TRACING CONFUCIANISM IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

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Abstract: With the reform and opening policy implemented by the Chinese government since the late 1970s, mainland China has witnessed a sustained resurgence of Confucianism first in academic studies and then in social practices. This essay traces the development of this resurgence and demonstrates how the essential elements and authentic moral and intellectual resources of long-standing Confucian culture have been recovered in scholarly concerns, ordinary ideas, and everyday life activities. We first introduce how the Modern New Confucianism reappeared in mainland China in the three groups of the Chinese scholars in the Confucian studies in the 1980s and early 1990s. Then we describe how a group of innovative mainland Confucian thinkers has since the mid-1990s come of age launching new versions of Confucian thought differing from that of the overseas New Confucians and their forefathers, followed by our summary of public Confucian pursuits and activities in the mainland society in the recent decade. Finally, we provide a few concluding remarks about the difficulties encountered in the Confucian development and our general expectations for future. 

Introduction

Confucianism is not just a philosophical doctrine constructed by Confucius (551-479BCE) and developed by his followers. It is more like a religion in the general sense. In fact, Confucius took himself as a cultural transmitter rather than a creator (cf. Analects 7.1, 7.20), inheriting the Sinic culture that had long existed before him. 

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1 We should confess at the outset that both authors of this chapter are Confucian scholars. However, we attempt to offer a primarily descriptive rather than evaluative account of the Confucian development in mainland China in the recent decades. Although a completely neutral account is impossible, we attempt not to appeal to our own Confucian perspective to examine the figures and events covered in the chapter. Due to space limit, it is impossible for us to include as many important Confucian scholars and activists as we like, much less the details, nuances and complexities of their views, arguments and activities. We must apologize to them for our limitations. Finally, among the huge amount of recent Chinese Confucian literature, we can only offer a brief list of references covering the works that we have directly or indirectly quoted in the chapter.

2 Confucius and his disciples recompiled the cardinal Confucian classics. The original versions of the classics recorded the Sinic culture that had existed for at least two thousand years before Confucius. Moreover, Confucius wrote the first Chinese historical book about his own dynasty, the Spring and Autumn Annals, which was immediately taken as another major Confucian classic upon its completion. Among numerous early Confucian works written by Confucius' disciples, four books were selected by a Neo-Confucian master, Zhu Xi (1130-1200) in the
Accordingly, Confucianism is best understood as a cultural system, including distinct familial, social, moral, and political ethos as well as relevant rituals, practices, and institutions. It is also embedded with prominent spiritual and religious concerns, which make Confucianism both similar to the Abrahamic religions in some respects and dissimilar from them in other. In short, Confucianism is a way of life shaped in light of Confucius’ teaching around the notion of the Dao (way) of Heaven. It has been a deeply rooted cultural tradition in China and other societies of the Pacific-rim.

Since the demise of China’s last dynasty, the Qing, in 1911, Confucianism has lost its dominant political and legal strength in its homeland. During the New Culture Movement (including the May Forth Movement in 1919) in the early 20th century, Confucianism became the symbol of backwardness and was severely criticized by Chinese intellectuals. After the Chinese Communists came to power in 1949, Confucianism speedily faded away in the society. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Confucian scholars were ruthlessly insulted, and Confucian temples and other historic relics were insanely destroyed. During the most time of the 20th century, Confucianism was taken as the ultimate source of all evils in China’s past.

Nevertheless, Confucianism has not been eradicated in China. The elements of long-standing Confucian culture have been retained in ordinary Chinese ideas, familial ritual or quasi-ritual practices, and everyday life activities. With the reform and opening policy implemented by the Chinese government since the late 1970s, mainland China has witnessed a sustained resurgence of Confucianism first in academic studies and then in social practices. This chapter traces the development of this resurgence. In the second section, we introduce how the Modern New Confucianism reappeared in mainland China in the 1980s and early 1990s. In section III we describe how a group of innovative mainland Confucian thinkers has come of age since the mid-1990s. Section IV includes our summary of public Confucian pursuits and activities in the mainland society in the recent decade. Finally, we provide a few concluding remarks about the difficulties encountered in the Confucian development and our general expectations for future.

I. The Return of the Modern New Confucianism to Mainland China in the 1980s and Early 1990s

With Mao’s death in 1976 and the advent of the era of reform and opening policy adopted in the late 1970s, the overwhelming anti-Confucianism political atmosphere began to mitigate. A few scholars proposed for re-evaluating Confucius and Song dynasty, to represent essential Confucian readings. Thus, the Chinese have had a commonly used phrase, *si shu wu jing* (four books and five classics) – referring to *the Analects, Mencius, the Doctrine of the Mean*, and *Great Learning* as the four books, and the *Classics of Poetry, Documents, Rituals, Change, and Spring and Autumn Annals* as the five classics – to constitute fundamental Confucian materials. For the English translation of these classics and books, see Legge 1970.
Confucianism (Cf. Chen, 1978; Pang, 1978; and Li, 1980). Under the orthodox Marxist account of historical materialism (which roughly holds that social relations, values and politics are determined by the basic economic forces of society), Confucianism had been taken as the produce of the ancient economic conditions and class struggles and had been serving the interests of the ruling classes for oppressing the people throughout the history of China. Now some scholars started to reevaluate the complicated nature and function of Confucianism without rigidly sticking to the Marxist dogma. Dozens of such research articles appeared in the early 1980s. Of course, the dominant Marxist ideology and methodology remained unshakable in the intellectual circle at that time. While affirming some positive effects of Confucianism, most scholars had to provide an overall negative view on Confucianism. The slogan of “discarding the dross and selecting the essence” (according to the Marxist standard) was the principle to direct their studies.

From the mid-1980s, there arose a so-called “culture fever” in China’s intellectual world – a great number of scholars and students became interested in cultural studies in pursuing new roads to a free, civil and democratic China. This was a reaction to the totalitarian Chinese political reality of the past several decades. The in-flooding fresh air of Western thoughts of various brands brought in needed intellectual resources for the fever. Modern Western theories, such as liberal and democratic ones, were the predominant stream among such resources. However, there were also imported voices for traditional Chinese culture: the voices of the Modern New Confucianism that had been developed in Taiwan, Hong Kong, North America and other oversea areas in the 20th century.

Modern New Confucianism originated in mainland China from the 1920s to the 1940s. Although many Chinese intellectuals callously accused Confucianism during the New Culture Movement, a few thinkers, especially Xiong Shili (1885-1968), Liang Shuming (1893-1988) and Ma Yifu (1883-1967), held the Confucian life line and developed Confucian thought in defiance of the intellectual fad. Their disciples, including Tang Junyi (1909-1978), Mou Zongsan (1909-1995), and Xu Fuguan (1903-1982), fled to Taiwan and Hong Kong when the communists seized power over China in the late 1940s and early 1950s. From the 1950s to the 1970s, they managed to recast Confucianism in a new vision in response to modern Western thought. From the 1970s on, a younger generation, represented by Tu Weiming (1940-), Liu Shuxian (1934-) and Cheng Zhongying (1935-), carried on Modern New Confucian thought in North America. They were able to do so because they had received their PhDs from American universities and got settled in the US. The version of Confucianism developed by this group of three-generation Confucians – from Xiong to Mou and to Tu - is usually referred to as “Modern New Confucianism” in the English literature. As John Makeham describes it, “[this version of Confucianism] is characterized by a mission to carry on the ‘interconnecting thread of the Way,’ to revive Confucianism, and by its belief in the idealist philosophy of the Song and Ming dynasties, especially Confucian moral metaphysics” (Makeham 2003, 92). In political philosophy, the Modern New Confucianism emphasizes the consistency of Confucianism with modern Western liberal democracy.
More and more overseas intellectuals were allowed to deliver lectures and attend conferences in China in the 1980s. Tu, a representative Modern New Confucian, was one of them. He made the first introduction to the Modern New Confucianism into China when he taught a course “Confucian philosophy” at Peking University in 1985. His lectures and public speeches and presentations, coupled with the academic activities of other overseas Confucian scholars such as Cheng Zhongying and Liu Shuxian, along with the efforts of some mainland Chinese scholars who came to be interested in Confucianism in the “Culture Fever”, created a Confucian discourse in China’s academia in the mid-1980s. The influence of the Modern New Confucianism steadily proliferated and deepened, resulting in the “National Learning Fever” beginning in the early 1990s.3

As of the mid-1980s, the study of Confucianism (including the New Confucianism) had become a spectacular nation-wide phenomenon. Numerous scholars, essayists, journalists and officials talked about Confucianism. A number of local, national and international conferences on Confucianism were held. A large amount of publications on Confucianism turned out, including studies on the lives of Confucius and later Confucian masters, their philosophies and ethico-political thoughts, exegetical studies of and commentaries on Confucian classics, and comparative studies in relation to Western thinkers. Moreover, several Confucian or traditional-culture-oriented associations and organizations were established, including China Confucius Foundation (the first nation-wide Confucian institution since 1949) set up in 1984, the Chinese Culture Academy (a very active and influential Confucian academic association) formed in 1984, Chinese Confucian Academy founded in 1985, and the International Confucian Association established in 1994.

Chinese scholars in the Confucian studies in the 1980s and early 1990s could roughly be divided into three groups. In the first group were those scholars, such as Fang Keli and his followers, who intended to criticize and reject Confucian thought based on the orthodox Marxist position. The second group was made up of a number of knowledgeable and influential scholars, such as Li Zehou, Pang Pu and Chen Lai, who manifested a sympathetic and respectful attitude to the certain features of Confucianism, although they did not have faith in the core teachings of Confucianism as a culture or religion. Finally, figures in the third group, instead, unambiguously embraced fundamental Confucian principles and showed considerable spiritual concerns with and commitments to Confucian values. Thus, these figures could be classified as the genuine present-day followers of Confucius. Although there were not many scholars belonging to the third group in the 1980s and early 1990s, it is worth introducing a few of their representatives here, leaving the case of Jiang Qing to the next section.

Lou Yijun (1944—) was presumably the first and firmest follower of the Modern New Confucianism in mainland China. As a fellow at Shanghai Academy of Social

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3 Regarding the Modern New Confucianism and its place in the “culture fever”, see Song Xianlin, “Reconstructing the Confucian ideal in 1980s China: the ‘culture craze’ and New Confucianism” (Makeham 2003, 81-104).
Sciences, he got access to some New Confucian writings through reading historian Qian Mu’s works in the late 1970s. Mou Zongsan’s ideas came to take dwelling in his heart. Before Mou’s death in 1995, Luo travelled to Taiwan and Hong Kong several times to attend international conferences on the New Confucianism and got close personal contact with Mou and his disciples. Indeed, Lou was probably Mou’s only formal disciple on the mainland. In the three decades since 1979, Lou exerted extraordinary efforts on researching and propagating the New Confucianism in the mainland. Among his well-known edited works about the New Confucianism are the *Comments on the New Confucianism, Reason and Life: A Selection of the Essentials of the New Confucianism* (I) (1994) and *The Existence of Life and the Realm of Mind* (2009). He also managed to have Mou’s bulk of works published in the mainland. Especially praiseworthy was Lou’s courage to spell out his New Confucian thought on public occasions regardless of the pressure from official political authorities.

Deng Xiaojun (1951-), a professor at Beijing Normal University, is another follower of the New Confucians. In 1978, he entered Southwest Normal Institute (now the Southwest University) as an undergraduate student majored in Chinese language, where he became a student of Cao Mufan (1912-1993), a disciple of Xiong Shili and Liang Shuming, the New Confucianism’s founding fathers as we mentioned above. Directed by Cao, he read Xiong’s *New Doctrine of Consciousness-only* and Liang’s *Human Mind and Human Life.* Such reading “rendered his mind a trembling experience like an earth quake” (Deng 2004, 8). He also devoted himself on studying the works of the second-generation New Confucians for many years. Deng, always keeping a low profile in public, harbors Confucian thought and sentiment deeply in his heart. His main viewpoint, as indicated in his *The Logical Combination of Confucianism and Democracy* (1995), is that Confucianism should incorporate democracy into itself, echoing Mou Zongsan’s proposition that democracy is the logical development of Confucianism.

Differing from Deng, the late professor Yang Zibin (1932-2001) at Lanzhou University was an especially active and intrepid Confucian. In his college days of the 1950s, he, like many other Chinese youths at the time, cherished a sincere, candid and ardent communist dream. Beyond his expectation, however, his warm blood brought his life nowhere but only misery. Soon after becoming a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences after graduation from Peking University, he was branded as “an extremist rightist” in the Anti-rightists Movement in 1958, and was exiled first to the Great Northern Wilderness and then to Dunhuang (a wild area in the Northwest of China) to receive reformation through forced manual labor. He spent 19 years in this harsh and bitter life. During the Cultural Revolution, with his sincerity and

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4 In his private correspondence with the first author of this chapter, Lou discloses that he requested to become a disciple of master Mou, and Mou gladly accepted it. In Lou’s opinion, “Master Mou is a contemporary Confucius.”

5 As an official Chinese Marxist scholar Fang Keli puts it, Lou “criticized Marxism publicly” and “embraced Hong Kong-Taiwan New Confucianism unconditionally” (Fang 1996B, 32, 37).

6 In fact Liang’s book was not published yet at the time, and Deng gained access to its manuscript privately kept by Cao.
perseverance unchanged, he wrote five long letters to Mao Zedong and other Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders to question the correctness of the Cultural Revolution. Through so much frustration and reflection, Yang gradually lost his confidence in communism and got on his way to Confucianism in the 1980s. At a conference in 1992 Yang openly and challengingly claimed that he “is deeply convinced by the New Confucians,” a voice unheard—of publically at that time (Fang 1996A, 13). In 1993 he published an article, “Reviving Confucianism,” in the influential and popular journal Du Shu, in which he asserted that “up till now Confucianism is the first comprehensive and profound system of humanitarian thought ever appeared in human history,” and that “today the way of Confucius and Mencius has caught the great best opportunity of fulfilling its grand ambitions” (Yang 1993, 150). Yang’s conception of Confucianism is akin to that of the overseas New Confucians in that it incorporates considerable liberal and democratic ingredients in it, though, unlike Lou, he did not have much personal connection with overseas Confucians. As a Confucian, Yang was more of a practitioner than of a system builder. He established Gansu Research Society of Traditional Culture, created the journal National Learning Review, and exerted great efforts on Confucian education in his last years.7

II. The Emergence of Innovative Mainland Confucian thinkers and Campaigners since the Mid-1990s

With the publication of Jiang Qing’s first monograph on political Confucianism in 1995 (see below), this year can conveniently be marked as the emerging time of the innovative mainland Confucian thinkers and campaigners in mainland China. Before this time the mainland Confucians were busy learning, digesting and propagating the thought of the overseas New Confucians and their forefathers, whereas after this time they have come of age in developing new versions of Confucian thought and launching new campaigns for Confucianism. Their innovative ideas have been accomplished through their engagement and dialogue with other world-wide spiritual traditions or intellectual systems, including Christianity, liberalism, conservatism, Marxism, phenomenology as well as the New Confucianism.

Among these innovative mainland thinkers, Jiang Qing (1953-) has undoubtedly been a leading figure. After a long trudge of intellectual and spiritual engagement with Marxism, liberalism, existentialism, Daoism, Buddhism and Christianity, Jiang first came to rest his mind on the New Confucianism in the late 1980s. In companion with Lou Yijun and Deng Xiaojun, Jiang proved himself one of the staunchest followers of the New Confucians. This is well illustrated in his long article, “the

7 It should be noted that a few more mainland Chinese scholars can also be characterized as Modern New Confucian followers in a loose sense, such as Huang Kejian (1946-), Guo Qi Yong (1947-), and Du Guangjian (1956), who have in various degrees expressed their commitment to Confucianism and helped to magnify the pitch of the Confucian discourse in contemporary China.
meaning and problem of revitalizing Confucianism in mainland China,” published in a Taiwan-based New Confucian journal, Ehu Monthly, in 1989. This article was taken by Fang Keli as “the political manifesto and theoretical program of the New Confucians for ‘reviving Confucianism in the mainland’ (Fang 1997, 39). In this article Jiang claims that confronting mainland China’s heaps of moral, political and economic crises, the real solution to them is to substitute Confucianism for Marxism as the “state religion.”

In the early 1990s Jiang began to develop an authentic system of political Confucianism in deviation from the New Confucian strategy. That strategy, from his new understanding, had been overly recast by modern Western liberal democratic view. In his first political Confucian work, *Introduction to the Gongyang Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (1995), Jiang distinguishes “mind Confucianism” from “political Confucianism,” showing the insufficiency of the New Confucian focus on the former. He contends the priority of the latter for a proper Confucian mission for the future of China. His subsequent work *Political Confucianism* (2003) details the fundamental principles, mechanisms and institutions of political Confucianism. His later publications, *Faith in Spiritual Life and Politics of the Kingly Way* (2004), *A Sequel to Political Confucianism* (2011), and *A Confucian Constitutional Order* (2013), provide further arguments and defenses for his basic viewpoints, bringing his whole system of political Confucianism to fruition.

The core of Jiang’s political Confucianism lies in his theory of political legitimacy. He argues that from the wisdom of the Confucian classics in general and the *Gongyang Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* in particular, a fully legitimate and stable Chinese political system must meet three conditions: first, it must be at one with and sanctioned by the Dao, the way of Heaven; second, it must be in accordance with the mainstream of national cultural heritage; third, it must comply with the will of the people at the present time. In line with this principle of “three-dimension legitimacy,” Jiang puts forward a legislature composed of three chambers as a mutually checked and balanced political system, with each chamber representing one dimension of legitimacy. To strengthen the first dimension, he proposes to establish an extra Academy of Confucians endowed with the task of supervising the running of the whole government. Moreover, to highlight the cultural identity of the state throughout history and stress the second dimension of legitimacy in China, Jiang proposes to appoint a symbolic monarch as the head of the Chinese state. Finally, he advocates that Confucianism should be announced as China’s state religion. By this he does not mean that other religions should be restricted in China, but is to affirm the mainstream cultural status of Confucianism for augmenting the solidarity of the Chinese people and safeguarding the cultural and moral fiber of the society. In short, Jiang’s entire system integrates Confucian religious, ethical and political thoughts into a reconstructed comprehensive political Confucianism for contemporary China. Not surprisingly, Jiang’s innovative political Confucianism has not only offended the Chinese Marxists and displeased the New Confucians, but also exacerbated Chinese
liberal and democrat scholars. Jiang’s thought has stimulated great controversy in the current intellectual world of China.⁸

Another active Confucian thinker and activist is Chen Ming (1962-). After overcoming enormous financial and managerial difficulties, he established a Confucian-study journal named Yuan Dao (Searching the Way) in 1994. This has been the first private-run periodical aiming at exploring and promoting traditional Chinese thought independent of the swaying of the dominant Marxist ideology in China ever since 1949. The journal has since become the very headquarter of Confucianism-reviving movement in the mainland. Chen is a pragmatic and action-directed Confucian. Although his thought has not been systematized and completed, a group of his ideas, especially the proposition of “finding substance (ti) in function (yong),” has gained considerable attention in the Chinese media and intellectual arena. Briefly, “substance and function” is a pair of categories in traditional Chinese philosophy, with “substance” referring to fundamental ontological being or entity, while “function” the manifestation or actualization of the substance in the flux of the empirical world. Chen, while appropriating these terms, gives them rather peculiar new interpretation in light of his own understanding. For him, “substance” means the will of the Chinese nation to life and existence in the anthropological sense, and “function” the environment or situation in a historically conditioned context. For current China, Chen emphasizes that its national “substance” must be fulfilled in the “function” of the modern world, namely suitable advanced technology, economic system, socio-political structure and ideas and values that are already radically different from those of the traditional world (Cf. Chen 2012,122).

Given such new “function” of modern society, Chen holds that Chinese political “substance” can only be realized in a democratic system to meet the need of modernity and globalization. On the other hand, from his view, Confucianism can be restored and promoted as civil religion of China in the sociological sense – as the concept of “civil religion” is expounded by Robert Bellah regarding Protestant Christianity for the United States, in order to deal with the problem of value erosion and life banality in modern Chinese society. For Chen, Confucianism is necessary for contemporary China because “while providing the government with the indispensable legitimacy of its politics as well as a standard of moral restriction on the government,” Confucianism also “helps lay the foundation of Chinese cultural identity, cultivate a sense of nationality, and augment the cohesion of the people” (Chen 2012, 127). Like Jiang, Chen regards Confucianism as a religion and has made many efforts on reviving it in Chinese society. But he follows Chinese liberals to take the separation of state and religion as the cardinal principle of modern politics, and is thereby strongly against Jiang’s idea of establishing Confucianism as state religion in

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⁸ There are great amount of Chinese literature addressing Jiang’s political Confucianism, e.g., Fan (2008) and Ren (2013). For an English version of Jiang’s three important papers, see Jiang (2013). For a succinct English introduction to Jiang’s political Confucianism, see Wang Ruichang, “the Rise of political Confucianism in Contemporary China” (Fan 2011, 33-45). For more discussion of Jiang’s work in the English literature, see Bell (2008), Fan (2011), and Elstein (2013).
China. From Chen’s view, Confucianism should not be established as an official state religion, but should only be restored as civil religion of Chinese society. And this latter task, he thinks, could be achieved in two steps: first to campaign for the official recognition of Confucianism as a religion in the mainland of China, just as the religious status that is currently enjoyed by Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Christianity and Catholicism, and secondly, to manage to make Confucianism play a role of civil religion in Chinese public life (Cf. Chen 2012, 124).

Kang Xiaoguang (1963-), originally a specialist on rural science, turned to Confucianism after the June-Fourth political tragedy in 1989. To put in his own words, before 1989 he was “a simple-headed economy determinist, believing the doctrine of historical materialism that ‘economic basis determines everything.’” That tragic event made him aware that “culture and politics constitute a kind of force that is independent of economy and is decisive in determining the course of social development” (Kang 2003, 9). Recognizing an important part that culture plays, Kang began to read Confucian classics in the 1990s. On entering the new millennia, Kang had become a Confucian. His first Confucian writing, and perhaps the most widely known of all his writings, was “on the essentials of cultural nationalism” published in 2003. In this article he observes that “culture is the basis for the identification of a nation state, and a unified nation or state would not be able to subsist without a common culture.” He further argues that for an underdeveloped country like China, modernization is not the same as westernization. In the present time of globalization, culture constitutes one of the essential factors of a nation-state’s international competitiveness. Indeed, as he sees it, culture is “the most important ‘social capital’ supporting the economic development of a nation state.” In traditional culture lie the resources of expectations, values and morality of the people as well as the ideal, dynamics and cohesiveness of the nation’s continued development. Kang emphasizes that his proposed cultural nationalism is “not intended to create a lofty theory of traditional culture, but to establish a forceful ideology to launch a comprehensive and lasting social movement,” i.e., “the movement of traditional Chinese culture” (Kang 2003, 9-10).

With this mission in mind, Kang has proved himself a zealous and tenacious campaigner for Confucianism. As to China’s political future, he is opposed to liberal democratic ideas. He proposes to establish an authoritarian but humane regime, with Confucianism in place of Marxism as the favored ideology. In regard of the question of Confucianism as a religion, his view has much in common with Jiang’s. On the other hand, his approach to Confucianism for contemporary China is akin to Chen’s in that the interests of the Chinese nation are of top priority, while Confucianism as the mainstream of Chinese culture should be brought to the fore mainly as an indispensable means of rejuvenating the nation.

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9 Kang’s political view is yet to be fully developed. In the early 2000s he was strongly for authoritarianism and against democratization (cf. Kang 2004). In a recent article (Kang 2012), however, he considerably revised his previous view and integrated democratic elements into his account.

10 Concerning the similarities and differences among Jiang, Chen and Kang, see Chen, 2009.
Zhang Xianglong (1949-) is originally from the academic background of phenomenology. From his view, there is much affinity between Heidegger’s phenomenological approach and Confucius’ way to human existence. For many years he has done a great deal to explicate Confucianism from a phenomenological perspective, thereby shedding new light on Confucianism. Importantly, in his course of philosophizing, he has personally transformed from a phenomenologist to a Confucian, developing “phenomenological Confucianism” in China. His transformation is best explained in his own words:

As modern Chinese, our background is heavily inlaid with Western philosophy and education. But we are usually called back from the West to China, from phenomenology to Confucianism, and from alien bourn to homestead. This return is by no means regulating Confucianism with phenomenological rules. It is rather searching for the re-entrance of original and primordial experience to Confucianism. Once you really get into the inner part of Confucianism, you will be transformed and moved by the vitality of the Confucian classics and original Confucian experience, and your understanding will be deepened. With Confucian experience gradually awakens in your heart, you will come to realize that all philosophies you have perceived, including phenomenology, fall short of your expectation. You will notice that considerable part of philosophy is not well-placed; philosophy is actually pale or deficient of liveliness, originality or profundity (Zhao and Zhang 2011, 359).

While appreciating Jiang’s proposal of establishing Confucianism as state religion, Zhang thinks that this is, at least in the foreseeable future, unrealistic. Instead, Zhang mapped out a blueprint for creating a “Confucian culture reserve” in China in 2001, in which a local authentic Confucian society of the traditional pattern will be established and preserved intact, in the hope of evoking a nation-wide restoration of the Confucian way of life in the future (Zhang 2001). This proposal embodies the ideal of a Confucian philosopher such as Zhang with strong affection for idyllic rural life brimming with primordial Confucian consanguineous love. Zhang’s proposal has drawn wide attention and generated much discussion among Chinese scholars.

The above thinkers, whose Confucian identity has become unequivocal since the mid-1990s, together with some other intellectuals who also came out as Confucians in public in recent ten years, such as Guo Qiyong (1947-), Sheng Hong (1954-), Huang Yushun (1957), Yu Zhangfa (1964-), Yao Zhongqiu (1966-), and a cluster of others, constitute the main force of what is currently referred to as the “contemporary mainland Confucianism.”

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11 In the summer of 2004, Jiang hosted a meeting with Chen Ming, Kang Xiaoguang, and Sheng Hong (a Confucian-minded economist) in Jiang’s private-run Yangming Academy in Guizhou Province, discussing Confucian development in mainland China and a series of problems faced by mainland Confucians. This meeting, from Fang Keli’s observation, signifies a new stage of the development of Confucianism, “a stage in which mainland Chinese Confucians represented by Jiang Qing, Sheng Hong, Kang Xiaoguang, and Chen Ming will play a leading role” (Fang 2006, 6).
In their different approaches to and interpretations of Confucianism, mainland Confucian thinkers take on various looks. However, in comparison with overseas Modern New Confucians, there are still discernible common features among the mainland Confucians. First, they tend to go back to the classic Confucianism and the Confucianism of the Han dynasty, rather than the Neo-Confucianism of the Song-Ming dynasties favored by the Modern New Confucians, to find starting point and inspiration for their proposals and disquisitions. Moreover, while the overseas New Confucians’ main attention is paid to moral metaphysics and ultimate spiritual pursuits, the top concern and discourse of the contemporary mainland Confucians are predominantly focused on social and political issues: problems in politics, law, administration, social justice, education, familial matters, rituals and folk customs, economy, technology, environment, national interests, and international relations. Finally, while they differ from each other in their reconstructed political Confucian philosophy, ranging from a substantively liberal and democratic version like Chen Ming’s to a fundamentally conservative and meritocratic version like Jiang Qing’s, they have all performed more sophisticated reflection than the Modern New Confucians on the relation between Confucian thought on one hand and modern Western liberal democratic view on the other in relation to Chinese reality.

III. The Unfolding of Confucian Culture in Society

With the emergence of the above-mentioned cohort of mainland Confucian thinkers and activists, there has been the revival of Confucian culture in all walks of life in mainland society since the end of the 1990s. While the “national learning fever” of the 1990s was confined to the academia and its influence on society was superficial, this recent revival of Confucianism has proved solid and robust. As Kang Xiaoguang observes,

On entering the 21st century, dominated by civil groups and supported by the government, a “phenomenon” [movement] aimed at reviving traditional culture has quietly turned out and taken on a rapid development in a few years. The number of its participants is legion; its manner of mobilization is varied; its units are independent from each other and thereby there is no headquarter. However, they are by no means “a loose sheet of sand,” for they share the same [cultural] convictions on which the foundation of their cohesion and solidarity is hinged. What is of pivotal significance is that the participants have posed a critical challenge to the mainstream ideology, calling for re-shaping the axiological criteria of the society. Evidently, this “phenomenon” has on the whole possessed for itself the hallmark of a “social movement.” Since the objective of this “social movement” is distinctively clear, i.e. to revitalize the traditional culture of the Chinese nation with Confucianism as its core, we call it “the movement of cultural nationalism” (Kang 2010, 247).
Not all Confucians would agree with Kang in calling this movement “nationalism” – they would rather stress its state-independent nature of Confucian civility. It is also a very complicated story regarding whether it was really supported by the government (see below). In any case, Kang’s above conclusion is made of the movement that took place during 2005-2007. He further investigated the movement in its 2008-2010 period. From his discovery, more and more participants from various social strata have engaged in the movement since 2008. At the beginning traditional culture was mainly the appeal of a group of scholars. Now it has become the goal almost of all the people, encompassing even some of those from its antagonist camps. Ever-increasing elites from the academic, economic and political circles have joined in the movement one after another and constituted the main force. As China has become a world power in economy, the participants have gained more confidence in and stronger admiration for their national traditional culture. From Kang’s view, traditional culture has now taken root in all soils, proliferating in every direction. In a word, what was “abnormal” has now become “normal,” and what was “destructive” now “constructive” (Kang et al 2010, 5).

Kang’s conclusion might be over optimistic. But it is no doubt that after the unfolding process of recent three decades, Confucianism has significantly infiltrated into the Chinese society again. This is perhaps best epitomized by the “reading-classics movement” that has swept over the whole country, such as the one led by Wang Caigui (1949-), a Taiwanese disciple of Mou Zongsan. In fact, Wang launched his classics reading campaign in Taiwan in 1994. From 1996 on, he has been frequently invited to the mainland to propagate his ideas, thus activating the movement by setting up part-time schools (and even a few full-time schools) for classic learning in many places of the mainland. His effort has resulted in remarkable achievements. It is believed that in 2001 more than one million and two thousand children in mainland cities joined in the classics reading schools as part-time students (Hu 2006, 14). The movement reached a climax in 2004 when the estimated participating children numbered ten million in that year (Zhang 2011, 34), and we have not seen its momentum abate ever since. The main texts read and recited at the schools are Confucian classics such as the Four Books, traditional children’s textbooks such as the Three-character Book, the Thousand-character Book, and the Disciplinary Instructions for Children, and other traditional literatures such as the Three-hundred Poems by the Tang Poets. Such schools have generally followed Mr. Wang’s pedagogical method: “boys and girls, please follow me to read aloud.” They emphasize the method of repeated loud reading and rote memorization, believing that when the pupils come of age with matured comprehension, they will fully understand the texts by themselves. In addition to reading classics, the pupils at such schools also learn Confucian rituals, calligraphy, traditional Chinese music instruments, singing, dancing, martial arts, and even folk handicrafts.

One obvious reason for the up-surging of such schools is that Chinese parents have been fed up of the compulsory curriculum of the state-run public schools in which there is little or no Chinese classic being taught but is full of unavailing Chinese Marxist ideological messages and clichés. They have recognized the worthiness and merit of the Chinese classics per se for the future of their children’s
lives. Accordingly, numerous independent-minded parents prefer to send their children to such traditionally-patterned schools at weekend to receive part-time classical education. Some of them have even enrolled their children in such schools for full-time education. In huge demand, such schools have multiplied at a great speed over the whole country in spite of the palpable enmity and vigilance of the authorities. Among the most noticeable ones are Shaonan Promotion Center for Classics Reading (in Xiamen, founded in 1997), Huaxia School of Traditional Culture (in Xuzhou, founded in 1998), Yidan School (in Beijing, founded in 2000), Sihai Education Center for Children’s Classics Reading (in Beijing, founded in 2002), and Qufu National Learning School (in Qufu - Confucius’ hometown, founded in 2005).

Although Wang is a Confucian, his pedagogy carries a tincture of liberalism. His recommended textbooks go beyond Confucian classics, covering some Taoist and Buddhist texts. Some schools have even included Shakespeare’s plays. Disapproving of this “impurity”, Jiang Qing, as the most tenacious classics-reading advocator in the mainland, made his own selection of the classics in 2004 and produced a 12-volume textbook consisting entirely of Confucian classics, from Confucius’ Analects down to Wang Yangming’s Instructions for Practical Learning. Jiang’s idea is not that children should only learn Confucian classics; given that children are already learning a lot of other things in their full-time schools, Jiang emphasizes the focus of this classic learning on Confucian material. Still, Jiang’s unreserved voice for “carrying on the silenced teachings of the past sages” was criticized as obscurantist by some progressivists, thereupon engendering great controversy among Chinese intellectuals from 2004 to 2005. This controversy has been taken as a virtual resurgence of the prolonged debate over the similar subject in the Republic China from the 1910s to the 1930s.

In addition to children, many adults — such as university teachers and students, entrepreneurs, and officials — have also engaged in classical learning. Since 2005, Peking University in Beijing, Fudan University in Shanghai, Wuhan University in Wuhan and a dozen other universities have established their “classical learning classes” for interested persons from outside of their universities to enroll. The booming market in this area indicates that traditional culture has become a fashionable subject for the middle class people to study. A great number of university

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12 On inquiring, Mr. Wang informed the first author of this chapter that due to the fear of interdiction by the government, a great amount of such schools are run in secret in private dwellings. For example, the Mencius’ Mother School was opened in Shanghai in 2002 but was compelled to withdraw into secret household running after the interdiction in 2006. Nevertheless, from Mr. Wang’s estimation, there are about one thousand such schools in current China that are publicly known.

13 Of the controversy over classics reading, see Hu 2006. Of the debate in the Republic China, see Lin 2010.
teachers and students have organized and joined in their own national or Confucian learning societies on campus for the promotion of traditional culture.\textsuperscript{14}

Since the 1990s, Chinese business companies and government at various levels have shown increased enthusiasm in promoting traditional values among their personnel and citizens, although they have inevitably selected some values to emphasize for practical or utilitarian purposes. In order to enhance team cohesion and work ethic, many companies are inclined to frame and forge their enterprise culture with Confucianism, and some bosses even spare a fixed interval from the working hours for their employees to recite Confucian classics.\textsuperscript{15} All levels of the Chinese Government have been appropriating Confucianism – this has been done for the sake of elevating contemporary Chinese “spiritual civilization” as officially announced, or inspiring Chinese patriotism as otherwise believed, or pacifying swelling popular discontentment with the regime as suspected by many. Such use of Confucianism by the government has rendered a great push on the evocation of Confucian awareness in the popular mind, albeit in the perverted way of integrating certain selected Confucian values into the official Chinese socialist system. Beginning in 2005, high-rank officials of the central government have taken part in the annual ceremonies at the Confucius temple in Qufu (Confucius’ hometown) on Confucius’ birthday every year, and many local governments have also, often to a greater extent, involved in such ceremonies at their extant local Confucius temples.

As a rule, Chinese mass media is playing its unequalled role in spreading relevant information, although the media is exclusively state-controlled in China. The “Yu Dan phenomenon” is a prominent example. Yu, a government-media-favored scholar, delivered a series of lectures entitled “Yu Dan’s insights into the Analects” on CCTV’s popular primetime show in 2006, and instantly attracted broad attention. Roughly, her “insights” into the Analects concentrate on personal psychological matters, without touching on any serious political issues with which typical Confucian scholars would take the Analects to be genuinely concerned. A month later, she put her lectures together and published them in book form. This so-called “chicken soup book” by some commentators were sold extremely well. It is reported that on its first day sale, some 12,600 copies were sold out at one bookstore in Beijing. Up to April 2009, the book had sold 4.7 million copies, “creating a wonder of best-sellers” (Song 2009, 70).\textsuperscript{16}

In addition to the advent of Confucianism into the spheres of education, business, politics, and media, the surfacing of clusters of sincere, ardent and active Confucian volunteers has genuinely bespoken the warming of Confucian culture in mainland

\textsuperscript{14} For example, the first author of this chapter organized an “oasis seminar” at his university in 2011 and has been guiding teachers and students interested in traditional culture to read the Analects and other classics since then.

\textsuperscript{15} A friend of the first author of this chapter is a company head, who informed that under his decision, all his staff are required to recite the Confucian classic of the Great learning for half an hour during the work time everyday.

\textsuperscript{16} Yu’s book was published in English with the title of Confucius from the Heart, Zhonghua Book Co / McMillan, 2009.
China. Such Confucian zealots entertain heart-felt commitment to Confucianism as a religious faith. Hence, their voluntary Confucian work has not been motivated by any personal career concern or political ideological consideration. Following Jiang Qing’s pioneering struggles in the 1990s and early 2000s, a cohort of Confucian volunteers surfaced in the mid-2000s, and their number has been ever in growing. With facilities brought about by popular electronic communications, they have exerted great efforts to propagate Confucian ideas and attempt to re-institutionalize Confucianism in mainland China (see below). In this regard they have tried various ways, including establishing webs, opening forums, delivering speeches, organizing summer camps, producing publications, creating academies, lodging public appeals, and conducting demonstrations.

Here are a few examples. First, with deep faith in Confucianism and extraordinary patience and industry, Duan Yanping (1969-), a technician growing up and living in Qufu, Confucius’ hometown, has devoted himself to the task of consolidating the mass of Confucian volunteers scattered over the country. In 2005 he formed the “Qufu Union of Confucians,” and since then the Union has been organizing the non-official Confucius-worshiping ceremonies held four times every year in Qufu, in distinction from the official ceremonies held by the government. From his view, the official ceremonies were spectacular but deficient of real Confucian spiritual commitment. Through his persistent and tactic maneuvering, the Union was successfully registered as a legitimate civil organization in 2007. Duan is also the founder and headmaster of the non-profit-making Qufu National Learning School, in which authentic Confucian lessons are taught and traditional Confucian rituals are practiced.

Zhou Beichen (1965-), a disciple of Jiang Qing, resigned from his university teaching post to help Jiang construct the Yangming Academy in the mid-1990s. He cherishes Jiang’s conviction that Confucianism is the religion that buttresses up the Chinese civilization, believing that the crux of restoring Confucianism in modern society is to create new preaching mechanisms attuned to the industrialized urban life. In 2006 he left the remote Yangming Academy in the hope of blazing a new trail in cities. After many twists and turns, he triumphed in establishing the Sacred Confucius Hall, something of a “Confucian church,” in the metropolis of Shenzhen in 2009. Through struggling for several years, Sacred Confucius Hall has gained a stronghold with increasing social impacts in Shenzhen, and the anticipated “new preaching mechanism of Confucianism” has come into form. Zhou calls it the “Sacred Confucius Hall model of Confucianism restoration.” His long-term objective is “to extend this model to every city in China, even to overseas areas inhabited by the Chinese” (Peng and Fang 2011, 103).

Renzhong (1972-) and Wang Dusan (1974-) are two Confucian friends. Neither of them majored in Confucian studies at university, but their heart-felt concerns fell on the Confucian cause. With enormous Confucian sincerity and vitality, they have been the agitators and coordinators of several collective Confucian actions in recent years. Backed by several distinguished Confucian thinkers, they have attempted to contact all domestic and international sympathizers of Confucianism and mobilize all possible resources to promote Confucianism in mainland China. They have also
attempted to make the best use of internet facilities for the Confucian cause. For instance, Wang created the website “Confucian Religion of China” in 2006, turning out as one of the most influential Confucian websites in China. Renzhong’s website “Confucian China” appeared in 2008, becoming another famous Confucian station.

In the last decade, they activated a series of public actions, which have greatly uplifted the Confucian consciousness in the populace. In 2006 Wang Dasan drafted the “Petition for instituting Confucius’ birthday as ‘the Teachers’ Day,’” collected fifty-four cosigners of famous Confucian scholars, and publicized it on several websites before Confucius’ birthday in that year. This letter caught wide public attention. Since then Wang and Renzhong have reiterated the petition every year, and there is evidence to show that the authorities are proceeding to accept the appeal. In addition, Wang and Renzhong played a pivotal role in the so-called “Qufu cathedral event,” in which the impact of Confucian voices was made more evidenced. In December, 2010, a 40-meter-high Christian cathedral with a capacity of three thousand people was about to be built near Confucius Temple in Qufu, Confucius’ hometown. This new cathedral had been designed not only much larger but also much taller than the long-standing, traditional Confucius’ Temple. Wang Dasan, on behalf of Confucians, penned a protesting letter cosigned by ten influential Confucian scholars, and posted it on ten Confucian websites with the support of ten Chinese and international Confucian associations. The Confucian view on this event is not that Christians do not have a right to build a cathedral at Confucius’s hometown. Rather, to embrace a civil and polite attitude to other major religions in the world, Confucians insist that it is inappropriate for Christians to set up their new religious building larger and taller than Confucius’ Temple in the very location of Confucius’ hometown. This Confucian public action, while incurring big controversy, also gained wide social support, including receiving sympathetic online comments from some Chinese Christians. Consequently, the construction project of the cathedral came to a standstill.

Apart from going hand in hand with Wang in many public actions, Renzhong devotes himself more on editing contemporary Confucian literature. In 2011, he created a Confucian Journal, the Confucian Practitioners, addressing contemporary practical issues. He is also in charge of editing contemporary Confucian writings, “Serial Collections of Confucian Practitioners.” Moreover, he established the Electronic Newsletter of Confucianism in 2006, and has single-handedly edited it for nearly ten years now. This electronic newsletter has produced more than two hundred issues since its birth, and has been widely accessed and acclaimed by Confucian scholars. In short, the work of such enthusiastic Confucian volunteers as Renzhong and Wang Dasan is testifying to the vitality of Confucianism in contemporary China.

Concluding Remarks

Evidently, the development of Confucianism is faced with many difficulties and adverse forces in contemporary China. The foremost and immediate barrier lies in the officially imposed Marxist and Maoist ideology on the nation. There are fundamental conflicts between this ideology and Confucianism regarding basic cultural, historical, ethical and political issues. Indeed, there has been a feud between the Modern New
Confucianism and Chinese Marxism since their concurrent births in the wake of the New Culture Movement.\textsuperscript{17} For instance, Chen Duxiu, the founder of the Chinese Communist Party, made the fiercest attack on Confucianism in the 1920s; new Confucian Mou Zongsan condemned Communism with unreserved indignation from the 1940s on. Communist chieftain Mao Tse-tung humiliated what Guy Alitto called “the last Confucian” Liang Shuming in most acrimonious words in the 1950s, and launched an unprecedented anti-Confucianism campaign in the 1970s.\textsuperscript{18} In the 1980s, the leading mainland Confucian Jiang Qing sharply criticized Marxism. For the approximately four decades from the ending of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 till now, Chinese society has witnessed an escalating rejuvenation of Confucianism on the one hand and a gradual weakening of Maoism and Marxism on the other hand.

However, Marxism, as the state ideology on which the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist regime hinges, has been steadfastly maintained by the ruling bloc of China as the dominant ideology. It is true that the Communist regime has significantly adjusted its wholly hostile attitude to Confucianism as seen in the Cultural Revolution, and has even gone so far as to take considerable positive measures to communicate with Confucian culture in society, but this seeming conciliation seems only strategic. This government strategy is indeed opportunist and precarious. The authorities are manipulating and exploiting Confucianism for reinforcing their rule in the contemporary time: to inculcate docility in the people by distorting the Confucian doctrine of virtue cultivation, to enhance authoritarianism by exploiting Confucian emphasis on social order, and to enhance “national soft power” by appropriating Confucian cultural symbols.

The opportunist mentality of the Chinese Communist Party in respect of Confucianism cannot be better informed than the following embarrassing facts. On the one hand, from 2004 to 2013 the government appropriated the name of “Confucius Institute” to set up 440 training centers for promoting the Chinese language learning in many counties in order to boost China’s “national soft power.” On the other hand, it failed to secure enough confidence and sincerity to keep a mere statue of Confucius in the public area of Beijing (see below). Neither was the government able to make up its mind to institute Confucius’s birth day on September the twenty-eighth as the national Teacher’s Day to replace the meaningless date of September the tenth. When Guo Qiysong and others called for including the Four Books into the curriculum of secondary schools, the government simply lent them a deaf ear. Yu Dan’s soothing lectures could be broadcasted on the state’s central

\textsuperscript{17} The Chinese Communist Party was founded in 1921, and in 1922 one of the Modern New Confucian founders Liang Shuming published his \textit{Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies}. A conservative Chinese journal \textit{The Critical Review} was also created in 1922.

\textsuperscript{18} For Mao’s personal attack on Liang, see “Criticism of Liang Shuming’s reactionary ideas” (Mao 1978, 121-130). Mao also launched the “criticizing Lin Biao and Criticizing Confucius” campaign in 1973-1974.
television station in primetime over the entire people, whereas Jiang Qing’s frank voices could not be heard in public, nor could his books be published unabridged.19

The purpose of the government in using Confucianism was laid bare by a high official, Gu Mu (1914-2009), the late honorary president of government-sponsored China Confucius Foundation: “it is for the purpose of serving today’s reality that we should research on Confucius, a figure of more than two thousand years ago; this utilitarian purpose we never conceal. Confucius’ doctrine had always been used by the ruling classes in the past feudal societies, and a lot of elements among them can also be used by the party of our working class today. We venture to make this point open now” (Gu 2009, 453). In addition, a portion of hard-boiled Maoists (so-called Maoist Leftists) from both inside and outside the ruling bloc constitutes an anti-Confucianism force in current China. The event of the Confucius statue is a telling snapshot. In January 2011, the National Museum of China erected a thirty-one-foot high Confucius statue in front of the entrance of the museum near the east side of Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Three months later the statue was removed under the government’s order without any convincing explanation. Many take this piece of unconfirmed information is actually true: the removal was urged by a petition cosigned by one hundred veteran Maoist cadres.

Since 1949 the policy of the Chinese Communist party on Confucianism has undergone various changes, but one thing has never changed: Marxism and Maoism must be taught as compulsory courses in Chinese schools and colleges, whereas Confucianism is always branded as a feudal ideology, and the Confucian religion is always denied of its legal status. Indeed, traditional Confucius temples across the country are still in the control of the government. In this predicament, mainland Confucians cannot pursue their mission with access to sufficient social resources, and neither can they, in many circumstances, convey their Confucian message and conduct their Confucian activities in necessarily frank and straightforward manners.

However, although confronted with many difficulties, mainland Confucians have now become more confident in their future than ever before in modern Chinese history. They believe that Confucianism will eventually get the better of Marxism and Maoism in China. In addition, the momentum of anti-Confucianism forces has been much reduced for another reason. Chinese liberals used to blame Confucianism for China’s backwardness and supporting a whole-sale westernization for China’s future, as were seen in the New Culture Movement in the late 1910s and the 1920s as well as in the “culture fever” in the 1980s. However, since the 1990s more and more Chinese liberals have come to realize that a national tradition like Confucianism is not something that can be disposed of at will; instead they have come to understand that Confucianism can and should play a positive part in China’s modernization. Some liberals, notably Yu Zhangfa and Yao Zhongqiu, have even whole-heartedly converted to Confucianism and become ardent Confucian activists in recent years. On

19 Most of Jiang’s books published in the mainland were abridged versions. The twelve-volume textbooks for classics reading edited by Jiang were later restricted for circulation. In his indicting letters to the authorities, official-scholar Fang Keli more than once accused Jiang of offending socialism (cf. Fang 2006, 4-9).
the part of Confucians, many of them hold that some liberal democratic ingredients, such as rule of law, constitutionalism and even democracy, can be incorporated into Confucian politics. So there has appeared a salutary interaction between the two strands of thought that formerly seemed two foes of uncompromising hostility. It is reasonably expected that in the foreseeable future, China will witness a more profound development of Confucianism.

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THE EARLY MODERN EUROPEAN (NON) RECEPTION OF THE ZHUANGZI TEXT

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Abstract: This essay draws attention to the neglect of a key foundational text of Daoism, namely the Zhuangzi in early modern European discourses about China. It traces the contrasting Jesuit interaction with Confucianism as opposed to Buddhism and Daoism in order to emphasize how a text like the Zhuangzi was unable to be assimilated with the Catholic mission of accommodation. It contrasts the non-reception of the text in early modern Europe with its later popularity following publication of full English translations at the end of the nineteenth century. It argues that the early neglect and later explosive discovery of the Zhuangzi in the West can tell us much about shifts in intellectual history, specifically the misappropriations and misunderstandings of Daoist traditions as filtered through the European mind.

There exists a notable neglect of the Zhuangzi (莊子) text (a body of work attributed at least in part to the Warring States philosopher Zhuang Zhou (莊周) (ca. 369-286 BCE)† in early modern European receptions (roughly 1580-1880) of Chinese thought and philosophy. Of the two native thought systems of China, namely Confucianism and Daoism, it took centuries of European contact and the arrival of Romanticism before serious engagement (with one or two exceptions) with the great Daoist texts: the Laozi 老子 (?) or Daodejing 道德經 and particularly, the Zhuangzi took place. In the early centuries of Jesuit contact with China, much interest was taken in the Yijing 易經 (the Changes) that great mystical text of divination, and of course, in the Confucian Four Books (Lunyu 讀論 “the Analects”, Mengzi 孟子 “the Mencius”, Daxue 大學 “the Great Learning” and the Zhongyang 中央 “the Doctrine of the Mean”). These texts were seemingly unproblematic for those early Catholic humanists eager to hold a mirror up to Chinese culture and see reflected there their own Judeo-Christian symbolic universe. The foundational Daoist texts, the Laozi and the Zhuangzi were,

* Dr. ELIZABETH HARPER, literary scholar and post-doctoral fellow, the Society of Fellows in the Humanities at the University of Hong Kong. Email: bethsheba24@gmail.com.
† Scholarly consensus generally agrees that only the so called “Inner Chapters” (nei pian 内篇) which are seven in number are homogenous in thought and style and thought to be substantially the work of Zhuangzi himself. The rest of the thirty-three chapter edition that has been passed down to us from the time of Guo Xiang 郭象 (252-312) is separated into the “Outer Chapters” (wai pian 外篇) and “Miscellaneous Chapters” (za pian 雜篇), chapters 8-22 and 23-33 respectively. The collection of scrolls containing the Zhuangzi did not achieve a standard form until the collation efforts of Liu Xiang 劉向 (77-6 BCE) who edited them for the Imperial library of the Han. According to the bibliographical chapter of the Han Shu 漢書, the Imperial copy originally had 52 chapters. See Livia Kohn, Zhuangzi: Text and Context (Honolulu: Three Pines Press, 2004, pp. 1-10) for a detailed summary on the Zhuangzi’s textual history.
however, much more difficult to accommodate to universal Christian truth. As the first Jesuit accounts of the early modern period provided the intellectual foundations for the future field of Sinology, the gap on the Zhuangzi as Daoist traditions were sidelined and downgraded by the early missionaries (in line with contemporary Chinese judgement) is highly significant.

What I explore here, then, is the problematic of how European thought missed out on the early discovery and appreciation of Daoist philosophical texts.2 I focus on the Zhuangzi as the Laozi was somewhat taken up as a mystical text in the philosophia perennis vein3. It was also translated and commented upon much earlier in Europe and had a number of high-profile champions in the eighteenth century. Today the Dao de jing is the most translated Chinese work, indeed after the Bible it is thought to be the most translated work in the world.4 The other texts sometimes

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2 I am not unaware of the debate within the academy on the relative merits or pitfalls of separating religious Daoism (dao jiao 道教) from the foundational texts of philosophical Daoism (dao jia 道家). The French scholar Isabelle Robinet is probably the most stringent representative of the no separation camp writing in her Taoism: of Growth of a Religion (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) that any apparent differences are due merely to those between “self-discipline (techniques, training etc.) and … the speculations that can accompany or crown it.” (3) As I am interested here less in the history of Daoism in China and more in how the Zhuangzi was read by Europeans, I use the distinction to avoid having to deal with the immensely complex mass of esoteric texts epitomized by the Daozang 道藏 or collected sacred texts of Daoism, canonized in 1444 and still largely untranslated into English. For the sectarian differences in the practice of Daoism brought about by these thousands of texts, see Robinet, Taoism, 196-7. On the other side, the Chinese scholar Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 suggests the difference between “Taoism as a philosophy [which] teaches the doctrine of following nature, and Taoism the religion [which] teaches the doctrine of working against nature.” (1948, 3) The semantic problem of mapping “philosophical Daoism” onto the Chinese dao jia “family of the Dao” and “religious Daoism” onto dao jiao “teachings of the Dao” is itself a form of hermeneutics involving translation and mediation.

3 The term philosophia perennis is often associated with the philosopher and sinophile Leibniz who uses the term in an oft-quoted letter to Remond dated August 26, 1714. In his article “Perennial Philosophy: From Agostino, Steuco to Leibniz”, Journal of the History of the Ideas 27 (1966), pp. 505-532, Schmitt points out that the first use of the term indeed precedes Leibniz and is used as a title to a treatise by the Italian Augustinian Agostino Steuco (1497-1548). Steuco believed that all religious traditions drew from a universal source and he drew on a well-developed philosophical tradition to create his own synthesis of philosophy, religion and history which he labelled philosophia perennis. This syncretic tradition was the intellectual heritage of the first missionaries in China. Although they posited the end of philosophy as piety and the contemplation of God, many of the Jesuits were still open to the truths of the ancient Chinese philosophical tradition as conversant with and in some cases typologies for Christian Revelation. The concept of philosophia perennis continued to influence intellectuals well into the twentieth century: C.G Jung and Mircea Eliade and their work on archetypes are two famous examples.

4 It is also one of the most misappropriated and misunderstood of the Chinese Classics; harnessed to western spiritual capitalism in the 1960s the marketization of Daoism as self-help has nothing to do with its Classical Chinese context. See Louis Komjathy, Daoism: A Guide for
included as part of the Daoist corpus around the central Lao-Zhuang tradition are the syncretic Huainanzi 淮南子 (circa 140 BC) and the Guanzi 管子 (Xinshu 心術, Baixin 白心, Neiye 内業) and the Liezi 列子 from the Jin period 晉 (265-420), written by Lie Yukou 列禦寇. I leave these texts aside to focus on the Zhuangzi because it is the Zhuangzi, I think, that is most interestingly implicated both in the early missionary reluctance to appreciate the complexity of Daoist philosophical thought and in the (post) modern European “discovery” of Daoism by philosophers and literary critics. It is the case of an absence followed by an explosive discovery. From Ricci’s establishment of a missionary residence in Beijing in 1601 and the proliferation of works engaging with the Confucian Classics, the Yiijing and latterly the Laozi that follow, it will not be until the end of the nineteenth century that a full scholarly translation of the Zhuangzi will appear and a serious discussion of the text in Europe can begin.5

David Mungello is perhaps the most important living scholar on the Jesuit missions in China and the cultural interaction between China and Europe 1550-1800. Neither his Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology (1989) nor the later The Great Encounter Of China and the West, 1500-1800 (1999) contain an index entry for “Zhuangzi”.6 Donald Lach’s immense work of scholarship Asia in the Making of Europe which came out in three volumes in seven books between 1965 and 1993 contains information on everything from the flora and fauna of China, to the influence of Oriental art on the Wunderkammer of Europe and the price of pepper in the spice trade. Positivistic in nature and a sweepingly encyclopaedic work, there is little in Lach, however, for the scholar interested in how early modern European receptions of ancient Chinese textual traditions, and particularly foundational Daoist Classics like the Zhuangzi collided with minds shaped by scholastic theology, Renaissance philosophy and the idea of the Jesuit as “a Roman Catholic profoundly and practically convinced that all things in this world (science and philosophy of course included) are but means for him to work out the salvation of his soul” (Winterton 1887, 254, n.1). The history of orientalism is also, in part, the history of the West’s gradual detachment from Judeo-Christian ideology as the ideology that subsumes all other truths within it. As it was brought into contact with competing and compelling alternative belief systems, Christianity had to reexamine its own tenets. As Lach writes in his epilogue to Asia in the Making of Europe: The Age of Discovery:

5 The earliest partial translation of the Zhuangzi can be found in an eighteenth century translation of the short story "Zhuang Zhou Drums on a Bowl and Attains the Great Dao" by the late Ming writer Feng Menglong. For complete translations we must wait for those of Frederic Balfour, Herbert Giles and James Legge (all into English) in 1881, 1889 and 1891 respectively. Giles’ English translation of 1889 was based on the first German partial edition of Zhuangzi by Martin Buber (1910). For Buber’s final edition he then drew in turn on the complete translations of Giles and Legge in 1891.

6 Both contain entries for Laozi.
“perhaps what is most significant of all is the dawning realization in the West that not all truth and virtue were contained within its own cultural and religious traditions” (Lach 1965, 835). This collision of religious faith with alternative credos was of course not new to these Catholic voyagers in distant lands: as Jesuit scholars steeped in Humanist learning, the accommodation of pagan wisdom to Christian truths had already been subsumed into Jesuit practice. The early story as to how a philosophico-religious foundational Daoist text influenced those currents of intellectual thought in Europe before the end of the nineteenth century remains something of a mystery.

In Europe, the late sixteenth to eighteenth century was a time of huge cultural ferment for missionaries, sinologists and philosophers who were consumed with a fascination for Chinese history, language and culture. It was also a time during which the vast edifice of a hierarchically governed universe, unified and presided over by a God who created the universe out of nothing began to experience the first cracks. The emergent scientific view of the universe coincided with the age of discovery on the one hand, both of other lands and of an emancipatory “self”, and with a period of wars and retrenchment of religious dogma on the other. Karl Heinz Pohl describes how after the devastation of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), many European intellectuals recommended the moralistically ordered and peaceful Chinese state as “a better model against native barbarism” (2003, 473). They arrived at this view thanks to the missionaries’ accounts of China’s excellent governance which they tied to the influence of the Confucian Classics.

The early Catholic missions in China were admirably broad in their approach to

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7 In The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), C.S. Lewis describes the medieval synthesis as “the whole organisation of their theology, science, and history into a single, complex, harmonious mental Model of the Universe” (11).

8 In 1860, the Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt in his seminal Kultur der Renaissance in Italien (The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy) wrote that the Renaissance was the age in which “der Mensch wird geistiges Individuum und erkennt sich als solches” (Burckhardt 1860, 76). The emphasis on this dynamic shift from a rigid hierarchical cosmos in which man was sure of his place within it, to an emphasis on the intellectual (geistig) value of man as moulder and maker of his own destiny reminds us of the spiritual background against which the Jesuits encountered and interpreted Chinese thought.

9 Leibniz is probably the most famous thinker to embrace and respect Chinese philosophy as philosophy. In the Preface to his Novissima Sinica of 1697, Leibniz describes how he sees Europe as superior in deductive reasoning, but that China excelled in empirical knowledge. The so-called natural theology of the Chinese was more effective in producing good behavior; China was peaceful whereas Europe was constantly at war. See Lach, The Preface to Leibniz’ Novissima Sinica, Philosophy East and West 7:3 (1954) pp. 154-55. In his Discourse on the Natural Philosophy of China, Leibniz also argued that the Chinese principles of li (first principle) and qi (vital energy) could be compared closely with European philosophical concepts and on this basis a common core of philosophical beliefs could be established. Inheriting Leibniz’s enthusiasm, Voltaire became the great champion of Confucianism in the 18th century writing in his Lettres Philosophiques that China is already “la nation la plus sage et la mieux policée du monde”.

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Sinitic culture and many transplants were scholars, artists, botanists, cartographers and philologists as well as evangelists. The sole conduits for conveying the thought traditions of China to some of the leading minds of Europe of the time, this early period of intellectual openness, cultural dialogue and exchange lasted roughly from the successful installation of Ruggieri and Ricci in southern China in 1583, to Pope Clement XI’s issuing of a decree against accommodation in 1704 and its reinforcement by a bull (Breve ex ille die) in 1715. This decree was particularly crushing to the Jesuits and their interlocutors back home given that in 1692, the Kangxi Emperor 康熙 had issued his ‘Edict of Toleration’, allowing the free practice of Christianity in China. The edict was widely known and praised in Europe. This decree was the culmination of the so-called Rites Controversy which developed out of the Jesuit attempt to introduce Christianity to Chinese culture.

It is reasonably obvious, then, why the Confucian Classics were embraced by early modern missionaries at the expense of alternative textual traditions. First, Confucianism was the cultural code of the elite which had demonstrated a remarkable ability to survive as a political philosophy and a stabilizing force throughout Chinese imperial history. Second, it concerned itself only with external behaviors making no decisive claim on the soul or spirit as understood in a Christian sense. The Jesuits marketed Confucian philosophy for a Christian Catholic Europe. Although study of the Confucian texts was called ruxue 儒學 “literati teaching” by the Chinese rather than “Confucianism” because Confucius himself had stated that he was merely transmitting this teaching from the ancient sages rather than originating it, the

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10 That is not to say that the question of accommodation had not been fought out amongst various Catholic factions before this. The Dominicans and Franciscans had always been more hard-line than their Jesuit confreres; they protested the Jesuit approach as apostasy and had retained their European clothing and conviction that the Chinese did not know God. The rites had been banned by Rome as early as 1645, but the Jesuit arguments had eventually won out and the ban was lifted in 1656. We must also mention the dissension within the Jesuits’ own ranks: Longobardi and Visdelou were two prominent dissenters from Ricci’s version of accommodationism.

11 The question of whether the Confucian rites to honour ancestors and Confucius himself were religious in nature and therefore idolatrous and forbidden to all converted Christians, or purely civil and therefore free from superstition was one of the most significant intellectual debates of the seventeenth century. Linked to this question was the debate over the terminology found in the Classics: shang di 上帝 and tian 天 and whether these terms could be used for the Christian God. Jacques Gernet points out that “up until Ricci’s death in 1610, nobody had dared to question the wisdom of establishing an equivalence between the Sovereign on High of the Chinese Classics and the God of the Christians.” (1985, 30) After his death, however, a number of missionaries, chief among them Nicolo Longobardo, came to the conclusion that too many concessions had been made. The Chinese perception of shang di was incompatible with the personal, unique and all-powerful Creator of the Judeo-Christian tradition: the natural theology of the Chinese was ultimately considered materialistic. This is of course precisely what would appeal to the deist philosophers of the Enlightenment.

12 Lunyu 7.1: 子曰：述而不作，信而好古 (A transmitter, not an originator, I believe in and love the ancients).
Jesuits Latinized the Chinese name Kong-fu-zi into Confucius and, by phonetic extension, the teaching associated with this name became “Confucianism”. Unlike Buddhism and Daoism, this new creation was represented as being rational, free from superstitious religiosity and open to Christian revelation.

Whereas Ruggieri and Ricci had initially donned Buddhist garb and tried to win over the populace, Ricci quickly recognized the importance of the literati, scholar-bureaucrat class (the ru 儒) and the status they enjoyed in comparison to the lowly Buddhist monks. He abandoned his alliance with the Buddhists and his later works would chastise Buddhism, especially the Buddhist idea according to which being emerged from nothingness. Thus although in the early days of contact the Jesuits had recognized many similarities between Buddhism and Christianity, such as the recognition of a kind of Trinity, the existence of heaven and hell, the call to poverty, chastity and obedience, these potential areas of assimilation became the fierce battle ground for Chinese souls. In his earliest surviving letter from China, written on 13 September 1534, Ricci wrote that he preferred “the sect of the literati” and that although “commonly they do not believe in the immortality of the soul” they rejected the superstitions of Buddhist and Daoist traditions, and practiced an austere cult of heaven and earth. (Quoted in Standaert 2003, 374) The Buddhists and the Jesuits accused each other of fraudulent imitation and maintained that only their religious teaching contained the truth. While Buddhism was maligned, Daoist texts were ignored altogether. Knut Walf makes the important point that: “European missionaries judged every interpretation of the world as ‘religion’. Furthermore, they used the Western phonotype of (highly) institutionalized religion, which in China corresponded more with Buddhism and Confucianism.” (Walf, 2005, 279) This necessarily resulted in a neglect of the perceived “mystical incomprehensibilities” (Creel 1956, 52) of the various strands of Daoist practices and beliefs. This neglect would go on to perpetuate the misunderstanding of the Daodejing and Zhuangzi into the twentieth century.

In his path-breaking book China and the Christian Impact (First French edition Paris: Gallimard, 1982; English translation: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Jacques Gernet points to the early seventeenth century as a particularly amenable time for the Jesuits to be propagating the Catholic faith thanks to the amalgamation and accommodation of European and Chinese science, technology, philosophy and ethics. He writes:

There happened at that time to be a happy conjunction between the teaching of the Jesuits and the tendencies of the period. An orthodox reaction, hostile to the Buddhist influences which had deeply penetrated literate circles, had been developing ever since the last years of the seventeenth century. [...] Along with Buddhism itself, the Buddhist-inspired deviations, originating in the school of Wang Yangming (Wang Shouren, 1472-1529) were being condemned. The egoistical quest for wisdom by the men of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was rejected as vain and immoral at the point when, faced with a general decline of society and its institutions, the elite circles were rediscovering the importance of their social responsibilities. (Gernet, 1985, 23)
Though Gernet discusses the lack of appeal of Buddhist practices and belief to the ruling elites, Daoist texts are simply lumped together with Buddhist ones as sources of selfishness and idolatry. Ricci’s reply to a letter from a Chinese contemporary urging him not to attack Buddhism before reading the Buddhist texts is indicative of the missionary attitude to anything that was not state Confucianism. Ricci writes: “Since entering China, I have learned only of Yao, Shun, the Duke of Zhou and Confucius and I do not intend to change.” (Quoted in Gernet 1985, 214) This willful turning away from other textual traditions was indicative of the way early Jesuits selected their encounters with Chinese classical texts and rejected the syncretic nature of Chinese belief systems. Riding a wave of internal power struggles to undermine Buddhist monks at court and Daoist folk practices amongst the populace, the early missionaries aligned themselves with the ru scholars to create a civic-centered theology.

There was, of course, early Chinese opposition to the Jesuits’ denunciations of Buddhism and Daoism and their preaching of Christianity. In 1623, a Wang Qiyuan writes:

The barbarians began by attacking Buddhism. Next, they attacked Taoism, next the later Confucianism [hou ru 后儒]. If they have not yet attacked Confucius, that is because they wish to remain on good terms with the literate elite and the mandarins, in order to spread their doctrine. But they are simply chafing at the bit in secret, and have not yet declared themselves. (Gernet, 1985, 52)

In truth, the Jesuits were often received by the Chinese elites with an adverse mixture of admiration, disdain, indignation and bemusement. Though the Mission did achieve some noteworthy conversions and won the toleration of both the Wanli and Kangxi emperors, the predominant mood in China remained one of bafflement at the central concept of 天主 tianzhu and horror at the crucifixion. Ricci in particular, was very aware of the essential absurdity of his task and believed that his goal “was not to multiply baptisms, but to win for Christianity an accepted place in Chinese life.” (Leys 1983, 46) This suave modo approach ultimately meant that although the Jesuits had sought to use the prestige of European science to reinforce the authority of the Catholic religion, the Chinese rejected that religion wishing to keep only the scientific knowledge. ¹³ In his understanding of how difficult Christian doctrine was to convey to those not already sufficiently primed for it, Ricci had turned to philosophy to sugar

¹³ Works written by missionaries in Classical Chinese were included in the great compilation commissioned by the Qianlong emperor 乾隆 (r. 1735-1795) in 1773. In the 1781 special guide to the collection, the Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao 四庫全書總目提要 there was the following note appended to the section dealing with missionary works: “The superiority of the Western teaching (xixue) lies in their calculations; their inferiority lies in their veneration of a Master of Heaven of a kind to upset men’s minds.” Quoted in Gernet, China and the Christian Impact, 59.
the pill because, as Feng Youlan puts it: “The Chinese people take even their religion philosophically.” (Feng 1948, 2) That Ricci wasn’t quite persuasive enough is testimony to the strength and sophistication of China’s native ethical philosophy and its skepticism towards the more mystical elements of Christianity (the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, the Resurrection and the Trinity).

In one letter, Ricci seeks to make Confucius intelligible to those European humanists back home similarly with an appeal to ethics, on how to live, rather than to religious doctrine. He describes the Chinese sage as “un altro Seneca” (a second Seneca) intuizing the shared mission despite the difference in form of the philosophical works of Plato, Aristotle and Seneca, and the Chinese Masters. He writes: “At the very time when, if I calculate correctly, Plato and Aristotle flourished among us, there also flourished [amongst the Chinese] certain literati of good life who produced books dealing with moral matters, not in a scientific way, but in the form of maxims”. (Standaert, 2003, 375) The identification of ethics as the heart of philosophy both east and west allowed Ricci to consolidate his accommodationist line. Just as Renaissance authors were aware of the important distinctions between Christianity and Stoicism but ultimately deemed them compatible, so did Ricci merge Stoicism and Confucianism as a way of clearing the intellectual pathways for Christianity. The Jesuits also tried and failed to have Aristotelian philosophy introduced as the basis of the Chinese education system.

The reason for the missionaries not attacking Confucianism was, then, in some senses purely tactical. In a letter of 15 February 1609, Ricci acknowledges this utilitarian aspect of championing the Confucian Classics despite any personal affinities he may or may not have had with Daoist texts. He writes:

> In the books that I have written, I begin by singing their praises [i.e. Those of the Confucian men of letters] and by using them to confound the others [the Buddhists and the Taoists], not refuting them directly but interpreting the points on which they are in disagreement with our faith… A most distinguished person who belongs to the sect of idols has even called me an adulator of the literate elite… And I am very keen that others should regard me in that light, for we should have much more to do if we were obliged to fight against all three sects. (Gernet, 1985, 52)

The ambiguity surrounding Ricci and the Jesuits’ intentions, the extent to which their views changed on encounter with Chinese texts and customs, and how the Chinese themselves understood the Jesuit mission is born out in this passage. Here Ricci pictures the Jesuits as engaging in a fight against the san jiao 三教 using a divide and conquer mentality. However, in a letter by the infamous “maverick thinker and intellectual provocateur” (Handler-Spitz, 2017, 3) Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602), it would seem that the literati had no clue what to make of Ricci’s intentions. In an oft-cited

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14 Feng quotes Derk Bodde who writes: “They [the Chinese] are not a people for whom religious ideas and activities constitute an all-important and absorbing part of life… It is ethics (especially Confucian ethics), and not religion (at least not of a formal, organized type), that provided the spiritual basis in Chinese civilization.” 4.
passage Li Zhi writes:

Now he is perfectly able to speak our language, he can write our characters, he follows the customs and ceremonies in use here, he is an unusually accomplished man... But I still don’t know what he has come here for. I have already met him three times, and I still don’t know what he is here to do. 

今藎能言我此閒之言, 作此閒之文字, 行此閒之儀禮, 是一極標致人也... 但不知到此何為, 我已經三度相合, 畢竟不知道此何幹也.  (Li Zhi, 2016, 256-7)

The enigmatic quality of Ricci in particular as he was perceived by the Chinese reminds us of what a feat it was for the Jesuits to master the language, culture and mores of China sufficiently to become prominent members of society at the highest level. That Ricci was not known as a proselytizer of the Catholic faith is testimony to his roles as an outstanding cultural mediator and a Humanist scholar at home with ambiguity and ambivalence.

In a rather daringly titled chapter “Matteo Ricci, The Daoist”, Haun Saussy gestures towards how Ricci was rather counterintuitively perceived by his Chinese contemporaries as a Daoist sage and that he “found strategic and publicity value in allowing them to do so.” (2017, 51) Saussy troubles the neat distinction between Ricci the Jesuit missionary (and therefore staunch upholder of the Confucian Classics), and Ricci the Ming celebrity who acquired and perhaps himself actually cultivated a persona as a renegade anti-establishment figure. Saussy describes Ricci’s “persona” as “the disputatious, paradoxical, countercultural persona of Zhuang Zhou in the Zhuangzi” and focusses his analysis not on the intentions of the missionaries and their professions of accommodation, but on how Ricci’s Chinese contemporaries perceived him. Saussy’s analysis of a letter addressed to Ricci by Li Zhi in which he compares Ricci’s arrival in China in terms that consciously echo the huge fish Kun descending in xiao yao “free and easy” fashion opens up a window to a kind of multi-perspectivism. Ricci recognizes and enjoys textual references to the Zhuangzi and his being written about in other places as a shan ren or Daoist mountain recluse. Therefore, although there exists no direct record detailing how Jesuits understood the Zhuangzi, no translations or commentaries, we may discern the seeds of the later twentieth century appreciation of the Zhuangzi scattered in the personal letters between Ricci and his Chinese interlocutors.

When we leave the rather exceptional figure of Ricci and return to the Jesuit China mission as a whole, we see that the textual culmination of the Jesuit proposal to create a Confucian-Christian synthesis was the translation (completed by hundreds of Jesuit collaborators) of the first three of the Confucian Four Books Sishu into

16 This appellation is always somewhat problematic given that what the Jesuits promulgated as the essence of Confucius’ teaching was in fact the selections made by the much later Song neo-Confucian Zhu Xi (1130-1200). For example, the Dacue 大學 and Zhongyang 中央 were separate chapters drawn from the traditional classic the Liji 禮記 The Book of Rites. Zhu Xi,
Latin. This mammoth project was completed in 1687 and edited by Philippe Couplet in Paris. Published under the rather revealing title *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (Confucius, the Philosopher of China), this was the book that successfully launched Confucianism in Europe and represented it as the eastern counterpart to the European Renaissance at the expense of Daoist texts. The Four Books had been used as Chinese language primers for newly arrived missionaries in China, and now they were to be selectively disseminated in Europe as the very spirit and essence of native Chinese thought. Ricci and his collaborators were content to treat the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine on the Mean* and the *Analects* as serious philosophical texts and exemplary models of enlightened deism: sections of translations were entitled “Scientiae Sinicae” (Learning of the Chinese), “Sapiencia Sinica” (Chinese Wisdom), and “Sinarum scientia politico-moralis” (The politico-moral learning of the Chinese). When it comes to the key Daoist texts, however, the *Laozi* receives only a cursory and dismissive mention, and the *Zhuangzi* no mention at all.

In “The Encounter of Christianity and Daoism in Philippe Couplet’s *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*”, Mei Tin Huang searches for references to the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* and tries to find alternatives to the standard Jesuit line that Daoism was “superstition”, “exorcism”, “sorcery” or “heresy”. Huang finds that Couplet does grant Laozi the status of philosopher (which Ricci never did) in his paragraph entitled “Brevis Notitia Sectae. Li lao kiun Philosophi, ejusque Sectariorum, quos in Sinis Tao Su vocant.” Laozi is referred to as the philosopher *Li Lao Jun* 李老君 and founder of religious Daoism. In his *Brevis Notitia*, Couplet mentions the search of the first emperor Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇 (259 BC-210 BC, r. 221 BC-210 BC) for longevity and his resorting to the *artis magicae*, the esoteric arts or alchemists. Couplet follows the standard Jesuit interpretation that the philosophical teachings of Laozi (*daojia* 道家) were quickly corrupted and intermingled with the religious practices of magic, alchemy and idolatry that characterised the religious practise of *daojiao*道教. The emphasis on immortality, the development of *changsheng yao* 長生藥 (life extending drugs) was, of course, a heresy to Catholics who believed in the death of the body and the eternal resurrection of the soul. However, as Huang points out, Couplet did make an effort to distinguish the philosopher Laozi from the “sect” that had grown up around his teachings. Fascinatingly, he cites the legend from the *Shiji Zhengyi* 史記正
via the Daoist scholar Ge Hong 葛洪’s (283–343) Shenxian Zuan 神仙傳 (Biographies of Divine Immortals) that Laozi was carried for 81 years in his mother’s womb and then burst from her left side. This mythical etiology (one thinks of Athena, emerging from Zeus’s forehead in the Greek tradition) is somewhat unusual for a Jesuit to associate with a philosopher figure who he understands to be a historical personage. Couplet does not, however, ridicule the legend nor cast doubt on the historicity of Li Lao Jun. Though Couplet attributes to Laozi an intuitive understanding of divinity, he still views this understanding as too material and incompatible with the Christian God. Couplet’s commentary on Chapter 42 of the Daodejing (“The Tâo produced One; One produced Two; Two produced Three; Three produced All things.” 道生一， 一生二，二生三， 三生萬物) reads as following:

This, the pronouncement of a man, is quite ambiguous and obscure, as the maxims of the Ancients usually are. Yet one thing is certain: he was aware of a kind of first and supreme deity. However, his understanding was flawed in as much he conceived of the deity as corporeal [numen esse corporeum] though ruling over all other deities, like a king rules over his vassals. It is widely believed that he was the founder and creator of the art of alchemy. (Couplet, 1687, XXIV)

Laozi as a figure is granted the status of a philosopher but only as the founder of a Daoist system of alchemy; the textual foundation on which Daoism was formed, namely the Daodejing and the later Zhuangzi and their established commentarial traditions are either written off as obscure or simply not mentioned at all.

The compilers of the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus would have a lasting influence on how philosophical Daoism would be received (i.e. constructed) in Europe. The great sinologist and (not inconsequentially) Protestant missionary James Legge writes at the end of the nineteenth century: “The brilliant pages of Kwang-tze [Zhuangzi] contain little more than his ingenious defense of his master’s [Laozi’s] speculations, and an aggregate of illustrative narratives…in themselves for the most part unbelievable, often grotesque and absurd” (Legge, 1962a [1891], 39). Legge’s Protestant paradigm of a pure master text, namely the Daodejing opposed to the later “popish” contamination with ritualistic and magical practices left little room for a deep and meaningful appreciation of the Zhuangzi as a composite philosophical text.

Western philosophers up until the twentieth century continued to dismiss Daoism as the very infancy of philosophy, a nihilistic reductive credo in which the goal of perpetual tranquility and the erasure of all distinctions was seen as anathema to western philosophical systems built upon logical rigor. In Hegel’s Lectures on The History of Philosophy, delivered in 1825-6 he famously described the Chinese master texts as uninteresting manifestations of an early stage in the evolution of Spirit or Geist. If each civilization represents a stage of development which for Hegel culminates in nineteenth century Germany, China is characterised by Stillstand—a marmoreal, static civilization ruled by a despotic emperor over a people characterized by passivity and conformity. For the Jesuits, while Daoism was deemed an obstacle to their accommodationist mission, Confucius at least was revered as a moral philosopher. For Hegel the whole of masters’ literature in early China is understood as lacking the
speculative thinking and systematicity he deemed essential to “philosophy”. He describes Confucius as “merely a practical statesman” whose reflections “never rise above the conventional views”. Though Hegel finds the Yi Jing intriguing, he still deems it overly concerned with the external ordering rather than the inner nature of reality. He discusses Laozi and the Daodejing but finds the Dao too obscure for any substantial commentary and he makes no reference to the Zhuangzi at all. Ignored by the Jesuits and the Enlightenment philosophes, it will not be until the early twentieth century that the efforts of Richard Wilhelm and Martin Buber will create a Dao fever (Dao-fiebers) in Germany, Giles’ Zhuangzi and Legge’s The Texts of Taoism will do the same in England, and in 1823 in France Abel Rémuat, the first European chair of Chinese language and literature at the Collège de France will publish Mémoire sur la vie et les opinions de Lao-Tseu, one of the earliest European works on Lao-tzu and classical Daoism.¹⁸

The Zhuangzi has now been rehabilitated as a linguistically playful philosophical text that offers complex perspectives on alternative ways to live. It is also an extraordinary literary text; Victor Mair describes it as “primarily a work of literature than a work of philosophy”. Herbert Giles’ English translation was rapturously received by Oscar Wilde who penned a review of it in The Speaker in 1890 under the title “A Chinese Sage”. Deeply appreciative of Zhuangzi’s contrarian spirit, Wilde praised the rejection of instrumental morality and “the idealist’s contempt for utilitarian systems”. Cribbing from the Oxford theologian Aubrey Moore’s introduction to Giles’ translation, Wilde writes: “Chuang Tsū may be said to have summed up in himself almost every mood of European metaphysical or mystical thought, from Heraclitus down to Hegel.”¹⁹ In this he publicizes a new appreciation of East-West understanding in Europe. Though Wilde was no sinologist and he uses Daoist ideas impressionistically and to suit his own purposes, it is hard not to appreciate the kindred spiritual ethos that Wilde captures in his reading of Giles’ Zhuangzi. Speaking very much of his own day, Wilde goes on:

But Chuang Tsū was something more than a metaphysician and an illuminist. He sought to destroy society, as we know it, as the middle classes know it... There is nothing of the sentimentalist in him. He pities the rich more than the poor, if he ever pities at all, and prosperity seems to him as tragic a thing as suffering. He has

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¹⁸ The great period of nineteenth-century Sinology did little of course to change the age-old distinction between “authentic” philosophical ie. textual Daoism and “polluted” ie. practised religious Daoism. Legge epitomized this outdated (although still present in the academic study and of world religions) approach to Daoism. According to Girardot (1999, 108), Legge was “the single most important figure contributing to the late Victorian invention of ‘Taoism’, as a reified entity located ‘classically’, ‘essentially’, ‘purely’ and ‘philosophically’ within certain ancient texts or ‘sacred books’.” The use of quotation marks here reminds us how suspect these appellations became post Said’s critique of Orientalism as a negative, distorting paradigm.

nothing of the modern sympathy with failures, nor does he propose that the prizes should always be given on moral grounds to those who come in last in the race. It is the race itself that he objects to; and as for active sympathy, which has become the profession of so many worthy people in our own day, he thinks that trying to make others good is as silly an occupation as ‘beating a drum in a forest in order to find a fugitive.’ . . . While as for a thoroughly sympathetic man, he is, in the eyes of Chuang Tsŭ, simply a man who is always trying to be someone else, and so misses the only possible excuse for his own existence.

If the Zhuangzi’s joyful abstention from the will to rule and serve had been what set it apart from the Laozi and from what Wiebke Denecke calls “the Huanglao version of a cosmic administration of the universe through the ‘law’ of the Way” (2010: 233), now that abstention was celebrated as a source of radical freedom from bourgeois society. If the text’s incongruity with ordered hierarchical government had sealed its fate in oblivion for so long, by the late nineteenth-century Zhuangzi was poised to become the Chinese philosopher of choice for an atheistic and world-weary Europe seeking a break with conformism.

Connections now being made between Zhuangzi and Heidegger, Zhuangzi and Derrida, Zhuangzi and Spinoza, Zhuangzi and the philosophy of language etc reflect the text’s celebration of the unstable nature of the self and the world: the function of life becomes an exhilarating process of spontaneous self-creation. It also insists repeatedly that death and life are just the same and that neither should be sought or feared. Profoundly anti-dogma, anti-government and anti-otherworld at the expense of this one it is clear why the Jesuits did not quite know what to do with Zhuangzi’s chutzpah. That the text was ignored for so long is a reminder of the extent to which the early European reception of Chinese texts were entirely reliant upon the missionary accounts filtered through a Catholic agenda. The missionaries decided what got read and how because they were the only Europeans equipped with the skills to read and interpret Classical Chinese texts. The Zhuangzi, however, has always floated free of the traditions that have surrounded it. Neither a prescriptive text nor a coherent system of belief, the Zhuangzi still might be deemed a quasi-religious text that offers a different (and for its European readers, competing) vision of revelation. In this sense, it has been thoroughly rediscovered by modernity. The story of that modernity as a gradual detachment from monotheism and from a faith in overarching, hierarchical structures is reflected in the neglect and subsequent feverish interest in the Zhuangzi in the West.

References


20 It is, of course, paradoxical that the Zhuangzi would be linked with immortality cults and the concept of yang sheng 養生 when the text rejects both the possibility and desirability of immortality.


THE JUNGIAN TRANSCENDENT FUNCTION, THE DANCE OF DAO, AND THE INNER LANDSCAPE OF EDUCATION

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Abstract: Drawing upon the Jungian theory of the transcendent function and the yin-yang dynamics in Daoism, this paper explores cross-cultural philosophical foundations for engaging psychic and inner transformation and their implications for vitalizing the inner landscape of education. There are inherent connections as well as differences between these two theories: First, the fundamental principle of integrating opposites is central to both, although Jungian theory probes deeper into the psychic life to heal fragmentation while Daoism’s non-dual personhood has a stronger sense of interconnectedness. Second, both engage in social critique and self-critique, but there is a certain difference between lifting repression in Jungian transcendence and emptying out suppression in Daoism. Third, the two intersect at going beyond the confinement of the intellect to include embodied, aesthetic, and meditative activities for integration. The final section of the paper focuses on re-imagining the inner landscape of education based on these intersections and differences.

Today American education is marked by standardization, accountability, and test scores to such a degree that the field of education is perceived to be in crisis. Al Lauzon points out the prevalent impact of neo-liberalism on universities in Australia, Britain, the United States and Canada through the commoditization of higher education, “human capital formation in service to market needs” (Lauzon, 2011, 290). Both K-12 schools and universities are facing challenges. As David Rosen argues, “crisis” in Chinese is a two-character word, which means “danger” and “opportunity” (Rosen, 1996). As external demands are pushed to the extreme, new possibilities lurk within the danger. Precisely at this historical moment, we need to attend to the inner landscape of education for new vistas of transcending the external constraints. This paper draws upon Jungian theory and the philosophy of Daoism for a portrayal of such an inner landscape.

The links between Carl Jung’s analytic psychology and Daoism have been made historically and contemporarily. However, most discussions have focused on Jung’s approach to Daoism as a religion through encounters mediated by German sinologist and theologian Richard Wilhelm. This paper focuses on philosophical connections that are not necessarily explicitly discussed in Jung’s writings, connections that have broader implications for education and society, particularly for the inner lives of both teachers and students. Discussing both the transcendent function in Jung’s work and the yin-yang dynamic in Daoism, I intend to negotiate a mutually informative dialogue for transformative education.

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Born of the union of opposites, the transcendent function is a “progressive development [of the human psyche] towards a new attitude” (Jung, 1953, 99). It is “a dialogue between the unconscious and consciousness through which a new direction emerges” (Miller, 2004, 3) in an ongoing process. Jung uses the term “transcendent” to refer to the human capacity for transformation and change. The Daoist yin-yang interaction is a dance of opposites along both personal and cosmic lines. The term “dance” (舞) in this paper is a play with its homophone, wu (无), which in the ancient Chinese inscription, depicts a dancing figure. Wu is closest to Dao and is prior to the existence of any being. It holds empty stillness that gives birth to all beings. In stillness, Dao is a moving force (Allan, 1997) that dances along the lines of yin-yang interplay, leading to transformation and change.

While the parallel between these two notions is evident, there are also intellectual and cultural differences. For instance, the notion of the unconscious is of paramount importance in Jungian analytical psychology but this notion does not exist in Daoism. Some interpretations equate yin with the unconscious and yang with the conscious (Shen, 2004; Watts, 1975), but I think such a direct equivalence neglects some fundamental differences between Western and Eastern philosophies and cultures. I argue that not reducing the differences is beneficial because the differences present diversified modes of achieving integration, which suggests multiple educational pathways.

By attending to the inner landscape of personhood in the context of education through a dialogue between the Jungian transcendent function and Daoist yin-yang dynamics, this paper attempts to explore cross-cultural philosophical foundations for engaging inner and psychic transformation in education. This paper starts with the fundamental principle of integrating opposites in both theories, moves to different forms of social critique and self-questioning for enabling transformation, and then discusses multiple modes of inner engagement that go beyond the intellect. Finally, transforming the inner landscapes of teachers, students, pedagogical relationships, and curriculum, informed by the Jungian transcendence and the Daoist dance, is explored.

I. Integrating Opposites

Both Jung’s theory and Daoist philosophy are based upon the integration of opposites. For Jung, the flow of psychic energy depends on tensions between opposites, and “the transcendent function manifests itself as a quality of conjoined opposites” (Jung, 1960, 90). He believes that it is a natural tendency for opposites in the psyche to unite but that bringing such potential into existence requires rigorous effort (Miller, 2004). Fundamentally, the unconscious is oppositional to the conscious, and the transcendent function mediates between the two to achieve their union. However, since the unconscious can never be fully mastered by the individual, such a union can never be permanently achieved, but only partially at any one time, which makes integrating opposites an ongoing process in which something new constantly emerges to enable change in the psyche.
According to Jung, integrating the unconscious and the conscious through the transcendent function has three major effects: “firstly of extending the conscious horizon by the inclusion of numerous unconscious contents; secondly of gradually diminishing the dominant influence of the unconscious; thirdly of bringing about a change of personality” (Jung, 1953, 219). First, becoming aware of the unconscious expands consciousness to accommodate what had not been accepted previously. Cultivating such an awareness can be difficult since what stays in the unconscious (including the personal and collective unconscious) are elements that are repressed and difficult to get access to (Jung, 1968). But incorporating the unconscious into awareness enriches consciousness and enables it to develop the capacity to contain psychic complexity.

Second, the new awareness gradually assimilates the unconscious into consciousness and prevents it from being projected onto others or the outer world. The unconscious influences everybody’s daily life and can have destructive effects when unacknowledged. Through projection, the unconscious can throw out those aspects that are rejected within the self onto others or another group of people. But when the unconscious is allowed to enter into the conscious, it no longer has a tight hold on the psyche. Awareness helps one to acknowledge one’s own unconscious shadow so that demonizing others becomes difficult. Third, a new possibility emerges from the interaction between the conscious and the unconscious, or the superior psychic function and the inferior psychic function. The confrontation of opposites “generates a tension charged with energy and creates a living, third thing—…a living birth that leads to a new level of being, a new situation” (Jung, 1960, 90). The transcendent function lies in this creative capacity of the human psyche for renewal and change.

The Daoist yin-yang dynamics are also embedded in the integrative tendency. Dao De Jing¹ says, “returning/reversal is the movement of Dao” (Chapter 40)². In ancient Chinese, returning  （返） and reversal  （反） were interchangeable homophones and shared a character component. In this movement of Dao, everything has its opposite/reversal and everything changes towards its opposite (in a reversal way towards the origin of Dao). Yin and yang are the fundamental pair of opposites. The term yang originally referred to the sunshine or the light side of the mountain and yin referred to the lack of sunshine or the shaded area on the other side; later they came to signify opposite yet complementary cosmic energies that permeate the universe and humanity. In Daoism, yin and yang can change into each other when one aspect moves to the extreme, but they can never eliminate each other, so the cycle of

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¹ There are debates about when and whether or not Laozi (as the author of Dao De Jing) or Zhuangzi existed in history. In this paper I use Dao De Jing and Zhuangzi as classical texts. Dao is often translated as Tao in the Western literature, and this paper follows the mainland Chinese pronunciation system.

² All the translation of classical Chinese texts from Chinese into English in this paper, unless specifically indicated, are the author’s own translations. Chapters are used to indicate where the citation come from, and reference lists include the Chinese texts that are used for chapter numbers.
interplay keeps moving. In this sense, *yin* and *yang* are mutually embedded within each other with an inherent bridge to connect them. Both *yin* and *yang* exist in all things and all persons, and they are inseparable. Nothing can exist with only one side.

In the tradition of Chinese philosophy, the person is connected to the universe, and personal cultivation lies at the root of harmonious relationships in the family and the nation (Author). *Zhuangzi* is well known for its stories of seeking authentic personhood through reaching harmony between *yin* and *yang*. *Zhuangzi* considers the true nature of *Dao* as personal governing from within (Chapter 28). However, such personhood requires the individual to dissolve the ego in order to become united with *Dao* to achieve spiritual freedom, and thus necessarily goes beyond ego-consciousness in Jungian terms. It is similar to Jung’s notion of Self through the transcendent function of uniting the unconscious with the conscious. Both authentic personhood and Self suggest original personal and psychic wholeness.

Jung explicitly defines “the Chinese concept of *Tao*” as “the union of opposites through the middle path” (Jung, 1953, 205; italics in the original). It is not surprising that *yin* is often considered equivalent to Jung’s unconscious while *yang* is considered equivalent to Jung’s consciousness. However, the notion of the unconscious does not exist in the philosophical tradition of Daoism in the way Jung describes it. As Lionel Corbett and Leanne Whitney point out, “Jung equates consciousness with ego-consciousness” (Corbett & Whitney, 2016, 17), but “from the non-dual point of view, since consciousness is undivided, there is no such thing as the unconscious” (Corbett & Whitney, 2016, 19). As a non-dual philosophy, Daoism emphasizes the harmonious interaction of *yin* and *yang* through *Dao*, which does not push *yin* into the psychic basement hidden from the light. In other words, Chinese individual consciousness is always already relational, and interdependence is the cornerstone of the Chinese worldview.

In the individualistic, competitive cultural climates in the West, the social demand for differentiation can easily split individuals’ psychic wholeness, and repression has to be lifted to get in touch with interconnectedness of life. But in Daoism, the individual person who achieves freedom through uniting with *Dao* follows a different pathway to achieve enlightenment. Moreover, in *Dao De Jing* the role of *yin* is privileged over *yang* as the springboard to obtaining *Dao*, while Jung emphasizes the role of consciousness in assimilating the unconscious even though he also has a vision of Self that goes beyond ego-consciousness (Jung, 1968). Jung’s archetypal figures of anima as female and animus as male in the collective conscious are also in contrast to the Daoist notion that both women and men have *yin* and *yang* within the self at the conscious level.

On the other hand, as John Suler suggests, the psychoanalytic theory of the unconscious provides a much more specific and clarified analysis of the internal factors that promote or prevent the transformation of the psyche (Suler, 1993). I think that Jungian psychology probes into such analytic depth and provides valuable insights into specific pathways of integration. Tu Wei-ming also points out that traditional Chinese philosophy lacks an in-depth understanding of psychic fragmentation and how to work through it to arrive at advanced integration (Yu & Tu, 2000). Thus the Daoist non-dual approach to the universe and the individual needs to
be coupled with an understanding of the depth of the psychic life in order to achieve individual freedom and societal harmony.

The notion of integrating opposites for wholeness in both Jungian theory and Daoism is informative for addressing the inner landscape of education. In education, often tensions and conflicts are regarded as something to be managed and controlled rather than mediated for integration. In instrumental, linear educational models, ambiguity, uncertainty, and contradictions are factors to be eliminated in order to reach clear-cut quantifiable outcomes. However, educational attention to the internal world of both teachers and students should not be pushed to the sideline by external political demands and neoliberal market logic, because serving only instrumental needs will be the end of education as personal cultivation. Education for integration remains a fundamental task for educators whose inner work helps them to hold open students’ ambivalence and resistance towards learning for a breakthrough of meaning.

II. Social Critiques and Self-Questioning

Both the Jungian transcendent function and the dance of Daoism require an attitude of questioning, not only questioning societal norms and mass uniformity, but also questioning the self. Jung’s pursuit of psychic wholeness and the Daoist yin-yang dynamics go against conventional ways of thinking and being, and both disrupt the moral dualistic judgment of right/wrong and good/bad.

Jung’s notion of integrating the shadow defies the rigid boundaries of either/or thinking. According to Jung, “By shadow I mean the “negative” side of the personality, the sum of all those unpleasant qualities we like to hide, together with the insufficiently developed functions and the contents of the personal unconscious” (Jung, 1953, 66). While the shadow indicates what is not accepted by consciousness, it is not necessarily “bad” or “wrong”, as coming to terms with it leads to the fuller development of a person in a better relationship with others. Jung asserts, “If people can be educated to see the shadow-side of their nature clearly, it may be hoped that they will also learn to understand and love their fellow men [sic] better” (Jung, 1953, 26). Here self-questioning and critiquing social conventions that fragment psychic wholeness are intimately related to cultivating compassion for others.

Similarly, what are regarded as the moral virtues of the time are unveiled layer by layer by Daoism as a mechanism of control rather than what is essentially good. Both Dao De Jing and Zhuangzi convey the message that only after Dao is lost does society-sanctioned morality become important. Chapter 38 of Dao De Jing says: “Only when we have lost Dao is there De [virtues of the particular]; only when we have lost De is there benevolence; only when we have lost righteousness; only when we have lost righteousness is there ritual.” Zhuangzi is well-known for mocking social and cultural conventions. These social critiques go hand in hand with Daoist personal cultivation that must go beyond the prevailing either/or mentality and further the ego consciousness to get in tune with the dance of Dao.

Francis Hsu’s distinction between repression and suppression is helpful here to explore different approaches in Jungian and Daoist questioning (Hsu, 1983). He uses the terms “suppression” versus “repression” to depict the psychological
interpretations of four cultures: The United States, Germany, Japan, and China. Here “repression” refers to the Freudian notion that painful and unaccepted materials are buried into the unconscious beginning in the early years of an individual. The term “suppression” refers to the mechanism of restraining “from certain actions because of external circumstances”; “the thought of such actions, however, [is] not necessarily excluded from consciousness” (Hsu, 1983, 104). Hsu acknowledges that societal constraints upon individual persons exist in every society and that “repression usually begins as suppression” (Hsu, 1983, 106), but different cultures emphasize different modes of socialization as mechanisms of control.

If we approach the Jungian notion of the shadow as what is psychologically repressed in mainstream Western families and societies, then the Daoist yin can be understood as what is psychologically suppressed by cultural norms in China. While Jung rigorously searches for ways of integrating the shadow—the repressed psychic energies—and, at a deeper level, the archetypal energy of anima/animus, for psychic wholeness, the Daoist personhood cannot be fully realized without unlearning the mechanisms of control and domination that suppress the role of yin. However, in Chinese society yin is not repressed into the unconscious but is generally acknowledged as a life force, even though it is officially marginalized. Daoism, particularly, Dao De Jing, is unique in its emphasis on the importance of yang, but political and social system usually pushes yin aside to the margin. Here the Jungian assimilation of the unconscious and the Daoist emptying out of societal norms rely on different degrees of interconnectedness and interdependence at the conscious level.

In Jungian theory, the notion of the unconscious is crucial and lifting repression takes tremendous effort. In the West, interconnectedness is repressed by the mainstream tradition of individualism, and the Jungian project of assimilating the unconscious takes multiple layers of questioning. First, it must unveil the underlying thread of shared archetypal energy through putting the individual into the collective context. Second, while integrating the unconscious, an individual person cannot be carried away by archetypal energy to be lost in the collective uniformity. Jung is skeptical of collectivism also because “cultural demands impel a differentiation of psychic functions and destroy the wholeness of the individual for the sake of collective [sic]” (Miller, 2004, 37). Such a differentiation enhances a collective entity but fragments the individual psyche. Thus, paradoxically, Jungian theory transcends individualism and yet at the same time reinforces the primacy of the individual in the transcendent function.

Daoist personhood has a stronger sense of interconnectedness. According to Liu, Daoist harmony between yin and yang is the original state of human nature, in balance with the world (Liu, 2016). However, in a hierarchical society, harmony is already lost because of external constraints and internal imbalance, and the power of yang overshadows the generative and enabling strength of yin in social systems and cultural climates. The suppression of yin aspects of life and humanity does not necessarily push them into the unconscious, as the role of yin is still acknowledged at the conscious level, but the balance between two opposing yet complementary energies is disrupted. To restore harmony, Daoism unleashes sharp critiques of social
hierarchy and positions personal cultivation at the pole of yin against the control of yang.

To deal with suppression, it is important for the person to empty out the internalized rules and regulations. Both Dao De Jing and Zhuangzi speak about the necessity of questioning, or in today’s terms, “unlearning”. Dao De Jing says, “The pursuit of learning is to gain day by day; the pursuit of Dao is to lose day by day. To lose and further lose till one reaches the state of wuwei. Wuwei leads to getting everything done” (Chapter 48). Here the pursuit of learning leads to the accumulation of knowledge, yet such knowledge follows societal expectations of accumulating power and strength (yang) at the expense of gentleness and sustainability (yin). Such an accumulation does not benefit the individual’s capacity to get in touch with Dao. The reverse direction of decreasing as a way of unlearning leads one to achieve harmony between yin and yang. Incorporating the vibrant power of yin, wuwei, as non-dual action (Loy, 1998; Author) that adapts to the situation at hand, does not impose but follows the dance of Dao to get everything done.

Zhuangzi sharply critiques Confucian moral codes and instead emphasizes the internal transformation and spiritual freedom of the individual person. In its vision, authentic personhood goes beyond both external and internal constraints to be immersed in a state of emptiness and quietude. In stillness, one transcends the self, things, and the distinction between self and things in order to return to Dao. While forgetting the self in order to reach Dao sounds similar to Jung’s notion of Self transcending the ego, Jung thinks that the expanded ego-consciousness with the integration of the unconscious is the leading factor in achieving psychic wholeness (see below). Authentic personhood in Zhuangzi is beyond ego-consciousness and is cultivated by questioning conventions step by step to reach a carefree state in union with Dao.

Both Jungian and Daoist modes of questioning at social and personal levels affirm the necessity for educators to refuse to reinforce the mechanisms of repression and suppression in the classroom. Teachers’ capacity for doing so requires the critical reflexivity (Mayes, 2005) to engage their own inner work and unlearn the mentality of control and management. At the same time, more affirmatively, teachers need to create educative conditions in which students can unfold their lives through learning and connect their lived experience with academic studies. The stronger emphasis of the relational in Daoism is a site for questioning a separate sense of the individual and bringing a vital sense of interconnectedness to be infused into students’ inner lives. Here educators’ integrative capacity and relational attunement invites students’ critical thinking and relational orientation to others and the world.

III. Circular Movements towards Wholeness

Beyond the Freudian reductive, analytic method, Jung’s method, which he calls “constructive or synthetic” (Jung, 1960, 73), supports the transcendent function of shifting to a new attitude. Synthesis relies on the construction of “symbol” that means “the best possible expression for a complex fact not yet clearly apprehended by consciousness” (Jung, 1960, p. 75). The symbol carries the unconscious materials,
and constructive treatment of the unconscious dives into the depth of archetypal energies in the collective psyche and allows intuition and insights to play an integrative role. While the transcendent function is both natural and cultivated (Miller, 2004), it is a circular movement towards psychic wholeness that is ongoing throughout one’s lifetime.

Jung (1960) specifies two major stages of the transcendent function. The first stage is to collect the unconscious materials through dream-images, fantasies, or active imagination and further clarify the mood or emotions evoked by these images either intellectually or by giving such materials visible shape through drawing or hands-on crafting. In this stage, aesthetic formulation and intellectual understanding complement each other in search for meanings and purpose from the unconscious. The second stage is to bring together “opposites for the production of a third: the transcendent function. At this stage it is no longer the unconscious that takes the lead, but the ego” (p. 87). The second stage is more important, and although the ego takes the lead, the dialogue between the conscious and the unconscious is as if “a dialogue were taking place between two human beings with equal rights” (p. 89) to allow the unconscious to have its say. The process in which the ego and the unconscious come to terms with each other is often a long, unending struggle.

While Jung is explicit about the transcendent function giving birth to the third, new thing, he considers the number four (not three) or quaternity as the symbol of wholeness, similar to the Taiji symbol of a circle incorporating the interaction of opposite forces—yin and yang. The transcendent function as a process is not linear but circular, and Jung uses mandala images to indicate the ongoing process of achieving balance in the circle. The ego cannot accomplish the union of the unconscious and the conscious once and for all, but each time absorbs part of the change into the psychic movement, and then the conflict of opposites resumes to re-initiate the process of struggle (Miller, 2004). For example, Jung worked with an artist as a patient and encouraged her to paint as a mode of expression. She painted a series of 24 pictures related to her dreams during the process of treatment. These paintings demonstrated the changes in her psychic state from the initial fragmentation depicted through split images to more integration through beautifully harmonized mandala circles (Jung, 1968).

Jung advocates going beyond the intellect to develop psychic wholeness because the emotional and affective life of an individual person cannot grow with an exclusively intellectual attitude. Creative and embodied formulations of what is repressed into the unconscious are necessary to break through the analytical and linear thinking that confines the psyche. Aesthetic and embodied activities that give shape to the unconscious can lift repression through nonverbal expressions, release the imagination, and bridge the split psyche. Jung practiced his theory in his own lifelong journey of achieving psychic integrity. He used mandala images, active imagination, and hands-on crafting to facilitate the process (Jung, 1960, 2009). In the last stage of his life, he retreated to his country home, Bollingen, to chop wood, carve stones, and rebuild its architecture, infused by his psychological insights and wisdom (Rosen, 1996).
While psychic struggles are necessary in the Jungian approach because of the difficulty of getting in touch with the unconscious, Daoist integration seeks inner harmony to dissolve the violence of suppression. In a circular movement, Daoist personhood develops the capacity to see conflicting sides of the same issue and follow the two courses at the same time. What is initially perceived as conflict can become a connected part of the whole in a broader context. While the lenses of struggle and harmony are different, going beyond the intellect is shared by Jungian and Daoist modes of integration. Integrative engagement in the dance of Dao include achieving union with nature, immersing oneself in artistic activities, and practicing meditation, among other exercises.

Getting in tune with the spirit of nature marks a distinctive feature of Daoist personhood. It is worthwhile to note here that “nature” in ancient China refers to self-so-ness or self-so, rather than the natural world directly (Ames and Hall, 2003; Lai, 2017; Luo, 2017). And the notion of “nature” is related to the Chinese notion of the universe as self-generating and self-transforming. However, for Daoists, the natural world provides inspiration for getting in touch with the spontaneous, self-transforming rhythm of the universe and for achieving inner harmony. Daoist personal cultivation requires direct engagement with nature, and historical academies (shuyuan) chose their sites according to appropriate natural landscapes (Yu & Tu, 2000).

Because of the ideographic nature of the Chinese language, Chinese aesthetics is closely related to language. Calligraphy, an inherent part of Chinese painting, is considered a form of art that unites the intellect and the aesthetic. Chinese aesthetic creativity is embedded in the fundamental orientation of harmony between humans and nature, not in a representational way, but in a holistic capturing of the spirit of nature or objects (Lai, 1992). Daoist integrative engagement is intimately connected to artistic activities such as calligraphy, poetry, painting, music, and architecture. Experiencing the power of yin-yang dynamics, one necessarily blends intellectual understanding, holistic insights, and the creative formulation of symbols in embodied activities.

Both Dao De Jing (Chapter 10) and Zhuangzi mention practicing meditative breathing, and Zhuangzi further develops specific modes of stillness related to achieving authentic personhood. For example, practicing meditative breathing to reach emptiness of the mind/heart is called “fasting of the mind/heart”. “Forgetting self by sitting” means achieving enlightenment beyond the distinction between the self and the world. As Chang Chung-Yuan points out, “Through concentration on nothingness, one awakens his cosmic consciousness to spiritual revelation” (Chang, 1963, 137). Thus, going beyond worldly affairs, external objects, one’s own existence, and life and death, one reaches a carefree state in union with Dao. Here transcending all the external and internal constraints is simultaneous with deepening attunement to Dao (Ding, 2004; Xu, 2013). Achieving such an experience of oneness with Dao transcends language and the intellect.

David Rosen (1996), who has studied Carl Jung’s life history, points out that Jung’s search for transcendent integrity demonstrates the yin-yang dynamics of Dao, so it is not surprising that insights provided by both Carl Jung’s theory and Daoism...
have strong resonance. Both the Jungian transcendent function and Daoist harmony value the role of imagination and embodiment in cultivating the wholeness of a person, which has important educational implications. Aesthetic, meditative, embodied, hands-on, and self-reflexive engagements play important roles in integrative education. Unfortunately, modern education has over-emphasized the intellect at the expense of other capacities. Both the Jungian synthetic method and the Daoist circular movement point to the necessity of transcending the confinement of the intellect in education.

IV. The Inner Landscape of Education

Jungian theory is seldom discussed in the field of education, partly because it is the theory of the human psyche and psychotherapy, and the classroom setting is different from therapeutic situations. However, this paper is not about directly applying Jungian principles but to understand how its philosophical orientation in relationship with Daoism can inform educators’ effort to attend to the inner landscape of education. As mentioned before, this attention to the inner life of education has been largely neglected. As Brian Casemore comments on American education, “Where education, in the throes of standardization and quantification, becomes a soul deadening experience, it demands concern for the fundamental experience of aliveness, for a recovery of the inner world” to restore conditions “necessary for subjective vibrancy and self-understanding” (Casemore, 2018, 7). Thomas Gitz-Johansen, from Denmark, sees Jungian psychology as playing “a compensatory or balancing role in the field of education”, which is currently dominated by measurable learning outcomes, instrumental teaching methods, and nationalized curricula (Gitz-Johansen, 2016, 379). Anne Phelan also advocates for the central role of teacher subjectivity in Canadian teacher education (Phelan, 2015). Both Jungian and Daoist approaches to integrating opposites, such as the conscious and the unconscious, reason and emotion, or mind and body, are essential for transforming education in integrative directions.

Echoing commitment to creative self-formation in education from diverse scholars, this paper demonstrates how the Jungian and Daoist approaches in combination can serve the purpose of vitalizing inner becoming, inter-subjective dialogues, and communal inquiry even when education as a field is plagued by unwanted external agendas. While there are intersections between the Jungian transcendent function and Daoist yin-yang dynamics, they also point to multiple bridges for re-imagining the inner landscape of education, including the inner landscapes of teachers, students, pedagogical relationships, and curriculum.

Attending to the ongoing renewal of the inner landscape of teachers is crucial for keeping education alive in a time of crisis. Two decades ago, Parker Palmer had already issued a call to attend to teachers’ inner work in order for them to connect with students and resist external forces that undermine meaningful education. He points out: “To educate is to guide students on an inner journey toward more truthful ways of seeing and being in the world. How can schools perform their mission without encouraging the guides to scout out that inner terrain?” (Palmer, 1998/2007,
Unfortunately, soon after his call for teachers to work from within, external forces have intensified the pressure for standardized uniformity in American education. In such a difficult time, the teacher’s inner work becomes more important to sustain the hope of education for students as well as the teacher’s own commitment to education. According to Gitz-Johansen, Jung put a lot of emphasis on teachers’ (and parents’) self-education because without understanding their own dreams, fantasies, and unconscious problems, educators may negatively influence students in unintentional ways (Gitz-Johansen, 2016). Susan Rowland also points out that the unconscious, if one is not aware of it, can be projected to “other people, to ideas and ideologies, and social institutions” (Rowland, 2012, 8), which makes coming to terms with the unconscious a necessary task for educators whose relational attunement is not only oriented to students but also to texts/ideas. Jungian self-education is essentially a process of exercising the transcendent function to first bring the unconscious to light and then to integrate it to form a new attitude. This process is necessarily influenced by the events and activities of teaching as well as by what transpires psychically from the process of teaching. In this sense, teaching is itself part of the Jungian transcendent function for teachers to achieve a new potentiality of the self.

“Tranquility in turbulence” is the phrase that Zhuangzi uses to describe the highest level of inner peace (Author). In Daoism, it is less about the unconscious and more about achieving harmony between yin and yang through relational dynamics. Daoist personal cultivation suggests that teachers need to unlearn the mechanisms of control and domination while simultaneously participating in interpersonal, social, and natural relationships. “The mutual entailing of opposites” (Ames and Hall, 2003, 27) in yin-yang dynamics supports an interdependent world in which a teacher’s relational attunement helps to mediate between the inner and the outer so that external demands do not coerce her or him into submission. Instead, following dynamic patterns of relationships, the teacher’s wuwei position improvises the best responses to complex movements of relational situations and brings students’ potentiality into existence. Practicing mindfulness and stillness is part of teachers’ self-education—echoed by the contemporary mindfulness movement (Jennings, 2015)—because without inner peace, a teacher cannot practice wuwei in the classroom.

The inner landscape of students must be nurtured. Learning is an activity that is full of tensions, risks, and emotional complexity, as it involves learners’ stepping into the unknown. Beyond the current external emphasis on intellectual excellence, for students’ well-being, their symbolic, intuitive, and imaginative capacity must be cultivated. When the thinking function is over-developed at the expense of feeling, intuition, and the senses, the student will grow into a one-sided person who suffers from psychic fragmentation. Daoism further approaches the mere accumulation of knowledge as an obstacle to personal cultivation. Both Jung and Daoism support the psychic or personal wholeness of students in their intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual growth. Helping students to get in touch with their internal resources not only means deconstructing the mechanisms of repression and suppression but also means creating conditions for students to learn and grow as whole persons through lived experience (Mayes, 2005; Rowlands, 2012).
If the role of the unconscious is considered, the inner landscape of pedagogical relationships is complicated and messy. Jenna Min Shim asserts that “both conscious and unconscious subjectivities are at work in pedagogical scenes” (Shim, 2018, 270). To support students’ inner work, teachers must have the capacity to withdraw their own projection and understand students’ psychic lives. While the role of transference and counter-transference (see Mayes, 2005, 2007) is beyond the scope of this paper, it is sufficient to note that the interiority of teacher-student relationship is influenced by the unconscious. Jungian theory emphasizes the role of engaging in dialogues without forcing understanding, engagements that invite teachers to suspend judgment and give students enough space and time to work with the problems at hand. Imposition is not a Daoist stance either. Adapting to local situations and improvising appropriate responses, wuwei as a teacher’s position does not impose but invites students’ own creativity (Author).

The Latin root word educare means “leading out” (Aoki, 2005, 438). While both teachers and students have the potential to lead out and/or be led out into a new world, the teacher is “the first among equals” (Doll, 2012) in serving as a guide for students. In this sense, both leading new adventures and providing pedagogical companionship are necessary tasks for educators (Author). This leading out is also differentiated according to students’ situations. For instance, in school education, the teacher must be mindful of not reinforcing the mechanisms of repression or suppression, but of connecting teaching with students’ intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth as whole persons. In college education, the role of the instructor is not only to accompany students in their journey but also to help them unlearn aspects of socialization that are harmful to their personal fulfillment.

The inner landscape of curriculum brings together the inner worlds of teachers and students in their relationships between and among one another and also with academic knowledge. While curriculum is often thought to consist only of subject matter or texts, it has been re-conceptualized as “a complicated conversation” (Pinar, 2012, 1) informed by subjectivity, academic knowledge, and historical situations. Thus, curriculum is no longer a noun but a movement as lived in time, place, relationality, and embodied encounters in which subjectivity threads through subject matter for the reciprocal reconstruction of the subjective and the social. Emphasizing the necessity of shifting from instrumental concerns to subjective reconstruction, Pinar asserts, “It is through subjectivity that one experiences history and society, and it is subjectivity through which history and society speak” (Pinar, 2012, 33).

As a non-dual philosophy, Daoism does not use the term “subjectivity”, since it implies the separation of subject and object. The mutual embeddedness of yin and yang with a strong sense of interconnectedness does not support a categorical distinction between subject and object. While I think a certain sense of differentiation between subject and object is needed for exploring the depth of one’s psychic life, such a differentiation should not lead to dualistic thinking. In Daoism, personhood is always inherently relational with nature and with others. As intellect is highly integrated with the body, the aesthetic, and the spiritual in Daoism, engagement with academic studies should be embodied, although modern education has disrupted this tradition. Following the dance of Dao, the inner landscape of curriculum is not
centered on the accumulation of academic knowledge, but on whether teaching and learning guide personal cultivation towards its union with Dao. While subjectivity and personhood have a different degree of differentiation, they meet at the inner landscape of curriculum through the individual person as the site of transformation.

It is important to point out at the end of this paper that the inner is always related to the outer, so the lens for the inner landscape of education does not intend to de-emphasize the outer world, as the two are intimately intertwined. Jung regards the capacity for an inner dialogue with the unconscious as the basis for outer dialogues with others in a community: dialoguing with the other within the self leads to dialoguing with others who may hold different perspectives from the self. In Daoist personhood, the individual is always relational. By highlighting the significance of the inner work, this paper intends to call attention to what is currently further marginalized in the field of education. Particularly in today’s education, such a call is imperative for sustaining the pulse of education: “Teaching from their depths to their students’ depths allows teachers to find deeper satisfaction in their vital work as they foster psychodynamic and ethical growth in their students” (Mayes, 2007, 210) and allows students to find deeper meaning in their study. Only when both teachers and students breathe life into the classroom can education fulfill its vital role in personal and social transformation.

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFUCIAN ETHICS AND CARE ETHICS: A REFLECTION, REJECTION, AND RECONSTRUCTION

Qingjuan Sun

Abstract: This essay first refutes two extant views on the relationship between Confucian ethics and care ethics, that is, 1) Confucian ethics is a care ethics, and 2) Confucian ethics and care ethics are virtue ethics. It then proposes that a better accommodation of Confucian ethics and care ethics into a single value system is to put them under relation ethics. While Confucian ethics is relation-oriented, care ethics is relation-constituted.

Regarding the relationship between Confucian ethics and care ethics, there are two kinds of mainstream opinions. One is represented by Chenyang Li (1994; 2008) and characterizes Confucian ethics, Mencius ethics included, as a care ethics. The other is held by scholars such as Daniel Star (2002) and Raja Halwani (2003) and regards Confucian ethics and care ethics as virtue ethics. This essay in the following will reject both views and propose a new approach that can accommodate Confucian ethics and care ethics in a single value system.

To avoid confusion and ambiguity, two points should be clarified beforehand. First, by Confucian ethics, this essay does not refer to the broad and prolonged ethical tradition of Confucianism, which is far beyond its coverage. Rather, it succeeds previous discussions pertinent to the topic and focuses on Confucius ethics as well as Mencius ethics in elaborating Confucian ethical points. Second, when talking about care ethics, instead of referring it broadly as a cluster of normative ethical theories, this essay, following Li’s arguments, draws support from Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings’s works.

Rejection I: Mencius Ethics Is Care Ethics

This essay will begin with Li’s enlightening article of Does Confucian Ethics Integrate Care Ethics and Justice Ethics? The Case of Mencius (2008). While some scholars hold that Confucian ethics embraces both care and justice, Li’s article, by introducing the concept of “configuration of values,” claims that care ethics and justice ethics cannot be integrated into Confucian ethics. He first distinguishes two kinds of perspectives: perspectives as an aspect of view or single-aspect perspective and perspectives as interrelated aspects or configured perspective, and argues that different ethics may embrace the same values from a single-aspect perspective, but they have different ways of configuration of these values. Li contends that while care and justice may be compatible as single-aspect perspectives within a configured

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perspective since a configured perspective can embrace both values, care ethics and justice ethics are incompatible as configured perspectives because these two configurations contradict each other and cannot be incorporated into a single value system. Further, Li holds that although Mencius advocates both care and justice as single-aspect perspectives, he does not embrace care ethics and justice ethics as configured perspectives. Besides, in contrast to justice ethics, Confucian ethics attaches great importance to family relationships and, in maintaining such relationships, Confucian ethics is willing to give up impartiality. Therefore, Li concludes that Mencius ethics should be considered as a care ethics rather than a justice ethics or a mixture of these two ethics.

Li’s approach is novel and inspiring and his arguments are systematic, however, there is an inconsistency of standard in his illustration of the relationships among care ethics, justice ethics, and Confucian ethics. It is said that care and justice are compatible as single-aspect perspectives, while care ethics and justice ethics are incompatible as configured perspectives, because these two ethics “give opposite answers to the question of which single-aspect perspective is more important” (Li 2008, 74-75). When it comes to the relationship between care ethics and Confucian ethics, however, Li suggests that Confucian ethics, or more precisely Mencius ethics, is a kind of care ethics. It is thus only reasonable to say that in Li’s view both care ethics and Mencius ethics give the same answer to the question of which single-aspect perspective is more important, and they place the same value above the other in their configuration of ethical values. If the above analysis is correct, this essay holds differently from Li on this point.

Li’s argument is based on the notion that ren (benevolence 仁) is the core concept in Confucianism. Undoubtedly, Confucian ethics takes ren to be an uppermost virtue. But we cannot say that ren is the uppermost value in Confucian ethics. In Xunzi, for example, li (ritual propriety 礼) is evidently more prominent than ren. In the following, this essay will argue that ren is not the uppermost value in Mencius either. Rather, it is only one of the four supreme virtues, namely, ren, yi (righteousness 义), li, and zhi (wisdom 智). It says that,

The feeling of compassion is the sprout of benevolence. The feeling of distain is the sprout of righteousness. The feeling of deference is the sprout of ritual propriety. The feeling of approval and disapproval is the sprout of wisdom. People having these four sprouts is like their having four limbs. (Mencius 2A: 6)1

The four sprouts of the four virtues, that is, ren, yi, li, and zhi, parallel with each other. No particular stress is laid on any one of them. Besides, these four sprouts, as well as the four virtues, are intrinsic to every man. In Mencius 6A: 6, it says that,

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1 Quotations of Mencius are based on Mengzi: with selections from traditional commentaries, translated, with Introduction and Notes, by Bryan W. Van Norden (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2008).
Humans all have the feeling of compassion. Humans all have the feeling of disdain. Humans all have the feeling of respect. Humans all have the feeling of approval and disapproval. The feeling of compassion is benevolence. The feeling of disdain is righteousness. The feeling of respect is propriety. The feeling of approval and disapproval is wisdom. Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are not welded to us externally. We inherently have them.

More importantly, not a single one of them can be omitted or downplayed. The absence of any one of them will make a man not a man anymore. This could be backed up by the statement in Mencius 2A: 6 that, “if one is without the feeling of compassion, one is not human. If one is without the feeling of disdain, one is not human. If one is without the feeling of respect, one is not human. If one is without the feeling of approval and disapproval, one is not human.” The equal importance of the four feelings is thus obvious.

Emerged from the four paralleled sprouts, the four virtues are not only equally important as single-aspect perspectives, but also as configured perspectives. That is to say, people should make their decision or behave based on a much comprehensive consideration of these four virtues in accordance with the concrete relationships and specific situations rather than acting merely out of ren. For example, in dealing with a lawsuit, ren is not the magistral virtue in Mencius. A judge should not be dominated by his feeling of compassion toward a wrongdoer. On the contrary, he should make a clear distinction between right and wrong, and deal with the wrongdoer in accordance with the principle of justice and law. It is clearly expressed in the Wuxing (The Five Conducts 五行), unearthed manuscript from Guodian Chu Tomb, that,

If one lacks straightforward determination, he will not take action. If one does not harbor lenience, he is not discerning of the way. To mete out great punishments for great crimes is to have “straightforward determination”; to pardon minor crimes is to “harbor lenience.” If one does not mete out great punishments for great crimes, he will not be taking action; if he does not pardon minor crimes, he will not be discerning of the way. (Cook 2012, 514)

In addition, it also says that straightforward determination is the orientation of yi, and harboring lenience is the orientation of ren (Cook 2012, 514). Apparently, ren is not the single ultimate value in judging a crime. If it is a severe crime, the judge ought not to commiserate or harbor the wrongdoer, as the orientation of yi is being called upon in the case. Heavy punishment should be carried out. Nevertheless, it does not imply that the judge should cast off ren. It is still possible that when a judge severely punishes the criminal following the orientation of yi, he is at the same time showing his compassion towards the victim and other people, even things, involved. But he should uphold yi as his main principle and not be influenced by personal emotion of compassion and thus partial in sentencing. The case would be totally different if the crime is a minor one. The predominant value becomes ren and accordingly the

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2 Quotations of the Wu Xing text in this essay are based on The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: a study & complete translation, vols. I, translated by Scott Cook (Cornell East Asia Series, 2012 ).
orientation of *ren* should be applied. As a result, minor crime should be pardoned to harbor lenience. Mencius followed and developed this idea of the *Wuxing*. He does not presuppose a *single* utmost value. The four virtues, namely, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* are of equal importance and dominate in turn according to specific situations.

This equal importance of the four virtues constitutes one of the reasons why Mencius always promotes the virtue of *ren* and the virtue of *yi* simultaneously. According to Pang Pu’s reading, the virtue of *yi*, rooted in the feeling of disdain, runs also as a kind of moral restriction to the virtue of *ren*. The feeling of disdain includes two components, that is, the feeling of shame (*xiu* 舒) and the feeling of dislike (*wu* 恶). The former makes people feel shameful when they are not morally good, and the latter is the detestation towards others when others are not morally good (Pang 2005, 452). With such a limitation, people should apply their feeling of disdain only to good people and on good deeds in an appropriate manner without abusing it. Another account for promoting *ren* and *yi* simultaneously is that people need to adjust their emphasis on different virtues from time to time based on the roles they are playing in society. It says in *Mencius* 7B: 24 that, “Benevolence between father and son, righteousness between ruler and minister, propriety between guest and host, and wisdom in relation to the worthy.” This shows the emphasis that Mencius places on specific virtues with respect to people’s specific roles within different relationships. For example, in the relationship between a father and his son, the emphasis should be put on the virtue of *ren*. Let *ren* be the guiding virtue in the father-son relationship. When this father is facing the ruler, however, his role shifts from a “father” to a “minister.” The virtue of *yi* accordingly stands out in the ruler-minister relationship. The same logic also applies to *li* and *zhi*.

The situation is different in care ethics. From a configured perspective, *care/caring* plays the most important role. According to care ethics, the caring person⁴ instead of appealing to reason, the universal principles, or other fixed rules, tends to make moral decisions or act based on feelings and a sense of “personal ideal.” She tries to apprehend the real situations of the other and figure out what the other expects of her. Thus, caring behavior is actually related to the other’s wants and

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3 According to Van Norden’s translation, it follows that “the sage in relation to the Way of Heaven 人之於天道也．” This essay, however, takes the character of *ren* 人 as a redundant word. Hence the sentence should be “sagacity in relation to the Way of Heaven 人之於天道也．Most of the time, Mencius does not parallel sagacity (*sheng* 聖) with *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. This is because *sheng* belongs to the *tian*’s Way, while the other four belong to human Way. It says in the *Wuxing* text that, “When all five kinds of virtuous action are in harmony, it is called ‘virtue’. When four kinds of action are in harmony, it is called ‘good’. Good is the human Way. Virtue is *tian’s Way*”. “Five” refers to *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi* and *sheng*, and “four” refers to *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. Mencius’ focus is on the human Way, that is, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*.

4 In discussing care ethics, this essay uses consistently female pronouns and examples to refer to the one-caring. But neither does it mean all women would practice care ethics, nor will it exclude all men outside our consideration. It is not a rivalry between women and men. What this essay aims to illustrate here are two different approaches. And the use of female pronouns and examples only serve to avoid confusion.
desires, and also the objective problematic situations the other is facing. In addition, the caring relationship needs the one-caring to get rid of frame of self-reference and get into that of the cared-for. The mental engrossment focuses on the other, the cared-for, rather than the one-caring.

A comparison on sentencing is given by Nel Noddings in the *Caring* (2003). She comes up with two approaches in asserting the proper punishment of a particular crime. The father, who represents the traditional approach, concerns about the principles that the wrongdoer violates; while the mother, acting out of affection and regard, may want to inquiry more about the criminal and his victims. The former points directly to the abstraction, therefore he can deal with the case distinctly and logically despite the intricate interferences such as the particular person and specific circumstances. The immediate response of the latter, on the contrary, directs to concretization, involving herself in concrete facts, feelings and requirements of others, and personal relationships and histories. On account of these two different approaches, the father may uphold the principles and adhere to the rules at the expense of scarifying his criminal son. The mother, however, tends to protect her son regardless of all the principles and rules (Noddings, 2003, 36-37).

Another compelling example mentioned by Carol Gilligan’s *In A Different Voice* (1982) also presents the caring perspective. The female lawyer Hilary, who considers self-sacrificing conducts courageous and praiseworthy, runs into dilemmas in both her personal life and professional life. She finds it impossible to avoid hurt “in a relationship where the truths of each person is conflicting” and “in court where, despite her concern for the client on the other side, she decided not to help her opponent win his case.” She found, in both instances, “the absolute injunction against hurting others to be an inadequate guide to resolving the actual dilemmas she faced.” Her final solution to such dilemmas is to claim “the right to include herself among the people whom she considers it moral not to hurt” (Gilligan, 1982, 165).

Therefore, the nearly insane conducts of Bree Van de Kamp in the TV series *Desperate Housewives* seem understandable, or at least not that “insane.” She exerts all her energies to cover the crime of her son who runs over one of her best friends’ mother-in-law. She also does whatever she can to conceal her unmarried daughter’s disgraceful pregnancy, even pretends to be pregnant herself and tries to raise the child as her own son. All these madnesses are at least partly out of a mother’s caring toward her children. It is said by Noddings that “If I care enough, I may do something wild and desperate in behalf of the other … Hence, in caring, my rational powers are not diminished, but they are enrolled in the service of my engrossment in the other” (Noddings, 2003, 36).

From the above analysis and the distinct responses in dealing judicial issues, we can see that *ren* or caring is not the sole and most important consideration in Mencius. Compared with the caring in care ethics, Mencius’ *ren* carries much more restrictions. People have to take other important virtues into account and think much more comprehensively. Besides, personal feelings and emotions are not always wanted in Mencius. In certain situations, subjective sentiments, like empathy and compassion, should be put aside. By contrast, private affections and regards are essential to care ethics. They are indispensable in any case. Hence, even though the notion of *ren* in
Mencius in some way resembles caring in care ethics as single-aspect perspectives, the ethics of Mencius and care ethics are different as configured perspectives.

Rejection II: Confucius Ethics Is Care Ethics

When it refers to Confucius ethics, which considers the virtue of ren to be the utmost virtue, there undeniably are some similarities between the concept of ren in Confucius and that of caring in care ethics. With respect to the similarities, Chenyang Li mainly hammers at three major areas in his article The Confucian Concept of Jen and the Feminist Ethics of Care: A Comparative Study (1994). First, he contends that Jen (i.e. ren), being the highest moral ideal of Confucianism, can be best interpreted as caring, which is the highest moral ideal of care ethics. He says that, “Even if the entire concept of Jen (Jen of affection and Jen of virtue) cannot be reduced to ‘caring,’ at least we can say that ‘caring’ occupies a central place in this concept” (Li, 1994, 74).

Second, the highest moral ideals as they are, neither Jen nor caring pursues general principles or universal rules. More importantly, they both “remain flexible with rules.” Third, both Confucian ethics and care ethics promote their highest moral ideals, namely Jen and caring, with gradations. It is said that “although we should care for everyone in the world if possible, we do need to start with those closest to us,” and this is “the only reasonable way to practice Jen and care” (Li, 1994, 81). Based on these similarities, Li comes to his conclusion that Confucian ethics is a care ethics.

Hot debates follow consequently. In the article Do Confucians Really care? A Defense of the Distinctiveness of Care Ethics: A Reply to Chenyang Li (2002), Daniel Star, on the one hand, critiques this Confucian care thesis, namely, the thesis that Confucian ethics is either philosophically very similar to care ethics or is actually a form of care ethics. He contends that Confucian ethics is better conceived of as a unique kind of role-focused virtue ethics. On the other hand, he also argues that care ethics is by no means merely a new approach to virtue ethics. Ranjoo Seodu Herr (2003) also rejects the proposition that Confucian ethics is a kind of care ethics by examining two aspects of Confucianism and care ethics that allegedly converge: their emphasis on human relationship and their prescriptions for maintaining harmonious human relationship, namely, the cultivation of ren in Confucianism and caring in care ethics. She analyzes that their respective prescriptions regarding human relationship are unbridgeable. And the effort to assimilate these two ethics rests on the downplaying and neglect of li, and on the misunderstanding of the feminist conception of care. Raja Halwani (2003), in the article Care Ethics and Virtue Ethics, argues that care ethics should be subsumed under virtue ethics by construing care as an important virtue, which allows us to achieve two desirable goals. First, we preserve what is important about care ethics, such as its insistence on particularity, partiality, emotional engagement, and the importance of care to our moral lives. Second, we avoid two important objections to care ethics, namely, that it neglects justice, and that it contains no mechanism by which care can be regulated so as not to go to morally corruption.

The above authors propose different kinds of tenable arguments to oppose the notion of considering Confucian ethics a care ethics. This essay is in sympathy with
them on this point. However, it is not satisfied with their notion of taking Confucian ethics and care ethics as virtue ethics. The essay will further argue against Li’s notion in what follows by rejecting his three similarities, and in the meantime draw forth its own view on the relationship between Confucian ethics and care ethics.

The first similarity to be rejected is that neither Confucian concept of ren nor caring of care ethics involves general principles. Care ethics does not call on abstractions but devotes to concretizations. It “recognizes and calls forth human judgment across a wide range of fact and feeling” (Li, 1994, 77). Therefore, it is reasonable to attribute it as non-general-principle-needed. However, it is at least debatable to say that Confucian concept of ren “cannot be achieved by following general principles” (Li 1994, 76). As a matter of fact, this essay holds that Confucian ethics involves general principles, and the Confucian concept of li and its requirements actually serve as the kind of general principles regulating the virtue of ren.

First, li in Confucianism gives a series of general principles, acting up to which can lead to the accomplishment of ren. A conversation is recorded in the Analects 12.1:

Yan Hui asked about ren. The Master said, “Restricting yourself and return to rites constitutes ren. If for one day you managed to restrain yourself and return to the rites, in this way you could lead the entire world back to ren. The key to achieving ren lies within yourself — how could it come from other?”

Yan Hui asked, “May I inquire as to the specifics?” The Master said, “Do not look unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not listen unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not speak unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not move unless it is in accordance with ritual.” Yan Hui replied, “Although I am not quick to understand, I ask permission to devote myself to this teaching.”

This passage conveys at least three messages. 1) One can attain the virtue of ren and become a person of ren by restricting himself and returning to li. In this sense, ren can be perceived as the internalization of li. The achievement of ren does not depend on others but is determined by one’s own efforts. Therefore, it is inappropriate to say that ren cannot be accomplished by following li which contains a series of moral principles. 2) These indispensable “specifics” are the general requirements of li. They are always applicable and can be used to regulate people’s behaviors in any situation at any time, which means they are general and universal. 3) Virtuous as Yan Hui was, he still modestly made practicing the four “specifics” his business. This concrete example shows indirectly the feasibility and efficiency of achieving ren by following the four specifics.

Second, although li is not the utmost virtue in Confucianism as configured perspective, it is indispensable as single-aspect perspective to the virtue of ren. In the Analects, it is mentioned in many places the essential functions that li plays. For

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5 Quotations of Analects are based on Confucius Analects, translated by Edward Slingerland (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003), with modifications when necessary.
example, it appears repeatedly that, “Someone who is broadly learned with regard to culture, and whose conduct is restrained by the li, can be counted upon to not go astray” (Analects 6.27; 12.15). Yan Yuan also says that “The Mater is skilled at gradually leading me on, step by step. He broadens me with culture and restrains me with rites” (Analects 9.11). From these we can see, in order to prevent one from going against the utmost virtue of ren, it is imperative to restrain oneself by li and act in coherence with its requirements. According to Confucius, if people do not behave in accordance with li, they do not really achieve the full excellence (Analects 15.33). Therefore, it is safe to say that he who wants to be a person of ren should conduct according to the requirements of li. Otherwise, if a person does not learn and understand li, he could not even take his place in the society (Analects 20.3, 16.13, and 8.8). In addition to ren, the restrictive function of li also works well when it is applied to other important Confucian virtues, which are concrete presentations and different aspects of the utmost virtue ren in specific situations. To name some, the virtue of gong (respectfulness), shen (carefulness), yong (courageousness), and zhi (upright), etc. These virtues are highly praised and greatly promoted as single-aspect perspectives in Confucianism. Nonetheless, they will go astray without the regulating of li: respectfulness becomes exasperation, carefulness becomes timidity, courageousness becomes unruliness, and upright becomes inflexibility (Analects 8.2).

Third, most of the requirements of li are flexible and open to modifications in their application, though, there are certain unchangeable universal rules of it. We can examine the example proposed in Li’s article. In Analects 4.18, the Master says that, “In serving his father and mother a man may gently remonstrate with them. But if he sees that he has failed to change their opinion, he should resume an attitude of deference and not thwart them.” Different from Li, this essay reads from it the absolute obedience and respect for a son towards his parents. A son should always serve his parents with reverence and respect. Even in cases when his parents are wrong, a son should not point out their mistakes straightforwardly or impolitely. He should give his advice in an appropriate way and at an appropriate degree. If his parents do not take the advice, he should not complain or be dissatisfied with them, but attend upon them with an even higher degree of reverence and respect. Besides, he should not give up easily but continue to hold on to his responsibility until he convinces his parents successfully and assists them to become better persons (Herr, 2003, 472-473). This is not blind filial piety, but a great wisdom in dealing with the intricate interpersonal relationships in Confucianism. The son preserves yi without violating li, not to mention that he turns his parents into better persons as well.

In denying that filial piety to one’s parents is absolute, Li also resorts to the collision between filial piety to one’s parents and loyalty (zhong) to the ruler, and asserts that “Confucianism offers no general rules to solve the problem” (Li 1994, 78) when they conflict with each other. Tension, or even conflict, does exist between filial piety and loyalty sometimes, but the two can be accommodated. Mencius holds that

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6 This translation is adopted from Li’s article.
the greatest service is severing one’s parents (Mencius 4A: 19), therefore loyalty is logically secondary to filial piety. When addressing the seemingly dilemma of Shun being so laboriously engaged in the sovereign’s business that he was unable to nourish his parents, Mencius says that of all which a filial son can attain to, there is nothing greater than his honoring to his parents; while of what can be attained to in honoring his parents, there is nothing greater than nourishing them with the whole kingdom (Mencius 5A: 4). In other words, being loyal to the sovereign by serving the state is actually the greatest filial piety towards one’s parents. A sound account would be that by serving the state, one helps to maintain the state in peace and prosperous, which will in turn benefit one’s family and let the family prosperous in a peaceful environment. As is expressed in the Springs and Autumn of the Lu’s Family (Lüshi Chunqiu 吕氏春秋), if the whole state is in chaos, there is no stable family within it. It would be impossible for people to live and work in peace and contentment and to be happy and prosperous if the whole state is devastated and ravished.

In fact, filial piety and loyalty not only can be accommodated, but they are essentially in agreement to Confucians. According to the chapter of “A Summary Account of Sacrifices” (Ji Tong 祭统) in the Book of Rites (Liji 礼记), “There is a fundamental agreement between a loyal subject in his service of his ruler and a filial son in his service of his parents” (25.2). In the chapter of “The Meaning of Sacrifices” (Ji Yi 祭义), it also says that, “if (a man) in serving his ruler, he be not loyal, he is not filial” (24.26). Confucius is also quoted in the Classic of Filial Piety (Xiao Jing 孝经) as saying that filial piety is the root of all virtues. Filial piety is divided into different stages: “it commences with the service of parents; it proceeds to the service of the ruler; it is completed by the establishment of character” (1.1). Hence, the seemingly contradiction between filial piety and loyalty cannot be used to deprive the absoluteness from filial piety.

Rejection III: Care Ethics Is Merely a Virtue Ethics

When comes to Li’s third similarity, this essay agrees that gradation appears in both Confucian ethics and care ethics. Nonetheless, this essay argues that the gradation of ren is essentially different from that of caring. It believes that the extension of Confucian utmost virtue of ren is self-oriented, while the application of caring in care ethics is other-concerned and caring-centered.

The Confucian belief in “love with gradations” (i.e. ai you cha deng 愛有差等) means that instead of loving or caring for all people universally without distinction, one should first start from loving or caring one’s own family members and then gradually extend it to others. It is also reasonable for Confucians to love or care his family more than strangers. Mencius says in 1A: 7 that, “Treat your elders as elders, and extend it to the elders of others; treat your young ones as young ones; and extend it to the young ones of others.” We should love our own elders and young ones first and then extend it to the elders and young ones of others, not the other way around.

What should be noticed is that Confucian love is self-oriented. It is from my family that the love, or caring, is being extended. I begin with my family, love my
own elders and young ones, and then extend the love and caring to others. It is both mentioned in the *Analects* 12.2 and 15.24 that, “Do not impose others what you yourself do not desire.” This principle is considered as the Confucian Golden Rule. And it says in 6.30: “Desiring to take his stand, one who is benevolent helps other to take their stand; wanting to realize himself, he helps others to realize themselves. Being able to take what is near at hand as an analogy could perhaps be called the method of benevolence.” In these two statements, caring also starts from the self. It is centered on one’s own desires and feelings, and likes and dislikes, and further supposes that others are the same as the caring-self, and have the same needs as the caring-self. Accordingly, the caring-self should give others what himself wants, and should not impose on others what himself does not want. The problem of this notion is that it neglects the real needs and requirements of the others involved. Is what I want necessarily the same as the others do, and is what I do not want necessarily useless to others? There is no response in Confucian ethics, but it is not hard to imagine a negative case in real life. For example, there are plenty parents who want their children to live out their own unfulfilled dreams which denies the opportunity of their children to live life for themselves. While the husband hates all kinds of flowers, his wife may be expecting a bunch of roses on their anniversary. In such cases, people should give up being self-oriented.

Care ethics, on the other hand, is other-concerned and caring-centered. Even though the feelings of the one-caring are important, they are not the key consideration. Noddings says that, “Caring involves, for the one-caring, a ‘feeling with’ the other. We might want to call this relationship ‘empathy,’ but we should think about what we mean by this term.” It is not that “the power of projecting one’s personality into, and so fully understanding, the object of contemplation” as defined in *The Oxford Universal Dictionary*. She elaborates that the idea of “feeling with” involves, instead of projection, reception which she calls “engrossment.” It is neither about the extension of my feelings and needs, nor about what I would feel in certain situations as Confucian ethics holds. Rather

> I receive others into myself, and I see and feel with the other. I become a duality. I am not thus caused to see or to feel—that is, to exhibit certain behavioral signs interpreted as seeing and feeling—for I am committed to the receptivity that permits me to see and to feel in this way. The seeing and feeling are mine, but only partly and temporarily mine, as on loan to me. (Noddings, 2003, 30)

In this way, as long as the one-caring receives the cared-for, she is totally with him. What we really care is not the problematic situations, but the person. When one cares, she stands in the view of the cared-for, his objective needs, and his actual expectations from her. The one-caring’s attention and mental engrossment are on the cared-for, not on her own feelings. Thus, the reasons for the caring conducts are related both with the cared-for’s wants and desires and with the objective factors of his problematic situation, not the one-caring’s own personal frame of reference into the cared-for (Noddings, 2003, 24).
Besides, care ethics concerns relatively less about self-feelings and takes caring as responsibility. For example, in Gilligan’s classic study, Claire, one of the female participants mentioned, considered Heinz’s dilemma, that is, whether he should steal the drug or not, by focusing on the failure of response, rather than on the conflict of rights. She not only believes that Heinz should steal the drug since his wife’s life was more important than anything, but also thinks that the druggist has a moral obligation to show compassion to the patient and he does not have the right to refuse. She also says that, “the wife needed him at this point to do it; she couldn’t have done it, and it’s up to him to do for her what she needs.” In analyzing this, Gilligan says that, “Whether Heinz loves his wife or not is irrelevant to Claire’s decision, not because life has priority over affection, but because his wife is another human being who needs help. Thus the moral injunction to act stems not from Heinz’s feelings about his wife but from his awareness of her need.” In this case, a person’s responsibility equates the need to respond that “arises from the recognition that others are counting on you and that you are in a position to help.” The one-caring does not resort to any principles and rules before conducting. She usually cares naturally and directly, just because she wants to respond positively to people who turn to her (Gilligan 1982, 54).

Therefore, even though both ren and caring have gradation, they gradate differently in an opposite direction. The Confucian notion of ren, being self-centered, puts most emphasis on the self and the feelings of the self. The extension of ren starts from the self and is based on the closeness of relationships between the self and the others. The caring in care ethics, however, is other-oriented. It prioritizes the cared-for and the feelings of the cared-for. It considers caring as responsibility, and focuses on the establishment of the caring relation.

Conclusion: Confucian Ethics and Care Ethics Are Relation Ethics

The above analysis has shown that Confucian ethics, from the perspective of Confucius and Mencius, is not care ethics or a care ethics. Then what is the relationship between the two ethics? Star proposes to integrate both into a role-focused virtue ethics (2002). This essay will argue that it is inappropriate to equate care ethics a kind of virtue ethics.

According to Noddings’ definition, there are two meanings of caring, that is, 1) caring as a certain kind of relation or encounter; and 2) caring as a virtue, as an attribute or disposition frequently exercised by a moral agent (Noddings 2003, xiii). Based on the second meaning, we might well consider care ethics as a kind of virtue ethics, however, it is not all-inclusive for the first meaning has been overlooked. More importantly, Noddings points out that, “Both concepts are useful, but care theory itself makes its special contribution through the relational sense” (Noddings 1999, 37). Care ethics puts its emphasis on the caring relation. It is believed that relations, rather than individuals, are ontologically basic. This means that different from traditional moral philosophy, which does not pay enough attention to the contributions of the cared-for, care ethics not only requires the one-caring to have the virtue of caring, but also depends on the cared-for to successfully receive and accept the caring emitted by
the one-caring. It is only after the cared-for receiving and accepting such caring that the caring relation can be established. Noddings contends that the primary message of caring is that we cannot justify ourselves as carers by claiming “we care.” If the recipients of our caring insist that “nobody cares,” caring relations do not exist (Noddings 2003, xiv). The caring actions and the caring relations largely depend on the cared-fors, not the ones that care. Noddings gives an example. On the one side, the students in high school want their teachers to care for them, but they feel nobody cares; while on the other side, the teachers convincingly insist that they do care since they work hard and hope their students to succeed. In this case, both sides may be blameless. But, the teachers obviously care only in the second sense of caring. Although they do have the virtue of caring, they fail to establish the caring relations. From the perspective of care ethics, caring as a virtue and caring as a relation are both important but the later takes a larger share of the importance. In other words, the establishment of caring relation is more essential than having the virtue of caring. Therefore, from a configured perspective, care ethics should be better described as a relation ethics than a virtue ethics.

According to Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont Jr., the pre-Buddhist Confucianism is best described as a role ethics which embodies first “a specific vision of human beings as relational persons constituted by the roles they live rather than as individual selves,” and embodies as well “a specific vision of the moral life that takes family feeling as the entry point for developing a consummate moral competence and a religious sensibility grounded in this world” (Ames and Rosemont 2011, 17). This means that Confucian ethics lays stress on the realistic life where people are interdependent and interactional. Once we were born, we interplay with others and live in a web of relations (being self-oriented and starting from family relations). As we growing up, the relational web may become more and more expanding and intricate. According to Confucianism, we should act in line with our roles within our relational web. In this sense, Confucian ethics can also be better characterized as relation ethics. For one thing, it is believed that we are relational persons, playing different roles in society and aiming to formulate a harmonious web of relations. For the other thing, roles are relative and changeable. It only exists when there is/are relation(s). For example, in a family, the mother is so called only because the existence of her child. Without this mother-child relation, there are no roles of mother and son/daughter. No relation, no role(s). Role(s) can only make sense within the framework of relation. Hence, relation ethics may well be more appropriate a name than role ethics from a configured perspective.

Each specific role corresponds with certain responsibilities and rights. To maintain the relations, everybody within it should perform his responsibilities dutifully. As is recorded in the Analects12.11,

Duke Jing of Qi asked Confucius about governing. Confucius responded, “Let the lord be a true lord, the ministers true ministers, the fathers true fathers, and the sons true sons.” The Duke replied, “Well put! Certainly if the lord is not a true lord, the ministers not true ministers, the fathers not true fathers, and the sons not true sons, even if there is sufficient grain, will I ever get to eat it?”
Here, “the lord be a true lord, the ministers’ true ministers, the fathers’ true fathers, and the sons’ true sons” means that the lord, ministers, fathers and sons all act in line with their roles respectively, or more precisely, with the specific responsibilities endorsed by their roles. For Confucians, not only the above four roles, but actually all roles should act in this way. It is demonstrable from the Confucian notion of rectification of names (zhengming 正名), which means that “things in actual fact should be made to accord with the implications attached to them by names” (Steinkraus, 1980, 262). To be noted, the roles serve to define one’s responsibilities, but it is not for the roles themselves, but rather, it is for harmonious relationships and ultimately a harmonious society weaved together by all kinds of relationships that everyone act upon their responsibilities accordingly.

The difference between these two relation ethics, namely, care ethics and Confucian ethics, is that the former is relation-constituted, while the latter is relation-oriented. This is because care ethics has already embraced the notion of relation in its definition of caring from a configured perspective. The caring-relation constitutes the essential element of care ethics. Confucian ethics, however, does not include such notion in its definition of ren. But efforts of Confucian ethics are devoted to harmonious relations within the society, it thus is relation-oriented.

To sum up, on the one hand, through the study of Confucius ethics and Mencius ethics, it is illustrated that Confucian ethics should not be considered as (a) care ethics. Because, ren is not the most important virtue in Mencius and Confucius' ren is different from caring in care ethics from a configured perspective. On the other hand, care ethics is not merely about the virtue of caring. Rather, it places more emphasis on the relational sense of caring. Therefore, care ethics is not a virtue ethics from a configured perspective. This essay holds that Confucian ethics and care ethics can be accommodated in relation ethics. The former is relation-oriented, guiding people towards harmonious relations; and the latter is relation-constituted, embracing relation as its most important element from a configured perspective.

References


OCCIDENT AND THE ORIENT: GODS, MYTHS AND CONVERSATIONS

Abhirup Sarkar and Anupama Nayar *

Abstract: The term ‘indigenous’, since late 20th century, is being extensively used to denote people and literatures, in addition to its previous function of classifying flora and fauna. These people, under international and national legislations are referred as, culturally distinct groups, affected by colonization. The paper raises a query against the categorization of a community and literatures as ‘indigenous’, on the basis of a comparative and descriptive study of myths, historical belief systems, gods and their language systems, partially based on the idea of the structural study of myths (mythemes) as well as, on the notion of a common psyche. For a long span of time, the West hardly knew about East Asian islands (During their stay in Korea from 1653 until 1666 the Dutch came into a stable and well-organized country – The journal of Hamel and Korea), thus the two worlds developed without having much contact or knowledge about each other, even when the West and major regions of the East (including Central Asia, Malay islands, and later, Japan) were trading. It can be observed, even when these islands were untouched by the Western world, (only majorly influenced by the Chinese and the Japanese cultures) huge number of gods, belief systems and myths are identical to just be called a coincidence. This resemblance in the historical, socio-cultural, mythical and mystical notions of the two different sides of the world with considerable difference in their geographical occupancy, impels a much deeper and detailed study to understand the development of psyche of the human civilization through the ages and thus assist in discarding the categorizations. Thus, on the basis of the identicalities, the paper attempts to discard the categorization of the Asian culture and literature of the far Eastern islands as indigenous, and provided a level platform alongside Western literature.

Introduction

“REKKR – Men, who are warriors in the sense of their courage, bravery, deeds and feats, rather than just warriors by occupation.” ~ Norse Culture

“JEONSA – Men who are brave, champions, warriors on the battlefields, charismatic and a lot more than just heroes by occupation.” ~ Korean Culture

The time when the Norse culture was spreading like wildfire in the west, there were huge shifts happening here in the east as well. When the earliest Runes were being written (3rd Cen.), around the same time, one of the major countries in the eastern

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hemisphere of the world was undergoing a massive shift, by forming alliance with China. That is, Silla, for the first time under the Tang dynasty, unified its peninsula with the Chinese. The script used by Silla at that time was majorly Chinese script. The myths and gods, people of Silla believed in were also partly influenced by the Chinese or the Japanese cultures along with their own, unique ones. But at no point were the Silla (Later Goguryo) islands influenced by the Western culture or myths. And yet, on comparing the two sides, we found innumerable identical notions, which concretizes the idea that it is unnecessary to categorize these islandic communities and their literatures as “Indigenous” with a loose ended justification.

The following work provides a comparative research study in an attempt to explain, why it is justified to draw parallels between Eastern and Western communities and literatures, keep both of them on a level platform and thus, discard the categorization of either of those as “Indigenous” or otherwise.

I. Gods

I-1. THE NORSE THEORY OF CREATION

According to the Norse mythology, in the beginning there was infinite space which they called as Ginnmga-gap wherein, one confinement was icy and frost while the other was flame and heat. Muspellsheim (Home of desolation) melted the ice in Niflheim (Home of fog) and icy cold venom flowed in the gap, and from the heat of Muspellsheim, emerged the first giant of the planet and the first cow (Ymir and Audhumla). While from Ymir, sprang the other giants, Audhumla licked an iceberg which gave birth to Borr, who with Bestla gave birth to, Odin, Vili and Ve, the forebearers of mankind. And thus it was Odin, who furthered the world, and thus becoming the “God of Life and Death”.

I-2. THE KOREAN THEORY OF CREATION

According to the ancient Hangul mythology, Maitreya existed during the formation of Earth, who decided to separate the Earth and the Sky, and thus place the heaven like the handle of the lid of a kettle and set pillars at four corners of Earth, which had two moons and two suns. Maitreya also found the secret to make fire from the MOUSE, who was promised the access to all the rice chests in return. After finding fire, Maitreya stood under the heaven with a GOLDEN tray in one hand and SILVER tray in another praying to the heavens. Five bugs, dropped on the golden and the silver tray. Of these, the bugs from the silver tray became women and the bugs from the golden tray became men. And thus, they were the forebearers of mankind. Thus, it can be clearly seen that the idea of creation on either side, as mentioned, is almost exactly similar, with some minor modifications. It can be observed that apart from the minor modifications, both the creation stories have a clear demarcation between the heaven and the hell, the light and darkness, the warmth and the cold, right from the point where these stories begin. Thus, this is the point which marks the beginning of understanding, how and the where the commonalities lie in these notions, the first one being mentioned above.
II. DRAGONS – OCCIDENT and THE ORIENT

The myths of ‘Dragons in the East’ began with Fuxi 伏羲 (the founder of Chinese civilization) who was said to be half man and half dragon. The Koreans adapted the Dragon from the Chinese myth, but in a much more spiritual and understanding manner. The Dragon in South Korea has been depicted as the king who lives under the sea and is welcoming to fault, is just and faithful. While, on the other hand, the myth of Niohoggr emerged in Norse mythology as that of a malis striker. In the Viking era, Nio meant a social stigma. Rather than a forgiving creature, the dragon or ‘Niohoggr’ has been depicted as a Serpent, gnawing at the world tree or horrifying monster chewing on corpses of inhabitants of Nastrond, who used to be guilty of murder, oath breaking et-al.

III. LANGUAGE: FUTHARK: THE NORDIC MOTHER LANGUAGE

III-1. OVERVIEW

The mere notion of being able to read and understand a language (letter) which possibly is magical in nature brought in a huge number of enthusiasts from around the waters to join in and interpret the Runic languages for transcription. But not every transcription was as justifiable as Stephen’s. While conducting an unrestricted interpretation was easy, a uniformed reconstruction strategy has not been agreed upon with every researcher pitching in their own concepts and theories. Further, there have been several instances of incorrect transcription as well as renowned cases of forged ‘historical’ texts and charters. Thus, amidst this hoard of transcriptions provided by innumerable number of researchers and linguists and historians, the transcriptions by Stephen’s and Worm’s interpretation have been considered to be closest to the exact meaning. And thus, any interpretation from anyone without a legitimate justification is discarded.

III-2. OLD FUTHARK

The Kuryłowicz’s 4th law of analogy states that,

“When a new form comes into an opposition to an already existing form, the marked (new) form will assume the unmarked functions and the unmarked (old) form will fill in some new ones” ~ John S. Robertson

The above analogy can be used to justify the notion that the Germanic (old) Futhark was derived from Roman letters. Like for instance:

Sir-ÆNEHÆ, Sir-HEISLÆ. The lady-GINIA. Raised-this-stone-to-the-lord FRÆWÆRÆDÆA (by Stephen) is different from frawaradaz |anahahaislagina |z; which modern runologists have come to accept. Further, the theory has been successfully able to justify the development of Anglo-Saxon Futhark, wherein the new syllables ‘æ/œ’ were added in the phonetics inventory, as well as two existing phonemes ‘a:/O’.
In a simplified manner:

“FORMUNMARKED ↔ FUNCTIONUNMARKED ⇒ (1) FORMUNMARKED ↔ FUNCTIONMARKED; (2) FORMMARKED ↔ FUNCTIONUNMARKED.”

(Where ↔ means ‘corresponds to’, and ⇒ means ‘develops into, splits into’.)

Furthermore, the phonological changes were as follows:

- Transforming of /a/ to /æ/ (e.g., *ask > æsc ‘ash’);
- Monophthongization of /ai/ to /aː/ (e.g., *aik > āc ‘oak’);
- Umlaut under certain conditions of /oː/ to /œː/ (e.g., *ōþil > þil ‘homeland’);
- Loss of nasal after /a/ and before another consonant with compensatory vowel-lengthening, nasalization, and rounding, */anC/ > */ãːC/ > */œːC/ (e.g., *ansuz > ąs̄(u)z > *œš > õs ‘god’).

There have been a lot of disputes and mismatches in comparing the Latin and the Germanic writing systems but Williams provides a feasible enough theory that,

“During inconsistencies, Roman letters took a new function not present in the inventory while the Latins filled the existing gap.” ~ Williams

The relationship between the Roman and the Runic forms can be clearly seen in the following:

(A) = A /a/, (B) = b /b/, (C) = K /k/, (D) = F /f/, (E) = H /h/, (I) = i /i/, (L) = l /l/,
(M) = M /m/, (N) = n /n/, (R) = r /r/, (S) = S /s/, (T) = t /t/, (U) = U /u/.

There were major shifts, additions and modifications in the Germanic Futhark, similar to that of the ‘Great Vowel Shift’ in the modern English language. An interesting evidence that Germanic Futhark borrowed the Roman Y to represent /y/ is the words like ‘Nimphis’ used around the birth of Jesus Christ (1980 A.E). That is, the word transformed from: Nimphis (<1980 A.E) to Nymphis (1980 A.E) to Calipso (A.E 1934).

The most interesting shift in the creation of the futhark from the Roman alphabet are X, Y, and Z (including G). These letters have undergone a series of chain of shifts. It is notable that X /ks/, Y /v/ (or /u/), and Z /z/, like Q /k(w)/ and K /k/, are kind of extended, since these last three letters of the alphabet were borrowed from Greek and were used to write Greek names and other Greek contents.

There has also been considerable ambiguity in borrowing the letter X and Y and using them in the words around the time of Birth of Christ which later also appeared alongside K. There were very limited gaps to be filled in the Germanic inventory wherein the ‘Zeta’ (Z) was the last letter to receive a Germanic function, apart from only a few other major functional changes.

III-3. NEW FUTHARK
“The Runic reform throughout Scandinavia was an unconsciously continuous process.” ~ Schulte (2006)

Similar to the disparities found in the transcriptions and the theories regarding the Older Futhark, there have been continuous debates whether or not the newer Futhark was a major drastic jump or a continuous process, and that was the response of one of the researchers.

Following the K-4 analogy, the older Futhark transformed into a newer version of Futhark, the “Younger Futhark”. The development of Younger Futhark was massively influenced by child language acquisition leading to the transformation of /a/ to /a,i,u/ (leading on to the transformation /a, i, e, o, u/ in modern English later).

Concerning graphemic reductions, from old Futhark to the new Futhark, (e) and (o) were removed from the list and (i) and (u) took over. Similarly, (j, i, e) were replaced by (w, u, y, o, ɸ) and thus those shifts were continued until the post Nordic or post Viking era to produce the younger Futhark and further the vernacular Germanic languages.

The Runic alphabets were called “Futhark”, named after the first six Runes that were found, namely Fehu, Uruz, Thurisaz, Ansuz, Raidho and Kaunan (similar to aleph-beth). The transformation of Futhark happened from Elder (Germanic) Futhark with 24 characters (1st century) to Younger (Nordic) Futhark with 16 characters (750 CE – Viking Era) to the Anglo-Saxon “FUTHORC” with 33 characters, which was the major version of Futhark carved on wood stones or bones found today. The Futhorc letters ‘supposedly’ held magical powers and thus were of great importance to the Nordics. The Futhorc is considered the origin of the Germanic languages, which is evident from the following excerpt taken from the story of “Imma” by the Venerable Bede.

In the battle where King Aelfwine was killed, a memorable incident happened which is worth mentioning. There was a youth called Imma one of the king’s thegns, and was struck down, brutally injured. In a matter of time, he gathered himself up and patched his wounds. As he looked around for a friend to be taken care by, he was caught by the men of King Ethelred’s army. On being questioned, he responded that he came to the war to bring provisions. The noble (present among the others there) agreed to that and tended to his wounds. And to prevent his escape, ordered him to be bound at night. But he COULD NOT BE BOUND, for as soon as those who bound him were gone, HIS BONDS WERE LOOSEned.

And thus, it’s said that the bounds of Imma, were inscribed with Runic letters that is, “Futhark”, and held magical powers, unlocking the bounds every time the capturers left. The Runic characters were theorized to say something along the lines of “No innocent shall be held captive in these bounds”. Runes are constantly discovered during excavations of explorations all around the European region, providing even more solid grounds regarding “Futhorc”. Recent Runic findings were in Orkney by Michael P. Barnes (University College London), OR 22 Quoys and OR 23 Naversdale. And thus, it is evident that FUTHORC was being used before the Germanic languages...

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arrived, and that the Germanic languages must have merged from Futhorc to the current versions we know them.

IV. HANGUL

IV-1. OVERVIEW

As mentioned earlier, while the western “Futhark” was transforming, Korea was declared an official state after merging with China. Thus, distinct parts of Korea were writing in different scripts as opposed to the Germanic Futhark (courtesy of the Runes), the ancient Koreans did not have any such system to turn to. The only earliest first-hand description we get is that of the Han-Chinese observers who recorded the names of the states and described the people. The earliest description was that of the town and settlement of Choson, and its people who were described by the Chinese as ‘Eastern Barbarian groups’. The three Hans were namely, Puyo, Koguryo, Okcho and Ye. Further, the origin of Koreans has been a hugely ambiguous. Whether to affix the origin of Koreans to the Tungusic family, the Manchu family or the Japanese family, is still a huge debate due to unavailability of any written script from those times (unlike the Runes). Yet, one of the widely accepted theories is the origin from the Altaic and Japanese families.

IV-2. EARLY SCRIPT

It is known that Chinese were writing history and literature 2000 years before even Hangul letters were invented. Thus, no wonder we have such huge volumes of Chinese history and literature and mythologies available even until this day.

Silla, was the first state to take up Chinese as its principle written language. The Chinese had different sets of characters. The adaptations were carried out around 57BC – 935AD. Thus, the huge number of Chinese characters were adapted by the early Koreans to transcribe them into a language of their own. Thus, most of the early Korean scriptures (including the local dialects) were hugely influenced by Chinese as well as a little from Japanese characters as well.

HANGUL. It was in 1446 that King Sejong decided to introduce new and exclusive Korean letters, and completely move away from the Chinese characters. And thus, it was 1449, when King Sejong introduced the script in a handbook and explained its uses, which was found to be brilliant and was slowly universally accepted by the Koreans. The dictionary which was invented in 1447 was called, ‘Tongguk Chounguk’ and by 1480s the Korean script (Hangul) emerged as an independent language.

As Hangul slowly developed, some things became very obvious:

A. A lot of syllables (including the number system) were borrowed from Chinese system.
B. The early Hangul that used Chinese characters failed to identify words even after using blocks, which led to the invention of independent Hangul.
C. The 15th century scripts added a few modifications which were later deemed to be obsolete, once new Hangul was introduced.
D. While the semantic structure is borrowed from Japanese system, it sounds completely different.
E. The spellings are written morphophonemically instead of phonemically, which is exactly opposite to Futhorc, which is majorly written phonemically.

Thus, to sum up, what the South Koreans refer to as the Hangul and the North Koreans refer to as the Choson Mal, the Korean language is a genius invention by King Sejong back in the 15th century, which later developed to become the independent language of Korea, believed to have been derived from the names of the places, and the 25 poems known as ‘Hyangga’ which was composed in the 10th Century, portraying the language of Silla, and slowly turning into the Vernacular Hangul.

Following a brief discussion on how the languages of the East and the West transformed through the ages, further are some interesting and crucial theories, providing a concise and abridged version of some myths which were similar in the nature in a way that they meant to express the same concept and yet were diametrically opposite to each other in a way that they had complete different notions and myths related to those symbols.

Conclusion

Thus, just like the Occident, the Orient also underwent massive amounts of transitions in terms of languages, myths as well as religion.

While the occidental language diverged from a single mother language (Futhorc) to produce the Germanic sounds, in and around the Germanic land, Hangul was invented as a completely new language in the farther east.

While the Occident believed that the world did not have either men or women in the beginning, the Orient believes that there was a man who existed while the creation happened and the he was the one who gave rise to every other creature that existed on the planet. While for the Occident the Dragon or the symbol of Dragon was referred to, as the symbol of malice but the Orient believes the Dragon to be something quite auspicious, holy and kingly as well.

Hence, just like the Occident, the Orient provides a huge glossary of literature, myths as well as beliefs which are worth acquiring, studying and researching upon, not just because their myths and beliefs and gods (almost everything) et-al, are diametrically opposite (but exactly similar in a lot of ways as well) to what the Occidental portrayals are, but because they are equally rich in knowledge and literature. And thus, Oriental myths and literature are also equally important and worth taking up as a discourse to get even more in-depth understanding of literary and cultural developments around the world as major literatures rather than indigenous literatures, which limits the interpretation of such literatures.
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LI ZHI IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP

Wennan Wu

Abstract: Li Zhi (1527–1602) was a philosopher, historian and writer of the late Ming Dynasty. In terms of themes, besides the traditional social, political, historical and philosophical topics, more scholarship has been written about Li Zhi from the perspective of literary studies and the arts since 1980. Before 1980, translation was largely secondary to or an offshoot of the more principal goal of producing scholarly studies of Li Zhi and more extensive translation work has been published in the new millennium. With the development of Sino-western cultural communications, Sino-American scholars will cooperate to bring the translation and dissemination of Li Zhi to a new altitude both quantitatively and qualitatively, and establish the communicating bridge.

Li Zhi (1527–1602) was a philosopher, historian and writer of the late Ming Dynasty. In terms of themes, besides the traditional social, political, historical and philosophical topics, more scholarship has been written about Li Zhi from the perspective of literary studies and the arts since 1980. Before 1980, translation was largely secondary to or an offshoot of the more principal goal of producing scholarly studies of Li Zhi and more extensive translation work has been published in the new millennium. With the development of Sino-western cultural communications, Sino-American scholars will cooperate to bring the translation and dissemination of Li Zhi to a new altitude both quantitatively and qualitatively, and establish the communicating bridge.

Li Zhi otherwise known by his pseudonym Zhuowu, was a philosopher, historian and writer of the late Ming Dynasty. Ever since the May Fourth New Culture Movement, when he was rediscovered by the famous anti-Confucian Wu Yu, Li Zhi has attracted a great deal of attention because of his controversial behavior, the ideas he articulated about human desire, and how he challenged conventional norms. The voluminous scholarship about his philosophy includes studies of his ontology, theory of human nature, and method of self-cultivation, among many other topics. With his concept of the childlike heart-mind, Li Zhi promoted a notion of authenticity that challenged norms and broke down boundaries. All these philosophical ideas, as well as his enigmatic conduct and iconoclasm, still carry significance for our contemporary life and world. Li Zhi is one representative of Taizhou School of Yangmingsism, and thus his philosophical studies are also an indispensable element of current studies of the Wang Yangming School.

Since Reform and Opening, scholarship and conferences on Li Zhi have blossomed in the People’s Republic of China. In 1987, the first Li Zhi Research Seminar was held in Quanzhou, and since then there have been seven research seminars held in places where Li Zhi lived or stayed for a time, including Nan’an,

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Quanzhou, Kunming, Macheng, Shangcheng, and Tongzhou. The most recent international conference was held at Nan’an, Fujian, China in December, 2017. In tandem with this outpouring of papers, scholars have written state of the field studies for the Chinese-language literature, adding to the classic English-language review written by Pei-kai Cheng in 1982.¹

With more scholarship about Li Zhi being published in China, some specialists have also been interested in the state of studies on him globally. They have noted that the European and North American scholarship on Li Zhi has developed substantially over the last few decades. Historiographical studies have already appeared in Chinese-language journals. Bai Xiufang’s “Li Zhi Studies in America and Europe” (1995) and “Li Zhi Studies Outside China” (1996) are two of the first articles written in China about the state of Li Zhi studies outside China. He includes discussion of scholarship on Li Zhi published between 1930 and 1988 in North America. (Bai,1995,19-23; Bai,1996, 82-87) Bai found that, “In American scholarship, some scholars of Chinese history mention Li Zhi in their works, and thus we can see that Li Zhi as attracted the attention of historians in America, an economically developed western society. Li Zhi’s thought had a certain impact in America.” (Bai,1996,21) Similarly, in a paper that she presented at the Li Zhi conference held in Quanzhou in 2004, Li Chao states that, “since the twentieth century, the thought and historical value of Li Zhi has been attracting attention from scholars in such countries as America, Germany, France, Singapore, South Korea, and former Soviet Union.” (Li,2004, 342) In his study of the dissemination of Li Zhi’s work, Zhang Xianzhong claims that, “It was through Matteo Ricci that Li Zhi came to be known to the western world. But Li Zhi was not well-known until 1930, and after that greater numbers of scholars focused on Li Zhi and Li Zhi’s ideas, their copious scholarly achievements disseminating knowledge of this to the Western world.” (Zhang,2009,145) Lastly, regarding the importance of Li Zhi to Ming scholarship outside of China, Lu Peimin concludes that, “Thus far, scholars from all over the world have produced in-depth studies on Li Zhi, the representative of Taizhou School. It is clear to see that Taizhou School has exerted considerable influence on international scholarship which is sustainable and far reaching.” (Lu, 2016, 152)

The purpose of this article is to review the English-language scholarship on Li Zhi, most of which was published in North America. In sum, between 1930 and 2018, ¹

¹ And translated into Chinese in 1984, see Cheng,1984,15-22. Cheng’s paper divides Chinese-language Li Zhi studies before 1980 into four periods. Between 1900 and 1920 Li Zhi was rediscovered and characterized as an anti-traditionalist. From 1930 to 1949 more in-depth, wide-ranging studies were published, especially concerning his thought. He was still characterized as an anti-traditionalist but also written about from a Marxist point of view. Between 1950 and 1969, in Maoist China, Li was analyzed primarily in terms of Marxist categories. After the establishment of new China, Marxist historical theories are used to analyze the capitalist enlightenment of Li Zhi; 4. From 1970 to 1979, Li Zhi studies were stuck into a deadlock, trapped in political perspectives, and he was often cast as an iconoclast. See Cheng,1983,4-29.

² For German scholarship on Li Zhi, see Franke, 1982,137-147; Shin,1982; Spaar,1984.

³ For French-language Li Zhi scholarship as of 1979, see especially Billeter,1979.

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Li Zhi has been the subject of three monographs, six master and doctoral dissertations, over thirty articles, as well as a respectable number of encyclopedia and dictionary entries. One major translation of his work has also been published. In general, studies on Li Zhi have increased in number over time, especially since the 1980s. As well, a wider variety of disciplines have been brought to bear on his life and works. In general, earlier studies of Li Zhi were largely written from a political, historical, and social point of view while more recent works give more attention to his significance for literary studies and the arts. Li Zhi studies in English-language world can be roughly divided into two periods: 1930-1980 and 1980-2018.

I. Early Studies, 1930-1980

K. C. Hsiao was the first to write about him for an English-reading audience. He was a Chinese scholar and educator, best known for his contributions to Chinese political science and history. In 1938, he published his article, “Li Chih: An Iconoclast of the Sixteenth Century” in the journal *T’ien Hsia Monthly*. This was the first essay to introduce Li Zhi to America, and Hsiao presented him as an iconoclastic thinker with contradictory ideas. Hsiao highlights tensions and apparent contradictions abounding in Li Zhi’s works brought out by Yuan Hongdao’s “Biographical Sketch of Li Wenling.” Yuan had written that, “For the most part, Mr. Wenling’s behavior was hard to explain. A successful degree holder who had renounced his post, he talked about nothing but the art of statesmanship: the affairs of all under heaven, he said, are too important to be left to the management of the typical fame-seeking scholar.” (Hsiao, 1938, 341)

Hsiao believes that the origins of Li’s innovative ideas are to be found in just such tensions. In traditional China, where there was a deep-rooted traditionalism, Li Zhi’s independent thinking was a challenge to the conventional ethics and philosophy of Neo-Confucianism represented by Cheng-Zhu School. Hsiao notes that “It was this infantile paralysis of the mind, so to speak, that Li Chih abhorred and undertook to cure.” (Hsiao, 1938, 327) Wang Yangming’s philosophy of mind had opened the way to a remarkable emancipation of Chinese thought from the fetters of Neo-Confucianism, and Li Zhi capitalized on it. In conclusion, Hsiao held that Li Zhi was a self-contradictory iconoclast, and he said that, “His philosophy therefore cannot stand the test of logic; like an object of art it may be enjoyed by those who have a taste for it, but it does not prove anything or convince anybody. It amounts to a charming statement of an ineffectual theory-ineffectual because it bore no fruit either immediately or in the time that followed.” (Hsiao, 1938, 341)

Hsiao also wrote about Li Zhi in his book, *zhong guo zheng zhi si xiang shi* (A History of Chinese Political Thought). This book was originally published in Chinese, but Frederick Mote translated it into English in 1979. (Hsiao, 1979) Hsiao explained that Li Zhi’s free thinking was focused on practice and self judgment, in conformity

\[4\] In *Dictionary of World History*, Li Zhi is defined as an iconoclast, see Lenman & Anderson, 2005.

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with the Chan Buddhism of leftist Taizhou School of Yangmingism. This is due to his free nature and the influence of Wang Yangming’s Philosophy of Mind. (Hsiao, 1998, 526-545) Slightly earlier, Hsiao had also elaborated upon these themes in the entry he penned for the Dictionary of Ming Biography, which was published in 1976. He wrote that Li Zhi was the devout follower of the left-wing Taizhou school of Wang’s philosophy, and had been regarded as the martyr of such a doctrine of free conscience and thinking. (Hsiao, 1976, 807-818)

Others scholars who contributed to the outpouring of studies on Ming thought in the 1970s also connected Li Zhi with what they regarded as tide of individualistic thought in the late Ming, a tide that he exemplified. William Theodore de Bary explained that Li Zhi died for his belief in individual spontaneity and freedom, and that he was both condemned and acclaimed as the greatest heretic and iconoclast in China’s history. (De Bary, 1970, 213) Also writing in the 1970s, Timothy Brook concluded that, “Much of the impact of Li Zhi’s thinking lies in his emotional commitment to his discoveries of how Wang Yang-ming’s philosophy could be extended beyond its original theses. It is his courage as much as his originality which brought him to the notice of his contemporaries and of historians of philosophy in the 20th century.” (Brook, 1978, 66)

In 1976, Ray Huang also wrote about Li Zhi in his well-known book, 1587, A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline. He too characterized Li Zhi an anti-traditionalist who was inconsistent and contradictory, but rejected Marxist-inspired labels portraying him as anti-feudalist. It should be noted here that several scholars have since criticized his interpretations. Pan Shuming and Xu Sumin have criticized him for misreading the historical evidence and lacking a full understanding of Li Zhi’s thought, by saying that in Chinese society, new economy and new thoughts will never occur, and modernization can only be realized by foreign forces. (Pan, 2000, 35; Xu, 2006, 658-659) Zhang Xianzhong also finds that Ray Huang lacked a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of Li, but nevertheless praised him for playing a critical role in disseminating information about him to the West. (Zhang, 2009, 148)

In English-language scholarship, the first comprehensive study of Li Zhi’s work and thought is Eng-chew Cheang’s doctoral dissertation, “Li Chih as a Critic: A Chapter of the Ming Intellectual History” (1973). Cheang wrote this under the supervision of some of the most important historians working in the field of Ming studies: K. C. Hsiao, Hok-Lam Chan, and Frederick Mote. After introducing Li Zhi in the first chapter (“Preamble”), subsequent chapters discuss him as “A Social Critic”, “A Philosophic Critic”, and “A Literary Critic.” Cheang finds that Li Zhi’s eccentric behavior and formidable critical writing do indeed show that he was an anti-traditionalist. But he does not regard him as in any way revolutionary or as a social reformer. He also does not accept William Theodore de Bary’s characterization of him as a “negative individualist.” The term individualism is, as a general matter, too ambiguous to be useful in describing Li Zhi. (Cheang, 1973, 8-10) Cheang analyzes

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5 See Huang, 1976. Huang also briefly discusses Li Zhi in the chapter he wrote on the Longqing and Wanli reigns for the Cambridge History of China, see Mote & Twitchett, 1988, 551-552.
his anti-traditionalism from several angles and in relation to several issues topical to the late Ming world: society, philosophy and literature, gender equality, free marriage, hypocrisy, all saints, righteousness and principle, the childlike heart-mind and its influence on the later literary creation. (Cheang, 1973)

An important turning point in Li Zhi studies arrived with the extraordinary contribution of Hok-lam Chan. He compiled several useful bibliographies for Li Zhi studies. These began as articles published in the late 1970s – “Li Chih (1527-1602): A Modern Bibliography” (1978), (Chan, 1978a, 17-27) and “Supplement to ‘Li Chih (1527-1602): A Modern Bibliography (1974-1978) ’”(1978). (Chan, 1978b, 11-18) In 1980, these were published in an expanded version as a book, *Li Chih, 1527-1602, in Contemporary Chinese Historiography: New Light on His Life and Works.* (Chan,1980a) Chan explained that there had been a profusion of modern studies on many facets of Li Zhi since the turn of the twentieth century in both academic and semi-academic publications in Chinese, Japanese, and Western languages. (Chan,1980b,183-208) In his article “Bibliography of Modern Publications on Li Chih (1901-1979),” Chan further explained that his book is, “not a critical evaluation of their scholarship, but rather a modest inventory of the major works on the subject culled from the available publications and general bibliographies on Chinese studies.”(Chan,1980b,184) In fact, some chapters were contributed by scholars in China with particular expertise in some area of the Li Zhi archive. Topics covered by the bibliographies and related bibliographical essays include Li Zhi’s family, residence, wife, family tomb and burial inscriptions, life and thought, and writing and rare manuscripts. Special attention is given to detailing all available extant Li Zhi writing’s as of that time, as well as documenting the secondary scholarship around the world.

Several scholars recognized the importance of Chan’s work. In his “Foreword”, Frederick W. Mote commented, “Studies of Li Chih are certain to continue to be important in China and Japan, and have become more important in the West. Such studies now will start with the present work. It provides the essential overview of the place Li Chih has assumed in historical scholarship, in recent politics, and in Chinese consciousness.” (Chan, 1980a, ix) In her review of Jean-François Billeter’s monograph on Li Zhi, Julia Ching stated that, “For those who only read English, however, we fortunately have Hok-lam Chan's careful rendition of *Li Chih in Contemporary Chinese Historiography*, which is even more bibliographically-oriented than this book.” (Ching, 1980, 95-96) Also in 1980, Morris Rossabi said, “Chan's book is a model of its kind, shedding light on the subject while pointing to specific problems that require additional research.” (Rossabi, 1980, 54) In 1982, in his article, “Some New Publications and Materials on Li Zhi, Wolfgang Franke likewise found that it was the most complete bibliography to date. (Franke, 1982, 137-147) Chinese scholars also recognized its value. In 1996, Bai Xiufang wrote that, “This bibliography had a profound influence on American scholarship. Professor Hok-lam Chan made an enormous contribution in Li Zhi’s introduction to the western world and Li Zhi studies as well.” (Bai, 1996, 85)
During the first weeks of January 1980, shortly after his draft was sent to the printer, Chan had the opportunity to visit China with a delegation of scholars of Chinese studies, and he found that leading libraries had several important publications on Li Zhi then unknown to him. He wrote that, “It was already too late to include this information in the book upon my return; thus, I take the opportunity to report these new findings herewith to supplement the bibliographic survey in my study.” (Chan, 1980c, 81) Besides, Chan also mentioned that there were three doctoral dissertations in progress, which were not included in his bibliography: E.M. Frederick’s “Li Chih and the Problem of Ethical Independence”, (Frederick, 1975) Pei-Kai Cheng’s “Reality and Imagination: Li Chih and Tang Hsien-ts’u in Search of Authenticity”, (Cheng, 1980) and Wilfried Spaar’s “Die kritische philosophie des Li Zhi (1527-1602) und ihre politische rezeption in der Volksrepublik China.” (Spaar, 1984)

Since 1980, English-language publications on Li Zhi have flowered and gone in new directions. In terms of themes, besides the traditional social, political, historical and philosophical topics, more scholarship has been written about Li Zhi from the perspective of literary studies and the arts. In 1950s, Carsun Chang had already described Li as “primarily a literary man.” (Chang, 1957, 216) Thus, sophisticated translations making more of Li Zhi’s corpus available to an English-reading audience reveals both the philosophical and literary world of the late Ming. While the language barrier to producing scholarship on Li Zhi has meant that much of it is still being written by Chinese Americans and Chinese students studying overseas, more scholars who grew up in and obtained their education in the States have been publishing scholarship.


More extensive translation work has been published in the new millennium. In 2002, in the appendix to her doctoral dissertation, “Li Zhi (1527-1602): a Confucian Feminist of Late-Ming China,” Pauline Lee included annotated translations of some Li Zhi’s letters, poems, historical commentaries, and prefaces. Lee states that, “The
essays have been selected to give the reader an introduction to Li's views on topics central to his works, ranging from the context-sensitive nature of truths, Li's novel concept of the mind, to his disputation with the Neo-Confucian preoccupation with abstract metaphysics.” (Lee, 2002, 177) In 2016, Rivi Handler-Spitz, Pauline C. Lee, and Haun Saussy published a translation of a substantial portion of two of Li Zhi’s most important works – A Book to Burn and A Book to Keep (Hidden), as well as selected historical documents pertaining to his life. This was the fruition of five years of careful translation and editing, and the product is the most comprehensive in its genre up to this point in time. The poems were translated by Timothy Billings and Yan Zina. The translations also include a useful chronology of Li Zhi’s life and bibliography. The translations are mainly based on Zhang Jianye’s Li zhi quanji zhu (Annotated Complete Works of Li Zhi ) (Zhang, 201) and they supplemented Zhang’s annotation whenever necessary with further research of their own. (Li, 2016)

In addition to much translation work, thematic studies of Li Zhi have also been published, especially in the areas of comparative literature and the arts. Pei-Kai Cheng’s doctoral dissertation, “Reality and Imagination: Li Chih and Tang Hsien-tsui in Search of Authenticity” (1980) was the first lengthy English-language comparative literary study of Li Zhi. The dissertation is a study of the lives and intellectual pursuits of Li and Tang in the historical context of the sixteenth century Chinese society. Cheng focuses on the relationship between their intellectual journeys and late-Ming social change, economic development, and political factionalism. Of course, the teachings of Wang Yangming, especially the ideas promoted by the Taizhou School, play an essential role in the development of Li’s and Tang’s thinking and deeply influenced the future direction of their intellectual pursuits. Both men were deeply frustrated by the environments in which they grew up and sought for new models of authenticity as a result. (Cheng, 1980)

Qingliang Chen’s master’s thesis, “Li Zhi (1527-1602) and his Literary Thought” (1999), focuses on Li Zhi’s status as a literatus. She devotes chapters and discussion to the ChengZhu Neo-Confucian background to Li’s thought, and analyzes the influence of Wang Yangming’s learning of mind on him; Li’s enthusiasm for vernacular literature; recognizable phases in Li Zhi’s life; his criticisms of writers; Li Zhi’s critical method for reading the classics and reasons for taking fiction seriously as literature; appraisals of Li Zhi’s thought and his influence on Chinese literary history. She notes that Li Zhi is indeed one of the pioneers of Ming-Qing vernacular literature; after all, as she summarizes his thinking, “The very essence that makes a good writer is in his original mind—the ‘mind of a child’…For Li Zhi, there are three terms-talent, courage and insight-these are adequate to encompass the quality of individual mind of a good writer.” (Chen, 1999, 40)

Pauline C. Lee and Rivi Handler-Spitz are two representatives of younger generation of Li Zhi scholars. Lee is a professor in the Asian Studies department of Washington University, who has conducted much research on the comparative study of Li Zhi and feminist theory. Early on while studying Li Zhi, Lee found that “Despite Li’s considerable role in Chinese thought, at present there exists but a handful of articles on him in the English language.” (Lee, 2002, 4) She holds that there is a rich and vibrant Confucian feminism in Chinese history with the focus of
self-cultivation. Li Zhi is one of the earliest Confucians to seriously advocate for gender equality.

In an edited volume published in 2000, Lee contributed an essay titled “Li Zhi and John Stuart Mill: A Confucian Feminist Critique of Liberal Feminism.” In Lee’s opinion, such contemporary feminist schools as liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, existentialist feminism, and psychoanalytic feminism have voiced ideas that to some degree still place women in a subordinate role or subjugated position. She compares the feminist thought of Li Zhi with John Stuart Mill, an English Unitarian philosopher and economist. Based on her close reading of both, Lee finds that Li Zhi’s Confucian feminism and John Stuart Mill’s liberal feminism are compatible and complementary to each other for addressing the problem of patriarchy. Both believed that something must be done to give women the kinds of opportunities for education and work that men have. Li Zhi’s concepts of gendered inner and outer spheres are permeable and graduated, while Mill’s private and public are impermeable and categorical. Regarding changing women’s status and measures to promote gender equality, while for Mill self-cultivation is secondary to legal reform, it plays a central role in Li Zhi’s thinking on this issue. For Li Zhi, women too can engage in moral self-cultivation with a view to returning to the “childlike mind.” Mill rather supports legal and education reforms that would bring women out into the public realm. Lee points out, “One of the shortcomings in Mill’s feminist vision is indeed his inability to imagine a social world where there exists permeability between the spheres of the domestic and the public.” (Lee, 2000, 123)

Lee’s chapter was, in fact, spun off from the process of writing her dissertation, which was completed in 2002. In “Li Zhi (1527-1602): a Confucian Feminist of Late-Ming China” (2002), Lee interprets Confucian views of feminism with Sino-western feminist comparative theories. Lee first explains the feminist dimensions to Li Zhi’s life and work and the theoretical frameworks that she uses to approach this topic. She then explains Li Zhi’s life and work in the context of late imperial China’s history and intellectual history. Following, Lee elucidates Li Zhi’s central philosophical concepts and method of moral self-cultivation, including the influence of Wang Yangming and Luo Rufang on his notions of mind and the child-mind. Contrary to what Willard Peterson had claimed, Li Zhi is not a moral relativist but rather an ethical particularist and realist – to use philosophical terminology for Western ethics. (Peterson, 1998, 746) Then Lee explains issue of hierarchy, complementarity, and gender relations as pertain to Li Zhi’s thought, followed by her comparative study of Li and Mill discussed above. In conclusion, Lee reiterates that Li Zhi had not embraced a kind of relativist ethics. She also proposes other direction for future research. One is to study earlier conceptions of gender that inform feminism as it develops in China. The other is to move forward in time and study contemporary Chinese feminists. (Lee, 2002)

Since then, Lee has published other essays. In “Spewing Jade and Spitting Pearls: Li Zhi’s Ethics of Genuineness” (2011), she compares Li Zhi’s “On the Childlike Heart-Mind” with Charles Taylor’s “The Ethics of Authenticity”. Li Zhi holds that genuineness is inborn - like “spewing jade and spitting pearls”, while Charles Taylor thinks that authentic life should be shaped with language and culture. (Lee,
In another essay, “‘There is Nothing More...Than Dressing and Eating’: Li Zhi (李贽) and the Child-like Heart-Mind (Tongxin 童心)” (2012), Lee discusses different interpretations of Li Zhi’s “Childlike Heart-Mind”. In Chinese culture, Lee writes, this phrase can be interpreted at two different levels: naive and pure. Li Zhi accepts the original and genuine heart-mind in the commentary on the Western Chamber by “The Farmer of Dragon Ravine”. Lee holds that Li’s conception of the heart-mind is meaningfully similar to the genuine heart-mind found in the Platform Sutra. (Lee, 2012a)

In 2012, Lee published a revised version of her dissertation and these essays as the book Li Zhi, Confucianism, and the Virtue of Desire. Individual chapters are devoted to the publication of A Book to Burn, Li Zhi’s life in the year 1590 (Wanli 18), what she calls the secular cult of feeling, and historical, philosophical, and literary interpretations of him; the relationship between Li’s life and thought; comparison of the thought of Li, Mengzi, and the Wang Yangming school; Li’s ethics of feeling, genuineness, and desire; and comparing his ethic of genuineness to Charles Taylor’s ethics of authenticity. In general, Lee believed that Li Zhi, “is a thinker we ought to engage and bring into the growing body of international religious-philosophical discourse on the importance of desires and the expression of feelings, as well as the ideal of authenticity or genuineness...but his life and thought have remained almost wholly inaccessible to English-speaking audiences...his works deserve to be read, critically analyzed, and celebrated as the masterful philosophical and literary works that they are.” (Lee, 2012b, 9-10)

Unlike what is the case for earlier scholarship, Lee did not see Li Zhi as a radical thinker who wholly jettisons tradition; rather, he is “a thinker who has mastered the traditional canon of literature and passionately strives to reform, amend, and embellish upon what is given.” (Lee, 2012b, 34)

Because it brought so much of the earlier scholarship as of this point in time to fruition, Lee’s monograph was positively received. John H. Berthrong found that her use of the work of Charles Taylor to illuminate how a late-Ming thinker might contribute to modern ethical debates was especially fruitful. Both, he points out, were concerned with the ethics of authenticity. Berthrong concludes that, “Dr. Lee argues that Li Zhi shows us how to reform Confucian philosophy, and those insights might indeed help us grapple with the complexities of the ethics of a globalized modern world.” (Berthrong, 2014, 221)

After praising the writing style, clarity of the translation, Hammond affirmed the importance of the subject, stating, “The field of Chinese history needs more studies of important figure such as Li Zhi, and this book is a major contribution to a growing body of biographical and semi-biographical works.” (Hammond, 2014, 1111) Lastly, De Weerdt states that, “The author is to be commended for working across literary, historical, and philosophical boundaries in shedding light on Li Zhi’s historical significance and intellectual legacy. By recovering Li Zhi from the (sometimes contradictory) modernist readings to which he has heretofore been subjected, this book opens the way to a new intellectual history of the late Ming era.” (Weerdt, 2014, 1110)
Rivi Handler-Spitz, a professor of Department of Comparative Literature University of Chicago, has been another important contributor to Li Zhi studies. In her essay, “Relativism and Skepticism in the Multicultural Late Ming” (2008), she examines the social and cultural origins of dimensions of Li Zhi’s well-known skepticism. She found that, “Li’s skepticism and relativism stem largely from his close encounters with a wide range of cultural ‘others’ including the tribal peoples of Yunnan over whom he governed, Muslims in his own family, international merchants, and the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci.” (Handler-Spitz, 2008, 13)

Handler-Spitz’s doctoral dissertation, “Diversity, Deception, and Discernment in the Late Sixteenth Century: A Comparative Study of Li Zhi’s ‘Book to Burn’ and Montaigne’s ‘Essays,’” was published the next year. In it she explores the relation Handler-Spitz gives a synchronic analysis of similar themes and styles in Li Zhi’s and Montaigne’s writing and holds that their similarity can be connected to global trade at that time. Handler-Spitz explains the connections between globalization of the Chinese and French economy and culture in the sixteenth century, the similarity between Li Zh’s and Montaigne’s biography, writings, and publishing activities. Handler-Spitz adopts analogical approach to deal with the uncertainty of text in changing society. She explores the impact on literary creation from the uncertain society and economy. She holds that the reader should make their own choice of textual skepticism and judgment. (Handler-Spitz, 2009)

Handler-Spitz has since continued to publish on Li Zhi, including an essay and then a book. In her essay, “Provocative Texts: Li Zhi, Montaigne, and the Promotion of Critical Judgment in Early Modern Readers” (2013), Handler-Spitz furthers comparison of Li Zhi and Montaigne by applying various critical literary theories. Her monograph, Symptoms of an Unruly Age: Li Zhi and Cultures of Early Modernity is in some sense the fruition of over a decade of research “Unruly Age” is what Montaigne uses to describe his age. Handler-Spitz describes Li Zhi’s pursuit of primordial, pure, and transparent semiotic system and analyzes the full manipulation of these rhetoric devices in Li Zhi’s works. She examines particular instances of Li’s behavior and use of language as they relate to core spheres of material life and semiotic activity in the early modern period: dress codes, economic conditions, and publishing. She tackles the question of how contemporary readers interpreted Li’s bluff-laden texts. In her book, Handler-Spitz adopts her constant comparative approach, and she says, “I have undertaken such comparisons in the hope and with the conviction that by examining and comparing diverse cultural products, we in the twenty-first century may gain insight into features of the early modern world that may have eluded the comprehension or cognizance of contemporaries in the sixteenth century.” (Handler-Spitz, 2017, 9)

Finally, aside from their joint translation of Li Zhi’s works, Pauline C. Lee, Rivi Handler-Spitz and Haun Saussy are co-editing the book The Objectionable Li Zhi: Fiction, Syncretism, and Dissent in Late Ming China for publication. Robert E Hegel will contribute a chapter entitled “Performing Li Zhi: Li Zhuowu Fiction Commentaries”. (Hegel, forthcoming). He also wrote a conference paper, “Reading Fiction in the Guise of Li Zhi”. (Hegel, 2013) Ying Zhang is responsible for writing the chapter “Li Zhi’s Image, Print, and Late-Ming Political Culture.” (Zhang,
She had already written about Li Zhi in her doctoral dissertation on politics and morality during the Ming-Qing dynastic transition. In the first chapter, “Before the ‘Conservative Turn:’ Li Zhi’s Tragedy and the Late Ming (1570-1620),” Ying Zhang explores Li Zhi’s moral formation through self-cultivation by social and cultural means, and focuses on his gender equality in his thought. (Zhang, 2010, 51-145) She also given several papers on Li Zhi, such as “Li Zhi’s China: Secular Fiction and Post Secular Reality” (Zhang, 2012) and a workshop report “Li Zhi’s Image Trouble and Late-Ming Political Culture” (Zhang, 2013).

Lastly, one other article should be mentioned. Jin Jiang’s essay, “Heresy and Persecution in Late Ming Society-Reinterpreting the Case of Li Zhi” (2001), provides a case study of Li Zhi’s activities in Macheng Hubei in order to analyze the development of his heretical thinking. She holds that the core of Li Zhi’s thought is an ethics of authenticity (genuine morality) directly derived from Wang Yangming’s School of Mind, and the real cause of his trouble. (Jiang, 2001)

In sum, a rich tradition of writing about Li Zhi in the English-language literature has now developed over nearly the course of a century. This is important because, considering the Ming dynasty as a whole, few Ming figures have received such attention as he has. The most notable exceptions are the Ming founder Zhu Yuanzhang and Wang Yangming. But Zhu belongs to the early Ming, Wang belongs to the mid-Ming, and Li Zhi belongs to the late Ming dynasty. Thus, by studying him scholars have been able to establish much about the cultural, social, and political landscape of this crucial time in Chinese history. Furthermore, Li Zhi has been considered worthy of study because he is a brilliant and yet contradictory person, with a compelling life and tragic end, telling us something about the human predicament. Finally, his life and ideas have been shown to be relevant not only academically, for studies in literary theory, the arts, ethics, and metaphysics, but also for modern times. He was, in many ways, innovative, and transcended the limitations of his time. Thus, his philosophical, historical, and literary theories and insights are still useful for today’s global society, including his people centered politics, egalitarian notions, and insistence on leading an authentic life. (Zhang, 2012, 1) With ever more publication work happening both east and west, and more bridges being established through conference and other collaborative activity, Li Zhi scholarship is sure to expand and develop even further.

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BOOK REVIEW


As its title indicates, *Figures du néant et de la négation entre Orient et Occident*, explores the concepts of nothing(ness) and/or negation across the boundaries of Eastern and Western thought, a kind of *philosophie sans frontières*. Heidegger and to a lesser degree Husserl provide the philosophical spine to the book - Françoise Dastur writes as well on them as anyone in the world today - because Heidegger famously deconstructed the Western ontological tradition from Plato and Aristotle onwards as focusing on beings (the things themselves) rather than the state of being *per se*. This means there was a tendency to see nothing as the negation of a pre-existing something rather than the nothing(ness) out of which the being of that something emerged. Heidegger spent his whole career evolving more and more subtle quasi-mystical but never irrational or illogical ways of thinking about the relationship between being and nothing(ness). What is especially important about him is that he does not simply debunk the Western philosophic tradition: he gives it a specific but legitimate character, which gives the space to non-Western philosophies to be equally specific in their way.

Husserl and Heidegger were both interested in Buddhist or related Far Eastern thought and had sustained contact with Japanese students and philosophers, and there seems to be a real affinity between Heidegger's exploration of nothing(ness) and the Buddhist concept of *sunyata* or emptiness, in particular as developed by Nagarjuna, 1 which was of central importance for Japanese Zen philosophers such as Dogen and members of the Kyoto School, who were themselves very strongly influenced by Heidegger. In fact, another pre-eminent Heideggerian, Joan Stambaugh, has devoted entire books to discussing Dogen, Hisamatsu and Nishitani, with frequent references to Western philosophers, such as Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl and Heidegger. 2

By contrast, Dastur only really deals at length with non-Western thinkers in one of her chapters ("Figure II"), where a sweeping historical narrative that leads from the origins of Indian philosophy to the Kyoto School via Buddhist philosophers provides the frame for a more focused look at Nagarjuna and Nishida Kitaro. Elsewhere, apart from a number of brief comparisons between Nagarjuna or Buddhist thought with Heidegger in her last chapter ("Finale"), references to non-Western philosophy are mostly limited to very detailed accounts of exchanges between East and West, in particular in relation to Husserl and Heidegger, but also in one of the richest chapters in the book ("Figure IV"), where nineteenth century European nihilism and the

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contemporary interest in Oriental thought are the context for concentrating on another individual philosopher, this time Nietzsche. A subtle reading of how he "juggles" what he sees as the main qualities of Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism as building blocks for his own philosophy, especially in *The Anti-Christ*, emerges from a precise knowledge of which Eastern texts he would have known in which translation and a nuanced understanding of how he is trying to overcome nihilism through nihilism itself: this discussion is then followed by Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche's approach to nihilism. However, because there has already been an extended examination of Buddhist thought in an earlier chapter, one is aware of the fact that it exists independently of its use as a source of ideas by Nietzsche or even Heidegger. Particularly important is the way in which Westerners have tended to project their own problems connected with nihilism on to Buddhism, when the latter is not nihilistic.

Dastur explicitly states that her book is not a work of comparative philosophy, which of course can be valuable. However, it tends to binarize and do its comparing and contrasting purely in the realm of ideas. Stambaugh's excellent books are not comparative philosophy either, but she tends to assimilate the ideas of Japanese thinkers to those of the Western thinkers she cites because she continuously uses the latter as a way of explaining the former, although there is some justification for this: the twentieth century Japanese figures she deals with were strongly influenced by Western philosophy.

Thought, however, is paradoxical: it can be used to transcend the material, and it can be communicated in a seemingly immaterial way from mind to mind, but it is actually produced by a mind that is an integral part of a body that is geographically situated in a specific spot on the earth's surface. In *What Is Philosophy?*, especially the fourth chapter, "Geophilosophy", Deleuze argues for a complex relationship between ideas and the earth, but according to him, philosophy was invented by the Greeks, so this makes him Eurocentric and hegemonic, not seeing the possible encounters of different philosophies emerging from different parts of the world on an equal footing. He does not also understand Heidegger after the turning-point (*die Kehre*) and cannot detach Husserl's ideas thought from his moments of Eurocentrism, as in the Vienna *Krisis* lecture. ³

These two problematic areas are covered very well by Dastur in the opening few and final sections of her book, where she demonstrates an exceptionally detailed knowledge of the work of Heidegger and Husserl and explores these two philosophers

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³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Minuit, 1991), esp. 82-108, and *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London/New York: Verso, 1994), esp. 85-113. The book was published under both Deleuze and Guattari's names, but it is now known to have been written by the first author on his own. That said, it very much shows the influence of the intense collaboration with Guattari on Deleuze. "Deleuzian connectivity" and "work of the surface" are indeed very compelling, but they are linked to a free-wheeling Western entrepreneurial self who does the "backward races", both non-Western and within the West, such as Spaniards and Italians, no favors. *What Is Philosophy?* is saturated with ethnocentric remarks.
with immense profundity. As has already been said, she also goes through their contacts with the East, in particular Japan. These two types of approach - penetrating analysis and historical description - are skilfully intertwined in the main body of the work within this "frame". On the one hand, there are dense Heideggerian/Husserlian deconstructions of Greek, German and French philosophers, with the readings of Parmenides, Kant, Nietzsche (already mentioned) and Merleau-Ponty, 4 being especially rich. Indian and Japanese philosophy are treated in a very thorough, competent, but ultimately descriptive way, mainly in the two chapters already alluded to. This makes for a kind of disjunctive structure in which the latent possibilities of Western thought are examined in the context of an Eastern one which develops very similar possibilities much more fully, without however tending to fuse the two, as Stambaugh does.

Dastur's approach to East-West relations is epitomized by her movement from her discussion of Pyrrho - scepticism was very important for Husserl - to Jain anekantavada at the end of her "Greek chapter" ("Figure I"), which leads to Nagarjuna in her "Buddhism/Kyoto School chapter" ("Figure II"). Pyrrho was one of the philosophers who accompanied Alexander on his way to India, where they are said to have encountered the naked Indian gymnosophists, 5 who Dastur very reasonably identifies with Digambara Jains. There is a beautiful crossing of physical boundaries and multi-cultural blending in the description of Alexander's journey and a suggestive jump-cutting or montage juxtaposition of Pyrrho, Jain thought and Nagarjuna, all seen in the light of Husserl's epoché (suspension of judgement), which can have a mystical quality to it. Dastur avoids certain problems (in a sort of epoché): how much the Greek and Indian philosophers could have seriously debated philosophic ideas and what the precise differences are between sceptical thought and Nagarjuna. Richard Bett and Jonardon Ganeri have dealt excellently with these problems from different perspectives, both however operating within the context of analytic philosophy. 6

4 Françoise Dastur, Chair et langage: Essais sur Merleau-Ponty (Paris: Les Belles Lettres/Encre Marine, 2016) is an excellent book on this philosopher. Dastur is particularly good at valorizing his late thought, which was ignored in France because of the rise in anti-humanism in the sixties and seventies. She refers mainly to Foucault in this respect, but one could also make the same argument in relation to Deleuze (with or without Guattari).

5 Gymnos means naked in Greek.

6 Richard Bett, Pyrrho, his Antecedents, and his Legacy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 169-78 is a very judicious examination indeed of the affinities between Pyrrho's ideas and Buddhism in particular. Bett is a Western classical philosophy specialist and remains open-minded but agnostic about the depth of exchange between the Greek philosopher and his Indian "colleagues". Jonardon Ganeri, Philosophy in Classical India: The Proper Work of Reason (London/New York: Routledge, 2001), 43-70 is a superb discussion of of a whole range of problems in Nagarjuna, which does subject the parallels between the Buddhist philosopher and Sextus Empiricus' account of sceptical thought to a rigorous analysis (55-7). Ganeri's overall approach very much concentrates on the rational side of Indian philosophy, assumes that rationality is the same cross-culturally and avoids all soteriological aspects. He is fully aware of what he is doing and has a perfect right to do it, and his work has been exceptionally fruitful. It
Dastur is not, and her subtle blend of rationality and mysticism illuminates Eastern thought in a way that can at the very least richly supplement work of a more analytic kind. She uses Indian and Japanese thought almost intuitively to go much more deeply into her own philosophy, while respecting them as irreducibly other and therefore not appropriating them as if she had a right to own them. This is how she does philosophie sans frontières.

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was also necessary as it comes out of an Indian tradition of analytically-trained philosophers who were trying to revalorize their philosophy, which had often been denigrated as religious or irrational. However, non-Western philosophies are sui generis, not necessarily analytic or Continental in Western terms.

7 Françoise Dastur, Heidegger: La Question du logos (Paris: Vrin, 2007) is an excellent book on Heidegger's subtle critique of Western reason and formal logic, which could well prove illuminating for exploring the more mystical dimensions of Buddhist logic.