great Ultimate, the Dao in the myriad things is quite limited.

## 2.2 DIFFERENCES IN HUMAN NATURE

Since the Great Ultimate has endowed things with *qi*, things with life, things with awareness and things with consciousness of justice in such a varying matter, how about what the Great Ultimate has endowed each and every individual thing with among the same kind? Is the nature that each and every person received from the Great Ultimate the same or different?

Confucius said, "By nature men are similar. Through practice they have become far apart."<sup>14</sup> This "nature" is physical nature. Because of "practice", Confucius thinks it is not the same but similar among men. He distinguished the endowment of men on four levels: "Those who are born with knowledge are the highest type of people. Those who learn through study are the next. Those who learn through hard work are still the next. Those who work hard and still do not learn are really the lowest type."<sup>15</sup> He said again, "Only the most intelligent and the most stupid do not change."<sup>16</sup> But Mencius believed each and every person has the Four Beginnings and they are same among all persons. He said, "Not only do virtuous men have the mind of Four Beginnings, but everybody has it." "The sages realize what is the same in our minds before others."<sup>17</sup> Here

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<sup>14</sup> *The Analects*, 17:2, Chan, Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, 1969, 45.

<sup>15</sup> *The Analects*, 16:9, *ibid.*, 45.

<sup>16</sup> *The Analects*, 17:3, *ibid.*, 46.

<sup>17</sup> *Mencius*, 6 A, *ibid.*, 78.

“what is the same in our minds” refers to the Four Beginnings. The Four Beginnings, as we mentioned, belong to value-nature.

Influenced by both Confucius and Mencius, philosophers in the Song and Ming Dynasties hold that for every person, physical nature is different, but the nature of Heaven and Earth that corresponds to value-nature is the same. Zhu Xi said, “The nature of all men is good, and yet there are those who are more good at their birth and those who are more evil at their birth. This is because of the difference in material force with which they are endowed. The revolutions of universe consist of countless variety and are endless. But these may be seen: if the sun and moon are clear and bright, and the climate temperate and seasonable, the man born at such a time and endowed with such material force, which is clear, bright, well-blended, and strong, should be a good man. But if the sun and moon are darkened and gloomy, and the temperature abnormal, all this is evidence of violent material force. There is no doubt that if a man is endowed with such material force, he will be a bad man.”<sup>18</sup> In this paragraph, only the first sentence “the nature of all men is good” speaks of value-nature, all the rest talks about physical nature.

In my opinion, *qi* is also the decisive and initial element for the nature of different individuals of the same kind. For every person, both value-nature and reason-nature is based on physical nature. Every person inherits his or her physical nature in thousands of different ways. The differences between physical nature determine the differences between value-nature and reason-nature. We can use Zhu Xi’s metaphor about the difference between human beings and things to understand the differences between people: “This is just like if you take water from a river. If you use a spoon to take water from the river, you will only get a spoonful of water, if you use a bowl you will only get a bowlful, if you use a pail or a vat you will get a pailful or a vatful. According to the different capacity human beings and things receive different amounts of principle, like the different containers hold the different amount of water.” Therefore, everyone’s endowment is different. There are no two people completely the same in the world, just as there are no two leaves completely the same.

Does this mean that some are born good, and some are born evil?

Let us return to the different properties of *zhi*, *qi* and *li* to discuss this problem. As already mentioned, *zhi* is absolutely true, good and

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18 *Zhuzi Yulei*, chapter 4, *ibid.*, 624.

beautiful. *Qi* itself cannot be designated as true, good and beautiful, or false, evil and ugly, but it contains the tendency or possibility of both sets of characteristics. *Li* itself also cannot be designated as true, good and beautiful, or false, evil and ugly, but with both *li* (law, form and reason) of truth, good and beauty and *li* of falsehood, evil and ugliness.

Therefore, if one looks at it from the perspective of value-nature and the reason-nature of value, then man's nature is absolute truth, good and beauty, or pure truth, good and beauty. This is the same, whether for the sage or ordinary person. On other hand, restrained by the "containers" of the physical nature, there are differences between the value-natures and the reason-natures of value in every person in terms of great and small, many and few, strong and weak. This is the difference between the sage and the ordinary person. So, although the nature of all people is beautiful, the beauty itself can be great or small: like the beauty of a great sea, or rivers, or a drop of dew.

If one looks at it from the perspective of the physical nature and the reason-nature of matter, although man's nature itself has no good or evil, it still has the possibility of doing good or bad. On the one hand, everybody possesses the physical nature and the reason-nature of matter, so everybody has the possibility of doing good and evil. This is the same whether one is a sage or an ordinary person. Depending on this, no matter how intelligent a man is, he is not innately a sage. If the ordinary person wants to become a sage, he must do so through cultivation and education. Like Confucius said, "I am not one who was born with knowledge; I love ancient teaching and earnestly seek it."<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, physical natures and the reason-natures of men differ in thousands of ways, so that the possibilities of doing good and evil are different in thousands of ways. In the course of things, one who is endowed with clear *qi* (or material force) is most likely to do good and least likely to do bad, so that it is easy to become a sage for him; while the one who is endowed with turbid *qi* (or material force) is least likely to do good and most likely to do bad, so that it is difficult for him to become a sage. The great majority of ordinary people are in between. This is the difference between the sage and the ordinary person.

Thus, the inherent endowment itself cannot be designated as good or evil, but it contains the possibility of doing good and evil. Different endowments play different roles in doing good and evil. Some endowments

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19 *The Analects*, 7:19, *ibid.*, 32.

easily lead to good, and some easily lead to evil. As for finally doing good or evil, this is decided by nurture and education. It is possible to imitate Wang Yangming's "Four Sentence Teaching"<sup>20</sup> to sum up the problem of good and evil in the following four sentences:

In the original substance of nature there is no good and evil.

Being able either to do good or to do evil is the function of nature.

To tend to good or evil depends on endowment.

To do good and remove evil depends on education.

### 2.3 EXAMINING THE ARGUMENT THAT "XING IS LI" AND "XIN IS LI" FROM THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE MIND

Because the human mind is the bearer of human nature, we can say it comprises physical nature, value-nature and reason-nature. In other words, the mind has a Taiji (or Great Ultimate). As Taiji in the myriad things is nature, and the mind is the nature, so the mind itself is a Taiji. From the perspective of nature, the mind has physical nature, value-nature and reason-nature. From the perspective of mind, the mind could be divided into three parts, namely the mind of *qi* 气之心 (or the physical mind), the mind of *zhi* 值之心 (or the value-mind) and the mind of *li* 理之心 (or the reason-mind). Among them, the mind of *qi* (or the physical mind) is subjective, active, and has perception. It can be called the subjective mind. The mind of *zhi* (or the value-mind) and the mind of *li* (or the reason-mind) are objective and can be called the objective mind.

During the last 800 years, the main argument in Chinese philosophy has been between the school of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi 程朱学派, and the school of Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming 陆王学派. The former believed that *xing* is *li* 性即理 or nature is principle, the latter believed that *xin* is *li* 心即理 or mind is principle. In my view, *xin*, *xing* and *li* are the same thing. There is no difference between *xing* is *li* and *xin* is *li*.

What is the real difference between these two schools? We can say that the School of Cheng and Zhu 程朱 thought that the objective mind

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<sup>20</sup> Wang Yangming (1472–1529) is a philosopher of Ming Dynasty. Here is his Four Sentences Teaching: "In the original substance of the mind there is no distinction between good and evil. When the will becomes active, however, such distinction exists. The faculty of innate knowledge is to know good and evil. The investigation of things is to do good and remove evil." — Wang Yangming, *Instructions for Practical Living*, *ibid.*, 686–687.

does not belong to mind; instead, it belongs to nature. The School of Lu and Wang 陆王 thought that the objective mind belongs to mind. In other words, Cheng and Zhu identified the objective mind as nature, meanwhile Lu and Wang named it mind.

### 3. THE SPHERE OF *XIN* (OR MIND) – WHAT WE CAN DO

The above discussion treated mind with respect to nature. Now let us focus on the subjective mind. According to the views of modern science, the so-called subjective mind is the brain and the whole nervous system. It has three basic functions, which we can express in three terms: namely *zhi* 知 (or knowing), *qing* 情 (or emotion) and *yi* 意 (or intention).

#### 3.1 ZHI 知 (OR KNOWING)

*Zhi* (or knowing) is the function of the subjective mind, which is comprised of three forms, namely *renzhi* 认知 (or cognition), *ganzhi* 感知 (or sense perception), and *juezhi* 觉知 (or illumination). Their subjects are respectively *renzhi xin* 认知心 (or the mind of cognition), *ganzhi xin* 感知心 (or the mind of sense perception), and *juezhi xin* 觉知心 (or the mind of illumination).

*Renzhi* (or cognition) is the way to know the world of *li* (or the world of form and Reason), and the way to get knowledge. *Ganzhi* (or sense perception) is the way to know the world of *qi* (or the physical world), and the way to get sensation. *Juezhi* (or illumination) is the way to know the world of *zhi* (or the world of value), and the way to get the value of the universe and the meaning of life. That means the mind of cognition takes *li* (or reason) as its object, the mind of sense perception takes *qi* (or matter) as its object, the mind of illumination takes *zhi* (or value) as its object.

As the things with awareness (animals) and things with consciousness of justice (man) among the myriad things have mind, so they are the only two agents of knowing. Surely their ability and level of knowing are different. As animals lack value-nature, they also lack the function of *juezhi* (or illumination). Because of this, an animal's *renzhi* (or cognition) is limited in *qili* (or the law of matter). That means human beings uniquely have the ability of the illumination of value and the cognition of the law of value, while animals only have the ability of sense perception of matter and cognition of the law of matter, and its level cannot be said to be equal to human beings.

The objects of knowing are Dao and its varied existent forms including the Dao in oneself, in the myriad things, in the Great Ultimate and in the sphere of Dao.

For subjects of knowing, to know Dao in their selves is introverted, to know Dao in the myriad things, in the Great Ultimate and in the sphere of Dao is extroverted. In other words, Dao in their selves is the Secondary Great Ultimate they received, and this is an internal world for them, while Dao in the myriad things is the Secondary Great Ultimate all other things received, and together with the Original Great Ultimate and the sphere of Dao forms the external world for them.

Originally Dao is external, but when it has been received by the subjects it becomes the internal world. Consistent with this, the internal world and the external world coincide with each other. Therefore, to know the internal world means to know the external world, since their shared object is the Great Ultimate or Dao. This is similar to the fact that the moon in the sky is the same moon that must be seen in rivers and lakes. On this issue, the school of Cheng and Zhu takes the external side, and believes that to investigate things is to understand the principle of the external things, while the school of Lu and Wang thinks that to investigate things is to understand your own internal mind. In fact, to understand the principle of the external things and to understand the internal mind are the same thing, and there is no essential difference between them. But compared with the complete and limitless Dao, the Secondary Great Ultimate is partial and limited, and the object of knowing cannot be limited in the internal world. On this point, to investigate the law of the external things is not necessarily the process to investigate the internal mind.

Considering the correlation between Dao and the myriad things, there are two fundamental ways to understand Dao and the nature of the myriad things. One is to explore the nature of the myriad things according to Dao, as seen above in Laozi's saying "There was the beginning of the myriad things which may be considered as the mother of the myriad things. He who has found the mother, may thereby understand her children." Another way to search Dao is according to the nature of the myriad things, as Mencius said, "He who exerts his mind to the utmost knows his nature. He who knows his nature knows Heaven."<sup>21</sup> But sometimes these two ways have been used at the same time, as

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<sup>21</sup> *Mencius*, 7A:1, *ibid.*, 78.

*Zhongyong* (or *The Doctrine of the Mean*) said, “The Dao of the superior man functions everywhere and yet is hidden. Men and women of simple intelligence can share its knowledge; and yet in its utmost reaches, there is something which even the sage does not know. Men and women of simple intelligence can put it into practice; and yet in its utmost reaches there is something which even the sage is not able to put into practice. Great as heaven and earth are, men still find something in them with which to be dissatisfied. Thus with the Dao of the superior man, if one speaks of its smallness, nothing in the world can split it. *Shijing* says, ‘The hawk flies up to sky; the fishes leap in the deep.’ This means that the Way should be explored from the top to the bottom, and from the bottom to the top. The Dao of the superior man has its simple beginnings in the relation between man and woman, but in its utmost reaches, it is clearly seen in heaven and on earth.”<sup>22</sup>

Thus we can say Dao is transcendental and also inherent, *a priori* and also empirical. We can induce an *a priori* world from the empirical world, as well as infer the empirical world from the *a priori* world. On this issue, the Western tradition maintains the opposite view.

### 3.2 QING 情 (OR EMOTION)

*Qing* (or emotion) is the reflection of the biological characteristics of human beings and animals. It is the inner object of *ganzhi* (or sense perception). On this point, sense perception and emotion form the structure of sense perception-emotion.

Emotion has three levels. The first level is natural compassion and mercy. The second is desire. The third is feeling.

All these three levels belong to biological instinct. They cannot be designated as good or evil, but contain the principle and possibility of both. As a rule, the first level leads to altruism easily, the second leads to egoism easily, the third has no clear trend to altruism or egoism.

### 3.3 YI 意 (OR INTENTION)

*Yi* has four connotations, namely the consciousness of the mind, the commander of the mind, the direction of the mind and the condition of the mind.

Regarding the consciousness of the mind, *Daxue* (or *the Great Learning*) said, “When things are investigated, knowledge is extended; when

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<sup>22</sup> *The Doctrine of the Mean*, *ibid.*, 100.

knowledge is extended, the consciousness is full; when the consciousness is full, the mind is rectified.” Concerning the commander of the mind, Xunzi said, “The mind occupies the cavity in the center to control the five organs. This is called the natural ruler.”<sup>23</sup> As for the direction of the mind, Confucius said, “If you set your mind on humanity, you will be free from evil.”<sup>24</sup> And in regard to the condition of the mind, *Daxue* (or *The Great Learning*) said, “Only after knowing what to abide in may one be calm. Only after having been calm may one be tranquil. Only after having achieved tranquility may one have peaceful repose. Only after having peaceful repose may one begin to deliberate. Only after deliberation can the end be attained.”<sup>25</sup> “What is meant by saying that cultivation of the personal life depends on the rectification of the mind is that when one is affected by wrath to any extent, his mind will not be correct. When one is affected by fear to any extent, his mind will not be correct. When he is affected by fondness to any extent, his mind will not be correct. When he is affected by worries and anxieties, his mind will not be correct. When the mind is not rectified, we look but do not see, listen but do not hear, and eat but do not know the taste of the food.”<sup>26</sup>

It is not difficult to see that *yi* (or intention) is also the commander of another two functions of the subjective mind namely *zhi* (or knowing) and *qing* (or emotion). For knowing, *yi* (or intention) decides its direction and extent. For *qing* (or emotion), *yi* (or intention) decides whether it is aroused, and whether it attains due measure and degree when it is aroused.

#### 3.4 THE MIND OF COGNITION AND THE MIND OF LIFE

All of the functions of the mind belong to life experience except cognition. These functions of mind include *jue zhi* (or illumination), *gan zhi* (or sense perception), *qing* (or emotion) and *yi* (or intention) and named the mind of life.

The importance of the mind of cognition and the mind of life is different depending on the condition and purpose of life. The mind of life is the bearer of the purpose of life, but the mind of cognition is the means to realize the purpose of life.

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<sup>23</sup> Xunzi, Ch. 17, *On Nature*, *ibid.*, 118.

<sup>24</sup> *The Analects*, 4:3, *ibid.*, 28.

<sup>25</sup> *The Great Learning*, *ibid.*, 86.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

Among the four functions of the mind of life, *yi* (or Intention) plays the role of commander, while *jue zhi* (or illumination), *gan zhi* (or sense perception) and *qing* (or emotion) are the performers of the experience of life. So *jue zhi* (or illumination) and the structure of sense perception-emotion are two fundamental states of life. Since *jue zhi* (or illumination) directs the world of *zhi* (or the world of Value), the structure of sense perception-emotion originates from *qi* and directs the world of *qi*. So the life state of *jue zhi* (or illumination) is named value-life, and the state of the structure of sense perception-emotion is named biological life.

### 3.5 THE GOAL AND MEANING OF MYRIAD THINGS

The goal and meaning of the myriad things, according to ancient Chinese philosophers, is to fully develop one's nature.

Differences in the natures of the myriad things determine differences in the goal and purpose of the myriad things. For every kind of thing, to fully develop its non-essential nature is the lower goal, and to fully develop its essential nature is the higher goal. If we can say that the higher goal determines the meaning of things, so the meaning of plant life is to fully develop its vegetable life, the meaning of animal life is to fully develop its biological life, the meaning of man is to fully develop his or her value-life. The physical bodies of the above living things are merely the tools and means to realize their life purpose.

Obviously, for man, value-life determines the meaning of life, since it is the higher state of life, but biological life is the lower state, since it has no value and cannot be designated as good or evil.

It is worth pointing out that also Dao has its own goal, that is, to produce and help the universe and the myriad things to fully develop their nature.

### 3.6 THE LEVELS OF THE VALUE-LIFE AND THE SPHERES OF LIFE

Relative to *li* (or the world of form and reason) as the object of cognition, *qi* (or the physical world) as the object of sense perception is more rich, vivid and varied, and *zhi* (or the world of value) as the object of illumination is the most rich, vivid and varied. There are different levels in the physical world and the world of value. Therefore, we can say the understanding of the world of form and reason is similar between different persons, but the experience of the physical world and realization of the world of value are different in thousands of ways and forms various states of mind.

By illumination one can reach different levels and heights of the world of value, this having determined value-life itself has different levels. It is known that the world of value, as the object of illumination, covers eternal value, primeval value and value-nature (or mind), but between the three there is a relationship of part to whole, meaning value-nature is a subset of primeval value and primeval value is a subset of eternal value. Among these, value-nature is the value in me, it is the most direct object of illumination. So the primary aim of illumination is the realization of one's value-nature, and then, a further aim, is the realization of primeval value, which is the direct source of value-nature. The highest aim of illumination is to achieve the original state of the world of value, that is, being with the eternal value in the state of Non-ultimate of Dao, and being compatible with it, and thereby fully realizing "the ten characteristics" of Dao, attaining the greatest freedom, ease, happiness, satisfaction and peace in life. This is the peak state or peak experience of life. It can be said to embody life's final meaning, to reach man's true spiritual homeland. Thus, the endless pursuit of illumination is an unending process of spiritual liberation.

There are five approaches to the peak state of life: first, realization of the mind itself; second, cultivation of mind and body by special techniques; third, morality; fourth, appreciation of beauty; fifth, the gods. Among them, the first is the immediate and thorough understanding and insight of Dao. The second through the fourth is having the aid of practicing special rules, morality and aestheticism respectively, but still based on the knowing ability of the life of mind. The fifth has the aid of external forces.

Different civilizations have different emphases on these five approaches. Generally speaking, every civilization emphasizes the approach of aestheticism, Chinese civilization favors the first three, Indian civilization inclines to the first two, Western and Islamic civilizations prefer the last.

It should be pointed out that these are different approaches to the peak state of life, but their final goal is the same. It has been given different names, for instance, later in life Confucius called it Yi, other Confucians called it Tian (or Heaven), Taoists called it Dao, Buddhists called it Zhenru (or the unconditioned), Christians called it God, and Islamists called it Allah.

### 3.7 THE CORRUPTION OF VALUE-LIFE BY BIOLOGICAL LIFE AND KNOWLEDGE

For man, sometimes there is a conflict between fully developing value-life and fully developing biological life. Moreover, the unrestrained development of biological life can corrupt and unsettle value-life, allowing man to lose the goal and meaning of life. Mencius said, “one part of the body is noble and one is ignoble; one great and one small. We must not allow the ignoble to injure the noble, or the small to injure the great. Those who nourish the small part will become small men. Those who nourish the great part will become great men.”<sup>27</sup> What is the noble and great part and what is the ignoble and small part? Mencius said again, “our senses of sight and hearing cannot think and are thereby obscured by material things, the material things act on the material senses and lead them astray. The function of the mind is to think. If we think, we will develop them (the natural virtues). If we do not think, we will not develop them. This is what Heaven has given us. If we first build up the noble part of our nature, then the ignoble part cannot overcome it. It is simply this that makes a man great.”<sup>28</sup> It is clear that the noble and great part is the value-life, the ignoble and small part is the biological life.

Conflict between knowledge and value-life means the infinite development of the mind of cognition and the infinite pursuit of knowledge leads to decline in the value of life. *Laozi* said, “The pursuit of knowledge increases day after day. The pursuit of Dao decreases day after day. It decreases and further decreases until one reaches the point of taking no action (meaning one attains Dao). No action is undertaken, and yet nothing is left undone. Abandon knowledge and there will be no sorrow.”<sup>29</sup> *Zhuangzi* said, “One who employs a machine (designed by knowledge) will use tricks in shortcuts and finesse. When he uses tricks in shortcuts and finesse, he has the idea of using tricks in his mind. When he has the idea of using tricks in his mind, his spirit cannot be quiet and pure. If his spirit cannot be quiet and pure, his nature will be not restful. If his nature is not restful, he cannot bear the Dao.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Mencius*, 6 A, translated by the author.

<sup>28</sup> *Mencius*, 6 A, Chan, Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, 1969, 59.

<sup>29</sup> *Laozi* (Guodian bamboo version), translated by the author.

<sup>30</sup> *Zhuangzi*, ch. 12, translated by the author.

In summary, among the mind of illumination, the mind of sense perception and the mind of cognition, it is the mind of illumination that occupies the leading position. The mind of sense perception and the mind of cognition take the assisting position. When they conflict, the last two are subordinate to the first.

### 3.8 MUTUAL INTERACTION BETWEEN VALUE-LIFE AND BIOLOGICAL LIFE

The two fundamental states of life, value-life and the biological life, influence and interact with each other. On the one hand, because of the influence of emotion, value-life becomes more active and colorful. On the other hand, the influence of value-life gives meaning to emotion.

Emotion with value can be called the value-emotion, value with emotion can be called emotional value. In fact, they are the same thing, although they have different names. The so-called moral emotion, aesthetic emotion and religious emotion belong to them. Accordingly, emotion without value could be called biological emotion, and value without emotion could be called pure value.

The transition patterns from biological emotion to value emotion between the three levels of emotion are different. The tendency is for natural compassion and mercy to lead to altruism. This means it is easy becoming value emotion without obstacles. Desire leads to egoism. This means only through moral cultivation could it become value emotion; as feeling, it is between the above two.

Whether or not one kind of biological emotion could change into value emotion is a matter of the commander of *yi* (or intention). So we can say *yi* (or intention) commands knowing and emotion.

## 4. THE HUMAN WAY – HOW WE SHOULD DO

### 4.1 CULTURE AND ITS SYSTEM

Knowing the world of value, the world of reason and the world of *qi* is essentially a matter of exploiting Dao, and it is also a matter of Dao's presentation. Dao is infinite, understanding of the infinite Dao is limited. As a result, culture is formed. In other words, cultural phenomena are the result of use of the mind. The result of use of the mind of life forms the life culture or life system of culture, and the result of using the mind of cognition forms the system of knowledge.

As *juezhi* (or illumination) manifests the value-life, and *ganzhi* (or sense perception) manifests the biological life, so culture manifested by *juezhi* (or illumination), such as morals, religion, literature, art and so on, can be called value culture. The culture manifested by *ganzhi* (or sense perception), such as sports, entertainment and so on, can be called biological culture. As value-life and biological life interact with each other, value culture and biological culture also infiltrate each other. Therefore, as the products of mind, value culture contains some elements of non-value or even negative value (the false, evil and ugly), while biological culture contains some elements of value (the true, good and beautiful).

Because the world of *li* (or reason) contains two parts, namely *zhili* (or the law of value) and *qili* (or the law of matter), knowledge culture should also be divided into two kinds, namely value knowledge and natural or scientific knowledge. The former comes from the world of value, and then become the bridge to the world of value; the latter came from the world of *qi*, and then created the new man-made world of *qi*, that is material culture. Once the systems of culture have been formed, they became the means, tools and way for mind to know the worlds of value, of *qi* and of reason. On the other hand, once culture has been formed by mind, it then becomes the object mind.

In respect to epistemology, we can say mind has the ability to know, the worlds of value, of *qi* and of reason are the prospective objects of knowledge, culture is the present object of knowledge, and the remaining part of the worlds of value, of *qi* and of reason that have not been understood by mind are unknown.

Animals have sense perception and cognition concerning the law of matter, so they can create some simple biological and material culture.

#### 4.2 FINAL VALUE AND THE GENERAL VALUE

As we already know, in value-life and the *juezhi xin* (or the mind of illumination), the peak state of life manifests the final meaning and ultimate concern of life. This is the final value. It can be named *an* 安. The Chinese term *an* has the meaning of quiet, peaceful, calm, stable, safe, easeful, happy, harmonious, etc. The final value *an* appears as a firm belief and as the norm of conduct in civilizations.

The three basic value categories, the true, the good and the beautiful, are the values manifested by the various approaches to the peak state of life, but not the values manifested by the peak state of life itself. In other words, they are not the highest and final value.

Therefore, the three basic value categories may be expanded to four basic value categories, namely the true, the good, the beautiful and *an* (or spiritual quietness). Among them, *an* is not on the same level with the other three, but the final value which is higher than the other three.

In this value system, values that do not involve the final meaning of life, such as ethical values, social values, political values and so on, could be called general values.

In this way, culture could be divided into four systems, namely the final value system, the general value system, the biological system and knowledge system. Of course, the importance of different kinds of cultural phenomena differs for each human being. The final value is most important, it decides the fundamental purpose of human beings; following this is general value, then biological system, and lastly, the knowledge system.

#### 4.3 THE HUMAN WAY AS THE FINAL VALUE SYSTEM

Dao is a core concept in Chinese philosophy, and was held in high esteem by Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. But every school interpreted it differently. Generally speaking, as a philosophical concept, Dao is used in two fundamental senses. One is law, principle and norm, which extended from its original meaning (namely, road and way); another is the source of the universe and the nature of the world. The concept Dao we discussed above belongs to the latter.

In the philosophy of Daoism, Dao 道 is a metaphysical and ontological concept used to express the source of the universe and the nature of the world. But almost all Confucian philosophers in pre-Qin Period, including Confucius, Zisi, Mencius, the author of the bamboo book *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, and Xunzi, took Dao as law, regular pattern and norm. Generally speaking, excluding cases where it is explicitly defined — such as *tiandao* 天道 (or the Way of Heaven) and *didao* 地道 (or the Way of Earth) — the concept Dao 道 (or the Way) is *rendao* 人道 (or the Way of Human Beings) in Confucian philosophy in the pre-Qin Period. This means the Way that people should behave.

So what is the Way that people should behave from the point of view of Confucianism? As a whole, Dao (or the Way) in Confucianism has two dimensions. One is the spiritual spheres of living; another is ethics and virtue. The former emphasizes individual cultivation, and the latter emphasizes the order of society. They combine into one. Confucius said, “At seventy I could follow my heart’s desire without transgressing moral

principles.<sup>31</sup> This is the highest spiritual sphere of living, as well as the highest moral sentiment. Therefore, in Confucianism, Dao manifested as a series of moral categories. According to the Confucian classics in the pre-Qin period, Dao could be interpreted as the general term for morals. For instance, Confucius said, “The Dao of the superior man is threefold, but I have not been able to attain it. The man of *ren* (or humanity) has no worry; the man of *zhi* (or wisdom) has no perplexities; the man of *yong* (or courage) has no fear.”<sup>32</sup> Here Confucius takes humanity, wisdom and courage as Dao.

Throughout the Song and Ming dynasties, Neo-Confucianists absorbed both fundamental levels of Dao, and further put forward the term *daoti* 道体 (or the Sphere of Dao). Thus, the two fundamental senses of Dao were united. The Dao of metaphysics and ontology is the source of the Dao of moral norms, while the Dao of moral norms is the manifestation of the Dao of metaphysics and ontology.

Therefore, the Dao as the Way that people should behave, is the final concern and belief of Confucianism, and also the Dao of *daotong* 道统 (or orthodoxy) in Confucianism. It represented the Confucian final value. The so-called *daotong* is the tradition of the sages and virtuous men who search, find, and develop the Way that people should behave through ages. Confucius said, “It is man that can enlarge the Dao which he follows; and not the Dao that can enlarge men.”<sup>33</sup> The Dao came into being through the agency of ancient sages and virtuous men, and was developed in endless succession by the continuous work of the sages and virtuous men through the ages.

In my opinion, Dao and *daotong* (or orthodoxy) as the final value and its tradition have universal value. Though the value systems among civilizations are different from each other, where they may be generalized into a system of behavior standards, that is the Way that people should behave. The sphere of Dao is an inexhaustible source of value. Just like Confucianism has developed its Dao (or the human way) and orthodoxy, other value systems in the world have also developed their own Dao or the human way and orthodoxy. Up to now, the various transcendental concepts such as Tian (or Heaven) in Confucianism, Dao in Daoism, the Unconditioned in Buddhism, God in Christianity and Allah in Islam, are

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31 *The Analects*, 2:4, translated by the author.

32 *The Analects*, 14:30, Chan, Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, 1969, 42 (with some minor changes).

33 *Ibid.*, 15:28, 44.

all the realization of the sphere of Dao from different standpoints and angles by different civilizations, and at last all of them developed into the Way that people should behave so as to direct the behavior of human beings. Therefore, approaches to final value by human beings can be called *rendao* (or the human way).

As the final concern, belief could be divided into two kinds, namely religious belief and humanist belief. As the final value of human beings, the human way could be correspondingly divided into two kinds, namely the human way of religion and the human way of humanism. The belief of most of the world is religion, so that their final value is the human way of religion; but the belief of most Chinese includes both religion and humanism, and inclines to the latter, so that their final value represents both the human way of religion and the human way of humanism, and inclines to the latter.

#### 4.4 A RE-ESTIMATION OF CIVILIZATION

In traditional society, material civilization was very backward and the political system largely restricted personal freedom. Even more important, however, this was a society that revered final value. Just as Mencius said, "If we first build up the noble part of our nature, then the ignoble part cannot overcome it."<sup>34</sup> If one just protects and lives according to the final value then one can protect the place of human meaning and spirit. This was then the fundamental source from which people of those times gained their feelings of security and belonging.

The basic values of contemporary society are science and democracy. Yet we already know that science is a tool of life and not life itself. Although the advance of science has broadened our understanding and increased our knowledge, it has not helped our spirit in the least nor resolved problems concerning human purpose.

As for democracy, this is fundamentally a problem of the appearance of a system belonging to what I call general value and not final value. Today's notions of freedom, including freedom of faith, political freedom, freedom of speech, economic freedom and so on, belong to outside freedom and cannot in the same breath be compared to life freedom which belongs to internal freedom.

In this way, contemporary people primarily seek not final value but rather the tools and methods of life's existence. The style of contempo-

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34 *Mencius*, 6 A, translated by the author.

rary thinking is to use the “tool of rationality” to fully establish a point. Using the language of Mencius, the key aspect of contemporary society is “allowing the ignoble to injure the noble, or the small to injure the great”.<sup>35</sup> Contemporary people are truly “small men”, intent on “nurturing the small part”. This means that contemporary man has already forgotten life’s value.

Talking this way is not to deny science and democracy, and is not to say that contemporary society is unlivable. What I am emphasizing is that the science of a so-called knowledge culture needs to obey a value culture and that the political system of so called general value needs to obey final value, giving true meaning to “If we first build up the noble part of our nature, then the ignoble part cannot overcome it”.<sup>36</sup> This would then be a robust society.

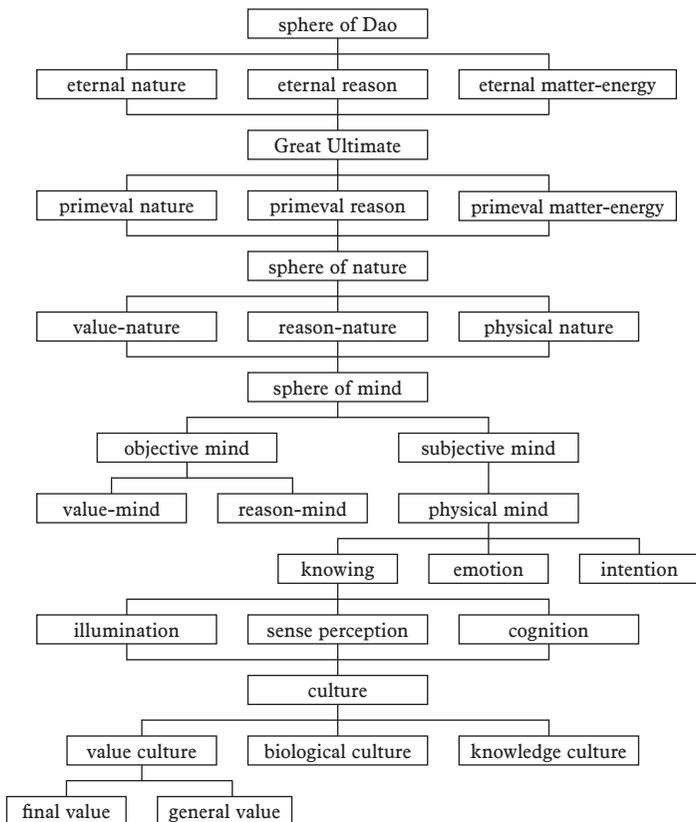
## 5. THE DIAGRAM OF SUBSTANCE AND FUNCTION

The above discussed sphere of Dao, sphere of nature, sphere of mind and human way and so on, make up a chain. Among them, the sphere of Dao is the main substance of all other parts, below it, substance and function alternate. Thus, when the sphere of Dao is substance, the sphere of nature is function. When the sphere of nature is substance, the sphere of mind is function. When the sphere of mind is substance, culture is function. When life is substance, knowledge is function. When value is substance, biology is function. When the human way is substance, general value is function. A diagram of “substance” and “function” is as follows.

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<sup>35</sup> *Mencius*, 6 A, translated by the author.

<sup>36</sup> *Mencius*, 6 A, translated by the author.



From the diagram, one can see that the sphere of Dao, sphere of nature, sphere of mind, culture, value, the human way, substance and function are one, above and below link in harmony, just like water flows from a high mountain, steadily flowing.

As Dong Zhongshu said, “The great source of Dao comes from the Heaven”.<sup>37</sup> One obtains and one sees!

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<sup>37</sup> Ban Gu, *Han Shu (History of Former Han Dynasty)*, ch. 56, translated by the author.

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CHUNG-YING CHENG (HONOLULU)

## **ONTO-GENERATIVE EPISTEMOLOGY (本体知识论)**

### An Inquiry into Source and Structure of Knowledge

#### ABSTRACT

This article pioneers in exploring a new concept of knowledge, knowledge as onto-generative system which always involves consideration of a root-source and its developing into a body of which knowledge is to be claimed. This concept and the philosophy behind it comes from the metaphysics of *benti* (original body or root-body) in Chinese philosophy which takes being to be generated from a source and is generative of other being or beings. But it also takes into consideration of naturalizing epistemology by W. V. Quine as well as the virtue-epistemological insights in contemporary Western discussions. The resulting epistemology will be onto-generative, macroscopic-mesoscopic-microscopic, holistic and openly systemic. Two fundamental principles of onto-generative epistemology are discussed and can be seen to give rise to two fundamental principles of the *benti* or onto-generative metaphysics rooted in *Yijing*. Based on this onto-generative concept of knowledge we are able to resolve some epistemological riddles which often trouble us when we take a traditional definition of knowledge as justified true belief.

The different sections of the article are 1) Introductory Remarks 2) *Benti*-Epistemology Proposed 3) On the Concept of Onto-Generativity 4) From Quine to Onto-Generativity 5) Methodology of Comprehensive Observation and Inner Feeling 6) An Epistemic Analysis of the *Yin-Yang* Binary System 7) Onto-Generative Knowledge as Complex System on Five Levels 8) Onto-Generative / Macro-Epistemological Tradition in

Chinese Philosophy 9) Onto-Generative System and Onto-Generative Resolution of Epistemological Riddles 10) Conclusion.

#### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In tracing the development of modern epistemology in the West, Quine has focused on Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume as providing the resources for such a development.<sup>1</sup> For Quine Descartes and Berkeley evidently have worried about the ontological foundation and guarantee of knowledge whereas Locke and Hume provide empirical resources from our senses as stuff forming what we know without explaining how identity of the whole world is possible. What is missing is a framework in which subject of knowing and object of knowing can be adequately and effectively related.

I notice that apart from this contrast there is also the contrast of Descartes and Berkeley speaking of innate ideas of God and Self as versus Locke and Hume rejecting all innate ideas. In this sense Locke and Hume are truly the founders of no foundation theory of knowledge. Quine ignores Kant for apparent reason that Kant is an internalistic philosopher rather than an externalist philosopher.<sup>2</sup> Yet for Quine knowledge of our physical world still needs explanation and he then appeals to Carnap for developing and using the constructive method of “constitution system” derived from the method of contextual definition, which would explain away entities in terms of uses of language about those entities.

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**1** See W. V. Quine, *From Stimulus to Science*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995. In this final work of Quine we see Quine reflecting on how contemporary issues in epistemology and scientific methodology develop in light of Carnap’s conceptual reconstruction of sensory experience and how logic and language play essential roles in shaping up our concepts of reality, scientific knowledge, truth, reference and meaning.

**2** Only on page 57 Quine refers to Kant for his thing-an-itself. Quine rejects such imposition as basically useless since our observation sentences and categorical are sufficient for reflecting what nature is about. In a sense Quine’s main effort consists in showing that we can make necessary ontological commitments and yet we can also dispense with reference to entities by use of logical schemes such as Ramsey sentences. For Quine reference is indeterminate and relative to a system of language.

The turning point is how we come to use language for abstraction, complexization and generalization of ideas from our experience. It then appeared possible to construct a world of physical objects from experience and a world of experience from minimal simple ideas which Carnap would describe as “unorganized global experiences” of a specious present for an individual. Then by introducing primitive relations we can eventually construct our concept of a world of quality experience by way of logical definition.

Although Quine does not condone the world construction beyond this level, he does show great admiration for the development and use of the method of contextual definition as formally introduced first by Russell in his explanation of definite description but perhaps first suggested by Jeremy Bentham and used by George Boole the algebraist. The mathematical application of this method led to the great achievement in defining mathematical truth in logic based on logical operators of negation and conjunction. But Quine recognized the limitation of this “logical paradigm of philosophical analysis” in light of Goedel 1931 incompleteness proof to the point that he would like to seek a new starting point of knowledge.

What is Quine’s new starting point? It is to take the world of physical objects for granted in experience and then see how we actually come to develop a language of physical objects which accommodates the objective and external experiences we have of the world. In doing so he comes to famously reject so-called two dogmas, namely the distinction between the analytical and synthetic, and the primacy of phenomenalism of sense data. He sees that our ideas form a whole which exhibits degrees of analyticity as well as degrees of syntheticity at the same time just as experiences are inseparable from theory in science. Similarly, sense experience leads to speeches of physical objects which explain the holistic nature of our perception and thinking. It is on the basis of the theoretical explanation we come to the world of knowledge, which we may regard as forming an open system of interrelated concepts and presuppositions based on sense stimulations. The epistemological tasks of description, explanation, justification and theorization are just an integral part of our construction of science. This constitutes what is broadly called “naturalized epistemology”.<sup>3</sup> His purpose is empiricist or scientific-empirical

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**3** Quine wishes initially to substitute our reasons for justifying our epistemic beliefs on causal grounds based on empirical psychology. But he could not deny that epistemology contains request for evaluating how and

so that we would come to recognize a world of things significantly and articulately represented in a framework of first-order logic of ostensible objects, a world eventually open to scientific methodology of observation and confirmation.

Quine comes to his holistic view on knowledge: There is no item of knowledge which can be absolutely independent of other items of knowledge and there is no item of knowledge which we could consider absolutely true. Even our logic could be revisable in light of radical experiences. He comes to his famous statement on the holistic confrontation of our knowledge as whole with the world of sense experiences which are boundaries of reality. The motto is still the same: *nihil in mente quod non prius in sensu*.

### BENTI-EPISTEMOLOGY PROPOSED

Given Quine's naturalized system and structure of knowledge, I wish to go a step further in light of my reflections on our observational experience of the world from Chinese Philosophy. I shall develop a theory of onto-generative epistemology which would explain and accommodate the naturalized epistemology, but which would also take an anti-reductive attitude in endorsement of a process of growth and transformation as basis for our holistic view of knowledge. It would therefore accommodate what has naturally evolved and emerged as experiences of reality and this no doubt would include experiences of life and mind. This is what I title "onto-generative epistemology" (*benti-zhishilun* 本体知识论), which would allow me to see knowledge as rooted in different layers of experience and constructed on different levels of our understanding. As we shall see, the term "onto-generative" is given rise to by understanding the Chinese metaphysics of generation of a bodied being from a source where the concept of source or root (*ben* 本) is more broadly conceived than cause (*yin* 因)<sup>4</sup> This would enable us to dissolve the three famous paradoxes or

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why one epistemic statement is better or more acceptable than another. Also confer W. V. Quine's original paper on epistemology naturalized, in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

<sup>4</sup> See the item on *benti* or root-body as written by me in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, edited by Antonio S. Cua, New York: Routledge Publishing, 2003.

problems in contemporary epistemology, namely, the Gettier Problem, the New Riddle of Induciton formulated by Goodman, and finally the Anomalous Monism Puzzle advanced by Davidson and Quine himself.

We shall see that this new approach to contemporary epistemology would compensate and complement what has been done by empiricists like Hume and logical analysts such as Carnap and Russell, but also would allow recognition of Kant as representing a reasonable internalistic position which under proper restraint is required to explain the mind phenomena of understanding of self-knowledge and virtues for action needed by morality. In this new approach we come to a larger view of reality based on our large experience of cosmos and ourselves with an emphatic stress on that which allows growth and emergent development just as this cosmos of ours allows growth and development from the quantum state/stage to the matter state/ stage which gives rise to the life state/stage. What remains to be recognized for this cosmic growth and development is the state and stage of mind emerging from life in which we are called upon to be not only accountable for what experience but also responsible for what we come to know and how we may use our knowledge for action or how knowledge brings out values and norms of action and situating.

Chinese philosophy and its metaphysics recognizes this growth and emergent development from the very beginning, and has since then elaborated on this growth and development in terms of concepts such as *taiji* and *yin-yang* and *benti*, namely, “origination and embodiment of being and becoming”, which I have described as “onto-generativity”. The Greek tradition has largely failed to recognize this fact of reality in their metaphysics which hence makes their metaphysics difficult for understanding contemporary science in terms of physics of quantum particles and relativity of time and space as a manifold<sup>5</sup> which most of us would recognize as a fact of our world in which we find ourselves. But for the Chinese philosophy of *benti*, this aspect of growth from quantum indeterminacy to emergence of biological world of life can be accommodated easily as constituting a partial illustration of the onto-generative cosmology it has embraced from the beginning of the *Yijing* philosophy and be seen as not only compatible with but seems to pointing to a creative self-understanding of mind actions in moral practice of human development. There is no reason why such a metaphysical vision of humanity in

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<sup>5</sup> Here we may speak of spacetime as well as timespace.

a quantum world should be discounted by any scientist dogmatism if not considered highly important and inspiring. We may be indeed reminded of Charles Peirce's own speculation on love in a world of chance.<sup>6</sup>

It must be understood that the *benti*-epistemology or onto-generative epistemology starts with dealing with macroscopic experiences of the cosmic heaven and earth as a prevailing creative basis for microscopic and mesoscopic phenomena of dynamic change and onto-generativity. We may also regard this onto-generative epistemology as holistic and holographic in so far as it would incorporate the macro-, the micro-, and the meso-epistemology of the early empirical externalists together with later analytic internalists such as Kant and twentieth Century virtue-epistemologists as constitutive parts.<sup>7</sup>

It will be briefly indicated that the onto-generative epistemology has its base in onto-generative metaphysics (本体形上学) and must lead to normative onto-generative morality (本体道德) or onto-ethics (本体伦理学) and normative onto-generative epistemics (本体知识学). We may explain these terms as follows: "onto-generative metaphysics" takes things as generated through a process of polaristic forces with intrinsic power of change and transformation from an ultimate source of creativity, and the process of creative and change is by way of differentiation and integration in organic and holographic contexts. Hence to be is to be generated and form a concrete entity capable of generation of future entities. Such a system is described in my work on the philosophy of the *Yijing*.<sup>8</sup> Such a system of generative being is to be contrasted with traditional ontological metaphysics which takes static essences as main concern and consideration of being, apart from a transcendent creator which

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**6** See C. S. Peirce, "The Doctrine of Chances." in: N. Houser/C. Kloesel (eds.), *The Essential Peirce*. Vol. I. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.

**7** No elaboration is enough to make this link as we shall see, since the onto-generative considerations always involve the traits and capabilities / abilities of the knowing agents as both knowers and agents. I shall touch on this topic again in connection with my description of the solutions of the three oddities in contemporary epistemological research.

**8** This system can be likened to Whitehead's Theory of Process and Reality, but has two strengths of its own which the Whiteheadian system lacks: first, the simplicity of premises and principles of change, and the second, the humanity as creatively identified in an interactive process of engagement with reality. Whitehead's system is technical and lacks clear guidance of how to apply to human experiences.

either continues sustaining the objective entities or beings or leave it sustained by its own inertia. It is the Aristotelian metaphysics of the four causes. Such a view eventually becomes exemplified in the Ptolemaic worldview and in the Newtonian worldview which results from improving on the Ptolemaic worldview. It is interesting to note that while we can see how metaphysics of four causes justified the world structure we come to describe as Ptolemaic or Newtonian, we cannot say that the four causes generate our knowledge of life and mind as a complex structure. But in the case of onto-generative metaphysics we see how a source -being in an ultimate sense is generative of the world in a process of change and transformation. Hence our concept of being as *benti* makes it necessary not to separate cosmology from ontology as any ontological being must be generative of other beings together with other beings. There is always such a process of generation so that ontology is cosmologically processed and cosmology reflects an underlying and inherent source of creativity and its emerging forces of formation and transformation.

Another consequence of such an onto-generative view of reality is that there is no absolute transcendence beyond immanent transcendence in the sense that the moment of transcendence is at the same time the moment of immanentizing or integration from the same source of transcendence. God can be defined and considered as the self-transcending and yet self-immanentizing power of creation which is continued in the continuous creation of things. Humanity can be thus conceived as resulting creatively from the self-creative power of transcendent immanentizing and immanentizing transcendence so that we can say of any thing created has a source which transcends and a body which immanentizes that source. This is precisely how *benti* is to be understood.

Given this understanding of the onto-generative metaphysics, we can explore into the onto-generative morality which leads to onto-generative ethics which has been described by me simply as onto-ethics.<sup>9</sup> To be a human being is to be generated from a source and form a human body or bodied being (*ti*) of its own. As *benti* existence the human person is virtually related to all things on a level and his purpose of life is to relate to them from his uniquely *benti* point of view as a human being. This means that he has to develop and acquire virtues of humanity and act on his virtues. He should practice his human reason in light of an

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<sup>9</sup> See my 2002 article. "Integrating the Onto-Ethics of Virtues (East) and the Meta-Ethics of Rights (West)." *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy*, 1, 157-184.

onto-generative way of hermeneutics so that he reaches a life of fullness and significance from which freedom, duty, benefits and even rights can be integrated into a working system of interrelatedness and dynamism. How is a human being capable of doing this? This is because he has a source of creativity from his nature which can be realized and fulfilled in his generative activities. His morality is to be considered part of such a creativity which gives him ability to self-discipline and self-govern in achieving co-humanity or love and sense of duty and responsibility. In this manner I have explained not only how but why ethics is a vital part of human life whether considered individually or collectively.

One may query how this onto-ethic view differs from moral metaphysics of Mou Zongsan, the famous contemporary Neo-Confucian philosopher? The difference is that in realizing our natural being generatively we shall realize our ethics and our morality as part of the particularization of the onto-generative being of the human person, whereas for Mou it is due to our moral experiences that we have to speak of a metaphysics which is to be founded on our moral experiences. In actuality this metaphysics which functions as the source and foundation of our ethics or morality is precisely the onto-generative creativity which leads to humanity and morality as partial fulfillment of humanity. Onto-ethical understanding is much straightforward which enables us to understand our own actions as a human being as morality-generative. And this is so again because the human agent is generated with its motivational resources in human mind and human nature which seeks both inner harmony and outer harmony altogether. With regard to our knowledge, we can indeed say the same thing, our knowledge is generated from our ability to know and through experience we are able to apply such knowing ability to reality to engender and re-generate our knowledge in so far as we have engaged ourselves in an onto-generative contexts of learning, observation and inquiry.<sup>10</sup>

The actual process of acquiring knowledge or achieving epistemic values, like the ethical case, can be described as onto-epistemic and hence the creative process and result of knowing can be regarded a matter of practices of our *benti* in knowing and hence we can speak of onto-epistemics (本体知识学) in analogue to onto-ethics (本体伦理学). The important point about this novel idea of epistemics is that we are em-

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<sup>10</sup> John Dewey has taken this route of thinking as well. See J. Dewey, *Logic: Theory of Inquiry*, New York, 1938.

phatic about learning and doing, not discoursing and argumentation of knowledge which resides in onto-generative epistemology (本体知识论).

In this framework of understanding we may indeed introduce the very idea and concern of virtue-epistemology (as correlated with virtue ethics) in update contemporary discussion in America.<sup>11</sup> More importantly we are then able to introduce the distinction between knowledge of virtues (德性之知) and knowledge by seeing and hearing (见闻之知) in Zhang Zai and develop it into a theory of defining and acquiring knowledge by forming intellectual virtues of our minds versus defining and acquiring knowledge by experience, 立德以致知 (to reach knowledge by establishing virtues) versus 见闻以致知 (to reach knowledge by way of seeing and hearing), both of which are made possible by the onto-generative epistemology as mentioned above.

#### ON THE CONCEPT OF ONTO-GENERATIVITY:

“本体 发生: 本立道生, 道生万物”<sup>12</sup>

The world of things we experience is a world of emergence, becoming, formation and transformation of things. Things are in the middle of such generation, formation and transformation. We observe how things are related by mutual generation and interaction. In a sense our own observant awareness of things is a generative response elicited by things and ourselves as a body. So are our feelings and reflections. There are many contexts from which we have to assume counterfactuality and generativity, for example, we can speak that should a rain come in time, the famine could be avoided. Here we are actually assuming that a rain under whatever conditions it may take place could lead to avoidance of a famine. This means that the rain has the disposition or power to generate a condition which is necessary for avoidance of this famine. Or for another instance, we may say that should the witness testify in court, we could win the suit. This means that the testimony of the witness has the power to be generated to prevail over the suit. It is clear that it is

<sup>11</sup> See L. Zagzebski, *On Epistemology*, Belmont: Wadsworth, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> This is the key expression of the meaning of onto-generativity: “The root-body takes place when the root is found or founded, the *dao* will ensue naturally and the *dao* will give rise to all ten thousand things.” These key words come from my own synthesis of the insights of the *Yijing*, the *Daodejing* and the *Lunyu* of Confucius.

often the case that it is not a single event but an event in a situation that would produce the generative force. Hence we may regard such situation as a generative context. In understanding things generatively we need to know those generative contexts in which the knowledge can be said to be genuine or non-defective and non-reductive.

In Chinese philosophy there are words like “*sheng* 生” and “*fa* 发” which indicate such a generative event and process. Specifically we may even use the term “creative 创造” or “creativity 创造性” to denote the same idea as generative or generativity. Hence we can speak of onto-creativity or being onto-creative. The important point is that we need an ontology or metaphysics which recognizes this creative and generative factor to be a factor of being, not to say becoming. In this context we can speak of onto-generativity in five basic forms of onto-generativity as initiated by Zou Yan (305–240 BCE) in the fourth Century BCE: namely the generativity of water from metal, of wood from water, of fire from wood, of earth from fire, and of metal from earth. For Laozi we can speak of the mutual generation of being and nothing (有无相生), why? DDJ (*Daodejing*) makes it clear that being must come from where there is no being and no-being must come from where there is being. Logically it is the only way in which onto-generation is to be understood. In terms of particular things or events, this is particularly true as well. This is what *dao* is. But we do seem to experience emergence of being from non-being, and the world and the *dao* therefore must be seen as directed to a world of emergence of new things. There is no reason why we may not see our world as receding and non-being as being generated from being so that we could experience a world of non-beings with equal potentiality to generate things as well. On this basis of mutually of generativity of being and non-being we could also speak of mutual activation of the subjective and the subjective (主客互发), mutual inducement among and between knowledge and action (理气互生: 知知与知行相因), mutual entailment of existence and value in human beings (知识与价值互引), and hence an unending generativity of generativity (生生不息). The traditional concept of unity in “*heyi* 合一” is better understood as mutual generativity.

#### FROM QUINE TO ONTO-GENERATIVITY

In a sense Quine started the contemporary epistemology by his rejection of the dogma of phenomenalism and liberated epistemological queries from sensational and atomist constraints. We are able to face reality and

ask questions as to what we know and how do we know about things which we know. There is no play of skepticism for we can, like scientists, do observation of things and organize our experiences by making our conceptual description. Even though there are many ways of describing things and events, we do have a sense of knowing in common sense world of objects in which we can say we know. Although we are like scientists in following a process of learning, there are two differences between our common sense knowing and the scientific knowing. First, we do not always do explanation by appealing to universal laws, for we just explain in citing reasons and mention causes we believe to be relevant, and yet we do not normally need to cite laws of nature or scientific laws to support our explanations or understanding. To explain an automobile accident, to explain a financial loss, and even to explain climate change, we can cite general regularities as premises of explanation without introducing theoretical entities and for that matter without giving precise quantitative precisions. The second difference is that we are set to act from what we know ordinarily and in fact to a large measure our ordinary knowledge communicated in common sense language is always practical and it actually comes from practical experience. Hence we can apply our common sense to practical experience and in so applied would learn and slowly make changes to what we know so that it would be better fitting with our world in our practical life.

It is Quine and his logical positivist predecessors who add the dimensions of the analytical and ontological to what we come to know from our practical life. To be analytical is simply to watch out our concepts and their implications in light of logic and language use. On the other hand, to be ontological is to be clear about what sort of objects we are talking about. Certainly it is also common sense that we pay attention to what we talk about. To be ontological is to be able to refer to things and to be able to refer to things is to be capable of committing our beliefs about existence of things we refer to so that we could be responsible for what we do on the basis of what we know in terms of reference we make. There are always deep dubious issues on gaps between knowing and being, and between believing and truth. But in ordinary knowing we can be said that if we know what there are, it would be legitimate to speak of what there are in the world. On the other side, we may imagine that if there are things which we do not know about, but then if we believe that there are indeed such things as we imagine, we can make logical or linguistic or epistemic reference to them, but we would not say these are things we know in the ordinary sense and as common sense. Thus in-

existential objects from our imagination expressed in poetry and novels cannot be said to be known in unrestricted context. What makes science different is that we insist on deep level explanation in terms of laws of nature or scientific laws which we need to do inquiry by observation and experimentation. We need also to use logic to make sure that what we claim we know is consistent in meaning, reference and intention and that we are able to measure them in quantity and articulate its reference in a language which is essentially logical.

It is interesting to note that when Quine introduces his idea of naturalized epistemology, he is actually to break down the gap between the scientific epistemology and the ordinary way of knowing and his idea is to push our ordinary knowing toward the scientific case: We need to talk of objects like scientists do. But my above point is that the gap still exists as we can still make the distinction: our ordinary way of knowing is practical while scientific way of knowing needs not to be. It is not to deny that the scientific knowledge does get incorporated into modern man's ordinary language knowing and we can use such knowledge without claiming scientific jargon and precision.

There is no denial that scientific talk of knowledge and ordinary talk of knowledge overlap to a large extent for modern man. Perhaps as a sociological fact, the more advanced education we get the more we become scientific in our reference and in our knowledge. Since knowledge has to make reference to things, even in ordinary talk we cannot avoid referring to things we know or to things we believe of their existence under certain conditions. Hence Quine's famous motto: To be is to be the value of a variable of quantification. But such values need not to be found in ordinary knowledge nor in scientific language but from some form of language we have to construct on the basis of our interest or needs.

Given such distinction between naturalized knowledge and common sense knowledge, what is the knowledge to be said to be onto-generative? In the first place, we have also to ask what is there to be for an ontology which is generative? The answer is that to be in an onto-generative sense is to be generated from a source, in other words, to imitate Quine, it is to be generated in a context where its generative source can be identified. Of course there is the second requirement, namely, to be generated is to have a source which gives rise to a bodied being. The difference between naturalized knowledge and the onto-generative epistemology is that the latter can incorporate the former while the former can not incorporate the latter for the latter uses generativity and organic constitution as its requirements and thus is intended to be not only anti-reductive but also support-

ive of emergence and supervenience. Perhaps we can learn from Quine concerning the limitation of logical construction or reconstruction in Carnap's reductive *Aufbau* of the world so that we can therefore do something more realistic in confronting the generative nature of this world.

In examining Carnap's construction of the world from sense experience, one can see how we need to introduce concepts which require presupposition of ordinary objects. Besides, from those basic experiences of sensation it is also clear that our ideas of ordinary objects must be learned by ostension, that is, by pointing to. As ostension is an experience which still needs interpretation by oneself, what is pointed out as an object by a teacher may not become understood as the same object by the learner. But it is still an empirical fact that children do learn what objects are specifically by ostension when ostension is seen to generate a term for a learner to apply to the same object. In this sense Quine decides to make a shift from direct mode of reference by observation sentences to ostension in order to give meaning to our concepts or language. It is useful for establishing communication under again presupposition of same reference in same contexts. We have seen Quine has strongly argued for relativity and hence indeterminacy of reference, but nevertheless we can go by in so far we can talk of the same reference in language or by way of ostension. What is the content or predication of an object is a matter always to be assumed or analytically hypothesized. For him sometimes we see that reference is not really important as the truth conditions of our sentences which make reference to those things can be substituted by complements of what we take to be without changing the truth value of those assertions. Again the issue is whether we can trace to a generative source from which a body can be identified on whatever level of reference, predicative, or observation-categorical, or inter-subjective.

From an onto-generative epistemological point of view, what is important to see how Quine sought and achieved a new start in identifying and ostension of physical world based on some generative notion of stimulus and response as origin and a subsequent system of observation. We can also see how Quine's effort provides an insight and for reconstructing of the identity of a body in terms of relevant generative contexts such as observation and ostension or communication and perhaps translation. He has thus given rooted body or *benti* 本体 an objective meaning in his naturalized epistemology. Yet we must also recognize that *benti* is a term derived from reflection on our onto-generative metaphysics of heaven and earth and man. It has a richer meaning than bodies being generated from observation and ostension, namely it has retained its

holistic implication in reference to onto-generative formation of things as a whole, and this holds similarly for onto-generative formation of knowledge as a whole in Chinese Philosophy.

The large difference of reduction versus non-reduction remains: As we see that the Quine's last efforts of a naturalized epistemology is to hopefully reduce mind to brain states so that our paraphrase of meaning of propositional attitudes (mind sentences) could have a place in the first order of logic of concrete objects as material objects. But for the ordinary objects in Chinese onto-generative epistemology minds and thoughts still can be regarded as concrete events in the world without being necessarily identified with brain states. They are regarded also as onto-generative which could lead to scientific discoveries and artistic activities which have intrinsic values for their onto-generativity of joy and peace.

#### METHODOLOGY OF COMPREHENSIVE OBSERVATION (观) AND INNER FEELING (感)

In the Greek tradition, the idea of *onto* (ou, on, onto) is the ultimate being conceived only in passivity and fixation. In modern Western philosophy there is introduced the idea of Becoming in Whitehead, Bergson and Heidegger, but it is not yet an onto-generative concept, a concept pointing to the process of creative forming of world and human beings. In Chinese philosophy *benti* 本体, described as “onto-generative”, is intended to describe the emerging and generation of beings in becoming which leads to the formation of ten thousands of things and human beings. This concept also implies mutual generation of being and nonbeing (有无相生) and “ceaseless generation” (生生不息) as indicated above.

Given this onto-generative metaphysics (本体形上学), we must come to see knowledge as not simply a system of objective description of objective truth to be constructed by science or special intuitions of reason or noesis. We want to avoid to see knowledge as a reductionist structure pertaining to the world of matter and energy alone rather than as an onto-generative structure in terms of:

- 1) the sensible and empirical as leading to the conceptual and the rational
- 2) the smaller scope as leading to the larger scope which involves paradigm and perspective changes such as from Ptolemy to Newton, Newton to Einstein and Einstein to Post-Einstein Quantum Physics

- 3) the physical as leading to biological and then to humanistic
- 4) the theoretical as leading to the practical
- 5) the source as leading to a full body

Besides, the present approach to knowledge in philosophy is basically microscopic (微观, 小观) and mesoscopic (中观) which are derived from British empiricism and/ or German transcendentalism in modern times. It is hence micro-epistemological and meso-epistemological, but not yet macro-epistemological (宏观, 大观) so that it does not have macroscopic point of view such as found in the *Yizhuan*, *Laozi* and *Zhungzi*. But we need this point of view in order to integrating and grounding our sciences and our humanities. The point is that we need a new approach to epistemology which would show rapid changes on both macroscopic level and meso-microscopic levels. For this reason, I introduce the methodology of comprehensive observation (观) and inner feeling (感) from the tradition of Chinese philosophy.

The Chinese word “*guan* 观” has the meaning of looking over things at a wide angle so that one can see a whole range of things. It is to look and see like a bird which would not do anything in looking carefully about the environment in which it finds itself. There is indeed such a bird called *guan* 鸛 which would watch over a pond or a water field with the intention to catch a fish, but before it plunges to make its catch, it has to inspect the whole field so that it could position itself and act easily and efficiently in targeting its game. But when we come to the word *guan* 观 there is no such intention of catching a game or doing anything: *guan* is merely to look over and see around so that we may come to know a holistic picture or scenario of the world in which one finds one self. In fact it is a matter of positioning oneself in the world. As the world is large and comprehensive, hence we speak of comprehensive observation as it is intended by the use of the word *guan* 观. Thus we see how in the *Yizhuan*, Fuxi is described as looking up the heaven and watching over the land (观天察地) he is able to detect patterns of things and draw the trigrams and hexagrams. In fact, in order to reach for an objective understanding of the world, one needs to comprehensively observe the world with a mind of no desire and no action.

In other words, one should avoid being influenced by one's emotion and desire or even prejudice in looking over the world. Hence in the DDJ one sees how Laozi holds that: 1) Always emptying one's mind so that one can see the mystery of the *dao*; always recognizing things so that one can watch the boundaries of being (故常无欲, 以观其妙; 常有欲,

以观其微。(DDJ #1)). Here the *guan* again is comprehensive observation for different purposes and in each other the *guan* reveals the reality of the *dao* and the things. Then when Laozi speaks of “all things co-happen, I am ready to observe their return (万物并作, 吾以观复 DDJ #16), it is clear that he has opened his eyes widely so that he can see how the things in world change and change in a certain direction. This also means that the *guan* is not only comprehensive in space, but comprehensive in time. It may take a long while to see things returning to their beginnings or a short time. But nevertheless the *guan* one is engaged with must be unrestricted in both time and space so that one can come to know what reality is really.<sup>13</sup>

Hence we can see that *guan* is to observe and to observe is to perceive and witness holistically and comprehensively. One may not observe without any intention or desire to discover something. But one must admit that there could be state of comprehensive observation to the effect that observation itself is attractive and there needs not any explicit purpose motivating the observation. It may be said that this is how knowledge of *dao* is established. When the *dao* is understood, it is understood naturally and that one comes to see that it is the *dao* which is the source and body of all things. In this sense we may also say that to recognize the *dao* is to recognize something so fundamentally and ultimately onto-generative so that it can be said to generate all things. In this sense *guan* is important for it is the way in which the cosmic way of onto-generation is experienced. It is in the like manner of comprehensive observation that one comes to see *dao* as non-active *wuwei* and yet capable of doing all. There is the spontaneity of action and transformation of things. There are also the characters of the *dao* to be realized, namely such as giving rise to things without possessing them, let things growing without ruling them, upholding them without dominating them, achieving things without claiming credits. One can see that the whole onto-cosmology of the *dao* is the result of understanding reality by comprehensive and selfless observation of the things in the world. It is by a comprehensive and perhaps long-enduring process observation, one comes to see the ultimate onto-generativity of the *dao* and things in *dao*.

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**13** A good lesson in history of astronomy is such that without the time-consuming watch of the movements of the planets Kepler (1571–1630) there could be no modern science constructed by Newton. However, special watching may not always end up in discoveries as we see in the century-old experiment called Michelson-Morley Experiment.

It is in this process that the human person becomes to be realized as a being-in-world, and for Zhuangzi the best mode of existence for human person in the world is to roam (*xiaoyao* 逍遥) in the world so that one may experience life-worlds of many small beings such as trees, birds and fishes and maintain communication with them. This implies that one needs to view world from no fixed perspective and hence transcending and yet including any perspective. Of course, still it may involve a process of incorporating or reconciling any perspective which contradict the “comprehensive view”. For Zhuangzi this is the experience of illumination (*yiming* 以明).<sup>14</sup> In the *Yizhuan* the emphasis is laid on the seeing of the interpenetration of all things or *huidong* 会通. Here we speak of the *huidong* of all things through our comprehensive observation and it is in the process of our comprehensive observation that things naturally show their interpenetratedness and mutual interdependence. The understanding is that there is a comprehensive viewing comprehending both the subjective and objective or transcending them and seeing them as parts of the holistic view of a dynamic *dao* and *benti*. It is to commit oneself to a valuable position from which creativity and purposiveness of action is to be derived. Hence this viewing is different from the view of Thomas Nagel in his book *The View from Nowhere* (1986) which poses a problem of conflict. It is a world without articulation and a world empty of all things. But the world of *guan* as shown by Confucians or by Daoists is not such a world. In particular, we need *guan* not as simply a mirroring but as a creative response to the world and a source of insights of reality.

*Yijing* has shown how viewing progresses to larger and larger, deeper and deeper, higher and higher point of view which is not simply no point of view. It is this observational viewing which leads *Yizhuan* to say “to observe the meeting and union of all things” (观其会通). This provides an open and all-comprehensive view and observation among different individuals regarding understanding overlapping identities in a hierarchy of differences and identifies of things.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See Zhuangzi, *Essay on Equalizing All Things*, where he refers to a special insight one may have from inborn but which one forgets one has.

<sup>15</sup> Quine deals with this problem of shared observation in many places in his last book. He sees “perceptual similarity in part innate and in part molded by experience”. “Recurrences of it must activate, in each individual, global stimuli that are perceptually similar for that individual”, “So we see a pre-established harmony of perceptual similarity standards. If two scenes

This brings us to the role of subjective and inter-subjective feelings (*gan* 感) and perception (*jue* 觉) in reflection (*si* 思) with *guan* as a comprehensive background. Why is feeling or perception or thinking or reflection important? Feeling is the way in which any living being comes to contact the world. Whether the feeling is conscious or not conscious feeling identifies one's being in the world by responding to whatever is world or in the world. It is in this broad sense that feeling defines life just as perception defines our mind. For Whitehead feeling even is taken to be the defining characteristic of simply existence or actual entity. In Chinese philosophy we see this insightful statement from the Tuan Judgment on *xian* (咸) in the text of the *Yijing*:

“Tuan says: *xian* 咸 is feeling. The soft is above and the firm is below. The two *qi* (breath and vital force) respond to each other and find peace in joy. When the male is under the female, the situation is prosperous and advantageous to hold on. Hence to marry a woman is auspicious. Hence we see how heaven and earth feel each other and then ten thousand things become generated and transformed. We see how a sage may move the feelings of peoples in their minds and therefore the world becomes peaceful. Thus to observe what one comes to have feeling, one comes to see the condition and state of being of all things in heaven and earth.” (translation mine) (“咸，感也。柔上而刚下，二气感应以相与，止而悦，男下女，是以亨，利贞，娶女吉也。天地感而万物化生，圣人感人心而天下和平，观其所感而天地万物之请可见矣”。)

In this rich passage we see how feeling has both a cosmic and a human dimension: as vital energy generated by heaven and earth and as feelings-desires for action of self-fulfillment and harmonization. With this two levels of reality feeling can be seen as an onto-creative or onto-generative principle of generation and production. It is how the world evolves and becomes and it is also how we come to know the world and ourselves and thence how we come to know our positions in the world as beings-in-the-world.

We can observe (观) feelings and feel them with our perceptive mind. On the other hand, we can feel what we observe. Mutual observation and mutual feelings (观其所感，感其所观) mutually provide a foundation for mutual understanding and a sense of common goal and reality, again in an onto-generative manner. We may indeed regard comprehensive

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trigger perceptually similar global stimuli in one witness, they are apt to do likewise in another”, W. V. Quine, *From Stimulus to Science*, 1995, 20–21.

observation and situational inner feeling as two fundamental principles of onto-generativity of any object or subject in the world. It is where existence is to be conserved and relationships pertain and new things emerge so that we come to have a whole world of life and life-like activities such as the birth of new stars.

Based on the two onto-generative principles of observation and feeling, we are able to invent symbolic systems such as language and other symbols for symbolizing our onto-generative knowledge. This means that our symbolization of knowledge has to be onto-generative as well. And this is precisely what happens in the formation of language. For symbolization is to represent a thing or an idea by a sign which can be further related to other signs by way of onto-generative connectedness. For the reality of things as root-bodies or generated beings we come to see a complex but systematic relationships of generating through the interaction of *yin* and *yang* in terms of differentiation and integration. Similarly, we see our language as a system of signs which shares meanings one way or another and yet maintains a definite or definable reference in open contexts of transformation and generation of meanings as there are always new situations which prompt new uses of the language symbols. This amounts to having opportunities to reaffirm or yet sometime to vary or innovate meanings in contexts of use. The Chinese principles of formation of words are six<sup>16</sup>, but their combination to generate new words and new meanings and therefore new references or new aspects of references are unlimited. This is because there is the human mind which functions as an interpreter which identifies what needs to be identified and differentiates what needs to be differentiated in so far as the mind has achieved a holistic and comprehensive understanding of reality through onto-generative principles of observation and feeling.<sup>17</sup>

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**16** See Xu Shen (58–147) the well-known Han scholar has first articulated the six principles of word formation for the Chinese language. See his *Shuo Wen Jie Zhi* (说文解字).

**17** Specifically, Charles S. Peirce's theory of signs can be incorporated into such a system of generative signs. The following points can be made: Based on this system of generative signs language is capable of leading to extended and transformed meanings because of possibility of translation and interpretation. Interpretation will make the following possible: 1) It preserves meaning and extending it; 2) it provides a common and shared medium and back/ fore-ground for integrating. In fact this makes clear how we have to see knowledge as basically not fixed and must be non-deterministically

In Peirce's theory of signs the distinction among icon, index and symbol is significant because it is onto-generative and it is by implicit appeal to this principle of onto-generativity that Peirce is able to maintain his insight into mind as a interpretant which can always make interpretation by introducing or generating new signs or new ideas or both. The human mind is an infinite interpretant which would respond to the world by observation and feeling. This creative mechanism when applied to the Chinese Six Principles of Word Formation would explain why Chinese language is a typically onto-generative language which inspires understanding by its own onto-generativity. With signs and language we have come to a way of achieving communication and congruence among people in a community or across tongues by way of translation which should take place as a type of interpretation.

How do we communicate ideas among individuals so that we get the right meaning? It is by way of using language to convey the intended meaning based on comprehensive observation and inner feeling. Hence the invention and use of language makes communication possible. As we have seen, knowledge depends on a symbolic form of language for articulation and communication. Hence the importance of a theory of signs to be open to interpretation: This is precisely how the *Yjing* system of signs becomes interpretive and opens to interpretation as a result of its onto-generativity from comprehensive observation and inner feeling.

#### AN EPISTEMIC INTERPRETATION OF THE *YIN-YANG* BINARY SYSTEM

Knowledge can be seen as a system of *yin-yang* binaries in open development and hence onto-generative. *Yang* can be said to be what we know and *yin* can be said to be what we do not know. The mutual generation of *yin* and *yang* leads to mutual generation of knowledge and non-knowledge. We must always go back to the common root of knowledge and non-knowledge in terms of the observations and feelings so that we can expand our knowledge as higher level of knowledge with larger

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given. The fact is that knowledge exists in many forms, but it always exists in interpretation which could give you a new knowledge by broadening it or by restricting it. Quine even sees more than that, he sees a contextual definition and hence elimination of definite notations. But in this manner he comes to presuppose in using language a life-world of observations and feelings.

scope. We have to be reminded that the natural disclosure of patterns of what we have observed comprehensively in nature signifies something so basic and so fundamental that we cannot ignore it because we see it at work on any level of existence and in any domain of life activities. This is precisely what *yin* and *yang* mean to our observational experience as well as our feeling experience. In both we see the conjunction and contrast, opposition and complementation of *yin* and *yang* as the visible and the invisible, the bright and the dark, the firm and the soft, and the moving and the resting. The Greek sees these too, but for the Chinese *Yijing* tradition these binary states form an onto-generative system which can be extended indefinitely. This is because we can see how *yang* generates *yin* and vice versa and how the combination of *yin* and *yang* generates a new set of *yin* and *yang* under our proper observation, feeling and interpretation.

It is in this process the whole system of trigram symbols are generated and they are generated from the basic symbols *yin* - - (broken line) and *yang* — (solid line). Here by both observation and interpretation, we come to say, here is heaven, here is earth, and here is man. Each can be seen to have two states, which makes a trigram system of eight trigrams. With trigrams we come to hexagrams by natural doubling of symbols which is also a natural doubling of situations in the world. This can continue indefinitely. Interestingly, the ancient Chinese has found the natural number sequence of 2 to the *n*th power as a natural way of extending the manifest with all the nodes of the lattices of the binary *yin* and *yang* to signify hidden points of beginning power thrust or ending result achievement. In this manner all natural numbers are involved in the generative production of the *gua* system which nevertheless remains open and generative like numbers.

The traditional notion of the great ultimate is most suggestive and instructive for understanding the beginning and sustaining of the *yin-yang* (阴阳) binary system.

The central onto-generative principle is that the one gives rise to two which in turn gives to new *yin-yang* binaries in light of the one root. One need to know however what it means to say that there is *yin* in *yang* and *yang* in *yin*: Both *yin* and *yang* represent the great ultimate and their singular presence involves and presupposes the whole of the originating *taiji* (太极) as the ultimate creative source. Hence the *yin* in *yang* is that there is potential and implicit whole in *yang* and similarly for *yang* in *yin*. We have here a natural definition of the *benti*, as *benti* is what has its source in the *taiji* and its body in the *yin* and *yang* which results from

creativity or onto-generativity of the *taiji*. Hence *benti* in its metaphysical sense is simply an onto-generative entity which has a unity of *yin* and *yang* based on *taiji* to be identified with its source or itself as the source so to act on itself.

In the following I shall explain two onto-generative principles of the ultimate reality which corresponds to the two onto-generative principles of the *guan* and *gan*, that is, of onto-generative epistemology. The first principle is what we have already discussed, namely the principle of binary generation of the *gua* or hexagrams. The binary number of *yin* and *yang* or 0 and 1 could generate to 64 hexagrams, but there is no limitation to 64, because theoretically we could have 128 septagrams and 256 octograms and so on and so forth. These generations all depend on the basic onto-generative fact of *yin* and *yang* relationship with their underlying *taiji* as the source. Although this may appear to be a mathematical fact, it is in fact an onto-generative fact which is covered and represented by the mathematical induction: Whatever is true of  $n$  is true of  $n+1$  because of the onto-regeneration of the *benti*, because whatever body is generated from a source will become a source to generate a body. It is represented by the series

$$1 \rightarrow (1 \rightarrow 2) \rightarrow (1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 3) \rightarrow (\dots \rightarrow n \rightarrow n+1)$$

Here “ $\rightarrow$ ” means “onto-generates”. We assume that this understanding of cosmic reality comes from comprehensive observation. For it is in reality that we see how things arise from co-causing relationship or how life arises from two genders in union. It is this sort of observation which leads to the naturalist theory of five generative elements (*wuxing* 五行). Behind the *wuxing* there is still the *yin-yang* at work.

Now one question comes forward: What do all those hexagrams mean? Do they refer to any substantial forms or any realistic situations at all? The fact is that they do not refer to any realistic situation nor are they eternal forms like Platonic *eidos*. They are just patterns and configurations which would not become realistic or referential because of or on account of the process of *guan*. The reason is that in the process of *guan* there is no existential commitment to any phenomenon in the totality of the scenario open to observation. In other words, there is no reification entailed by observation. In fact, we must refrain from reification so that that we can see the world as a display of entrenched or free possibilities. Yet those forms must be seen as free forms as each line needs not to be subject to any bonding and quantification such as in Quine’s observa-

tion categoricals. This makes it possible to have free interpretation on the basis of some real experience of the observer or for that matter the diviner who tried to see some meaning out of the patterned relationship or/ and some of his own beliefs which provide a basis for interpretation.

Corresponding to the onto-generative principle of feeling in the onto-generative principle of onto-generative epistemology is the principle of prospective or retrospective existential generalization or particularization. The truth is that any *gua* could change to any other *gua* by the switching of *yin* by *yang* or *yang* by *yin*. Although the natural numbers 6, 7, 8, 9 may have their natural reasons for representing changing or non-changing lines, it is clear that any *gua* can transform into another *gua*. I have come to this conclusion by the fact that any *gua* can be transformed on any line or any combination of lines by contingency. This amounts to saying that any *gua* can become any other *gua* under a number of contingent moves. The philosophical meaning of this is the following:

Any configured *gua* in order to presently relevant and meaningful has to be determined by a contingent cause represented by a changing line. By manipulating the varying line one can arrive at a realistic *gua* intended to capture and represent the current situation. In this sense the *gua* becomes incorporated and realized with full meaning to be determined by whatever is known about a given situation. This point is important because no *gua* will determine what your situation is. You always can in this sense reify the *gua* by existentially instantiating it, namely by identifying our meaningful reference with the lines which have positional and dynamic meanings independent of your real reference. But once existentially instantiated, the *gua* becomes a real situation in which you are situated and thus realistic prediction or explanation can be made. The question is: what is the occasion for making the existential instantiation possible. Again the answer is simple, namely our feelings. It is through our feelings that we come to read the *gua* existentially. Our feelings tell the proximate reference and meaning and then we let the form be applied to. Hence we can let the second onto-generative principle of the ontoprogress in process learning as requiring an extra insight for its existential particularization. We may call this principle Principle of Onto-ontological Identity and Reification.

We may now distinguish the system of knowledge based on what we have observed from non-system (an implicit system) of what we have also observed or not yet observed. The latter could eventually become systemized. We need a larger system to integrate them into oneness with

coherence and consistency. Given this new larger system, a non-system could be again implicitly generated. Again this non-system is again to be systemized and then to be integrated with a future explicit system. It is up to us to find a way to integrate both. This type of process can recur and go on indefinitely. The process is naturally observable and is subject to a logic of integration as illustrated by integrating the Ptolemaic System into the Newtonian System which accounts for the Ptolemaic system. The Newtonian system is later integrated into the Einstein Relativity Theory. Consequently, there comes the non-system (an implicit system) of quantum fields, which is yet to be integrated with the world of matter and energy. The ultimate integration is first with biological science and phenomena of life, and then with experience of mind and human nature. Thus knowledge forms a progressive lattice structure of the *yin-yang*. The interesting thing is that it always remains as *yin-yang* dynamics.

This process is also ontogenetically justified as the *yin-yang* structure but with a dynamic process of becoming and reconstruction. We can see how this process embodies a conscientious reflection on the results of science development as suggested by Thomas Kuhn in his 1962 book *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. It also provides a method combining confirmation and falsification.

#### ONTO-GENERATIVE KNOWLEDGE AS COMPLEX SYSTEM ON FIVE LEVELS

A complex system is composed of at least two units of knowing which are linked to form and generate more of the same and this lead to a system of lattices which has two sets rooted in one root set. A complex system is generative if it is open to potential indefinite generation of systems of binary systems and their binary sub-content. This system can be generated in the like manner as the *Yijing* system of binary *yin-yang* forces / states/ stable natures. In fact, this *Yijing* system provides a model for knowledge generation and construction. It seeks out a common root for two systems and uses this root to project an overarching system of the two systems generated by the root. To illustrate, physics and chemistry as two disciplines can be said to be rooted in one source of reality and pointing to an overall system of quantum theory of subatomic and molecular forces capable of explaining the differentiating the physical from the chemical in light of the same source or root.

In health sciences one could also see the root of differentiating Western medicine from the Chinese medicine, yet in tracing their common root in the ecology of human body we can see how we may develop a system of Western medicine in conjugation with Chinese medicine and vice versa when both can be considered onto-generative.

We may now divide the system of onto-generative knowledge on five levels of understanding knowledge as onto-generating process:

The level of Source and Foundation (*ben* 本): The source is not the same thing as foundation, but a source or root that generates a system of conceptual symbols capable of articulation or existential particularization or generalization.

The Level of Body and System (*ti* 体): The body is either the *yin-yang* existence with underlying principle of unification and generation which enables the bodies to go on to give rise to other bodies, or we can use the term *ti* body as a metaphor for system and system building. It consists in having a system of capabilities and abilities developed and generated from our learning from experience (observations) and cultivation (reflections) on experience in an effort to coordinate and integrate understanding and action. Bodies can range from cosmic wholeness of stars and nebulae to living organism of humans.

The Level of Epistemic Embodiment and Communication (*zhi* 知): As human person we need to become aware and assured of what we know as a matter of experience (*Erfahrung and Erlebnis*) so that the body of knowledge becomes embodiment in the human person and thus can be functionally acted upon on one hand, and yet on the other hand, to be communicated to others in the form of language and discourse. What is to be acted upon may not be communicable to others in language and discourse. We may then speak of implicit and explicit forms of knowledge as Michael Polanyi does.

The Level of Use and Application (*yong* 用): We can apply what we come to know from the above to applying to whatever subject or object for whatever purpose and thus generate skills and technology and even information: two aspects

The Level of Action and Practice (*xing* 行): We decide what we ought to do on the basis of what we come to know of the world, others and ourselves. We have to be able to generate such practical knowledge pertaining to value and moral goals with regard to others and ourselves or the world. We are responsible for what we know and the action based from such knowledge. This is what I have called *benti* or onto-generative axiology and onto-generative ethics and morality.

ONTO-GENERATIVE / MACRO-EPISTEMOLOGICAL TRADITION  
IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

As we have pointed out, the Chinese philosophy tradition is in reality an macro-onto-generative epistemological tradition for it is always concerned with how to know the whole and full truth of being. In the first place, as we read in the *Yizhuan* as commentary of the ancient *Yijing*, the term *zhi* (知 knowing) always has the connotation of realizing reality. Thus one speaks of “the Qian power knows the world by its ability to transform, the Kun power enables itself to be receptive by its simplicity” (乾以易知, 坤以简能). Then there are debates on whether knowledge in this sense is easy whereas action is difficult. In a sense it is clear that we could easily know the world as a *benti* or ourselves as *benti* by comprehensive observation and deep inner feeling. But once we come to know the *benti* of myself, how to substantiate it by cultivation becomes a challenge and this is the reason as to why we can see knowledge as easy and action as difficult (知易行难). But when we come to the modern world, it is Dr. Sun Yatsen who reverses the order of easy and difficult by insisting that knowledge is difficult where action is easy (知难行易). What is the reason of reversal? The answer is that Dr. Sun is speaking of scientific knowledge which requires a process of investigation and theory construction and then confirmation of the theory by observation or interpretation of experience. The two theses need not be incompatible as they deal with different ideas of knowledge. There is a third position which is represented by Wang Yangming in his thesis that knowledge and action are one (知行合一). This thesis could be easily seen as a matter of onto-generative epistemology as it also presupposes an onto-generative metaphysics like of the *Yjing*.

In the wake of the *Yijing* onto-generative epistemology we have in *Confucius* the claim of knowing the mandate of heaven (*zhitianming*, 知天命) and knowing people (*zhiren* 知人). In *Mencius* we also read the question of knowing one's nature (*zhixing* 知性), knowing heaven (*zhitian* 知天) and perhaps knowing one's mind (*zhixin* 知心, so that one can fulfill one's mind, namely *jinxin* 尽心). All these forms of knowledge are possible because we can see knowledge as *benti* system or onto-generative system in which we as human minds of understanding have a part to play in forming a understanding of a whole system of relationship and practice or value. There is no isolated knowledge which may not point to something one could cultivate oneself to know. This is not to say that objective investigation is not important, but that investiga-

tion of things will deepen my intention and mind so that we can know more about ourselves and others and thus know about what makes this unity of knowledge and practice toward a more developed person possible. This is how Mencius could argue that once you have fulfilled your mind you could know your nature and thus to know heaven by fulfilling and knowing your nature. Knowledge just emerges or supervenes in the process of a web of unifying or integrating theory and practice. It is an onto-generative process.

We may use the *Daxue* argument from investigation of things to extension of knowledge and eventually to the fulfilling the goal of bringing peace to the world as an classic example of how knowledge can be onto-generative in generating practice and theory toward an desirable end:

In the *Daxue* 大学 we read:

“Once things are investigated, knowledge takes place, following arrival of knowledge, one’s intention would become sincere. With sincere intention, one’s mind will be rectified. By rectified mind one would achieve a moral character. Moral character leads to good family, good family leads to effective ordering of a state, which would lead to peace of the world.” (Translation mine) (“物格而后知至, 知至而后意诚, 意诚而后心正, 心正而后身修, 身修而后家齐, 家齐而后国治, 国治而后天下平”.)

From this we can indeed define an “onto-generative knowledge” as a state of believing which is justified on a ground which would lead to fulfilling practical ends of life and community through a process which integrates human experiences of world and humanity. One cannot deny that knowledge could generate practice while practice would lead to further practical knowledge or theoretical knowledge for achieving a goal.<sup>18</sup>

By the same token, we can argue for Confucian knowledge of *li* (知礼) and knowledge of *ren* (知仁) in Confucius and the Mencian knowing the language (知言), Mozi’s knowing rightness (知义) and Xunzi’s knowing the way (知道). I wish to give one more piece of knowledge to do with welcoming friend and controlling oneself in the Confucian Analects. We have Confucius saying the following:

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**18** Contrast this with virtue-epistemological definition of knowledge a state of belief arising from acts of intellectual virtue (Sosa and Zagzebski).

“To learn and often review what one has learned, is that a joyful experience? A friend comes from afar, is this event a pleasant thing? Not being known by others and yet not becoming angry, is this a worthy attitude of the Junzi?” (Translation mine) (学而时习之, 不亦悦乎? 有朋自远方来, 不亦乐乎? 不知而不愠, 不亦君子乎?)

We are here witnessing three forms of onto-generativity: the intrinsic feeling of joy from one's own action, a feeling of pleasure from an outer event, and finally a reflective virtuous self-transcending act of mind. Of course there are always other forms of onto-generativity.

When we come to the Neo-Confucian philosophy we are confronted with the ideas of knowledge by virtues (德性之知) and knowledge by hearing and seeing (见闻之知). It is important to see that the speech of knowledge by virtues is intended to generate knowledge of virtues by having virtues. In this regard it is not the same as virtue-epistemology which declares that we could have reliable or responsible knowledge because we have certain intellectual virtues. Yet it cannot be excluded that for both classical Confucians and Song-Ming Neo-Confucians like the Cheng Brothers and Zhang Zai, to be able to know people or oneself it is necessary that one be sincere and (诚) and trustworthy (信). Perhaps, under the influence of Daoism and Chan Buddhism, the Neo-Confucians like Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi also hold that we come to know heaven the ultimate and *li* and *dao* by cultivating a concentrated oneness of mind without leaning (主一无适). Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming, on the other hand, believes by exercising one's innate knowledge of good (*liang-zhi* 良知) one could come to see *benti* in all things and hence forms one body with them. One answer to the question as to how is onto-generative epistemology possible is because we are part of an onto-generative cosmos in which as we have come to see all things as interlinked in a system of existentially instantiating web of relations and mutual implication founded on our basic experiences of life.

On these ground we may see that we could know that we may not know because we do not know the sources or the bodies generated from the source (知不知), but sometimes we may not know that we know something (不知知) because we are prevented from claiming the knowledge by bias or prejudice in denying a source or a relevant object. Similarly, we may not know that we do not have knowledge (不知不知) as we again can become blind and arrogant in misplacing our understanding or losing our clarity of mind. It is of course only when we are clear and fair-minded that we are able to reflect on what we know and re-certify our

knowledge (知知). We must see that like any system of knowledge onto-generative knowledge seeks consistency and coherence and its onto-generativity is a matter of internal consistency and coherence, for one has to see that one's idea of a thing or a person and self must be well rooted in a source which should also be well-rooted in still a deeper source or in an ultimate common source, and that this source must be seen as giving rise to the result of what we come to know, namely a body or an object which forms itself and give rise to other relations in a system.

One can finally come to see how a macro-epistemology could relate to micro-meso-epistemology by inclusion (包容), comprehension (超容) and transcendental integration (超融).

#### ONTO-GENERATIVE SYSTEM AND ONTO-GENERATIVE RESOLUTION OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL RIDDLES

What is the ultimate source or ground which gives rise to and yet justifies knowledge? We see that in some way time and space forms an open system of change and transformation in which all things may take place and thus all items of knowledge can be said to be generated and become justifiable by reference to its well-formedness and its rootedness. Against this generative background which is also their logical ground, all items of knowledge would have the following features:

- All existing items are directly or indirectly connected
- They form a system which is indeterminate, open and changing
- There is incompleteness of items
- There is indeterminateness of items
- Knowledge changes because of the creative change of the whole system
- Knowledge changes because of reflection and creativity of us as knowers
- Knowledge can give rise to higher forms of knowledge by interpretation<sup>19</sup>

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**19** How is knowledge open to translation and interpretation? The function of translation is preservative while the function of interpretation is integrative. Thus a sentence as understood is rooted in our experience and yet can be extended either to other languages in its attributed original meaning or to be enriched by integrating with new experience and understanding

On the other hand, our knowledge can be evaluated in terms of scopes of comprehension, simplicity, practical use and moral action.

We also see human knowledge as an onto-generative order with rich content which covers at least the following:

- Experiential – aesthetic and perceptual
- Cognitive – conceptual and analytical
- Transcendental – categorical and synthetic
- Originative – onto-generative
- Referential – objectual-scientific
- Valuational – evaluative
- Normative – practical-creative

There is no empty space and no empty time, there could be synthetic a priori concepts and propositions in onto-generative contexts: for example we could mention any law-like statements which we would hold true no matter what, for example  $F=MA$ ,  $E=MC^2$  which we can see as examples of knowledge as onto-generative. Besides we must see our knowledge as an open whole system rooted on some ultimate source-identity.

With our understanding of onto-generative knowledge and epistemology we are in a position to tackle a few epistemological riddles or puzzles in modern epistemology without the benefit of onto-generative epistemology:

#### GOODMAN'S NEW RIDDLE OF INDUCTION

How do we establish inductive validity? Why must the future resemble the past? From Hume's old riddle on matters of fact versus relations of ideas, we may not have any knowledge of the world in so far as the world is considered independent of our perception without onto-generativity. But we do have the knowledge due to our ability to apply understanding to sensible experiences onto-generatively. Then there is the New Riddle of Induction proposed by Nelson Goodman (Fact, Fiction and Forecast 1963): How do we choose predicates of blue and green instead

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against a new or enlarged horizon of understanding. e. g. the meaning and interpretation of "Gavagai", Observation and feeling have the function of identifying, predicating and inter-predicating, which in turn combine to give results in interpretation.

bleen and grue for describing the future events in light of the fact that bleen/grue and blue/green are interdefinable. This question is to be seen as a matter of entrenched use of language by Goodman apart from his proposal of projectivity. But from the onto-generative epistemology the use of predicates have to be founded on experience of some source. If we have no actual experience of change of the colors there is no reason to introduce predicates of bleen and grue in the first place which brings superfluous content of change to the simple quality experience of blue and green. The very notion of *benti* or onto-generativity must conserve simplicity and scope as suggested by our onto-generative experience. This is the idea and principle of *jianyi* (简易) suggested in the idea of *benti* from the *Zhouyi*.

#### THE GETTIER PROBLEM

This problem shows how reality or truth may not be necessarily revealed by true belief with justification or evidence. This is because to say that belief P is true is not to say that P is true because of evidence but that the belief is justified and it is also true. Hence the truthfulness of a belief has no necessary connection with the justification of the belief. There is a logical defect in assuming essential relationship between “P is true” and “S believes that P is true and S is justified in believing so”. Despite many fixings, the Quine analysis remains insightful: the propositional attitude of believing that P is opaque and it only represents a relation between S and a string of words. This means that knowledge has to remain either intuitively true or true as supposition or hypothesis to be indefinitely confirmed. We may therefore have to see knowledge as interpretive of experience which may have to confront the reality as a whole system of beliefs which cohere. This again depends on the notion of a system or body or *ti* 体 as rooted in reality. There is an onto-generative relation between truth and knowledge as between *ben* 本 and *ti* 体. Perhaps an analysis in terms of virtue-epistemology is relevant here for we need to reflect on traits of our intellectual character in order to forge a trustworthy relation of onto-generation between our intellectual virtues and the knowledge we come to claim.

## ANOMALOUS MONISM

Anomalous Monism is monism of material substance (token identity) and psychophysical dualism (type diversity) of predicates. Its paradoxicality lies in: 1) Each mental state corresponds to a bodily state 2) Mental predicates group bodily states under the predicates 3) No possible translation or reduction of mental terms to bodily terms. This means that there is a world of mental activities over and above and yet linked to relevant physical states. Following Davidson, we may call this supervience. The question is to explain what, how and why is there supervience of the mental over the physical occurs. This means that we have to recognize that the mental emerges from the physical in a experienced observational framework of onto-generativity over long period of time. It means that we have to recognize reality of the mind by way of admitting the hard fact of non-reduction and the hard fact of experiencing emergence of the mind by simply becoming conscious or self-conscious. We may also appeal to empathy and imagination for observing and understanding the other person's unspoken thought.

Onto-generative epistemology recognizes autonomous activities of the mind once it becomes free from physicalistic restraints, yet it also requires a physical source for achieving a mental body or mental knowledge because there is an onto-generative relationship between the two.

## CONCLUSION

In the above I have pointed out how Quine's new model for analyzing and constructing knowledge as a language system with symbolic meaning subject to interpretations in some very interesting way resembles the onto-generative epistemology in Chinese philosophy. I have brought out, formulated and discussed this *benti*-epistemology in Chinese philosophy in light of an extension of Quine's model and what I have developed as Onto-generative Metaphysics and Onto-generative Epistemology in terms of interpretation based on two onto-generative principles for each. However I have not say much about the interpretation involved in the formation of each. But certainly we can regard the way that these two

disciplines are formed as constituting what I would like to call an onto-generative hermeneutics 本体诠释学.<sup>20</sup>

I have illuminated the implicit Chinese view on knowing and knowledge and at the same time expanded Quine's naturalized epistemology on the basis of a non-reductive metaphysics of experience, observation, and reflection to a holistic macro-epistemology which has a onto-generative structure. Besides, I have indicated how the *benti*-epistemology is needed for generating a *benti*-axiology (本体价值学) and *benti*-ethics (本体伦理学) which would explain and justify Chinese Philosophy of heaven 天, way 道, nature 性, determination 命/ principle 理, vital force 气, heart-mind 心, human nature 性 with its axiological and moral contents.

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**20** It is to be noticed: the 本体诠释学 has been in the past identified as "onto-hermeneutics" which in actuality is a short form for "onto-generative hermeneutics."



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ASUMAN LÄTZER-LASAR (COLOGNE)

## THE GUODIAN MANUSCRIPTS IN THEIR ARCHAEOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The following paper deals with a grave tomb that has been excavated in the Hubei Province in 1993, and which contained bamboo slips with philosophical writings on them. These bamboo slips and their content became tremendously important for Chinese philosophy and its history, because they seem to contain probably the oldest writings of the *Laozi* Book (*Daodejing*). Therefore the dating of the manuscripts forms a crucial point in the whole dispute about the genesis of the *Daodejing* and its relation to the earlier existing Confucianism. This is why after the publication in the year 1998 Allen and Williams immediately organised an international conference about the Guodian bamboo slips,<sup>1</sup> where various scholars discussed the content of the writings, linguistics and style, as well as the possibility of a single or multiple authorship.<sup>2</sup> However, the content of the bamboo slips also served as starting point for the philosophical thoughts of Guo Yi which became finally the basis for this conference.

In this context it was the wish of the editors to include a paper that provides information about the physical circumstances these writings came from. Hence this paper does not present a new analysis, but rather a review of the latest publications about the tomb and its findings. My aim here can only be to give an impression about the archaeological-

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<sup>1</sup> S. Allan/C. Williams (eds.), *The Guodian Laozi: Proceedings of the International Conference*, Dartmouth College, May 1998. *Early China Special Monograph Series*, 5 (Berkeley 2000), passim.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

historical background the bamboo slips came from. At last, this paper should be perceived as an interdisciplinary supplement to the philosophical contributions in this volume.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The state of Chu was a vassal state of the Zhou Dynasty, that, according to the myth, was founded by the grandson of the Yellow Emperor. During the Spring and Autumn period in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Chu capital moved from Danyang to Ying.<sup>3</sup> The Chu had several military battles, especially in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, when they expanded into the North, South and East. However through the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century they got besieged from the West by the powerful becoming Qin State under the reign of Qin Shi Huang Di, the later called “First emperor of China”. In the year 278 BC the Chu finally lost their capital to the Qin invaders.<sup>4</sup> Though, the Chu state remained autonomous until 223 BC, but then it became destroyed by the Qin.<sup>5</sup>

The philosophical-religious orientation of the Chu people was a mixture between Daoism, some native shaman folk belief and selected Confucian ideals. The territorial expansion additionally fostered the mixing of diverse indigenous cultures. Nearly 40 smaller states were annexed during the Chu-expansion. In the Chu period especially music and songs became the highest artistry, but also literature, as the many findings of bamboo slips in many other tombs are showing.

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**3** B. Q. Li, *The Origins of Chu culture*, in: S. Allan/C. Williams (eds.), *The Guodian Laozi: Proceedings of the International Conference*, Dartmouth College, May 1998. *Early China Special Monograph Series*, 5 (Berkeley 2000), 10. The Spring and Autumn period lasted between 770–476 BC.

**4** R. G. Henricks, *Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching: A Translation of the Startling New Documents Found at Guodian* (New York 2000), 4; Li 2000, op. cit., 10.

**5** Li 2000, op. cit., 10.

## THE EXCAVATION OF THE GRAVE

The Guodian village is nowadays located 9 km away and as part of the Jingmen city in the Hubei province.<sup>6</sup> The city Ying functioned as capital of the Chu state for about 400 years. In the Warring States period the people of Ying frequented the area around mount Ji, which served as a cemetery and ritual center.<sup>7</sup> The landscape of the cemetery possesses the perfect geomantic qualification for building tombs. This belief, called *fengshui*, used astronomical and geographical information, which were indispensable for performing any burial. Not surprisingly the archaeologists could count about 300 grave mounds ordered in more than twenty groups that are barely excavated yet.<sup>8</sup> Our Guodian manuscripts were found in the tomb called 楚墓一号 (*Chu mu yi hao*) that belongs to group I. The tomb is clearly identified as a Chu tomb, because of its orientation, style and design.<sup>9</sup>

The tomb was robbed several times, at least in October 1993. A tunnel was dug down to the southeast corner of the grave chamber. Using a hacksaw the robber cut through the outer coffin to reach to the precious grave pieces. As a result, rainwater came easily into the grave and destroyed the monument in a severe way. That was the reason why in the year 1993 Chinese archaeologists from the Jingmen City Museum decided to carry out a rescue excavation of the tomb.<sup>10</sup>

The earth-built tomb itself is rectangular and lies in 6.92 m depth. A nine m long ramp<sup>11</sup>, coming from the East, was built to bring the body and the grave furniture down into the grave chamber.<sup>12</sup> In some graves even horses and chariots were brought down the ramp and left in the

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**6** Jingmen shi bowuguan 荆門市博物館. Jingmen Guodian yihao Chumu 荆門郭店一號楚墓. *Wenwu* 文物 1997, 7, 3, 5.

**7** L. von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): The archaeological evidence* (University of California Los Angeles 2006), 4.

**8** Henricks 2000, *op. cit.*, 4.

**9** *Ibid.*, 4.

**10** Jingmen shi bowuguan 1997, *op. cit.*, 7, 3, 5.

**11** The ramps occur in graves of the Rank N/O, later of the Rank P, Q and R in Zhaojiahu. At Yutaishan and Jiudian are less examples. L. von Falkenhausen, *Social Ranking in Chu Tombs: The Mortuary Background of the Warring States Manuscript Finds*. *Monumenta Serica*, 51, 2003, 474.

**12** Z. X. Liu, *An Overview of Tomb Number One at Jingmen Guodian*, in: S. Allan/C. Williams (eds.), *The Guodian Laozi: Proceedings of the Inter-*

tomb. But it was not a standard that every grave in the Zhou period had one of these ramps.<sup>13</sup> The coffin chamber of *Chumu yihao* is 3.4 m long and 2 m wide in total and has two coffin layers<sup>14</sup>, in which the outer coffin was wooden.<sup>15</sup> The corpse was layed down on a sleeping platform in the inner coffin with his head directing to the East.<sup>16</sup> The chamber was also divided in three compartments: one for the inner coffin, one above the head and the third at the deceased's left side.<sup>17</sup> The upper compartment and the one at his side were filled with all the accompanying burial objects. This arrangement is typical for the Chu Culture and could not be seen in the tombs of the Central Plains region.<sup>18</sup> Around the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC tombs became oriented horizontal and conceptualised as room.<sup>19</sup> From then on the grave tomb mirrors the occupants terrestrial domicile but under earth.<sup>20</sup>

## FINDINGS

The grave *Chumu yihao* comprises 58 individual objects mostly made of metal. But it contained also findings made of various other materials like wood, jade, lacquer, bamboo, ceramic or textile. Graded sets of ceramic and bronze vessels are essential in the ceremonial context.<sup>21</sup> Besides, the tomb possessed the usual assemblage of bronze vessels, like tripods

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national Conerence, Dartmouth College, May 1998. Early China Special Monograph Series, 5 (Berkeley 2000), 24.

**13** During the Middle Warring States Period the shape of the entrance to the tomb (sloping passageway) was adapted by lower ranks, see von Falkenhausen 2003, op. cit., 51.

**14** Which was the minimum, see von Falkenhausen 2003, op. cit., 52.

**15** Liu 2000, op. cit., 26.

**16** See Jingmen shi bowuguan, op. cit., 37, fig. 4.

**17** Falkenhausen considers Rank N/O to have lateral compartments, but these ranks have only one coffin! See von Falkenhausen 2006, op. cit., 382. Tombs with two coffin layers are considered to hold Rank M, mediumsize. See von Falkenhausen 2003, op. cit., 464–465, 468 and 473.

**18** Li 2000, op. cit., 11.

**19** Von Falkenhausen 2003, op. cit., 444.

**20** Ibid., 473; von Falkenhausen, op. cit., 306–316.

**21** Ibid., 443 and 452. If ritual vessels are made of different materials and also both present, it may be considered that the occupant holds the Rank O, see *ibid.*, 479.

called *ding* and liquid containers called *hu*. The style of the vessels that we are facing in this tomb is typical for the Chu burials of the middle Warring States Period. Li compared the vessels especially with the ones of the Baoshan and Xinyang tomb.<sup>22</sup>

Weapons, like spears, swords, knives and halberds,<sup>23</sup> take the second largest part of the whole material. I can only highlight outstanding items like the highly decorated head of a pike or sword-shaped spear that shows ornamental spiral designs inlaid in gold. Furthermore there are swirling cloud patterns, animal-heads and phoenixes illustrated on the sheath. This notably decorated sheath was encased in silk and leather.<sup>24</sup> Besides the grave contained a bronze sword which scabbard was coated with black lacquer.<sup>25</sup> Swords are found in almost every tomb no matter which rank the occupant had.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore a bronze halberd with no handle bar shows a stylised bird design.<sup>27</sup> Worth mentioning is the share of agricultural/working tools, like a sickle or a dagger-axe for example, as well as the share of horse and chariot paraphernalia.<sup>28</sup>

Personal objects that have been used in the daily life or luxury items were enclosed to the grave inventory after the mid of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>29</sup> In our tomb for example is a bronze mirror painted with red and black lacquer, an exceptional fine work.<sup>30</sup> The mirror is decorated with calyx and cloud patterns as well as illustrations of phoenixes. The mirror was produced out of two bronze castings in which between a piece of

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**22** Li 2000, op. cit., 18 and 21, fig. 8. The tombs are dating from the second half until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The deceased in the Baoshan tomb No. 2 was a highest-ranking official, while the one from Wangshan tomb No. 1 was a member of the royal family; see von Falkenhausen 2003, op. cit., 451.

**23** See also the chart in Jingmen shi bowuguan, op. cit., 7, 48 in the center above.

**24** Liu 2000, op. cit., 27, fig. 13, 7.

**25** Ibid., 26, fig. 12, 5.

**26** Von Falkenhausen 2003, op. cit., 478.

**27** Liu 2000, op. cit., 27, fig. 12, 6.

**28** Jingmen shi bowuguan, op. cit., 48. After von Falkenhausen horse-and-chariot fittings are found in tombs of Rank M and N until the Middle Springs and Autumn period. In Warring States Period only a small number of tombs with paraphernalia occurs. Von Falkenhausen 2003, op. cit., 478.

**29** Ibid., 444 and 452.

**30** Jingmen shi bowuguan, op. cit., 39, fig. 8, 1.

silk were put in.<sup>31</sup> Bronze mirrors are a common grave gift from the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium onwards. But only the Chu people painted the mirrors with lacquer. At this time lacquer was very expensive. The price was ten times that of bronze. A group of wooden objects like the hilt for a knife, a neck-rest and diverse combs describe also items of daily use which may not be expensive, but indispensable for life and therefore for the afterlife.<sup>32</sup> Wooden figurines as no. 4 are only found in grave contexts.<sup>33</sup> They are considered to function as companion, servant or protector from the evil. Outstanding seems a round toilet case made of lacquer, that usually was used by women. It should contain different toilet articles. The lid and the rims were accentuated with bands of abstract ornaments.<sup>34</sup>

Other very personal objects come from the deads clothing, as the simply decorated cloth pearls.<sup>35</sup> Item no. 5 is a bird-headed walking staff made of bronze with splendid gold and silver inlays.<sup>36</sup> Liu identified the bird-head as a “recumbent dove”.<sup>37</sup> Another zoomorphic shape can be seen in the belt hook made of jade. While its shape forms a dragon, on its body are hybrids — phoenix head and dragon body — illustrated.<sup>38</sup>

Normally in tombs of the Zhou Dynasty we find a set of bronze bells. These bells take an important role in burial rituals. But none was found in our grave. The only music instrument was a seven-stringed zither called *qin*.<sup>39</sup>

However the major part of the findings are the bamboo slips with 804 pieces.<sup>40</sup> The bamboo slips were aptly found in the head compartment of the coffin. They were covered with mud, that no character could be even seen. After a careful documentation and numbering of the slips, so that the archaeologist could reconstruct the order of the slips afterwards, they were brought to conservators who cleaned them for about

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**31** Liu 2000, op. cit., 29.

**32** Jingmen shi bowuguan, op. cit., 42, fig. 16, 5 and 6–8.

**33** Ibid., 42, fig. 16, 4.

**34** Ibid., 42, fig. 1, 5, 1.

**35** Ibid., 39, fig. 8, 3 and 4; 43, fig. 20.

**36** Ibid., 39, fig. 8, 5.

**37** Liu 2000, op. cit., 29, fig. 13, 5.

**38** Ibid., 29, fig. 13, 2. Jingmen shi bowuguan, op. cit., 43, fig. 17. Intertwined supernatural beasts as a new concept of representing the cosmos arises during the Warring States period, see von Falkenhausen 2003, op. cit., 472.

**39** Jingmen shi bowuguan, op. cit., 41, fig. 13.

**40** Ibid., 44, fig. 22 and 48 left side of the chart.

three months.<sup>41</sup> The cleaning process exposed 730 slips with writings on them. Thereafter the scientists could separate the texts from each other by distinguishing their optic characteristics (shape of the slips and distance between the binding marks), calligraphic style and also semantic content. The optic characteristics are crucial, because ancient bamboo slips made by one hand, have the accurately same length, binding distance and shape. This is how the 71 *Laozi* slips were sorted into three groups.<sup>42</sup> *Laozi A* contains 39 slips, each 32.3 cm long with beveled ends. The distance of the binding is about 13 cm wide. Additionally the characters are smaller and near by each other than in the other two groups.<sup>43</sup> *Laozi B* consists of 18 slips, each 30.6 cm long with flat ends. The binding is also 13 cm wide.<sup>44</sup> The 14 slips of *Laozi C* are quite smaller: only 26.5 cm long, and the binding is at 10.8 cm. But the ends have the same flat shape as the B-slips.<sup>45</sup> Manuscripts made of bamboo slips describes the “economic wealth and individual preference”.<sup>46</sup>

#### CONTENT OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

First of all we have to admit that the combination and sorting of the text slips is honorably done, but also a troublesome work, that finally cannot be expected to be without possible mistakes.<sup>47</sup> However, the recent sorting is the most accepted version by the scholars until now. The scientists could decipher 16 different philosophical texts.<sup>48</sup> Beside the *Laozi* texts and the *Tai yi sheng shui*, which is an cosmological essay, the other texts are largely of Confucian nature. The main themes going through all texts are self-cultivation (*xiushen* 修身) and state governance

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**41** H. Peng, Post-Excavation Work on the Guodian Bamboo-Slip. *Laozi: A Few Points of Explanation*, in: S. Allan/C. Williams (eds.), *The Guodian Laozi: Proceedings of the International Conference*, Dartmouth College, May 1998. *Early China Special Monograph Series* (Berkeley 2000), 33 and 37, figures.

**42** Peng 2000, op. cit., 33–34.

**43** Henricks 2000, op. cit., 6–7.

**44** *Ibid.*, 7–8.

**45** *Ibid.*, 8.

**46** Von Falkenhausen 2003, op. cit., 486.

**47** Liu points out, that the sequence of the slips was muddled, see Liu 2000, op. cit., 30.

**48** Henricks 2000, op. cit., 5.

(*zhiguo* 治國). Some scholars postulate to recognize *Laozi C* and *Tai yi sheng shui* as one philosophical text, because of the same style of the characters and slips.<sup>49</sup> The content also seems to fit. We will await further discussions in the future. Some texts can possibly be ascribed to their authors. For example the *Ziyi* (text no. 3) was regarded as part of the classic “book of rites”, although Li Xueqin postulated it as a work of master Zi Si, the grandson of Confucius. Li suggested the same author for the *Wuxing* (text no. 6). In the Guodian tomb it happened to be, that these two texts were bundled together, which might support Lis theory.<sup>50</sup> In this case altogether 8 texts could now be identified as the formerly lost work of Zi Si.<sup>51</sup> But we have to be careful with this conclusion, unless there is no true evidence.

The Guodian *Laozi* is a collection of sections from the present known *Daodejing*, the book of the way and virtue. It contains 31 of the current 81 chapters.<sup>52</sup> Therefore we cannot expect the same concentration of philosophical content in the bamboo slips as in the present *Laozi* book. Figure 1 shows a list of the distinctive concepts that are included or missing in the Guodian slips after Henricks research.<sup>53</sup> Textual analysis is still in progress, so it might be incomplete. Béky assumed that the early Daoism sympathizes more with Confucianism according to the concept of ethics.<sup>54</sup> Guo Yis researches are following this direction. He states that the Guodian *Laozi* is an early version/an *Ur-text*, that was written by a first Lao Zi.<sup>55</sup> Then he found out that the later version does not contain the chapters about the “art of ruling” nor the ones with a legalist connotation.<sup>56</sup> That is why he supposes them as additions made by a second Lao Dan. The historian Sima Qian of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC mentions the possible second Lao Dan, who had a meeting with the Duke Xian of Qin in the year 374 BC.<sup>57</sup> Guo Yi comes to the conclusion that after this point actually the gap between these two philosophical schools became insurmountable.

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49 Ibid., 5.

50 Ibid., 5.

51 Ibid., 5.

52 Ibid., 17.

53 Ibid., 17–19.

54 G. Béky, *Die Welt des Tao* (Freiburg/München 1972), 28.

55 Henricks 2000, op. cit., 20.

56 Ibid., 21.

57 Ibid., 20–21.

**Fig. 1** Occurrence of terms used in the Guodian bamboo slips in comparison to the *Daodejing*

included terms in chapters	missing terms in chapters
6 of 10 deal with <i>wuwei</i> (無為, do nothing)	1 of 8 is discussing the <i>Dao</i> (道) in detail
2 of 2 with <i>shiwushi</i> (事無事, serves with no concern for affairs)	0 of 5 refer to the <i>Dao</i> as “the One”
5 of 6 with <i>pu</i> (樸, genuine, natural, uncarved wood)	1 of 6 mentions <i>tian dao/tian zhi dao</i> (天道/天之道, way of heaven)
2 of 3 with <i>zhizhu</i> (知足, be content with one’s lot)	0 of 6 about feminine mode of behaviour, passive and weak overcoming the active and strong
2 of 2 with <i>zhizhi</i> (知止, know when it is time to stop)	0 of 4 about water
	2 of 5 about the “mother”-metapher
	0 of 3 about “mother-infant” like “Way—the ten thousand things”
	nothing beyond chapter 66 of the present <i>Laozi</i>
	no “anti-aristocracy” chapter
	5 of 20 use the phrase “therefore the sage ...

The exceptional fact, that inside the tomb were no divination records, but only this philosophical texts, is still an unsolved problem.<sup>58</sup> The function of the philosophical texts cannot be considered of apotropaic service as usual. Explanation can be given by the fact of robbery, and that we don’t know, if and which slips were actually stolen. Another indicative argument might have been seen in the enclosed text *Ziyi* (text no. 3), in which there is written that one should “not perform divination, nor ritual”! At least this would correlate with the statement about a decline of ritual during the Warring States Period.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>59</sup> Von Falkenhausen 2003, op. cit., 492.

## DATING OF THE GRAVE

The dating is essential for the originality of the *Daodejing*. The destruction of the capital Ying by the Qin people in the year 278 BC gives us a terminus ante quem for the dating of the tomb. That means, it must be erected and sealed at least before 278 BC! The small findings lead to further information. Firstly, to accompany bamboo strips into the grave has been a development that happened in the Warring States Period.<sup>60</sup> For a narrower time span Li Boqian compared the style of the vessels from the Guodian tomb with the ones from the Baoshan tomb No. 2, that is dated to the year 316 BC.<sup>61</sup> He noticed strong similarities between the assemblages. He even thinks that the bronze mirrors may derive from the same mould. That is why he added both tombs in his chronology to the Middle Warring States Period, called No. 6. His Middle Warring States period lasted from about 350 until 280 BC. Unless we have no coins or records with precise dates, we finally have to state, that we can only date the tomb into a relative chronology during the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

## THE OWNER OF THE GRAVE SEEN IN HIS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The type of the tomb defines the owner as a member of the aristocracy. Von Falkenhausen assigned it to Rank N/O.<sup>62</sup> However, due to the inventory and the fact, that there are two layers of coffins in the grave chamber, the occupant is assumed to hold only the lowest elite rank, the *shi* (士) class.<sup>63</sup> During the time of the Warring States Period a new social stratum of intellectuals emerged out of the *shi*-rank<sup>64</sup>, so it is not surprising that even a lower elite rank possessed manuscripts in his tomb. Though, we also have to emphasize that at this time tomb inventories do not serve as parameters for privileges anymore, but for cultural values,

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**60** Although bamboo strips as writing surface were known since the Late Shang, *ibid.*, 484.

**61** Comparisons with the Baoshan tomb no. 2 (316 BC) and Wangshan tomb no. 1 (332 BC) lead to a dating into the late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, see Henricks 2000, *op. cit.*, 4; Li 2000, *op. cit.*, 21, fig. 8.

**62** Von Falkenhausen 2003, *op. cit.*, 485.

**63** Henricks 2000, *op. cit.*, 4.

**64** Von Falkenhausen 2003, *op. cit.*, 441.

prestige and social status.<sup>65</sup> It is not sure, if the occupant was a studied man. In a “culture of display” it was important to own these manuscripts, but not necessarily being able to read them.<sup>66</sup>

The tomb contains surprisingly no personal records about the occupant, nor any burial inventories or divination texts, though merely philosophical texts. Only one possibly concrete hint is given to the identity of the dead, an eared cup (耳杯) with an inscription. The inscription can be read as “Teacher of the Eastern Palace” (東宮之師).<sup>67</sup> The crown prince used to inhabit the Eastern Palace, that is why scholars assume the occupant to be the tutor of a Crown Prince. Although it is very doubtful that the crown prince has been taught by the lowest rank aristocrat.<sup>68</sup> Education in China was most important, the Emperor would not let the teacher of the crown prince escape to war. But the Guodian tomb comprises plenty of bronze halberds, swords, pikes and spears as shown above. So we may assume that the deceased of the Chu tomb No. 1 participated in some of the battles happening at that time. Anthropological analyses, that have not been done yet, would generate more knowledge about possible injuries or lifestyle of the deceased. Under the circumstances of the condition of the grave and the lost findings an absolute image of the deceased identity is not fully reconstructable yet. But we may state, that it was a male member of the *shi*-rank with a notion to luxury objects.

#### SUMMARY AND MEANING OF THE MANUSCRIPTS FOR THE HISTORY OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

The Chu tomb No.1 was made for an inhabitant of the city Ying, who owned a lower rank in the social elite. Beside the typical grave goods, like ritual vessels, weaponry and objects of personal use, the occupant of the tomb was buried with a collection of diverse philosophical texts written on bamboo slips. In the Zhou period manuscripts as accompanying grave object were most likely found in tombs of close relatives of the ruling family, high-ranking aristocrats and magnates. This changed

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 488.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 495–496, with footnote 166.

<sup>67</sup> Henricks 2000, op. cit., 4.

<sup>68</sup> The teachers of a crown prince are normally royal ministers, at least a Middle Magnate, see von Falkenhausen 2003, op. cit., 496.

in the Warring States period, where manuscripts suddenly transformed into a prestige object.<sup>69</sup> Members of lower ranks usurped the style of the tomb and its furnishing of the higher elites.<sup>70</sup> It could be possible that the occupant even was not aware of the content of the three bundles and its sections of the *Daodejing*.

But finding these texts reactivated the debate about the authorship and originality of the *Daodejing*, that has lasted for thousands of years in Chinese intellectual history. One of the main reasons for this continuing debate might be the vanishingly little knowledge about the historical person Lao Zi. Even the historian Sima Qian recorded doubtful information about the existence of Lao Zi. Besides, Confucius never mentioned him, as well as the *Daodejing* did not bear any testimony to the legendary meeting with Confucius. In addition the first historically comprehensible citations of the *Daodejing* are from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. At the Dartmouth conference an *opinio communis* was manifested that Lao Dan wrote the *Laozi* text in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, but then it is still not clear, why the Guodian tomb holds not the complete, but only sections of the text.<sup>71</sup> Notwithstanding that the later Mawangdui tomb for example that dates to the year 168 BC<sup>72</sup> comprises two versions of the full and complete *Laozi* Manuscript. From this point of view it is still not possible to give any clear answer to the question whether the Guodian *Laozi* was copied from a complete text or whether it was the first stage of a collection of various sections. It is assumed that in ancient times texts were rather orally transmitted<sup>73</sup> and only written down, not by copying, but from memory. In fact, the lower social rank of the deceased makes it justifiable, that we are not facing the genuine texts written by their original authors, but “copies of copies”.<sup>74</sup>

Finally we can state, that the discovery of the Guodian bamboo slips in the present tomb of the 4<sup>th</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century enlightened the philosophical and historical discussion, at the same time made it more complex yet. Nevertheless, it seems that the enormous gap between China's most important philosophical schools, the Confucianism and Daoism, begins to become smaller. Moreover the finding of the Guodian manu-

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69 Ibid., 495.

70 Von Falkenhausen 2006, op. cit., chapter 9, 370–399.

71 Henricks 2000, op. cit., 19.

72 Ibid., 1.

73 Béky 1972, op. cit., 31.

74 Henricks 2000, op. cit., 22.

scripts teaches us, that our handling of Chinese historical texts has to become more adjusted.<sup>75</sup> Ancient texts have their own transforming and dynamic development. They are not static or stiff. Then, from the archaeological perspective, it is necessary to analyse the circumstances and accompanying grave objects more accurately to gain a clearer image about the function and meaning of such documents. Further archaeological, anthropological and philological works are expected, so that speculations about the originality of the *Daodejing* and its following controversial debated questions do not remain conjectural.

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75 E. Giele, Using Early Chinese Manuscripts as Historical Source Materials, *Monumenta Serica*, 51, 2003, passim.



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HANS-GEORG MOELLER (CORK)

## EMOTIONS AND MORALITY IN CONFUCIANISM AND DAOISM

In this paper, I intend to discuss connections between emotions, or emotionality, and morality in early Confucianism and Daoism. Such connections have been explored in many philosophical contexts in East and West and at various time periods. Given the limited scope of this paper, I will refrain from looking into broader comparative aspects of this theme. I do hope, however, that the present collaborative research project of which my paper is part, may help in shedding light on some larger issues which I cannot consider here.

### I. EMOTIONAL IMMEDIACY AS THE FOUNDATION OF CONFUCIAN MORALITY

A major conceptual link between emotionality and morality in Confucianism in general, and in particular in the *Analects of Confucius* and in the *Mencius*, is *xiao* or “filial piety” (also translated as “filial responsibility”<sup>1</sup> or, more broadly, “family reverence”<sup>2</sup>). Quite famously, the *Analects* state as early as in section 1.2 that “filial and fraternal responsibility” are “the root of authoritative conduct (*ren*).” *Ren* (“authoritative conduct,” “humaneness,” “benevolence”) is one of the cardinal virtues in Confucianism, and to be *ren* means to have achieved a very high

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<sup>1</sup> See R. T. Ames and H. Rosemont Jr. in *The Analects of Confucius. A Philosophical Translation*. New York: Ballantine, 1998. See pp. 58–59. All translations from the *Analects* in this paper are taken from this source.

<sup>2</sup> See R. Ames and H. Rosemont Jr., *Xiao Jing: The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009.

degree of personal cultivation and excellence. As suggested in the just quoted maxim, the beginning of this social and moral cultivation process is typically identified with exercising one's role as a son or daughter during one's childhood.<sup>3</sup> It is at this very early stage in one's life that one has to begin practicing how to behave well.

I think that it is not merely a metaphorical or poetical gesture that *xiao* is said to be the "root" of *ren* in that paradigmatic declaration in the Analects. Ancient Chinese notions of personhood and the self<sup>4</sup> often integrate mental and physical connotations and thus it is not unreasonable to assume that the Analects indicate here that the project of moral cultivation is not restricted to an intellectual learning of moral principles, but also includes biological aspects. It was probably considered as even more important to literally embody moral behaviour and virtuous conduct; and doing so required the nourishment of the root of morality in oneself basically as soon as one was born. Early Confucianism attempted to physically establish moral virtue in young human beings by training their emotional attachment to their immediate social environment, i. e. their family members. The emotional construction of the self is seen as the necessary foundation for training us to literally feel what is right and thus, quite contrary to Kantian deontic moral philosophy, to act right not as an effect of the rational insight into one's duties, but rather out of inclination. If, as a child, one successfully cultivates the root of filial piety within one's emotionality, and, as we learn in the Mencius, then succeeds as an adult in preserving it, one will have within one's physical nature all the preconditions for exercising moral excellence in society.

Another famous passage in the Analects<sup>5</sup> illustrates this well. When Zaiwo, one of Confucius' disciples, complains to the master that the "three-year mourning period on the death of one's parents is already too long" and should be abridged to just one year, Confucius asks him back if he would feel comfortable with returning to the habit of "eating fine rice and wearing colourful brocade." When Zaiwo then says that, indeed, he would, Confucius grudgingly encourages him to do so, but at the

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**3** On the notion of *xiao* and, in particular, on its importance for the Confucian "role ethics" see the Introduction by Henry Rosemont Jr. and Roger Ames to their translation of the *Xiao Jing*. Ibid., 2009. 22–64.

**4** D. Summer, "Self and Embodiment in Early Chinese Texts." Forthcoming in J. Dockstader, H.-G. Moeller, and G. Wohlfart (eds.), *Deconstructions of Identity: East and West*. Nordhausen: Bautz.

**5** *Analects* 17.21.

same time explains that an “exemplary person”, a *junzi*, could never do this precisely because they would not feel comfortable with eating lavish meals and wearing shiny clothes so relatively soon after their parent’s death. Confucius then goes on to explain that he considers Zaiwo “perverse”—as Ames and Rosemont translate *bu ren* here —because he is unable to feel the need to care for and about his parents for three years after their death in reciprocity for the care that he received from them as an infant in his first three years of his life.

This passage shows rather clearly that for Confucius moral excellence and its expression in ritually correct behaviour (including such basic and everyday aspects as how one dresses and what one wears) has to be rooted or physically engrained in one’s feelings or emotionality. Exemplary persons have, as it is natural and common, received love and care from their parents as infants when they were entirely dependant on them, and they healthily responded to this by developing their own reciprocally appropriate feelings of love and care towards them. Anyone who, for whatever reason (for instance for the lack of love and care received from one’s parents or for personal deficiencies) is unable to develop such feelings towards one’s next of kin will be emotionally crippled and thus, so to speak, morally disabled. Not so different from the present-day tendency to trace sexual perversions back to abuse experiences or deviant inclinations in one’s early years, Confucius in the Analects ascribes Zaiwo’s moral perversion to his inability to properly cultivate the root of filial piety as a child. We do not know if Zaiwo’s moral perversion is ultimately due to neglect by his parents or to his own neglect of them, but this is quite irrelevant with respect to the outcome that Confucius is facing now, namely the emotionally unhealthy Zaiwo who simply does not feel uncomfortable to eat and dress luxuriously only one year after the death of his parents.

From a present-day Western perspective, one might sympathize with Zaiwo and agree with him that one year after the death of a loved one we are usually—and even should be, if we want to function well both socially and psychologically—finally able to “get over it” and to “move on.” Most people today are able to return to a “normal life” some time after a loved one has died; and in our society we tend to advise those who cannot do so to look for some psychological consultancy rather than praising them morally. Still, even most contemporary Westerners will find it easy to personally relate to Confucius’ basic claim, namely that we ought to change our ways of dressing and eating for a while after the death of a close family member. It is still—though increasingly less—customary to

dress in plain black at a Western funeral and to serve only very simple food at such an occasion. Even our culture has not yet lost all connections with what the Analects expressed in China more than two millennia ago, namely that it is a matter of moral decency to alter our behaviour when our parents pass away, and that we should do this out of a feeling of emotional urgency. Even today, we would find it slightly “perverse” if a child would dress fancily and go to a posh party on the night after their mother’s or father’s death. Probably most people would react to such behavior in a similar way as Confucius did to Zaiwo’s: We would perhaps say to such a person: Well, if you really feel comfortable in going to this party and dressing like that, then there’s not much we can do—but in this case there seems to be something fundamentally wrong with your emotions, and your moral constitution seems to be seriously damaged.

There is a huge gap between the temporal extension of the mourning period that Confucius believed to be “natural” and ethically correct and what is considered appropriate by current Western standards, but such differences may well be explained as culturally, historically, or sociologically relative. There is probably no “objectively” correct length of the mourning period, and, in particular, no objective or correct way of dressing or eating habits after the death of a family member. Instead, we are obviously dealing here with “social constructs” that vary in different social contexts. Notwithstanding such often huge concrete practical differences, the basic connection between emotionality and morality that is expressed by Confucius in the Analects is not completely alien even to modern Western readers—including philosophers.<sup>6</sup> Despite the Kantian imperative that morality ought not to be grounded on emotional “inclination,” in everyday life, we all are still often “Confucian” in this respect, irrespective of us being from the East or West. We would still “normally” be appalled by someone who does not react emotionally, and consequently behaviourally, to the death of their parents in the ways that our culture considers to be decent or appropriate, and thus would tend to consider any such person morally wrong.

The book of Mencius continues and expands the Confucian ethics of emotionality. While filial piety is still depicted as a cornerstone of emotional morality, the appeals to human emotion are extended to a larger variety of situations and contexts. The dialogues in the Mencius

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<sup>6</sup> Early modern Western “moral sense theory” as introduced by Francis Hutcheson, Joseph Butler, and Shaftesbury proposed a connection between morality and sensual perception.

are usually longer and more detailed than those in the Analects and thus one can obtain more intricate insights into the Confucian coupling of morality and emotionality through this work. In particular, the numerous debates between Mencius and rulers or politicians of his time reveal the important role that emotional cultivation was supposed to play in what was considered virtuous government or ethical political rulership.

A famous passage in Mencius 1A: 7 relates an exchange Mencius had with King Xuan of Qi. Mencius instructs the king on good government, on maintaining peace, and on the personal qualities that a “true king” needs to have. In this context, he mentions an incident that he had heard about and that had happened when the king had been watching an ox being led to be killed in a sacrificial rite. The text quite nicely describes how the king was emotionally moved when watching the poor animal walking to its death. He said “Spare it. I cannot bear to see it shrinking with fear, like an innocent man going to the place of execution.” When asked by the conductors of the ritual if therefore the ceremony should be abandoned, the king replied: “That is out of the question. Use a lamb instead.”<sup>7</sup>

The reaction of the king will most likely surprise modern Western readers for its lack of moral coherence. Why should the killing of a sheep be less of a reason for pity than the killing of an ox? From the perspective of an ethics based on principles and rational reflection the reaction of the king seems hardly praiseworthy. Does he not understand that killing an ox or a sheep is, morally speaking, equally problematic? However, this is not how Mencius looks at the issue—his ethical interest in the king’s reaction is not based on an analysis of his moral principles or maxims and their rational coherence. Even less, Mencius is interested in developing the case into a moral discourse on animal rights or vegetarianism. While acknowledging the inconsistent reasoning of the king, he refrains from criticizing him for this on moral grounds. Instead, he focuses on the ethical relevance of the emotional reaction of the king.

Mencius asks the king if the report about his emotional reaction was correct, and when the king confirms this, Mencius states: “The heart behind your action is sufficient to enable you to become a true king.”<sup>8</sup> And he further explains that the king displayed “the way of a benevolent (*ren*) man” since the “attitude of a gentleman (*junzi*) is this: once having

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7 D. C. Lau. *Mencius*. London: Penguin, 1970. 55.

8 Ibid.

seen them alive, he cannot bear to see them die, and once having heard their cry, he cannot bear to eat their flesh. That is why the gentleman keeps his distance from the kitchen.”<sup>9</sup> Mencius then morally instructs the king—not by suggesting he should correct his faulty understanding of animal rights—but by encouraging him to extend his sympathy for an animal that he saw to the people living in his state. Mencius appreciates that the king still possesses the right “heart” (*xin*), namely the emotional, mental, and physical capacities to feel the appropriate feelings and thus to act morally correct. For Mencius, this episode shows that the king is, unlike Zaiwu, not “morally perverse.” If the king succeeds in further cultivating his moral emotions he may eventually become a “true king”, i. e. a morally good ruler who will be able to establish good government.

Whereas Confucius in the Analects points out the capacity to feel love for one’s family members and thus the urge to care for them in life and death as a most important emotional foundation for behaving in line with ritual propriety (*li*) and for developing the “authoritative conduct” (*ren*) of a “gentleman” (*junzi*), Mencius describes the capacity to feel compassion, pity, and sympathy for any living being in one’s presence, be it an animal or a human, as essential for one’s ability to be *ren* and to act as a *junzi*. Mencius states explicitly that it is exactly this emotional set-up that makes it so uncomfortable for a *junzi* to go the kitchen—which at the times before packed and processed food products was still a place where animals were slaughtered. Again, Mencius is not at all interested in the rational moral inconsistency between eating meat and being emotionally appalled by witnessing how animals are killed, but rather in the emotional characteristics of the benevolent person of authoritative conduct. It is this emotional quality that makes a human being moral, and not the consistency of his or her moral reasoning. Similarly, a morally good ruler will be one who feels instantaneous empathy for those around him and those under his rule rather than one who may have studied some strategies for seemingly efficient government. The emotional capacity to immediately feel the right feeling and then to more or less automatically act upon it was regarded as the basis of morally excellence. This emotional immediacy is, I believe, at the heart of the Confucian moral philosophy that appears in the Analects and in the Mencius.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

## II. EMOTIONAL EQUANIMITY AND DAOIST AMORALITY

A crucial point of disagreement between early Confucianism and early Daoism concerns their respective assessments of emotionality. As outlined above, Confucian ethics were based on emotional cultivation. To achieve a socially and behaviourally correct emotional immediacy was believed to be the foundation for moral excellence, personal refinement, and social harmony. The Daoists, on the other hand, distrusted this approach and believed it to be dangerous for both society and individuals. They were concerned about the potentially unhealthy effects of emotional cultivation and instead advocated, and apparently also practiced, methods for calming one's feelings.

The most dramatic difference between early Confucians and Daoists is, arguably, their attitude towards death. As described above, for the Confucians a person's degree of filial piety (*xiao*) as the root of benevolence or authoritative conduct (*ren*) showed itself most conspicuously at the occasion of the death of a close family member. The grief and related feelings that a person displays when a loved one dies directly shows the state of their emotional and thus also their moral cultivation. The strong Confucian concern with mourning and funeral rites clearly reflects this. These rites and conventions were central to the Confucian project of establishing a harmonious society consisting of well-feeling and well-behaving individuals. One's performance after the death of one's parents or spouse, for instance, would visibly indicate to society one's "true heart" and, by extension, also indicate the social health of a community or a state. Given this cultural and customary context, many passages in the Zhuangzi dealing with death and the reactions to it must have been perceived as quite shocking provocations at the time. In stark contrast to the Confucian moral exemplars, the Daoist sages in the Zhuangzi do not mourn when facing the death of people close to them.

Probably the most famous of these scandalous passages in the Zhuangzi describes Zhuangzi's reaction after the death of his wife. When Zhuangzi's best friend Hui Shi comes to condole, he finds the new widower drumming and singing.<sup>10</sup> Such comportment has a rather appalling effect even on today's Western readers of the text. It must have been even more disturbing, though, to Zhuangzi's contemporaries. In direct viola-

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<sup>10</sup> See A. C. Graham. *Chuang-Tzu. The Inner Chapters*. Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett, 2001. 123–124.

tion of all that was taken to constitute decent demeanour, Zhuangzi not only shows no signs of grief, but demonstrates very much “in the face” of his friend his ease and happiness by making music. This not only unconventional but openly anti-conventional behaviour (jubilant music was among the last things one was supposed to enjoy at a funeral and for a long time after) displeases even Hui Shih greatly, who himself was not a Confucian. Quite outraged, he criticizes Zhuangzi for his “most shameful” behaviour. Zhuangzi, however, serenely explains to Hui Shi that the customary expressions of grief after the death of a family member only indicate a wrong way of life based on a misunderstanding of nature and its changes. The contemporary emotional and moral standards in society as expressed in the dominating Confucian doctrines thus appear as entirely mistaken and unnatural. Zhuangzi justifies his behaviour as indeed the correct emotional attitude towards death which, unfortunately, is presently disesteemed because of misguided Confucian social norms.

The anti-conventional behaviour displayed by Zhuangzi after the death of his wife is apparently meant to be shocking for didactical reasons. People are so much immersed into Confucian standards for emotional behaviour that they no longer question it. For Zhuangzi, however, the philosophical assumptions underlying these standards are mistaken, and people need to be perplexed so that they will be enabled to return from their states of unhealthy emotional excitement to a state of healthy emotional equanimity. Other figures in the book of Zhuangzi show in a less confrontational way what such equanimity is like. A passage in chapter six in the Zhuangzi introduces a Daoist “artist of mourning” named Mengsun Cai who “wailed when his mother died but did not shed a tear, in his inward heart he did not suffer, conducting the funeral he did not grieve.”<sup>11</sup> Despite his emotional coldness, Mengsun Cai is considered to be “the best of mourners” in his community. As in some other passages in the Zhuangzi, the Daoist justification of Mengsun Cai is ironically put into the mouth of Confucius who explains to his stunned disciple Yan Hui why Mengsun Cai is truly a sage.

Mengsun Cai has, just like Zhuangzi and several other personae in the text, understood that life and death are equally valuable and necessary phases in the continuous change of nature. There is no reason to

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 90. For a philosophical analysis of this story that is somewhat similar to mine see P. D'Ambrosio, “The Role of a Pretending Tree: Hermits, Social Constructs, and ‘Self’ in the *Zhuangzi*.” Forthcoming in J. Dockstader, H.-G. Moeller, and G. Wohlfart (eds.), op. cit.

prefer one over the other or to look at life as being better or more authentic than death. If life and death, just like day and night, or Yin and Yang for that matter, are two mutually complementary aspects of the way of natural change and continuity, than there is absolutely no need for making such emotional “fuss” about death as the Confucians usually do. Their insistence on feeling grief and sadness, and to express it through tears and wailing is an unnecessary exercise at best and a cause of a lot of personal and social harm at worst. Mengsun Cai, unlike Zhuangzi after the death of his wife, outwardly follows ritual propriety by acting in compliance with the rules of decency—and thus he does not shock his community—but he still provides the people around him with an example of how to remain healthy and emotionally uncorrupted within an unhealthy and emotionally corrupted society. By being perfectly at ease during a funeral he shows his immunity towards what, from a Daoist perspective, may be seen as the emotionally perverting effects of Confucian moral and behavioural standards.

Facing one’s own mortality and the death of loved ones and close family members is arguably the most emotionally upsetting experience in human life. From a Confucian perspective, funeral rites channel the emotions that naturally arise at such an occasion in ways that are morally appropriate and ultimately beneficial and healthy for both individuals and the group. From a Daoist perspective, however, the Confucian cultivation of upsetting emotions is not helpful at all. In the Daoist view, the cultivation of emotional equanimity is far more appropriate. It reflects a correct understanding of the Dao or the course of nature and, accordingly, also makes individuals and society emotionally healthier. For them, the severe pain and grief that society demands of itself at the occasion of death does not at all indicate its emotional and moral rightness, but, to the contrary, its state of delusion. The emotional “errors” we tend to commit when facing death are, for them, a, or perhaps the, prime example for our general emotional and moral corruption. Therefore, the only true “artist of mourning” is the one who remains emotionally completely untouched by a funeral. Rather than showing his moral excellence at such an occasion, he gives a striking display of having cultivated equanimity to such perfection that even death cannot upset him.

The Daodejing is less vivid and immediate in style, and operates much less with anecdotes and stories than the Zhuangzi and other early Daoist works. Philosophically speaking, however, it is very much in line with these when advocating emotional equanimity. It expresses this view, perhaps even more appropriately, only in a more detached and im-

personal way. A paradigmatic chapter in the *Daodejing* articulating the Daoist maxim of emotional calm is, at least in my reading, the twelfth: “The five colors make one’s eyes blind. Galloping horses and hunting in the fields make one’s heart mad. Goods that are difficult to obtain obstruct one’s ways. The five tastes make one’s palate obtuse. The five tones make one’s ear deaf.”<sup>12</sup>

Not only when facing death, humans tend to potentially harmful emotional excitement. We are constantly exposed to events and objects that stimulate and arouse our feelings in every-day life. What we see (“the five colors”) can emotionally stir us just as what we eat (“the five tastes”) or what we hear (“the five tones”). Similarly our daily activities (such as riding or hunting) and cravings (the desire for possessions) can easily upset us emotionally. The *Daodejing* points out in this chapter how we are permanently faced with emotional challenges that may, at least in the long run, make us suffer. Human life is on a day-to-day basis under emotional pressure. What we nowadays call “stress” can, from a Daoist perspective, be understood as the mental and physical wear and tear resulting from being emotionally overcome by our daily life. What we hear, see, and do can become unbearable if we get overexcited by it. There is a constant danger that we develop habits of emotional attachment and investment in activities or sensual experiences. In order to avoid such harm, Daoist philosophy advocates the cultivation of calm.

In the *Daodejing*, as in many Confucian texts, correct emotional cultivation is particularly important in a political context. Concretely, present and future rulers are the main “targets” of emotional education and training. In accordance with their general philosophical views on emotions, Confucian texts usually highlight the need for the ruler to cultivate the capacity to feel the correct emotions to the correct degree at the correct time, while Daoism points out that the generally correct emotional attitude that a sage ruler should cultivate and practice is equanimity. An impressive portrait of the Daoist sage ruler as an example of emotional calmness can be found in chapter 20 of the *Daodejing*. Here, the ruler is characterized as having “the heart of an idiot” and, in particular, as being “like an infant that does not yet smile.”<sup>13</sup> The heart (*xin*) of the sage ruler, as it is clear from the thematic context of chapter 20, is “idiotic” in the sense that it does not get emotionally excited even during major

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<sup>12</sup> H.-G. Moeller, *Daodejing (Laozi). A Complete Translation and Commentary*. Chicago: Open Court, 2007. 29.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

social festivities, celebrations, or “events” as people often say today. The sage ruler remains “stupidly” calm in the midst of great popular excitement. Just as Mengsun Cai in the *Zhuangzi* managed to be emotionally unmoved during times of public display of grief, the sage ruler in the *Daodejing* manages to be emotionally unmoved during times of public display of joy—as if he did not even understand what was going on. The text depicts the ruler as having returned to the pre-emotional state of a child that does not yet smile.

Unlike a Confucian sage ruler, the perfect ruler in the *Daodejing* is not empathic, he does not feel with the people, but rather provides society with an inner calmness that stabilizes it from within. Very much in line with the image of the wheel in chapter eleven of the *Daodejing*, the ruler is, literally speaking, the motionless hub at the center of the spokes that allows them to circulate harmoniously and efficaciously. His capacity to remain completely emotionally unmoved serves the function of keeping the emotional balance of society intact. Images of stillness and immobility abound in Daoist texts, and are in more or less immediate semantic opposition to the very term “emotion” which, derived from Latin, literally means “to be moved.” It has to be stressed that in line with the basic Daoist maxim *wu wei er wu bu wei* (“doing nothing and nothing is undone”)<sup>14</sup> the (e)motionlessness of the sage (just as the motionlessness of the wheel) is seen as the intrinsic foundation of orderly and harmonious (e)motion. The Daoist sage ruler’s emotional calm prevents society from falling victim to its own emotional passions. Without force, the sage ruler’s equanimity does not erase the people’s feelings and desires, but keeps them in check.

The *Zhuangzi* is particularly outspoken about the dangers of emotional excitement with respect to politics—and in connection with morality. Emotionally excited rulers typically also display moral excitement. If, in line with the Confucian ideal of rulership, the king or emperor is one whose emotions are always adequate, then he will also know and do what is morally correct. He will thus develop a strong political and moral self-confidence and self-righteousness. An emotionally charged ruler will feel that he is doing the right thing whenever he acts. This, according to the *Zhuangzi*, can become dangerous and pathological.

The phenomenon of committing most violent and destructive acts precisely because one immediately feels that what one does is morally

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<sup>14</sup> See chapter 48 in the *Daodejing*; *ibid.*, 115.

right is probably universal. There are countless historical examples of feeling not only entitled but even obliged to creating havoc and, indeed, sometimes to committing mass murder, out of emotional excitement about the righteousness of one's actions and beliefs. This is what the Zhuangzi points out in the—shockingly provocative—analogies it draws between those who at its time were regarded as great moral heroes (such as the sage rulers Yao or the Confucian ethical exemplars Zeng Zi and Shi Yu) and as moral villains (such as the brutal tyrant Jie and the infamous criminal Robber Zhi). One passage states: “Formerly when Yao governed the world he made everybody exultantly delight in nature, which is excitement; and when Jie governed the world he made everyone suffer miserably in his nature, which is discontent. To be excited or discontented is to go counter to the Power (*de*); and nothing in the world which goes counter to the Power can last for long.”<sup>15</sup> The Zhuangzi continues to explain that after the great sage ruler Yao the world became “agitated by restless ambitions, and only after that ... you had the conduct of robber Zhi on the one hand and of Zeng and Shi on the other.”<sup>16</sup>

Great emotional investment and feelings of moral righteousness in politics pose a threat to peace and social harmony. They can easily prove to be divisive and create social contention and conflict. Once one is feeling strongly, and moral feelings are among the strongest humans tend to have—then one may also act strongly. Moreover, moral emotions are usually double-edged. By feeling moral awe for some people and the actions they perform, one is likely to feel moral disdain for other people and their behaviour. Once there are strong moral emotions in society and in politics, they will, at least in part, also include feelings of disapproval, condemnation and what has been called “moral anger.”<sup>17</sup> Emotionally excited “moral anger,” particularly in politics, can have disastrous effects. The Zhuangzi thus declares: “I am inclined to think that sagehood and knowledge are the wedges of the stocks and the cangue, that Goodwill (*ren*) and Duty (*yi*) are the pin and hole of fetters and manacles. How do I know that Zeng and Shi are not the whistling arrows which signal

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15 A. C. Graham. *Chuang-Tzu. The Inner Chapters*. Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett, 2001. 211.

16 Ibid.

17 For a more detailed discussion of this issue see the chapter on “The ‘Morality of Anger’” in H.-G. Moeller. *The Moral Fool. A Case for Amoralität*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. 53–63.

the attack of tyrant Jie and robber Zhi?”<sup>18</sup> Once moral sentiment is introduced as the major indicator of being personally right and socially correct, pathological consequences are virtually unavoidable. Instead of following the Confucian project of the cultivation of moral emotionality, the Zhuangzi and the Daodejing warn of the dire consequences that are bound to result from fostering ethical excitement.

In conclusion, it can be said that the core texts of early Daoism, the Daodejing and the Zhuangzi, view the Confucian project of cultivating emotional immediacy which is supposed to result in morally correct behaviour of individuals and, accordingly, in an orderly and harmonious society as inherently flawed. These Daoists text assume that the moral emotions that the Confucians believe to be “natural” (such as grief at the occasion of the death of a family member) are not so natural at all, but rather symptoms of a “bad philosophy”, i. e. of a misunderstanding of the Dao or the course of nature. From a Daoist perspective, the Confucian emotional immediacy, as can be seen in social and political practice, has not at all led to beneficial results. Its unnatural foundation is shown in the pathological effects that moral sentiment has had on individuals and society. In order to counter the emotional and moral perversion that Confucian ritual practices and political ideals have created in individuals and society, the early Daoist texts advocate the cultivation of emotional equanimity, which, in their view, is much more in accordance with the Dao and thus also much more efficacious and healthy.

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18 Graham 2001, op. cit., 213.



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ARRAN GARE (MELBOURNE)

# **DAOIC PHILOSOPHY AND PROCESS METAPHYSICS**

## Overcoming the Nihilism of Western Civilization

### ABSTRACT

Taking as a point of departure Professor Guo Yi's defence of Daoic philosophy to provide values lacking in Western civilization, it is argued that in light of the global ecological crisis, a more creative synthesis of Chinese and Western thought is required, a synthesis building on earlier efforts to synthesise Chinese and Western thought begun by Leibniz and taken much further by Joseph Needham. This project is seen as more than complementing Western science with values deriving from Daoic philosophy; it involves a transformation of science to incorporate Daoic philosophy into science. Through science, people can then appreciate that humans are products of and creative participants within a creative nature and orient themselves to live by values generated within nature. It is argued that this transformation of science has been in process for some time. Building on Leibniz's philosophical opposition to Newtonianism it has developed up to the present in opposition to mechanistic materialism as the tradition of process metaphysics. The most advanced development of this anti-mechanistic tradition within science, it is suggested, is theoretical ecology, and as such, this provides the foundation for the creation of the ecological civilization called for by Chinese environmentalists to address the global ecological crisis.

## INTRODUCTION

Professor Guo Yi's paper in this volume, 'Metaphysics, Nature and Mind – The Main Idea of Daoic Philosophy', is challenging in more ways than one. It is a diagnosis of the current crisis facing both Western and Chinese civilizations, arguing that despite the unquestionable success of Western science in achieving power over the world, it has undermined the metaphysical basis for upholding values. The paper offers Daoic Philosophy as a basis for upholding values, providing an exposition of it and showing at the same time how the achievements of science can be given a place as a tool of life, not as an end in itself. This is challenging to begin with because of the ambitiousness of what is claimed for Daoic philosophy; but this is only the beginning. The proposal involves characterizing not only the main tradition of thought of Chinese civilization, but the thought of Western civilization. This proposal is presented in English, with all the problems of characterizing and translating Chinese thought using terms in English that are themselves highly problematic, at a German university. The terms 'science' and 'metaphysics' are cases in point. This makes the defence of this proposal difficult, demanding a leap of imagination and a suspension of disbelief for Westerners to accept that Daoic philosophy should be taken as the primary tradition of metaphysical thought and Western thought subordinated to it at a time when the domination of the world by Western thought, including the language used to characterize the differences between Western and Chinese thought, has never been so complete.

However, there are reasons for taking this proposal very seriously. Largely as a consequence of the domination of the world by Western culture we are not only struggling with its nihilism but facing an ecological crisis that threatens all civilization, humanity, and even life on Earth. I agree with Professor Guo Yi that by turning its back on metaphysics, mainstream philosophy in the West has been trivialized, and as a consequence, marginalized. This ecological crisis has inspired a major movement of thought within mainland China challenging what had been regarded as the spectacular success of government policies based on Western thought in industrializing and modernizing Chinese society. People are calling not only for a revival of Chinese traditions of thought, but the creation of an ecological civilization as a successor to industrial civilization. Professor Guo Yi's paper comes at a time when such a synthesis of European and Chinese traditions of thought is coming to

be seen by many as imperative not only to give a place to values, but to develop a civilization which will enable humanity to survive.

So, it is not the ambitiousness of Professor Guo Yi's paper that I want to call into question, but that it is not ambitious enough. That is, I will suggest that we do need a synthesis of traditions of thought of Chinese and Western (or European) civilization, but, as called for by Chinese environmentalists, this synthesis will involve a more thoroughgoing rethinking of these traditions than is suggested by Professor Guo Yi. To this end I will argue that while Professor Guo Yi is justified in recognizing defining characteristics of thought characterizing Chinese and European civilizations, full justice has not been done to these traditions, or to previous efforts to integrate them. To begin with I will suggest that Professor Guo Yi's characterization of Western science is deficient, most importantly for not recognizing rival research traditions within science based on different metaphysical theories, each of which upholds different values. This argument requires an examination of the notion of metaphysics and its relation to science. Secondly, I will suggest that in effecting this synthesis it is necessary to pay more attention to ways of thinking developed in China radically different from the analytic thought privileged in Western civilization. Zhu Xi (1130–1200) is particularly important to focus upon if we are to integrate these radically different forms of thinking.<sup>1</sup> Although constrained by a tradition which extolled fidelity to past thinkers, Zhu Xi argued that scholars should not accept received wisdom uncritically. They should develop Confucianism through critical reflection, empirical research and creative thinking, and should be willing to embrace what is best in other traditions.<sup>2</sup> His philosophy integrated much of Daoism and Buddhism into Confucianism and, most importantly, gave a central place to the study of nature guided by general ideas about nature, which he sought to provide.

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**1** See W.-T. Chan, 'The Great Synthesis of Chu Hsi', in *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, pp. 605–633 and Chu Hsi, *Further Reflections on Things at Hand: A Reader*, trans. Allen Wittenborn, University of America Press, 2002.

**2** On Zhu Xi's reconciliation of this tension through 'innovative reconstruction', see Liu Xiaogan, 'The Struggle Between the Two Orientations: A Study of Zhu Xi's *Commentary on the Analects*' in *Contemporary Chinese Thought*, 40(2), Winter 2008–9: pp. 46–66. See also S.-H. Liu, *Understanding Confucian Philosophy: Classical and Sung-Ming*, London: Westport, 1998, chaps. 7, 8 & 9.

In his effort to comprehend and learn from Chinese philosophy, Leibniz, who began a whole tradition of thought opposed to the mechanistic thought of Descartes and Newton, studied Zhu Xi's work and, possibly, was influenced by him. Central to this tradition, running through Johann Herder, Friedrich Schelling, Henri Bergson, Charles Sande Peirce and Alfred North Whitehead, has been the concern to overcome the nihilism of mechanistic materialism. While this tradition has been marginalized within philosophy, the research programs inspired by it have largely succeeded in replacing mechanistic materialism in advanced theoretical science; and it has been associated with further efforts to reconcile Western and Chinese thought, exemplified in the twentieth century by Joseph Needham's massive, multi-volumed study *Science and Civilization in China*. This work was partly inspired by the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, and Needham's own work in theoretical biology and philosophy also was influenced by Whitehead. This tradition does attempt to give a place to the ways of thinking and values upheld by Chinese philosophy.

At the same time, however, there is something lacking in these efforts, including those of Leibniz, that is illuminated by Professor Guo Yi's paper. Chinese philosophy is first and foremost concerned with fostering virtues, having its main goal the self-cultivation of people so that they can find, appreciate and live according to *Dao*, the path or the way. As Angus Graham put it (perhaps not entirely accurately), while Western philosophers are pre-eminently concerned with 'What is the Truth?' Chinese philosophers are pre-eminently concerned with 'Where is the Way?'<sup>3</sup> Finding the way leads to and inspires harmony in people's relationships. Appreciating this difference, and how virtue was understood by Chinese philosophers, should more clearly highlight the forms of thinking developed in China and its potential contribution to the current world. I will argue that this should lead to a re-conception of science so that the development of scientific knowledge should be motivated first and foremost not by the quest to control the world, but to cultivate people and orient them to live in a way that augments life. I will suggest that Zhu Xi was right to argue that such self-cultivation

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**3** A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, La Salle: Open Court, 1989, p. 3. However, this might be based on a misunderstanding of ancient Western philosophy. Pierre Hadot argued in *What is Ancient Philosophy*, trans. Michael Chase, Cambridge Mass.: Belknap Press, 2002 that for the ancients, a philosophy was a whole way of life.

requires the study of nature, and argue that in the modern world, Daoic philosophy requires for its defense and development the tradition of science consonant with Daoic philosophy, a tradition which is now being advanced most creatively in the science of ecology. It is in this form, I will suggest, that the synthesis of Chinese and Western thought can serve as the foundation for the new, ecological civilization called for by Chinese environmentalists.

#### SCIENCE, METAPHYSICS AND TECHNO-SCIENCE

So, what is the relationship between science, technology and metaphysics in Western thought. Professor Guo Yi notes that knowledge of natural science was only 'minor skills' and contrasts this with West which, he suggests, has revered natural knowledge and instrumental rationality. However, while Western natural knowledge might have supported and advanced instrumental rationality, it was not based on instrumental rationality. And it was not indifferent to values. Western civilization was technologically inferior to Chinese civilization for most of its history, and then surged ahead because it fused the development of technology with philosophical speculation about nature, most importantly, metaphysical speculation which guided systematic investigation of nature. As historians of science have shown, modern science was inaugurated by a metaphysical revolution.<sup>4</sup> This metaphysical revolution was in part inspired by efforts to oppose the values of the Civic Humanists and Nature Enthusiasts of the Renaissance. The Civic Humanists, educated in the humanities, defended republicanism and were concerned to inspire people to serve the common good and develop the virtues required to defend their liberty and govern themselves. Education in the humanities was the means to this end, and was seen to require the study of history and the arts as well as moral philosophy and rhetoric. The Nature Enthusiasts, in particular, Giordano Bruno, a significant figure in the development of modern science, construed the cosmos and nature generally as self-organizing, celebrating it as divine, providing not only a metaphysical

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<sup>4</sup> See E. A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, [1924, 1932], New York: Doubleday, 1954, and A. Koyré, *Metaphysics and Measurement: Essays in the Scientific Revolution*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.

and cosmological defence of these civic virtues, but also the aspirations of the 'heroic soul' to truth, prudence and wisdom.<sup>5</sup>

Marin Mersenne, a lifelong friend of Descartes, characterized Bruno as 'one of the wickedest men whom the earth has ever supported ... who seems to have invented a new manner of philosophizing only in order to make underhand attacks on the Christian religion.'<sup>6</sup> Mersenne initiated the quest to develop an alternative to Bruno's system of thought. That alternative system—the mechanical philosophy—was provided by Descartes.<sup>7</sup> Thomas Hobbes, another friend of Mersenne was also a fierce critic of the Civic Humanists and Nature Enthusiasts in Britain. Strongly influenced by Galileo, he also took up the project of developing a mechanical philosophy and attempted to subvert the ideals of the Civic Humanists by promulgating a view of humans as machines moved by appetites and aversions. On this view the only defensible values are satisfying one's appetites while avoiding aversions, particularly death, as efficiently as possible, and that consequently the ultimate end which all people are pursuing, whether they acknowledge it or not, is having the whole world fearing and obeying them. It also justified the view, previously suggested by Francis Bacon, that the sole end of scientific knowledge is controlling the world. This is the metaphysics that has underlain modernity.

This does not mean that that this philosophy has remained unchanged throughout modernity. It has evolved from Descartes' metaphysics to Newton's, from Hobbes' defence of enlightened tyranny to Locke's defence of rule by those with wealth, from an economy based on rights to the products of one's labour to the utilitarianism of neo-classical economics, and from a static nature to nature seen as evolving through the struggle between rival machines for survival, with progress being defined as ever improving efficiency of these machines. It is in this context that it is necessary to understand the primacy accorded to the

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5 See G. Bruno, *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, trans. Arthur D. Immert, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992, p. 80 f.

6 M. Mersenne, *L'Impiété de deists*, (Paris, 1624), Vol. I, p. 230 f. Translated and quoted by A. C. Crombie, 'Mersenne', *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, Ed. Charles Coulston Gillispie, 16 vols (New York: Scribner 1970–80) Vol. IX, 1974, p. 317.

7 B. Easlea, *Witch-Hunting, Magic & the New Philosophy: An Introduction to Debates of the Scientific Revolution 1450–1750*, (Brighton: Sussex: Harvester Press), p. 108.

economy and the military, and the acceptance of ‘creative destruction’ of species, ecosystems, pre-modern societies and losers in the struggle between competing economic enterprises. All this is necessary to make room for the winners in this struggle for survival, the more efficient machines. It is in this context that instrumental reason is privileged above all else as a criterion of evaluation, with the remainder of human affairs being reduced to consumption and entertainment based on subjective preferences.

#### OPPOSITION TO THE MECHANISTIC WORLD-VIEW

This conception of the world and the values it upholds has not prevailed completely, however. Neither Renaissance humanism nor Nature Enthusiasm nor the quest for republican liberty was completely subjugated with the rise of mechanistic metaphysics. In the early Eighteenth Century they were forced underground as part of the Radical Enlightenment. They survived not only in the quest for liberty and republican democracy, but in the arts, the humanities and anti-mechanist metaphysics supporting an alternative tradition of scientific thought. Humanities scholars continued to defend the possibility of human freedom, and along with this, higher values than surviving, dominating and satisfying one’s appetites. They analysed the human condition from perspectives inconsistent with and opposed to the view that humans are nothing but complex machines. Bruno’s ideas were revived by those who used the metaphysics of Leibniz to reformulate Spinoza’s philosophy (which was influenced by Bruno) to free it of its mechanistic accretions. J. G. Herder in particular was central to this, defending a dynamic view of nature while reviving and giving a central place to the humanities. He first used the term ‘culture’ in the plural, signifying recognition of and respect for diverse cultures, and portrayed humans as developing greater humanity through history, and projected a future in which, through education, people would be self-governing. These ideas were vigorously promoted by the Early Romantics, foremost among them Schelling who, synthesizing ideas from Herder and Wolfgang Goethe with the more radical of ideas developed by I. Kant and J. G. Fichte, elaborated a coherent metaphysics that not only supported the arts and the humanities but had a major influence on the subsequent development of the sciences. In his later work Schelling went on to argue that “through the virtually unrestricted expansion of world relations ... the Orient and the Occident are not

merely coming into contract with one another, but are being compelled ... to fuse into one and the same consciousness, into one consciousness that should for this reason alone be expanded into a world-consciousness.”<sup>8</sup> To this end, he argued, it will be necessary to develop a ‘philosophical religion’, addressing and integrating the freedom of existence, historical phenomena and nature into an expanded *Weltanschauung* inclusive enough to overcome philosophy’s compulsive tendency to splinter off into mutually exclusive schools of thought.<sup>9</sup>

The coherence and success of this tradition has been obscured by its subordinate position. This has had the effect that it has been far more prone to fragmentation than the mainstream tradition, with defenders of the humanities and arts ignoring advances in metaphysics and science that support their views, and its contributions to science plundered, reworked and appropriated as achievements of the dominant culture. This assimilation has been challenged through metaphysical thinking of philosophers and scientists influenced directly or indirectly by Schelling who have not only pointed out the true significance of advances in the natural sciences, but have contributed to these advances. The most important of these metaphysicians have been C. S. Peirce, Henri Bergson, Aleksandr Bogdanov and Alfred North Whitehead. The view expressed by Stephen Hawking and quoted by Professor Guo Yi, that philosophy can no longer comprehend science, while common and commonly accepted and true of much of philosophy, is not true of all philosophy. Philosophers of science and philosopher scientists such as C. H. Waddington, Joseph Needham, Ivor Leclerc, Michael Polanyi, David Bohm, Ilya Prigogine, Isabelle Stengers, Rom Harré, Stanley Salthe, James Lovelock and Jesper Hoffmeyer are cases in point. When these philosophers and scientists are recognized as part of a tradition, it can be seen that this tradition promises to transform science and thereby humanity’s understanding of itself and its place in nature, the revolutionary implications of which can only be ignored by denying that science is anything more than a means to develop technology.

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<sup>8</sup> F. W. J. F. Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, The Berlin Lecture, trans. Bruce Matthews, New York: State University of New York Press, 2007, p. 94. (*SW* II/3: 8)

<sup>9</sup> F. W. J. Schelling, *Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger, New York: S.U.N.Y. Press, 2007, p. 173 f. (*SW* II/4: pp. 364 ff.)

## POST-MECHANISTIC SCIENCE AND CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

This alternative tradition of metaphysics, and developments in the arts, humanities and sciences inspired by it, has throughout its development sought to overcome the nihilistic implications of reductionist materialism by giving a place to values within nature and supporting the higher values aspired to by humanity. The core ideas of this tradition of thought not only accord with some of the ideas of Daoic philosophy; Needham argued that Chinese thought had a significant influence on its development. Taking Whitehead's organicist philosophy as his point of reference, he argued that this philosophy was the culmination of a tradition going back through Lloyd Morgan, S. Alexander, Jan Smuts, Engels, Marx, Hegel, Schelling and Herder to Leibniz. The spectacular originality of Leibniz, the ultimate source of the opposition to the tradition of Galilean-Newtonian science, Needham argued, derived from the influence on him of Zhu Xi. Needham wrote of Zhu Xi: 'Behind him he had the full background of Chinese correlative thinking, and ahead of him he had — Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.'<sup>10</sup>

Needham then argued that neo-Confucian thought had not been able to be understood properly in the past by Western thinkers because "they lacked the background ... of modern organicist philosophy."<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, he argued:

"On the organic view of the world, the universe is one which simply has the property of producing the highest human values when the integrative level appropriate to them has arisen in the evolutionary process. ... From the point of view of the scientist ... the levels of organization can be described as a temporal succession of spatial envelopes; thus there were certainly atoms before there were any living cells, and living cells themselves contain and are built up of atoms. ... I am prepared to suggest, in view of the fact that the term *Li* always contained the notion of pattern, and that Chu Hsi himself consciously applied it so as to include the most living and vital patterns known to man, that something of the idea of "organism" was what was really at the back of the minds of the Neo-Confucians, and that Chu Hsi was therefore further advanced in insight into the

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<sup>10</sup> J. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. II, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956, p. 291.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 474.

nature of the universe than any of his interpreters and translators, whether Chinese or European, have yet given him credit for. ... [T]he modern view of the universe, as the natural scientist and the organic philosopher sees it, are Matter-Energy on the one hand, and Organisation, the principle of Organisation on the other. If, therefore, it were indispensable to translate the *Li* of Chu Hsi into English, 'Organisation' or 'Principle of Organisation' would be the choice I would make."<sup>12</sup>

Needham thought that *qi* (or 'Chhi'), the second concept deployed by Zhu Xi, is even more difficult to translate than *li*. Analogous to the Greek *pneuma* it could be a gas or vapour, or matter as it was understood by Aristotle, or 'ethereal waves'. While he argued that the term is best left untranslated, he equated it to the matter-energy of modern physics. Needham discussed the conception of *Dao* in relation to early Confucian philosophy and to Daoism, noting that initially Confucians meant by *Dao* the ideal way or order of human society, while for Daoists it meant the way the universe works, or, as Needham put it: 'the Order of Nature.'<sup>13</sup> In characterizing the meaning of '*Dao*' in relation to *li*, Needham noted that according to Zhu Xi:

"[T]he original meaning of *tao* [*Dao*] was 'way', while that of *li* was the graining or pattern of markings (Gestalt) in any natural object. 'The term *tao*', he says, 'refers to the vast and great, the term *li* includes the innumerable vein-like patterns included in the Tao.' Thus Tao was to be used only for the pattern of the whole cosmic organism, while *li* could mean also the minute patterns of small individual organisms."<sup>14</sup>

Needham ascribed to Zhu Xi the insights that 'first, the existence of a universal pattern or field determining all states and transformations of matter-energy, and secondly, the omnipresence of this pattern. The motive power could not be localized at any particular point in space and time. The organization centre was identical with the organism itself.'<sup>15</sup> Zhu Xi also saw this matter-energy consisting of two opposing forces,

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 474 f.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 484.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 466.

that nature works in a wave-like manner, and that new things are produced by reactions which we now call chemical.<sup>16</sup> On this basis he was able to set forth a comprehensive philosophy of cosmic and human creativity, formulating a viable account of the formation of the world in stages to provide a foundation for the Confucian concepts of human nature and self-cultivation.

#### EVALUATING NEEDHAM'S INTERPRETATION OF ZHU XI

Needham's interpretation of Zhu Xi is contentious. To begin with, his claim that Leibniz's philosophy had been influenced by Zhu Xi has been questioned, and along with this it has been questioned whether the Chinese generally and Zhu Xi in particular had any conception of metaphysics or science as these were developed in Europe. There has also been much dispute over how the terms *li* and *qi* should be translated and interpreted, and even more over the notion of *Dao*.

While there has been no consensus reached on how much Leibniz was influenced by Zhu Xi, it has been accepted that at very least Leibniz found support for his radical ideas in Chinese philosophy.<sup>17</sup> The question of whether the Chinese had science or metaphysics as understood in the West is more complex. In a major study, Yung Sik Kim argued that even Zhu Xi's call for the study of nature lacked most of the features we associate with modern science.<sup>18</sup> As Professor Guo Yi points out, Chinese philosophy has always been concerned primarily with society,

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 467.

<sup>17</sup> While David Mungello has questioned this claim in his study of Leibniz's relation to Chinese thought, Mungello still acknowledged that Leibniz did find in the work of Zhu Xi ideas entirely consonant with his own philosophy. See D. E. Mungello, *Leibniz and Confucianism: The Search for Accord*, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1977, p. 15. Needham's claim has been defended by W.-T. Chan, 'The Study of Chu Hsi in the West', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 35(4), Aug. 1976: 555-577, p. 571. Leibniz's major writings on China have been published as G. W. Leibniz, *Writings on China*, trans. Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemont Jr. Chicago: Open Court, 1994. This does not contain early correspondence in which Leibniz discussed Chinese thought.

<sup>18</sup> Y. S. Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi: 1130-1200*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2000.

people, value and the meaning of life. David Hall and Roger Ames make this point more emphatically.

“The dramatic contrast between Chinese and Western modes of philosophic thinking may be illustrated by the fact that the tendency of European philosophers to seek out the being of things, the essential reality lying behind appearances, would meet with little sympathy among Chinese thinkers, whose principal interests lie in the establishment and cultivation of harmonious relationships within their social ambience. Contrasted with Anglo-European philosophic traditions, the thinking of the Chinese is far more concrete, this-worldly and, above all, practical. One reason for this difference is suggested by the fact that cosmogonic and cosmological myths played such a minor role in the development of Chinese intellectual culture and that, as a consequence, Chinese eyes were focused not upon issues of cosmic order but upon more mundane questions of how to achieve communal harmony within a relatively small social nexus.”<sup>19</sup>

These different orientations, Ames and Rosemont argued, were influenced by the different languages and forms of writing.<sup>20</sup> European languages with their ‘subject, verb, object’ structure, privilege nouns that identify things, essences or substances, which then are seen as doing something or having something done to them or attributed to them. This leads to efforts to identify the nature of these things underlying appearances, while ancient Chinese language, having no definite or indefinite articles, focused on events and relations and fostered concern with orienting people to live in the context of the becoming of the world. It is

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**19** D. L. Hall and R. Ames, ‘Dao’ in E. Craig (ed.) *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, CD version, Version 1.0, p. 1419.

**20** R. T. Ames and H. Rosemont Jr. ‘Philosophic and Linguistic Background’ in the ‘Introduction’ to *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*, trans. Ames and Rosemont Jr., New York: Ballantine Books, 1998. See also ‘Appendix II: Further Remarks on Language, Translation, and Interpretation’, pp. 279–317. See also C. Hansen, ‘Taoism’, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Winter 2003 Edition), E. N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2003/entries/taoism/> revised, 2007, p. 27 f.

for this reason that Western philosophy was dominated by metaphysics and epistemology while Chinese philosophy focused on how to live and how to cultivate people, including oneself.

However, Needham, acknowledged that Zhu Xi only glimpsed through a glass darkly what was later fully developed by European science, and acknowledged that this research program was not taken up in China.<sup>21</sup> It appears that because he was a scientist himself, Needham was able to see in Zhu Xi's work something that tends to be missed by other historians of thought. His views in this regard were closely related to his translations of key Chinese terms. Needham was aware of alternative translations of these terms, but defended his own translations. Professor Guo Yi interpretes *li* as 'the locus of form, reason, law and principle' (p. 22). Needham reviewed the translations of *li* as Platonic or Aristotelian 'form' and '*Vernunft*' or 'Reason' and 'Law', but argued that each of these was unacceptable, severely distorting its meaning.<sup>22</sup> *Li* is often translated as 'principle', but also as 'pattern' or 'the patterned regularity of existence'. The earliest sense of *li* was a rectangular field divided into quadrants to form an 'orderly pattern'. Later it was used as a verb to mean the creating of such a pattern. The term was developed as a general concept by the Daoists. As Philip Ivanhoe noted:

"The most important and extensive early uses of *li* occur in the *Zhuangzi*. There, *li* appears both in the sense of the grand pattern underlying all phenomena and the individual instantiations of this pattern in discrete things. The *Zhuangzi* contains the first occurrences of 'heavenly principles', 'principles of the Way' and 'great principles', terms which connect the notion of 'pattern' to a greater cosmic scheme, lending it a wider metaphysical role and greater normative force. Being explicitly linked to 'Heaven' and the 'Way', *li* describes not only how things are but also how they should be."<sup>23</sup>

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**21** While written much earlier, Wing-Tsit Chan provides a defence of Needham's assessment of Zhu Xi, with some modifications, in 'Neo-Confucianism and Chinese Scientific Thought', *Philosophy East and West*, 6(4) Jan. 1957: pp. 309–332.

**22** J. Needham, op. cit., p. 475 f.

**23** P. J. Ivanhoe, 'Li', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. Craig, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 4750. See also W.-T. Chan, 'The Mystical Way of Chuang Tzu' in *A Sourcebook of Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 202 ff.

This view was further developed by the Han Dynasty Neo-Daoist Wang Bi (226–249).<sup>24</sup> The term was appropriated and developed by the Buddhists and then embraced by the Chen brothers who gave it a new meaning by claiming that ‘the innumerable principles amount to one principle’, with ‘*tian*’ (‘sky’ or ‘heaven’), ‘decree’ and ‘*Dao*’ being merely different names for this.<sup>25</sup> The Song neo-Confucians also compounded the word *li* with the word for the ‘veins in jade’, with ‘veins of the body’ and the word ‘way’. To understand the *li* of things, they suggested, is to understand ‘why they are as they are.’<sup>26</sup> As Angus Graham characterized *li*, it ‘is a line which it natural to follow, not a law which one is bound to obey; it is also spontaneous, “thus of itself”’.<sup>27</sup> Zhu Xi’s contribution to the development of this notion was to conceive of *li* as logically prior to, although not actually separable from, existing things. On this basis, Needham’s translation of this term as ‘principle of organization’ would appear to be justified.<sup>28</sup>

*Qi* as used by Zhu Xi has been translated as ‘pneuma’, ‘the psychosomatic stuff of existence’, ‘hylozoic vapours’, ‘psychophysical stuff’, ‘ether’, and ‘vital energizing field’, characterized in terms of the active and passive dynamics of *yin* and *yang* that had evolved from *qi*.<sup>29</sup> While it is a leap to translate this as ‘matter-energy’, Needham acknowledged this, and the concept ‘matter-energy’ is itself far from unproblematic in modern science.

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**24** On Wang Bi’s elevation and development of the concept of *li*, see W.-T. Chan, *A Sourcebook of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 316.

**25** See A. C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers: The Metaphysics of the Brothers Ch’eng*, La Salle: Open Court, 1992, p. 11. See W.-T. Chan, ‘Neo-Confucianism: New Ideas in Old Terminology’, *Philosophy East and West*, 17(1/4) Jan.–Oct., 1967: 15–35, p. 20 ff. The influence of Buddhism on the development of the notion of *li* is described by Bryan W. van Norden in ‘What is Living and what is Dead in the Confucianism of Zhu Xi’, in *Chinese Philosophy in an Era of Globalization*, ed. R. R. Wang, New York: S.U.N.Y. Press, 2004, pp. 99–120, p. 105.

**26** A. C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

**27** *Ibid.*, p. 12 f.

**28** Kirill O. Thompson has defended Needham’s interpretation of Zhu Xi in ‘Li and Yi as Immanent: Chu Hsi’s Thought in Practical Perspective’, *Philosophy East and West*, 38 (1), Jan. 1988: 30–46. See esp. p. 34.

**29** Yung Sik Kim has pointed out the complexity and some limitations of Zhu Xi’s concept of *qi* in ‘Some aspects of the concept of ch’i in Chu Hsi’, *Philosophy East and West*, 34 (1), Jan. 1984: pp. 25–36.

The notion of *Dao* is crucial to all this. Needham's characterization of the Daoist notion of it as 'Order of Nature' which brings everything into existence and governs everything without the use of force, combines the views of the *Great Dao* characterized by Professor Guo Yi's explication of the first cosmological model expressed in the Guodian text of *Laozi* of Lao Dan and the second cosmological model of the received version of *Laozi* of Taishi Dan. From Needham's perspective the second text can be regarded as simply more elaborate, incorporating mathematical notions and the generation of opposing forces, but otherwise it is not fundamentally different. However, Professor Guo Yi treats the *Dao* of the second cosmological model as equivalent to *Yi*, the transcendent and absolute world, and 'One' as equivalent to *taiji*, translated by Professor Guo Yi as the 'Great Ultimate'. This appears to introduce a notion of a transcendent cause much closer to traditional Christian thought, whereas Needham, along with many other Westerners who have turned to Chinese thought for inspiration, have emphasized the immanence of *Dao*, whether this be the *Great Dao*, the Natural or *tian Dao*, or the human or social *Dao* of the Confucians and Mohists.<sup>30</sup> It is clearly possible to interpret these Chinese texts as implying transcendence,<sup>31</sup> but they can more fruitfully be interpreted as evolving towards and then upholding an immanent view of *Dao*.<sup>32</sup> Zhu Xi defended an entirely immanent view of *Dao*.<sup>33</sup> He did characterize *li* as *taiji*, but as Joseph Adler recently argued, it is necessary to translate this as 'Supreme Polarity' rather than as 'Great Ultimate' to make sense of Zhu Xi's discussions of it.<sup>34</sup>

While 'way' has until recently had no place in Western philosophy, it is central to Chinese thought. *Dao* means 'path' or 'way' — and since

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**30** See for instance D. L. Hall and R. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1987, p. 15.

**31** For a defence of an interpretation involving transcendence, see Wang S. Jang, 'The Problem of Transcendence in Chinese Religions', *Whitehead and China: Relevance and Relationships*, ed. W. Xie, Z. Wang and G. E. Defer, Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2005, chap. 7. For a critique of such interpretations, see D. L. Hall and R. T. Ames, *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture*, New York: S.U.N.Y. Press, 1998, esp. chap.'s 8 & 9.

**32** See W.-T. Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 4.

**33** On this, see B. W. van Norden, op. cit., p. 114.

**34** J. A. Adler, 'On Translating *Taiji*', Zhu Xi Now, ed. D. Jones and He Jinli, Albany: SUNY Press, (forthcoming).

it can be singular or plural, it is best treated as the part-whole sum of ways. While it is tempting to treat *Dao* as equivalent to the Western notion of Being for this reason, *Dao* is essentially a concept of guidance. *Dao* can also be a verb, understood as ‘guide’. Ways do not necessarily determine actions, and as a consequence Chinese philosophers allowed that it is possible to participate in the creativity of *Dao* by augmenting the way or even to open new ways. As Professor Guo Yi notes, according to Confucius (551–479 BCE) ‘It is Man that can enlarge the *Dao* which he follows, and not the *Dao* that can enlarge men.’<sup>35</sup> And as the Zhuangzi (370–301 BCE) put it, ‘The path is made in the walking of it.’<sup>36</sup> On this understanding of *Dao*, David Hall and Ames argued:

“The natural cosmology of classical China does not require a single-ordered cosmos, but invokes an understanding of a ‘world’ constituted by ‘the ten thousand things’. There is no Being behind the beings—only beings are. And *in toto*, these beings are *dao*. Continuity makes *dao* one; difference makes *dao* myriad; change makes *dao* processional and provisional. *Dao* is thus both the One and the many, or better, the field and foci through which it is entertained. The Chinese ‘world as such’ is constituted by ‘worlding’ (*ziran*), a process of spontaneous arising, or literally, uncaused ‘self-so-ing’, which references no external principle or agency to account for it. The one and the many stand in a holographic relationship: there is the indiscriminate field (*dao*) and its particular focus (*de*). *Dao* as field is always entertained and focused from some perspective or another, from some particular. Just as in a holographic display where each detail contains the whole in an adumbrated form, so each item of the totality focuses the totality as its particular field.”<sup>37</sup>

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**35** Guo Yi, ‘Metaphysics, Nature and Mind – The main idea of Daoic Philosophy’, in this volume, p. 45f., from *Analects*, 15:28 as transl. by W.-T. Chan. (In the Ames and Rosemount translation, footnote 20 in this article, 15:29).

**36** Chu Hsi, ‘The Complete Works of Chu Hsi, chap. 2, in Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 180.

**37** D. L. Hall and R. Ames, ‘Dao’ in E. Craig (ed.) *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, CD version, Version 1.0, p. 1965 f.

From this perspective, the ‘sphere of *Dao*’ or *Daoti* of the Neo-Confucians referred to by Professor Guo Yi<sup>38</sup> would include particular ways. This does not entirely support Needham’s interpretation of Zhu Xi’s notion of *Dao* as referring exclusively to the totality, while components were referred to as ‘*li*’, but as Graham pointed out, for the Song Dynasty Neo-Confucians, ‘*li*’ also meant ‘way’. ‘It will be observed’ wrote Graham in reference to a dialogue between Zhu Xi and his student, ‘that the images behind the two words are so closely related that Chu Hsi’s questioner could see no difference between them.’<sup>39</sup>

While the Chinese might not have focused on the question of what there is, their concern with how to live involved developing the metaphysical assumptions that Needham claimed to have found in Chinese thought, with the universe construed as self-organizing patterns with their component patterns being part of them, guided by the whole but not determined by it. Cheng I and Zhu Xi offered this as a framework for ‘the investigation of things’ in order to achieve insight, uniting and relating what is studied to gain an integral understanding of the world, thereby achieving integrity or ‘self-completion’.<sup>40</sup> As Cheng I put it, ‘To learn from what is outside, and grasp them within, is called “understanding”. To grasp them from what is within, and connect them with outside things, is called “integrity”. Integrity and understanding are one.’<sup>41</sup> Unlike the reductionist forms of thinking that have dominated modernity in the West, these assumptions do accord with (post-)modern science.

## OVERCOMING NIHILISTIC SCIENCE

Westerners who have been attracted to Chinese thought generally have done so because, grappling with the nihilism of Western civilization, they have seen in Chinese philosophy ways of thinking that might enable them to go beyond the assumptions that led to this nihilism. These assumptions led to what Nietzsche proclaimed as ‘the death of God’; that is, the collapse of the God of metaphysics, the ultimate good posited beyond all beings and bestowing order and purpose upon them. The death

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<sup>38</sup> Guo Yi, ‘Metaphysics, Nature and Mind – The main idea of Daoic Philosophy’, p. 20.

<sup>39</sup> A. C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> See *Ibid.*, ‘KĒ-Wu (The Investigation of Things)’, ch.7.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

of God deprived the ultimate source of value of its value. The postulation of this God as a transcendent cause and source of ultimate value was partly a consequence of forms of thinking engendered by European languages, tending to objectify everything and then treat 'things' in abstraction from their contexts. Analysis has been privileged, dividing up the world through abstract concepts into incommensurable domains, such as God and nature, minds and bodies, values and facts. Actions which bifurcate the agent from the product of its activity, as in the production of a commodity, have been taken as paradigmatic, and actions in which outcomes are intrinsic to people, as in self-cultivation, have been barely acknowledged.<sup>42</sup> It was to avoid these tendencies that Martin Heidegger, strongly influenced by Daoism, drew upon Chinese thought to develop new ways of thinking, appropriating the word 'way' in his 'The Question Concerning Technology' and the essays in 'On the Way to Language' (*Unterwegs zur Sprache*).<sup>43</sup> Thus, 'The Question Concerning Technology' begins: 'In what follows we shall be questioning concerning technology. Questioning builds a way.'<sup>44</sup> This unusual use of language enabled Heidegger to expose modern technology as a way of enframing that reveals the world, including ultimately people, as only standing-reserve ready to be exploited while concealing other possibilities, and to show the connection between this and experimental science which sets nature up to 'exhibit itself as a coherence of forces calculable in advance'.<sup>45</sup> It also enabled him to show that there are other ways of revealing the world, notably that of the Ancient Greeks where *poiesis* (making) was seen as agents participating with matter, ends and forms to bring forth products. However, Heidegger did not offer a viable alternative to modern technology. To do this it will be necessary to develop a new kind of science, advancing beyond the techno-science of mechanistic materialism, a science which enables people to reorient themselves by revealing to them that they are participants within the self-organizing patterns of activity

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<sup>42</sup> On this, see M. Weber, 'Concepts of Creation and Pragmatic of Creativity' in *Whitehead and China*, ed. W. Xie, Z. Wang and G. E. Derfer, Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2005, chap. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Heidegger's indebtedness to Chinese thought has been revealed by the essays in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. G. Parkes, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987.

<sup>44</sup> M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt, New York: Harper & Row, 1977, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

of nature and society. This is the promise of Needham's Chinese influenced tradition of science.

Needham began his career as a bio-chemist and theoretical biologist attempting to develop a new, post-mechanistic approach to life based on process metaphysics while focusing on morphogenesis—the genesis of forms in developing embryos. Needham's colleague in the movement for theoretical biology, C. H. Waddington, developed the notions of fields, chreods (time-paths) and homeorhesis (stabilization along a time-path) to conceptualize such development, granting a place to fields within fields and chreods within chreods, which he then generalized to other domains, including ecology and human societies.<sup>46</sup> This movement for theoretical biology has continued up to the present, with one of its foremost representatives being Mae-Wan Ho. Ho was born in China and for this reason, she claims, was impervious to the reductionist materialism she was taught in schools, but uniquely receptive to advances in science beyond reductionist materialism.<sup>47</sup> Her work, also influenced by process metaphysics, integrates these advances.<sup>48</sup> That is, as someone brought up within a culture permeated by Daoic thinking, she was able to embrace and further develop a form of science that had already incorporated, or at least resonated with, Zhu Xi's metaphysics. This work aligned her with and led her to collaborate with the theoretical ecologist and proponent of 'ecological metaphysics', Robert Ulanowicz. Integrating non-linear thermodynamics, hierarchy theory and other developments in complexity theory with biosemiotics, including eco-semiotics and the unique, reflexive semiotics of human culture, theoretical ecology can be seen as the most advanced post-reductionist science, transcending Cartesian dualism, emphasizing the primary reality of processes over laws and mutuality over competition, thereby fusing the best of Western and Chinese thought.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> C. H. Waddington, *Tools of Thought*, Frogmore: Paladin, 1977.

<sup>47</sup> See interview by David Riley of Mae-Wan Ho, 'Quantum Jazz Biology', <http://www.i-sis.org.uk/quantumJazzBiology.php> (accessed May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011).

<sup>48</sup> See M.-W. Ho, *The Rainbow and the Worm: The Physics of Organisms*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, New Jersey: World Scientific, 2008.

<sup>49</sup> R. E. Ulanowicz, *Ecology: The Ascendent Perspective*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, p. 6. Ulanowicz has further developed this argument in *A Third Window: Natural Life beyond Newton and Darwin*, West Conshohocken: Templeton Foundation, 2009, especially chapter 9 where he argues for an ecological metaphysic. Other major figures involved in the

The development of theoretical ecology justifies Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, the claim that the Earth itself is alive and has produced the conditions for life. Gaia is the ultimate community of life on Earth, a community of communities of living processes which to survive must augment the environmental conditions both of their components and of themselves. Organisms are themselves highly integrated ecosystems, that is, self-organizing patterns of activity generating and maintaining 'homes' for their constituents, emerging from and participating in a hierarchy of broader ecosystems. Evolution occurs through the elimination of species of organisms that undermine rather than augment the conditions of their existence. These theories provide the basis for a better understanding of humans as a complex of culturally constituted processes, structures and communities within the global ecosystem with unique powers and liabilities by virtue of their cultures, providing new insights into why civilizations survive or collapse, and what is required to avoid such collapse.<sup>50</sup> In collaboration with Ho, Ulanowicz spelt out the implications of this work for the economy, for society and for civilization.<sup>51</sup> It is this program, integrating the achievements of Western and Chinese civilization that can provide the foundation for the creation of the ecological civilization now being called for by the Chinese government.<sup>52</sup>

## DAOIC PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

What is the significance of all this for Daoic philosophy? As Professor Guo Yi presented it, Daoic philosophy is a fusion of Confucian and Daoist philosophy. With the Song and Ming dynasty Neo-Confucians, 'the two fundamental senses of Dao were united. The Dao of Metaphysics

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advance of theoretical ecology are Stanley Salthe, Timothy Allen and C. S. Holling.

**50** See A. Gare, 'Philosophical Anthropology, Ethics and Political Philosophy in an Age of Impending Catastrophe', *Cosmos and History*, 5 (2), 2009: 264–286.

**51** M.-W. Ho and Robert Ulanowicz, 'Sustainable systems as organisms?' *Biosystems*, 82 (2005): pp. 39–51.

**52** A. Gare, 'Towards an Ecological Civilization: The Science, Ethics and Politics of Eco-Poiesis' (Chinese translation), *Marxism and Reality*, 8 (1), 2010: pp. 191–202, and A. Gare, 'Towards Ecological Civilization: The Science, Ethics and Politics of Ecopoiesis', *Process Studies*, 39(1), 2010: pp. 5–38.

and Ontology [of the Daoists] is the source of the Dao of moral norms [of Confucius], while the Dao of moral norms is the manifestation of the Dao of Metaphysics and Ontology.<sup>53</sup> For Confucius, *Dao* is *Rendao*, as Ames and Rosemont put it, 'a way of becoming consummately and authoritatively human'<sup>54</sup> through conscientious performance of ritualized action. While Professor Guo Yi has argued that Daoism was not as opposed to Confucianism as is commonly thought, Daoism did develop in opposition to Confucianism and defended the *Dao* of Nature as the guide for living rather than the *Dao* of social ritual promoted by Confucians. It was the Song Dynasty neo-Confucians, most importantly the Ch'eng brothers and following them, Zhu Xi (1130–1200), who effected an integration of these notions of the Dao.<sup>55</sup> They joined together the productive process of the universe with the virtues in Confucian ethics by embracing but then reformulating the *Dao* of Nature of the Daoists, ascribing the highest virtue or *ren* to nature as a vital force, identifying substance and function (*sheng-sheng*) in nature and then viewing nature as creative activity.<sup>56</sup> Humanity was then understood as a creative participant within nature. In the light of the developments in science and metaphysics influenced by Zhu Xi, culminating in recent community ecology and human ecology, it is now possible to clarify what following *Dao* involves, and to see how this overcomes nihilism.

As Zhu Xi argued, finding *Dao* involves the investigation of things to explore pattern and to attain knowledge. Through probing situations and affairs, constituent patterns and deep structures are more and more clearly discerned, generating an integrative comprehension that simultaneously cultivates the self to realize its full humanity and orients people to act appropriately.<sup>57</sup> The tradition of modern science influenced by, or

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**53** Guo Yi, 'Metaphysics, Nature and Mind – The main idea of Daoic Philosophy', p. 20.

**54** R. T. Ames and H. Rosemont, Jr, op. cit., p. 46.

**55** Despite Zhu Xi's criticism of Laozi, he was strongly influenced by his conception of nature. On this, see W.-T. Chan, 'Chu Hsi's Appraisal of Lao Tzu', *Philosophy East and West*, 25 (2), Apr.1975: 131–144.

**56** On this integration and its significance, see W.-T. Chan, 'Chu Hsi's Appraisal of Lao Tzu', *Philosophy East and West*, 25 (2) Apr. 1975: 131–144, p. 140.

**57** On Zhu Xi's arguments for this and the relation between the quest for knowledge and self-realization, see S.-H. Liu, *Understanding Confucian Philosophy: Classical and Sung-Ming*, London: Westport, 1998, p. 190 f. and

at least concordant with, Zhu Xi's philosophy does not see science as simply a means to develop technology or a mere tool of life, as Professor Guo Yi claimed. Authentic science, intimately related to the philosophy of nature and aligned with the humanities and the arts, is an exemplary form of life committed to the pursuit of truth and an integral understanding of the cosmos, fostering the virtues required for this pursuit. It cannot be taught by having students remember texts, but requires the socialization of students into communities of enquirers engaged in observational, experimental and theoretical research and problem solving to achieve real understanding of terms used in scientific discourse. Understanding requires what Michael Polanyi called 'indwelling' in which what is focused upon is comprehended against a background in terms of which it is experienced as significant.<sup>58</sup> Such indwelling is exemplified in understanding a sentence where the meaning and significance of each word requires indwelling in the whole sentence, which in turn must be understood in the broader context of the discourse of which it is part. However, indwelling is also involved in using instruments, with people coming to experience these as extensions of their bodies, in non-discursive practices where people are able to understand what others are doing and are able to identify with and participate in the projects of groups, and in whole forms of life. Proper understanding requires indwelling in all of these contexts, and cannot be fully captured by what can be put into words; understanding always involves 'tacit' knowledge. Advances in understanding include comprehending aspects of the physical and biological world, natural and human communities and the evolution of cultures and of philosophy and science, as well as the lives of individuals and their activities and products. It includes the present philosophical, artistic and scientific communities and the efforts of their members to advance understanding of the world and themselves. As such, science, along with philosophy, history, the arts and other forms of inquiry, should be providing people with the means to understand the significance of their own lives by dwelling within diverse contexts from their own immediate physical and social situations and local human communities to the community of all life on Earth, from its beginnings to the present, and more broadly still, in relation to the evolution of the

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K. O. Thompson, 'How to Rejuvenate Ethics: Suggestions from Chu Hsi', *Philosophy East and West*, vo.41(4), Oct.1991: 493-513, esp. p. 500.

<sup>58</sup> On the concept of 'indwelling' see M. Polanyi and H. Prosch, *Meaning*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975, p. 44.

universe. Scientific enquiry is part of the process whereby Gaia, through humans, is coming to understand itself, its significance, its potentialities and its ends.

This complicates the quest to live according to *Dao*. For Confucius, society is a creative achievement. It is maintained by following and developing the *Dao*, acting appropriately (*yi*) according to traditional social rituals (*li*), thereby inspiring spontaneous cooperation between people. For theoretical ecologists, all ecological communities are creative achievements. Each is maintained by what could be called the *Dao* of its components and its own *Dao* within broader communities.<sup>59</sup> For various reasons, these components can lose their *Dao*, as occurs with cancer cells, leading to the destruction of these communities. What complicates the Confucian picture is that people are simultaneously involved in communities of communities, and a particular community can, like a malignant tumour, flourish in the short term at the expense of broader communities of which they are part. It is necessary to constrain communities to serve broader communities. This tension is the source of opposition between not only Confucians and Daoists, but also for divergences between different Confucians such as Mencius, who argued that people are basically good, and Xun Zi (ca. 312–230 BC) who argued that people are born with an innate desire for gain and a tendency to envy and hate others, proclivities which must be overcome through civilizing influences.<sup>60</sup> There is a further complicating factor. Communities only exist through balances of opposing forces within and between them. This can be dealt with in Confucian philosophy through the concept of harmony, which implies both difference and unity, combined with the notions of *yin* and *yang*. Living according to *Dao* must take into account diverse *Dao*, some of which to be healthy are by their very nature partially in opposition to each other.

What are the implications of this for values, and most importantly, for identifying the ultimate value? Professor Guo Yi has divided values between knowledge system, biological system, general values and ultimate value, arguing that the lower values should be subordinated to higher values. General values are the ethical, social and political values. The ultimate values of the true, the good and the beautiful are different

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<sup>59</sup> This, essentially, is how Aldo Leopold characterized the participants within ecological communities. See *A Sand County Almanac*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949, p. 203.

<sup>60</sup> See Hsün Tzu, 'The Nature of Man is Evil' in W.-T. Chan, op. cit., p. 128.

approaches to the peak state, but not the peak state itself. The ultimate value which is the final meaning of life, *An*, is a firm belief and norm of conduct characterized by quiet, calm, peacefulness and harmony. If this final end is not merely a way of living designed to produce a peaceful state of mind, which could be efficiently achieved by taking tranquilizers, what is it? Interpreting this as living in harmony with *Dao*, and interpreting *Dao* through post-mechanistic science, we should regard this as indwelling to reveal the diverse *Dao* of the human and non-human communities on Earth, including the *Dao* of Gaia, and to live in a way that augments the life of Gaia. The difference between lower and higher values can be evaluated according to the breadth of context dwelt within and responded to. Someone who lives from day to day, concerned with immediate sensuous pleasures without concern for the morrow, is someone living according to the lowest values, values that they share with lower animals. If they indwell within and thereby take into account in the way they live the broader context of their whole life, and then the life of their family and other immediate communities, they are living according to higher values, the values they share with higher animals. If they indwell within and so appreciate these immediate communities in the context of broader social communities again, whether their village or town, their craft or professional associations, their country, their culture, civilization and the whole of humanity, in each case taking into account broader spatial and temporal spans, then they are living according to higher values again, values specific to humans.

The highest value involves forming oneself through indwelling within and experiencing immediate situations in all these contexts and the broadest contexts of all, human history, including the history of its cultural development, the history of life on Earth and the evolution of whole cosmos, and living accordingly. This involves extending the person embodying *ren*, 'the general virtue' or 'generative force that makes virtues real, social and dynamic,'<sup>61</sup> from 'wishing to establish his own character, also establishes the character of others, and wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others to be prominent',<sup>62</sup> to include: 'and wishing to prosper, also fosters and augments the resilience and vitality of their own and other human and ecological communities.' Science, in

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61 W.-T. Chan, 'The Evolution of the Confucian Concept of Jen' in *Philosophy East and West*, 4(4), Jan. 1955: pp. 295-319, p. 316.

62 Confucius, 'Analects', 6:28, in W.-T. Chan, op. cit., p. 31.

conjunction with philosophy, history and the arts, should enable people to indwell in all these contexts, while at the same time appreciating the uniqueness and significance and potentiality of humanity in general and of their own situations and lives in particular. The ultimate concern of science should be the cultivation of people who can achieve this. Such indwelling should constrain the way people live and act to facilitate the flourishing of their future selves, their social and natural communities, other people and their communities, other forms of life and their ecosystems, and Gaia. This must involve appreciating conflicts between specific *Dao*, yet maintaining equilibrium and equanimity in the face of these conflicts. In doing so, people should not be asserting themselves, but in their actions should experience themselves and be seen as ‘vessels’ and expressions of *Dao*, acting by ‘non-acting’; that is, not acting coercively but acting by fostering cooperation and the orchestration of the full potential of any community’s population.<sup>63</sup> It is in this context that a peaceful and harmonious state of mind should be cultivated and achieved. It is achieved by living and acting in harmony with and being a vehicle for *Dao*, thereby achieving equanimity even in the face of injustices, lack of recognition and threats. This provides an interpretation of Cheng Hao’s statement endorsed by Zhu Xi, ‘The constant principle of the sage is that his feelings are in accord with all creation, and yet he has no feelings of his own.’<sup>64</sup> In doing so people should provide examples to others and thereby reveal *Dao* as the best way to live, inspiring others to search for and live according to *Dao*. However, having this effect on people should not be a goal. Living according to *Dao* and becoming thereby exemplary persons should not be treated as a means to manipulate others to conform to their goals but as acting in a way that is conducive to spontaneous cooperation to respond to problems and to augment *Dao*.<sup>65</sup> The highest end is not just an end in itself, nor simply a means to other ends, but the highest form of participation in

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**63** On this, see H. Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred*, [1972] Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1998. See also, H. Fingarette, ‘The Confucian Perspective: The Self’, *Mapping Responsibility: Explorations in Mind, Law, Myth, and Culture*, New York: Open Court, 2004, chap. 10.

**64** Chu Hsi, ‘The Complete Works of Chu Hsi’, 127, in W.-T. Chan, op. cit., p. 643.

**65** The implications of such an orientation to action have been shown by R. C. H. Chia and Robin Holt, *Strategy Without Design: The Silent Efficacy of Indirect Action*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

and contribution to *Dao*. This is the form of self-cultivation and way of living, indwelling in the world in all its complexity as fully as possible and living accordingly, augmenting the *Dao* revealed by this, that is required for an ecological civilization.

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## FIGURATIONS OF FREEDOM

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the history of Chinese philosophy the concept “Dao” was not used exclusively by authors that we classify as “daoists” in the Western literature. It was rather common to many classical authors including Lao Tse and Confucius. And while Confucius uses this concept preferably in reference to the way human beings should behave in order to enhance the full development of their nature, especially their moral nature, Lao Tse speaks of Dao primarily in reference to the idea of an original source or the producer of the world. As Guo Yi points out, his own concept of Daoic philosophy is based upon Dao as the origin of the universe (root of the world, *taiji*) in the first place. Within a holistic framework, he advocates a system of metaphysics that distinguishes between the sphere of Dao (*daoti* 道体) the sphere of nature (*xingt* 性体) and the sphere of mind (*xingt* 心体), and he suggests that the fundamental structure of Dao determines the fundamental structures of the spheres of nature and mind. He specifies the innate structure of the original or primary Dao (the producer) by three fundamental elements, *zhi* 值, *li* 理, and *qi* 气, which represent the original sources of value, form, and energy or matter. Accordingly, the secondary Dao (nature/the product) must also contain “the nature of *zhi* 值之性 (or the value-nature), the nature of *li*, 理之性 (or the reason-nature), and the nature of *qi*, 气之性 (or the physical nature)”. The human mind also represents a product of Dao and it is therefore intrinsically determined by the fundamental structure: *zhi*, *li*, and *qi*. Consequently, Guo Yi specifies the innate structure of the mind as the mind of *zhi* 值之心 (or the value-mind) (rooted in the ultimate source of values, the *zhi* of the primary Dao, the *taiji*), the mind of *li* 理之心 (or the reason-mind rooted in the original source of form), and the mind

of *qi* 气之心 (or the physical mind, rooted in the source of matter)". And moreover he ascribes the productive principle of Dao, the so called *taiji*, to the mind and claims that the mind has a *taiji* itself, which means that the mind is able to determine its own nature. The mind is not only a receiver, the patient of the dynamics of Dao but a producer, an agent himself. On the basis of the fundamental structure that it shares with the original Dao the mind is able to determine its own agency.

This structural framework plays a significant role for one of the major concerns of Guo Yi's text. He proposes a solution for one of the most controversial issues in Chinese philosophy during the last 800 years, namely the dispute on the primacy of nature or mind. In the Chinese history of philosophy the school of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, 程朱学派, advocated the primacy of nature, while the school of Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming, 陆王学派, advocated the primacy of the mind. In regards to this controversy Guo Yi argues that "*xin*, *xing* and *li* are the same thing. There is no difference between [the claim that] *xing* is *li* and *xin* is *li*", or in other words: This classical controversy can be dissolved on a higher level once we understand that the mind is an agent who has his own *Taiji* and determines his own nature. Therefore the question of primacy can be replaced by a more profound understanding of this self-determination and its innate (daoic) structure. *Zhi*, *li* and *qi* represent the fundamental principle of both, (objective) nature (of mind) and mind itself, because they substantially determine the mind's agency and self-constitution. To a certain extent, we can denote Guo Yi's dissolution as dialectical because it preserves the truth of both competing theories while it elevates the topic from the level of an inevitable confrontation in the finite sphere, to the dialectical idea of self-determination on a metaphysical level.

Because our mind has a *taiji* and determines its own nature, we are able to cultivate our (especially moral) character and gradually overcome the innate conflict between our biological and moral nature. Thereby we seek to achieve a level of self-determination on which we could easily follow our affections without risking to conflict with the moral law. This result of such self-cultivation is not at all easy to achieve although it is valued by western philosophers as much as by their Chinese colleagues. The German philosopher Friedrich Schiller for example highly appreciates such a structure of volition or character and denotes it as "beautiful soul".<sup>1</sup>

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1 Schiller, F. 1793: On Grace and Dignity. In: Schiller, Friedrich: Werke. Nationalausgabe. Edited by the Nationale Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur in Weimar (Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv)

But he is skeptical about our ability to realize this ideal of education within our earthly life. I am, however, convinced that he would have been delighted by Confucius' disclosure that he indeed achieved such a state of self-cultivation, although not before the age of 70.<sup>2</sup> But as long we are cultivating our character and as long as we are still challenged by the force of affections of which we are not certain whether they conform to morality or not, we must be able to overcome these affections somehow. In the tradition of Chinese philosophy, i. e. Chung-ying Cheng believes that we are able to overcome our natural feelings by the force of the moral feelings, while in the German tradition we speak of the moral law or the faculty of reason instead of moral feelings. In this spirit, not unlike Kant, Schiller states:

“Every time, then, that nature manifests an exigency and seeks to draw the will along with it by the blind violence of affective movement, it is the duty of the will to order nature to halt until reason has pronounced.”<sup>3</sup>

As I mentioned before, Chinese scholars would speak of moral feelings rather than reason but the ability and necessity to reflect upon our natural affections and overcome their influence if it confronts morality is common to both traditions. Guo Yi's interpretation of the innate *taiji*-character of our mind provides even a solution for the question of the primacy of moral feelings or moral rationality, currently discussed among Chinese and German philosophers.<sup>4</sup> The mind contains both elements because it determines its own nature by the three fundamental principles that determine its agency. And if we exercise the *taiji*-potential of our mind, we will strive to evolve to the maximum of our potentials

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and by the Schiller-Nationalmuseum in Marbach von Lieselotte Blumenthal und Benno von Wiese. Vol. 20: Philosophische Schriften. First part. 1962.

<sup>2</sup> Confucius, Analects 2.4.

<sup>3</sup> “So oft also die Natur eine Forderung macht, und den Willen durch die blinde Gewalt des Affekts überraschen will, kommt es diesem zu, ihr so lange Stillstand zu gebieten, bis die Vernunft gesprochen hat.” Schiller, op. cit., 20: 292.

<sup>4</sup> The debates that we initiated at our Conference in Cologne 2011 were continued in Tutzing near Munich 2012. It turned out that the dichotomy “moral feeling – moral law” represents an important topic to discuss.

including our potentials as moral agents. That is an interesting idea but we need to discuss how exactly such self-determination is possible.

It seems to me that a profound understanding of the concept “*taiji*” in daoic philosophy, especially the specific concept of the mind’s *taiji* might help to overcome the controversy about the roles of moral feelings and moral laws. I will therefore try to provide some clarification on the mind’s agency ere turning to the specific claim that rational agency must be based upon laws instead of feelings.

## 2. DAO – THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF A NASCENT WORLD

Dao represents the embodiment of the totality of all facticity, all circumstances, and all processes that generate the sphere of the “myriad things” to which we refer as “nature”. And if we agree that at least our physical and biological existence is a product of nature, we could argue that we “receive” our nature from the surrounding totality and this is indeed what Guo Yi claims. But because we are able to determine ourselves and to cultivate our character, we conclude that our character is not only a product of nature but a product of our own self-determination and self-cultivation as well. Just as, in Lao Tse’s words, “a big tree grows from a tiny sprout”<sup>5</sup> we receive our physical and intellectual potential from nature and this potential serves as a groundwork of our self-determination. The achievement potential of our capacities is certainly different from individual to individual but we can never evolve to a level of self-determination that transcends our natural potentials. Translated in Schiller’s words, we could say that we have even got the potential to evolve to a *beautiful soul* but we cannot expect this metamorphosis to take place without our intense efforts. Thus self-determination is intrinsically tied to self-cultivation and the end of both is the maximal development of our whole nature, the biological as well as the spiritual or moral.

Daoism, and as far as I see also daoic philosophy, advocates a concept of nature as a continuous process of changes within which all beings are currently nascent or, metaphorically speaking, being born.<sup>6</sup> In this

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<sup>5</sup> Lao Tse, *Dao De Jing* 64.

<sup>6</sup> This idea reminds me very much on Schelling’s process philosophy, especially his ontology in the “World Ages” from 1811. Thus my essay, “Tao als Ursprung der Existenz”, represents an imaginary dialogue between Schelling and Lao Tse. It speaks of Daoism but at the same time everything

sense nature can be associated to the Latin verb “natare” which means “to give birth”. Consequently our own existence is nascent and therefore open for possible modifications. Some of these modifications might be caused by the surrounding circumstances of our existence, while some others represent products of our own self-determination. But the theory of our self-determination based on the potentials that we receive from our nature determines the process of our self-cultivation because according to this theory we are justified *to privilege* one specific form of self-cultivation which aims at the development of the faculties and capacities that we receive from nature, rather than any sort of self-determination that violates our nature or the principles and laws of the environment. By accepting the theory that we receive our potentials from Dao, we accept the fact that our existence is a product of specific (natural) circumstances and that it can be maintained only if we maintain these circumstances. This is one of the reasons why according to the Daoic philosophy the process of the human self-determination and the realization of human nature is necessarily connected to environmental ethics. The continuity of the process of changes manifests life according to a specific principle or productive force, “Ziran”, and thus Ziran represents a value independently from our volition. It is a necessary condition of our existence as human beings. Similarly our “mind” including world-orientation and value-orientation together with the ability to determine our volition represents an essential element of our existence because it is “given” to us by nature and the whole process of our volition is based upon this faculty. In my paper I will actually focus on the social sphere of our self-determination but here, not unlike Arran Gare, I suggest that the concept of Daoic philosophy might provide some interesting perspectives for the debates on environmental ethics, because it enables us to advocate the value of natural processes such as the emergence of life independently from individual or collective human interests.

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that is mentioned claims to be true of Schelling’s “World Ages” as well as of Daoism. In reference to the wu-Negation I tried to create a wu-presence of Schelling in this text. Cf. Josifovic, S. 2008: Tao als Ursprung der Existenz. In: Bickmann, C. et al.: Religion und Philosophie im Widerstreit. Studien zur interkulturellen Philosophie 18, Band 1.

### 3. FREEDOM REPRESENTS A NECESSARY CONDITION OF GUO YI'S CLAIM

In sum, I appreciate Guo Yi's embedment of the human existence in the totality of nature as well as the idea of nature as a continuous process of the emergence of life and humanity, and therefore I agree with his postulation that practical philosophy needs to develop *a framework that enhances the full development of the human nature*.

But here I need to confront Guo Yi's theory with the Western theory of freedom and action, because according to the classical German philosophy, freedom represents a necessary condition of all sorts of self-determination, self-cultivation, and of course especially of moral agency. Even if we agree on the fact that there are certain natural values, we must insist on the idea that the development of our natural potentials represents a primary object of our volition and self-determination. Our self-determination is possible only under the condition of our freedom because of the following argument: Freedom represents the necessary condition of morality. In Kant's words: Freedom is the *ratio essendi* of the moral law. So, if we intend to establish "a spiritual home for human beings" (Guo Yi) which provides the groundwork for the full development of the human nature, we need to discuss the underlying theory of freedom and self-determination. In the tradition of the classical German philosophy I will present a conceptual framework of which I suggest that it complements and supports Guo Yi's ideas. Basically, I believe that the classical German theory of freedom, especially Kant's concept of "practical freedom" concerns a specific sort of rational agency by which the mind (of which Guo Yi speaks) determines his own nature. Let us agree that the mind has a *taiji*. Let us also agree that the mind is an agent able to determine his own nature. We are now moving on to this determination precisely and trying to understand more about it.

### 4. THE THEORY OF PRACTICAL FREEDOM

In classical German philosophy, we define freedom as a faculty to determine our own volition and act on the basis of classifiable ends and principles.<sup>7</sup> These ends represent the objects of our self-determination

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<sup>7</sup> Of course, Kant does not speak of *zhi*, *li*, and *qi* but nevertheless we can accept the definition of freedom as volitional self-determination based on

and they are usually given to us on the basis of sensuous affections respectively natural feelings. But in contrast to animals, we are not necessarily driven to follow these affections. Instead, we are able to anticipate possible consequences of our actions, to consider the attractiveness of these consequences, and to overcome given affections in case that the anticipated consequences seem unattractive. The ability to overcome given inclinations, in Kant's words "*arbitrium liberum*" (CPR: B 562, B 830), represents a substantial element of his theory of practical freedom in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

We have got a choice whether to follow a given inclination or not, and we are able to make this choice consciously. Whenever we experience a sensuous affection, based on the natural appetite, we are able to reflect upon this affection and to recognize it as a legitimate expression of our volition or to deny it this recognition and thus disqualify it as a mere natural drive that needs to be overcome. This act of recognition represents a specifically human faculty and it can be either based on the attractiveness of the anticipated consequences or on *principles*. We exercise practical freedom in both cases, but the ability to act on the basis of principles represents a *higher* level of freedom, because it involves the *autonomy* of reason which is able to determine the structure of our own volition independently from given affections. This is exactly the human faculty of which Kant claims, that it "*infinitely elevates my worth as an intelligence by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world*". (CPrR: AA 162)<sup>8</sup> The moral principles represent the highest level of the autonomy of reason and we are bound to follow these principles in every single manifestation of our rational agency, respectively our practical freedom. This is exactly how the human mind determines his own nature, this is the prototype of rational agency.

Practical freedom represents the ability to act on the basis of classifiable ends as far as we recognize these *ends* as an expression of our own volition. But we recognize these ends as achievements of our own freedom only if we have realized them by our own actions. The exercise

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certain principles. These principles might even be *zhi*, *li*, and *qi*. We need to clarify this matter gradually.

<sup>8</sup> Kant, I.: The Critique of Practical Reason/Kritik der praktischen Vernunft. In: Kants Werke. Akademie Textausgabe. Vol. 5: Kritik der praktischen Vernunft. Kritik der Urteilskraft. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1968, pp. 1–163 (henceforth cited as CPrR).

of practical freedom is therefore based on the ability to identify the appropriate means and to determine one's own volition to undertake the necessary action.

Furthermore, if we take especially the transition from Kant's to Hegel's theory of freedom into account, we understand that there is an insufficiency in the structure presented above, and this insufficiency relates to the fact that the ends on the basis of which we exercise our practical freedom are *given to us by a contingent source*—sensuous receptivity. We are free to *recognize* them as an expression of our own volition, but *we do not specify* these ends freely. We could speak of a higher quality of freedom, if we could also determine the contents of our volition freely.<sup>9</sup> And if, as Guo Yi advocates, the mind determines his own nature, it must also control this aspect of self-determination.

We share the intuition that we are able to do this. But in fact, we can only speak of a free determination of the ends of our volitional self-determination if these ends are specified by a faculty that represents an authentic expression of our *spontaneity*. Spontaneity refers to agency and it seems to me that only the combination of spontaneity and agency is able to clarify the *taiji*-character of the human mind within the framework of Western philosophical vocabulary. According to Kant Reason represents a spontaneous faculty which determines itself by autonomy—and it does it on the basis of rational principles. Thus Christine Korsgaard states:

“Kant is usually thought of as a rationalist, but the Kantian conception of practical rationality represents a third and distinct alternative. According to the Kantian conception, to be rational just is to be autonomous. That is: to be governed by reason, and to govern yourself, are one and the same thing. The principles of practical reason are constitutive of autonomous action: they do not represent external restrictions on our actions, whose power to motivate us is therefore inexplicable, but instead describe the procedures involved in autonomous willing. But they also function as normative or guiding principles, because in following these procedures we are guiding ourselves.”<sup>10</sup>

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**9** Compare: G. W. F. Hegel 1817–1830: *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. §§ 476–482.

**10** Korsgaard C. 1997: *The Normativity of Instrumental Reason*. In: *Ethics and Practical Reason*. new edition: Korsgaard, C. 2008: *The Constitution of Agency*, Oxford University Press, 31.

The specification of the contents of our volitional self-determination must not be based on arbitrariness and contingency, because arbitrariness and contingency oppose the idea of control within our own volitional self-determination and thus they oppose the idea of freedom. Instead of contingency and arbitrariness, our volitional self-determination must be based on consistent principles, because practical freedom is the ability to act on the basis of specified ends and *principles*, and not only on the basis of specified ends; and we achieve the full development of our practical freedom only under the condition that the totality of all involved faculties evolves to the maximum of their performance. Acting without the consideration of the moral autonomy does indeed represent some sort of practical freedom, but it does not represent its highest form and it does not at all represent the full achievement potential of the human autonomy and volitional self-determination. According to Kant we can hardly speak of a free will if we exercise our volition arbitrarily. He recognizes the human volition as a free will only if it is determined exclusively by the autonomy of reason and the moral law. (CPrR, AA 72) Similarly Schiller concludes:

“The will really then makes use of its liberty even whilst it acts contrary to reason: but it makes use of it unworthily, because, notwithstanding its liberty, it is no less under the jurisdiction of nature, and adds no real action to the operation of pure instinct; for to will by virtue of desire is only to desire in a different way.”<sup>11</sup>

Thereby Kant and Schiller support Guo Yi’s advocacy of a human self-determination that aims primarily at the development of the moral character and they would easily agree that the mere satisfaction of desires represents an unworthy form of existence and that we need to determine the ends of our volition on the basis of the moral autonomy. In fact, Guo Yi wouldn’t speak of the moral autonomy nor of the moral law but rather of morality, value, and the “noble part” of our nature, which is the reason why we must sooner or later discuss the underlying concept of morality: but here we find an agreement in regard to the theory of the

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**11** “Er gebraucht also seine Freiheit wirklich, wenn er gleich der Vernunft widersprechend handelt, aber er gebraucht sie unwürdig, weil er ungeachtet seiner Freiheit doch nur innerhalb der Natur stehen bleibt und zu der Operation des bloßen Triebes gar keine Realität hinzutut; denn aus Begierde wollen heißt nur umständlicher begehren.” Schiller, *op. cit.*, 20: 291.

human self-cultivation and the underlying structure of volition or practical freedom. I propose to accept this agreement as a common ground and starting point of the intercultural encounter. And if we translate Guo Yi's postulation of the full development of our nature into Kantian words, we must perform our practical freedom in regard to ends that are "desirable in relation to our whole state", which means that they are good as well as useful (CPR, B 830) in order to evolve to a form of practical freedom by which it is possible to achieve the maximal development of morality along with the maximal development of happiness, which is, of course, the *ideal of the highest good*. (CPR, B 832 ff.: CPR, AA 110 f.) If, on the other hand, we translate Kant's idea into Guo Yi's vocabulary, we could state that the Kantian ideal of the highest good aims at the full development of the human nature.

In sum, Kant's theory of practical reason and practical freedom is based on the distinction of our phenomenal and our noumenal (intelligible) life, in this context especially the intelligible character, and his theory of freedom is on one hand based on our ability to overcome given sensuous affections and on the other hand on the ability to determine ourselves *a priori*. He is aware of the fact that our biological life involves ourselves into circumstances that are able to corrupt our moral development. Schiller even develops an explicit theory of the "natural instinct" (Naturtrieb) and concludes that dignity consists of the ability to overcome it:

"The rule over the instincts by moral force is the emancipation of mind, and the expression by which this independence presents itself to the eyes in the world of phenomena is what is called dignity."<sup>12</sup>

And not unlike Guo Yi, they both privilege the development of our freedom on the basis of morality, or, to put it in Guo Yi's words: the higher end of our existence is our moral life and we must first and foremost develop the higher end of our existence. But in Kant's philosophy there is a particular reason for this hierarchy: This reason is *control*. If we want to determine the contents of our volition independently from given affections, and if we want to maintain control over our self-determination, we must exercise it on the basis of a consistent groundwork of prac-

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<sup>12</sup> "Beherrschung der Triebe durch die moralische Kraft ist *Geistesfreiheit*, und *Würde* heißt ihr Ausdruck in der Erscheinung." Schiller, op. cit., 20: 294.

tical principles. Otherwise our self-determination would be based on contingency and arbitrariness. Control is the reason why the European tradition of moral philosophy gave up the metaphor of a “good heart” and turned the concept of the “moral law”. And if, as Guo Yi claims, the human mind determines his own nature through his own *taiji*, it must preserve the necessary control over this process of self-determination. It must assure that the nature that it produces is determined by the three fundamental principles. What I am trying to say is that this control cannot be maintained without classifiable principles.

## 5. DISCUSSION

I am convinced that we share a common ground in regard to the fact that our practical freedom must be based on morality and we also agree on the fact that we don't support a theory of freedom based on the arbitrariness and contingency of natural desires.

According to Guo Yi's terminology, we would agree on the idea that our life must be based on the “value-mind”, the “*zhi*-mind”. But the crucial point is our understanding of the principle *zhi*. We can interpret it as a more or less explicit groundwork of moral values. We could also interpret it as a “good heart”. And in some sort of a popular understanding those things coincide. But in fact, the metaphor of a good heart needs to be translated into a clear set of moral principles, or else it does not represent a philosophical concept acceptable for the German classics. We could raise the same claim even in reference to Confucius, because he is absolutely clear about the fact, that the moral substance needs to be bound to a specific *framework of values* and even a specific framework of *rituals* and that these rituals represent the necessary and *authentic* expression of the *moral substance* within a given society. The relation between the moral substance and the *li* is *not at all arbitrary*. And if a human being is supposed to develop his full natural potential within a society, he must cultivate his character on the basis of the *li*. It does not suffice to trust in the good heart as long as the individual in question is not a siege, a “beautiful soul”. Of course, I do not intend to advocate the *li* of Zhou as a groundwork of a new “spiritual home” for human beings in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, neither would I support the idea to enforce the structure of the Platonic state, but I suggest that the philosophical quality of the idea that the *li* represent a necessary expression of the moral

substance consists in understanding how and why the rituals communicate and manifest the values which determine a society.

The underlying set of values represents the groundwork of the *emergence* of society at all. It does not only contain the defining function in the logical sense but in fact an ontological dimension to which we can refer as *emergence or figuration* of the social reality. The social reality represents the totality of the social interactions of human beings and I am convinced that these interactions do not only recognize but actually manifest the values that constitute society. Thus the underlying values and the social practice are necessarily interconnected and the unity of both represents the emergence or the figuration of society. Accordingly I agree with the concept *li* only in reference to the codes of the social interaction within a given society as long as these codes represent an appropriate manifestation of practical freedom including the moral autonomy and self-determination and certainly not in reference to the specific codification of the Zhou-society. According to Krummel<sup>13</sup> “the sense of *Li* evolves from the basic verbal meaning of ‘to order’ to encompass its nominal sense of ‘order’ or ‘pattern’ — to distinguish it from this order or disharmony — both in its explanatory and normative sentences, both cosmologically and ethically” and I intend to emphasize the *constitutive* dimension of this function for the emergence of society. The *li* do not restrict the options of the individual self-determination in a given society: they rather constitute the groundwork of the society and thus they actually *provide all options*.

Within the sphere of the social interactions the *li* serve to provide a sophisticated code that enables every individual agent to manifest and express his own values by his actions. On the basis of the postulated unity of *form and substance* of morality in the tradition of Confucianism (see: Analects 12.8) as well as in the theory of the moral substance (*Sittlichkeit*) in German Idealism, we can draw some conclusions in regards to the free actions of individuals and their ability to articulate the underlying values and realize their ends adequately. It is essential for the theory of freedom to provide a framework within which it is possible for every individual agent to express his own values precisely and thus to articulate and manifest his values and ends by his own actions. This social sphere of the human practice, according to Confucius as well as

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13 Krummel, J. W. M. 2010: Transcendent or Immanent? Significance and History of *Li* in Confucianism. In: Journal of Chinese Philosophy, Volume 37, Nr. 3. (417–437).

according to the German Idealism (especially Hegel), must be rooted in a *precise set of codes* instead of a metaphorical reference to a “good heart”. A society, that lacks of such codes, in Confucius’ understanding specifically a precise structure of the *li* and a precise language, is constantly challenged by the problem that the individuals cannot adequately express their values, cannot adequately realize their ends and thus misunderstandings are unavoidable. And even worse: the relation between the underlying value and its attempted manifestation by the action is *arbitrary*, which is the reason why the agent cannot provide the necessary control over his actions and guarantee that his intention is realized in his action. But what kind of freedom do we have, if we cannot guarantee that our actions manifest our ends? If we intend to develop and advocate a theory of freedom based on straightness, *zhi*, we must postulate a *precise set of codes, li*, that provides the necessary groundwork for the precise articulation of our own volitional contents in every single action, or otherwise we have got to deal with the problem that Confucius specifies in the Analects VIII, 2:

“Respectfulness, without the rules of propriety (Li), becomes laborious bustle; carefulness, without the rules of propriety (Li), becomes timidity; boldness, without the rules of propriety (Li), becomes insubordination; straightforwardness, without the rules of propriety (Li), becomes rudeness.”

But we don’t want our carefulness to be misunderstood as timidity, our boldness to be misunderstood as insubordination, nor our straightforwardness to be misunderstood as rudeness. And if within our actions we want to provide the necessary control over the expression of our values, we need to rely on a precise system of codes as a part of our communication and social interaction. If we are to be held liable for our actions, we must be able to rely on a precise set of codes of our interaction.

## 6. THE FIGURATION OF FREEDOM IN THE SOCIAL PRACTICE

As Guo Yi points out, the concept of education in the ancient Chinese culture is strongly connected to the education of the, specifically moral, character and the concept of theoretical, instrumental knowledge serves only as a transitory moment of education. He also points out that the concept of knowledge is mostly the knowledge of virtue, which is the

reason why we should probably associate it to the Western concept of wisdom rather than knowledge. But the actual education of the moral character is based on the participation in the social reality. This participation serves as a ground for the individual experience of the values that form the specific framework of codes that constitutes a given society. Thus, if an individual is to be educated and to develop a strong moral character, it must be introduced to the system of values within a society, and this introduction is not based on the communication of knowledge alone, nor on argumentation, but on *practice and participation* and in its consequence on the ability to *share values*. From the point of view of the society and the theory of education, we introduce an individual to a given system of values if we invite him to share our values. Those who share values participate on one and the same society, and they establish a community that provides and offers options for the development of their personal freedom.

The opportunities that a random society is able to provide for the individual self-determination are nothing given by nature. They are always a *nascent* product, a *figuration* of the human interaction and especially a representation of the values that the individuals share. Thus the invitation to share certain values, of which we assume that they are appropriate to support the development of the human nature in regards to the individual as well as in regard to the social sphere of our freedom, is essential for the establishment of social order and for the establishment of any sort of opportunities that the society might provide for the personal self-determination of individuals. In the tradition of the theory of recognition developed in the classical German philosophy, especially by Fichte and Hegel, this conclusion not at all controversial. But what I'm trying to emphasize here is the agreement of the European and Chinese tradition in regard to this point because I'm convinced that although Confucius doesn't use the concept of freedom, self-determination, or recognition, social philosophy contains a sophisticated fundamental structure able to respond to the requirements and achievements of the theory of recognition.

We need to understand that the full development of the human nature entails a creative, dimension, which culminates in the option to cooperate, share intentions, share ends, realize these ends together and thus *establish a system of values as a nascent product of our own practice*. I actually believe that this is a descriptive approach, because I am convinced that this is the way we establish normative structures within the totality of the global world, whether we like it or not, whether we're con-

scious of it, or not. Our interactions are always based on certain values, some of which we share, and some of which we intend to impose upon one another, and the *reality* of the social practice, the reality of our actions and the performance of our practical freedom represent the actual *recognition* or figuration of these values. We do not recognize values by verbal commitments, we manifest them by our actions. And Confucius was probably one of the first philosophers who advocated such a primacy of the social practice. (See: Analects II, 13 and IV, 24). Thus the “reestablishment of a spiritual home for all human beings”, which Guo Yi postulates, represents primarily a practical challenge which at the same time represents a *new* establishment of practical freedom and together with our practice the *figuration of value structures*, ideally such value structures that we all recognize as an expression of our own volition and our own freedom.

## 7. THE MORAL ATTITUDE

Confucius was often accused of advocating some sort of a more or less insubstantial moral formalism based on an unnecessarily complicated system of rituals and it was considered as a system that restricts freedom instead of supporting it. This accusation was made especially in contrast to Daoism, and it is indeed not easy to absolve every cultural phenomenon in the Chinese history that justified its validity and existence in reference to Confucius, from this suspicion. I would even doubt that the *li* of Zhou need to be considered in our current debates. But the philosophical fidelity requests us to distinguish between the original theory that was advocated by Confucius himself and the tradition of Confucianism, and to consult Confucius’ own attitude to this topic. In reference to the Analects III, 26 we can easily argue that Confucius himself condemns the idea of an insubstantial moral formalism:

“The Master said, ‘High station filled without indulgent generosity; ceremonies performed without reverence; mourning conducted without sorrow;— wherewith should I contemplate such ways?’”

According to this, he definitely dislikes the practice of rituals without the adequate attitude, especially, as we might add, without the most substantial of all ethical principles, *ren*. The execution of rituals must therefore be based on an appropriate attitude and without it the whole ritual would

degenerate to a mere spectacle and even to a charade. Thus we conclude that he advocates a theory of the appropriate figuration of values in our practice. In reference to the *Analects* III, 3:

“The Master said, ‘If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with the rites of propriety? If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with music?’”

we can incorporate the principle *ren* into our argumentation and conclude that the whole attitude that forms the groundwork of the appropriate practice of the *li* culminates in *ren* and that therefore *ren* represents the principle and source of every single moral action. Without *ren*, the moral practice is impossible and of course the practice of the Rituals (*li*) is insubstantial. In this case the *li* serve to the figuration anything. It is therefore a key concern of Confucius to teach and advocate the *inseparability of ren and li*.

The main difference to the daoist understanding of the ideal human attitude, *wu-wei*, does not at all consist in the putative rejection of this concept by Confucius, but rather in the fact that, probably in concordance with Lao Dan, but in contrast to Taishi Dan, he argues that only within a society, where virtue and duty, *ren* and *li*, and thus the *substance and form* of morality have evolved to their ultimate perfection, a placid action such as *wu-wei* is able to provide and maintain morality, the social order, and freedom. But as soon as these forms turn into disorder, or as soon as they are executed without the appropriate attitude and without the rootage in *ren*, *wu-wei* becomes inapt to maintain order and avert chaos. Confucius’ main objection to the daoist theory of *wu-wei* is after all based on a certain understanding of education and the idea that the moral substance cannot evolve to its full potential without the appropriate form. Thus, if *ren* represents the embodiment of the moral substance, and the *li* represent the embodiment of the moral form, the moral practice must be based upon the *unity of ren and li*. Confucius is deeply convinced that morality is reliant on its appropriate form and that the moral principle, *ren*, cannot find its expression in the moral practice randomly. The articulation of the underlying moral principle within the reality of the moral practice is bound to the idea that there is a privileged, necessary, natural expression of morality, which is the system of the rituals of Zhou, *li*. As a matter of fact, I think that we need to face the authentically philosophical challenge to understand that *for certain reasons that are rooted in the human nature, “ren” must be the ground of “li”*.

From Guo Yi I learned that there is a continuity in the development of the underlying principle of ancient Chinese ethics. It was originally believed that the principle was justice (*yi*) but in the Zhou Dynasty justice was replaced by the rituals (*li*) which evolved to the unity of *ren* and *li* in Confucius' philosophy and the *Four Beginnings* in the teachings of Meng Tse (*ren, yi, li, zhi*). The evolution of Chinese ethics in the transition from the philosophy of Zhou to the philosophy of Confucius consists in the establishment of a new principle of ethics based on the unity of *ren* and *li* and we must try to understand *why*, according to Confucius, *it is necessary for the li to be rooted in ren*.

## 8. REN (仁)

In my opinion, the concept “*ren*” does not necessarily need to be associated to the Western concept of humanity. It suffices to emphasize the fact that *ren* stands for at least two people being together, which is the underlying figure in the theory of recognition (Hegel and Fichte), encounter (Martin Buber), and substantial communication (Karl Jaspers).

Fichte and Hegel were the first Western philosophers who developed a sophisticated theory of recognition based on the encounter of two free, self-conscious agents. Martin Buber refers to a similar figure by the concept of the “encounter” in “I and Thou”<sup>14</sup> and Karl Jaspers specifies it within the theory of the “substantial communication” (*gehaltvolle Kommunikation*).<sup>15</sup> Thus the idea of at least two people coming together to build a unity is not only the origin of the idea of a family, but furthermore the offspring of the specifically human practice, human freedom, and human virtue, which is, in the first place, based on the social interaction. But *ren* is insufficiently analyzed, if we emphasize only its moral dimension. Its moral dimension is actually based on the underlying experience and practice of the encounter: two people who turn to each other and come together establish a *unity, com-unity*, and begin to *share values*, which is the offspring of society and all the options it can provide for the individual self-determination. From the theory of recognition we know that two people together are very different from two

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<sup>14</sup> Buber, M. 1923: Das dialogische Prinzip. Ich und Du. (I and Thou). In: Werke I. Schriften zur Philosophie, 5. Aufl. Heidelberg 1984.

<sup>15</sup> See: Jaspers, K. 1932: Philosophie. Zweiter Band: Existenzerhellung. Vierte Auflage. Berlin/Heidelberg/New York 1973 (Chapter on Communication)

people alone and that the concept “we” contains much more than “me and the others” because “me and the others” can culminate into the idea of “us” only as a result of our free commitment. Thus the encounter is a necessary condition and original source of shared values. And these shared values find their privileged form within the system of the social codes. So, if I had to approach *ren* from the point of view of the European tradition, I would in the first place refer to Martin Buber’s “encounter” or Karl Jaspers’ “substantial communication”. If I had to address it by a general, non-philosophic concept, I would first of all choose “community” and if I had to describe its structure philosophically, I would choose the approach of “recognition” as advocated by Hegel.

The secondary meaning of “*ren*”, that contains its ethical and educational elements, and to which we usually refer as “humanity” is actually based on the encounter, and since, according to Confucius, *ren* and *li* represent an inseparable unity, the moral implications should rather be approached by an analysis of the underlying values within the system of the rituals, respectively the social codes. This is actually an essential element of his theory of education. Education is certainly based upon the transitory moment of getting in touch with the rituals, gaining the knowledge of virtue, but it evolves to the practice of these rituals based on the appropriate attitude and thus also to the understanding of the underlying values. And furthermore it leads to the internalization of these values, which integrates the individual into the community that shares these values. Without the knowledge of the rituals an individual is unable to exercise them properly. Without the appropriate attitude the rituals are meaningless. Without study the individual will never understand the underlying values. And without the internalization of these values, the individual will never accept them as an expression of his own volitional self-determination. This is why the process of education is crucial to the establishment of society and we might conclude that the internalization of values and the ability to share values represent an offspring, a figuration of freedom.

## 9. CONCLUSION

In sum, I emphatically support Guo Yi’s idea that we need to establish a new spiritual home for all human beings in the world and provide the groundwork that enables us to *develop the whole potential of our nature*. But in the tradition of the classical German philosophy I need to em-

phasize the importance sophisticated theory of freedom or action. In this sense freedom means the ability to determine one's own volition on the basis of classifiable principles and ends and to realize these ends in the lifeworld. The manifestation of our values is a product of our interaction because we recognize and manifest values by actions. This transition from a mere verbal commitment to an object or phenomenon of the social interaction is what I denote as *figuration*, emergence of values. And if the exercise of our volitional self-determination represents the manifestation of values within the sphere of the social interaction, and if the volitional self-determination represents freedom, I conclude that our social practice represents a *figuration of freedom*. This figuration is based on the specifically human ability to build communities, share values, and thereby establish a society that provides options for the individual self-determination by participation. I use the concept "figuration" to emphasize the nascent character of the society and the concept "encounter", which I associate to *ren* (仁), in reference to our ability to come together, build communities, and share values.



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PAUL COBBEN (TILBURG)

# RECOGNITION AS UNITY BETWEEN THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL REASON

## INTRODUCTION

The project of philosophy is in itself a universal undertaking. Reason is not limited to a specific culture; metaphysical foundations have an absolute status. Therefore, philosophical discussion is principally a world-wide discussion that includes all traditions. In our globalized world the need for this world-wide discussion also corresponds to the experiences of real life, in which, for example, philosophical conferences are increasingly attended by representatives from all continents. However, I must admit that my philosophical knowledge restricts itself to Western philosophy. Moreover, even this pretension is highly exaggerated. I must be satisfied if it turns out that I have an accurate knowledge of some specific fields within Western philosophy. Therefore, it is very important to me that Professor Guo Yi has undertaken to initiate the dialogue between Chinese and Western philosophy. I realize that this first meeting is insufficient for a real, substantial discussion. The conversation must be continued in order to establish a better mutual understanding. However, Professor Guo Yi at least begins the reciprocal acquaintance by presenting his interesting paper “Metaphysics, Nature and Mind – The Main Idea of Daoic Philosophy”. In my attempt at a first reaction, I will comment on three fundamental topics that are raised by Professor Guo Yi: 1. The separation between knowledge and value in Western thinking; 2. The relation between philosophy and science; and, 3. The relation between the finite and the infinite world.

## I. THE SEPARATION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE IN MODERN WESTERN THINKING

Professor Guo Yi formulates the following thesis: “Since modern times, Western philosophers have been chiefly concerned with the world of knowledge and have taken knowledge as their highest goal”.

This thesis is of importance because it links modern philosophy with the crisis in which the modern world finds itself. This crisis has to do with a one-sided interest in knowledge. While technology has been developed to the highest degree, the normative framework fails to guide this development in the right direction.

Obviously, I can agree with this diagnosis of the crisis in the modern world. The globalization of the modern world seems, in the first instance, to relate to economic markets. Globalization is less evident at the level of human rights. With regard to philosophy, this diagnosis indeed implies that we have to search for the internal coherence between knowledge and values; between science and the normative dimension. In this respect, I can only welcome the dialogue between Western and Chinese philosophy that is proposed by Professor Guo Yi. However, I would like to provide a short commentary on his characterization of Western philosophy as a philosophy that has, since the time of Kant, been chiefly oriented towards knowledge. This may indeed be the case for a considerable part of the Anglo-Saxon tradition, but this is in no way representative of what I consider to be the core of modern Western thinking. To underpin this opinion, I will provide three considerations:

1. Although the rise of modern Western thought is closely tied to the rise of modern science, the driving force of this philosophy is by no means limited only to the acquisition of knowledge. René Descartes and David Hume, for example, turn against superstition and orientate themselves on the basis of reason. This reason is not only utilized in service of the development of knowledge, but also has an important practical meaning. Reason also had to provide an alternative to what religion could no longer offer: a normative framework that was convincing for all. The practical goal was clear: to overcome the threat of religious wars.

For Kant, the great merit of the *Critique of Pure Reason* not only consists in its reflection upon modern science, but also in the implication of this reflection—namely, the insight that modern science does not contradict religion. Ultimately, Kant is mainly interested in practical reason, or rather, in the coherence between practical and theoretical reason.

2. I would not only like to argue that the establishment of the relation between rationality and normativity, or between nature and freedom, is one of the motives of modern philosophy, but even that it is the central motive. I have already made mention of Kant, who was principally interested in reflecting upon the unity of reason; specifically, the unity between theoretical and practical reason. In this context, Hegel, who had the intention of radicalizing Kant's project, is particularly important. Like Kant, he wanted to reconcile modern freedom with modern science. Moreover, Hegel would not have been surprised if his philosophy was to be characterized in a way analogous to professor Guo Yi's characterization of Chinese metaphysics; in other words, as concerning itself with "three levels, namely ontology, human nature and the human mind". Incidentally, there may be an immediate historical connection between the central opposition of dialectics (form and content) and the opposition between *yin* and *yang*: "The great Ultimate through movement generates *yang*. When its activity reaches its limits, it becomes tranquil. Through tranquility the Great Ultimate generates *yin*. When tranquility reaches its limit, activity begins again. So movement and tranquility alternate and become the root of each other, giving rise to the distinction between *yin* and *yang*, and the two modes are thus established". (p. 22) Hegel writes: "As a curiosity, I will give a more specific characterization of this principle. Both basic figures are on the one hand, a horizontal line (—, *yang*) and, on the other hand, the same line that falls apart in two parts (– –, *yin*): the first one representing the perfect, the father, the male, the unity, as in case of the Pythagoreers, the affirmation, the second one representing the imperfect, the mother, the female, the duality, the negation<sup>1</sup>".<sup>2</sup>

It is true that the development of the real world of modern Western society is characterized by the one-sidedness that Professor Guo Yi attributes to Western philosophy; namely the primacy of knowledge, and especially technological knowledge. However, it was also precisely this

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<sup>1</sup> So, *yin* and *yang* correspond to the basic poles of dialectic thinking.

<sup>2</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, Frankfurt/M., 1986, p. 143–4: "Der Kuriosität wegen will ich diese Grundlage näher angeben. Die zwei Grundfiguren sind eine horizontale Linie (—, Yang) und der entzweigebrochene Strich, so gross wie die erste Linie (– –, Yin): das erste das Vollkommene, den Vater, das Männliche, die Einheit, wie bei den Pythagoreern, die Affirmation darstellend, das zweite das Unvollkommene, die Mutter, das Weibliche, die Zweiheit, die Negation".

philosophical tradition that criticized this development. To begin with, it was, of course, Hegel's pupil, Marx, who criticized Western capitalism as a society that is dominated by an economic system that has become independent. [Incidentally, I am curious as to whether a form of Marxism also exists in China that is not incorporated by the ideology of the communist party, i. e., a philosophical Marxism that is prepared to engage in debate with traditional Chinese philosophy]. After Marx came Heidegger, who criticized one-sided technological development in terms of the "will to power". Horkheimer and Adorno, with their concept of instrumental reason, criticized a version of reason that is one-sidedly oriented to knowledge and power. Following the first generation of the Frankfurt School, Jürgen Habermas developed his notion of the paradigm of philosophy of consciousness to articulate a similar criticism. All these attempts to criticize the one-sidedness of actual development in the Western world were accompanied by the formulation of alternatives in which this one-sidedness could be overcome. In Marx, this alternative was called "The Realm of Freedom"; in Heidegger, "fundamental ontology"; in Horkheimer and Adorno, "critical theory" and in Habermas, the "theory of communicative action". In the Anglo-Saxon world, too, there is, following Habermas, an actual discussion about the paradigm of recognition.

3. I consider the paradigm of recognition to be the most promising prospect for the accomplishment of the project that Professor Guo Yi envisions. However, this is only the case if this paradigm is not understood in the manner in which it is elaborated by Jürgen Habermas; in other words, as the theory of communicative action. It makes just as little sense to follow the modification worked out by Axel Honneth, or to focus on the elaboration of the recognition theory in the Anglo-Saxon world. In all these cases, recognition is understood as a one-sidedly practical, intersubjective relation. As a consequence, while it is true that these approaches are well able to thematize the value dimension, it remains unclear as to how this value dimension is internally related to the knowledge dimension. The knowledge dimension is left to the positive, empirical sciences. While it is true that the value dimension and the knowledge dimension are related to one another (for example, by so called rational reconstructions — the normative framework — that have to be indirectly affirmed through the positive sciences), it remains unclear as to why reality would lend itself to standardization at all. In this sense, I think that these approaches are inadequate in comparison to that of

Hegel, and probably also to that of Kant. After all, both of these latter approaches intended to provide a way to think of the unity of theoretical and practical reason.

## II. INTERMEZZO: A SHORT SKETCH OF HEGEL'S PARADIGM OF RECOGNITION AS THE UNITY OF THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL REASON

The lord/ bondsman relation is the core of Hegel's paradigm of recognition. The lord symbolizes the pure self; the self that Kant calls the "autonomous individual". The bondsman symbolizes the real self; the self that observes human law that underlies the social organism. Therefore, the lord/ bondsman relation can be considered as a model in which Kant's noumenal and phenomenal self are united. The relation between both selves is mediated by the fear of death.

To understand the fear of death, the elementary relation between the organism and the earth has to be examined. This relation can be described as an interplay of forces. Insofar as the organism is affected by the earth, it is interested in the earth. This effect appears as a specific need. In its reaction, the organism satisfies its need—it overcomes its interest and returns back to itself. The life process is the endless repetition of this movement. In the *fear of death*, however, this movement is interrupted. At this moment, the earth appears as the absolute power of death—as the "absolute lord".<sup>3</sup>

What exactly does the organism's experience of the "absolute lord" mean? Firstly, the organism's relation to nature is no longer determined through specific interests. The absolute power of nature appears as indivisible otherness. Therefore, the organism is, in this relation, the force that is pushed back into itself.<sup>4</sup> However, this "force that is pushed back into itself" is not the result of needs that are satisfied. Under the influence of the absolute power of death, "alles Fixe" in the organism "hat gebebt".<sup>5</sup> The fear of death tears the organism away from all specific

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**3** "... the fear of death, the absolute Lord". G. W. F. Hegel: *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, transl. A. V. Miller, Oxford 1979, p. 117.

**4** Concerning the fear of death of the *self-conscious* organism (the bondsman), Hegel speaks about "a consciousness forced back into itself" (Ibid., p. 117)

**5** "... everything solid and stable has shaken to its foundations". (Ibid., p. 117)

natural needs. All specific interests are sublated in the unifying experience of the fear of death. In this sense the fear of death is the experience of “nothingness”, because all specific determinedness has perished in the experience of the pure unity of life.<sup>6</sup> All specific interests vanish in the undifferentiated unity in which life as life is experienced. The temporal process of life is transcended in the experience of the supra-temporal unity of life. Therefore, the fear of death is also the experience of the finitude of life—the experience of one’s own mortality.

In the fear of death, the interplay of forces that characterizes nature is suspended, because the “absolute lord” is internalized. After all, the “absolute lord” appears as the force that is absolutely pushed back into itself, and is experienced in the fear of death that makes the organism the force that is absolutely pushed back into itself. As the force that is absolutely pushed back into itself, the organism experiences life as life; in other words, as the supra-temporal unity of life. In fact, the supra-temporal unity of life reflects the supra-temporal unity of nature—the “absolute lord” who, mediated by the fear of death, is experienced by the organism.

The *fear of death* that Hegel has in mind is not just the *fear of death* of an organism, but the fear that is experienced by an organism that is also a pure self. Initially, the body is threatening to the pure self. It threatens the pureness of the self because it implies that the self is externally determined in its awareness of its needs. Therefore, the pure self tries, at the level of *Desire* (PhS, p. 109), to negate the awareness of its body by satisfying its needs. From an external perspective, the interplay of forces between the organism and the earth can be interpreted as an action of the pure self that also has a body to rescue its pureness. At the moment of the *fear of death*, however, the pure self “experiences” that it is impossible to negate the awareness of its body. After all, in the *fear of death*, the body appears as the force that is absolutely pushed back into itself—as an independent self. This experience appears to be the definitive end of the pure self’s attempt to realize itself, yet the opposite is true. In the *fear of death*, the organism of the body has transcended itself—it has itself negated the naturalness of the organism. Therefore, the pure self can “recognize” itself in its body. It experiences that it is the “lord” of its body. The unity of life, the life as life, that the organism experiences in

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<sup>6</sup> In this sense, Heidegger’s analysis of the fear of death in “Sein und Zeit” repeats Hegel’s analysis.

the *fear of death*, is a self-relation, a being-at-itself whose pure form is the pure self. The pure self-relatedness of the pure self is not negated by the organism, but rather affirmed; specifically, by the organism in the *fear of death*.

In the relation of the *fear of death* in which the pure self “recognizes” itself, the pure self is related to the organism in its own independence. It is in the otherness as otherness returned to itself. This means that the pure self is not identical to the essence of the organism. The organism appears in its own independence—the relation between the pure self and the organism expresses an ontological difference. The organism is the appearance of the pure self, but it is only a finite appearance of the pure self, that in its finitude is essentially distinguished from the infinitude of the pure self.

The foregoing development has shown that the pure self is always already related to an organism in the fear of death. In this sense the pure self (or: *das reine Ich*) is an abstraction of this relation. The relation to the organism (in the state of the fear of death) is presupposed. Principally, this relation is a relation of transcendental openness—principally, the pure self has a free relation to the organism and can “conceive” of it in its own nature. Initially, however, the pure self has no insight into this relation. As a pure self, it is not able to perform any reflection, any thinking or knowing: after all, it is purely itself. Therefore, I placed “recognize” and “conceive” in quotation marks. The question is how the pure self is aware of its relation to the organism.

Hegel draws attention to the fact that this awareness can only be generated under the special condition that the *fear of death* is caused by another self. In this case, the absolute master (death) has the form of the other self; in other words, the other self is the master of the organism. Since the first self has experienced itself as the essence of the organism, it can “recognize” itself in the other self—the other self is the representation of the pure self. However, once again it is not clear as to how a pure self is able to “recognize”. According to Hegel, this recognition is not a spiritual act, but is expressed purely in practice. The first self recognizes the other self in its practical service—by being a bondsman who serves his lord.

From an external perspective, the serving bondsman is in theory the pure, free self. By internalizing the power of nature (the absolute lord), he has overcome death and can represent his pureness in the lord. In practice, however, with respect to his corporeality, the bondsman is part of a social organism. The organism of the bondsman does not (imme-

diately) serve itself—it does not satisfy its needs—but rather serves the lord. In this service, the fear of death; in other words, the transcendence of nature; is institutionalized. The relation to nature has, in the first place, the form of freedom. Through this openness to nature, the actions of the bondsman are no longer natural—they do not express the laws of instinct (the laws of the natural species), but the laws of the human species—the laws of the state (the social organism), whose essence is the lord, or the representation of the pure self.

The lord/ bondsman relation cannot only be considered the relation between the noumenal and the phenomenal self (Hegel's version of the *Critique of Practical Reason*), but is also the presupposition of Understanding, i. e., Hegel's alternative to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. It resumes the "reine Ich" (Hegel's transformation of the transcendental subject) in the form of the representation of the pure self (the lord) and shows that this pure self already presupposes the social organism of the bondsman. In the service of the bondsman—in his relation to nature in the form of labor—nature always already appears in practice (*a priori*) in the form of a law. In this sense, nature is reasonable. The "freedom" of the bondsman (his relation to nature which is mediated by the lord) results in an openness to nature which enables him to discover specific (contingent) laws of nature. These laws are not discovered through scientific experiments, but are rather practically experienced in the framework of the labor division which characterizes the social organism. But these practical laws are presupposed by the scientist. The scientists who examine the laws of nature are involved in a social organism in which nature already appears all the time in the form of the human law.

### III. THE RELATION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

Professor Guo Yi quotes Stephen Hawking in order to stress how one-sided Western philosophy has become. It not only neglects the great metaphysical questions, but is also no longer able to reflect on modern science. Science has become so "technical" that philosophy limits itself to language-analysis. The great tradition from Aristotle to Kant is interrupted. In opposition to this development, Professor Guo Yi pleads for the restoration of the bond between knowledge and metaphysics; between science and philosophy. In his article, he presents several examples of possible connections between metaphysics and modern sciences: "There is a room to imagine that we compare 'the Great begins to depart'

with the process of the Big Bang, ‘then it becomes further and further away’ with the expansion of the universe, ‘then returns to the original point’ with the collapse and condensation of the universe”. (Guo, in this volume, p. 19) Another example: “Modern biology proved that parents’ genes could be inherited by their children, while most members of an ethnic group carry the same gene. Based on this, we can conclude that as the mother of the universe, the single point should contain all basic information, and all things should carry the original information of the single point”. (p. 21)

However, I highly doubt whether the bond between metaphysics and science can be repaired in this manner. If we wish to understand the relation between science and philosophy, this, at the very least, cannot mean that we sacrifice the particular nature of scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge is based on hypotheses of laws that are affirmed through experiments. In contrast to metaphysical knowledge, scientific knowledge is basically hypothetical. Professor Guo Yi relates the separation of science and metaphysics to the separation of “substance” and “phenomenon”. In a specific sense, we can again make note of this separation in Kant. However, as I have argued, it is, in fact, Kant who has prioritized the unity between theoretical and practical reason. Moreover, it is precisely the separation between phenomenon and substance that is the central point in Hegel’s criticism of Kant. This criticism results in a philosophical position in which substance (in Hegel: the absolute spirit) manifests itself in the phenomenal world. However, this does not mean that, according to Hegel, philosophy or metaphysics could take instruction from the concrete models of science. Like Kant, Hegel, too, regards philosophical insight as limited to the law form that science imposes on the phenomenal world. Precisely which models science constructs to concretize this law form is its own business and has to be developed in relation to experimental practice.

However, Professor Guo Yi correctly states that the relation between science and philosophy in modern Western philosophy is a problem, not only in the tradition of Anglo-Saxon philosophy, but also in the continental tradition, and even in thinkers who appeal to the paradigm of recognition. Habermas, for example, rejects philosophy’s independence and turns against all forms of metaphysics. In his opinion, science; in other words, knowledge that is in the last resort empirically testable, has primacy. Philosophy only provides the encompassing development models of what Habermas calls, “rational reconstructions”.

However, the truth of these reconstructions is dependent upon scientific research.

If the relation between science and philosophy is conceptualized in this manner, it becomes impossible to ground scientific knowledge. Ultimately, each attempt to establish this foundation should be affirmed by scientific research. In this respect, this position implies a weakness in comparison with Kant. The question of how scientific knowledge is possible at all cannot be answered without an appeal to science itself. I have already argued that this problem does not arise in Hegel's version of the paradigm of recognition. Hegel has developed the internal coherence between the law form of theoretical and practical reason.

#### IV. THE RELATION BETWEEN THE FINITE AND THE INFINITE WORLD

Apart from the relation between knowledge and value and between philosophy and science, I would like to discuss a third fundamental relation; namely the relation between the finite and the infinite world. I quote Professor Guo Yi: "Dao is a core concept in Chinese philosophy, and was held in high esteem by all Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. But every school interpreted it differently. Generally speaking, as a philosophical concept, Dao is used in two fundamental senses. One is law, principle and norm, which extended from its original meaning (namely, road and way); another is the source of the universe and the nature of the world. The concept Dao we discussed above belongs to the latter". (p. 44)

I would like to ask Professor Guo Yi some questions about these two fundamental senses of Dao: Dao as law, principle and norm, and Dao as source of the universe and the nature of the world. I would like to translate this distinction into, on the one hand, the philosophical concept of the absolute world, and, on the other hand, the philosophical concept of the finite world. I hope that Professor Guo Yi can enlighten me as to whether this translation makes sense.

Until now, I have argued that there is a fundamental affinity between the project that Professor Guo Yi proposes and the Hegelian one. However, with regard to the two senses of Dao, we may have reached the limitations of this affinity. My own teacher, the late professor Jan Hollak, educated me in a critical reception of Hegel. I think that his critique of Hegel can be connected to the two senses of Dao that professor Guo Yi distinguishes. The core of Hollak's critique of Hegel comes down to

the following thesis: Although Hegel pretends that his philosophical system develops the philosophical concept of the absolute, he instead only developed the philosophical concept of the finite (in other words, the human) world. His philosophical concept of “substance”, the absolute spirit, cannot be identified, as he pretends, with the philosophical concept of god, but rather concerns the absolute, philosophical concept of the human world. This critique of Hegel refers to the concept of god that is developed in the tradition of Thomas Aquinas. In his view, god cannot be dependent on a world that is created. The almightiness of god implies that it is meaningless to speak of the self-realization of god. God has always already realized himself. In god, being is fully actual. As a consequence, divine freedom is fundamentally distinct from human freedom. In contrast to humans, who have to realize their freedom, god and divine freedom cannot be situated in time.

To a certain extent, the distinction between the divine and the human world seems to correspond to Professor Guo Yi’s distinction between general values (concerning the true, the good and the beautiful) and the final value, called *an*, that has the meaning of “quiet, peaceful, calm, stable, safe, easeful, happy, harmonious etc.” (p. 43). Ultimately, the values that are linked to *an* seem to express a state rather than an activity. They seem to correspond to the divine being that does not have to realize itself. Moreover, Professor Guo Yi himself, as I understand him, also relates *an* to the divine dimension: “Up to now, the various transcendental concepts such as Tian or Heaven in Confucianism, Dao in Daoism, the Unconditioned in Buddhism, God in Christianity and Allah in Islam, are all the realization of the sphere of Dao from different standpoints and angles by different civilizations, and at last all of them developed into the Way that people should behave so as to direct the behavior of human beings. Therefore, approaches to final value by human beings can be called *ren dao* (or the Human Way)”.

Nevertheless, it remains unclear to me precisely how Professor Guo Yi understands the relation between the divine and the human world. On the one hand, *an* seems to be a value that transcends human reality, but on the other hand, *an* seems to be the final value that “decides the fundamental purpose of human beings” (p. 43). Does this imply the same ambiguity in the relation between the human and the divine world as is found in Hegel? Or is the separation between these worlds maintained because *An* is always interpreted by human beings? (Professor Guo Yi refers to “approaches to the final value by human beings”). I hope that Professor Guo Yi can elaborate upon his view as to the relation between

philosophy and religion. How precisely are religious and humanist beliefs related? Has religion its own domain that cannot be translated into philosophical conceptions? Or is the religious dimension, too, ultimately accessible to reason?

My last question concerns Professor Guo Yi's thesis that: "The basic values of contemporary society are science and democracy" (p. 46) He adds that "science is a tool of life, not life itself". And: democracy is a "general value and not a final value". Although I can agree with this analysis, I am surprised that professor Guo Yi does not mention human rights as belonging to the basic values of contemporary society. Professor Guo Yi stresses that the contemporary notions of freedom "including freedom of faith, political freedom, freedom of speech, economic freedom and so on", "belong to outside freedom and cannot in the same breath be compared to life freedom which belongs to internal freedom". (p. 46) But what about Kantian freedom — the freedom of will — that can be considered to ground the concept of human rights? According to Kant, free will makes human beings an "end-in-themselves". Does this conception of freedom not belong rather to internal freedom, and, therefore, to final value? So, I would like to invite Professor Guo Yi to present his conception of contemporary human rights. Is this a conception that is only connected to the Western, Christian tradition, as some argue? Or are human rights related to final value?

One of the formulations of the Kantian categorical imperative is: never make the human person only a means. Basically, this moral criterion was Marx's standard to criticize capitalism. After all, capitalism made the individual, as the commodified labor force, only a means to capital. If Marxism can be related in this manner to the Kantian categorical imperative, and, if the categorical imperative can be related to final value, does this imply that not only traditional Chinese philosophy, but also the Marxist tradition in China, offer an entrance for thematizing the concept of final value? Or is the Marxist tradition in China restricted to the political dogmas of the communist party?

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## THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF VALUE

### A Modernist Reply to Professor Guo Yi

“There is no *classical author* in philosophy.”<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. VALUE OR KNOWLEDGE

Professor Guo’s sweeping panorama of traditional Chinese philosophy, undertaken under the guiding perspective of a Daoist-inspired thinking that he terms “Daoic,” develops an original philosophical position situated in a twofold larger context: the distinction between Western and Chinese philosophical thought and the distinction between traditional and modern philosophical thinking. Professor Guo maintains the different basic orientation of the Western and the Chinese philosophical traditions. In particular, he sees Chinese philosophy centered around the concept of value, and Western philosophy focused on the concept of knowledge. Moreover, he regards both philosophical traditions as subject to modification under the conditions of modernity as defined by the conjuncture of the unprecedented expansion of knowledge (“science”) and similarly aggressive economic growth (“capitalism”). On Professor Guo’s assessment, Western as well as Chinese philosophy is to respond to the

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<sup>1</sup> *Immanuel Kant’s gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Prussian Academy of Sciences (vols. 1–22), German Academy of Sciences (vol. 23) and Göttingen Academy of Sciences (vols. 24–29) (Berlin, later Berlin/New York: Reimer, later de Gruyter, 1900–), 8:219 note (*Über eine Entdeckung ...*) (emphasis in the original).

twofold, cognitive and economic challenge of modernity with a project of emendation that complements the limited orientation of each of the two grand traditions in philosophy with the basic orientation of the other one: Western philosophical thinking, marked by the focus on knowledge, is to be supplemented by the systematic concern with value, while Chinese philosophical thinking, characterized by the concern with value, is to be supplemented by systematic attention to the issue of knowledge.

In the case of Western philosophy the systematic incorporation of the dimension of value advocated by Professor Guo is properly a rediscovery and a return, since Professor Guo acknowledges that pre-modern, traditional Western philosophy already had been concerned chiefly with issues of value, only to have its earlier basic axiological orientation superseded by the modern focus on knowledge in theory as well as practice. In the case of Chinese philosophical thought the systematic inclusion of the dimension of knowledge recommended by Professor Guo is not to take the form of a departure from the traditional orientation on value but is to serve as an enhancement of traditional Chinese thought in the interest of responding adequately to the modern growth of knowledge.

In articulating the ideal dual focus on value and knowledge in Chinese philosophical thought Professor Guo stresses throughout that the foundation of both knowledge and value is metaphysical in nature. In particular, he documents the cosmological dimension of traditional Chinese thought and notes certain affinities between Daoist cosmogony and modern astronomical speculations (“big bang”). Moreover, he traces the ontological basis of value to what he terms “value nature”—as opposed to “physical nature” and “rational nature.” In particular, Professor Guo notes the distinction between “final value” and “general value,” arguing that freedom and democracy, while representing general values transcending cultural divisions, do not therefore represent final values, which reside, according to Professor Guo, not in the socio-political sphere but in an inner, spiritual dimension. Accordingly, Professor Guo concludes with a reconsideration of the traditional Chinese conception of the sage, who acquires virtue through extensive education and erudition, thereby reaffirming the special status of philosophy independent of a modern world marked by the twin temptations of cognitive and economic expansionism.

## 2. ANCIENTS AND MODERNS

From my own perspective, which is informed by scholarly acquaintance with European philosophy in its two outstanding manifestations, viz., as classical Greek philosophy and as classical German philosophy, as well as extensive teaching experience in North America and Europe along with visiting appointments and conference attendances in East Asia, Australia and South America, Professor Guo's perspicuous analyses and assessments seem less specific to the situation of Chinese philosophical thought than to the condition of philosophy worldwide today. Whether practiced in Europe, North or South America, Australia or the Far East, philosophy—especially academic philosophy—finds itself in the situation of a traditionally established discipline confronted with the scientific and cultural revolutions of the modern world and called upon to respond to them by means of sustained reflection and critical analysis. Accordingly, almost everywhere in the world of academic philosophy there are to be found two main types of response to the modern challenge, viz., a return to some earlier, lasting, lost or threatened kind or form of philosophy and a more or less emphatic embrace of the novel outlook on life offered through the scientific and cultural conditions of modernity.

With regard to the European philosophical tradition, chiefly preserved in Europe itself and in the Americas, the modern-anti-modern duality manifests itself, e. g., in the competitive coexistence of “analytic” and “Continental” modes of philosophical thought, or in the rivalry of neo-Aristotelian and neo-Kantian approaches in ethics and in social and political philosophy. Unlike Professor Guo's portrayal of the situation might suggest, Western philosophy is by no means homogeneous and affirmative in its responses to the conditions of modernity but reacts to them with a broad spectrum of positions that reach from outright denial and outraged denouncement to genuine approval and active endorsement. Similarly, the distinction offered by Professor Guo between the primary orientation of one type of philosophy toward knowledge and that of another type of philosophy toward value is, on my view, not specific to the distinction between Western and Chinese philosophy but also marks an internal opposition between traditionalist and modernist philosophy in the West today.

The true divide, then, in contemporary philosophy does not run between a narrowly epistemological type of philosophy to be encountered in the West and a primarily value-oriented type of philosophy favored by Chinese philosophy. Rather the deep division that Professor Guo sees

between Western and Chinese philosophy is equally an inherent division within the former and may well have its counterpart within the latter. Just as there is to be found in the West, in addition to specifically modern modes of philosophical thought, a substantial and extensive commitment to traditional forms of philosophy, along with a focus on traditional values, including traditional religious values, there are to be found in Chinese philosophical thought, in addition to a traditionalist orientation, specifically modern forms of philosophical thinking.

But Professor Guo's analyses are not limited to a typological characterization of Western and Chinese philosophy past and present. In addition to the descriptive level there is an evaluative dimension to Professor Guo's assessment of the historical and contemporary conditions of the two philosophical traditions. Moreover, the normative aspect of Professor Guo's reconstruction of Chinese philosophy chiefly concerns the potential of traditional Chinese philosophy in the face of the challenges posed by modernity. Professor Guo considers Chinese philosophy in its traditional form—and in its syncretistic composition reflecting Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist traditions—capable and called upon to oppose the negative effects and implications of a modernity chiefly defined by uncontrolled cultural and economic development.

### 3. THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE

In response to Professor Guo's portrayal of the current possibilities and tasks of philosophy in general and of traditionally oriented Chinese philosophy in particular, I would like to examine more closely the relation between the two key features of Western and Chinese philosophy detected by Professor Guo, viz., knowledge and value. In particular, I would like to draw on Western philosophy, both past and present, to assess the nature of the relation between knowledge and value. More specifically, I will investigate the mutual involvement of considerations of knowledge and considerations of value in Western philosophical thought. In the process, I will argue for the (limited) modernity already of classical Greek philosophy and for the emphatic modernity of classical German philosophy. In so doing, I will draw on a conception of modernity that is itself specifically philosophical and that exceeds the narrow confines of a merely scientific or economic conception of modernity, as presupposed by Professor Guo.

From its origins in archaic gnomics (Seven Sages) and Ionic philosophy of nature (Thales, Anaximander) through its heyday in Plato and Aristotle to its later developments in Pyrrhonic skepticism and old and middle stoicism Greek philosophy has been concerned equally with what came later to be identified as “theoretical philosophy,” involving physics and metaphysics, and with what came to be labeled “practical philosophy,” involving ethics and politics. Moreover, both sets of inquiry pursued throughout by Greek philosophers typically involved epistemological issues addressing the modality and extension of knowledge to be achieved in the various areas of theoretical and practical philosophy. Major examples of the prominence of epistemological concerns in both main parts of Greek philosophy are Plato’s *theory of forms*, which serves both to distinguish opinions concerning appearances from knowledge regarding true reality and to mark off unreliable from safe and sound standards of conduct, and Aristotle’s distinction between the scientific knowledge to be obtained in physics and metaphysics (*episteme*) and the role of practical judgment (*phronesis*) in ethical and political matters.

But the interconnection between epistemological and axiological issues in classical Greek philosophy concerns not only the presence of considerations of knowledge in practical philosophy. It also manifests itself in the reverse presence of axiological considerations in theoretical philosophy. A central concern of the Greek philosophers throughout is the significance or, in Professor Guo’s preferred parlance, the value possessed by philosophical knowledge, in contrast to other modes of theoretical inquiry and practical existence. Chief examples of the Greek philosophical evaluation of knowledge in general and of philosophical knowledge in particular are the comparison and contrast of the lives of the ordinary citizens and the guardian-philosophers in Plato and the distinction between the forms of life devoted to artisanal production (*poiesis*), ethical and political acting (*praxis*) and philosophical contemplation (*theoria*) in Aristotle. It is significant for the overall orientation of Greek thinking that, while the Greek philosophers on the whole value most highly the contemplative life of study and speculation, they also acknowledge the worth and indeed the worthiness of a life informed by philosophical insight but devoted to the furtherance and maintenance of the common good in political activity.

A further feature that marks classical Greek philosophy in general and its chief manifestations in Plato and Aristotle in particular is the critical spirit of philosophy that is geared both toward extra-philosophical beliefs and traditions and toward alternative philosophical positions

and doctrines. Throughout Greek philosophy is marked by controversies, polemics and antagonisms, resulting in an adversarial style of argumentation. To be sure, the pervasive element of polemics and antagonism in Greek thought is not a purpose of its own but reflects the deep-seated conviction that philosophical insight results from intellectual struggles and that lasting results and wider agreements require the prior carrying through of vehement disputes and radical dissension. A chief illustration of the Greek way of doing philosophy controversially are Plato's mature dialogues, especially the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, that have surpassed the aporetic impasses of his earlier works but do not yet exhibit the dialectical openness of his late works. Considered as a whole, Greek philosophical thought is critical to the point of being self-critical. As a result of its critical, even self-critical spirit, classical Greek philosophy is marked by disagreement among its main representatives, even in cases where nominally they may belong to one and the same "school" of thinking. In the classical Greek tradition there is not to be found an established, recognized and lasting consensus on philosophical matters. The very nature of knowledge, its definition, its intension and extension, remains as much a matter of controversy between Academics, Peripatetics, Pyrrhonists, Stoics and Epicureans as the nature of the good (or the valuable), its constitution and the conditions of its obtainability.

#### 4. THE KNOWLEDGE OF VALUE

The critical character of classical Greek philosophy finds its modified continuation in the dramatic development of modern philosophy from Descartes and Hobbes through Hume and Kant to Frege and Husserl and beyond that to Adorno and Heidegger. Modern European philosophy, along with its satellite developments in North America and elsewhere, has been marked by internecine strife, resulting in clashes between opposed schools and affiliations, and by philosophical attacks on established traditions and authorities, both religious and secular. The focus on reason, in particular on instrumental rationality, that is often cited as a main feature of modern philosophy in the West involves not so much the idolatry of reason as the reliance on reason for the critical assessment of the extra-rational aspects of human life in culture, politics and religion. Most importantly, the modern philosophical focus on reason often includes the self-critique of reason assessing as much the limits or boundaries of reason as its capacities and reach. For religiously

motivated modern philosophers, such as Pascal and Leibniz, the philosophical consideration of reason is to be supplemented by that of religious faith and divine grace. For secularly oriented modern philosophers, such as Hume and Rousseau, feeling, rather than reason, is the main source of orientation and motivation in human life.

The self-critical dimension of the concern with reason in modern philosophy is particularly obvious in the works of Immanuel Kant and his idealist successors, chiefly among them Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel. Kant sets out to critically assess the claims of reason to knowledge in matters of metaphysics, arguing that traditional metaphysics is unable to justify its alleged cognition of supersensible objects, in particular the soul, the world in its entirety and God. Moreover, Kant limits possible knowledge to objects in space and time, including their universal and, for that matter, metaphysical principles. Accordingly, Kant's purification of theoretical philosophy from false metaphysical pretensions results in a "metaphysics of experience" (Herbert James Paton) based on a novel account of non-empirical, metaphysical knowledge of the empirical, physical realm.

Kant complements the drastic curtailment of theoretical, knowledge-gearred reason to possible experience with a reverse extension of practical, volition-gearred reason beyond the limits of experience and beyond the confines of a merely instrumental understanding of practical reason. In fact, Kant views the limitation of theoretical reason as a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of genuine, purely practical reason, viz., moral reason. Only the ideality of the objects of knowledge can safeguard the reality of the moral law (categorical imperative) and the freedom it entails. Yet Kant also insists on the unity of theoretical and practical reason, arguing that it is one and the same reason that is subject to a twofold employment under alternative sets of principles, one involving the determination of objects by means of the categories, the other involving the determination of the will by means of ideas of reason, chiefly that of freedom from natural causation and rational self-determination (autonomy).

Kant's conception of a non-instrumental practical use of reason and the associated constitutive role of reason in the normative determination of human conduct distinguishes his account of human action from a metaphysically-based theory of value. On a Kantian account, neither cognition nor volition can be accounted for by an appeal to matters of fact. Both are products rather than findings, made rather than given, constituted rather than detected. To be sure, the activity of reason that

Kant locates at the basis of knowing as well as willing is not arbitrary and contingent but based on strict principles that structure and guide the exercise of theoretical spontaneity as well as practical freedom, each in its own specific way. Kant's strictly reason-based account of cognitive and conative normativity preserves and even strengthens the axiological dimension of human conduct in theory as well as in practice, even if value is not primary but reason itself, especially pure practical reason as the supreme condition of everything to be valued in human cognitive and volitional endeavors.

In sum, then, Kant offers an account of reason—in its differentiation as well as unity, in its theoretical as well as practical employment, in its pure as well as empirical use—that redresses the alleged shortcomings of modernist, merely instrumental reason as being defective, one-sided and impoverished. But it also places modern philosophy under the outright moral obligation to emphatically advocate the liberating potential of reason in the face of a modern world that has turned reason into rationality, progress into profit and communication into consumption. On a Kantian analysis, it is not modernity that has failed. Rather we moderns, half-moderns, to be precise, have failed modernity, its potential for a truly enlightened, genuinely cultured and actually civilized form of life that continues the humanizing aspirations of traditional life forms under the conditions of an increasingly world-wide interaction of previously separate traditions that need to seek modes of coexistence and compatibility.

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## ON RATIONAL FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE AND VALUES IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY<sup>1</sup>

1.

If I take Guo Yi's considerations as a starting point for a dialogue between China and Europe about the metaphysical foundations of knowledge and ethics, it is important to go into some presuppositions of his view on modern Western as well as ancient Western philosophy. These presuppositions are already relevant for the exposition of the problem, to which Guo Yi wants to introduce Chinese philosophy as the solution. It seems to me, that the dialogue should also be about what Western philosophy is and how it relates to values. Without having a clear picture of that, and of course of Chinese philosophy, a philosophical dialogue cannot be fruitful. For sure, philosophy is not only about something which has to do with what Guo Yi calls "the source of the world, the nature of the myriad of things and the order of society",<sup>2</sup> about '*was die Welt im Innersten zusammenhält*' (Goethe), and with that about totality. It is also about our understanding of that *totality*. At least in Western philosophy it has turned out that it is unavoidable for an adequate conceptualization of totality, to take also into account our understanding of it: our under-

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<sup>1</sup> I thank all participants of the conference *Metaphysical Foundations of Knowledge and Ethics* for their presentations and discussions. They inspired me to address some additional issues in the published version of my presentation.

<sup>2</sup> All quotes and references concern the chapter 'Introduction' of Guo Yi's article *Metaphysics, Nature and Mind – The main idea of Daoic Philosophy* (in this volume).

standing of the world we live in and of the place we have in it as humans. Hence, digging into some presuppositions of Guo Yi's understanding of Western philosophy is an essential element of the philosophical dialogue between China and Europe itself.

In what follows, I will make some comments about the contrast sketched by Guo Yi between knowledge and rationality on the one hand and values on the other.<sup>3</sup> My suggestion is that Guo Yi's contrast does insufficient justice to Western philosophy, especially to modern continental Western philosophy. Philosophy, values and meaning of life are intertwined here, as they already are in science itself.

## 2.

Guo Yi's argument for the relevance of Chinese philosophy hangs together with a view on Western philosophy, especially modern Western philosophy, that is for sure influential, but is still incorrect. In this view modern Western philosophy in particular is supposed to be only concerned with knowledge, chiefly the scientific knowledge of nature, in that it reduces rationality to instrumental rationality, and neglects or even excludes values because of that idea of rationality.

As far as the philosophy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is concerned, this picture of philosophy could of course refer to logical positivism and its reductionist empiricist methodological monism in regard to natural sciences. According to logical positivism, scientific knowledge is value-free and as far as its content is concerned scientific knowledge is founded

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**3** Cf. for more extensive elaborations my work on philosophy and values: *Nachmetaphysischer Sinn. Eine problemgeschichtliche und systematische Studie zu den Prinzipien der Wertphilosophie* Heinrich Rickerts, Würzburg 2001; *Philosophie als System. Prinzipientheoretische Untersuchungen zum Systemgedanken bei Hegel, im Neukantianismus und in der Gegenwartsphilosophie*, Würzburg 2008; Philosophy – Philosophy of Science – Science, in: *Economics and Management & Organization Studies: A Critical Philosophical Introduction*, Ch. Krijnen/B. Kee (Ed.), Deventer 2009, 13–50, chap. 2.3; Wert, in: *Handbuch Ethik*, M. Düwell/Ch. Hübenal/M. H. Werner (Ed.), Stuttgart 2011, 527–533; Values and the Limits of Economic Rationality. Critical Remarks on 'Economic Imperialism', in: *Elements of a Philosophy of Management and Organisation*, P. Koslowski (Ed.), Heidelberg et al. 2010, 111–136; Bedeutung, in: *Handbuch Kulturphilosophie*, R. Konersmann (Ed.), Stuttgart 2012, 279–287 (forthcoming).

in observations (observational statements). Empirical verification is the key for scientific research. Values seem only to be subjective, the results of atheoretical beliefs and mere decisions, irrational. They just disturb the process of acquiring scientific knowledge. Not only is science itself value-free, a truly scientific philosophy of values seems also impossible here; philosophy, in essence, is the logic of science, its task is not to determine and justify irrational objects like values.

This view has been extremely important for what has been called ‘analytic philosophy’ of science. The distinction between facts and values led much of the analytical philosophy of language, of metaphysics, and of epistemology to become hostile to the idea that our talk of value and human flourishing can be rational, right or wrong. Nowadays, however, even within analytic philosophy many studies about values appear. There is not only an intensive discussion going on about epistemic values,<sup>4</sup> but more general issues about values are addressed too.<sup>5</sup> And of course, in Western philosophy disciplines like ethics have always been intrinsically concerned with values.

### 3.

But let’s put this point aside now and assume for the sake of argument that a scientific philosophy of values seems far out of reach of Western, especially modern Western philosophy. According to Guo Yi, we need (traditional) Chinese philosophy for that. According to him, a theory of values should be dominant and central in philosophy, whereas a theory of knowledge should only hold a subordinate position. To a certain extent I agree with the systematic statement that a theory of values should be dominant and central in philosophy — especially from a Kantian point of view, leading however to substantial problems in confrontation with

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4 Cf. e. g. A. Haddock/A. Millar/D. Prichard (Ed.): *Epistemic Values*, Oxford 2009; G. Schönrich (Ed.): *Wissen und Werte*, Paderborn 2009.

5 Cf. e. g.: H. Putnam: *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays*, Cambridge, Mass. 2002; P. Grice: *The conception of value*, Oxford 1991; D. Wiggins: *Needs, Values, Truth: Essays in the Philosophy of Value*, Oxford 1987/1998; Harry Frankfurt: *The importance of what we care about. Philosophical essays*, Cambridge 1988; A. MacIntyre: *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*, London 1981; J. L. Mackie: *Ethics. Inventing Right and Wrong*, London 1977; B. Williams: *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, London 1985.

Hegel's idealism.<sup>6</sup> And I would like to add, that, at least from a systematical standpoint, one can identify the view that values should be dominant and central with much of Western philosophy.

Hence, values are not the “major defect of Western philosophy”, but a main object of its interest. I would hold, however, that only knowledge taken as *natural* knowledge can have a non-primary function. As philosophical knowledge it must have a primary function for a philosophy of values. The metaphysical turn towards traditional Chinese philosophy, as proposed by Guo Yi, and the cosmological component it apparently starts with, comes into conflict with the autonomy of human reason, at least according to the main figures of modern continental philosophy like Kant, Hegel, the Neo-Kantians, Husserl, etc. But for Guo Yi, these authors do not function as substantial references. Instead he refers to the physicist Stephen Hawking — whose lack of philosophical knowledge, especially of the continental tradition, has recently become the subject of many discussions on the internet and mailing lists. It seems to me that a dialogue between Chinese and European philosophy is in need of another approach, taking the heritage of continental Western philosophy, especially German idealism and its later developments, more seriously.

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6 Cf. my studies: *Selbsterkenntnis und Systemgliederung. Hegel und der südwestdeutsche Neukantianismus*, in: *Systemphilosophie als Selbsterkenntnis. Hegel und der Neukantianismus*, H. F. Fulda/Ch. Krijnen (Ed.), Würzburg 2006, 113–132; Ch. Krijnen 2008, op. cit., 4.2.3 f.; *Kulturalisierung des Geistes?* in: *Geist? Hegel-Jahrbuch 2010*, A. Arndt/P. Cruysberghs/A. Przylebski (Ed.), Berlin 2010, 253–258. — In confrontation with Hegel, limits of the concept of value can be discussed fruitfully, especially taking into account Hegel's concept of idea. This leads to an important difference between philosophical systems following a Kantian setting and a Hegelian setting: the difference between self-formation and self-knowledge. Both settings are bound to the problem of self-knowledge of thought. But it is only in Hegel that self-knowledge turns out to be the basic principle structuring the order of the system itself. The Kantian model leads to a philosophical system ‘culturalizing’ reality, the Hegelian model to a philosophical system ‘idealizing’ it.

## 4.

As logical positivism, and with it the roots of analytic philosophy, plays such an important role for Guo Yi's interpretation of modern Western philosophy and its concern with values, it seems fair to point out that in the founding years of logical positivism there was huge philosophical attention to values.<sup>7</sup> Many treatises on the concept of value were published.<sup>8</sup> For a great number of philosophers in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of value does not just function as a kind of expression of the latest verbal fashion, accompanied by the popularizing voice of Nietzsche's call for an "Umwertung aller Werte" und "Erfinder neuer Werte".<sup>9</sup> Rather, the concept of value turns out to be *the most fundamental concept of philosophy itself*. Although the philosophical use of the word 'value' appears especially since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the matter at stake is thought to be as old as philosophy itself. According to many philosophers in those days, seen from a historical perspective, philosophy *is* essentially philosophy of values. This can easily be illustrated by taking a look into works about philosophical schools in those years:<sup>10</sup> It will be difficult to find philosophers in Germany not being classified as 'philosophers of values'. Philosophy

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7 Ch. Krijnen 2001, op. cit., 2.3.

8 Johannes Erich Heyde: Gesamtbibliographie des Wertbegriffes, in: J. E. Heyde, *Literarische Berichte aus dem Gebiet der Philosophie* 1928/29, (15/16) 111–119, (17/18) 66–75, (19/20) 11–18.

9 Cf. for Nietzsches role in making the talk of values popular: F. Bamberger: *Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des Wertproblems in der Philosophie des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Halle/S. 1924, p. 3; M. Heidegger: Nietzsches Wort 'Gott ist tot' (1943), in: M. Heidegger, *Holzwege*, Frankfurt/M. 1994, 209–267, p. 227; J. Hessen: *Wertphilosophie*, Paderborn 1937, p. 15; J. E. Heyde: *Wert. Eine philosophische Grundlegung*, Erfurt 1927, p. 7; A. Messer: *Wertphilosophie der Gegenwart*, Berlin 1930, 2; W. Windelband: *Die philosophischen Richtungen der Gegenwart*, in: E. v. Aster (Ed.), *Grosse Denker*, Bd. 2, Leipzig 1911, 363–377, 363 f.

10 Cf. e. g.: J. B. Lotz: *Sein und Wert. Das Grundproblem der Wertphilosophie*, in: *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 57 (1933), 557–613, 574 ff.; F.-J. v. Rintelen: *Die Bedeutung des philosophischen Wertproblems*, in: F.-J. Rintelen (Ed.), *Philosophia Perennis. Abhandlungen zu ihrer Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, Regensburg 1930, 929–971; F.-J. v. Rintelen: *Wertphilosophie*, in: F. H. Heinemann (Ed.), *Die Philosophie im XX. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1959, 441–449; J. Hessen 1937, op. cit., 16–19; H. Schnädelbach: *Philosophie*

of values here includes thinkers like Windelband and Rickert, Dilthey and Spranger, Brentano and Meinong, Scheler and Hartmann, Lotz and Przywara, Münsterberg and Stern, among others with even Husserl being taken as a philosopher of values.

This focus on values hangs together, as in Guo Yi's exposition, with a crisis—but with a different crisis. The crisis German philosophy of values wanted to react to was a crisis between facts and values too, between (empirical) knowledge and the sources giving meaning to our life. But for them this crisis resulted from the decline of the philosophy of German idealism and its speculative understanding of reality on the one hand, and the rise of the role of empirical knowledge for the world-view of man (*Weltanschauung*) on the other. The crisis concerns the problem of substantial orientation in what we can call a post-metaphysical era. In this era the reference to beings belonging to a super-sensible realm functioning as grounds for the validity of human thinking and acting lost much of its persuasiveness. Perspectives of the empirical sciences and those of the philosophical reductions accompanying them (physicalism, materialism, biologism, historicism, psychologism, etc.)<sup>11</sup> became dominant: German idealism, and the unity of facticity and meaning, of reason and reality conceptualised in it, lost its leading spiritual position in Germany.

In the course of this development, theoretical thinking seemed unable to develop an encompassing systematic interpretation of the world we live in. At the same time it became unclear how something like human orientation could still make sense. Against all kinds of naturalisms and scientific reductionisms, evoking loss of meaning, richness and depth of life, against the spook of nihilism, of metaphysical emptiness, the philosophy of values tries to bring in the objective validity of values. Hence, the philosophy of values takes the pessimistic, relativistic and nihilistic signs of its time as a starting point for a thorough reflection on the values that guide human life. The central position that the philoso-

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*in Deutschland 1831–1933*, Frankfurt/M. 1983, 206 with 219 and 225. Cf. also further literature mentioned in footnote 8.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. on the issue of world-view, philosophy, and the natural sciences in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the recent work of K. Bayertz/M. Gerhard/W. Jaeschke (Ed.): *Weltanschauung, Philosophie und Naturwissenschaft im 19. Jahrhundert*, 3 Bd., Hamburg 2007. Cf. on the *Psychologismusstreit* in philosophy: M. Rath: *Der Psychologismusstreit in der deutschen Philosophie*, Freiburg/München 1994.

phy of values gained was not in the last place due to the fundamental uncertainty of modern man regarding the guiding factors of his thinking and acting. The foundations of human self-understanding and of human understanding of the world he lives in are at stake here.

Of course, the philosophy of values as a distinctive type of philosophy is not much older than a century or so—but its concern apparently includes themes that used to be central to metaphysics. Concepts like ‘truth’, ‘reality’, ‘morality’ and the like express a kind of framework, which gives orientation to human theoretical and atheoretical (practical, esthetical, religious, etc.) life. As guiding factors for human endeavors, values take over the place once occupied by metaphysical entities as sources for the meaning of life.

Taken in this comprehensive way, the concept of value does not have just an ‘ethical’ nature. The ethical sphere, or to put it more broadly, the practical sphere, is only one sphere of values among many, e. g. the sphere of knowledge, of art, or of religion. All these spheres, i. e. culture, are related to values determining them. Not only does reducing philosophy of values to ethics miss the point, at least systematically, the same counts for attempts to subjectivize or anthropologize the value-determinedness of human life. It is especially in a philosophy of values following the methodological setting of Kant, that the concept of values turns out to mean a set of rules, securing the objective validity of human endeavors.

## 5.

The *Neo-Kantians* of the South-West school in particular (Windelband, Rickert, Bauch, Cohn) succeeded in clarifying the concept of value in many respects. They tried to overcome value relativism and nihilism in a post-metaphysical and scientifically (in the broad sense: not restricted to natural sciences) justified way. Because of their decisive conviction that culture as an expression of human life is determined by values, they also hold that the sphere of knowledge and theory is determined by values, founded in a set of values. This set of values can be understood as whole of validity principles, as Kant’s realm of transcendental aprioris. These values, the traditional term for labelling them as a set is ‘truth’, orientate our actual thinking to become knowledge of objects. The Neo-Kantians mentioned above transpose this constellation of theoretical (epistemic) values and validity to the cultural spheres of atheoretical objectivations:

both the sphere of the theoretical and the atheoretical are conceptualized as ‘taking position towards values’ (*Stellungnehmen zu Werten*), as being subjected to ‘oughts’. Building further on Fichte’s interpretation of Kant, they develop Kant’s ‘primacy of practical reason’ to a general philosophy of values as a philosophy of culture.

## 6.

Hence, for them philosophy is the philosophy of values. In all its disciplines philosophy is about the fundamental determinants of orientation for humans as rational beings. It cannot be overlooked that *Kant* plays an important role in this conceptualization of philosophy as the philosophy of values. This is especially true with regard to the *rationality and justification* of values.<sup>12</sup> After all, the concept of value is about the end (goal, purpose) for human endeavors, philosophy of values about the foundations (principles) of human orientation. But if the purpose as determinant of orientation for human endeavors is the issue, then the *validity* of human endeavors is at stake, the validity determinedness of our thinking and (non) acting. All human endeavours are included. For traditional metaphysics, grounds for the objective validity of our endeavors are secured by super-sensible, ‘transcendent’ beings. Empiricists conceive of such grounds as being guaranteed by an ‘immanent’ (sensible) being, making it, however, incomprehensible as to how truly human, self-determined and at the same time intersubjectively valid orientation is possible.

Against both metaphysics and empiricism, Kant paradigmatically holds and shows what it means to approach the subject of foundations (principles, validity qualifications) philosophically. According to what is historically known as his historical Copernican turn, and what is called from a philosophical point of view his transcendental turn of the foundational project of philosophy, certainty with regard to the validity of human endeavors can only be reached by the transcendental route. On this route, to use the usual (though non-Kantian) term, ‘subjectivity’ turns out to be the principle of ‘objectivity’, of possible relations to

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<sup>12</sup> Hence, the focus is not so much on the specific content of Kantian philosophy, but on Kant’s methodology of philosophy: on his ‘approach’. This enables a kind of relevance going beyond the specific conditions of his time, treating the subject matters of our time.

objects, hence the ground for validity. Subjectivity here stands for the entirety of faculties of the subject; an entirety of faculties that can neither be naturalized nor culturalized in the sense of a mere multicultural plurality.<sup>13</sup> Transcendental knowledge of human endeavors leads to a set of grounds for validity, of values (as transcendental philosophy of values would put it), which cannot be understood by referring to something *outside* the structure of these endeavors themselves, i. e. by reference to some kind of a being as in metaphysics or empiricism. It can only be understood by reference to the validity claim and validity structure of human endeavors themselves.<sup>14</sup>

Behavior related to validity has meaning. Hence, *values function as source for meaning*: they constitute phenomena of meaning or meaningful entities. Phenomena of meaning are phenomena of validity: they can only be sufficiently determined by the concept of value. The objective validity of the human production of meaning, of human objectivations, has its foundations in a set of validity principles, as Kant would put it: in a set of ‘conditions of the possibility’ of such productions. The objective validity of these validity principles is made plausible by showing that they are validity conditions of such theoretical or atheoretical objectivations, i. e. productions of phenomena of meaning. Methodologically, this means to reflect on the validity *claim* of human endeavors in order to

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**13** This philosophy of subjectivity is therefore also not to be confused with a kind of egology: subjectivity as a set of principles of validity is conceived of as a ‘general’ subjectivity, binding all ‘human subjects’ as it defines what it means to be human.

**14** With this reference to the claim of human endeavors themselves, transcendental knowledge is about humanity, about what makes us human, about the *humanum*: the normative dimension of human thinking and acting. The fundamental factors guiding subjects therefore are no longer metaphysical entities, but values which are defining aspects of humanity itself. They are valid categorically, ‘transcendent’ in the sense that their validity does not depend on their factual recognition; on the contrary: they should be recognized because they contain what it means to be human, hence to think and act at all. They immediately determine the validity of such thinking and acting, and with that the thinking and acting subject. As their categorical validity is part of the validity claims of that subject itself, they are at the same time ‘immanent’: the subject forms itself by being determined by values which belong to its own status as a subject. The harsh critique that the philosophy of values falls short because of its dogmatic ‘realism of values’ falls short itself.

determine its validity structure. Apparently it is this structure that functions as a determinant of orientation for human endeavors. With that it functions as ‘value’. Values are (conscious or non-conscious) determinants of orientation for human endeavors.

## 7.

In the course of this Kantian philosophical paradigm, basing objectivity in subjectivity, it turns out that ‘ontology’, including ‘cosmology’, has its foundations in the cognitive claims of the knowing subject. Hence, an “analytic of pure understanding”, to use Kant’s famous phrase, must take over the foundational place of “ontology”.<sup>15</sup> A logic, as Hegel puts it no less famously, takes over the position of the former metaphysics,<sup>16</sup> and as “metaphysics proper” (*eigentliche Metaphysik*)<sup>17</sup> it changes both theme and method of pre-Kantian (but also Kantian) metaphysics.<sup>18</sup> Of course here, as in the transcendental philosophy of values, logic is conceptualized as an objective logic: a logic that makes thought explicit as thought about objects. Both for Kant and Hegel and the transcendental philosophy of values, regardless of the differences in their philosophical systems, nature is included as theme of philosophy. Nature, however, is not included as *philosophia prima*, but as a theme of later worries: as a theme which has itself only philosophical meaning when founded in logic. Differing from traditional Chinese philosophy here too, the philosophy of nature with respect to cosmology is not the discipline to start the philosophical system with, at least not if a philosophical system claims to be scientific knowledge.

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**15** I. Kant: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, in: *Werke in sechs Bänden*, W. Weischedel (Ed.), vol. 2, Darmstadt 1983, 303.

**16** G. W. F. Hegel: *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Teil*, ed. G. Lasson, Leipzig 1951, p. 46, and G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1830), F. Nicolin/O. Pöggeler (Ed.), Hamburg <sup>8</sup>1991, § 24.

**17** G. W. F. Hegel, *Logik*, op. cit., 5.

**18** Cf. Ch. Krijnen 2008, op. cit., 4.2.1.2, and Ch. Krijnen: *Metaphysik in der Realphilosophie Hegels? Hegels Lehre vom freien Geist und das axiometrische Grundverhältnis kantianisierender Transzendentalphilosophie*, in: M. Gerhard/A. Sell/L. de Vos (Ed.), *Metaphysik und Metaphysikkritik in der Klassischen Deutschen Philosophie*, Hamburg 2012, 171–210.

Neither Kant nor Hegel nor transcendental philosophy restrict knowledge (and science) to knowledge of the natural sciences. Of course they do not restrict philosophy to the clarification of the formal language of the natural sciences either. On the contrary, they see clearly that natural sciences for methodological reasons miss normative competence. In the third antinomy of his *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant even maximized the explanatory power of natural sciences to the whole realm of nature — and still showed that a realm of human freedom is possible. And going beyond Kant's concept of freedom, Hegel even makes freedom part of his concept of speculative knowledge that determines his whole system of philosophy.

This is another way of saying that in these philosophies *rationality* is in no way reduced to *instrumental* rationality. The concept of instrumental rationality, for sure very influential, is much too narrow to enable an adequate conceptualization of human behavior.<sup>19</sup> Historically speaking, rationality has always also been associated with arithmetic and calculation. But historically speaking the term rationality also refers to a more fundamental meaning: rationality as foundation and justification. As a disposition of man (*animal rationale*, to use the more precise Kantian term: *animal rationabile*) rationality signifies the competence to have reasons for beliefs (regardless of which) and the ability to justify beliefs (regardless of whether that justification is sufficient or not).<sup>20</sup> Competences of this kind are not limited to the validity of the means to achieve given ends, but also include the validity of goals (purposes, ends) themselves. Human behavior is not merely heteronomous (determined by natural and cultural constellations), but autonomous (self-determining) too. Limiting rationality to instrumental rationality is indeed unrealistic: this limitation does not sufficiently pertain to man's behaviour. Rather, the exclusively instrumental view makes absolute a particular aspect of rationality. Human rationality, however, has a reflexive dimension, taking means as well as ends into account.

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Ch. Krijnen 2010, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> For an example of analytical philosophy cf. R. Brandom: *Making it Explicit. Reasoning, Representing, and discursive Commitment*. Cambridge, Mass. 1994. For an example of continental philosophy cf. W. Flach: *Grundzüge der Erkenntnislehre. Erkenntniskritik, Logik, Methodologie*. Würzburg 1994.

## 8.

Philosophies of values trying to appropriate Kant's philosophy, were especially eager to get a grip on Kant's philosophical method, called by them transcendental, method. They appreciate Kant's insight into the problem of validity and its methodological treatment, and with that into the problem of values and their methodological treatment. At the same time, they find it important to develop Kant's concept of philosophy further, rather than falling back on to metaphysical speculations or reducing the method of philosophy to a positivistic approach of validity. Not only do they reactivate Kant's contribution to philosophy, they also reactualize his contribution, as their time is characterized by a different constellation of philosophical problems.

Kant's transcendental turn then contains a key to the solution for the problem the philosophy of values was motivated by in the first instance: the problem of orientation, the problem of the meaning of life, of human endeavors in a post-metaphysical era. Ultimately, Kant's sphere of the transcendental functions as a whole of grounds for the objective validity of human thinking and acting, and with that as the true source for culture as the human world of meaning. Hence, by focussing on the 'conditions of the possibility' (i. e. validity principles) transcendental philosophy turns out to be a critical philosophy of culture: it is not beings which function as grounds for validity, but subjectivity. With this reference to subjectivity, transcendental philosophy offers a post-metaphysical philosophy of meaning.<sup>21</sup>

To be sure, this means of *all* meaning, of the meaning of life. As post-metaphysical philosophy of meaning, philosophy does not restrict meaning to the sphere of knowledge and theory. The atheoretical domain is included too. Philosophy gives a conceptual account of the totality of meaning. Obviously, in Western philosophy serious efforts have been undertaken to develop a system of philosophy in which the concept of value is central and crucial.

Of course, the idea of a *system of values* is much disputed. The possibility of a scientific doctrine of values has already been denied or restricted. Whereas Neo-Kantians like Rickert or contemporary transcendental philosophers like Wagner and Flach argue with good reason for a comprehensive scientific doctrine of values, philosophers like Simmel,

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Ch. Krijnen 2001, op. cit.

Weber, Jaspers etc. take an agnostic stance towards values. According to them, it is only possible to acquire scientific knowledge about theoretical (epistemic) values, as those who do not recognize theoretical values will be caught up in contradictions. In this realm of 'truth' the validity of values can be proven scientifically. The validity of atheoretical values, however, is supposed not to be capable of such a scientific determination. A variant of this idea one can find in the work of philosophers who identify science primarily with the natural sciences and then exclude questions about value and meaning from scientific research and hand them over to the realm of 'world-views' and (religious and non-religious) 'beliefs' of concrete subjects.

As far as the idea of a *philosophical system* is concerned, for many decades the antipathy against thinking in philosophical systems has been immense (analytic philosophy, Frankfurt school, hermeneutics, post-modernism). Still, if we really want to know what makes up the value character of the different fundamental values (like truth, morality, justice, holiness, etc.), we cannot avoid determining the relations between the several different realms of values (*Wertsphären*). The validity claim of our concrete endeavors already confronts us with the quest for validity (the *quaestio iuris*). Obtaining certainty about the value determinedness of our own endeavors is intrinsically related to all our validity claims. This eventually leads to knowledge of both the system of values which belongs to a specific fundamental value (like truth, morality, etc. — e. g. the system of epistemic values, the system of moral values, etc.) and the system of these fundamental values itself.<sup>22</sup>

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**22** To be sure, neither Kant nor Hegel conceive of the system of philosophy as an 'axiomatic' system. On the contrary, Kant showed that philosophical concept formation cannot follow the *mos geometricus*, i. e. the axiomatic-deductive paradigm of mathematics that has been so important in the history of philosophy too. Hence, Gödel's incompleteness theorems are no arguments against the idea of a system of philosophy as it has been developed within German idealism. Unity here is conceived of as self-differentiation. Hegel's concept of idea e. g., is defined as unity of subject and object: 'outside' this unity, there is no 'meaning', no 'being', no 'nature', no 'subject', or whatsoever. As already pointed out, thought *per se*, as principle of objectivity, is not to be identified with *our* thought and its *claim* to knowledge (cf. Ch. Krijnen, Realism and the validity problem of knowledge, in: Ch. Krijnen/B. Kee, op. cit., 237–265). — More in general, two arguments have always played a major role in thinking about philosophical systems (cf. Ch. Krijnen 2008, op. cit., chap. 0 and chap. 6): The first argument addresses

Certainty on the basis of immediate intuitions ('self-evidence') about the value determinedness of our concrete endeavors and its values (cf. e. g. Scheler) is at the most a starting point for our knowledge about the validity of both the endeavors and the values guiding them. At the end of this process of acquiring certainty (*Selbstvergewisserung*) we'll have to come up with knowledge about the validity of values. Such knowledge is presupposed in each and every claimed instance of value determinedness. It leads us to a system of values. The philosophical determination of the system of values has then to face difficult problems like the completeness of the system of values, the ranking of the different values, the historicity of the system of values, etc.<sup>23</sup> And as far as philosophical ethics is concerned, ethics is knowledge about what is Good. It claims to be justified knowledge, at least it is obliged to justify its knowledge claims about what is Good, i. e. the system of moral values. The task of securing their (moral) validity claim belongs intrinsically to the moral endeavors themselves. This attempt to clarify the value determinedness of our concrete moral endeavors culminates in (philosophical) ethics. As knowledge, of course, ethics itself needs to be substantiated by logic.

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the 'finitude' of researchers as they are determined by nature and culture in many ways. The second argument concerns the 'infinite' of the natural and cultural reality we live in. The latter argument especially seems to be very relevant for traditional Chinese philosophy. The argument in essence has an empiricist and positivist color. However, is the reference to the manifoldness of the *world* a sufficient reason to reject 'closed' systems and prefer what are called 'open' systems? After all, the philosophical system is not after the world, but after an entirety of *thoughts* about the world. Hence, does the argument mix up the object of a theory with the theory of an object? From a German idealist perspective, the distinction between 'open' and 'closed' systems, which arose from developments within the special sciences, for *philosophy* only makes sense on a phenomenological level. An adequate philosophical system is both open and closed, for 'forms' as well as for 'contents' — it is neither open nor closed, but the philosophical systems that conceptually determines, in its time, totality via a justified entirety of thoughts.

23 Cf. Ch. Krijnen 2008, op. cit.

9.

Let me conclude. Guo Yi's article gives reason to pose many questions and to address many issues. For sure, it concerns intricate questions and issues: questions and issues that hit right at the heart of philosophy, its basic problems, its method, and its system. However, German idealism from Kant to Hegel, the Neo-Kantians, Husserl, and contemporary transcendental philosophy has developed very profound and elaborate answers and concepts. Taking them into account seriously seems to be an inescapable condition for the possibility of a fruitful debate between Chinese and Western philosophy.



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## PHILOSOPHICAL AUTHORITY

### A critical discussion of Guo Yi, “The Main Idea of Daoic Philosophy”

The first question that came to my mind after reading the paper “Metaphysics, Nature and Mind – The main Idea of Daoic Philosophy” presented by Guo Yi was the following: Is it legitimate and does it make sense to construe and compare “Chinese” and “Western” philosophy, as Guo Yi does it throughout the paper? My answer is: no, it is not; or, to put it more cautiously: it is legitimate only under very restrictive conditions and only as a first very general and introductory approach to comparative studies in the field of philosophy. I can find no position among those referred to in the paper as “Chinese” which could not be found in “Western” philosophy; and I assume that it will be the same when one is looking in the other direction. The labels “Chinese” and “Western” are simply too wide and too unspecific: They cannot serve as suitable objects of comparative inquiries.

Taking this observation as my point of departure, I will try to restrict the scope of the following comparative survey and reduce it to a manageable size asking what are the entities (texts, ideas, systems) that could be compared. This purpose in mind it is easy to see that there are, beyond (or beneath) those misleading general labels, a number of interesting philosophical statements presented and discussed in the paper which seem to be suitable for specific comparative inquiries. For example, the concept of “Daoic philosophy”, specifically concerning the question of the division of “philosophy”, seems to be sufficiently close to concepts concerning the same question within Stoic philosophy. “Philosophy”, taken as comprising all human mental activities, if I read correctly, is divided into the fields of *nature*, *theory* and *practice*. Within this framework comparing seems to be a promising task. Therefore, comparing

the proposed division of philosophy in Daoic and, respectively, in Stoic doctrines will constitute the first part of the following discussion. On the basis of this discussion I will then proceed to the central problem of *method* in philosophy — Daoic and Stoic — in the second part. I will pose the fundamental question: Who is authorized and by which legitimation he is authorized to specify, to classify, and to evaluate the doctrines of “philosophy” (in the broad sense of human mental activities)? In a brief concluding third section I will reflect on what will have been discussed so far trying to ascertain what the purpose of Daoic philosophy might be. To put it more precisely: to ascertain what kind of truth it is that Daoic philosophy is *searching* for or, perhaps more correctly, is trying to *teach* us. The essay will end — not with alternative teachings, but with several open questions in the hope of finding answers through the subsequent discussions of this meeting.

#### I. DAOIC AND STOIC “DIVISION OF PHILOSOPHY”

(a) “An important characteristic of Chinese metaphysics is the combination of cosmology and ontology.” (“Cosmology” taken as the doctrine of “the origin and evolution of the universe”; “Ontology” taken as the doctrine of “the source, nature and structure of the world”).

Stoic philosophy being materialistic in the sense that everything existing in the world (or the universe?) has a material nature, never accepted a fundamental difference between these two spheres (cosmology and ontology): both belong to physics. The idea that “exploring the origins of the universe” is helpful for understanding “the order of society” is in accordance with the Stoic emphasis on the sympathy of all parts, facets, aspects of the world including the natural order of society. The analogy of the Big Bang theory both with Daoic and with Stoic cosmology is undeniable, but it is not surprising and does not go very deeply. You may add the Orphic “theory” of the primordial egg and similar myths of other cultures: such similarities concern the metaphorical outside of the various mythical narratives. The fundamental difference though, the revolutionary force of the Big Bang theory does not lie in its mythical outside, but in its mathematical structure, its formal representation. It is possible to predict discoveries of unknown objects and events in the universe, both past and future, on the basis of this theory. None of the older myths has had any such potential or power. That is what makes up for the difference. (It doesn’t prove any truth, though.)

(b) But now the division of philosophy:

This division is tripartite in both doctrines:

- |                                    |   |  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1) <i>zhi</i> – (value)            | ~ | Ethics   |
| 2) <i>qi</i> – (energy and matter) | ~ | Physics  |
| 3) <i>li</i> – (form, reason, law) | ~ | Logic (principle, or structure of <i>zhi</i> and <i>qi</i> ) |

It is even more interesting to compare the subdivisions of Daoic physics (i. e. of philosophy of nature):

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) Elements                 | (water, fire, earth ...) |
| 2) life                     | (plants)                 |
| 3) Awareness                | (animals with senses)    |
| 4) Consciousness of justice | ( <i>yi</i> )            |

At first sight, this division reflects a well-known Aristotelian doctrine, representing the four levels of the scale of nature. Anyone familiar with this still widely accepted tradition can easily see several substantial similarities as well as subtle differences between both doctrines. Working out a serious comparative study, however, would require thorough knowledge of both traditions and both original languages. Translations, even if there were competent and reliable ones, would not do, because the characteristics of both doctrines were established over extensive terminological evolutions and complex traditions, which form an essential part of their understanding.

(c) But this comparison is not my purpose for today. I want to highlight one other major point in Guo's presentation of Daoic philosophy, a point that is clearly present in Stoic philosophy too, but does not figure quite as prominently there. This difference may indicate a major shift of emphasis between the two doctrines and help us to better understand an important distinctive feature of Daoic philosophy.

As mentioned before, the various categories of mental objects resp. mental activities and fields of study (parts of philosophy) are somewhat similar in both doctrines. For the sake of argument I will now treat them as being equal. I will then take a look at their relations among each other on both sides. It seems to be a major point in Daoic philosophy and a major message of the paper we are reading that this relation has to be hierarchic. The author does not leave any doubt: Value (*zhi*) is supposed to take its place at the top, it is the sole end and justification of the other

two: theory/logic (*li*) and nature/physics (*qi*). Good life, i. e. justice in our behavior and in our social relations, justice in the order of society and in the government of people as well as justice in the order and government of nature—these are the purposes and the duties of everything. Energy and matter, lower life forms including that which is misleadingly called “biological life” should be developed and protected and cultivated, but they have to be and to remain subservient to “value nature”. Otherwise the harmony and balance of the universe is in danger. It is the foremost duty of everybody (and everything) to support this harmony and to maintain this balance as far as he or she can contribute to it. By this duty the four cardinal human virtues mentioned in the paper are justified: humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom (cf. Guo, in this volume, p. 28-29).

Stoic philosophers talk about the relations between the three parts of philosophy, too. When they suggest a relation of their respective roles and values, they arrive at similar conclusions. Famous and quite revealing are the similes used in this rating procedure: (1) Philosophy is compared to a garden: Logic stands for the wall that has to protect the garden against attacks from outside, physics corresponds to the trees with their branches which eventually will bear the fruits, but only ethics represents the fruits, i. e. explains the purpose of having the garden. There are more similes with the same function and message. (2) Philosophy is compared to an egg: Logic is the shell, Physics the egg-white that has to nourish the seed, and ethics is the yolk: it stands for the purpose of the whole. (3) Or philosophy is compared to an animal: Logic counts for bones and nerves, physics for blood and flesh, ethics for the soul (Sextus Empiricus, Math. VII 16–19; Diogenes Laertius, VII 40). But whereas from the Daoic point of view “physics” and “logic” seem to have auxiliary functions only, from the Stoic point of view these fields of study have their own value and are dealt with in their own right. All three fields are independent disciplines of knowledge. Furthermore, the Platonic and Aristotelian view that “theoria”—theoretical knowledge of eternal truths—is the highest of all human acts, seems to enjoy a strong background presence and will never be completely forgotten.

## II. DOGMATIC METHOD

The *similarities* between the Daoic and the Stoic concepts of philosophy are striking, *differences* were noted with regard to the hierarchic relations among the parts or fields of philosophy. In this section I want to explore

another area of comparison by way of analyzing a functional analogy between both sides.

Stoics were named after a hall in Athens where Zenon, the founder of the school, used to meet with his disciples and teach. In polemic writings of contemporary ancient literature, however, the Stoics were also called by another name relating more directly to their teachings: Stoic philosophy was known as “dogmatic” philosophy. The Stoic philosopher is a wise man. He is not so much a seeker, but rather a knower. He knows things, and he teaches what he knows.

The philosophical fields of teaching, according to the Stoics, as I said before, are Logic, Physics, and Ethics (under these names). But in all three fields philosophy is primarily a way of learning and of teaching; its first and major result, therefore, is true knowledge. To be sure, good practice belongs to (Stoic) philosophy too: Zenon, the school founder, was officially praised by a decree of the city of Athens with these words: “Whereas Zeno of Citium, son of Mnaseas, has for many years been devoted to philosophy in the city and has continued to be a man of worth in all other respects, exhorting to virtue and temperance those of the youth who came to him to be taught, directing them to what is best, affording to all in his own conduct a pattern for imitation in perfect consistency with his teaching,...” (Diogenes Laertius, VII 10). Obviously then, the way of life of a philosopher is considered to be quite important for his public esteem as well as for his philosophical reputation. But that is true for teachers from all philosophical schools. The distinctive feature of a philosopher or his school of philosophy, however, is not his conduct in life, but the sum of his teachings (*gnoomai*): It is his specific knowledge about the nature of things, the nature of the world, his knowledge about the right conduct in life, knowledge about virtues in personal as well as in public relations; and the knowledge of dialectics, the art of arguments. Stoic teaching comprises all three parts of philosophy: Logic, physics, ethics.

But how does the philosopher teach? He presents his doctrines in the form of oral or written assertive statements (speeches, books etc.). Assertive statements are true or false. The Stoic philosopher’s statements claim to be true assertive statements. Exactly for this reason the Stoics are called ‘dogmatic’ philosophers. They take positions and try to defend them. This general form of presentation is a Sophistic and then Aristotelian heritage in the field of philosophy (to be taken over by and still be valid for science, to a large degree). During the short so called classical age of philosophy in the city of Athens philosophy turned

public. Philosophical claims became objects of public debates, they had to be defended by argument. Neither the Stoics nor any other school of philosophy in Europe could ever since ignore this fact or rather this tradition, even though it was not always accepted. History knows of a good number of successful attempts to overcome (or transcend) this restriction of philosophy to the formal rules of reasoned argument by other forms of thought, e. g. by way of paradoxical speech.

A crucial part of Stoic teaching, therefore, ought to be and actually was a theory of knowledge. How do we find and recognize true statements, and how can we ascertain their truth? A criterion of truth had to be established to distinguish effectively true statements from false ones. The logicians of the Stoics were leading in this domain. Their highly sophisticated as well as stubborn opponents were the sceptics, Academic sceptics especially. (Epicureans didn't care much about logic and were not interested in public debates.) But again, it's not my purpose to go into details here. Only that much: The theory of knowledge was a standard chapter of Stoic teaching of philosophy. It was taught in a dogmatic way. There is nothing wrong with "Dogma". Dogma means belief of something, it denotes a position someone is holding. "Dogmatic" philosophy, therefore, just means that the philosopher teaching is teaching his position. A Stoic philosopher would even be willing to explain and defend his position against reasonable doubts. But he would not give it up only because he was unable to convince his skeptic opponent. That is why sceptics would call him "dogmatic".

But how far does Stoic argumentation (reasoning, justification of beliefs) go? At the bottom of an argument the Stoic philosopher expects to find natural evidence (if not, he will have to go on looking for such evidence), i. e. undeniable mental facts (*enargeia*). From a great historical distance we may recognize or diagnose such "facts", which to the Stoics appeared to be undeniable, as beliefs deeply rooted in tradition.

With the Stoics there is plenty of very interesting and noteworthy doctrine together with its sophisticated defense, but there is no internal critique; impressive teachings, but no reflection, no justification of the *basic* beliefs. Critique came only from outside: Sceptics denied the possibility of knowledge of this type in general. But there was no serious discussion between both sides.

How does Stoic dogmatism relate to Daoic philosophy? Here again, similarities are striking: My second thesis on Daoic philosophy (as I gather the teachings from their presentation in the English version of the paper of Guo Yi): Daoic philosophy is similar to Stoic philosophy not

only in its concept, its division and many of its teachings, but even more than that in its form. Daoic philosophy is a *purely dogmatic presentation* of what is considered to be true by its proponent.

This presentation of “truth”, how will it be defended and justified in the face of possible doubts? The method of justification is twofold:

- (a) Appeal to traditional Chinese authorities such as Confucius, Mencius, Laozi, Zhu Xi and others,
- (b) appeal to what seems to be natural evidence for everybody.

There is no attempt of justification of the doctrines presented and the beliefs discussed by any argument beyond these two sources. I could express this situation with the words of Plato’s *Sophistees* reporting that the guest from Elea was complaining about Parmenides by saying that he, Parmenides, ‘treated them like little children’.— And I would add, two thousand years later, that we don’t deserve such treatment.

These sources, ancient Chinese authorities and natural evidence, are by no means illegitimate sources. But why should we believe them? Felt evidence is not evident to everybody, and authorities have to be justified. The dogmatic philosopher might respond by reminding us that the sceptics mentioned before don’t have anything better to offer. They just don’t give answers. Moreover: it is not unlikely that we will always be bound to start with some sort of belief when we are looking for answers to questions and searching for solutions to problems. But he also offers a positive answer: reminding us that our most general and deep rooted beliefs usually have religious sources. And furthermore, that there is a widely spread religious belief—certainly not with all religious doctrines, but with some of them –, that, basically, all religions are the same, teach the same, promise the same. I was not surprised, therefore, to read that “the peak state of life” or “the final goal” is considered to be the same for all men whereas the approaches are different as are the names. Yi, Tian and Dao appear in one line with Allah and God (cf. Guo, op. cit., p. 39). These are different names for the one agenda setting focal point of all philosophical problems, doctrines, and promises.

This situation leads me to the last part of my presentation:

## III. SEARCH FOR TRUTH

This part is twofold. The first part may be read as a historical question, comprising the whole history of Western philosophy: Why did Western philosophy not come to a rest with Stoic philosophy? Or reassure Stoic philosophy by deepening and broadening, by strengthening and defending its doctrines? Obviously, I cannot even enter the process of answering this question in a brief presentation like this. What I can do is to remind you of the fact, that philosophy has developed ever since, and that it has developed by critical, sometimes even revolutionary steps. Again, I will not even try to outline possible reasons of this process, but I can and will recall its result: Philosophy in the Western world showed more and more reluctance to state philosophical (general and fundamental, so called “metaphysical”) truths. This means that in the long run, dogmatic thinking has had and will have no future in the field of philosophy. To be sure, new dogmatic concepts came up, again and again, but critique would follow immediately and sweep them away, or reduce them to what they could be: interesting suggestions to deal with specific (philosophical) problems we are confronted with here and now. People looking from outside have called this philosophical attitude “nihilism”. In my view it is the factual result of a long philosophical tradition, a tradition of self-conscious metaphysical experience. This experience led Nietzsche to observe: Dogmatism “wird bei einem Philosophen heute ein Lächeln und zwei Fragezeichen bereit finden” (... today will evoke a smile and two question marks). (Fr. Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 16., KSA 5, 30)

So my last question which may also sum up the previous brief remarks on the presentation of Daoic philosophy, is simply asking: By which authority the author of dogmatic statements is putting forward his doctrines, whichever they may be? I will briefly consider three possible candidates:

1. By the authority of god. (Guo certainly does not.)
2. By the authority of the natural light of reason. (Guo would probably deny this, too, because it might be too close to “Western” rationalism.)
3. By the authority of Chinese traditions. (Sometimes this seems to be the case. The author would then face the same problems Thomas faced and discussed when he was compiling his *Summa contra gentiles*.)

If I understand the message of the paper adequately, we are told to accept the following answer to the above question: The author's starting point is a critical assessment of the present situation of mankind: No doubt (for him), we are confronted with a "crisis of humanity and Philosophy". This statement is not a thesis to be tested, but to be taken and accepted as a fact. Daoic philosophy is presented as a remedy for such a situation. Taken in this function, it reminds us, first of all, that "in any reasonable [sic!] philosophical system [why system?], a theory of value should occupy the dominant and central position, and a theory of knowledge a subordinate position." (Guo, op. cit., p. 16) Then a traditional Chinese doctrine of values is presented. The theoretical framework as well as the ethical doctrines are comprehensible, honorable and interesting, they surely deserve further investigation. But their epistemic status is not clear. They are certainly far from what I'm used to call "metaphysical foundation" of anything.

Let me conclude with a remark and two further questions to the proposals of the Daoic therapy presented in the paper:

(1) Why call on the Big Bang Theory for the purpose of philosophy? Neither Confucius nor Mencius etc. had any idea of it (there is no mathematics in their cosmology). Even if there were significant analogies between both sides, it would not help much. Astronomers are not the philosophers of our days. As scientists they have no more authority in philosophical questions than any other well educated citizen. Their opinions may be interesting and should be discussed as such, but they cannot claim any privilege *in philosophicis*. So it seems better to forget about it.

(2) Values and virtues seem to be the main topics. Who is authorized to define the virtues and set the values? For whom? And what will happen to those who do not accept the proposed values?

So my major question can be summed up like this:

(3) By which authority we are told the Daoic narrative? Are we to believe it? And if so, why are we to believe it?—I see no answer. These questions were addressed not to "Chinese thinking" in general, but to "Daoic philosophy" as presented in the paper we are discussing. Fortunately there are many other voices from the vast ocean of ancient (and modern!) Chinese thinking. I am still waiting for a skillful interpreter.



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## MAKING THE IMPLICIT EXPLICIT

### An Analysis of Some Comparative Claims in Guo Yi's Discussion of Chinese and Western Philosophy

It is metaphysics in a traditional sense of the term that Guo Yi in his essay on 'Daoic philosophy' seeks to engage in. Against all talk of an end of metaphysics, Guo self-consciously embraces the traditional sense of the term as *prôtê philosophia*, interpreting the path of metaphysics since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Western philosophy and, under its influence, also in Chinese philosophy as a dead end not only for metaphysics, but for philosophy more generally. He thus takes a firm stand in that debate and at the same time joins the many voices currently debating the role of Chinese philosophy in the contemporary world.

With a view to Guo's scholarly biography, the essay by no means can be said to reflect a more recent interest of his but is variously linked to his in-depth studies on questions of authorship and textual chronology of pre-Qin texts culminating in his 850 page monograph on the Guodian 郭店 bamboo texts.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, it is fair to say that he has recently taken up more explicitly than in his earlier work questions regarding the present and future of Confucianism in China and the rise of Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Guo Yi 郭沂, *Guodian zhujian yu xian Qin xueshu sixiang* 郭店竹简与先秦学术思想, Shanghai: Shanghai Shiji Chubanshe, 2001. For reviews in English, see the one by Masayuki Sato in *China Review International* 9 (2), 2002: 427-433 and the one by Martin Lu in *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 31 (2), 2004: 297-301.

philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Still, the ambition to offer a reconstructed Chinese philosophy has been manifest throughout all of his writings.

In his essay on ‘Daoic philosophy’, he continues his reconstructive efforts by setting forth a metaphysical system based on traditional Chinese philosophy to work towards a future “world philosophy” (p. 16), which he claims is much needed in our modern times. His project is indeed ambitious and far-reaching, and it should be clear that both its ambition and scope exceed by far the limited possibilities of an essay. Much of what Guo writes requires further detail, or illustration, or argument—or all three. I hence take it that Guo’s essay on ‘Daoic philosophy’ is to be understood as exploratory and speculative.

My response to Guo’s essay is structured in three parts. First, I offer a summary of the text in terms of what I take to be its central and systematic part, i. e. his reconstruction of Chinese philosophy. This will, for one thing, expose my understanding, but—more importantly—it will also help to identify where I might misunderstand. Second, I highlight the comparative setting in which Guo’s reconstructive effort is embedded and subsequently engage in a familiar scholarly exercise by analysing that setting for implicit presuppositions as well as for unconvincing claims. Finally, this leads me to outline the problem to the solution of which he seeks to contribute and to raise a specific challenge to Guo’s project as it currently stands. I advocate a more explicit manner of pursuing comparative philosophy, i. e. in the few cases in which such an approach recommends itself at all, because in the great majority of cases no comparative approach in terms of Chinese versus Western philosophy is required or indeed recommendable. Guo’s project, I shall hold, is a case in point.

## I. ‘DAOIC PHILOSOPHY’: METAPHYSICAL AND MORAL

Guo presents his reconstruction of Chinese philosophy as ‘Daoic philosophy’ (道哲学). ‘Daoic’ is a neologism that he deploys to highlight the importance of *dao* 道 as a metaphysical concept on the basis of which philosophy and metaphysics are to be constructed. He distinguishes

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2 Cf. Guo Yi, “Zhongguo zhexue de dangdai jiangou 中国哲学的当代建构” in *Hebei Xuebao* 4/5, 2009; Guo Yi, “Ruxue gaixin jiazhi guan lishi yanbian he xiandai jiazhi 儒学核心价值观历史演变和现代价值” in *Zhejiang Xuebao* 6, 2010.

the term ‘Daoic’ from the term ‘Daoist’ (道家) and hence from Daoism, which is usually in philosophical contexts more restrictively associated with the *Laozi* 老子, *Zhuangzi* 庄子, *Liezi* 列子 etc., but also from Confucianism, because ‘Daoic’, as he explains, captures a sense “beyond the ideas of Dao in both Daoism and Confucianism” (p. 22). Guo largely abstains from giving a translation of *dao* 道, but turns it into a loan word capitalised as Dao.<sup>3</sup> By referring to Dao, Guo does not in the first instance refer to the prominence that the term *dao* boasts in many of the texts of Chinese philosophy, but he rather refers to a kind of insight or wisdom that is reflected in that prominence. And it is on the basis of this insight that he sets out to construct his philosophy.

He begins with a section on the sphere of Dao (“Where We Come from”) and identifies three models in ancient Chinese philosophical cosmology, respectively based on the Guodian version of the *Laozi*, the received version of the *Laozi* (which, Guo thinks, was later than the Guodian version), and the *Xici* 系辭 (which Guo ascribes to the late Confucius). This serves to emphasise the vitality of philosophical cosmology in ancient China and its ontological dimension, which together points to its metaphysical basis in Dao. Guo has much to say on Dao and its composition: relying on the words of ancient texts, he explicates that it stands for “the origin of the universe and the root of the world” (p. 22), it points to a sphere that constitutes “a transcendent and absolute world” (p. 20), and it is “an absolute ‘great whole’ 大全, boundless, ceaseless, all-embracing, without beginning or end” (p. 22).<sup>4</sup> And adding to the ancient texts, Guo suggests that there are three “fundamental elements” forming the sphere of Dao, namely *zhi* 值 (the locus of value and meaning), *li* 理, and *qi* 气, and that they are distinguished in terms of their “properties” and also in their hierarchical position, *zhi* being the highest and *qi* the lowest element. He also points out “ten characteristics” (*shide* 十德) of Dao, giving priority to the characteristic of it being eternal (*heng* 恒).<sup>5</sup> With the help of this conceptual framework, Guo develops an explication

<sup>3</sup> Towards the end of his essay, Guo makes occasional use of “the Way” as translation of *dao*.

<sup>4</sup> The reference of ‘great whole’ (*daquan* 大全) is to the *Zhuangzi* (Tian Zifang), where a dialogue between Laozi and Confucius is recorded ending in Confucius telling Yan Hui how Laozi helped him see the greatness of the world (孔子出, 以告顏回曰:“丘之於道也, 其猶醯雞與! 微夫子之發吾覆也, 吾不知天地之大全也.”).

<sup>5</sup> I cannot find the textual basis for the concrete list of ten characteristics

how the universe has come about (from *wuji* 无极 to *taiji* 太极), bringing in further conceptual baggage (*yin* 阴, *yang* 阳, *wuxing* 五行, etc.) and dividing the Great Ultimate (*taiji*) into “original” and “secondary” (the latter amounting to *xing* 性, the nature of the myriad things, *wanwu* 万物). The bottom line of Guo’s explication is that the Great Ultimate and, by analogy, Dao both are by virtue of being the source of everything “transcendent and a priori” and at the same time by virtue of running through all things “internal and experiential”.<sup>6</sup>

Turning to the sphere of *xing* (“Who We are”) and drawing e. g. on the *Xunzi* 荀子, *Mengzi* 孟子, more Confucius as well as Zhu Xi 朱熹 and Wang Yangming 王陽明, Guo continues to draw up a differentiated metaphysics. He distinguishes between “the reason-nature of value” (*zhili xing* 值理性) and “the reason-nature of matter” (*qili xing* 气理性), whereby he claims that only humans have “the reason-nature of value” given their exclusive “awareness of justice” (p. 30) and ability of “self-realization” (p. 30). From among the initially distinguished elements, *qi* turns out to be decisive in the nature of all things, while only some things in addition to *qi* possess *li* and *zhi*. When considering the question whether all things called humans do share the same nature, Guo claims that again *qi* is what accounts for differences in endowed reason-nature and value-nature. Yet still, everyone has “the possibility of doing good or bad” (p. 33). What road eventually is taken basically depends on “cultivation and education” (p. 33) rather than initial endowment. In an interesting twist, Guo sets aside one of the most established distinctions with regard to Song-Ming Confucianism, namely the opposition between the Cheng-Zhu (程柱学派) and the Lu-Wang (陆王学派) lines, claiming that *xin* 心, *xing* 性 and *li* 理 “are the same thing” (p. 34).

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that Guo offers, but it seems that the expression *shide* appears in a variety of contexts including different characteristics.

**6** It remains to be explained how exactly one can have knowledge about Dao e. g. in terms of its constituting elements (why tree parts, why not four parts?) if, as is claimed, it constitutes a “transcendent and absolute world”. Guo seems to argue that knowledge is possible because Dao also is “internal” and “experiential”, but that possibility is at least to some extent undermined by the very distinction that Guo draws himself between *Daoti* 道体 and *xingtü* 性体, which is a metaphysically relevant distinction. Any knowledge about *Daoti* could only be claimed from the standpoint of *xingtü*, which is, as Guo points out repetitively, a limited standpoint.

Having thus arrived at the notion of *xin* 心 (“What We can Do”), Guo again engages in further differentiation, this time distinguishing “three basic functions” (p. 35) of *xin*, namely knowing (*zhi* 知, comprising the “three forms” of *renzhi* 认知, cognition, *ganzhi* 感知, sense perception, and *juezhi* 觉知, illumination), emotion (*qing* 情, comprising the “three levels” of natural compassion and mercy, desire, and feeling), and intention (*yi* 意, comprising the “four connotations” of consciousness of the mind, commander of the mind, direction of the mind, and condition of the mind).<sup>7</sup> Of particular importance is *juezhi*, which “is the way to know the world of *zhi* (the world of value), and the way to get the value of the universe and the meaning of life” (p. 35) and as “performer of the experience of life” denotes the “life state” of “value-life” (p. 39). But to have appropriate “direction and extent”, it like all other functions of the mind requires right intention, which is hence singled out by Guo as “commander” (p. 38) of the other two functions of knowing and emotion. Determining the goal and meaning of each thing to be the full development of its nature, Guo analogises by claiming that the aim of illumination is to help realize “one’s value-nature” (p. 40), and it is here where the essay reaches a culminating point in terms of its metaphysical and philosophical construction:

“The highest aim of illumination is to achieve the original state of the world of value, that is, being with the eternal value in the state of Non-ultimate of Dao, and being compatible with it, and thereby fully realizing ‘the ten characteristics’ of Dao, attaining the greatest freedom, ease, happiness, satisfaction and peace in life. This is the peak state or peak experience of life. It can be said to embody life’s final meaning, to reach man’s true spiritual homeland. Thus, the endless pursuit of illumination is an unending process of spiritual liberation.” (p. 40)

From among five approaches to reach that peak state, Guo considers the approach of “realization of the mind” as leading to an “immediate and thorough understanding and insight of Dao” and as the one favoured by

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<sup>7</sup> Guo uses a variety of terms in his differentiations and it is unclear how they relate, both vertically and horizontally. How do “functions” (*gong-neng* 功能) relate to “forms” (*xingshi* 形式), “levels” (*cengmian* 层面) and “connotations” (*yi* 义)? And are the latter to be understood as synonyms, as “the diagram of substance and function” (p. 46) seems to suggest?

both “Chinese” and “Indian civilization”, whereas “Western” and “Islamic civilization” prefers another approach relying on the aid of “the gods”.

In the course of his essay, Guo takes up ever more explicitly the normative implications of his metaphysics (“How We should Do”). His reconstruction hence ends with a further analogizing differentiation with regard to “culture” and “cultural phenomena” and the identification of *an* 安 as the “final value”, for which he gives a whole cluster of meaning from “quiet” to “happy” and “harmonious” (p. 43). *An*, or “spiritual quietness”, is in Guo’s view “a firm belief” and “the norm of conduct in civilizations”. It is higher than “the three basic value categories” of “the true, the good and the beautiful” and than other general values (ethical, social, political, etc.) that “do not involve the final meaning of life” (p. 44). Thus, *an* emerges as the “final value” in Guo’s reconstruction of Chinese philosophy.

## II. AN ANALYSIS OF PRESUPPOSITIONS AND COMPARATIVE CLAIMS

As with the five approaches leading to the peak state of realised *an*, Guo embeds his metaphysics in a comparative setting, in his introduction and in the concluding paragraphs, but also every so often in his central reconstructive parts on Chinese philosophy. In what follows, this comparative setting will be explored and some crucial parts analysed. The manner of analysis forthwith employed relies on a simple procedure, which demands that all commonalities that an author asserts, say, by virtue of speaking in the plural or by postulating oppositions are taken seriously. Are the claims that come with such asserted commonalities stated implicitly or explicitly and are they substantiated by argument or qualified by a cautionary remark about their presuppositional nature or put forward unconsciously and thus not really asserted?

In any comparative setting, there are different *comparata* denoting what it is that is under comparison. In Guo’s essay, there are two different sets of *comparata*. One is the opposition between tradition and modernity—“traditional philosophies and modernity” (p. 15), “traditional society” and “contemporary society” (pp. 47–48)—and the other is a set with particular emphasis on two *comparata* among several. In the introduction, the guiding opposition is between what is “Western” and what “Chinese”, whereas towards the end, as mentioned above, Guo refers to “Chinese”, “Indian”, “Western” and “Islamic”. But these *comparata* are different in virtue of one or several commonalities, which are asserted in

notions such as “Chinese and Western *philosophies*” (p. 15), “in Western *culture*” (p. 13), “*traditional* Western *metaphysics*” (p. 17) and “*traditional* Chinese *metaphysics*” (p. 18), and “different *civilizations*” (p. 46). Each of these assertions amounts to a claim, which can be of very different status. For example, talk of civilization here and there could mean to posit an ontological claim (that there is such a thing as “civilization”) or perhaps a heuristic claim (that for reasons other than claiming existence it might be useful to speak of “civilization”), together with the additional claim that the differentiating adjectives “Western” and “Chinese” are the ontologically or heuristically appropriate ones.

Obviously, this mapping of the comparative setting could be continued for a long time and include claims asserted in manifold ascriptions to the above notions, such as when Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy are both related to a “theory of knowledge” and to “a theory of value” (p. 16), and so forth. This might well include the single use of some specific words, which—in the case of Guo’s essay being a translated and shortened version of a Chinese essay—would turn attention to comparative claims raised by decisions of translation. Guo, for instance, in one passage uses “thing-in-itself” to qualify the three components of Dao. In the Chinese version, it is of course not the case that there is e. g. *wuziti* 物自体, a common translation for the Kantian notion, but what we find are two expressions, *zizai* 自在 and *sanzai* 散在, which evoke quite different associations. The former, *zizai* (“free, unrestrained”) has roots in texts such as the *Hanshu* 汉书 or in the Tang-dynasty Confucian Han Yu’s *Changliji* 昌黎集, but also in Buddhist texts such as the Lotus Sutra (*Fahuajing* 法华经) or in Bai Juyi’s poetry. The point is that Guo’s use of “thing-in-itself” opens up an entire world of comparative issues and claims. Further exhausting such an analysis, one would probably uncover a huge map of claims. Up to which point such an analysis proves useful, is itself questionable, but it should be clear enough that the main comparative claims of a text have to be open for such scrutiny. And it is to these claims that I wish to return now.

As pointed out above, Guo does not specify how exactly notions such as “philosophies” (*zhexue* 哲学), “cultures” (*wenhua* 文化) and “civilizations” (*wenming* 文明) hang together. Does every civilization have one culture and one corresponding philosophy? Guo seems to defend in his essay some form of a positive answer to this question. Choosing the comparative setting that he does and thus opposing “Western philosophy” and “Chinese philosophy”, he certainly needs a robust sense of each of these expressions, which he establishes by presenting a unified

conception. Whatever frictions and oppositions could possibly threaten that unified conception of “Chinese philosophy”, in Guo’s essay all of them are quickly dispersed. There are no real frictions; often what has appeared to others as contrary in Guo’s assessment turns out really to be merely “definitions of the same thing from different sides” (p. 28), whereby sameness is emphasized to an extent that makes all difference vanish.

These unifying efforts are evident when Guo runs together, say, the Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang lines of Song-Ming Confucianism by asserting that “*xin*, *xing* and *li* are the same thing” (p. 34). Mind the claim here is not that they are “the same thing” in this or that regard; they are “the same thing” tout court. Similar efforts are at play when Guo likens the metaphysical positions of Daoism and Confucianism, which works only by a series of claims: that Confucius studied the *Yijing* 易经 in his mature years, that the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 论语) and related documents such as the *Xiaojing* 孝经 record the authentic words of Confucius and, most importantly, that Confucius is the author of the *Xici*, which then functions as something like the missing metaphysical link. Inversely, Guo contends that Lao Dan, his presumed author of the Guodian *Laozi*, did also embrace *ren* 仁, *yi* 义, *xiao* 孝, *ci* 慈, *li* 礼 (which are usually taken to be as ‘Confucian’ as it gets) and that the *Zhuangzi* draws on Lao Dan and Confucius alike when incorporating *dao* and *tian* 天 in its metaphysics.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, when Guo introduces three different ancient Chinese cosmological models, they again turn out to be not so different, but are unified by holding “that the universe comes from an original point and undergoes a process of development or expansion” (p. 21). In this passage, where the three cosmological models are not only likened to each other, but also to the Big Bang Theory, the level of abstraction on which Guo operates finally is in the open. For the commonality which underlies this comparative claim relies on considerable abstraction. How else could one argue that the sense, say, of “expansion” in the “philosophical cosmology in ancient China” and in Big Bang Theory is “similar” (p. 19), and at it “similar” in a substantial sense and not at all merely as the result of “coincidence” or “forced interpretation” (p. 21)?

As Guo’s unified conception of Chinese philosophy is abstract enough to subsume all difference that could possibly be invoked on textual grounds, so is his metaphysical system abstract enough to subsume major differences across “civilizations” on normative grounds. When

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Martin Lu, 2004, 299–300.

speaking of Dao, Guo claims that “we can induce an a priori world from the empirical world, as well as infer the empirical world from the a priori world” and points out that “on this issue, the Western tradition maintains the opposite view” (p. 37). Opposite views such as this, which seems to demarcate a rather far-reaching difference in terms of metaphysics, are again later levelled by a leap of an all-subsuming abstraction, when Guo explains that “various transcendental concepts” such as *tian* or *dao* (both subsumable under Dao) and the Christian God (which Guo at several instances takes as central to ‘Western tradition’) are “all the realization of the sphere of Dao from different standpoints and angles by different civilizations” (p. 46).

Yet other unifying efforts are more implicitly carried out by changes in a matrix which involves both mentioned comparative settings, i. e. the one of tradition and modernity and the one of Western and Chinese philosophy. Guo begins his essay with a statement qualifying “modernity” as “rational” and “traditional philosophies” as “more value-oriented” (p. 15). “Traditional philosophies”, “Western philosophy” and “Chinese philosophy” in Guo’s view share “key issues”, although he finds a difference regarding the interest in “knowledge of natural science”, which is almost completely absent in “traditional Chinese philosophy”. With the advent of modernity, “Western philosophy” has embraced “instrumental rationality” and turned all attention to the world of knowledge to the complete neglect of the world of value. The matrix that Guo draws up may be visualized as follows:

	Chinese philosophy	Western philosophy
traditional	theory of value no theory of knowledge	theory of value theory of knowledge
modern	?	theory of knowledge no theory of value
future	world philosophy = ‘Daoic’ philosophy	

Guo is hence very explicit about the deficiency of “modern Western philosophy”, but there is nothing explicit about “modern Chinese philosophy”. When he states that “the major flaw of Western philosophy is the breakdown of its theory of value”, then the word “breakdown” makes it clear that the statement identifies the difference between “traditional” and “modern Western philosophy”, but when he claims that “the major flaw of Chinese philosophy is the absence of a theory of knowledge”,

it is unclear whether the statement relates to “traditional Chinese philosophy” only or also to “modern Chinese philosophy”. Modernity, Guo asserts, has altered both Western and Chinese philosophy as both have “suffered under the impact of modernization and capitalism” (p. 15). The only change that Guo explicitly notes with regard to what he must take to be “modern Chinese philosophy” is that due to the influence of “Western philosophy ... Chinese metaphysics was discarded” (p. 18), but it is unclear what that means in terms of theories of knowledge and value. Given that Guo continues by pointing out that it is now time “to reconsider traditional Chinese metaphysics”, one might even speculate whether or not for him there is such a thing as “modern Chinese philosophy”.

Be that as it may, Guo is explicit about where to look for a future “world philosophy”. “Traditional Chinese metaphysics”, he writes, has “none of the aforementioned drawbacks of Western philosophy” (he must mean “modern Western philosophy”) and moreover “could rectify these drawbacks” (he could mean the drawbacks of “modern Western philosophy” in “Chinese philosophy” or in “modern philosophy” more generally). It is a paradoxical situation that results from Guo’s characterizations of traditional and modern Western and Chinese philosophies. For (modern) “Western philosophy” the task is to “reconstruct *its* theory of value to govern its theory of knowledge”, Guo writes, which hence seems to be a task completely internal to “Western philosophy” and in no need of ‘Daoic philosophy’ as constructed from ‘Chinese philosophy’. For “Chinese philosophy”, the task is “to construct a theory of knowledge to support its theory of value”, which seems to say that such a construction should proceed on the basis of traditional Chinese philosophy (which is what Guo sets out to do).

Although he agrees that modernity cuts across civilizations, he stays in these passages firmly committed to an approach that upholds civilizational differences in the sense that there is “Chinese philosophy” here and “Western philosophy” there. Meanwhile, speaking of “tasks”, Guo is already operating on a normative level, which is also what he does at the end of the essay when drawing out normative implications of Daoic philosophy with a view to different civilizations. There, however, the salient point seems to be that Daoic philosophy transcends all civilizational differences. Although “Western philosophy” could simply engage in reconstruction of its theory of value, Guo seems to suggest that it would thus only reconstruct an approach to “the peak state of life” that is inferior to the “Chinese” (and “Indian”) approach based on the “realization of the mind itself”, which involves “the immediate and thorough

understanding and insight of Dao” (p. 40). In a normative perspective, ‘Daoic philosophy’ is what *any* civilization eventually should embrace.

In sum, Guo’s reconstruction of Chinese philosophy relies on a series of comparative claims, most importantly on a unified conception of ‘Chinese philosophy’ (and, as could be shown, equally and no less problematically of ‘Western philosophy’), which works only on a level of abstractness that overrides all claims of internal difference. Yet, Guo’s use of a highly abstract and unified conception of ‘Chinese philosophy’ might find its justification in the purpose for which he uses it. In other words, the purpose of reconstructing Chinese philosophy might justify what to my mind are rather shaky comparative claims, for the reconstruction might not primarily be about the claims but about something else.

### III. CONCLUSIONS: WHY DRAW ON A COMPARATIVE SETTING?

Guo sketches the problem to the solution of which his ‘Daoic philosophy’ means to contribute in terms of a derailed rationalistic modernity. Modernization and capitalism have led to a world of “previously unknown material pleasures” at the cost of environmental pollution, civilizational clashes, a gap between rich and poor (*pinfu xuanshu* 贫富悬殊), alienated science and technology (*keji yihua* 科技异化), threat of nuclear warheads (*hedan weixie* 核弹威胁), excess of material desire (*wuyu hengliu* 物欲横流), loss of spirit (*jingshen chenlun* 精神沉沦) and decline of value (p. 16).<sup>9</sup> There is a major “crisis of humanity and philosophy” (p. 16), which in Guo’s view boils down not only to a decline, but to a “crisis of value” (p. 14). What is needed is “a new philosophical system that places its theory of value in the lead role and its theory of knowledge in a supporting role”; only thus can a “spiritual home” be rebuilt for humanity (pp. 16–17). To offer such a “new philosophical system” in order to fill the great void of value in modernity is the purpose of Guo’s ‘Daoic philosophy’.

To conclude, let me raise one specific challenge regarding the comparative setting into which Guo embeds his ‘Daoic philosophy’. As an aside, I should mention that I have a number of reservations about other parts of Guo’s project, for instance, about his depiction of science, democracy, and the contemporary state of affairs generally, and about the

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<sup>9</sup> In this list, I draw on both the English and the Chinese version of Guo’s essay. The Chinese expressions in brackets make it clear which is taken from which version.

promises he sees in a return to traditional metaphysics. But, as I have not engaged in analysis of these parts, I therefore abstain from commenting upon them any further. My main concern is with the comparative setting of Guo's discussion of Chinese and Western philosophy. What is the function of the comparative setting for Guo's 'Daoic philosophy'? Does his 'Daoic philosophy' in some sense require that setting or could it do without it? In my opinion, if I may put it polemically, it could and also should do without it.

For one thing, there seems to be a tension between the goal of establishing a 'world philosophy' and calling the philosophy proposed to do the job 'Daoic'. Guo clearly states that other, i. e. non-Chinese, "value systems in the world have also developed their own Dao" (p. 45), but he is as clear, as I have already mentioned, that the approach favoured by Chinese (and Indian) civilization is in some sense superior to the ones relying on the aid of the gods. It seems that Western civilization is able almost fully to grasp Dao (by way of the "knowing ability of the life of mind") — almost, but not quite. If this is what Guo suggests, then we are faced with an irony since the other term in the expression 'Daoic philosophy', that is 'philosophy', has been used for long along similar lines, as denoting something which 'Chinese civilization' also might have — might have, but not quite. I do not think that any future 'world philosophy' should rely on assertions of this kind, which establish a philosophical ranking among civilizations.

If 'Daoic philosophy' is to be a persuasive new philosophy fit for the ambitious task that Guo wants it to do, then it should not rely on a comparative setting in terms of Chinese and Western philosophy which unavoidably ties philosophical points to differentiations such as "Chinese" vs. "Western". That differentiation, to my mind, is not required and philosophically dubious. Mind that Guo does not speak of "Chinese philosophy" as a textual tradition, even if he writes that he sets out to reconstruct metaphysics "following traditional Chinese metaphysics", which might give the impression that he might mean some part of the textual tradition. His reliance on a unified conception shows that he does not. Also, towards the end of the essay, in what might be a slip of the tongue, Guo suddenly speaks of "the belief of most Chinese" (p. 46). But how do the "Chinese" and their "belief" on the one hand and Chinese philosophy on the other hand hang together? My contention is that Guo's 'Daoic philosophy' in terms of its philosophical import does not require making the comparative claim of philosophical difference that comes with the difference between "Chinese" and "Western".

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RICHARD N. STICHLER (READING)

## HUMAN NATURE AND CULTURES OF WAR

Those who have cultural business must have military preparations.

Confucius

The empire, long divided, must unite; long united, must divide. Thus it has ever been.

Luo Guanzhong, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

### INTRODUCTION

The return of China to its former status as a leading power among the world's civilizations has many people today thinking and speculating about the potential for future conflict between China and the West. In the past, rapid shifts in the balance of power have often resulted in wars between the established hegemon and the rising power. As China's demand for and control over the earth's resources continues to grow, its interests will increasingly clash with those of the West thus setting the stage for the possibility of armed conflict. In the United States there is already a swelling tide of resentment toward China. As economic conditions in the United States continue to decline, China is increasingly seen as the culprit, and China's rapid advances in the field of military technology are viewed with increasing alarm. A war between China and the United States would truly be a most catastrophic crisis of civilization. But given the current trajectories of the two nations, how can such a catastrophe be averted?

Guo Yi sees the contemporary "clash of civilizations" as rooted in a decline of human values due to the rise of a culture of material-

ism.<sup>1</sup> By focusing on the satisfaction of our physical needs and desires, he argues, we have allowed the inferior to injure the superior part of our nature. He calls for a revival of a neo-Confucian metaphysics and theory of value as a foundation on which to build a more humane culture, a culture that would be based on universal human values rather than ethnocentric values tied to the narrow and exclusive interests of material needs. With peace as the supreme value, conflict among the diverse cultures of the world could be harmonized and secure conditions established for all to live better, more humane lives.

Attractive as this prospect may sound, neo-Confucianism pacifism does not seem particularly well suited to providing practical solutions to contemporary problems arising from the conflict of cultures. The growth of capitalism and materialism may foster greed, decadence, and increased conflict among nations, but a more likely and practicable solution to the problem for both China and the rest of the world, would seem to lie elsewhere. In the past neo-Confucian pacifism and distain for the military led to serious problems for Chinese civilization, leaving China unprepared to cope with the threat of invasion by northern and western nomadic tribes. First invaded and conquered by Mongol and later by Manchurian warlords, China was humiliated and thoroughly devastated in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when it was partitioned and colonized by the West and then invaded and occupied by Japan. Having finally emerged from this dreadful experience, it is highly unlikely that China's leaders will revert to the neo-Confucian pacifism of the past.

In contemporary China there is an intense and growing interest in the ancient and long neglected military classics, which as Ralph Sawyer observes, are today playing an important role in the PRC's effort to create a "contemporary military science with unique Chinese characteristics." PRC think tanks, Sawyer reports, "are examining every passage for concepts and tactical principles that can be adapted to the contemporary battlefield so as to ensure that China's comparatively deficient armed forces will, through unexpected and unorthodox measures, be able to wrest a localized advantage and prevail".<sup>2</sup> As the earliest records of history indicate, war and its attendant military culture have long been an

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1 Guo, Yi. *Metaphysics, Nature and Mind: The Main Idea of Daoic Philosophy*, in this volume.

2 Sawyer, Ralph. *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*. Basic Books, New York: 1993, x.

inseparable part of civilization, and, human nature being what it is, it is unlikely that warfare can ever be completely abolished from human life. Recognizing the inescapable necessity of war, the ancient Chinese military classics seek to strategically limit war's damage while protecting and advancing the values of civilized life. Thus, the reflections they contain on human nature and the perpetual problems of war are as relevant today as they were for times in which they were written.

#### WAR AS A COSMIC NECESSITY IN ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

Warrior-elites first established and ruled the civilizations of the ancient world, and the military has ever since played an enduring and vital role in shaping the values, institutional structures, and habits of thought of both Eastern and Western civilizations. Throughout its long history, the civil and military spheres of Chinese cultural life, *Wen* and *Wu*, have been viewed as interdependent forces of nature, much like *Yin* and *Yang*, constantly pushing and pulling the empire in opposite directions. As stated in the opening and closing lines of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the empire perpetually divides and then again unites. Enmeshed in the eternal cosmic tension between *Wen* and *Wu*, humans perpetually seek a stable equilibrium.

In the early myths of India and Greece we find a similar view of the cosmic forces that govern both nature and human nature. Within the Hindu trinity that rules the cosmos, Brahman creates new forms of life, Vishnu protects and preserves the established order, and Shiva, the war-god, destroys the old forms of life, preparing the way for a new creation. In this eternal cycle of creation and destruction, the cosmos grows old, loses its vitality, is swept away, and upon the ashes of its destruction a new world is born. In the words of the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore:

“From the heart of all matter  
Comes the anguished cry –  
‘Wake, wake, great Shiva,  
Our body grows weary  
Of its law-fixed path,  
Give us new form.  
Sing our destruction,  
That we gain new life...”

In Homer too, war is a cosmic necessity, and the destruction of human life which it entails is unavoidable. Throughout the *Iliad* war is constantly compared with the destructive forces of nature. Similar views of the necessity of war are also found in the early Greek philosophers. For Heraclitus, war is the *logos* that governs the creation and destruction of all things. "Fire," he said, "lives the death of earth, and air lives the death of fire; water lives the death of air, earth that of water." The cosmos is a constant process of the creation and destruction of life-forms, and war is the agent that moves the process. Thus, he states: "It is necessary to understand that war is universal and justice is strife, and that all things take place in accordance with strife and necessity" (DK 22 B80).<sup>3</sup> Without war and constant strife, Heraclitus asserted, the world order could not exist. Empedocles modified the Heraclitean world-view and held that two opposing forces of nature, love and strife, rule the universe, uniting and separating the elemental substances.

The idea of war as cosmic necessity has played a predominant role in shaping the cultures and values of the ancient world. To understand the cosmos was to understand how to live in accordance with its natural laws. Philosophers, poets, and priests sought practical wisdom in observing and understanding the natural rhythms of the cosmos and in establishing human laws in accordance with the divine laws of nature. As the human analog of nature's destructive forces, it was thought that war could not be eliminated but at best only be managed and controlled so as to minimize destruction and harm to human life. War may produce the most vicious and inhuman savagery, but it can also bring forth the heroic virtues in defense of civilization. Thus, among the virtues of civilized life were included those essential military skills and capacities for conducting the art of war. Courage, loyalty, and obedience are just a few of the indispensable virtues that war and conflict were held to engender.

Crises of civilizations often arise from either of two opposite extremes, uncontrolled violence and war-lust or indolence and the torpor of cultural lethargy. War, considered as an antidote to cultural lethargy and stagnation, has thus been acclaimed as being not merely a necessary evil but as actually having positive value in itself. On such grounds Hegel objected to Kant's proposals for perpetual peace, saying that war "preserves the ethical health of peoples ... just as the blowing of the winds preserves

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3 Diels, Hermann. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker: Griechisch und Deutsch*. Walther Kranz Publisher: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung. Berlin: 1903.

the sea from stagnation which would be the result of a prolonged calm, so also stagnation in peoples would be the result of a prolonged, let alone, perpetual peace” (Hegel, 306–7).<sup>4</sup> He went on to add: “As a result of war, peoples are strengthened, but nations involved in civil strife make peace at home through making wars abroad” (307–8). Even friendly families of nations, he held, need to create conflict and fight one another if only to strengthen their moral fiber (Hegel, 307).

Pacifist movements have continually risen up throughout history to challenge the militaristic world-view, generally arguing against its basic assumptions concerning the laws of nature and human nature. Buddhism was the first great religious tradition to renounce all forms of violence and warfare. Though it accepted the traditional Hindu view of nature’s cyclical process of creation and destruction, Buddhism held that the human mind can overcome the natural desires that bind it to the constant process of rebirth, death and suffering. In principle, this dualistic separation of the human mind from the natural laws that govern the cosmos allowed Buddhists to reject all forms of violence, though in practice they often made concessions to the necessity of war, finding it difficult to consistently apply the principle of non-violence in all circumstances.

The dilemma confronting the Buddhist principle of non-violence is well illustrated by Thich Nhat Hanh’s claim that he would allow an aggressor to kill him rather than kill the aggressor in self-defense. Even if his death would bring the end of Buddhism as cultural institution, Hanh said he would allow Buddhism to perish rather than violate its principles. Such martyrdom may be an inspiring example of moral courage; yet if all Buddhists had followed the same path, it seems unlikely that the religion would have survived to the present day.

In its most extreme form, pacifism rejects the concept of just war, holding that all warfare is unnecessary and evil. Less extreme forms of pacifism allow limited warfare in defense of a just cause. Moderate forms of pacifism typically hold that although war is in principle unnecessary and contrary to human nature, it may at times be unavoidable and thus justified as a means for achieving peace. War, on this view, arises not from nature and the natural tendencies of men but from the cultural conditions to which they are accustomed. Cultures of war, it is argued, nurture and glorify violence and war-like dispositions; thus, war arises

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<sup>4</sup> Hegel, G. W. F. *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*. T. M. Knox and Stephen Houlgate, trans. Oxford UP, Oxford: 2008.

from contingent cultural conditions that can be modified and improved through education and by building cultures of peace. Warrior cultures are thought uncivilized and barbaric, and civilization is defined as a progressive historical process of peace-making, its ultimate goal being perpetual peace among peoples and nations. Moderate pacifists thus view war as at best a necessary evil that is tolerable only to the extent that it contributes to the progress of civilization and world peace.

Even though the abolition of war may be desirable, Hobbesian realists respond that in a world rife with conflict, individual nations need to be adequately prepared to protect their own interests against potentially hostile aggressors. Thus, policies that weaken the military and a nation's ability to pursue and secure its self-interest are dismissed as impractical and utopian. Disarmament is rejected as source of weakness and cultural decay, or a lack of commitment to the values that sustain a nation's culture and way of life. Moreover, insecurity and distrust among nations drives the incessant quest for ever greater military advantage. Hence, political realists consider military strength and preparedness for war an essential component of a culture's ability to maintain its existence. Given the inherent conflict of human interests, peace-time is thus viewed as being for the most part a time of preparation for the next war.

#### WILLIAM JAMES: ON PACIFISM AND HUMAN NATURE

In 1906 William James gave his last public lecture, *The Moral Equivalent of War*. James put forward a rather paradoxical defense of pacifism when he proposed fighting a "war against war." His purpose in using this odd expression was to concede the point to the political realist that humans are by nature warlike, that the heroic fighting spirit is vital to civilization, and that it thus needs to be cultivated and maintained. But instead of expending our energies in fighting destructive wars, James proposed that we find more constructive battles to fight, battles that might contribute to the progress of civilization instead of its destruction.<sup>5</sup>

However, before going on to discuss the constructive battles to fought, James cautioned that the war against war "is going to be no holiday excursion," for he says, we have inherited all of the pugnacity and

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<sup>5</sup> James, William. *The Moral Equivalent of War*. <http://www.constitution.org/wj/meow.html> (November 2012).

love of glory of our ancestors. Thus, showing the horror and irrationality of war is no deterrent, for the fascination of war lies in its horror. Though our history is a bath of blood, says James, we relish the memories and stories of past wars as “a sacred spiritual possession worth more than all the blood poured out.” We look back on ancient Greece and Rome as the source of our cultural legacy, yet says James, “Greek history is a panorama of jingoism and imperialism—war for war’s sake, all the citizen’s being warriors. It is horrible reading—because of the irrationality of it all.” The Trojan and Peloponnesian wars “were purely piratical. Pride, gold, women, slaves, excitement were their only motives.” The career of Alexander of the Great was “piracy pure and simple, nothing but an orgy of power and plunder, made romantic by the character of the hero. There was no rational purpose in it, and the moment [Alexander] died his generals and governors attacked one another. The cruelty of those times is incredible.” James goes on to describe Roman history in similar terms and ends by saying:

“We inherit the warlike type; and for most of the capacities of heroism that the human race is full of we have to thank this cruel history. ... Our ancestors have bred pugnacity into our bone and marrow, and thousands of years of peace won’t breed it out of us. The popular imagination fairly fattens on the thought of wars. Let public opinion once reach a certain fighting pitch, and no ruler can withstand it.”

But unlike our ancestors, said James, we moderns now prefer to conceal our barbaric motives behind a mask of civility, and while preparing for war, we talk incessantly of peace:

“Pure loot and mastery seem no longer morally allowable motives, and pretexts must be found for attributing them solely to the enemy. England and we, our army and navy authorities repeat without ceasing, are solely for ‘peace.’ Germany and Japan it is who are bent on loot and glory. ‘Peace’ in military mouths today is a synonym for ‘war expected.’ The word has become a pure provocative, and no government wishing peace sincerely should allow it ever to be printed in a newspaper. Every up-to-date dictionary should say that ‘peace’ and ‘war’ mean the same thing ... It may even reasonably be said that the intensely sharp *preparation* for war by the nations is the *real war*, permanent, unceasing; and that the battles are only a sort of public verification of the mastery gained during the ‘peace’-interval. ”

Given our inherent warlike disposition and love of fighting, how then is human nature to be diverted to more constructive ends? If war is to be abolished, James asked, how shall we avoid falling into “a sheep’s paradise” and continue to maintain the vital military virtues of fidelity, cohesiveness, tenacity, and heroism? It is no use to dwell on the horrors of war, he said. To persuade our opponent, we must enter into “the aesthetic and ethical point of view” of the warrior mind. We must acknowledge the values of the martial spirit but devise other constructive means to cultivate and develop it. Yet James’s proposal, in the light of our current environmental crisis, may well seem incredible, for he claimed that the spirit and values of the warrior culture could best be maintained by declaring a *war against nature*. James actually proposed that instead of compulsory military service, the youth of America should be required to serve for a prescribed number of years in an “army enlisted against nature.”

“To coal and iron mines, to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, to dishwashing, clothes washing, and window washing, to road-building and tunnel-making, to foundries and stoke-holes, and to the frames of skyscrapers, would our gilded youths be drafted off, according to their choice, to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas. They would have paid their blood-tax, done their own part in the immemorial human warfare against nature; they would tread the earth more proudly ... they would be better fathers and teachers of the following generation.”

In the following years, many American Presidents enthusiastically endorsed James’s idea of fighting a war against nature. During the depression of the 1930’s, Presidents Hoover and Roosevelt began comparing the nation’s economic problems with the battles of the First World War, seeking to thus arouse the spirit of unity, cooperation and determination that the war had inspired in an effort to rebuild the nation’s economy. When Roosevelt later announced a public works program in 1933 to provide work for unemployed young men, he spoke of the spiritual values of the program as far outweighing its economic benefits. In 1961, under President Kennedy, the Peace Corps was founded. The Peace Corps was initially an alternative to military service and embodied many of the ideals specifically proposed by William James. Under the Peace Corps program, in place of compulsory military service, volunteers were sent to

developing countries to fight disease and poverty. Again, in 1964, President Johnson announced a bill for comprehensive welfare legislation by declaring “a war on poverty,” and President Nixon proclaimed “a war on cancer” in proposing the National Cancer Act of 1971.

Initially, the American war against nature seemed headed for unprecedented success; the nation soon recovered from the Great Depression and the Second World War and seemed well on its way to bringing the forces of nature under control. But it was not long before nature struck back. New diseases and economic problems soon began to emerge, creating ever new battles to be fought.

Nevertheless, in 1977, with the prospect of dwindling energy resources on the horizon, President Carter invoked the war metaphor once again in challenging Americans to reduce their consumption of oil and natural gas. In a televised speech to the nation he specifically alluded to James’s well-known essay, saying:

“Our decision about energy will test the character of the American people and the ability of the President and the Congress to govern. This difficult effort will be the ‘moral equivalent of war’—except that we will be uniting our efforts to build and not destroy.”<sup>6</sup>

But President Carter’s use of the war metaphor took a distinctly new turn and was extremely unpopular, for instead of encouraging Americans to fight against either nature or some foreign enemy he asked them to fight against their own desires and to consume less instead of more! For this he was severely criticized in the next election by his challenger, Ronald Reagan, as painting a bleak and pessimistic portrait of America’s future, and thus Carter was overwhelmingly defeated. When President Reagan took office, one of his first official acts was to dismantle Carter’s alternative energy programs, and, as a symbolic gesture of defiance, he removed the solar panels Carter had installed on the roof of the White House.

In America, talking about fighting for constructive, peaceful causes can be a political liability. Presidents who do so are often viewed as weak and cowardly; to appear strong and courageous, they must be willing to fight destructive wars against foreign enemies. Furthermore, calls for

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<sup>6</sup> Carter, Jimmy. Televised Speech, April 18, 1977: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/american-experience/features/primary-resources/carter-energy/> (November 2012).

wars against drug addiction, disease, energy consumption, and childhood obesity, fail to inspire the heroic martial spirit and toughness that William James sought to instill in the American people. In 2010, President Obama was mocked and derided when he compared the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico to the attack of 9/11. He used the comparison as a pretext for saying, "This is an assault on our shores, and we're gonna fight back with everything that we've got!" But the analogy was weak and brought him little credit. However, when he ordered the killing of Osama bin Laden, the alleged architect of 9/11, he was widely applauded and his popularity ratings significantly improved.

Despite the fact that many American Presidents have endorsed James's proposed war against nature, the policy has not served to displace traditional warfare in the slightest. America's foreign policy has grown more aggressive and warlike than it was 100 years ago, and today its military has more power and political influence than ever before. Having by far the largest military in world, it patrols every corner of the earth, seeking by every conceivable means to protect and secure its national interest.

For obvious reasons traditional warfare can never be replaced by pacifistic wars against poverty, disease, and natural disasters. Wars between peoples and nations arise from feelings of anger and righteous indignation; when nations feel that their honor, dignity, and security have been attacked or threatened in ways that are perceived as intentional, malicious, and unjust, they seek revenge in one form or another for the injustice done to them. Though nature may harm and destroy us, we never imagine that it does so with malicious intent. Thus, we cannot summon the feelings of anger and indignation toward nature that we feel toward our fellow man when we think that he has maliciously and unjustly harmed us.

If we fight against nature, we do so only in a derivative sense; we do not seek vengeance nor do we seek to punish nature or make it suffer to compensate for the pain it has caused us. But when we fight against those who have maliciously and unjustly harmed us, we seek revenge and the satisfaction of knowing that we have caused our enemy to suffer in return. If feelings of anger, righteous indignation, and the desire for revenge are part of human nature, it seems evident that they can neither be expressed nor satisfied by fighting against nature. Thus, there is nothing in our struggle with nature that can truly be considered the moral equivalent of war.

## WAR AS COSMIC NECESSITY IN HOMER, PLATO, AND ARISTOTLE

William James observed that our modern attitudes toward war have been shaped by a cultural tradition that originated in ancient Greece—a dysfunctional culture, marred by senseless violence and mayhem. He described the *Iliad* as “one long recital of how Diomedes and Ajax, Sarpedon and Hector *killed*.” Apparently he thought that Homer had no other aim than to record the death of each warrior and describe in the most gruesome detail all the wounds inflicted. He seems to have missed the deeper significance of the story.

Homer does in fact treat war and conflict as an inevitable and inextricable part of human life, and, like Heraclitus, he gives war a central place in the cosmic order. Again and again he invokes the image of the destructive forces of nature which he likens to the horror of war.<sup>7</sup> He dwells constantly on the cruelty and horror of war, but the horror is made all the more vivid by its contrast with the peace and tranquility of domestic life. Thus, woven throughout the tale are two contrasting attitudes toward war and two distinctly different ways of fighting: symbolized by the twin gods of war, Ares and Athena, one is mad and excessive, the other wise and moderate.

Ares, the male god of war, is described repeatedly as “man-slaughtering,” “blood-stained,” and “murderous,” and Zeus reviles him, saying: “You are the most hateful to me of the gods who hold Olympus, forever strife is dear to you and wars and slaughter” (*Iliad* 5.890). By contrast, his sister Athena, the goddess of war, is dearest of all the gods to Zeus, and she is extolled as an exemplar of strategic wisdom and moderation. Athena is the daughter of Métis from whom she inherits her cunning wisdom. She fights only when necessary and with skillful means, using cunning and deception to avoid useless slaughter. Zeus often employs her to thwart the mad violence and wanton killing of her brother Ares.

A similar contrast is drawn between Achilles and Odysseus. Achilles is called “iron-hearted,” and like Ares he kills in blind fury. His

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<sup>7</sup> Homer, *The Iliad of Homer*. Richmond Lattimore, trans. University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 1951. The following passage may serve as a typical example: “As when a swollen river hurls its water, large with rain down the mountains to the flat land following rain from the sky-god, and sweeps down with it cumbers of dry oaks and pine trees ... so now gleaming Aias cumbered the plain as he chased them, slaughtering men and horses alike” (*Iliad* 11.492–5).

unyielding pride and mad rage cause immense suffering to his fellow Achaeans. Moreover, he shows no appreciation or desire for the comforts of domestic life. When Agamemnon proposes that the Achaean warriors eat and rest before returning again to battle the Trojans, Achilles fumes with anger, “You talk of food! I have no taste for food, what I crave is slaughter and blood and the choking groans of men” (*Iliad*, 19.213–4). Although Achilles kills Hector, he is unable to finally defeat the Trojans. When the Trojans take refuge behind the high walls of their city, it is Odysseus who devises the Trojan horse, the clever stratagem that brings the war to an end. Odysseus fights at Troy only because he is bound by an oath,<sup>8</sup> and he yearns constantly to return to his wife and home in Ithaca. The epithet for Odysseus is “polymetis,” a term that refers to his many-sided, cunning wisdom and links him specifically with Athena. He is devoted Athena, and when the war is over, she aids and protects him through the trials and tribulations of his long journey home. Disguised as a shepherd boy she finally leads him back to Ithaca, and upon revealing her true identity, she says to Odysseus:

“Two of a kind, we are, contrivers, both. Of all living men you are the best in plots and storytelling. My own fame is for wisdom among the gods—deceptions too. Would even you have guessed that I am Pallas Athena, daughter of Zeus, I that am always with you in times of trial, a shield to you in battle” (*Odyssey* 13.350).<sup>9</sup>

The *Iliad* ends with the funeral of Hector, and it is he who is the true hero of the story. Hector fights to save his city from destruction, and most of all he fights for his wife and son whom he loves dearly. He dies a hero’s death, for far more than any Achaean warrior, Hector displays the military virtues in defense of civilized life.<sup>10</sup> In his final battle, knowing that his fate is sealed, he summons the courage to fight Achilles, saying: “let me not die ingloriously without a fight, but in some great

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**8** Odysseus actually tried to break his oath to defend Menelaus by feigning madness and thus avoid fighting in the Trojan War, but at the request of Agamemnon, Palamedes exposed his deception and thus forced Odysseus to honor his oath.

**9** Homer, *The Odyssey*. Robert Fitzgerald, trans. Doubleday & Company, New York: 1963.

**10** That Athena deceives Hector and helps Achilles to kill him is one of the great ironies of the *Iliad*. Disguising herself as Hector’s divine protector,

action that men yet to come will hear about" (*Iliad* 22.384–6). After he has killed Hector, Achilles again displays his unrelenting brutality as he attempts to defile Hector's body, and only after his mother Thetis pleads with him does he allow Priam to ransom Hector for burial. At Hector's funeral, the entire city of Troy comes out to mourn the fallen hero. He is praised by his parents and by his wife, Andromache, for his steadfast virtue and his unfailing devotion to the defense of his city. And finally he is praised by Helen, for his kindness and compassion; she tearfully recalls how Hector alone defended and protected her when other Trojans spoke of her with contempt.

So the story ends, evoking admiration for the courage and compassion of Hector and pity for the doomed city of Troy. It is worth noting that the Asiatic people of Troy are portrayed as far more civilized and humane than the merciless Achaeans—both Achilles and others like him. Though war and its destructive power are unavoidable, Homer shows its horror by revealing the humanity of its victims and all that is lost. The best and most civil of the Achaean warriors is the cunning Odysseus who accepts the necessity of war but attempts to limit its damage. But even he is flawed and is thus punished by the god he has offended on his long journey home.

Plato was extremely critical of the effect of Homeric poetry on the moral character of the young, but he fully accepted Homer's cosmic conception of war and applied it to politics. His *Republic* or ideal state is founded on the premise that warfare is a natural phenomenon that is embedded in the nature and structure of the human soul. Moreover, the love of war, according to Plato, was most deeply embedded in the Athenian soul, for the city of Athens, he claims, was founded and especially nurtured to excel in war by the goddess Athena.

In his dialogue on cosmology, the *Timeaus*, Plato begins with the story of the founding of Athens as told to Solon by an Egyptian priest. The priest relates how Athena first raised up on Athenian soil "the noblest and most perfect race of men" (*to kalliston kai ariston genos ep' anthropous*) who were "bravest in war" and who "possessed the most splendid works of art and the noblest polity of any city under heaven"

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Deiphoebus, she persuades Hector to believe that he will defeat Achilles in combat. When he fails, Hector then realizes that he has been deceived and prepares to meet his fate.

(Plato, 23c).<sup>11</sup> She furnished the Athenians with laws derived from the Cosmic Order and she established their city, “choosing that spot where [they] were born since she perceived there a climate duly blended that would produce men of supreme wisdom. So it was that the goddess, being herself both a lover of war and a lover of wisdom (*philopolemos te kai philosophos*), chose the spot which was most likely to bring forth men like herself, and this she first established” (Plato, 24d).

The Platonic Athena, it should be noted, is not a lover of *metis* or the cunning wisdom of disguises and deceptive strategies; she is a lover of *sophia*, that is, a lover *alethia* or unconcealed truth. In the *Republic* Plato rejects the Homeric notion that the gods go about in false disguises deceiving people. The gods are good, he argues, and hence they must be truthful in every way. The Platonic Athena thus resembles Apollo far more than the cunning Athena of traditional Homeric mythology.<sup>12</sup>

Like the Platonic Athena, the rulers of Plato’s perfect city must be both warriors and philosophers (525a) or lovers of both war and wisdom. Although philosopher-kings are not specifically referred to as ‘lovers of war’ in the *Republic*, they must be supremely courageous, and since the possession of every virtue requires the enjoyment of its corresponding activity, it is clear that philosophers must be fond of war. Moreover, philosopher-kings are to be chosen exclusively from the ranks of the warrior-guardians or professional military class, a class of men and women repeatedly described as “athletes of war.” Those who are chosen to rule “the most beautiful city” must be guardians “who have proven themselves best in philosophy and war” (543a). The elite warrior-guardians have been raised since childhood in a military culture that has trained them to prefer “death in battle over defeat and slavery” (386b). Even as youths they have accompanied their parents to the battlefield to watch them fight—in this way being habituated at an early age to sight of death and the terror of war.

By nature the guardians are “fearless and indomitable,” (375b) and their souls have been nurtured by musical rhythms that “imitate the sounds and accents of one who is courageous in warlike deeds and in

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<sup>11</sup> Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, eds. Princeton University Press, Princeton: 2005.

<sup>12</sup> For a comparative study of wisdom and cunning in ancient Greek and Chinese literature see Lisa Raphals. *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of China and Greece*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca: 1992.

every violent work” (399a); they have also received the discipline of gymnastic training that is akin to this music “especially concerning things of war” (404b). Furthermore, every subject studied by the guardians must be “useful to warlike men” (Plato, 521d). Arithmetic is to be studied “for war and for turning the soul around from Becoming to Being and Truth” (525c). Geometry and astronomy are also studied both for their philosophical and military applications (526d–527d).

As protectors of the state, guardians must have the character of watch dogs; they must be both friendly to those who are familiar and hostile toward strangers. Combining these opposed characteristics requires the proper education of the soul. The soul’s natural capacity for war is cultivated by gymnastic; but gymnastic alone renders the soul excessively fierce and warlike thus turning it against both friends and enemies alike. The soul’s warlike impulses must thus be counterbalanced and tamed by a music that renders it amenable to rational persuasion.

The soul’s principal parts are desire (*epithumia*), spirit (*thumos*), and reason (*logos*), and all three must work together in harmonious unity in order for the soul to perform its natural function and achieve its intended goals. Hence, the rational part must rule the desiring and spirited parts, setting the goals and limits of action. To govern the soul wisely, the reasoning part must be cultivated by philosophy—described by Plato as “the supreme music.” The soul’s spirited part is the natural ally of the reasoning part in ruling and enforcing its decrees upon the wayward desires of the soul. The capacity for anger and indignation resides in the spirited part, and insofar as it is ruled by reason, the spirit is the locus of the military virtues—courage, tenacity, and pride. Irrational anger destroys these virtues and makes the soul savage and brutal. Desire seeks satisfaction in the physical pleasures of life, and when restricted to the moderate enjoyment of necessary pleasures, the soul acquires the “mind-saving” virtue called *sophrosune* or temperance; *sophrosune* constrains the desires of the soul and prevents it from becoming dissipated, soft, and self-indulgent.

The true philosopher is thus distinguished from the sophist or false philosopher both by his toughness and love of war as well as his love of wisdom. Plato ascribes to the sophist all of the *metic* or deceptive qualities traditionally associated with Athena—duplicity, cunning, and ambiguity. Though the sophist pretends to be a lover of wisdom, in reality he is a lover of *metis* or of deception and disguise. Thus, it is the work of the true philosopher to reveal the truth and expose the frauds for what they really are—a job that the Platonic Socrates appears to relish as he

displays all the toughness and tenacity of a champion fighter in forcing his opponents to show their true nature and submit to his *logos*. At his trial Socrates claimed that his work was “a service to the god” and a great gift to the city of Athens. But apparently his service was dedicated not to Athena, the cunning and deceptive goddess of Athens, but to Apollo, the god of the oracle at Delphi.

In the *Republic* the sophist cross-examined is given the ironic name Thrasymachus or “Bold-fighter.” Though Thrasymachus brashly represents himself as a bold and tough-minded opponent in the dialogue, Socrates soon compels him to retreat from his belligerent claim that justice is ‘the advantage of the stronger’ and shows him to be in reality a rather pathetic, macho-boaster. But the dialogue also shows that Socrates himself uses deception and the pretence of ignorance and timidity in order to gain a strategic advantage in this battle of wits. Here we encounter the paradox of Socrates and are left to wonder whether he is really a trickster and sophist who hides behind a mask of ignorance or the wise warrior-philosopher of Plato’s ideal state. With the exit of Thrasymachus, Glaucon and the other followers of Socrates express their dissatisfaction with his evasive tactics and challenge him to state his own views on the nature of justice and injustice. Socrates agrees to do so, and thus begins his Platonic account of the perfect state.

After Socrates has given his account of the education of the guardians, he asks how the guardians of the perfect city ought to treat their enemies in war. He specifically asks whether it is permissible to enslave one’s enemies (Plato, 469b) and burn their crops and homes (Plato, 470a). It is agreed on all sides that members of the Greek race (*Hellenikon genos*) should neither enslave other Greeks nor destroy their property, for in this way “they will be more likely to turn against the barbarians and keep their hands from one another” (469e). The justification of this policy is that Greeks are “by nature friends” whereas Greeks and barbarians are “enemies by nature” (470c).

Given this distinction between Greeks and barbarians, enmity and fighting between Greeks is declared to be ‘faction’ rather than war, for fighting between those who are friends by nature is a division of the state against itself that should be treated as a kind of sickness or disease that needs the remedy of reconciliation. However, “the enmity and hatred” between Greeks and barbarians, who are enemies by nature, is properly called war (470d), and war, unlike faction, is not subject to constraints. In war, Socrates concludes, Greeks “ought to treat barbarians as Greeks now treat Greeks” (471b). This reference to the tactics employed by Greeks

against Greeks during the Peloponnesian War and its aftermath specifically implies that in war it is right and proper for Greeks to enslave barbarians, burn their homes and destroy the agricultural base of their economy. Reconciliation between natural enemies is neither mentioned nor considered. Between Greeks and barbarians, total war is both the law of nature and the entire foreign policy of Plato's ideal city.

Aristotle approaches the topic of war in much the same manner as Plato, but he expands the Platonic account to include a distinction between just and unjust war. Aristotle's discussion of just war arises within the context of his analysis of the disputed question concerning the justice of slavery. The dispute is between those who affirm that slavery is just and exists by nature and those who hold that it is unjust and exists merely by convention. Between the two extremes Aristotle holds the intermediate view that some forms of slavery are natural and just while others are merely conventional and unjust. He attempts to resolve the dispute between the two sides by drawing a distinction between the just use of slaves (which belongs to the art of rulership) and the just acquisition of slaves (which belongs to the art of war).

The just use of slaves is predicated on the distinction between humans who are slaves by nature and those who are masters by nature. Aristotle states that "from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule" (Aristotle, 1254a 23).<sup>13</sup> Thus, he claims that it is natural and just for those who are masters by nature to rule those who are slaves by nature. Moreover, when the practice of slavery is just, master and slave are said to be friends by nature since both benefit from the relationship.

Turning to the question of the acquisition of slaves, Aristotle states that he means the art "of justly acquiring them" which he says is "a species of hunting or war" (1255b 37). He further explains that "what we gain in war is in a certain manner a natural acquisition; for hunting is a part of it, which it is necessary for us to employ against wild beasts; and those men who being intended by nature for slavery are unwilling to submit to it, on which occasion such a war is by nature just" (1256b 23–25).

Although Aristotle refers to unjust wars on several occasions, he does not specifically explain how unjust wars differ from just wars. But if just wars are wars waged by natural masters against natural slaves, it may

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<sup>13</sup> Aristotle. *Politics*. H. Rackham, trans. Harvard University Press, Cambridge: 1944.

be inferred that an unjust war would be a war of natural slaves waged against natural masters. If natural slaves should then defeat natural masters and by the conventions of warfare enslave them, we might then say that the acquisition of such slaves could be considered just by the conventions of warfare but unjust by nature. Of course, we should add that warfare of any kind waged against natural masters, whether waged by natural slaves or by other natural masters, would be, according to Aristotle, by nature an unjust war. Also, the use of natural masters for slavery, whether by natural masters or natural slaves, would also be by definition an unjust use of slaves.

If, as Aristotle claims, some are marked out by nature “from the hour of their birth” for slavery and others for ruling, what are the identifying marks of natural slaves and natural masters? Aristotle clearly answers this question in *Politics*, Book 7, where he draws a distinction between “the Greek race” (*ton Hellenon genos*) and the rest of humanity that is specifically based on nature rather than convention. Much like Plato in the *Timeaus*, he attributes the natural superiority of the Greek race to the geographical location and climate within which the Greek city-states were situated. Europeans who live in a cold climate, according to Aristotle, are full of spirit (*thumou*) and free but lacking in intelligence and skill (*dianoia kai technē*). Thus, they are deficient in political organization and ability to rule. Asians, on the other hand, are intelligent and skillful but lacking in spirit and thus live in perpetual subjection and slavery. The Greek race, by virtue of the fact that it occupies the middle position geographically and climatically, possesses both spirit and intelligence. Hence, Aristotle concludes, the Greek race is not only free and politically well organized, but “if it could be formed into one state, it would be able to rule the world” (Aristotle, 1327b 23–33).

Aristotle’s views on the arts of rulership and war leave little room for doubt as to how he thought Greek governance of the world should be exercised and by what means acquired. Based on the fact that “nature produces nothing in vain,” the proper mode of governance of natural slaves, according to Aristotle, is despotic—natural slaves being designed by nature as tools to serve the interests and well-being of their natural masters. The acquisition of this power over natural slaves belongs to the art of war. Thus, if natural slaves refuse to submit to the despotic rule of their Greek masters, they may be justly conquered and enslaved by military force.

After the Macedonians had formed the Greek city-states into a unified state, Aristotle’s student, Alexander embarked on just such a cam-

paign to rule the world, using military force to conquer all who refused to submit. On his campaign he is said to have carried with him a copy of Homer's *Iliad*, and the hero he wished most of all to emulate was Achilles. Like Achilles, Alexander was disinclined to use deceptive tactics and strategies designed to minimize human suffering either of his own troops or of the enemy. He considered surprise attacks cowardly and demeaning. Though a brilliant strategist, he preferred to win glory in direct and open combat using overwhelming force and extreme violence to strike terror into the heart of his opponents. Alexander was quoted by Arrian as saying, "It is a lovely thing to live with courage and to die leaving behind an everlasting renown." "His dreadful legacy," wrote John Keegan, "was to ennoble savagery in the name of glory and to leave a model of command that far too many men of ambition sought to act out in the centuries to come".<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the expansive imperial ambitions that characterized the Western way of war throughout medieval and modern eras owed much not only to the example of Alexander but to the military theories of Plato and Aristotle as well.

#### HUMAN NATURE AND THE WAR CULTURE OF ANCIENT CHINA

Throughout the history of China, war has played an essential and pivotal role in overthrowing and replacing dynasties that allegedly had lost the mandate of Heaven. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, rival states fought one another almost constantly in an effort to stabilize and secure their kingdoms. Military strategy was studied extensively and numerous treatises were written on the subject. In addition, questions related to the nature, morality, and necessity of war were rigorously discussed and debated by the "Hundred Schools." Though opinions on war and human nature were invariably supported by reference to the *Dao* of Heaven, a wide variety of conflicting views were held on the justification of war, proper conduct in prosecuting a war, and the moral qualities of human nature.

During the Warring States period, most scholars accepted the necessity of war and argued only against unjust warfare. Early Chinese conceptions of just and unjust war, however, differed widely from views

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<sup>14</sup> Keegan, John. *The Mask of Command*. Penguin Books, New York: 1988, p. 91.

commonly held in Ancient Greece—particularly those of Aristotle. Unjust wars were generally viewed as wars fought for land, profit and power at the expense of the people. Just wars were fought for the liberation of the people from the rule of cruel and oppressive tyrants. A few scholars viewed all war as morally repugnant and argued for its abolition. As early as 545 BCE a proposal was drafted to end the conflict between the major states of Jin, Chu, Qi, and Qin and 10 other minor states. Initially, all fourteen states agreed to sign a covenant abolishing war, but disputes about formalities at the signing resulted in the eventual breakdown of the agreement.<sup>15</sup> Scholars who opposed the abolition of war argued that war is needed to coerce those who violate the law and to allow civilized virtue (*wen de*) to flourish.

Confucius himself acknowledged the necessity of war<sup>16</sup> and included the military skills of archery and chariot-driving among the six arts to be mastered by superior men (*junzi*);<sup>17</sup> he also demanded courage<sup>18</sup> and resoluteness in the pursuit of righteousness. Living in an age of cultural transition in which a rising bureaucracy of profit-oriented artisans and palace officials was merging with the older service-oriented military elite, Confucius lamented the loss of the values of the old feudal-system and despised the values of the rising class of profit-seeking ‘small men’ (*xiaoren*). He sought to revive the old values of the feudal society of Zhou Kings Wen and Wu. The foundation of that society “was a warrior-elite whose weapons were the compound bow and the horse-drawn chariot.

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**15** Hanafin, John. *Philosophy of War: Chinese and Western Perspectives*. (Unpublished paper presented at the Fifteenth International Conference on Chinese Philosophy, Wuhan University: 2007), p. 5.

**16** Knoblock, John and Jeffrey Reigal. *The Annals of Lü Buwei*. Stanford University Press, Stanford: 2000, p. 474. Knoblock cites a passage from the *Records of Ritual Matters (Da Dai Li Ji)*, according to which Confucius said, “Men are born possessing the emotions of joy and anger. This is the reason why weapons were invented and why all men have produced them.”

**17** Legge, James, trans. *The Book of Rites: Li Ji*, Kessinger Publishing, New York: 2003. The text contains several references to military affairs such as: “The son of Heaven orders his leaders and commanders to give instruction on military operations, and to exercise (the soldiers) in archery and chariot-driving, and in trials of strength” (p. 244).

**18** Much like Plato and Aristotle, Confucius (according to the *Li Ji* 47.8A) viewed courage as “fullness of spirit.” The ancient Chinese, as John Knoblock points out, generally regarded courage as an abundance of *chi* or the vital ethers of nature (see Knoblock and Reigal, op. cit., pp. 188–9).

[Warriors] lived on separate farmholds and assembled at the order of the Prince ... They were trained in martial skills and a service ethic based on ideals of duty, courage, selflessness, and comradeship”.<sup>19</sup>

In the biography of the “grand historian” Sima Qian, Confucius is portrayed not as the gentle teacher of the *Analects*<sup>20</sup> but as a severe and demanding leader who frightened disorderly rulers. According to Sima Qian, when Confucius assisted Duke Ding of Lu at a conference with the Duke of Qi at Jiagu, he anticipated a plot against the duke’s life and advised him to bring military troops to ensure his safety, saying: “Those who have cultural (*wen*) business must have military (*wu*) preparations.” Confucius also demanded harsh punishment for those who violate the rules of ritual propriety. At the end of the meeting with the Duke of Qi, jesters and dwarfs were ordered to perform in order to create disorder and an opportunity to attack Duke Ding. Confucius immediately rushed forward to object: “When a commoner throws feudal lords into confusion, the crime deserves execution. I request that you so order the official.” The law was applied and the performers were cut in half at the waist.<sup>21</sup>

After the death of Confucius, Confucian scholars began to develop a strong aversion to war. Some claimed that the need to resort to arms was a result of poor rulership and that war only made bad conditions worse. To engage in fighting and risk one’s life in combat, according to the *Classic of Filial Piety* (c. 350–222 BCE), would be an act of impiety, as it stipulated in the first paragraph: “Our bodies—every hair and bit of skin—are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them. This is the beginning of filial piety”.<sup>22</sup>

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**19** Brooks, E. Bruce and A. Taeko Brooks. *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors*. Columbia UP, New York: 1998, p. 3.

**20** In *The Original Analects*, Bruce Brooks maintains that the nearest semblance to the original teaching of Confucius is to be found in books 4–6. The sayings contained in these three books, he argues, were originally recorded and compiled shortly after Confucius’s death. Books 1–3 and 7–20 contain the views of later Confucians and were written over a 230 year period after the death of Confucius by various members of the Confucian school at Qufu. The later books concern issues debated during the Warring States period but were not considered during the lifetime of Confucius (see Brooks, Appendices 1–4).

**21** Durrant, Stephen. *The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian*. SUNY Press, Albany: 1995, p. 38.

**22** Xiao Jing. *The Classic of Filial Piety*, <http://www.chinapage.com/confucius/xiaojing-be.html> (November 2012).

Ignoring the teaching of Confucius, Mencius condemned war unequivocally, and claimed that Confucius “would have rejected those who are vehement to fight for their prince” (Mencius, 4A:14.2).<sup>23</sup> He argued that a benevolent ruler has no enemies under Heaven and thus no need to engage in warfare. Faced with the fact that the *Book of History* (*Shijing*) recorded a brutal and bloody battle when the Sage-King Wu of Zhou attacked the corrupt King Zhou of Shang, Mencius simply rejected the truth of the story. “It would be better to have no *Book of History*,” he said, “than to believe all of it. In its ‘Completion of War’ section, I accept only two or three passages. A man of humanity has no enemy in the world. When a most humane person (King Wu) punished a most inhumane ruler (King Zhou), how could the blood (of the people) have flowed till it floated the pestles of the mortars?” (Chan, 7B:3).<sup>24</sup>

Mencius then offered his own *a priori* and bloodless account of what really happened: “When King Wu punished the Shang, he had three hundred war chariots and three thousand infantry. But the King said, ‘Fear not! I bring you peace! I am no enemy of the people.’ Then the people bowed their heads, like animals shedding their horns. To launch a ‘punitive attack’ means to correct. If each wishes to correct itself, of what use is war?” (7B:4.4–6). Violent wars are never fought by Sage-Kings, according to Mencius, because they only need correct or rectify those who have neglected and failed to cultivate the goodness of their original nature. Since people naturally wish to rectify themselves and dwell in the peace and tranquility of their original goodness (4A:10), they “turn to a benevolent ruler as water flows downward, and as wild beasts fly to the wilderness” (4A:9.1).

Mencius thus vehemently condemned warfare and rejected in the strongest terms the more moderate views of Mozi, Sunzi, and others who supported just war and tactics designed to minimize its destructive effects. He called those who are skillful in military strategy “great criminals” (7B:4.1) and said that wars fought for the control of cities and land should be called “devouring human flesh for the sake of territory” (Chan,

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<sup>23</sup> Mencius. *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Bryan W. Van Norden, trans. Hackett Publishing, Indianapolis: 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Wing-Tsit Chan notes that the *Book of History* actually says that the bloodshed was caused by Shang forces turning against one another. But Mencius evidently thought that there should have been no bloodshed at all. See Wing-Tsit Chan. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1963, p. 81.

4A:14.2). Though Mencius did not recommend rectifying people with harsh punishments, he did advocate the most severe penalties for those involved in warfare, particularly generals, military strategists, and statesmen. He said, “Death is an insufficient punishment for such crimes. Those who are skillful in war deserve the greatest punishment, and those who form strategic alliances among states deserve the next greatest punishment” (4A:14.2–3). Though the purpose of inflicting such punishments is not mentioned, it does not seem to be corrective or benevolent.

People are naturally attracted to benevolent rulers, according to Mencius, because of the innate goodness of their Heaven-endowed nature. This nature consists of the feelings of compassion, shame, humility, and right and wrong. Mencius claimed that all humans are naturally endowed with these feelings (or four beginnings) just as they are endowed with four limbs. Thus he claimed that “all men have a mind that cannot bear to see the suffering of others,” and “a man without the feeling of compassion is not a man” (2A:6). When cultivated these inborn feelings become the four core virtues, benevolence (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), ritual propriety (*li*), and wisdom (*zhi*).

Mencius’s theory of the innate goodness of human nature is further clarified in his debate with Gaozi. Mencius claims that benevolence and righteousness (which originate from the feelings of compassion and shame) are innate rather than determined by outside social influences. Gaozi argues that human nature is not innately good but that it acquires these virtues from outside social factors. Gaozi maintains that human nature consists of desires for things like food and sex which are neither good nor evil. He compares human nature to a willow tree and benevolence and righteousness to cups and bowls that are shaped from the tree. Thus, in holding that benevolence and righteousness are acquired he evidently means that they are externally imposed on morally neutral human desires.<sup>25</sup> Mencius replies by saying that making cups and bowls of a willow tree is a violation of the tree’s nature. Thus, on Gaozi’s view says Mencius, benevolence and righteousness would be a violation of human nature and a calamity (6A:1). This way of distorting his opponent’s analogy is fairly typical. Gaozi intends the willow tree to be understood as a kind of raw material comparable to the raw material of human nature. Just as the willow tree has no natural tendency to become or not

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<sup>25</sup> The view later attributed to Gaozi (in 6A:4) that benevolence is internal and righteousness external is inconsistent with the argument of the earlier passages, and its supporting argument is obviously confused.

become cups and bowls, so too human nature has no natural tendency toward good or evil. Since human nature, on Gaozi's view, is morally neutral with respect to benevolence and righteousness, the acquisition of these virtues could not be a violation of one's natural human desires.

It is easy to see why Xunzi, the more realistic and empirically oriented Confucian, found Mencius's theory of human nature and his total condemnation of war unacceptable. If human nature flows towards virtue and goodness as naturally as water flows downward, what could be the use and function of ritual?<sup>26</sup> According to Mencius, man's innate inner humility naturally tends toward ritual propriety. Thus, he considered external constraint a useless and unnecessary impediment. But on Xunzi's view the world is full of weak, degenerate people who need to be disciplined, not set free to follow their subjective inclinations. For Xunzi ritual is an external convention and a constraint on men's natural desires which are ego-centric and tend toward evil. According to Xunzi, men are not humble by nature; on the contrary, they are arrogant and proud. Thus, if a man follows his natural inclinations, says Xunzi, "they will lead him into license and wantonness, and all ritual principles and correct forms will be lost. Hence, any man who follows his nature and indulges his emotions will inevitably become involved in wrangling and strife, will violate the forms and rules of society, and will end as a criminal" (Xunzi 161).<sup>27</sup>

Ritual propriety disciplines and corrects the disordered chaos of conflicting human desires. Therefore, ritual propriety is the core and foundation of Xunzi's theory of good government; by means of ritual the virtuous ruler establishes order and transforms the people: "The violent and daring are transformed to sincerity; the prejudiced and selfish-minded are transformed to fairness; and the quick-tempered and contentious are transformed to harmony" (Xunzi 78).

Given the inherent tendency of human nature toward evil, wars are at times unavoidable, and thus it is necessary to fight against evil rulers of aggressive war-loving states; but Xunzi said that wars should only be fought for a righteous cause and "to put an end to violence and to do away with harm, not in order to contend with others for spoil" (Xunzi 72). Thus Xunzi seeks to minimize the destructive effects of war by

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<sup>26</sup> See Dubs, Homer. *Nature in the Teaching of Confucius*, Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 50: 1930, pp. 233-237.

<sup>27</sup> Xunzi. *Xunzi: Basic Writings*. Burton Watson, trans. Columbia University Press, New York: 2003.

careful strategic planning. He sees the underlying key to success in war as the ruler's ability to win the support of the people, and this can be obtained only by adhering to the rules of ritual propriety. The inherent weakness of states governed by rash and arrogant rulers is their lack of unity and cohesiveness. Thus, the competent general must carefully observe the disposition of the enemy, examine the enemy's strengths and weaknesses, and obtain reliable intelligence. Most importantly, he should seek to imbue his soldiers with a sense of honor and propriety, in this way ensuring their loyalty and commitment (Xunzi, 64–68).

Although Xunzi's discussion of military strategy has many things in common with the military classics of the Warring States period, he specifically rejects the tactics of stealth and deception advocated by Sunzi and Wuzi (Xunzi, 60). He offers two arguments against the use of deception in war: the first is that deceptive tactics are ineffective against benevolent rulers; the second is that such tactics are demoralizing. In both cases his objective is to emphasize the superiority of governance by ritual propriety over other forms of governance. In arguing that deception is ineffective, he claims that any attempt to practice deception against a sage ruler would be immediately detected. The sage ruler, being widely loved and admired by loyal subjects, has eyes and ears everywhere. Thus, secret plots and deceptive strategies cannot work against him; they can work only against corrupt and arrogant rulers whose subjects are in conflict and at odds with one another.

The problem with the first argument is that Sunzi and Wuzi do not advocate attacking sage rulers. Their strategies are designed for the most part to enable virtuous rulers of smaller states with limited resources to defend themselves and to defeat aggressive rulers of large and powerful neighboring states. The classics of Chinese military strategy repeatedly emphasize that the only legitimate purpose of war is to aid the people and to eliminate evil rulers; also, any military action that would increase the suffering of the people should be strictly avoided. Thus, there is no justification to be found in Sunzi or Wuzi for attacking a just and benevolent ruler.

Xunzi's second argument, however, has more weight. To sustain the loyalty of the military and to attract worthy men to military service, he maintains, it is necessary to cultivate a sense of honor and duty. The use of deceptive plots, however, appeals to men's lower motives and the desire for rewards and profit. This tends to weaken military discipline and leads to faction. The sage ruler, therefore, will rely instead on "ritual

principles and moral education” to unite the people and reject deception as a military tactic (Xunzi, 66).

Ritual propriety or *li* is a practice that harmonizes all elements of society, both civil and military, thus producing unity of spirit and like-mindedness between the ruler and the people as a whole. Xunzi’s emphasis on the overriding importance of ritual propriety in military strategy is thus in complete agreement with many other important Confucian documents of the period. *The Book of Rites (lij)*, for example, states: “The army has *li* [ritual propriety]; therefore, it achieves military merit” and the *Zuo Zhuan* asserts: “Having *li*, there will be no defeat” (Mair, 48).<sup>28</sup> On this view, propriety is the moral and social bond that holds the military together and enables it to function as a coordinated whole. Similarly, Xunzi treats *wen* and *wu*, the civil and military spheres, as interdependent parts of a social fabric that mutually support and strengthen one another. As the virtue that renders the aim and purpose of warfare righteous and just, *li* strengthens the bonds of courage, loyalty and duty that allow the military to act in unison with the decrees of a benevolent and righteous ruler.

Although Xunzi rejected deception as a military strategy, his integration of *wu* within *wen* was in complete agreement with Sunzi and Wuzi as well as the views of many other military strategists of the Warring States period. In *The Art of War*, Sunzi stated that the first criterion for victory in battle is the *Dao*, and the *Dao* of war is like-mindedness or complete concord between the ruler and the people. Thus, Xunzi and Sunzi agree that the internal harmony of the state is the key to military success and that faction and conflict undermine the ruler’s ability to prevail in war. But Sunzi’s *Dao* of war is not the *Dao* of *li* or Confucian propriety; it is the elusive, formless *Dao* of Laozi’s *Dao de jing*. As Victor Mair points out, the *Sunzi* has long been considered a Daoist text and was included in the Daoist canons of the late eleventh century. “The chief difference between the *Dao de jing* and the *Sun Zi*,” Mair writes, “is that the former focuses on how to use a *wuwei* (“non-action”) approach to rule the state, whereas the latter concentrates on applying a similar attitude toward the prosecution of war ... Thus, the *Dao de jing* is a manual for the *wuwei*-minded ruler, and the *Sun Zi* is a handbook for the *wuwei*-minded general” (Mair, 49). The *wuwei*-minded general is one who rejects the rigid

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28 Sunzi. *The Art of War: Sunzi’s Military Methods*. Victor Mair, trans. Columbia University Press, New York: 2007.

forms of *li* and as far as possible avoids direct conflict, using instead the formless art of deception to foil the plans of the enemy and thus “win without fighting.” Finally, it may be noted that while Xunzi and Sunzi both stress the importance of like-minded agreement between the ruler and his subordinates, they also insist on the autonomy of the general and his duty to disobey orders that conflict with righteous military objectives.

The military strategy of Wuzi, on the other hand, presents a rather different response to Xunzi’s objection to the use of deception in warfare. Unlike the legendary Sunzi, Wuzi—or Wu Qi, as he was known, was a real historical figure and a Confucian general who allegedly never lost a battle. He served the embattled state of Wei in defeating the more powerful states of Han and Qin, and next to Sunzi, he was the most highly regarded military strategist of the Warring States period. In regard to the foundations of successful military strategy, there is actually little difference between the views of Wuzi and Xunzi. Wuzi supported the Confucian principle that rulers who have comprehended the *Dao* will harmonize the state by observing and maintaining “the forms of propriety (*li*) between themselves and their ministers” (Sawyer, op. cit., 209). He stated that the *Dao* “is the means by which one turns back to the foundation and returns to the beginning.” Thus, he said that “the Sage rests the people in the [*Dao*], orders them with righteousness, moves them with the forms of propriety (*li*), and consoles them with benevolence. Cultivate these four virtues and you will flourish. Neglect them and you will decline” (Sawyer, op. cit., 207).

Unlike Sunzi, Wuzi did not advocate deception as a strategic principle to be employed in all types of warfare; he actually recommended deception as a tactic to be used only against a specific type of enemy—an enemy that he described as “fierce.” Since the armies of different states have different motives for waging war, Wuzi said that a variety of different strategies or Ways (*Dao*) of fighting should be employed to defeat the various types of enemy one may encounter. The enemy’s characteristic form or way of fighting being determined by its motive for fighting, there is a particular *Dao* or appropriate form of response that must be used exploit the enemy’s specific weakness. Hence, propriety should be used against those who fight for fame, deference against those who fight for profit, persuasion against those who fight from hatred, and deception against those who are “fierce” or motivated by internal disorder within their own state (Sawyer, op. cit., 210).

Wuzi thus advocated only limited use of deception and apparently did not see it as demoralizing violation of propriety; on the contrary,

seeing the strength and moral purpose of the military as dependent on Confucian virtue, Wuzi sought to infuse the military with a sense of propriety. His view of the function of the military as a protector of the civil culture is thus in all other respects in complete agreement with Xunzi. To those who object that war is immoral and disregard the necessity of military preparation, Wuzi offered the following advice: “In antiquity the ruler of the Cheng Sang clan cultivated Virtue but neglected military affairs, thereby leading to the extinction of his state ... When the dead lie stiff and you grieve for them, you have not attained benevolence” (Sawyer, *op. cit.*, 206).

The writings of Han Feizi, Lü Buwei, and the Huainanzi all attribute similar views on warfare and the righteous use of weapons to Confucius. But these writings along with those of Xunzi and Wuzi were later discredited due in large part to the draconian military methods and civil policies of the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huangdi. His barbaric cruelty and ruthlessness being attributed to the influence of military strategists and advocates of warfare, pacifistically-minded Confucians would later classify those texts as belonging to the so-called “legalist” school of thought which they considered barbaric, crude, and diametrically opposed to the teachings of Mencius and Confucius.

During the Song dynasty, the neo-Confucian school led by Zhu Xi, officially adopted the Mencian version of Confucianism and declared Xunzi unorthodox. This further reinforced the growing separation and fragmentation of the schools of civil and military education and hastened the social and intellectual decline of the military class. Formerly admired as the elite protectors and patrons of civility, military officers came to be looked down upon as savage and illiterate by the elite class of neo-Confucian civil-servants. Examinations for entry into the prestigious field of civil service were centered primarily on the Mencius and the three core texts attributed to Confucius; tests for military service, however, focused on the seven ancient military classics. While the most accomplished young scholars competed for highly honored positions in civil-service, the less accomplished had no other option than to take the less demanding military service examinations. The declining prestige of the military thus fostered a simultaneous decline in the intellectual competence of candidates for military service as well as reliance upon non-Chinese mercenaries to do the actual fighting needed to protect the northern and western frontiers against attacks by nomadic tribes.

The neo-Confucian devaluation and separation of the military from the higher sphere of civil culture thus put Chinese civilization at a great

disadvantage in its efforts to defend itself against external attacks. Although Zhu Xi's policies and principles contributed to China's military weakness, in later life he became greatly troubled by increasing barbarian incursions on the northern and western fronts. As a solution to the problem he proposed educational reforms that were intended to reintegrate civil and military education by encouraging elite Confucian scholars to study the military classics and serve as military advisors and strategists. But his proposals had little effect, and not long after his death the Mongols, led by the Genghis and Kublai Khan, invaded China and toppled the Song dynasty.

A few centuries later, toward the end of the Ming dynasty, with Manchu warlords threatening to invade China another illustrious neo-Confucian scholar, Wang Yangming, faced the same problem once again. In his early twenties, as a young idealistic Confucian intent on protecting the northern frontier, Wang Yangming studied the ancient military classics and sought to devise a strategy to pacify and civilize the barbaric northern tribes. But the only relevant teaching he could find in the works of Mencius was the following military advice which Mencius gave to the war-loving King Hui of Liang:

“If your Majesty applies benevolent government to the people, lessens punishments, reduces taxes, and assures that there is deep plowing and careful weeding, then the strong, in their free time will cultivate their filial piety, brotherliness, sincerity, and truthfulness. At home they will serve their fathers and elder brothers. When they go out they will serve their elders and superiors. Then they can be ordered to fend off the hard armor and sharp blades of Qin and Chu even with mere sticks” (Mencius, *op. cit.*, 1A:5.3).

Although Mencius had never before been considered a military strategist, Wang Yangming explicitly recommended Mencius's strategy in his first memorial to the Emperor, *Chenyang bianwu shu* (*Recommendations on Borderland Affairs*), written in 1499.<sup>29</sup> Similar notions had long been ridiculed for their naivety by military theorists of the Warring States period. In the *Lü Shi Chun Qiu*, Lü Buwei specifically notes that there are some who hold the doctrine that untrained farmers armed with nothing

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<sup>29</sup> For further discussion of this topic see S. R. Gilbert, *Mengzi's Art of War*, in Nicola DiCosmo, *Military Culture in Imperial China*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge: 2009, pp. 243–56.

but hoes, barrows and clubs can defeat the long spears and sharp swords of well trained armies. In response he disdainfully dismisses such notions by remarking that these people have no understanding of military affairs (Lü, 8/3.1).<sup>30</sup>

Wang Yangming, however, sought to combine Mencius' pacifistic methods with those of Sunzi and Wuzi. Thus, he advocated training local farmers and civilians in the martial arts and placing them under the command of the military. He implemented these ideas with some success during his first active involvement in military service which began in 1517—some 18 years after his first memorial to the Emperor. But later in his career, when he was appointed Supreme Commander of the military forces in the southern provinces, he apparently abandoned the methods of Mencius and resorted solely to the more practical and primitive strategies of Sunzi, Wuzi, and other military strategists. In his last military campaign of 1528, Wang Yangming ordered an attack on Yao rebels in Guangxi province. According to the report he submitted to the Emperor 3,000 rebels were decapitated and 1,000 family members were captured. In addition to those captured and beheaded thousands more drowned or died of starvation, and many villages were completely destroyed. Though the operation was considered a great military success, the forces Wang Yangming used in this assault on the rebels consisted not of courageous Chinese farmer-civilians but 13,000 non-Chinese mercenaries (Shin, 101–2).<sup>31</sup> Wang may have been unsettled in his own mind as a result of the conflict between his teachings on civil and military virtue. In his later years he sought unsuccessfully to avoid military service, apparently having lost his youthful enthusiasm for military affairs.

The moral dilemma of Wang Yangming clearly illustrates the practical problems associated with the neo-Confucian doctrines on human nature and war. As a military commander faced with the reality of barbarian attacks on the empire, Wang Yangming evidently had no alternative other than to resort to traditional military methods that were specifically rejected by Mencius as immoral and criminal. However, the firmly entrenched position of Mencius within the educational system was a strong impediment to reinstating Xunzi's realistic view of human nature as a coherent basis for restoring the military to its former prestige.

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**30** Knoblock, John and Reigel, Jeffrey. *The Annals of Lü Büwei*. Stanford University Press, Stanford: 2000.

**31** Shin, Leo K. *The Last Campaign of Wang Yangming*, [http://www.history.ubc.ca/faculty/lshin/research/pdf/o6\\_shin\\_tp.pdf](http://www.history.ubc.ca/faculty/lshin/research/pdf/o6_shin_tp.pdf) (November 2012).

After the fall of the Ming Dynasty, the unresolved conflict between the military culture and neo-Confucian idealism frustrated the efforts of Qing Emperors to strengthen the martial virtues within the dominant neo-Confucian culture. When the Qing dynasty was finally unable to respond to the invasion of Western and Japanese imperialism, Confucianism was held largely to blame for the military weakness and lack of technological expertise that rendered the empire defenseless. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century China's loss of confidence in its Confucian tradition resulted in an extended period of internal turmoil and cultural conflict. But the rejection of neo-Confucian pacifism and the subsequent revitalization of the military laid the foundation for China's ability to reclaim its political independence and rebuild its economy. As China now seeks to restore the values of its Confucian legacy, the realism of Xunzi may once again play a timely role in mending the neo-Confucian breach between China's military and civil cultures.

## CONCLUSION

Given the inherent tendencies of human nature, Xunzi and other early Confucians viewed war as a necessary evil that can be contained but never totally eliminated. The perennial necessity of military preparedness was thus rooted in the need to protect civilized society from oppressive rulers and barbarian warlords. Unlike the expansive Western military tradition that originated in ancient Greece, both Confucian and Daoist military strategies sought not to impose their cultural values on other societies by force but to function as a means for circumventing war and alleviating human suffering. The need for military strategies that can avoid and diminish the destructive effects of war is more vital today than ever before. Confucianism has long sought to lead by setting a high moral standard that "all under heaven" might be inspired to emulate. If China's political leaders can employ such strategic military principles effectively, China may well play a leading role in avoiding potential clashes of civilizations that may lie ahead.



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